Christmas, 1935 • Canning • Parkersburg • Kingwood • Blue Jay

Goldenseal

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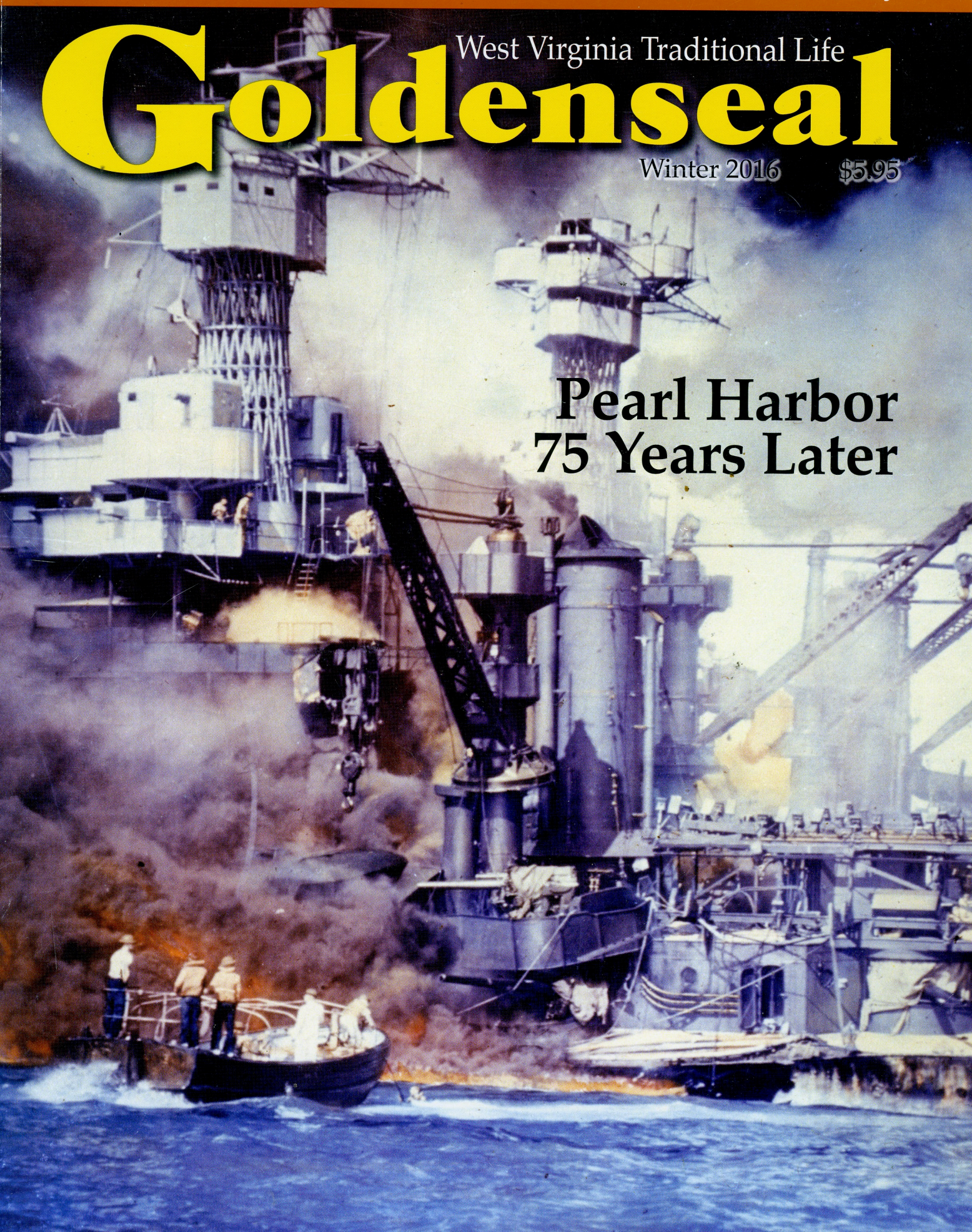
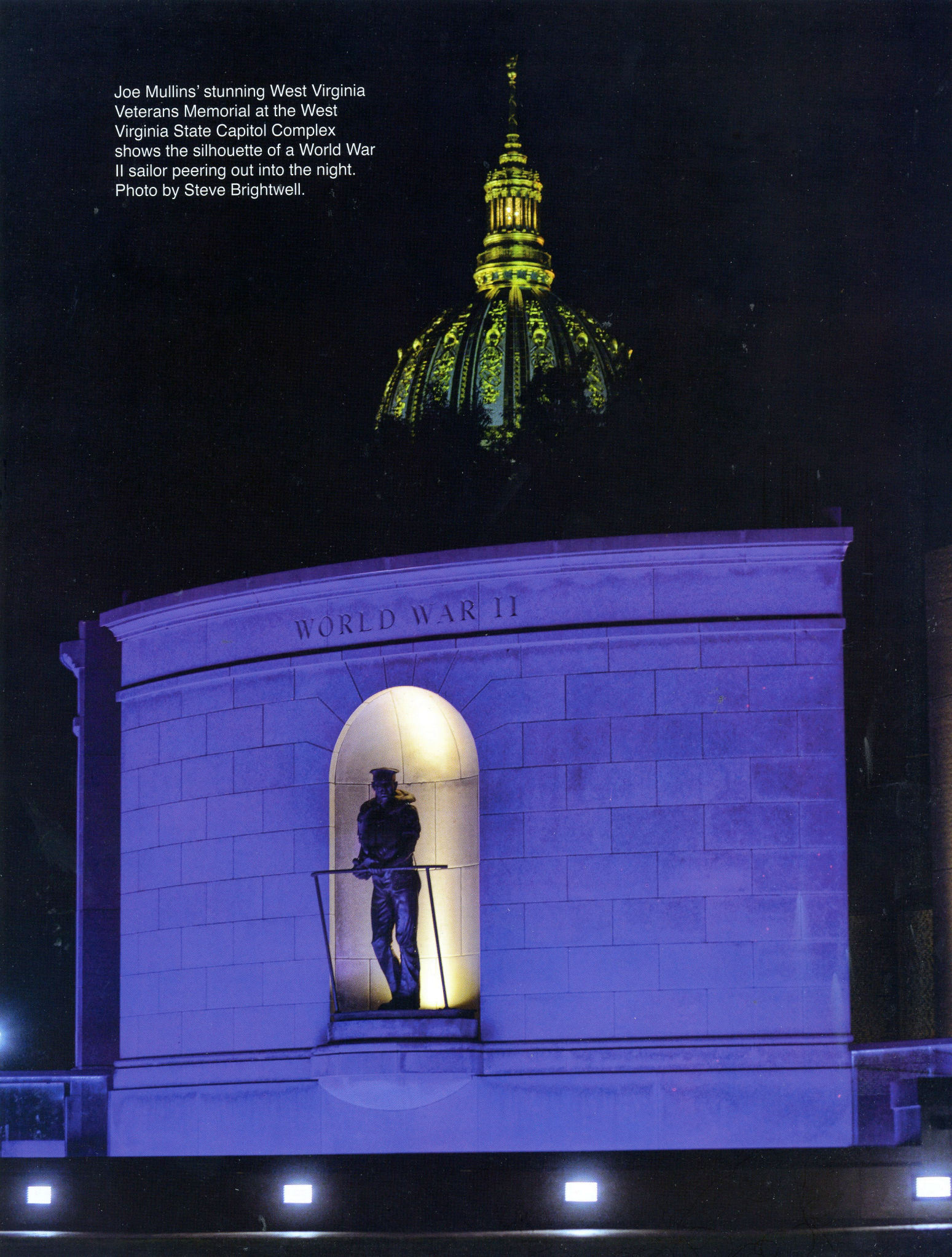


Pearl Harbor 75 Years Later



Joe Mullins' stunning West Virginia Veterans Memorial at the West Virginia State Capitol Complex shows the silhouette of a World War II sailor peering out into the night. Photo by Steve Brightwell.

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Winter 2016


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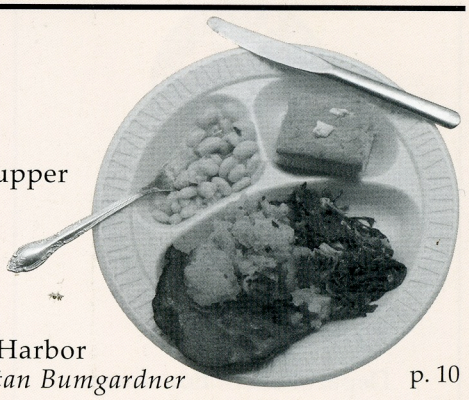

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On the cover: Smoke billows from the USS *West Virginia* at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, as rescuers pull sailors from the water. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

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Earl Ray Tomblin
Governor

Kay Goodwin
Secretary
Department of Education
and the Arts

Randall Reid-Smith
Commissioner
Division of Culture and History

Stan Bumgardner
Editor

Kim Johnson
Circulation Manager

Karin Kercheval Design
Publication Design

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

Phone (304)558-0220
e-mail chgoldenseal@wv.gov
www.wvculture.org/goldenseal

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From the Editor

It was Friday, November 4, and I had one thing left on my schedule for the week. Our photographer, Steve Brightwell, and I were headed to Quinwood to take a few photos of 95-year-old Pearl Harbor survivor Henry Sloan for this issue.

For whatever reason—maybe it was the turbulent political campaign, some turbulence in my own life, or just waking up on the wrong side of the bed that morning—I was feeling a bit out of sorts and more than a little sorry for myself. Self-pity is definitely one of my less-appealing traits. It doesn't rear its head too often, but when it does, I find it hard to ignore.

We arrived in Greenbrier County a bit early, and as usual, so did my thoughts of lunch. Steve and I don't get to travel much, but when we do, we make a point of eating at locally owned diners. Not only do we like to support local businesses, but based on my track record, a locally owned West Virginia restaurant is better than a chain restaurant every time.

Steve knew just the place in Rainelle. As we pulled up in front of the Fruits of Labor Café and Bakery, it struck me that this business had been pictured in our Fall issue about the June floods. We walked in, and the owner, Tammy Jordan, said she'd only been back open a few weeks. Like every other business in Rainelle, the flood had left behind a nightmare

In June 2016, the main street of Rainelle and the Fruits of Labor Café and Bakery were inundated by several feet of water. Photo by Chris Jackson, courtesy of *The Register-Herald*.





Pearl Harbor survivor Henry Sloan, pictured with his son, Audie, talks about fighting in the Pacific Theater during World War II. Photo by Steve Brightwell.

for Tammy and her colleagues to deal with. Fruits of Labor had been shut down for three months.

As I spoke with Tammy, I learned a lot more about her business. It's actually a nonprofit organization: all after-cost profits go back into Fruits of Labor. As part of the nationally certified Seeds of Recovery program, Tammy works with West Virginians who are recovering from addiction. By working for three months on local farms and at the restaurant, drug-court participants can graduate with nine different culinary and agriculture certificates. Seeds of Recovery's success rate is well above that of most drug-court programs.

Steve and I had a great lunch at Fruits of Labor, as we watched the diner fill to capacity with local residents. Unfortunately, we were running late by this point and didn't have time to sample one of the place's appetizing desserts.

We got to Henry's home in Quinwood a little late—45 minutes to be precise. I take full blame for being late—another of my insufferable traits—but you also have to understand that Quinwood is one of those small towns where addresses don't really exist or matter. You just walk from house to house and ask where Henry lives. We finally found the right house, but there was no answer at the door. Pretty soon, a friendly young woman—Henry's granddaughter—approached us and made a phone call. Henry had grown tired of waiting and headed down to the Rainelle Moose Lodge. His granddaughter observed, "Pawpaw isn't much for waiting around on folks."

Steve and I got in the car and headed back to Rainelle. The Moose was only a couple blocks from Fruits of Labor. As we walked in, Henry turned to us with a grin on his face and asked what we wanted to drink. Steve said he was fine, but I thought about it a minute and figured, "I'm off the clock after this, I'm not driving, and how many chances will I get to have a drink with a genuine American hero who survived Pearl Harbor?" So, I agreed and offered to buy. Of course, Henry rejected my offer, put a $20 bill on the bar, and said, "What'll you have?"

I ordered a beer and proceeded to listen to Henry's firsthand accounts of December 7, 1941,

and some of the most intense fighting in the Pacific Theater. And for good measure, we also talked some WVU football. After a few minutes, he excused himself and went to play on one of the video lottery machines. While he was in the next room, the folks at the bar went on and on about how much they admire Henry. When he returned, he motioned to his son, Audie, that it was time to go. Audie stood up, walked with Henry toward the door, and said, "Dad never likes to stay in one place very long."

Steve and I left right behind them. As they were getting in their car, I overheard Audie say, "Those were nice guys," and Henry replied, "Damn nice."

As I walked down the sidewalk, I started thinking about how I'd felt sorry for myself that morning—about what, I couldn't even remember. Then, I thought about Tammy, who'd struggled for three months to recover from a devastating flood, and 95-year-old Henry, who'd survived Pearl Harbor, Breakneck Ridge, and 37 years underground in three- and four-foot coal seams but "never likes to stay in one place very long."

Suddenly, I felt very humble and much more full of hope. And that's why I love West Virginians.

On the way out of town, we stopped back at Fruits of Labor, and I had the last piece of chocolate pie in the house. Other than my mother's pie, it was the best I'd ever had—yet one more thing I love about West Virginia.

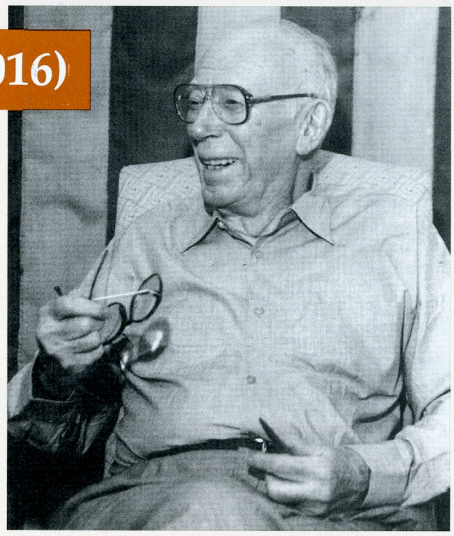
Stan Bumgardner

The Fruits of Labor Café and Bakery in Rainelle is back up and running. Owners had to replace virtually everything in the restaurant following the flood. Photo by Steve Brightwell.



GOLDENSEAL Good-Byes

Ken Hechler (1914-2016)



Ken Hechler, July 2000. Photo by Michael Keller.

On December 10, 2016, **Ken Hechler** passed away at age 102. Ken was one of the most influential political leaders West Virginia has ever known.

Born in New York on September 20, 1914, Ken served as a combat historian during World War II and earned the bronze star and five battle stars. At the end of the war, he interviewed a number of defendants in the Nuremburg Trials, including a rather famous sit-down with Herman Göring. Hechler later taught at Princeton University and served on President Harry Truman's staff.

In 1957, Hechler moved to West Virginia to teach at Marshall College (now University) and published his landmark World War II book *Bridge at Remagen*, which was made into a major motion picture in 1969.

In 1958, he defeated three-term Republican Congressman Will E. Neal. From 1959 to 1977, Hechler served in the U.S. House of Representatives and was a staunch advocate for coal mine health and safety and environmental protection. He played a leading role in passing the federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969—following the 1968 Farmington disaster—and fought to limit the effects of strip mining and preserve the New River. A leader in civil rights, he was the only sitting congressman to march with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in Selma, Alabama, in 1965.

Hechler was a major force in Democratic politics for most of the late 20th century. He campaigned with John F. Kennedy during the pivotal 1960 Democratic primary in West Virginia. After the Mountain State lost population in the 1970 census, West Virginia was redistricted and lost a congressional seat. Hechler was forced to run in the 1972 Democratic primary against Bluefield's James Kee. Kee's family members had held that seat since 1933, but Ken easily won the primary and continued his career in Congress.

In 1976, Ken stepped down from Congress to run for governor but lost in the Democratic primary to "Jay" Rockefeller. In the general election, he tried to get his old congressional seat back as a write-in candidate against Democratic nominee and political newcomer Nick Joe Rahall, but lost in a race in which both Rahall and Hechler finished ahead of Republican Steve Goodman. Hechler ran unsuccessfully against Rahall two more times and seemed to retire from politics, settling into a career as a professor / elder statesman at Marshall University and University of Charleston.

However, in 1984, at age 70, Ken made a political

President John F. Kennedy and Ken Hechler on the White House steps about 1962. Photographer unknown, courtesy of Ken Hechler.



comeback, becoming West Virginia's secretary of state. He was re-elected three more times and served until 2001, when he was 86. Throughout his career, he had been an opponent of strip mining and other forces that impacted the environment. During his tenure as secretary of state, he became an increasingly vocal critic of mountaintop removal mining.

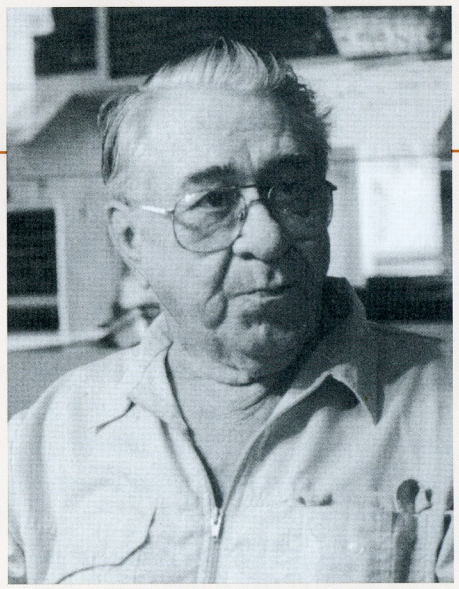
After retiring as secretary of state, he ran unsuccessfully several more times for public office: in 2000, for the House of Representatives; in 2004, for secretary of state; and in 2010, for U.S. Senate. In this latter race, he ran primarily to call attention to mountaintop removal mining. He lost in the Democratic primary to eventual winner Joe Manchin but still managed to receive nearly 20 percent of the vote—at age 95. The year before, he had been arrested for trespassing—along with other protesters—for picketing at a mountaintop removal site.

In 2013, Ken married his longtime companion, Carol Kitzmiller, and moved to Romney, where he died.

It is nearly impossible to think of any government legislation or political matter in West Virginia over the last six decades that Ken Hechler did not have a hand in—either in support or opposition. Even his Republican and Democratic opponents have acknowledged that Ken was one of the political giants in West Virginia history.



Jim Rubin. Photo by Tyler Evert.



Jim McCoy. Photo by Michael Keller.

Jim Rubin of Prosperity in Raleigh County passed away on April 19, 2016, at age 84. During his career, he worked for Beckley Newspapers, the Department of Human Services, Beckley Appalachian Regional Hospital, Whelan Psychiatric Services, Raleigh Psychiatric Services and, the VA Clinic in Princeton. It wasn't until he retired in 1995 that he began traveling throughout West Virginia and the nation performing in character as Abraham Lincoln. He was featured in a Winter 2010 GOLDENSEAL article by Pauline Haga. His resemblance to our 16th president was so striking that he noted, "When I walk around town or in a grocery store, even without my coat and top hat, people stop and take a second look."

Jim McCoy, a country music legend from Morgan County, died on September 7, 2016, at age 87. Jim led his own band, the Melody Playboys and, in the 1950s, started a country music radio program that aired every Saturday on WINC in Winchester, Virginia. The show boosted the careers of many up-and-coming performers, most notably a teenage Patsy Cline. Jim also owned the Troubadour Restaurant and Lounge on Highland Ridge, near Berkeley Springs, which hosted an annual festival dedicated to Patsy Cline. He was featured in the Spring 2002 issue of GOLDENSEAL in an article by John Douglas.

John Lambros was one of the most significant musicians and educators not only in Charleston history but in West Virginia history. He died on September 8, 2016, at age 98. He served as concertmaster and concertmaster emeritus of the Charleston Symphony Orchestra and then the West Virginia Symphony Orchestra for 55 years. An even more enduring legacy, though, is in the thousands of students he



John Lambros. Photographer unknown, courtesy of Rebecca Schlies.



Hazel Stover. Photo by Terri Paxton Allen.



John Pheasant. Photo by Steve Rotsch.

taught to play violin over his 66 years in Charleston. He also helped organize what would become the West Virginia Youth Symphony and conducted the group for nearly three decades. The youth symphony continues to honor John Lambros' many contributions by offering an annual scholarship in his name. And John was also a longtime professor of music at Morris Harvey College (now University of Charleston). He will be the subject of a feature article, along with instrument maker and colleague Harold Hayslett, in an upcoming issue of GOLDENSEAL.

Lawton Posey. Photographer unknown.



Lawton Posey of Charleston died on October 2, 2016, at age 81. A native of South Carolina, he came to West Virginia in the late 1950s as a minister, leading various Presbyterian and Lutheran churches in the Charleston area and serving as a mentor to countless lay ministers. He was also a gifted pianist, organist, and author who enjoyed writing columns for local newspapers. He wrote three articles for GOLDENSEAL: "Florien Vaughn, M.D.: Mystery Doctor of the Coalfields," Winter 1980; "A City Preacher Comes to Pendleton County," Summer 2004; and "Richard Ruddle and the Reed Organs of Pendleton County," Spring 2008.

Hazel Stover of Clay passed away on October 29, 2016, at age 98. She was born at Skyles in Webster County in 1917. A poet, musician, and songwriter, she was a devoted participant in early Vandalia Gatherings. Her interpretation of folk ballads played an important role in preserving traditional Appalachian music for future generations. She also helped develop the Clay County Historical Society.

John Pheasant of Fairmont passed away on December 6, 2016, at age 76. A prolific instrument builder—and builder of about anything—he was also a guitarist and fiddler, who loved to play along with his mother, Rosa; daughter, Cathy Pheasant Pearson; and granddaughter, Meredith Pheasant. John and the Pheasant family were regulars at the annual Vandalia Gathering and were featured in a GOLDENSEAL article by Torie Knight in Spring 2000.

David Morris (1944-2016)

Clay County musician **David Morris** died at his home in Pickerington, Ohio, on October 14, 2016, after a battle with brain cancer. He was 72.

Morris led a storied life. An acclaimed performer, singer, songwriter, storyteller, and third-generation balladeer, he was born in Ivydale on April 6, 1944. He grew up with music at home and was inspired to sing by his grandmother, Lula Jane Woods Hill. His schoolteacher parents, Dallis and Anna Morris, both played musical instruments and sang. David credited his father with teaching him many songs, such as "John Henry" and "Ticklish Reuben."

"I started singing when I was five years old," he told a Charleston newspaper in 1965, and "I liked to sit on the floor and listen in the evenings to the sweet folk songs and guitar playing of my parents."

His community was rich with traditional music. David grew up hearing fiddlers French Carpenter, Lee Triplett , Doc White, Ira Mullins, and Wilson Douglas; guitar player Gruder Morris; banjo players Jenes Cottrell, Phoebe Parsons, and Sylvia O'Brien; and ballad singer Aunt Minnie Moss. For years, David—who played guitar, autoharp, and banjo—made music with his younger brother, John, a powerful fiddler, banjo player, and harmony singer.

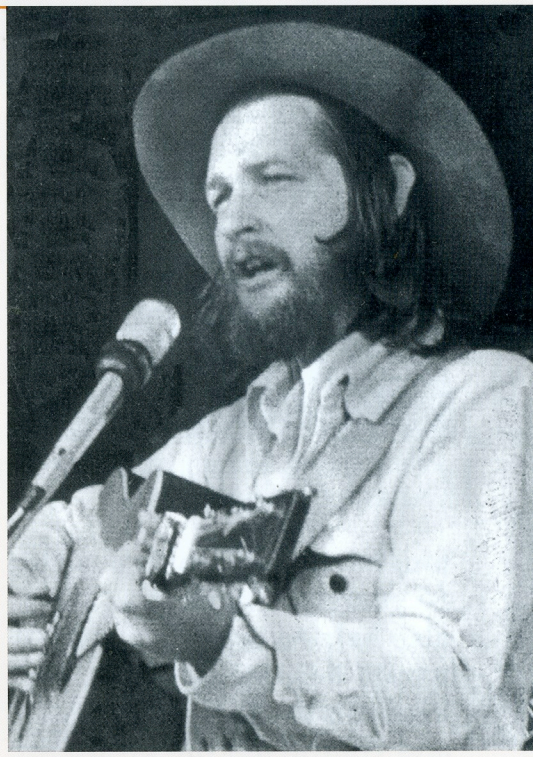
David attended Clay County High School, Glenville State College, and West Virginia State College (now University). It was at Glenville that he heard Colorado folk singer Mark Moore talk about how traditional songs would be lost if the young didn't take them up. David said, "This changed the direction of my life."

"I was in college before I put the music into any kind of context," he told the Charleston *Daily Mail* in 1979. "Before, it was just there. It was part of life."

David appeared on stage at the 1965 World's Fair, along with other Clay County musicians. He had planned to teach school but was drafted and sent to Vietnam as a combat medic in October 1967.

"I guess I was more or less an All-American boy when I went over there. When I came back, I was disillusioned and bitter." David started drinking heavily "to get rid of some of those memories," he later told a writer. Years later, he was granted 100 percent disability status by the Veterans Administration for post-traumatic stress disorder from his combat experiences.

One day, United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) leader Arnold Miller saw David hitchhiking with a guitar and gave him a ride. David told him he had just returned from Vietnam and couldn't find a job. Miller took him to UMWA headquarters in Charleston and introduced him to union reformer Jock Yablonski. David wrote a song on the spot, and Yablonski asked him to join his campaign against corrupt UMWA President Tony Boyle.



David Morris, early 1970s. Photo courtesy of Kim Johnson.

Around this time, David and John formed the Morris Brothers Band. In 1969, they started the Morris Brothers Old-Time Music Festival at their home in Ivydale [see "The Morris Brothers: Music from the Head of the Holler"

by John Lilly, Spring 2011, and "Ivydale: The Morris Family Old-Time Music Festivals" by Bob Heyer, Summer 1998]. Legendary for its great traditional music, the festival is also remembered for rain and mud. David was philosophical about the wet weather, "I think it always rains on us because the fiddle vibrations hit the heavens and jar the rain down."

In 1972, the late filmmaker Bob Gates documented the fourth and final festival in the documentary *Morris Family Old Time Music Festival*. The event was a victim of its success, and "it got too big," David said. "We just didn't have enough room for the enormous crowds. One year, I counted cars from 14 states."

David was active in the anti-strip mining campaign and, in 1976, produced an Appalachian heritage concert for public television featuring North Carolina fiddler Tommy Jarrell, Kentucky banjo legend Lily Mae Ledford, the Morris Brothers Band, and an up-and-coming string band, The Red Clay Ramblers.

David attributed the eventual breakup of the Morris Brothers Band to the usual stresses and strains on musicians. This was a low point for David. "I went down so low there were times I didn't think I would live," he recalled. He found sobriety. "I went through that valley and came out of it a different man, a better man, stronger, and more understanding of life. I have no regrets; it just happened that way."



David Morris performing on *Mountain Stage*, 2015. Photo by Amos Perrine.

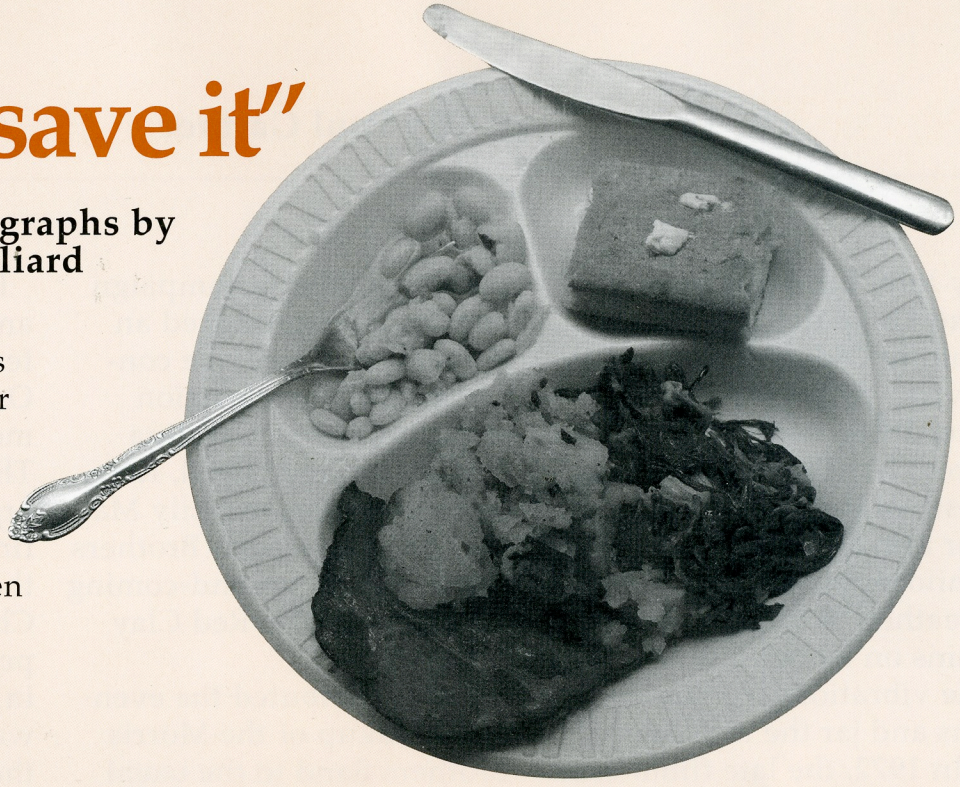
He resumed performing, and in 1977, his music was featured in Barbara Koppel's Oscar-winning mining documentary *Harlan County USA*. That year, David helped organize and program the first Vandalia Gathering on the state capitol grounds in Charleston. In 1982, he appeared at the World's Fair in Knoxville, Tennessee, and was awarded a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

At the 1984 Vandalia Gathering, he met his future wife, Ohio State University Professor Christine Ballengee Morris. In 2015, David and his son, Jack, worked with Koppel again on *Shelter*, a documentary about homeless veterans. He was interviewed for Glenville State College's West Virginia Veterans' Legacy Project and was included in the book *Heroes Among Us*. He was also part of "Morningstars," a multimedia theatrical program.

David appeared on nine recordings, solo and with others. In 1979, he said of his and John's role in promoting and preserving West Virginia's musical heritage, "We felt like we were going to lose something really beautiful and precious if we didn't do something. I don't mean to say that John and I did everything. We were just part of the picture."

"Eat it to save it"

Text and photographs by Emily Hilliard



Back in April, I spent a few days in Helvetia as residents prepared for their annual ramp supper. The event has been held in the Randolph County village for more than 60 years. Though the supper has been an important local gathering and fundraiser for the Helvetia Farm Women and Community Hall Association, it almost didn't happen in 2015. Turnout had declined in recent years, and revenues weren't offsetting the considerable investment of time and labor required to clean, store, and sauté 60 bushels of ramps; sort and cook beans; boil and fry 400 pounds of potatoes; cut and warm 300 pounds of ham; bake cornbread and homemade desserts; and host 300-plus guests.

The cancellation of the 2015 supper was imminent when 15 year-old Morgan Rice created a petition. She recalls, "I sent an e-mail to almost every person in Helvetia saying, 'The younger population of Helvetia does not want to get rid of the ramp dinner because of its importance to us and because it's such a staple to our community.' The ramp dinner is a big part of *my* life and *Helvetia's* life."

Morgan's petition earned the support of two other members of the Farm Women's Club, Cecilia Smith and Sharon Rollins, who decided to bolster their efforts with additional advertising and reorganization, and to continue the supper on a year-by-year basis. Despite cold temperatures and rain, both the 2015 and 2016 events were successful, bringing in enough visitors to make the fundraiser worthwhile.

But the value of the ramp supper for Helvetia isn't just monetary. For Cecilia, the event keeps traditions alive and reaffirms community after a long winter. "The ramp supper," she says, "is part of our heritage, and we've lost too much of our heritage. We need to hold on to as much as we can."

One way Cecilia does this is by sharing her family's cake recipes: "I brought two cakes today—one is a German apple cake, which I think was my grandma's recipe, but I know it's been in the family for umpteen

While the term *historic preservation* generally relates to conserving and protecting historically notable buildings, objects, and landscapes, folklorists interpret this idea and apply it to the way history and cultural meaning exist not just in objects and places, but in living traditions. This concept, called *intangible cultural heritage*, is defined by UNESCO as "the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills—as well as the associated instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces—that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage." These practices and expressions include oral traditions, rituals, and festivals.

Preserving the Helvetia Ramp Supper

years. The other one is molasses crumb cake, which my dad made when I was little."

These recipes—and the communal process of preparing everything for the supper—are distinct community practices and examples of *intangible cultural heritage*, a way of preserving memory through the acts of cooking and eating. This process evokes the phrase popularized by food preservationist Poppy Tooker—"eat it to save it."

The spring ramp suppers also demonstrate a close connection with the land—enacting another aspect of historic preservation and



intangible cultural heritage. In her essay "Ramps, Biodiversity, and the Integrity of the Mountains" about Raleigh County's ramp supper, Mary Hufford writes, "The traditional knowledge that sustains this annual round of harvesting is anchored in a people's landscape inscribed all over the mountains, a literary work writ large."

Ernest Hofer, a Helvetia native who's worked the supper for more than 40 years, used to donate 10 bushels of ramps. Now, the ramps are purchased from Webster County. Ernest says, "It's hard to find ramps because people aren't gonna tell you where their ramp patch is! That's a well-kept secret, and I'm not gonna tell you where mine's at! And a lot of the property has been closed to ramp digging due to the lumber company's leasing the property, which has hurt the ramp suppers a lot. So they just can't dig 'em."

Remembering her childhood growing up near Charleston, Sharon Rollins recounts, "Now we used to go ramp digging when I was a kid. My birthday dinner was always cooked by the creek while we were cooking ramps, and it was done over an open campfire. So, my family—my uncle and his family and my mom and my family—we'd go find a ramp patch. And let me tell you, they are always straight up a hill. I don't know how many hills I have rolled down. Even though I just started doing ramps here as a teenager, I knew ramps."

The yearly harvesting, preparing, eating, and celebrating at ramp suppers across the state highlight a different kind of historic preservation. It's not housed in a specific building, or environment but exists within people and their communities. It's found in the traditional knowledge of where the best ramps grow or how to boil 400 pounds of potatoes over an open campfire. It's housed in family recipes and the tradition of coming together each spring to retell stories, debate how to make the best cornbread, or meet strangers at a common table over a home-cooked meal in the basement of a community hall. Though context and circumstances change, in these annual suppers, memories live, and a shared heritage is sustained.

EMILY HILLIARD is West Virginia's first official state folklorist. She worked previously at Smithsonian Folkways Recordings and the National Council for the Traditional Arts. Her work has been published by *Southern Cultures*, National Public Broadcasting, *Ecotone*, and the James Beard Award-winning *Gravy*. She also plays old-time fiddle and writes the pie blog *Nothing in the House*. She writes a regular column for GOLDENSEAL.

Rooted in the Mountains

Rawan Elhamdani was the valedictorian of her 2016 class at Cabell Midland High School. Her May valedictory address sums up much of what we think "it means to be a West Virginian," so we wanted to share this excerpt with our readers. —ed.

Good evening. I am honored to stand before you today as one of the voices for the Class of 2016. Being given the opportunity to speak on such an important day for me, my classmates, and our families is something I will look back on fondly.

First off, I would like to thank God for helping us reach this point. Any event could have come between us and this day. So, it's truly a miracle that each of us sitting in these seats—totaling 464 students—is graduating today. Congrats to the Class of 2016. I'm happy to have been part of this class, even though we didn't end up with a solid senior prank. It was an unforgettable four years.

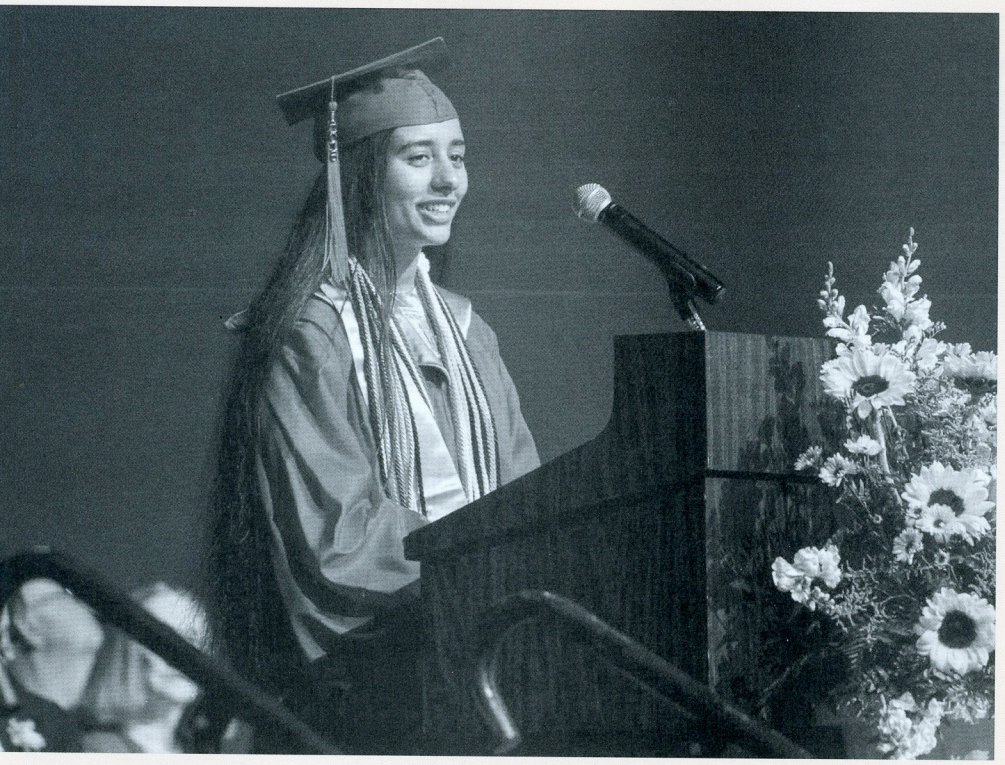
While we complained about waking up early and half-joked about dropping out on a daily basis, thank you, Cabell Midland, and all of your teachers and administrators. Thank you to our elementary and middle school figures—who we often forget—even though they built the necessary foundation for us. Thank you to our families, who woke us up every morning when we slept through five alarms and who made such a difference in our lives. Thank you to the friends who have stuck with us from start to end—the friends we have seen every day on the first day of school for the past 12 years. It is difficult to say "goodbye" to these familiar aspects of our current lives, but without these individuals—who have pushed us on and helped us move forward to face whatever trials and joys lie ahead—there would be nothing to say "goodbye" to because we would not have been able to succeed.

What I would really like to focus on today is identity—something every individual in this building has struggled with at one point. Minorities, especially, struggle with identity, and Appalachians are a minority in this nation. I am always shocked at the overwhelming number of classmates who tell me they have no future in West Virginia. They want to leave. They want nothing to do with this state. Their chief complaint: "There's no opportunity here. Our system is failing. This state is failing. The rest of America laughs at us, mocks us with stereotypes—uneducated, lazy, hillbillies, abusers of the system. Why would we stay here?" This is a problem.

I want all of you today to realize no matter where you go, you cannot escape from your roots. When you think about the system being broken and the state failing, why not adopt a proactive stance and fix this state? Why are we abandoning the state that raised us instead of supporting *it* as it has supported *us* toward our future success?

Now, when I talk about abandoning West Virginia, I am not saying all of you have to live here the rest of your lives. Making a difference here can be as simple as setting aside five dollars a month and donating the money to local organizations that help improve the literacy rate or that transport health-care items to struggling areas—groups like Lily's Place in Huntington. As the young generation with fresh thinking and new ideas, it is our responsibility to pull West Virginia forward.

On to stereotypes. These concepts really hit me while sitting with Mrs. Ross, having one of many conversations on culture and the importance of roots. Growing up appearing, speaking,



By Rawan Elhamdani

Photo by Sholten Singer, Huntington *Herald-Dispatch*.

and acting differently than the people around me was not easy. As a Muslim, I did not always feel welcome because of false stereotypes against my religion. Mrs. Ross encouraged me to be myself no matter if the people around me were hateful. I hope that by being myself, I have shown the love I feel for the people I interact with and have proven the stereotypes false. This must be the class mission. When you are older, successful, in a big office, maybe in a big city, you might not want to discuss the struggle—how you started in Barboursville or Milton—and how arduous it was moving to a big city where you didn't have big-city connections or a big-name school on your resume. However, we must embrace our past and the state that contributed so much to our future successes. Whether we stay here or go elsewhere, we must give people a different view about the West Virginia they have built in their heads. I hope all of you help eradicate the negative stereotypes about West Virginians and show the people who are ignorant of our state the beauty in our rich culture, values, determination, courage, and generosity.

Finally, I would like to dedicate my achievements to my grandpa. He passed away on April 1, 2014, and was one of the biggest advocates of academics I know. Once I called him after receiving a report card. I was ready to wow him with my grades; I had a 99 percent in one of my classes. I started to list off the grades, and when I made it to the 99 percent, I could only imagine the praise I was going to receive. He responded, "Very good. Very good. But why wasn't that last one 100 percent?"

I laughed about it later, but thank you, Grandpa, for teaching me there is always more you can give. You can always put forth more effort, you can always achieve at a higher level. May God bless him, and may God bless the Class of 2016.

RAWAN ELHAMDANI is enrolled as a freshman in Marshall University's fast-track medical school program and plans to become a doctor. She loves volunteering through Marshall's medical outreach program to help people in need of medical aid who do not have the financial means to pay for it. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.



By Patricia Richards McClure and Stan Bumgardner

West Virginia

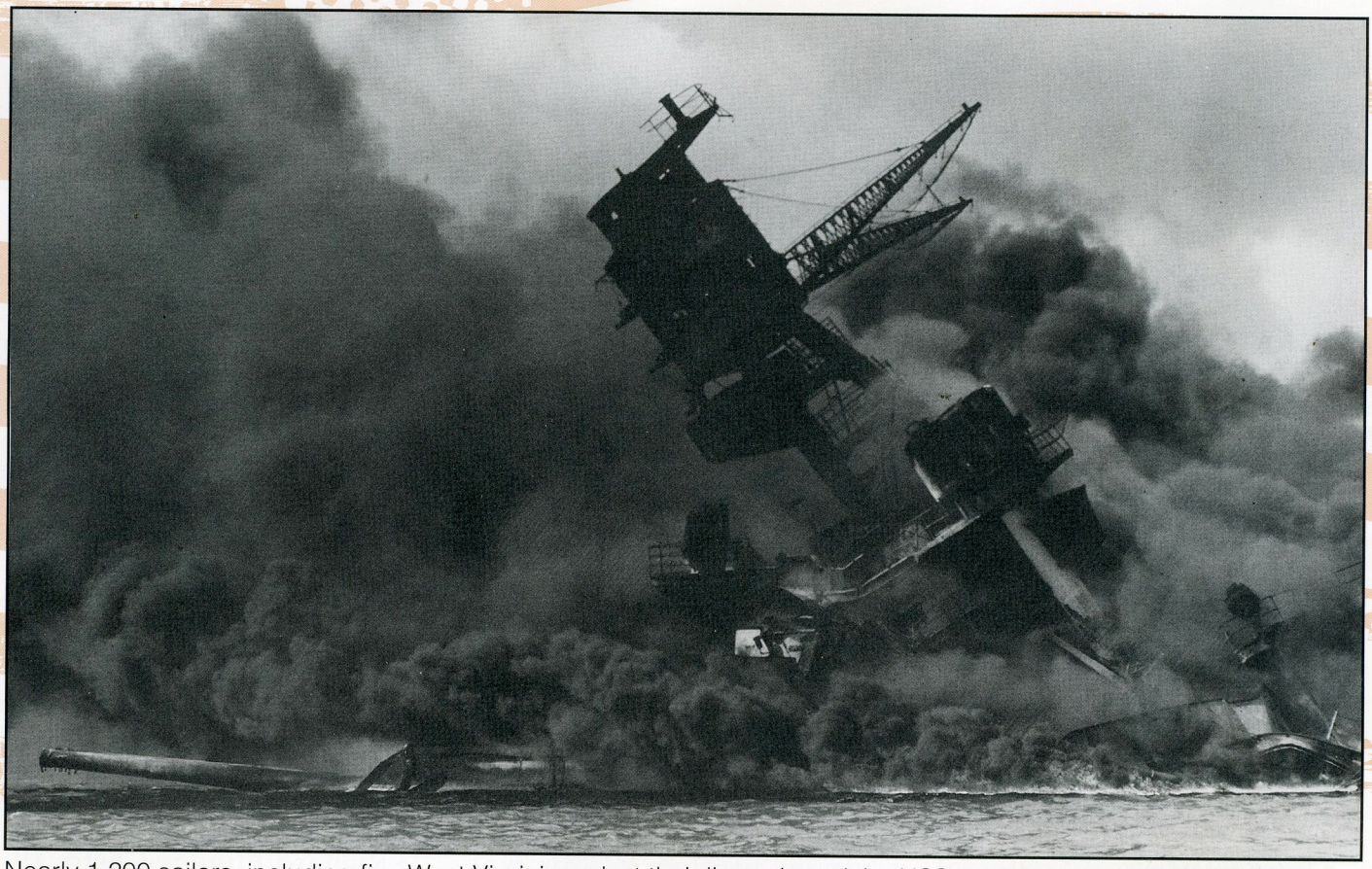
It lasted only two hours. Two hours that reshaped American history forever. President Franklin D. Roosevelt immortalized December 7, 1941, as "a date which will live in infamy."

The Japanese attack on the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor, near Honolulu, Hawaii, was devastating to American armed forces. The air assault damaged nearly 20 naval vessels, including eight battleships, and more than 300 airplanes. Nearly 2,500 U.S. sailors, soldiers, and civilians died in the attack; another 1,000 were wounded. The next day, December 8, the United States joined the world war it had avoided for two years.

In small communities across West Virginia, December 7 dawned bright and sunny, with temperatures from moderate to chilly. Families went to church and then home for their Sunday suppers.

The attack occurred about 7:48 a.m. local time in Hawaii, or 1:48 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. The Associated Press broke the news about a half-hour later. News spread quickly throughout West Virginia—by radio, newspaper, and word of mouth. Front pages hinted that war was looming. Later in the day, a Charleston *Daily Mail* extra proclaimed what citizens had already learned from their radios: "U.S. at War with Japan; Manila, Hawaii Shelled."

At least 27 West Virginians are known to have died as a result of the attack on Pearl Harbor. Angle, Barnhart, Browning, Bryant, Carroll, Drwall,



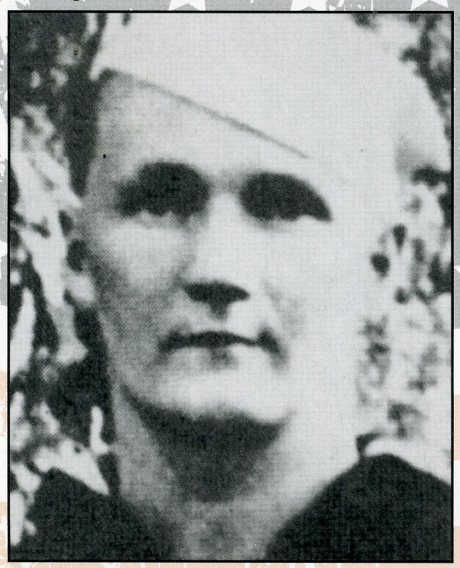
Nearly 1,200 sailors, including five West Virginians, lost their lives aboard the USS *Arizona* at Pearl Harbor. Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration.

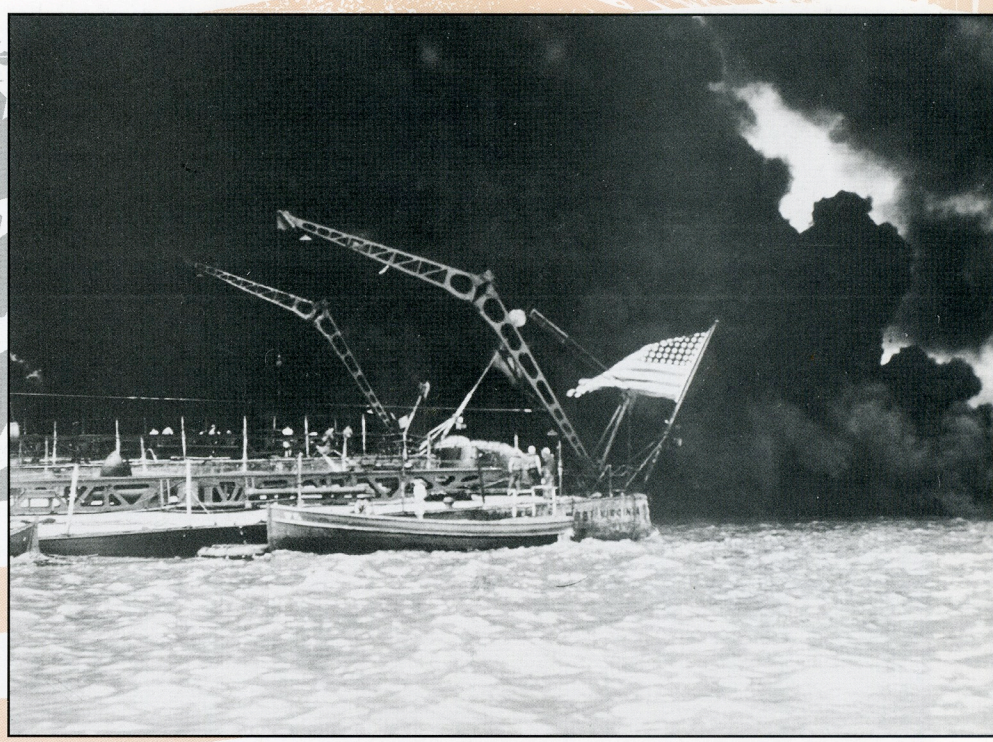
Remembers Pearl Harbor

Hull, McCloud, McComas, McGraw, Nichols, Reed, Robinson, Skaggs, Thomas, Wilson, Wimmer, Wright. Their surnames represent our state's diversity at the time.

Robert Paul Laderach—whose grandparents had emigrated from Switzerland in 1880 and relocated to the heart of West Virginia—had entered the service in October 1937, when he was 20. While the young man might have joined the Navy to see the world, he had the misfortune of being on the USS *Arizona* (BB-39) that fateful morning of December 7. A little more than 10 minutes into the attack, a Japanese bomb hit a powder magazine aboard the *Arizona*, plummeting the ship to the bottom of the harbor and killing 1,177 men—nearly half of all Americans killed at Pearl Harbor. The battleship was damaged beyond repair and left at the bottom of Pearl Harbor. The USS *Arizona* Memorial sits on the ship's hull and is the final resting place of more than 1,000 sailors, including these West Virginians:

Robert Paul Laderach of Beverly was one of five West Virginians who died aboard the USS *Arizona*. Courtesy of *Young American Patriots*.





Right: The stern of the USS *West Virginia* is in the foreground, as fire hoses from the USS *Tennessee* try to battle back the blaze from the USS *Arizona*. Courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives, USS *West Virginia* Collection.

- Earnest Hersea Angle, 19, of Quinwood, Greenbrier County, fireman 2nd class
- Tilmon David Browning, 16, of Omar, Logan County, seaman 1st class
- Robert Paul Laderach, 24, of Beverly, Randolph County, fire controlman 2nd class
- Robert Warren Robinson, 19, of Sistersville, Tyler County, patternmaker 2nd class
- Randall James Thomas, 20, of Cowen, Webster County, seaman 1st class

An American of Polish descent, Stanislaw Frank Drwall had worked in the mines at Douglas (now Albert), Tucker County, and enlisted in the Navy four years before his death at Pearl Harbor. Sadly, the war would take another child from Frank and Mary Drwall. Stanislaw's younger brother Walter was later lost at sea in the North Atlantic. Stanislaw Frank Drwall was one of eight West Virginians who died aboard the USS *Oklahoma* (BB-37).

Torpedoes struck the *Oklahoma* just seconds after the attack began. Within 12 minutes, the ship had capsized with her masts resting on the bottom of Pearl Harbor. The sinking of the *Oklahoma* brought unthinkable news to David and Mary Casto of Chester. Two of their sons, Richard Eugene and Charles Ray, had died on the capsized ship. Among the 429 who perished aboard the *Oklahoma* were

- Joseph William Carroll, 20, of Fairmont, Marion County, fireman 2nd class
- Charles Ray Casto, 21, of Chester, Hancock County, fireman 1st class
- Richard Eugene Casto, 19, of Chester, Hancock County, fireman 2nd class
- Stanislaw Frank Drwall, 25, of Douglas, Tucker County, patternmaker 1st class
- Donald Robert McCloud, 21, of Monaville, Logan County, fire controlman 2nd class
- Carl Nichols, about 21, of Glen Alum, Mingo County, seaman apprentice 2nd class
- Eugene Mitchell Skaggs, 32, of Fayette County, signalman 1st class
- Bernard Ramon Wimmer, 27, of Princeton, Mercer County, fireman 1st class

Only a small number of the *Oklahoma* victims were identified. Some 390—including all eight sailors from West Virginia—were buried as "unknowns" in local cemeteries



Frank E. Reed Jr. of Charleston died aboard the USS *Utah*. Courtesy of *Young American Patriots*.



The USS *California* sinks into the mud at Pearl Harbor, taking the lives of some 100 crewmembers, including West Virginians Howard Adkins and George McGraw. Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration.

and then reinterred at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu in 1950. In 2015, the Department of Defense began exhuming the bodies for DNA examination with the goal of ultimately returning the remains to their families.

One of the first battleships sunk was our state's namesake. At least three West Virginians were killed aboard the USS *West Virginia*:

- William Garnett Christian, 25, native of Gary, McDowell County, residing in Harriman, Tennessee, baker 1st class
- Clarence McComas, 18, of Caney Branch, Logan County, seaman 1st class
- Clyde Richard Wilson, 23, of Clarksburg, Harrison County, seaman 1st class

After the war, Christian was buried in a cemetery near his family in Tennessee, and McComas was buried in the Skaggs Cemetery in Chapmanville. Wilson is interred in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific.

Two bombs sank the USS *California* (BB-44), killing nearly 100 sailors, including two West Virginians:

- Howard Lucas Adkins, 20, of Goodwill, Mercer County, fireman 1st class
- George Vincent McGraw, 25, of Rachel, Marion County, fireman 1st class

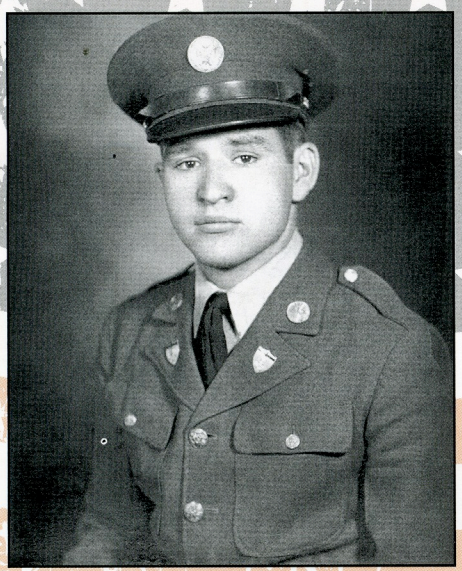
Adkins' and McGraw's bodies were never recovered from the sunken *California*.

One other West Virginia sailor was killed that morning. Frank Edward Reed Jr. an electrician's mate 3rd class from Charleston, was killed aboard the USS *Utah* (BB-31). Most of the sailors escaped from the rapidly rising waters of the *Utah* before she sank, but Reed and 63 others perished. A twist of fate saved the life of another West Virginian. Brooks Henderson Jr. was supposed to spend Saturday night/Sunday morning aboard the *Utah* with Reed, his cousin. However, at the last minute, he was assigned to guard duty for Sunday morning and decided against going to the *Utah* the night before.

Attempts to raise the ship failed. The remains of Reed and the 63 other sailors are still interred aboard the *Utah*.

Hickam Field and Wheeler Field were key targets of the Japanese. Hickam was the largest air base in Hawaii and home to the Army Air Corps' massive B-17D bombers, known as Flying Fortresses. About 8:00 a.m.

Morris Stacey of Fairmont was killed at Wheeler Field on December 7, 1941. Courtesy of Kathleen Rosenbarger.





Hickam Field, Hawaii's largest air base, was a key target of Japanese bombers. Four West Virginians were among the 189 killed at Hickam. U.S. Air Force photo courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration.

local time, the Japanese bombed and strafed the hangars and planes at Hickam, killing 189 people in the process. Among those killed at Hickam were four West Virginians:

- Harold C. Elyard, 28, of Coketon, Tucker County, staff sergeant
- Robert Maxwell Richey, 32, of Wellsburg, Brooke County, 1st lieutenant
- Carey K. Stockwell, 21, of Ivydale, Clay County, private 1st class
- Thomas M. Wright, 21, of Weston, Lewis County, private

Elyard, Richey, and Wright are buried in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. Richey, who served in the quartermaster corps, was a graduate of both Wellsburg High School and West Virginia University, where he was a member of the Army Cadet program. He was working as a public accountant in Wheeling when he entered the service and served as a purchasing agent in the Army Air Corps. "Bud" Stockwell, as he was known, was reinterred after the war in the family cemetery in Clay County. A bridge on Interstate 79 at Big Otter is named in his honor.

More than 85 percent of the planes at Wheeler Field, the Army's main base for fighter planes, were destroyed. Three West Virginians were among the 17 men killed at Wheeler:

- Robert Lee Hull, Jr., 19, of Wheeling, Ohio County, private
- Morris Stacey, 24, of Fairmont, Marion County, sergeant
- Russell P. Vidoloff, 21, of Mahan, Fayette County, private

Hull was wounded on December 7 and died the following day. He was originally buried in Hawaii, and, in 1947, reinterred at Wheeling's Greenwood Cemetery. Stacey, a sergeant in the 78th Pursuit Squadron, was killed by strafing from a Japanese plane and eventually buried in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. In 1947, Vidoloff's body was returned to West Virginia and buried in Montgomery Memorial Park at London in eastern Kanawha County.

Corporal Claude L. Bryant, a 23-year-old native of Canvas in Nicholas County, died in one of the more publicized events of the attack. Only nine Japanese Zeros were lost that day; three were shot down during the first



This shows the tail wreckage of Takeshi Hirano's plane at Fort Kamehameha in Honolulu. The crash took the life of Nicholas County native Claude Bryant and three other Army soldiers stationed at the base. U.S. Navy photo courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration.

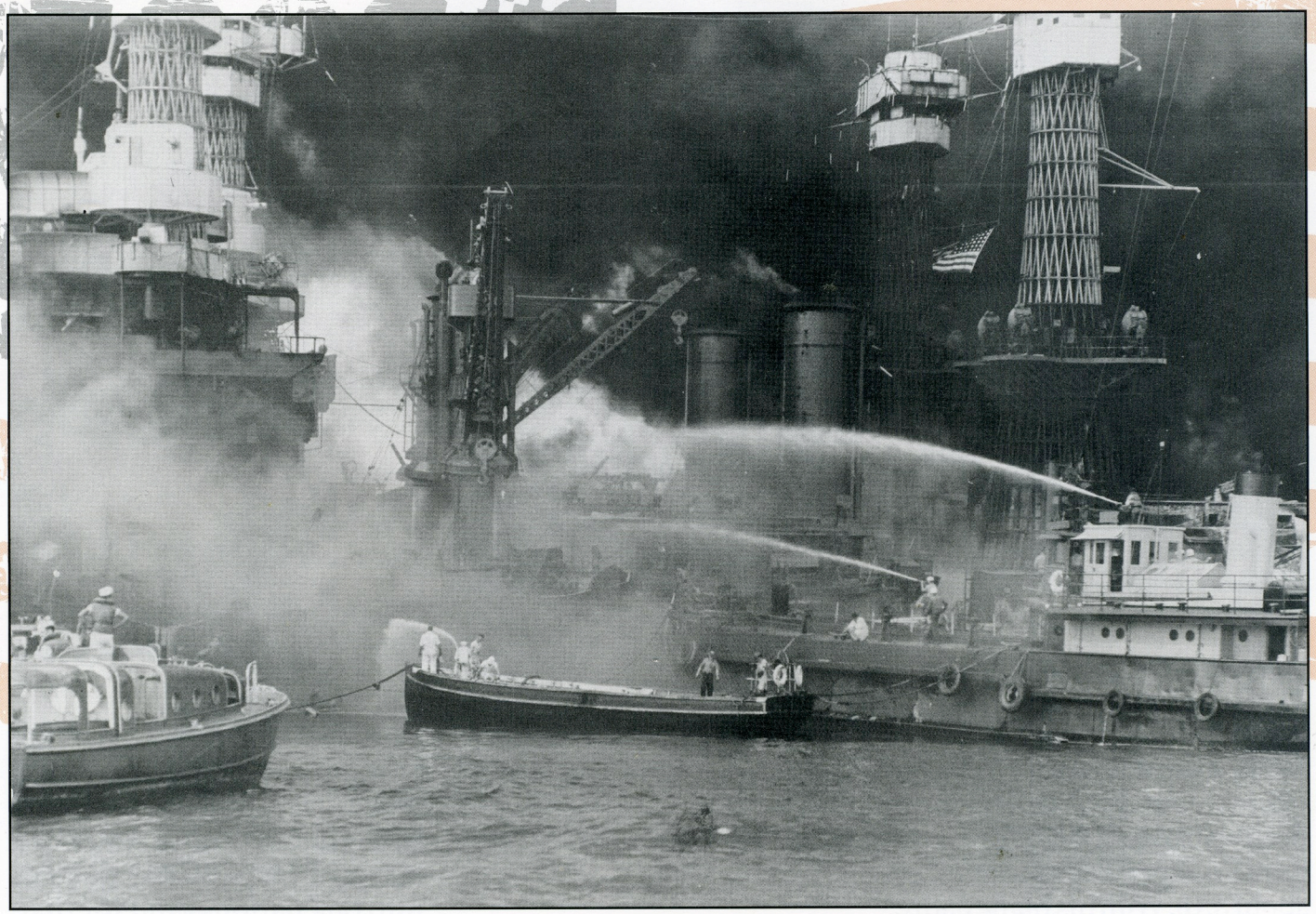
wave. While strafing Hickam Field, a Zero flown by Takeshi Hirano was hit by fire from the destroyer USS *Helm* and minesweeper USS *Bobolink* at about 8:10. With his plane badly damaged, Hirano steered his plane toward Fort Kamehameha, known to the U.S. troops as Fort Kam. While trying to land on a street in the fort, Hirano clipped a palm tree, lost control, and slammed his plane into an ordnance machine shop. Four Army soldiers stationed at the fort had been taking cover behind the shop while waiting for guns and ammunition. Joseph Medure, a veteran of the 41st Coast Artillery, later recalled, "The Corporal of the guard was a good looking kid, Corporal Claude L. Bryant, nicknamed 'muscles,' a weight lifter. He was killed by the crashing plane. He lived longest perhaps due to his physique and strong constitution." Bryant was buried in Hawaii and, after the war, reinterred in Groves Cemetery in Summersville.

Pearl Harbor is one of the pivotal, actually revolutionary, moments in American history. While December 7, 1941, will always remain a "date which will live in infamy," it stands for much more. Emerging from the Great Depression and still plagued with inner turmoil, we were a nation in search of a stable economy, a national focus, and a worldwide identity.

After December 7, our national problems didn't go away—far from it; yet, all Americans, regardless of politics, race, sex, or income pulled together in a way we'd never seen before. No one event ever gave us a greater common cause than Pearl Harbor, and no war ever brought us together like World War II. The war was a transformational time in American history. It helped better unify us into one nation—and for that, we owe an everlasting thanks to the hundreds of thousands of men and women who served, were willing to give their lives, and, in many cases—like these 27 West Virginians—sacrificed their lives.

PATRICIA RICHARDS MCCLURE has lived in West Virginia for more than 40 years. A graduate of Baldwin-Wallace College and Ohio University, she retired from West Virginia State University, where she was an associate professor of English. For six years, she has been writing biographies of veterans as part of the West Virginia Veterans Memorial project, a task that has become a lifetime commitment.

STAN BUMGARDNER is editor of GOLDENSEAL.



The USS *West Virginia* sinks to the bottom of Pearl Harbor. The main cook from the *West Virginia*, Doris "Dorie" Miller—a native of Waco, Texas—is in the bow of the small boat in the middle. Miller pulled many of his shipmates from the water, saving countless lives and becoming one of the first American heroes of World War II. The first African American to receive the Navy Cross, he was killed in 1943 during the Battle of Makin in the Gilbert Islands. U.S. Navy photo courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration.

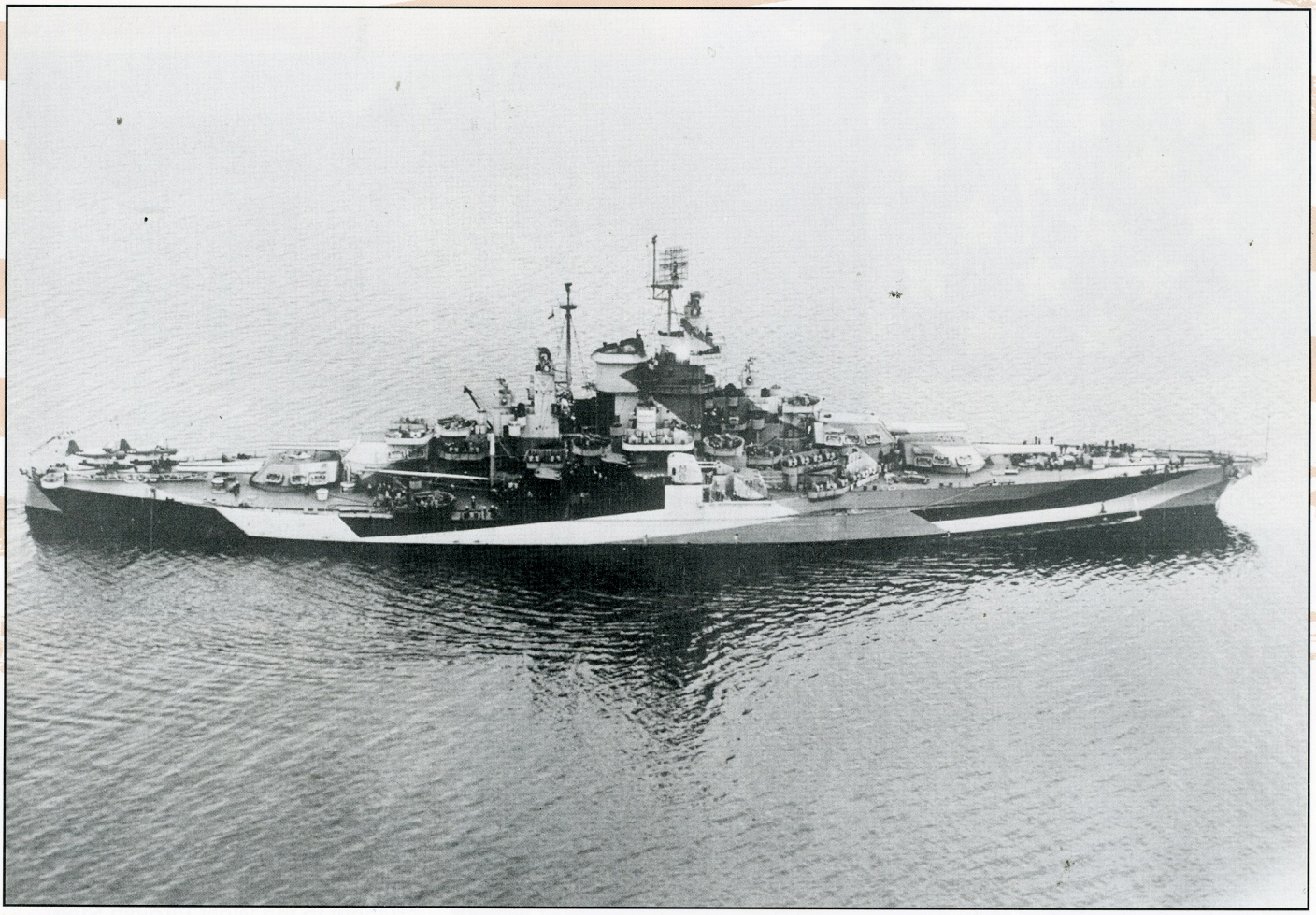
The "Wee Vee"

By Stan Bumgardner

The USS *West Virginia* (BB-48) was one of four battleships sunk at Pearl Harbor; four others were badly damaged. The *West Virginia*, nicknamed the "Wee Vee," was the second of three ships named for the Mountain State, following an armored cruiser (1905-1916), which was renamed *Huntington* (1916-1930), and preceding the current nuclear submarine (1989-present).

BB-48 (battleships were numbered consecutively) was commissioned on December 1, 1923, and sailed around much of the world—including the Caribbean, Hawaiian Islands, Alaska, Australia, and New Zealand—on various training exercises. In 1940, with World War II raging in much of the Eastern Hemisphere—the Navy sent the *West Virginia* to Pearl Harbor to help build up the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

On the morning of December 7, 1941, the *West Virginia* was blasted by 18-inch aircraft torpedoes and two armor-piercing bombs. The crew valiantly fought the fires for hours and evacuated the wounded to nearby ships. About 2:00 p.m. local time—some six



After being refloated, the *West Virginia* was repaired and sailed to Puget Sound Navy Yard, modernized, and dispatched in September 1944 to the Pacific Theater, where she became the flagship of Battleship Division 4. Courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives.

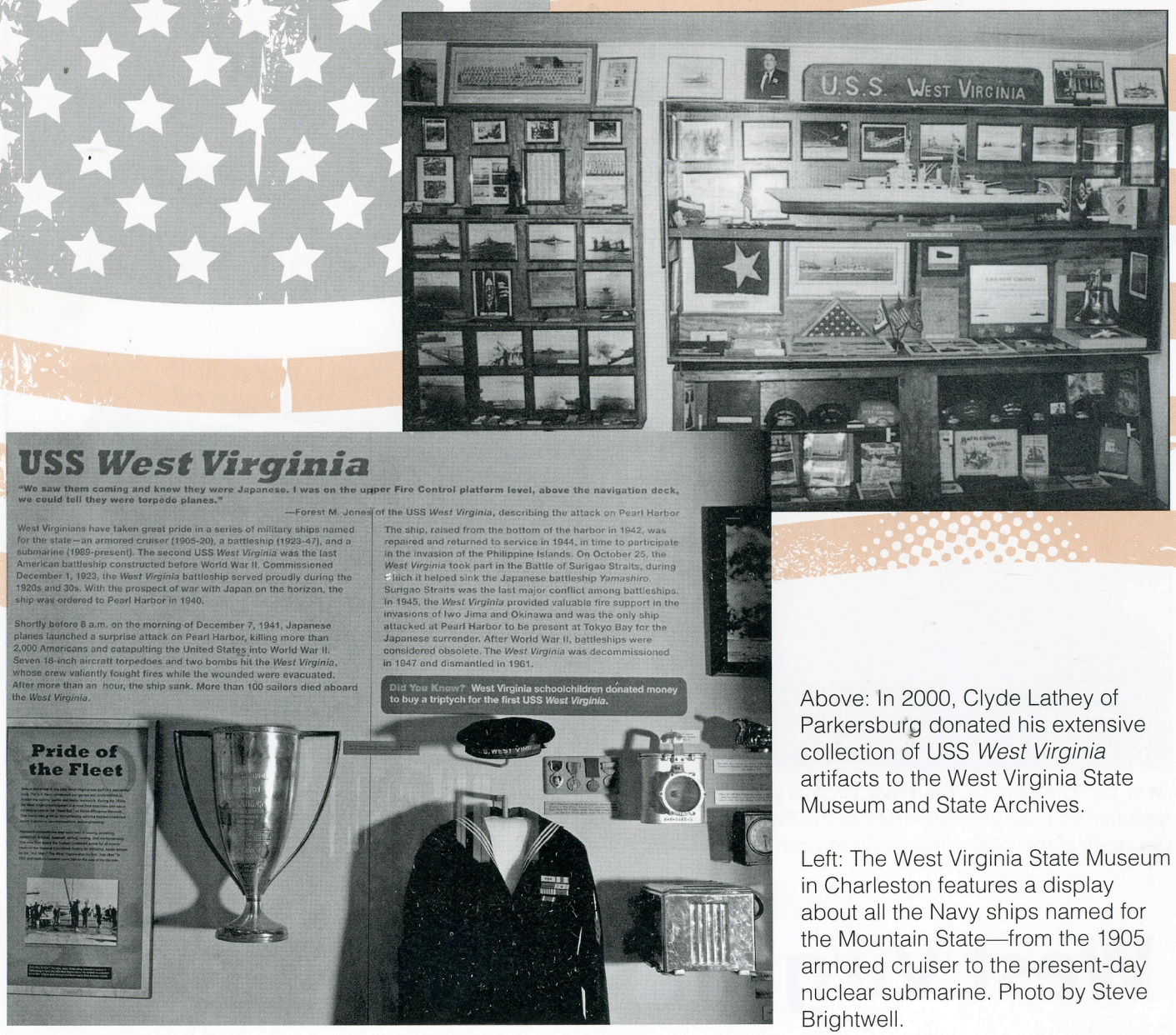
West Virginia's Pride and Joy

hours after the initial shelling—the *West Virginia* was abandoned.

The gaping holes in the battleship's hull were patched, and the water was pumped out. On May 17, 1942, the *West Virginia* was refloated. During repairs, the bodies of 66 dead sailors were discovered aboard the ship. Three were found in a storeroom. A marked-up calendar indicated the three men had survived on emergency rations and water until December 23.

After the *West Virginia* was repaired, she was returned to service in 1944. In October of that year, as part of the larger Battle of Leyte Gulf, she participated in the Battle of Surigao Strait—the last major pitched conflict among battleships. The *West Virginia* also provided fire support during the invasions of Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

On September 2, 1945, the *West Virginia* was moored in Tokyo Bay for the official Japanese surrender—making her the only ship present at both Pearl Harbor and the surrender. The venerable battleship was decommissioned in 1947 and sold for scrap in 1959.

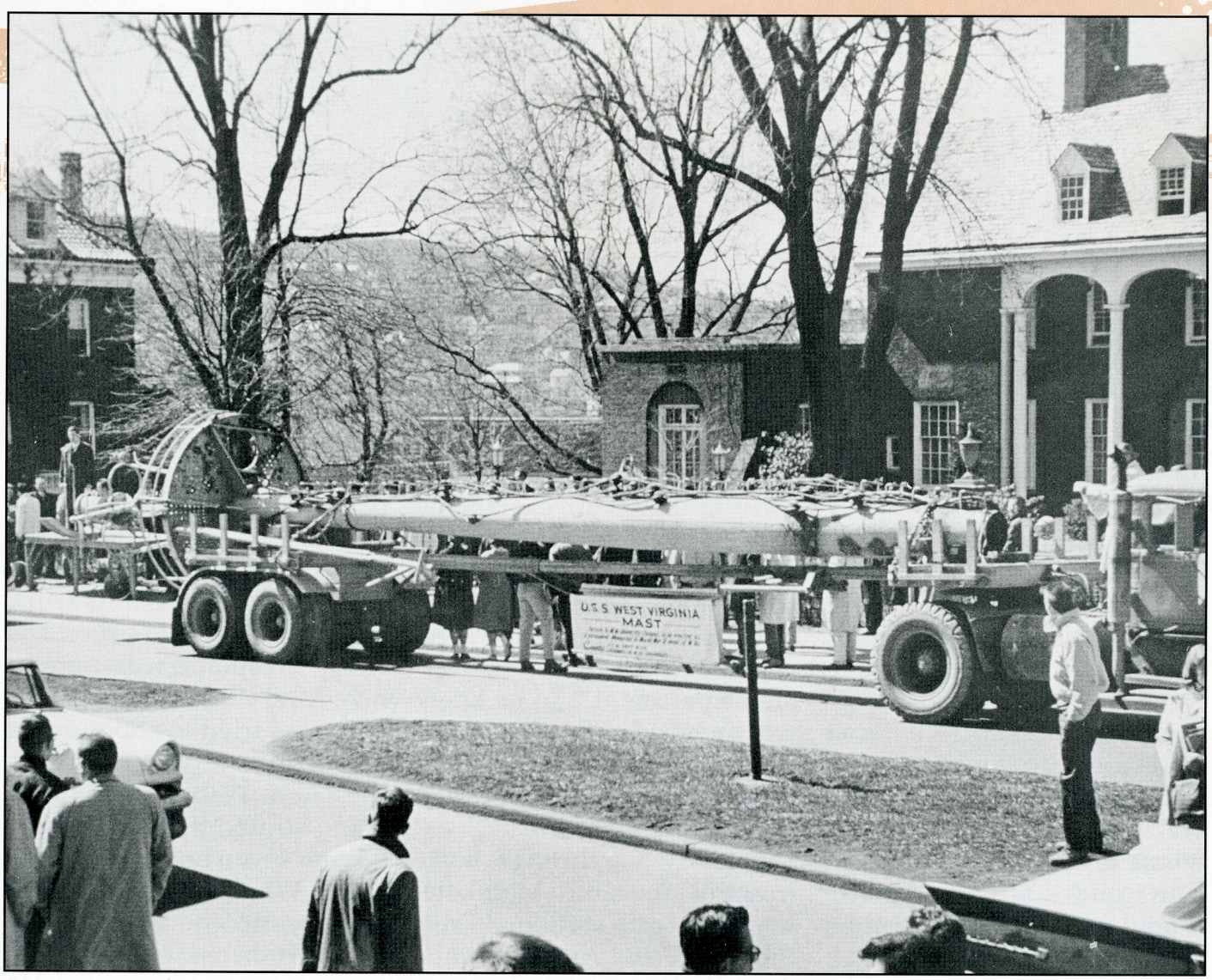


Above: In 2000, Clyde Lathey of Parkersburg donated his extensive collection of USS *West Virginia* artifacts to the West Virginia State Museum and State Archives.

Left: The West Virginia State Museum in Charleston features a display about all the Navy ships named for the Mountain State—from the 1905 armored cruiser to the present-day nuclear submarine. Photo by Steve Brightwell.

An exhibit in the West Virginia State Museum—located at the Culture Center on the State Capitol Complex—celebrates the history of the USS *West Virginia*. On display are everything from a triptych from the original armored cruiser—paid for, in part, by West Virginia schoolchildren—to items from the modern *West Virginia* submarine. The display includes several items recovered from the *West Virginia* when she was refloated from the bottom of Pearl Harbor: the ship's bell, a toaster and creamer from the ship's galley, and a clock.

Most of these artifacts were part of Clyde W. Lathey's extensive collection. He operated a USS *West Virginia* museum in Parkersburg before donating its contents to the State Museum and State Archives in 2000. Mr. Lathey passed away September 26, 2016, at age 74.



One of the most prominent artifacts from the USS *West Virginia* battleship is located on the campus of West Virginia University in Morgantown. It was installed during a celebration of our state's centennial in 1963. Courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives, USS *West Virginia* Collection.



By Patricia Richards McClure

Pearl Harbor

As we mark the 75th anniversary of Pearl Harbor and U.S. entry into World War II, the Greatest Generation is quickly dwindling in number. As of this writing, there may be only three remaining West Virginians who were at Pearl Harbor on that fateful day: Wetzel R. Sanders and Henry H. Sloan, both Army veterans, and a Navy man, who wants to remain anonymous; he's referred to here as "unnamed sailor."

Except for his military years, Wetzel Sanders has spent his whole life in and around Lincoln County, attending grade school at Midkiff and then Guyan Valley High School. After a couple of years, he went to East Lynn in Wayne County, where his father had a coal business. Working as a truck driver for his father, he loaded at one end and unloaded at the other. It was back-breaking work.

Joining the Army just before turning 18 was not exactly his way of running away, but it did offer an escape from the drudgery of manual labor. His enlistment record shows he was assigned to the "Hawaiian Department," so he knew where he was headed. To a West Virginia kid accustomed to hard work, peacetime Hawaii seemed like paradise.

Wetzel went through basic training at Camp Malakole, where he was stationed with the 251st Coast Artillery Anti-Aircraft Regiment. His experience as a truck driver suited him well. He drove a truck for soldiers on leave in addition to being a 40-mm gunner. Driving the leave truck on Saturday nights, he routinely picked up soldiers who spent late evenings in Honolulu and planned to sleep in on Sundays.

On the Sunday morning of the attack, he kept hearing explosions, so he started his truck and headed for the harbor. The Army's response was unorganized and chaotic; the soldiers with him tried to shoot down Japanese planes with what guns they had. Wetzel remembers being strafed three times and having seven holes shot in his truck. When the ammunition ran dry, he and others went down to the water to join the rescue efforts.

Wetzel recalls that Prime Minister Winston Churchill



Far Left: Pearl Harbor survivor Wetzel Sanders of Lincoln County proudly wears his World War II Victory and Asiatic-Pacific Campaign medals and various campaign medals.

This banner shows Wetzel as a young Marine in the late 1940s, with the inscription, "In Honor and Gratitude to Cpl. Wetzel Sanders For the Service and Sacrifice for the people of the United States of America." Courtesy of Wetzel Sanders.

They Were There

had called President Roosevelt and asked if there might be a bombing at Pearl Harbor on December 5, 6, or 7. Wetzel remembers that his unit was supposed to be on maneuvers at the time, but the maneuvers had been called off. Had they gone as planned, he says matter-of-factly, "We would have taken care of those planes."

Somewhere along the way, Wetzel took a piece of shrapnel to the knee. He was the only soldier in a hospital filled with injured sailors, most with more severe wounds. His most vivid memory from that day is the sight and sound of bedridden seamen in the Navy hospital calling out for their mothers. He was keenly aware that many would never see their families again.

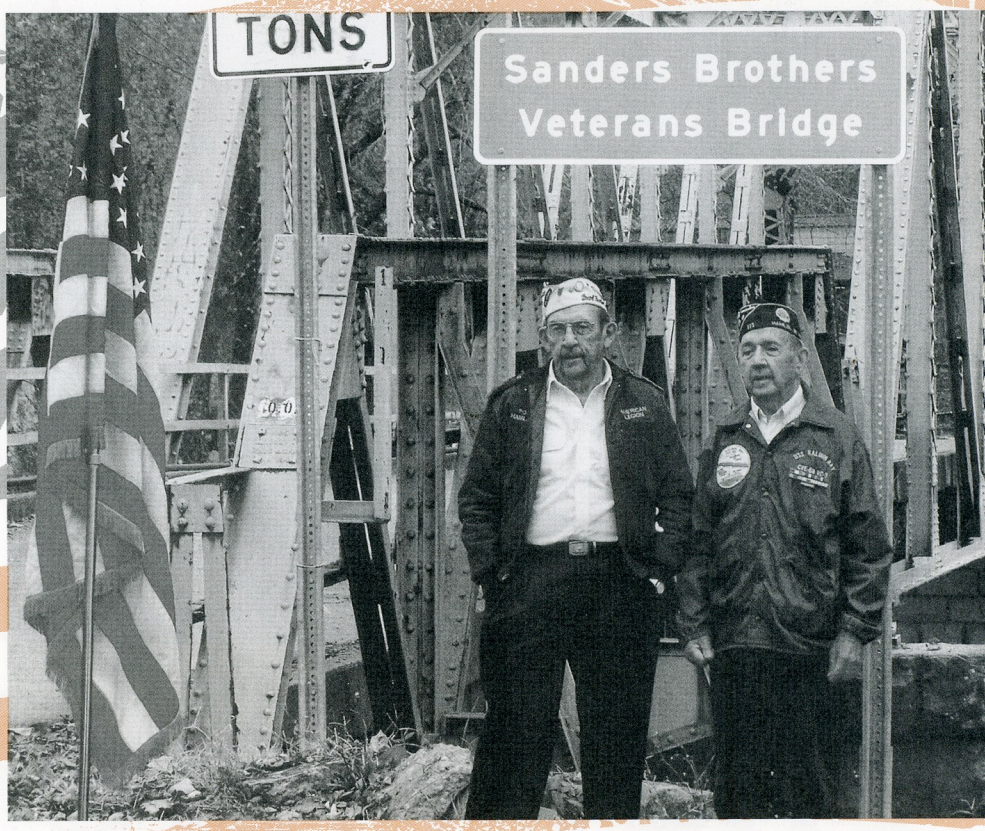
Wetzel tells of a first sergeant who didn't like soldiers from West Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee, calling them "hillbillies" and implying they might as well have been killed. Such treatment drove him to survive at all costs. Survive he did, and the grit of the 18 year old is still apparent in the voice and demeanor of a man now well into his 90s.

After Pearl Harbor, Wetzel spent more than three years in the Pacific and was "all over the place." In 1942, he went to the Fiji Islands, not for combat, but for infantry training. He remembers huge pineapples going to waste; because of the war, no one was cultivating them. "I saw it all," he says. "At Bougainville, I buried Japanese dead with a bulldozer."

He finally encountered a colonel from Morgantown who determined that this West Virginia boy had been in continuous service long enough. The colonel ordered Wetzel to Guadalcanal, where he caught a boat and headed for the states.

Wetzel vividly recalls the preparations for the impending invasion of Japan's mainland, which he expected to occur around November 1, 1945. To this day, he doesn't question dropping atomic bombs on Hiroshima or Nagasaki, which ended the war in August 1945, considering the number of U.S. military and Japanese casualties anticipated for the invasion.

Like so many of his fellow veterans, Wetzel returned to his home state and led a busy,



Wetzel and Howard Sanders stand beside the bridge near Midkiff dedicated to them in 2006. Courtesy of Wetzel Sanders.

productive life. In 1946, he re-enlisted, this time in the Marines, serving until 1949, the same year he married Kathleen Davidson. He drove a tractor-trailer for a while and then a city bus in Huntington. He was an equipment supervisor for the state Department of Highways for 17 years and retired in 1985. From 2000 through 2011, he drove a bus for Tri-Rivers Transit in Lincoln County, ferrying people from remote areas to places they needed to go. At the time he retired—at age 88—he believes he was the oldest transit driver in the country.

Throughout his life, Wetzel has stayed active in veterans' organizations. Each year, he goes to the Pearl Harbor celebration in Charleston. He has spent countless hours transporting veterans to hospitals in the area and regularly visits veterans' graves, especially those of other Pearl Harbor survivors. He's a life member of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association, and he spearheaded the drive to get a Pearl Harbor Survivor license plate in West Virginia.

Wetzel attended both the 60th and 65th Pearl Harbor reunions in Hawaii and was there on December 7, 2016, for the 75th, accompanied by a grandson. He notes that six members of his unit were there for the 60th, and then only three for the 65th. He was the only member of his company to attend the 75th.

Wetzel still has bad dreams about the horrors he saw. When that happens, he sometimes gets up in the middle of the night and does laundry or cleans the house. And then he goes on with his life. He likes the outdoors, cultivates a garden anyone would be proud of, and spends time up on his mountain on his four-wheeler. He takes a chainsaw with him in case a tree has fallen across his path. Loving all animals, he's in tune with nature.

Listening to Wetzel Sanders takes you back to another time. He speaks with authority and familiarity about figures such as Churchill, Roosevelt, Japanese Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, U.S. Navy Admiral Husband Kimmel, and U.S. Army General Walter Short, who was in charge of Hawaii's defenses. He displays photos of the grave markers of World War II luminaries Ernie Pyle and Audie Murphy. And at Guadalcanal, he met Ira Hayes, one of the men in the iconic photo of the flag-raising over



Pearl Harbor survivor Henry Sloan tells stories about the morning of December 7, 1941, while sitting in the Rainelle Moose Lodge on a Friday in early November. Photo by Steve Brightwell.

Iwo Jima. Hayes needed gas for his truck, so Wetzel gave him three gallons in a five-gallon can—such is his memory for detail.

One of his prized possessions is a piece of metal from the downed plane of Admiral Yamamoto. There's a certain satisfaction to having the last word: "He came to Hawaii trying to kill me, and I got a piece of the stuff where we took care of him."

Wetzel's injury qualifies him for a Purple Heart, which he has yet to receive. He jokes, "I've waited over 74 years. I can wait a little longer . . . but not much." Fortunately, he's enjoyed some well-deserved recognition in his lifetime. In 2006, the legislature named the truss bridge at Midkiff the "Sanders Brothers Veterans Bridge" in honor of Wetzel and his brother Howard, also a World War II veteran.

. . . . . .

Henry Sloan isn't a man to hold a grudge. Living at Quinwood in Greenbrier County, he takes life as it comes and moves on. Henry was born at Thacker, Mingo County, in a tent camp during the mine wars and expected to be a coal miner all his life. His father was at the Battle of Blair Mountain in 1921, the year Henry was born. Henry went into the mines before he turned 18, toiling underground for several years before enlisting in the Army in 1940.

He joined the 24th Infantry Division and went through basic training in Hawaii, recalling that the islands were "a good place to be—in peacetime." When the Japanese attacked, he was in Schofield Barracks, 13 miles from Pearl Harbor. Wheeler Field was a half mile from the base. Every Saturday, there were military parades, which Henry thinks were all about "show"—like many other Army rituals. The planes lined up precisely at Wheeler Field were all destroyed in the attack. Henry marveled at the daredevil American pilots who could dive their planes low enough to fly through the hangars; now those planes were lost.

Prior to the attack, Hawaii was an idyllic place. The islands offered a direct contrast to the terrain, vegetation, and way of life Henry had been used to in West Virginia. He thought he recognized one crop as potatoes, but when he and his fellow soldiers pulled them up, they were peanuts. They were told not to disturb the vegetation, but every day,



Henry Sloan describes how daring U.S. pilots used to fly their planes through the hangars at Wheeler Field. Due to their actions, some of those fighter pilots had been grounded on the morning of December 7. Photo by Steve Brightwell.

they marched past cane and pineapple fields. What was a young man to do? Henry laughs as he explains how one of his buddies sliced the top off a pineapple with a machete, filled it with sugar, put the top back on, and let it sit for three days. That pineapple packed a punch!

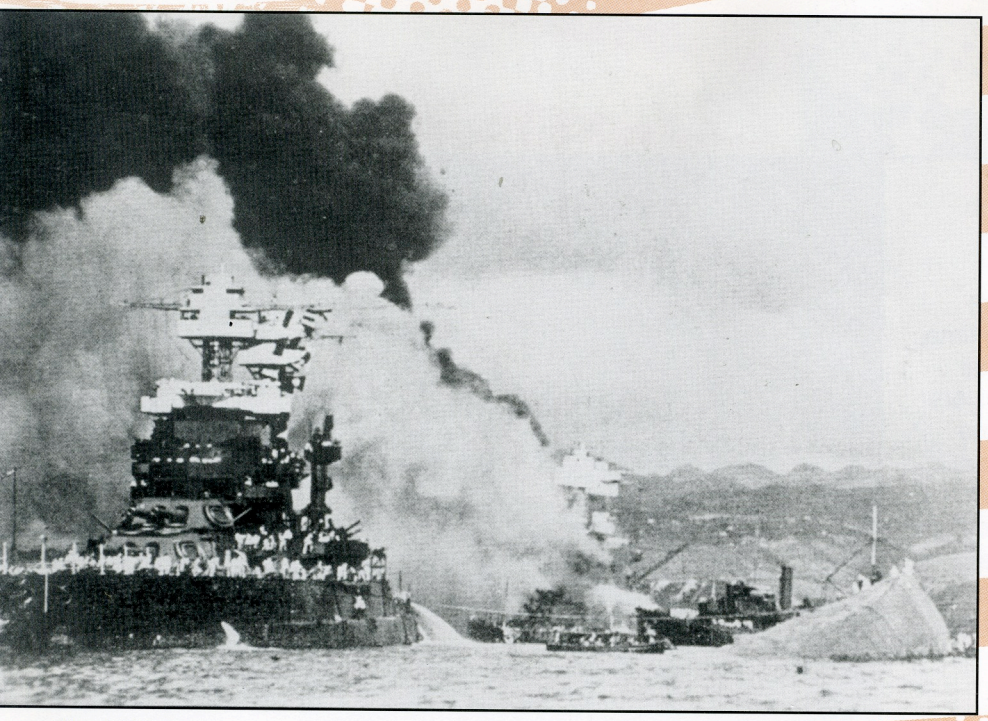
Some of Henry's buddies worried that trouble was brewing, but their commanders told them not to be concerned. Hawaii was well fortified, and in the event of an attack, they would be ready. He says bluntly, "The attack should never have happened in the first place."

Henry directly blames the military leadership in Hawaii. He notes the commissioned officers had big parties on weekends, and the attack took place on a Sunday morning. "Nobody was paying attention," he says.

When the attack started, he and his fellow soldiers didn't even have access to their guns, which were locked up. He feels that most of the men had some premonition of an attack; rumors had circulated that Japanese ships were gathering at various locations across the Pacific. But their commanding officers had told them not to worry. Once the attack began, staying at the barracks was out of the question since they would be sitting targets. They were marched to a eucalyptus forest, where they bivouacked for about a week. General Walter Short also ordered the pilots to a secret airfield.

Henry's unit remained at Pearl Harbor until spring 1943, when he and his fellow soldiers boarded the USS *George Washington*. They thought they were headed for San Francisco and then home; however, when they crossed the International Date Line, they knew Uncle Sam had a different plan. They were en route to Brisbane, Australia, but it was too shallow to dock there, so they ended up in a bivouac area at Sydney. It was cold, and they were miserable since their only clothing was suited for Hawaii. For the next two years, soldiers of the 24th Infantry zigzagged around the Pacific, securing islands as they went. With the exception of faltering at the name of an island or two ("I know one of them started with a G . . ."), Henry can recount his unit's movements in great detail.

After intensive training, the 24th moved to Goodenough Island to prepare for its next campaign. The division landed



The USS *Maryland* tries to rescue sailors from the capsized USS *Oklahoma*. Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration.

in Dutch New Guinea in April 1944 and seized the Hollandia Airdrome despite heavy rains and swampy terrain. In June, shortly after the landing, his unit moved to Biak to reinforce the 41st Infantry Division and captured additional airdromes before returning to Hollandia in July. After occupation duty in that area, the 24th landed on Red Beach on Leyte in October, drove up Leyte Valley, and took Breakneck Ridge in heavy fighting.

Although the 24th remained in the Pacific through the surrender of Japan, the war had other plans for Henry. He came home for Christmas in 1944 for the first time in four years. After being sent to Raleigh, North Carolina, his request to transfer to the Army Air Corps was granted. Training took him to Mississippi and then to Denver. He never went back into action; by that time, the war had ended. He was discharged in October 1945 and, by November 1, was back at his old job, where he would mine coal for the next 37 years.

Henry married and had two sons, Anthony and Audie. Henry's wife, Kathleen, died in 2005, and Anthony followed in 2013. The heart of his family remains in Quinwood; once a major coal producer, mines in the area are now idle. His great-granddaughter Alexis asked him to present a lesson to her schoolmates. "A history book doesn't tell you what the men felt fighting," she says. She regards her great-grandfather as a role model and a real-life history book.

Though he returned to West Virginia to carry on with his life, thoughts of the war never escaped him. Son Anthony was named for an Army pal whose death Henry witnessed in the trenches. His second son was named for Audie Murphy, America's most decorated combat soldier of World War II. For years, Henry had a strong compulsion to return to Hawaii. He and his son Audie made that journey in 1978.

Today, Henry Sloan is keenly interested in history and current events. He's concerned about the young people of West Virginia and the drug epidemic. He strongly believes in the value of education; to young people who know little about World War II, he says, "Get a history book and read about it!"

He believes 18 year olds are too young to vote because they aren't mature enough. Asked about the bombing of Hiro-



On December 7, 2001, Governor Bob Wise (left) hosted a ceremony at the state Culture Center to honor West Virginia servicemen who had been at Pearl Harbor 60 years earlier. At the time, it was estimated that 84 of the original 127 West Virginia Pearl Harbor survivors were still living; about 70 attended the event. Today, only three West Virginians who survived the attack are believed to be living. The 2001 ceremony had an even more solemn feel than usual, occurring just three months after the terrorist attacks of 9-11. Courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives.

shima and Nagasaki, he feels an invasion would have killed at least as many Japanese, and the Allies would have lost many military personnel. However, he believes the bombs should have been dropped "where the warlords were," not on strictly civilian populations.

Henry has no secret to his longevity. Despite having a pacemaker and a hip replacement, he gets around with apparent ease. He eats what he wants—not what the nutritionists say he should. He may be 95 years old, but he hasn't lost his sense of family, sense of place, sense of history, or sense of humor.

The third known West Virginia Pearl Harbor survivor has been mentioned in the media many times, but he requested that we not identify him by name for this article. Most Pearl Harbor casualties were Navy men, and our unnamed sailor served in the Navy from 1941 to 1946. He survived the attack on the USS *Maryland* on December 7 and eventually participated in 11 major battles.

The *Maryland* is best known for her role at Pearl Harbor, but her resilience paved the way for important Pacific operations. Unsunk at the attack and sustaining less damage than her harbor-mates *West Virginia* and *Oklahoma*, the *Maryland* was quickly placed back in service, with our unnamed sailor aboard.

The *Maryland* was in the Gilbert and Marshall islands in late 1943 and early 1944, was torpedoed in the invasion of Saipan but soon repaired, and saw action in the Palau operation. She sustained some damage during the Leyte invasion but was again battle ready for the Okinawa operation. At war's end, the *Maryland* transported servicemen home from the Pacific Theater.

Our sailor came home to West Virginia, married, and raised two daughters. Like his fellow Pearl Harbor survivors, he's always been active in his community—as a Sunday school teacher, on his community council, and through the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars, working tirelessly to keep the memory of World War II veterans and their achievements alive.

He's made frequent appearances at Pearl Harbor remembrances across the state. On one such occasion in 2007, he said the younger generation needs to understand the sacrifices



At the 2001 ceremony, Governor Wise presented each Pearl Harbor survivor with a specially struck medallion featuring the state seal. Here he honors Mercer County native and Concord College (now University) graduate Ira Southern (1919-2012), who, on that fateful day, was stationed at Hickam Field as part of the 23rd Bomb Squadron. Ira later cofounded Southern Communications in Beckley and served as city manager and mayor of Princeton. We also remember the many hours Ira entertained us with his banjo at the Appalachian String Band Music Festival and the Vandalia Gathering. Courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives.

made by the servicemen who fought for their freedom, a sentiment other World War II survivors heartily agree with. Recognizing his many accomplishments and sacrifices, the legislature named a bridge close to his home in his honor.

If you don't want to get a bunch of West Virginia boys in a fighting mood, don't call them "hillbillies" and don't attack the ship named for their beloved state. Much of the Allies' ultimate victory in the Pacific can be attributed to military strategy, but much of the credit goes to the determined service personnel who saw this thing through. What made this Greatest Generation so special? Of our Pearl Harbor survivors, there are clearly some common traits.

Given the state's economic circumstances at the time, West Virginia enlistees and draftees came mostly from modest backgrounds. Their families had been engaged in farming, mining, manufacturing, and timbering for several generations, so hard work was in their bloodstream. Their parents expected them to be in school or at work, and they understood this. Joining the military might even have given them a respite—a chance to see the world and the prospect of secure employment. The state's recovery from the Great Depression was spotty, at best, and the Army or Navy promised a job. From these origins, they didn't have unrealistic expectations. They did what they had to do for their country, came home to work again, raised families, and invested their time and efforts in their communities.

They were—and remain—generous to a fault. In the service, they formed a habit of helping their fellow soldiers and seamen. They have never stopped helping others. They value independence, sometimes becoming caregivers to a spouse or sibling, or living alone well into their 90s. The longevity of these three Pearl Harbor survivors gives a whole new meaning to the word *survivor*. When their lifetime jobs wound down, they found retirement careers or fulfilled their duties as family patriarchs.

Still busy, these three veterans don't take time for introspection. They are kind, gentle men but draw the line when provoked. They don't see themselves as heroes, only as ordinary men who lived through extraordinary times.

Christmas in the Valley

With excitement, I'd been at the front windows all day, watching the storm. The heavy snow swirled, covering the bare tree branches of the big maples in the front yard. Peering through the snow-laden limbs and down the riverbank, I could see my grandfather Carroll's farm across the ice-covered West Fork River. Snow was sticking to the milk cows huddled by the barn. My world was a wonderland, the special happy time that came only once each year. It was Christmas 1935 in Turnertown, about seven miles north of Weston.



The Albaughs gather at their home in Lewis County on our author Carolyn's second birthday in 1935. She's seated in the white chair on the right. Standing at the far left is Carolyn's mother, Beulah, and at the far right is her grandmother, Mawie Albaugh. The other children are (left-right) David Morrisette, Sam Dye, and Jim Brady. All photos courtesy of the author.

Dad hiked to the top of Lot Hall's Hill and cut a tall pine. I helped him secure it in a special tree stand. Ready for Christmas, the tree stood majestically between the wide front-parlor windows. We listened to holiday carols on KDKA radio out of Pittsburgh, while Mother directed us in trimming our tree in red and green velvet bows. I helped string popcorn for the final touch. It was a sight to see.

Mawie Albaugh was mixing her famous holiday cake while I sat anxiously, wiggling on the tall kitchen stool, waiting to lick the bowl. She'd soaked the raisins and currants in apple cider for two days to soften them. The kitchen was filled with fragrant spices, and my mouth watered in childhood delight. A smoked ham, which I helped stick with cloves, was in the oven.

Listening, I could hear the fierce wind coming straight at us from Jackson's Mill—the childhood home of "Stonewall" Jackson. It was blowing more snow down the valley of the West Fork. I'd been laughing and talking a blue streak, bouncing off the walls all

of the West Fork

By Carolyn King Albaugh

day. Mother made me sit in the rocker for a while. When I was allowed up, Mawie said to Mother, "Carolyn is going to be wild today. You may as well give her a spanking, Beulah, and settler her down!"

I don't remember many spankings. I guess just the threat of it worked best. Santa Claus was on his way, and the snowstorm hadn't dampened my spirits at all. Neither did sitting for 10 minutes in Mawie's big wicker rocking chair. It was Christmas.

I couldn't help but notice—I never missed much—that something was just a little different today. It was much more than the storm and Santa put together! There were uncommon activities, a lot of hushed talking and extra phone calls. Mother was more quiet than usual. To keep me occupied, she told me stories and read two chapters from *Three Billy Goats Gruff*. But I could tell something wasn't right. Mother wasn't wearing her apron.

When I asked, she assured me, "Everything is fine, and if you're a good girl, I'll let you feel my baby kick." Smiling, she told me, "It won't be long, Carolyn, you'll have a brother or a sister for a playmate."

I could hardly wait to be a BIG sister. Later in the day, Mother whispered to me, "Sweet girl, your baby is on the way."

The hushed talk got more intense. Dad, in a nervous voice, called the central switchboard and told the operator, "The baby is on the way! Please call Dr. Hudkins to come pick us up. We're ready to get to the hospital."

After placing her overnight bag by the back door, Mother and I sat by the Christmas tree. She said, "I'll be home soon. Pawie Albaugh will be staying with you until I bring home your new baby. Be a good girl. Mind your manners and don't worry Mawie."

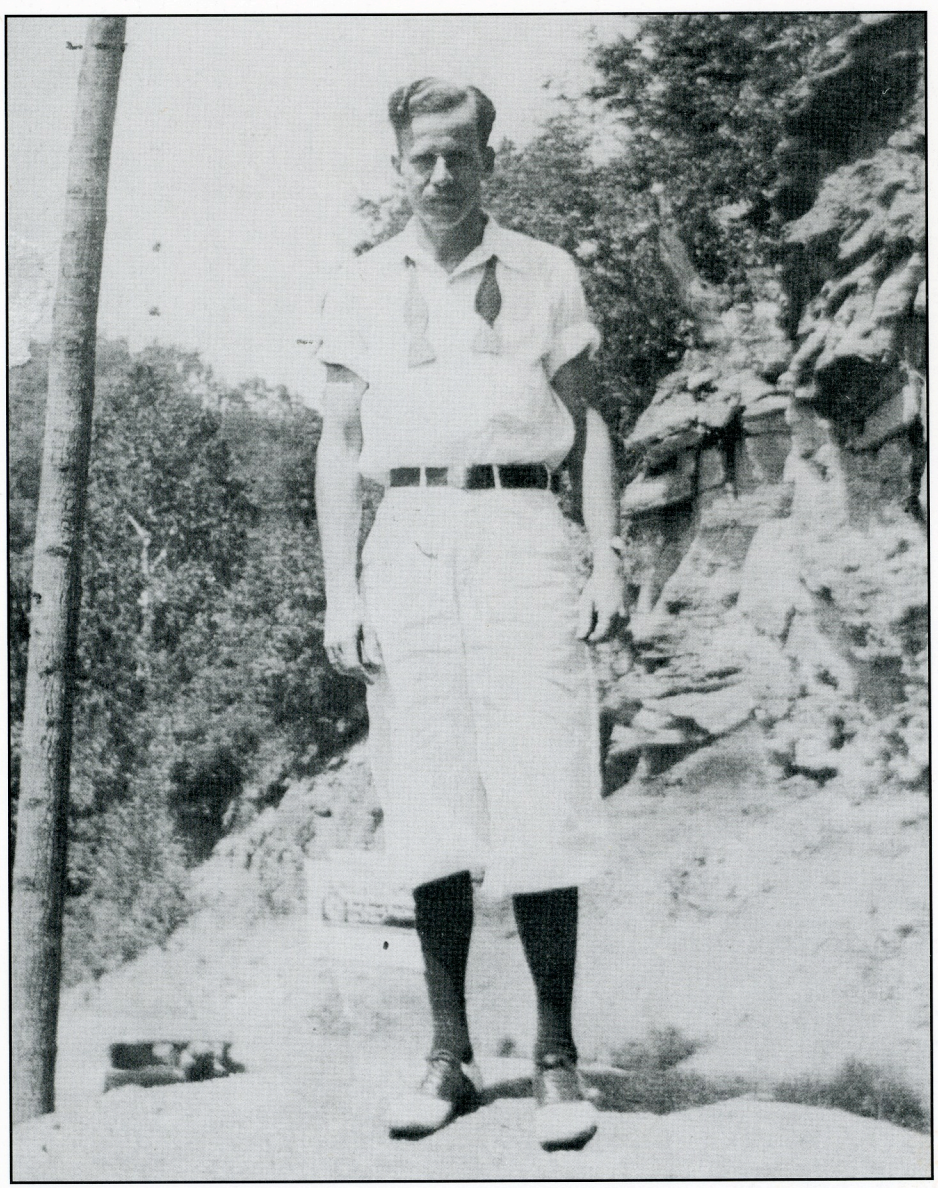
The snowstorm raged, and I wondered, "Where will they find the baby in this storm?



Carolyn and her mother, Beulah, on the front lawn of their house around 1950.

Where is it coming from? Could it be the place across from the Butcherville store where the mail plane drops special packages and letters? Do they drop babies? Maybe Santa Claus is bringing me the new baby?"

It was a mystery, but I decided it was the wrong time to keep asking questions. To this day, if I listen, I can still hear the wind howling, the tin roof creaking and popping. The Albaugh two-story home was built before the Civil War. Heavy snow piled up on everything, and it was very cold. Pawie held me up to the kitchen window, and the windows were iced in zigzag designs. I remember pressing my forehead against the cold pane, squeezing my eyes to see. Dad was holding Mother around the shoulder. Dr. Hudkins was carrying her special overnight bag. They stumbled by the barn through the falling snow, leaned into the howling wind, and made their way to Dr. Hudkins' car. Pawie said, "Your Mamma will be fine."



Carolyn's father, Bernard, showing off his fashionable knickers and saddle shoes on a picnic to Blackwater Falls in the late 1930s.

The last I could see were the car lights as they passed out of sight, around the curve by Pap Lawson's house. Pawie wrapped me in one of the soft hand-knit sweaters that were always hanging on hooks under the white mirrored medicine cabinet by the big oak table in the dining room.

Mawie was redding up around the stove, keeping busy, trying not to worry. She didn't speak much, just kept rubbing her head like she always did when she was addled about something. Her favorite saying in those times—usually after something had burned on the stove or she'd accidentally dumped over her mop bucket—was, "What did I do to deserve this?"

I can still hear her voice to this day. Dad told me it was just her way of easing a situation by letting off some steam. Then he'd smile, so it never worried me at all. Dad's grin always made everything in my world safe. His smile and love—always accompanied by a hug and a twinkle in his shining gray eyes—were magic in my life.

Pawie picked up his mandolin with one hand, cradled me in the crook of his other arm, and headed down the short path to the little house. The snow swirled around us. Cold, heavy flakes touched my lips. I held tight to his arm, feeling his scratchy woolen jacket that always smelled of pungent Chesterfield tobacco. It made my nose curl up.

In the little house, we sat side by side on chairs, the way we always did, with the wide silver-colored gas stove warming our shins. The blue-orange gas jets flickered, painting designs on the walls and ceiling. It was better than Christmas tree candles.

Pawie said, "We're having our own special Christmas party." He handed me an apple and said, "I'm gonna sing some of your favorite ragtime songs."

I had no idea what ragtime meant, but I always pretended I knew because I didn't want to ruin his fun. Munching on the crisp apple, I held tight to the whistle he'd carved me that afternoon from an orchard tree branch. Pawie sang all my favorites: "A Bicycle Built for Two," and "Yes! We Have No Bananas." He must have sung and whistled them three times or more before I fell soundly asleep. To this day, I can still close my eyes and hear it again: Pawie Albaugh serenading me with that sweet tenor voice and whistling like a flute as he strummed on his mandolin.

When I opened my eyes, I still had my clothes on, wrapped in one of Mawie's warm patchwork quilts. Dad was sitting beside me. We hugged, and his eyes sparkled. I learned the happy news. My new brother, Bernard John Albaugh Jr., had joined us from heaven and would be home soon, bringing Mother with him. Dad was smiling, and his eyes were shining.

I remember thinking, "My once-in-a-lifetime Christmas gift is here, and the mystery is solved: Babies come from heaven! How wonderful. Jesus sends babies! That's better than the mail plane or Santa Claus."

Dad always said, "Carolyn has a way with words."

I decided to call my brother "Buzzy." Little did I know that night, a lifetime ago, how much fun we'd have growing up in the Valley of the West Fork of the Monongahela River, winding through the hills of Lewis County. That special Christmas time 81 years ago has remained with me forever—the best Christmas of my entire life.



Our author, Carolyn Albaugh, celebrates May Day about 1950, as her brother, Buzzy, stands at attention, at the Albaugh farm home.

CAROLYN ALBAUGH notes that her creative life was born from the "deep well of our West Virginia history, listening to stories by bonfires in Lewis County." After taking writing classes at the University of Oklahoma and University of Oklahoma State, she penned a folksy weekly column for the *Oklahoma Times*. She also wrote a West Virginia biography, *Eighteen Rivers to Hannibal,* and books of poetry and short stories. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL. She'd enjoy hearing from readers. You can contact her at lovelightvintage@gmail.com.

Summer in a Jar

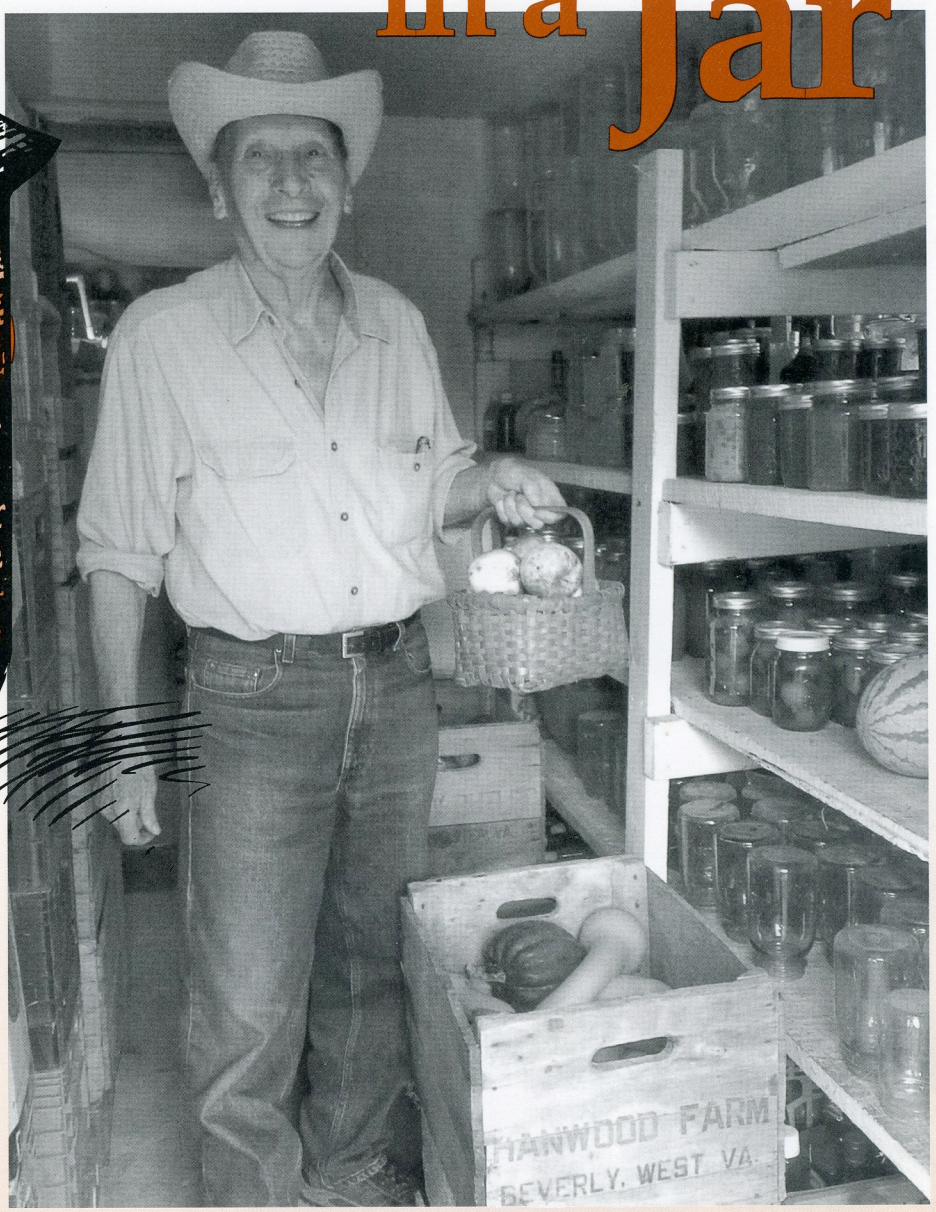
By Edwin Daryl Michael

My grandmother, Essie Myres Gump, used to say, "Opening a jar of peaches in winter brightens the day as much as opening an outside door in spring."

The bright orange color of a jar of peaches certainly resembles the bright sun, while its syrupy juices evoke sweet memories of previous summers. I vividly remember climbing the hill behind my grandparents' house on Plum Run in Marion County and picking bushels of the yellowish-orange fruits commonly called *old-fashioned peaches*. Although they might have been smaller than the freestone varieties we "imported" from Romney, they tasted equally scrumptious on a cold winter day.

Tasty summer memories certainly made life more enjoyable during the dark winter days while holding promises for the future. An opened jar of peaches promised an eventual end to winter and a return of bright





Our author, Edwin Daryl Michael, shows off some fresh food in the root cellar of Arden and Dawn Swecker, located just south of Beverly in Randolph County. All photos courtesy of our author.

sunny spring days with birds singing, flowers blooming, and peach trees blossoming. Likewise, jars of peaches—and green beans, red tomatoes, and yellow sweet corn—reminded us of plentiful seasons of the past and seasons to come.

Two essential developments made these miraculous jars possible: the simple glass canning jar and the lowly root cellar. Pioneers discovered that the West Virginia hills produced a great diversity of food and that the land would sustain them, especially if they had enough children to help work from daylight to dark. The list of potential foods seemed endless: apples, peaches, pears, plums, corn, wheat, oats, buckwheat, beans, peas, peppers, tomatoes, squash, potatoes, beets, carrots, onions, cucumbers, and sorghum molasses. In addition, woods and fields yielded paw paws, persimmons, blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, strawberries, service berries, grapes, chestnuts, hickory nuts, walnuts, butternuts, mushrooms, ramps, honey, maple syrup, squirrels, rabbits, bear, deer, and turkeys. Although bottomlands produced enough hay to support sheep, cattle, and horses, only the richest landholders typically owned this prized acreage. As a result, mountain farmers often relied on pigs, which could forage in the woods or be fed with food scraps, or *slop*.

Food was abundant in the summer and early fall but much less so during winter. Fortunately, livestock and wild game could be slaughtered and butchered during the coldest months, and much of it was preserved through curing and smoking. Fruits and vegetables, however, presented storage problems. Barrels, bushels, and crates of fruits and vegetables were harvested, but most remained edible for only a few days or weeks.



Our author's mother, Isolene (second from left), celebrates her graduation from graded school on May 10, 1929, at the Gump family home on Plum Run in Marion County. Left-right: Delma, Isolene, Essie, Harrison, Arnie, Brooks, and Milford Gump, and, on the far right, Sarah Catherine Park—Harrison's mother.

The challenge for settlers was how to preserve and store wild and cultivated food to get through the winter on more than just meat. In the 1700s and early 1800s, settlers used various preservation techniques, such as storing food in cool root cellars. Some turned to more creative ideas. In early fall, my grandparents dug outdoor pits, lined them with dry hay or straw, and filled them with potatoes, turnips, beets, cabbage, pears, or apples. Each pit contained only one kind of fruit or vegetable. They placed a two-foot layer of soil and sod on top to protect the food from animals and freezing. Ideally, temperatures in the pits would remain in the mid-30s. Once a week, someone dug small openings in the sides of the pits, reached in, pulled out enough vegetables and fruits for the week, and then plugged the openings.

In the late 1800s, the development of glass canning jars revolutionized food preservation. Glass jars (pints, quarts, or half-gallons) were ideal for storing most vegetables, fruits, and meats. In 1858, John Landis Mason patented a molded glass jar with a metal ring and a steel lid and rubber gasket on the underside. It drastically changed how we preserve food. Boiling and then cooling the jars and their contents sealed the lids and preserved the contents for months or even years. Some of

the more common canned foods in my family were peaches, green beans, peppers, sweet corn, beets, spare ribs, chicken breasts, and pickles.

The art of canning made life more enjoyable, but there was still one problem: glass jars filled with produce or meat would freeze and burst if stored in unheated buildings. A family of eight to 10 children could require up to 1,000 jars of canned foods to make it through the winter, and most farmhouses lacked this much storage. Limiting the space even more, temperatures often dropped below freezing in rooms along a home's outside walls. I remember awaking many mornings to find my bedroom window glazed on the inside with a layer of ice. Basements were nearly nonexistent because they had to be hand-dug and were continually damp. The solution often came in the form of root cellars, which maintained near-constant, above-freezing temperatures.

A root cellar was basically a below-ground storage space—typically with an earthen floor—that protected foods from warm or freezing temperatures. More advanced cellars consisted of large cavities dug into hillsides. Their walls were lined with stones and topped with logs and a thick layer of sod. The front of each was covered with logs or thick planks, with a thick hinged door attached. Ceiling-high shelving was built along all three sides of the cellars, which were typically 10-feet wide and 10- to 12-feet deep. The one- or two-foot-wide shelves were made from yellow poplar trees, which produced the longest and strongest boards of any tree in the mountains.



The Swecker farm in Randolph County preserves jams, jellies, marmalades, and green beans for years to come—all in the inimitable glass canning jar.

Hillside cellars often had a room on top. The stone walls provided an excellent foundation, and the wooden roof served as an adequate floor for the room above. My grandfather purchased a farm on Mods Run (just over the hill from Plum Run) in 1932 at the Marion County Sheriff's tax sale. That farmhouse was much larger than his previous home on Plum Run and had a much larger cellar: about 12-feet wide and nearly 20-feet long, with a large room above. My uncles used part of that unheated room as a workshop, where they built crystal radios and tried to listen to WMMN radio out of Fairmont. The Mods Run cellar was only 10 feet from the kitchen door, making it relatively easy to retrieve food during cold winter months. Other than keeping a short path shoveled through the snow, this cellar was almost as convenient as if it had been in the house.

My great-grandparents' farmhouse on Plum Run had an even more functional cellar. Theirs was about 15 feet from the kitchen door and also had a large storage room on top, which was referred to as the cellar loft. Thanks to its size, the unusual cellar also had a small room built onto the front. My great-grandparents used it as a milk room—where the milk separator and butter churns were located. The cellar entry was through a thick wooden door at the rear of the milk room. Rooms in front of and above cellars provided extra insulation against the cold of winter and the heat of

summer, keeping temperatures in the high 30s or low 40s year round with a humidity level between 80 and 90 percent. Such structures took advantage of the natural cooling, insulating, and humidifying properties of the soil and sod, creating nearly ideal conditions for storing most foods.

My mother remembers one of her neighbors having a cellar with a spring running through it. The neighbors had piped a running spring into a concrete trough along the inside rear wall of the cellar and then out through a pipe in the front. The cool spring water kept summer temperatures low enough to preserve milk, cottage cheese, and butter.

In flat areas of West Virginia, where hillsides were not available, cellars were freestanding. Examples can be seen at Arthurdale, the Depression-era Preston County community that was a pet project of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt [see "Arthurdale: The New Deal Comes to Preston County," by Kathleen Cullinan and Beth Spence, April-June 1981]. Of the 165 houses built at Arthurdale between 1933 and 1937, 115 had nearby root cellars, many of which can still be seen from West Virginia Route 92. These distinctive, domed cellars looked like earthen igloos. Each was covered with a thick layer of sod on the tops and three sides; measured 20-feet long, 12-feet wide, and 8-feet high; and had a small seven-by-eight-foot room on the front that could be used as a tool shed, smokehouse, or for general storage. Inside, the cellars were seven feet by 10 feet. A three-foot high retaining wall of large cut stones surrounded the earthen portion of each cellar. A curved, corrugated steel roof supported the soil and sod and covered the cellar portion.

A few farmhouses in northern West Virginia had cellars beneath them. These were typically accessed by outside steps leading down to the cellar door. My family lived at the Shinn House, near Shinnston, between 1944 and 1953 [see "Life in the Levi Shinn House," by Edwin Daryl Michael, Fall 2005]. The cellar entrance was located inside. Steep wooden steps led from the main living area of the log house into the dark, musty cellar. It had an earthen floor, and shelves lined the stone walls. Retrieving food from such a cellar was obviously much easier than going outside, especially during winter months. The Shinn House was built in 1778, when unrest was common

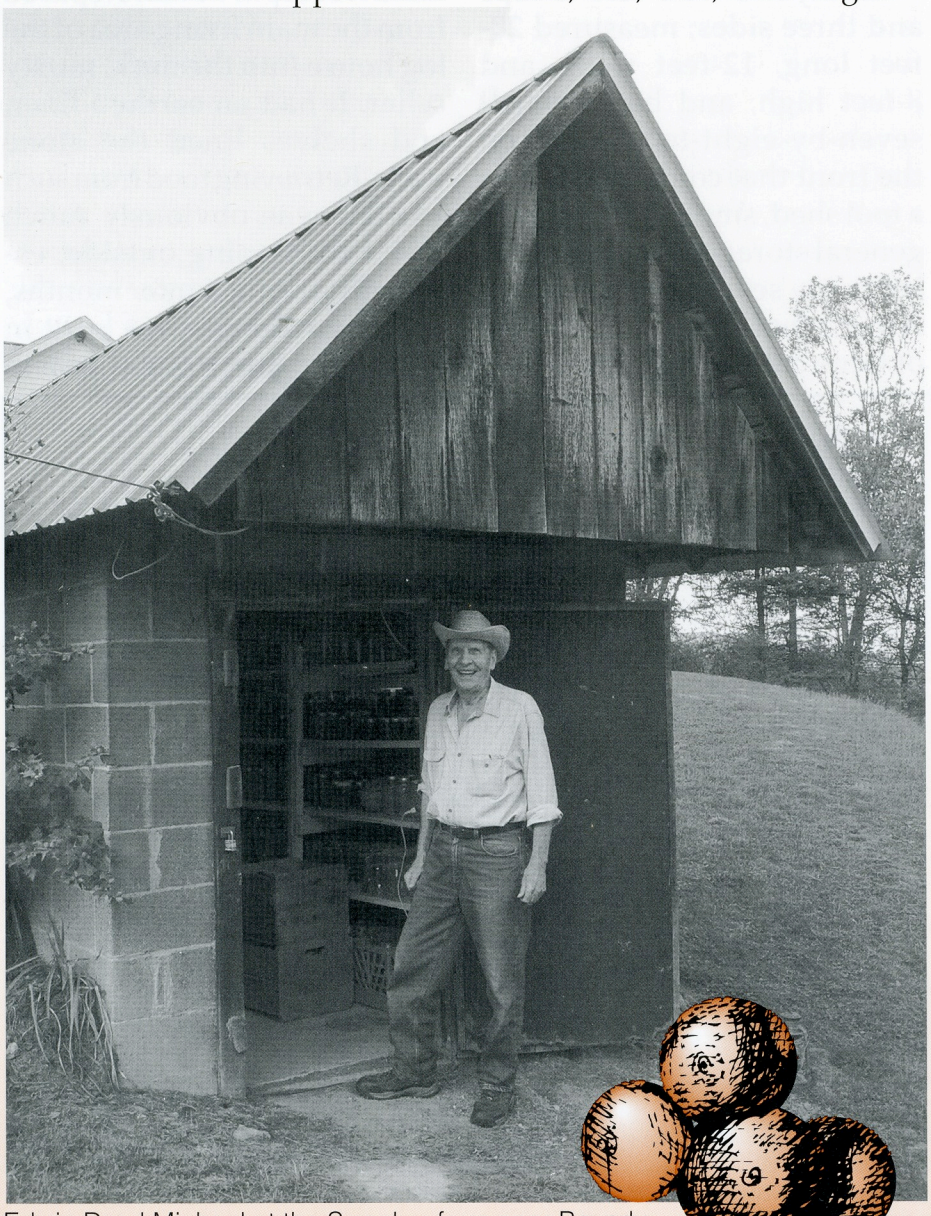


Joseph and Addie Myres—our author's great-grandparents—pose in front of their house on Plum Run in May 1929. Their root cellar is visible to the far left.

on the western frontier. More than a mere luxury, its cellar was built as extra protection in case of an Indian raid.

Large clay crocks, containing sauerkraut, pickles, and ground pork sausage, were stored directly on the floors. Brine preserved the sauerkraut and pickles, while a thick layer of fat atop the sausage kept out air and harmful bacteria. Crates of apples, potatoes, and winter squash filled whatever floor space remained, while one or two barrels of apple cider and wine were also present. Walking into a cellar was like walking down the aisles of a modern-day supermarket.

Cellars kept dairy foods cool during hot summer months. My grandmother made several gallons of cottage cheese each week during summer when the cows were producing lots of milk. Every Saturday, she and my grandfather drove to Papa Joe's Grocery in Farmington to trade butter, cottage cheese, and surplus eggs for coffee, tea, salt, and sugar—or any other food item they couldn't produce on the farm. It's important to note that this surplus of food occurred only after my grandparents' eight children had married and left home. I spent many summers with my grandparents during the 1940s and remember fondly Papa Joe's Grocery, which was owned and operated by Joe Manchin Sr. We often traded for salt fish (cod and herring), which were heavily salted and soaked in barrels to remove excess salt, and then fried. We ate it as a replacement for pork sausage at breakfast.



Edwin Daryl Michael at the Swecker farm near Beverly.

Cellars were dark and somewhat scary at night. Even in the daylight, trips to the cellar required a kerosene lantern—potentially dangerous and requiring constant vigilance—to search for specific foods. One time, when my mother was a child in the small house on Plum Run, she lit the kerosene lantern on the kitchen table and descended into the cellar. When she returned, she was terrified to find a kitchen curtain on fire, apparently sparked by the large farmer's match. She extinguished the fire with a bucket of water and remembers her father telling her how proud he was of her since she'd prevented a serious house fire.

It wasn't unusual to encounter small animals in cellars. Spiders and other crawly critters were permanent residents. Mice were common in the Shinn House cellar, and I often shot them with my Red Ryder BB gun. Although a few mice weren't a major problem, they did chew on whatever fruits we had. My

grandmother would get upset whenever she found apples, turnips, or potatoes with one side eaten. She'd immediately dispatch one of her barn cats to the cellar to deal with the problem. In addition, snakes occasionally found their way into cellars, likely in search of mice.

During summers, I spent extended periods of time on my grandparents' farm on Mods Run and my great-grandparents' farm on Plum Run. I made many trips to their root cellars. One particular winter-night adventure is etched in my memory. The family was gathered in the living room working on a jigsaw puzzle. My grandfather told me to get a basket of apples from the cellar. I put on my coat, grabbed the kerosene lantern from the kitchen—where it remained constantly lit in case anyone needed to go to the outhouse—and headed out into the wintry darkness. I was eight or nine years old—certainly old enough to handle such a small task—moved quickly through the blowing snow to the cellar, and gathered a mix of three or four varieties of apples. Kerosene lanterns can throw some eerie shadows. As I was leaving, I was positive I heard a soft human voice from the rear of the cellar commanding, "Go! Go!" I hurried out quickly, not taking time to close the door, and was soon reporting the "words" to my grandfather. He shook his head, smiled, and said, "Come on, Daryl, let's go see what we can find." A thorough search of the cellar revealed nothing out of the ordinary, and my grandfather explained the sound was most likely the wind blowing through a vent in the rear wall. Later that winter, my grandfather again asked me to make a night trip to the cellar—this time for some apple cider. I nervously inspected the inside of the cellar while filling the jug but didn't hear a voice. Relieved, I carried the clay container back to the house only to have my uncle Ronald ask sarcastically, "Did you see anyone in the cellar?"

Although inside plumbing, natural gas, and electricity reached most rural areas of West Virginia by the 1940s, none had a greater impact on the quality of life than canning and root cellars. Thousands of root cellars are still functional throughout West Virginia and offer no-cost storage for crates of apples and potatoes; crocks of pickles and sauerkraut; plus countless jars of canned fruits, vegetables, and meats. They also provide ample supplies of food in case of disasters or other emergencies.

Like many hunters, I typically can 15-20 jars of venison each fall. A wholesome meal of canned venison, brown rice, and black beans can be prepared in less than 10 minutes. Many people maintain that canned produce and meat are healthier and more nutritious than what we buy in supermarkets. Once you sample the taste of freshly canned food from a root cellar, I think you'll agree.

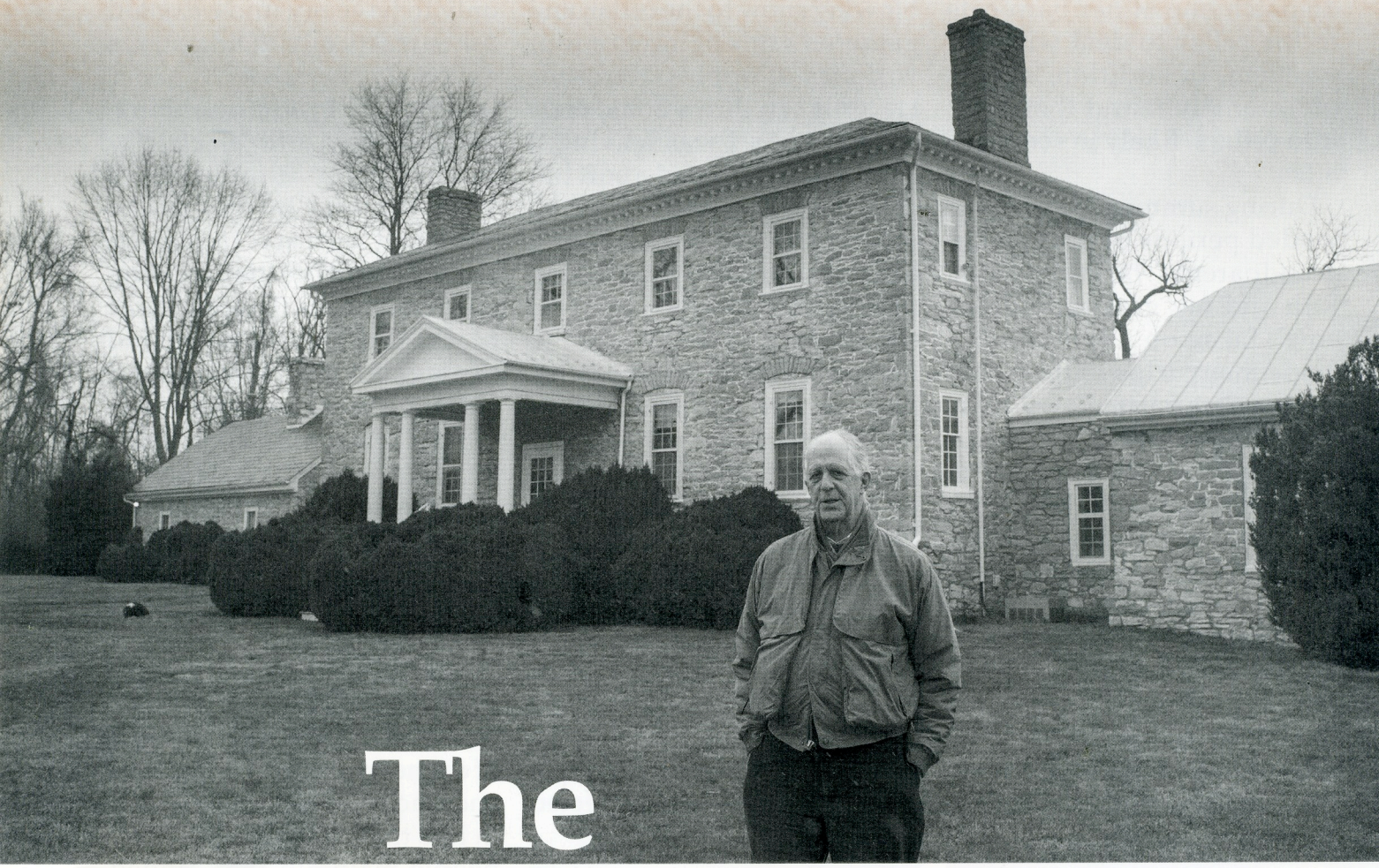




Mother and son, Isolene Gump Michael and Edwin Daryl Michael, look happy and spry in photos taken 81 years apart: in 1935 and 2016.

EDWIN DARYL MICHAEL, a native of Plum Run near Mannington, holds a Ph.D. in wildlife ecology from Texas A&M University. He taught at West Virginia University until his retirement in 1997. He is the author of more than 100 published works, including the books *A Valley Called Canaan: 1885-2002*, *Shadow of the Alleghenies*, *Death Visits Canaan*, and *The Last Appalachian Wolf*. His most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in our Winter 2013 issue.

"The writer has seen many beautiful places at home and abroad, but of all the places that have gladdened his eyes, Harewood is the most picturesque and the most beautiful."
Washington Manor Association for the Purchase and Preservation of Historic Harewood, 1901



The Washington Houses

By Carl E. Feather

The writer of the opening quote saw Harewood on "one lovely spring day." My visit is on a dreary winter day, but the beauty of the limestone mansion on the Smithfield Pike, some three miles west of Charles Town, isn't diminished by the gray sky and damp ground. Indeed, the livid backdrop amplifies the magnificence of the mansion that was built in 1770 for Colonel Samuel Washington, a brother of our first president.

Today, Harewood is the private home of Walter Washington, a direct descendant of the original owner. It's one of eight surviving Jefferson County homes with connections to the



Left: Walter Washington stands in the yard of his Harewood estate, the oldest of the Washington family houses in Jefferson County. This limestone house was built by Samuel Washington, the brother of George. Walter is a direct descendant of Samuel.

Right: According to family lore, the mantel in the parlor where Dolley and James Madison were married was a gift to George Washington from the Marquis de Lafayette. All photos courtesy of our author.

# of Jefferson County

Washington family.

The Washington link to Jefferson County begins with George Washington's first survey in the area in March 1748. While mapping the region, the future president suffered health issues. He found the springs at Berkeley Springs to be so beneficial he later acquired property there. In 1750, he purchased land in what would become Jefferson County. At one time, Washington owned nearly 2,300 acres in the region. His half-brother Lawrence likewise had a passion for the area. After Lawrence died in 1752, his brothers divided up the land. Although George didn't build a mansion for himself, he made numerous trips to the Shenandoah Valley over the years to visit brothers Samuel and Charles.

Samuel (1734-1781) was the first Washington sibling to venture northwest from the Tidewater and build a house in present Jefferson County. Harewood, made of native



Walter Washington, who resides in Harewood, gives a tour of the parlor where Dolley and James Madison were married in September 1794.

limestone and designed by noted architect and Washington family friend John Ariss, began to take form in 1770. When Samuel died in 1781, he bequeathed Harewood—most likely a reference to the greenish-gray wood of the abundant sycamore tree—and 850 acres to his widow and fifth wife. Harewood eventually ended up in the hands of George Steptoe Washington, one of Samuel's sons from a prior marriage. George Steptoe married Lucy Payne in 1793, setting the stage for the most spectacular event in Harewood's history.

Lucy's sister was Dolley Payne Todd, a widow engaged to Virginia Congressman James Madison. Dolley chose to marry the future fourth president of the United States at Harewood. The wedding was held in the first-floor drawing room, which hasn't been painted since the 1794 Madison ceremony. The drawing room is also notable for its dark green marble mantelpiece, said to be a gift to the Washington family from the General Marquis de Lafayette.

The Madisons' wedding was perhaps the happiest occasion in the long history of Harewood. The property, and indeed much of the Washington family, was beset by misfortunes. There was a succession of Washington heirs who inherited the property only to die young. By the time of the Civil War, Louisa Clemson Washington was living on the plantation.

Jefferson County was hit hard by the Civil War—possibly worse than any other place in West Virginia. Back taxes, demanded by the Union following its victory, bankrupted the Washington family. Harewood became a refuge for the Washington diaspora after the war. At the end of the 19th century, the Washingtons vacated Harewood and moved to Charles Town.

A tenant farmer occupied Harewood until Walter Washington's father, Dr. John A. Washington, restored and moved into the home in 1951. In 1961, Dr. Washington added a north wing as a more practical living space. He planned the addition with great reverence for the existing structure, blending it seamlessly with the architecture. Walter lives in this section of the house during winter months because the



Charles Washington, George's youngest brother, began building Happy Retreat by constructing two wings connected by a breezeway. The central section was added by Isaac Douglass about 1837. The wing on the far right is considered to be the only original section that dates to Charles Washington.

older parts are quite costly to heat. When warmer weather arrives, he returns to the familiar comfort of Harewood's central porch, the historic drawing room, and east-wing kitchen.

Dr. Washington also added modern decorative touches, such as wallpaper, to Harewood. He retained the services of Thomas T. Waterman—a distinguished architect and architectural historian who worked on the initial Historic American Buildings Survey in the 1930s—to guide the work and ensure the structure's historical integrity.

Walter returned to the family homestead in 2002 after a law career in Texas. Thanks to his parents, the property needed little in the way of structural attention. However, there was a more pressing threat. Charles Town had become part of the urban sprawl stretching from Baltimore and Washington, D.C. Jefferson County land was in high demand. Walter wanted to protect the property around Harewood and the structure itself from modern development.

He carved out 219 of his 260 acres as an agricultural easement. Some of this land encompasses part of a Civil War battlefield, so it also receives protection from a historic lands easement. His goal is to preserve all of the land from residential and commercial development—forever.

Happy Retreat

An attorney who specializes in real estate, Walter is also president of the Friends of Happy Retreat—another Washington family home. It stands on a hill overlooking Charles Town, a community founded by and named for Charles Washington (1738-1799), George's youngest brother. Charles built the west wing of this Federal/Greek revival-style home.

While Walter has a good grip on dates and events for Harewood, Happy Retreat's details are murky. "We don't know" is an oft-heard response when touring Happy Retreat. There's some evidence the property was farmed as early as 1768, but that's unverified. A more reliable date for the Washington family's presence on the knoll is 1780.

Matt Webster, director of Architectural Resources at Co-



A stone kitchen and smokehouse are believed to be the oldest buildings on the Happy Retreat property.

lonial Williamsburg, analyzed the property and determined that the home was developed in three phases: (1) portion of the west wing and old stone kitchen; (2) one-story east wing and brick portion of the kitchen; and (3) second stories above the two wings, tied together by a 2½-story addition. The latter improvements were made in 1837 by owner Judge Isaac Douglass, who presumably fulfilled Charles Washington's original intention to connect the two wings with a central section. Douglass' purchase ended the Washington family's ownership of Happy Retreat. In 1954, the house was bought by Mr. and Mrs. Robert McCabe and then, in 1958, by Mr. and Mrs. William Gavin, who extensively remodeled it.

Happy Retreat was eventually vacated and placed on the market. A 2006 appraisal commissioned by the City of Charles Town suggested that the land be subdivided for residential use. Meantime, the nonprofit Friends of Happy Retreat was formed to acquire, preserve, and utilize the property for public benefit.

"It had been on the market for three years," Walter says. "Someone would have eventually bought it, and it could have been subdivided and had other houses put on the property."

In 2010, Preservation Alliance of West Virginia recognized Happy Retreat's precarious status by naming it one of the 10 most endangered historic properties in the state. This spurred Walter and the Friends of Happy Retreat into action. As a result of their lobbying, the city of Charles Town purchased 10 acres of Happy Retreat land for a park, leaving the friends group responsible for raising $375,000 to purchase the house and 2.3 acres. As a result of two very generous gifts / challenge pledges, the sale was closed in spring 2015.

During the first nine months of ownership, the Friends of Happy Retreat invested about $80,000 in the property. The house is structurally sound, but more work remains.

"Our initial goal is to get the house into a condition that will allow us to use it for events and weddings," Walter says.

In the past, both the McCabe and Gavin families had hired architects to prepare drawings of their renovations to Happy Retreat. These documents will give the friends group a pathway to reverse-engineer some of the changes. Early on, a consultant steered the group away from building a "house museum" in favor of authentically restoring a portion to its 18th-century appearance and using it for educational, cultural, and social events.

"There will be only two rooms in the house that will look the

way they did when Charles Washington lived here," Walter says.

In October 2015, the Jefferson County Arts Council used Happy Retreat for its first ArtOber event. The mansion's space did great justice to the artists' work, while the acoustics drew praise from musicians and guests alike.

According to Walter, the group will need about $1 million to complete its vision for Happy Retreat. The board—stocked with professionals from education, law, and government—has hired numerous professional groups to evaluate the property and plan restorations. In 2015, Preservation Alliance of West Virginia, which just five years earlier had identified Happy Retreat as one of the state's most endangered properties, awarded the friends group with its Most Significant Save of an Endangered Site Award.

Claymont Court

On the southwest outskirts of Charles Town, new single-family homes and condos rise on farmlands where cattle once grazed and apple trees grew. Here, Claymont Court stands majestically on a hill, overlooking neglected gardens.

This, too, is historic land. Claymont's 300 acres were originally owned by John Augustine Washington (1736-1787), another brother of George. In 1811, Bushrod Corbin Washington (1790-1851), George's grand-nephew, inherited the Claymont land. Nine years later, he built the mansion that would grow to 59 rooms with 25 fireplaces. At a cost of $30,000, Claymont had a reputation among his neighbors as being "Bushrod's Folly."

Fire consumed his folly in 1838, but Bushrod, a wealthy assemblyman in the Virginia House of Delegates, rebuilt the central portion in 1840 and restored the remainder. This is the building that still stands.

Bushrod died in 1851; his son, Thomas Blackburn Washington, inherited the property but lived only another three years. Bushrod's eldest son, Bushrod

Some believe Claymont Court might be the largest house in West Virginia. It was built by Bushrod Corbin Washington in 1820; a fire destroyed much of the house in 1838, but he rebuilt it.





Henry Bedinger, a local political opponent of Bushrod Washington, once commented, "He is an innocent good man, and I deplore his weakness and folly in erecting such an expensive building because a house half or one quarter of the cost would have created as much if not greater real comfort."

Corbin II, was next in line. During the vicissitudes of the Civil War, many Washington family members found refuge at Claymont. Two young Washington men—both Confederate officers—were staying there during a Christmas furlough, when they were captured by Union troops under George Custer, a former roommate of one of the Washington boys at West Point.

Both men died in a Union prison. To punish the Washingtons for "harboring guerrillas," Union General Philip Sheridan ordered his soldiers to drive all the cattle off the land and burn every fence surrounding the estate. During the war, the Washingtons paid their taxes to the Confederacy; afterwards, the Union came knocking for its share. Unable to meet these financial burdens, the family was forced to sell Claymont for just $10,000, a third of its construction cost.

In an interesting twist of fate, one of the later owners was perhaps more famous than any of the Washingtons who lived there. In 1899, Claymont Court was bought by author Frank Stockton, best known for his short story "The Lady, or the Tiger?" He lived at Claymont for most of the last three years of his life and wrote three books in the house.

Claymont has a tired yet organic, original feel to it. Although the Georgian-style brick mansion is generally considered the grandest in this collection, it feels unpretentious. Perhaps it's the way the long narrow driveway winds past a 1930s barn and silo, the scruffy woodsy appearance of the grounds, or the cats that dart across the drive or peer out from a second-story window, but Claymont Court feels much less ostentatious than its smaller cousins.

Amy Silver, executive director of Claymont, welcomes me to the mansion on a sunny January afternoon—a time of year when the center is usually closed. Silver has lived here since 1982 and works for the Claymont Society for Continuous Education, which has owned the property since 1975. When Amy first arrived on the scene, the society owned 410 acres, and apple orchards still lined Huyett Road; however, as the trees succumbed to the asphalt and lawns of the housing boom, the society was tempted to sell off some of the property.

"Because of all the development that was going on, running a nonprofit can be financially stressful," Amy says.

The society's finances finally reached a point where nearly 100 acres had to be sold to raise operating capital. "It was pretty much a given," remembers Amy, "that that was what we had to do. But I think that also informed us that we didn't want to have to do that again."

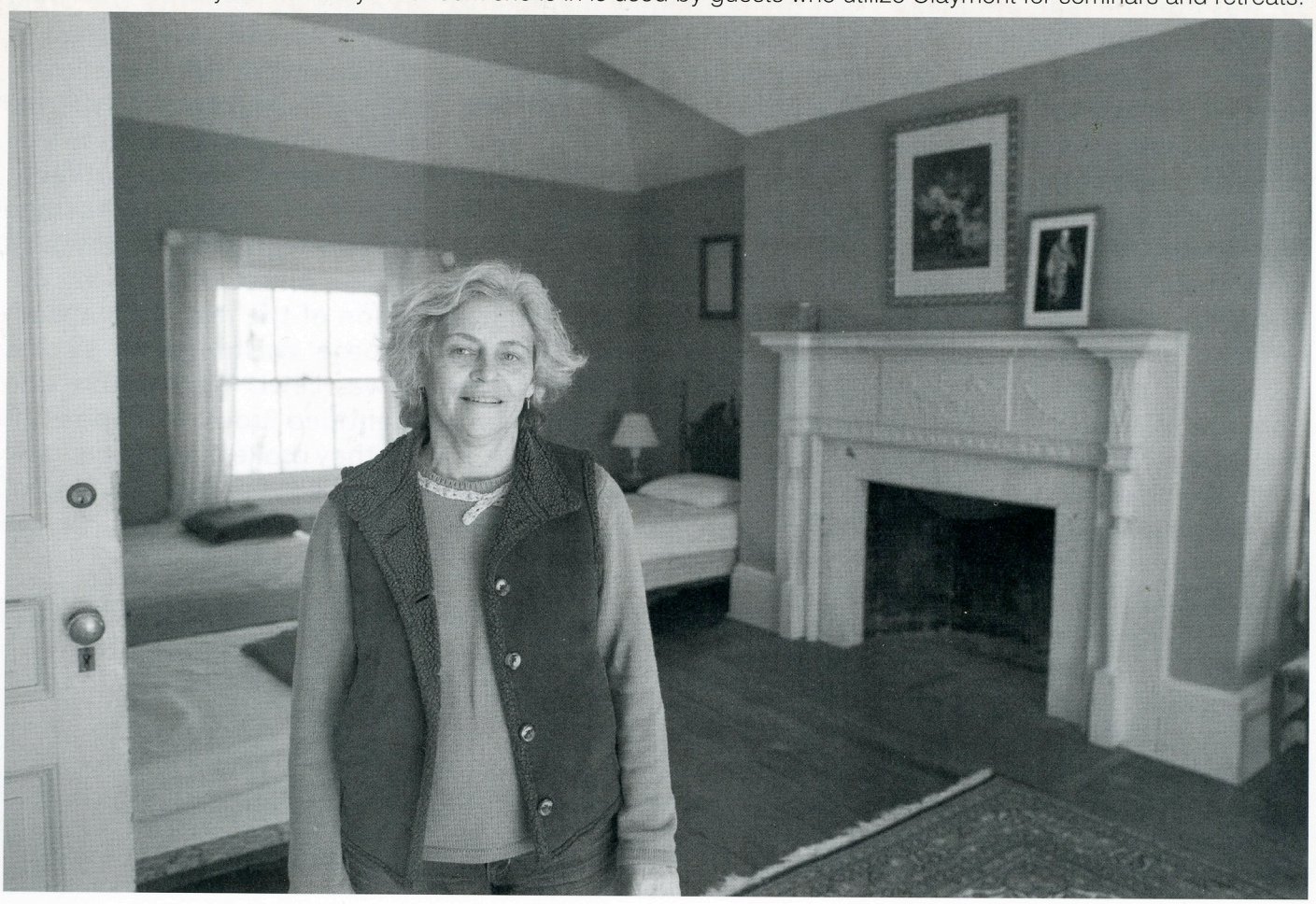
Calling the sale a "big motivator" to become more sustainable, the society placed 265 acres in a conservation easement. Another 25 acres, including the property the mansion occupies, is outside the easement but is still protected by the historic nature of the land.

At 16,000 square feet, Claymont Court is sometimes touted as the largest house in West Virginia. It's been used for several film productions, including the movie *Gods and Generals* and an episode of the History Channel's *The Men Who Built America*. The rest of the time, Claymont is essentially a nonprofit retreat center used by spiritual and meditation groups, healthcare workers, environmental groups, and artists. Amy says there's a strong emphasis on organic farming, local foods, and sustainability; 11 acres of the property are leased by a farmer who grows greens for the Washington, D.C., metro area.

The society has achieved financial sustainability through rental fees from these various groups. The society's nonprofit status as an educational entity prevents the use of Claymont for more lucrative uses, like weddings or as a bed and breakfast. And some projects, such as restoring the gardens that once helped define the mansion's grandeur, simply go undone due to lack of funds.

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 has been a longtime GOLDENSEAL contributor, dating back to his first article in our Summer 1987 issue.

Amy Silver stands in one of Claymont's 59 rooms with one of the 25 fireplaces behind her. Amy is the executive director for the Claymont Society. The room she is in is used by guests who utilize Claymont for seminars and retreats.



The Other Washington Houses

Other than Tidewater Virginia, perhaps no region is as closely associated with the Washington family as Jefferson County, West Virginia. In fact, more Washingtons are buried in Jefferson County than in any other place in the nation. Harewood, Happy Retreat, and Claymont Court are just three of the seven Washington homes still standing in Jefferson County. Four others remain—all privately owned and closed to the public.

Richwood Hall, a brick home about three miles from Charles Town on West Virginia Route 51, was built on land originally owned by George Washington. Around 1797, Lawrence Washington, the son of Samuel—George's brother—either built or moved into what is now the west wing of Richwood Hall with his bride, Mary Dorcas Wood. The Washingtons sold it in 1802. During the Battle of Cameron's Depot in 1864, Confederate forces under General Jubal Early fired from the Richwoods property at Union forces under General Philip Sheridan, who happened to be positioned on another former Washington estate, Locust Hill, which is no longer standing.

Blakeley, located on county route 13/3, was built in 1820 by John Augustine Washington II, the great-nephew of George Washington and brother of Bushrod Washington, who constructed Claymont Court. John Augustine Washington II designed Blakeley more modestly than his brother's house because he was in line to inherit Mount Vernon, which he did in 1829. In 1821, John Augustine Washington III was born at Blakeley; in 1855, he sold Mount Vernon, making him the last family member to own the founding father's estate. Blakeley remained in the Washington family until 1943.

Cedar Lawn, originally part of the Harewood estate, was built in 1825 for John Thornton Augustine Washington, the grandson of George's brother Samuel. It was erected on the site of a 1780 home, Berry Hill, which had burned.

Beall-Air brings together the Washington family saga with the most famous event in Jefferson County history. Beall-Air was built near Halltown in the 1790s by Thomas Beall, whose daughter Elizabeth married George Corbin Washington, another great-nephew of the first president. The home was later inherited by their son, Lewis William Washington. On the night of October 16, 1859, abolitionist John Brown launched his ill-fated raid on the Harpers Ferry Armory, about four miles east of Beall-Air. Brown was aware that Lewis owned three of George Washington's prized possessions: a sword presented as a gift by Frederick the Great and two pistols given to him by the Marquis de Lafayette. Brown dispatched some of his men to Beall-Air to capture Lewis, several of his slaves, and the artifacts. Brown held Lewis as a hostage for two nights in the armory's engine house, and for the duration of the raid, Brown wore George Washington's sword. It was Lewis Washington who identified Brown to Marines after they broke down the engine house door on the morning of October 18. — *ed.*

VISITING THE WASHINGTON HOMES

Harewood is privately owned and generally not opened for tours. The Claymont Society for Continuous Education holds open houses at **Claymont** several times a year. For more information, visit Claymont.org. **Happy Retreat** is marked with a state historical marker. For more information, visit happyretreat.org or write P.O. Box 1427, Charles Town, WV 25414.

# of Jefferson County









growing up on 7th street

By Roger Nedeff

In the 1950s and 1960s, I grew up on Swann Street, in a residential area of Parkersburg's "rough East End." It wasn't an unfair reputation.

The East End dates back to the mid-1800s when the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad was completed into town. Many railroad workers settled in the East End, which was originally the terminus of the railroad until the Ohio River Railroad Bridge was completed in 1871. The workers, many recent immigrants, lived daily lives of hard manual labor. For some, their primary recreation was consuming alcohol, which fueled some epic brawls, fights, knifings, and murders. In his book *Wood County, West Virginia in Civil War Times*, H. E Matheny notes that the East End was called "The Bloody Sixth" due to its violence and

This 1932 photo shows streetcar 806 passing a car showroom at the corner of 7th and Green streets in Parkersburg's East End. The banner on the streetcar is promoting comedian Joe E. Brown's new movie *Fireman Save My Child* at Parkersburg's Smoot Theatre.





Syrian immigrant Moses Nedeff—the author's father—displays his wares at The Family Store, located at the corner of 7th and Swann streets, shortly after he opened the market in 1945.



The East End Polecats were a youth sandlot baseball team in Parkersburg around 1913.

location in the city's sixth ward. In that book, Parkersburg resident Dr. C. J. Scott, who moved to Parkersburg in 1865, said, "There was a killing every now and then, especially at the corner of 7th and Lynn. . . . More men have been killed on that corner than in any place in the town."

By the time I came along in 1954, the East End's reputation hadn't improved much. Larry Gibson, a former Parkersburg police chief, began his career as a beat cop in the district in 1961. A beat cop was a patrolman who walked a route through a neighborhood. Larry relates, "It was always exciting. I think at one time, there were 13 or 14 illegal gambling and liquor-by-the-drink joints from 7th and Green streets to 7th and George streets."

My father emigrated from Syria in 1937. By 1945, he'd saved enough to purchase a brick building at the corner of 7th and Swann streets, where he opened up a small neighborhood grocery called The Family Store. He rented out the upper floors as apartments. In 1950, he purchased the house on Swann Street that my three brothers, three sisters, and I called home. A residence on East 8th Street Hill abutting my father's building had a dilapidated stagecoach in the backyard. Susan, my older sister, recalls that everybody in the neighborhood, except

me, played on it. I still like to tease Susan that she's so old she used to play on a stagecoach!

The boundaries of the East End's business district ran roughly from 13th Street West to Avery Street along U.S. 50, or 7th Street. The residential areas were the numerous side streets that intersected with 7th Street. Parkersburg's East End was like a village in its own right. There was no need to go downtown because everything you needed was readily available.

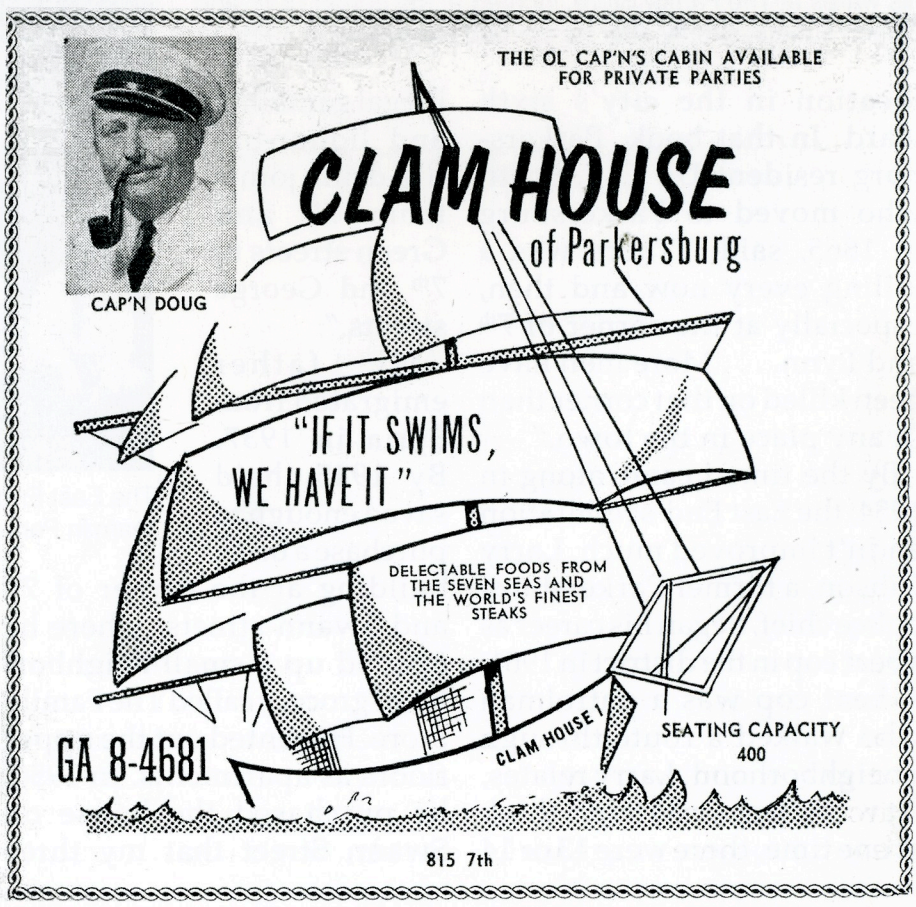
There was the Coliseum Skating Rink and Bowling Alley, where we skated for 25 cents on Sunday afternoons. Parkersburg Creamery had every dairy delight one could imagine, and at Greiner's Bakery, you could buy day-old bread for seven cents a loaf—three cents cheaper than the fresh bread. The Sheik Restaurant and Cafe, The Palace theatre, East End Drug Store, Arcade TV and Appliance, Kesterson Ice Plant, Berdine's Produce, and Aston Motorcycle Shop were well-known East End businesses. Scattered throughout was an array of used car lots and, of course, the district's primary businesses: taverns—or beer joints, as we referred to them—and clubs where liquor was often sold illegally.

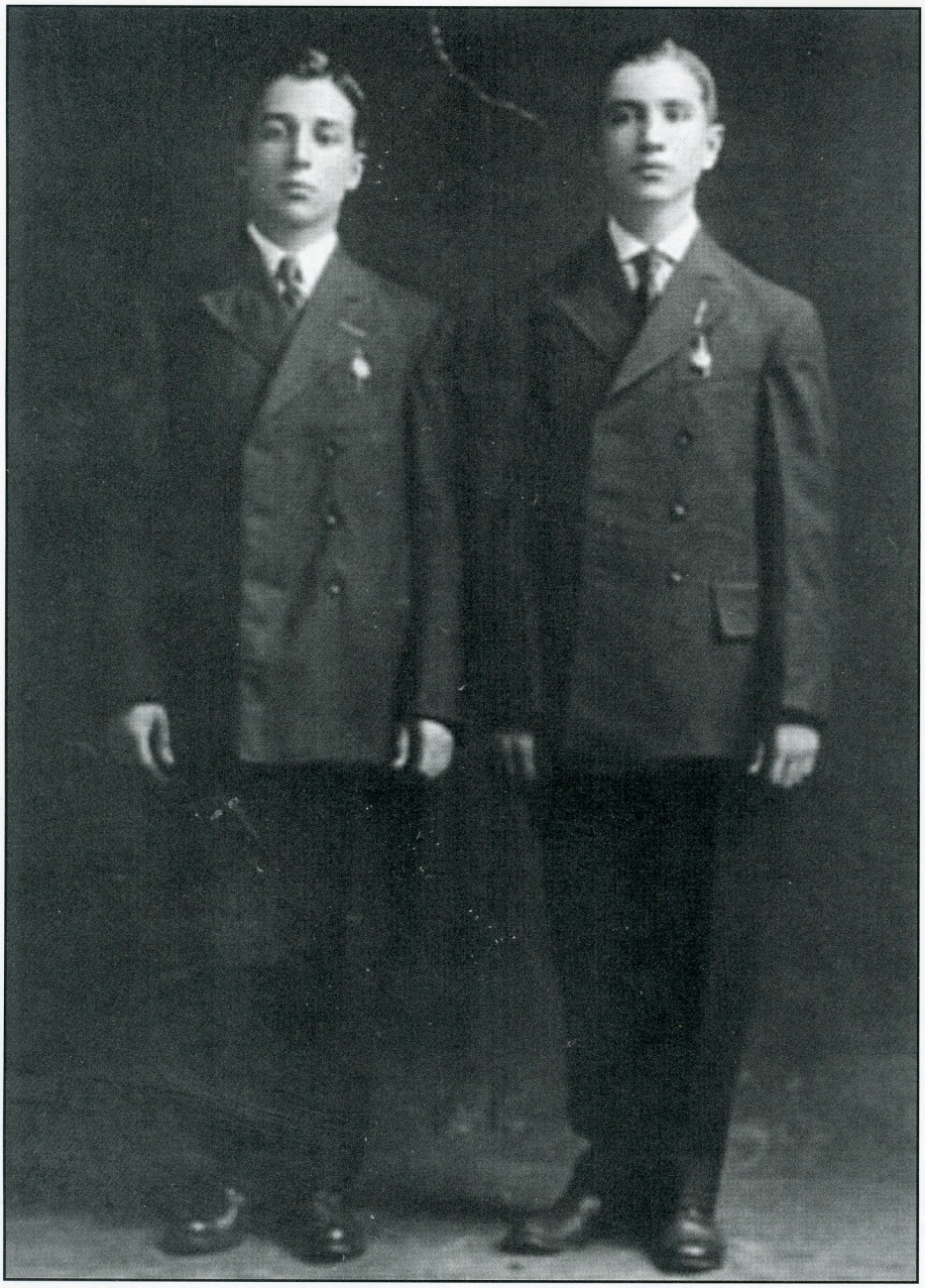
The East End had a unique and diverse character that I loved, even as a small boy. The Angelos family from Greece had a restaurant and soda fountain. Mr. Angelos was famous for his chocolate creations at Easter time. He'd make the most detailed and elaborate eggs, hens, and rabbits from chocolate. It was almost a sin to eat these works of art.

Two African-American men, Bill Waldon and Emmanuel

Ads for businesses in Parkersburg's bustling East End district.







Greek immigrants George (left) and Pete Angelos pose about 1900. The two brothers operated a long-running candy and ice cream store on 7th Street. Courtesy of Francis Angelos.

"Bud" Robinson, had barber shops in the East End. Bud was deaf. We used a stenographer's pad to tell him what type of haircut we wanted. We boys knew we'd come of age when Bud brought out the straight razor to do the final trimming on the backs of our necks and around our ears.

Two branches of the Thomas family, who, like us, were Syrian, had car lots on 7th Street. The residential area was a mix of whites, blacks, and various nationalities, including Syrians and Italians, blue- and white-collar workers, Catholics, Protestants, and a few Jewish families.

The East End was filled with individuals with peculiar names and nicknames.

My oldest brother had the unique first name of Ferris. His first job was at an East End car wash—an assembly line of teenage boys who'd scrub your car for a few dollars. Ferris remembers, "The washers and dryers got seven cents a car. The steamers who used steam guns to clean the tires and would vacuum the inside got 10 cents a car. That was in 1964-1965. Our weekly paycheck would be 15 or 20 dollars, and we felt like we were rolling in dough." I laugh now when I remember how this seemed like a dream job to a boy of 10.

"Sooner" was the delivery man for Gooley, the local Wiedemann beer wholesaler. "Sooner" would always honk his truck at us kids and shout "eeek eeek" as he drove back to Gooley's warehouse, which was basically an old barn in one of the district's nicest housing developments. This upset and annoyed his neighbors.

A lady who lived down the street from us was named "Poochie." I never knew her real name, and, to this day,

she's the only Poochie I've ever known.

An older man who frequented the many taverns and drank cheap Gibson Muscatel wine in the alleys of the East End went by the name of "Bat Eye" or "Bad Eye," depending who was pronouncing it. He was a nice enough fellow, even when intoxicated, and I used to feel badly that he drank so much.

My older sister had a girlfriend named Willa Jean. An eccentric elderly lady who rented an apartment from my father was known as "Leaping Lena." We had our "Slims," "Buds," "Reds," and even a "Brownie." An overweight lady on the corner opposite my father's store was known by everyone as "Fatty." She always seemed to stick her nose in everybody else's business, which didn't endear her to many folks and which probably led to her insulting nickname.

My father rented a tavern to a gentleman known as "Trusty," who was generally friendly and usually waved and smiled as we walked by. I later found out he got his nickname during a term in the state penitentiary. Trusty ran for elective office in Parkersburg with the slogan, "My record speaks for itself," which gave us all a chuckle. Trusty didn't win.

Even the East End taverns had unique names. There was the Thomas Tap Room, The Three Musketeers, The Oasis, and The Red Rooster. It wasn't unusual to see employees from the local Corning Plant, Walker Parkersburg, or the B&O Railroad piling into these places at lunchtime. After a couple of beers, they'd return to their jobs.

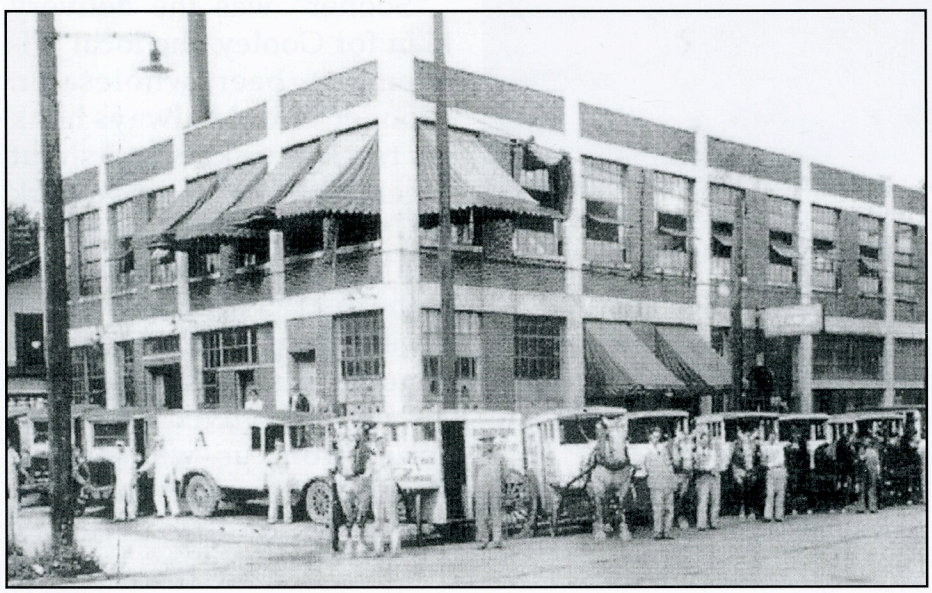
I never felt unsafe in the East End and wasn't too afraid walking the streets alone, even at night. Though it was considered a high-crime district, no one bothered me—perhaps because I lived there and wasn't an outsider. More than likely, though, it was because they knew about my older tough brothers or my cute sisters!

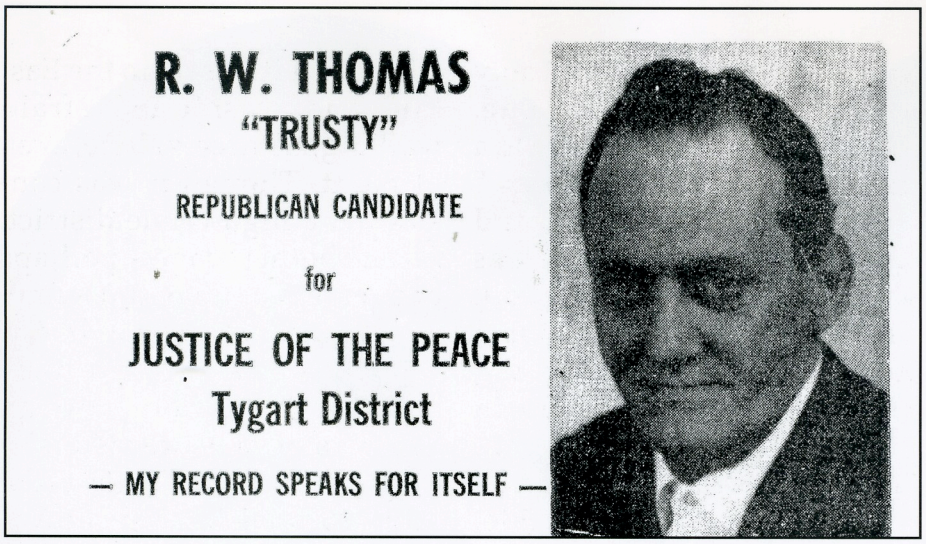
As urban renewal began in the mid-1960s, all the seedy downtown establishments moved to the East End. 7th Street became a string of XXX adult night clubs and peep shows. The taverns became rowdier and more

The Palace Theatre on 7th Street was a popular hangout for children and adults. The marquee is promoting the 1936 film *Trail of the Lonesome Pine*, which was very loosely inspired by the Hatfield and McCoy Feud. It was the first movie with outdoor scenes filmed in three-strip Technicolor. Photo by Artcraft Studio.



At the time this photo was taken in the early 1900s, the Parkersburg Creamery Company on 7th Street was making the transition from horse-drawn to motorized delivery trucks. Courtesy of Mike Penn.





R. W. "Trusty" Thomas launched a campaign for justice of the peace about 1964. Despite his slogan, "My record speaks for itself," his term in the state penitentiary was probably too much for most politicians to overcome.

violent as crime rates soared. The small mom-and-pop businesses, unable to deal with the local issues or compete with the big chains, shuttered up. Abandoned storefronts became the new norm. Residential values plummeted as properties suffered from apathy and neglect.

The new millennium, however, has brought an improved reputation and hope to the East End, which is experiencing its own type of urban renewal. Many of the blighted buildings have been torn down, and new businesses—The Dollar Store, KFC, and Safelite Auto Glass, to name a few—have moved in, and government grants have improved sidewalks and street lighting. The East End is on the road to becoming a vibrant part of Parkersburg.

ROGER NEDEFF graduated from Parkersburg Catholic High School in 1972. A member of the Wood County Historical and Preservation Society, Roger also serves as historian for St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Parkersburg. He lives in Vienna and is a retired truck driver. This is Roger's second contribution to GOLDENSEAL. His first was "'To Live as One Like Brothers': Remembering St. Joseph Seminary" in our Spring 2013 issue.

The Thomas Tap Room, shown here in May 1963, was a 7th Street institution. Photo by Artcraft Studio.



The Angelos Brothers' candy store on 7th Street, shown here in the 1940s, was known far and wide for its elaborate confections as well as lunches and everyday groceries. Courtesy of Francis Angelos.







James C. McGrew's

By Susan M. Hardesty

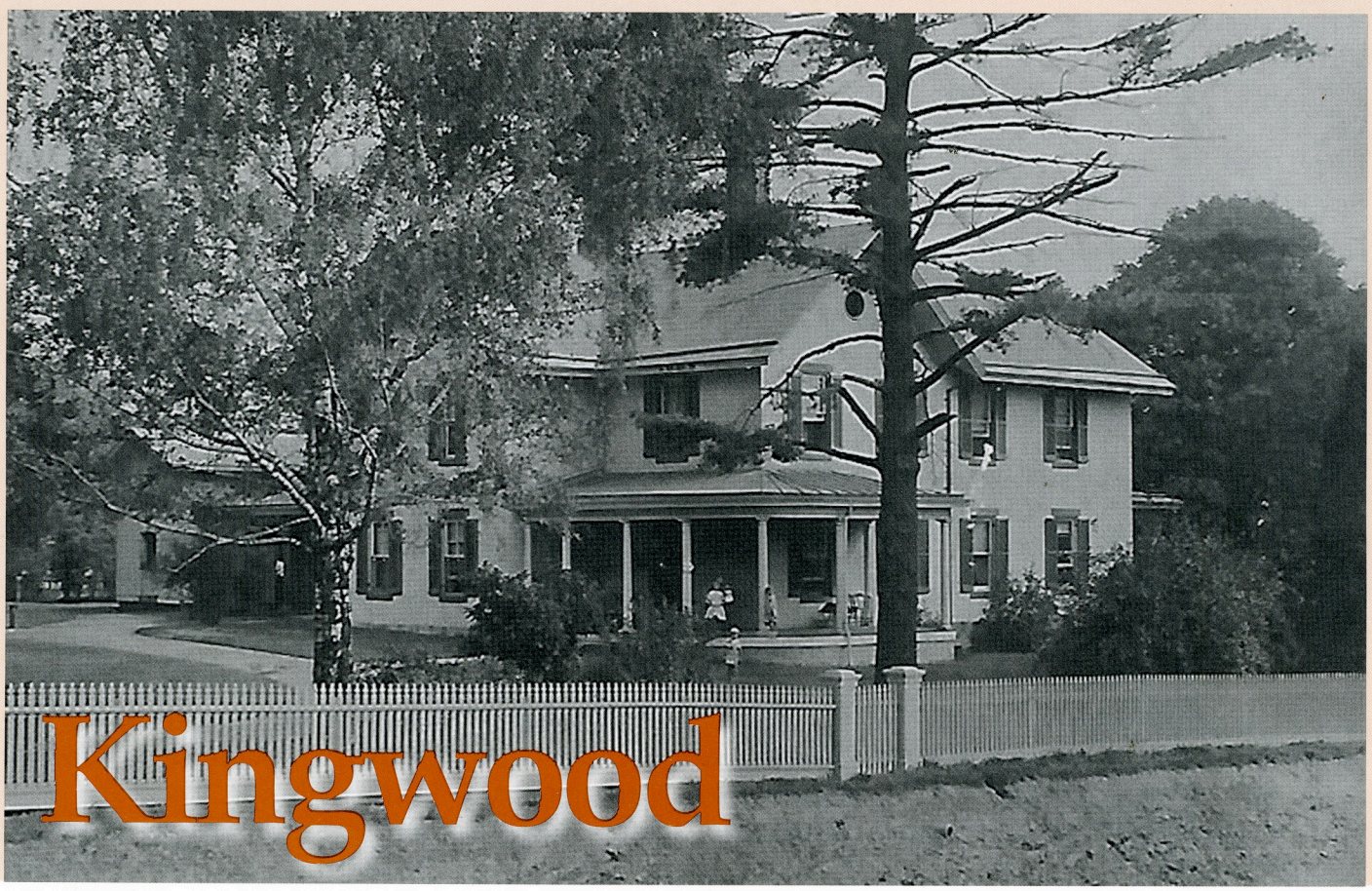
When James C. McGrew (1813-1910) first came to Kingwood as an 18-year-old farm-boy-turned-apprentice-clerk, little did he dream that he'd occupy a seat in Congress one day or have his portrait taken by celebrated photographer Mathew Brady. He was, after all, the son of a pioneer, skilled in blacksmithing and farming and schooled in only the three R's. But, to his mentors, Harrison and Elisha Hagans, McGrew showed great promise. Though he had much to learn about the mercantile trade, he was an able and willing student. He soon developed a knack for acquiring and pricing goods and building a loyal customer base.

Within a decade, McGrew had fully embraced the Kingwood community as his own. In 1841, he built a home for his bride, Persis Hagans McGrew, the daughter of his mentors. The simple Federalist-style house met their family needs, including space for their three children—William, Sarah Martha "Mattie," and George.

He was actively involved in the local Methodist Episcopal church, and, when it came time to venture out on his own, he built McGrew & Co. on land beside the Preston County Courthouse. From that time on, he was a part of the economic and political life of Kingwood until his death in 1910. A glance across Kingwood today reflects McGrew's role as architect of structures and infrastructure.

These photos of James Clark McGrew and his wife, Persis, were taken by Mathew Brady Studios in Washington, D.C., during the Civil War. All photos courtesy of the McGrew Society unless noted otherwise.

James C. McGrew first built his house, known as "The Pines," on what is now East Main Street in Kingwood in the 1840s and expanded it after the Civil War. In this home, the McGrews raised their three children: William, "Mattie," and George.



Kingwood

In his own lifetime, McGrew acquired almost celebrity-like stature, taking part in the 1861 Virginia Secession Convention and in the subsequent West Virginia statehood movement, and serving as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives during Reconstruction. A loyal Unionist, he faced the challenge of his generation—the Civil War—and pursued peace and reconciliation. After his congressional career ended, he retired from the national spotlight and returned to Kingwood, where he resumed his more familiar and comfortable role as city father.

His political influence was first evident in 1853, when he served as one of three supervisors for Kingwood's local election of officers. The town, chartered earlier that year, initially had a board-of-trustees-style government. In 1863, as a municipality in the new state of West Virginia, Kingwood residents elected James C. McGrew as their first mayor. He led the community through the difficult remaining years of the war, with his own safety always in danger. Due to his opposition to Virginia's secession, Confederate troops carried warrants for his and other Unionists' arrest. On at least two occasions, he was forced to escape hastily from nearby Rebel forces.

No town records survive from those early years, but by the time McGrew was re-elected



James C. McGrew's last major project was the Bank of Kingwood. He approved the final blueprint for the building shortly before his death in 1910.

mayor in 1879, records were carefully documented. In March 1879, council appointed him a "committee of one" to prepare town bylaws and rules of order. Within two weeks, he'd produced the first ordinances for "the protection of property and preserving the peace." Some were basic matters of civility, addressing physical assault, unlawful assembly, and cruelty to animals; others reflected local concerns unique to the time and place, such as a penalty for roaming livestock.

Mayor McGrew also functioned as the judge for local disputes, though no serious ones occurred. Most offenses related to peddling without a license, which could be settled by paying a fee. More often, he was the chief managing officer who authorized repairs to streets and crossings, and on more than one occasion, he paid for the services himself, seeking reimbursement later.

He was a popular leader. Even after he resigned from office in 1881 to travel overseas as a representative to the Methodist's Ecumenical Council meeting in London, he was immediately re-elected mayor upon his return. People liked and trusted him.

He built up that trust over decades of faithful service, which often produced noticeable improvements. For example, in 1856, the county court asked him to supervise construction of a much-needed new courthouse in Kingwood. When all bids came in above the budgeted $8,000, McGrew took on the contract himself. He'd already built his home, his store, and the Preston Academy, so he had experience. The next year, he completed an impressive three-story structure, complete with oak staircases and belfry. That same year, he built a suspension bridge across the Cheat River, connecting the northern and central portions of the county. Unfortunately, both projects fell victim to violence: the bridge was destroyed by Confederate troops in 1863, and the courthouse was burned by an arsonist in 1869. McGrew supervised the reconstruction of both the bridge and courthouse.

Though neither his reconstructed bridge nor the 1870 courthouse survives today,



In 1906, 93-year-old James C. McGrew reclines on the porch overseeing a slew of children, in-laws, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives, Taylor County Historical Society Collection.

three McGrew projects can still be seen in downtown Kingwood. After the Civil War, McGrew doubled the size of his home and added beautifully hand-carved bannisters and door frames. He also enclosed the well to provide for indoor water and a bathroom. He had a gorgeous fruit orchard and vegetable garden and imported a variety of exotic trees, many of which still stand: gingko and tiger tail spruce from Asia and European beech, larch, and bald cypress. The home and its surrounding landscape were his favorite pastimes until he was well into his 90s.

In 1878-1879, he oversaw construction of the new Methodist Episcopal house of worship. He did much of the legwork, including traveling to Baltimore to purchase and ship the furnace, carpet, and an 800-pound bell, which still hangs in the belfry.

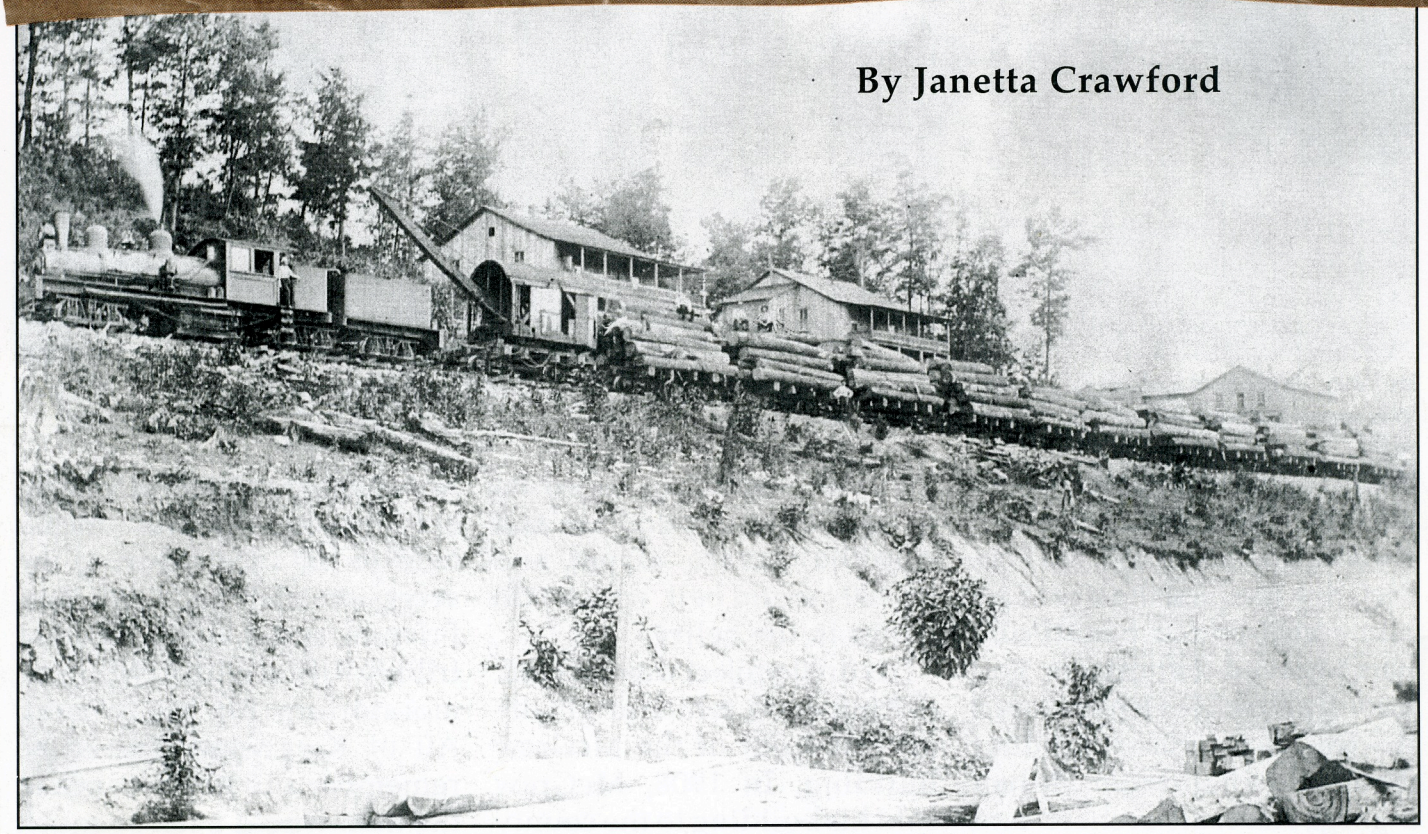
His final project was the Bank of Kingwood, which originally operated out of the McGrew Building. In 1908, McGrew sold his building to the county and bought land just across the street. He personally designed the bank's imposing structure, featuring two massive pillars on the outside, and an interior built with marble, tile, and mahogany. Though he didn't live to see it completed, he approved the final blueprint six months before his death in 1910 at age 97.

After his passing, James McGrew was heralded by national newspapers as a hero of his generation—one who'd staunchly held to his ideals during the secession crisis and Civil War. Friends and neighbors paid tribute to him with a two-hour moratorium for his funeral. All of Kingwood paused to remember and pay homage to the man who'd been so much a part of the town's history.

SUSAN M. HARDESTY is a member of the McGrew Society, a nonprofit historical group devoted to preserving the McGrew home in Kingwood. She has extensively researched the McGrew-Hagans family and written the biography *James Clark McGrew: Statesman and Servant*. For more information about the family and preservation efforts, please visit www.mcgrewhouse.org. This is Susan's first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

Home Sweet Home

By Janetta Crawford

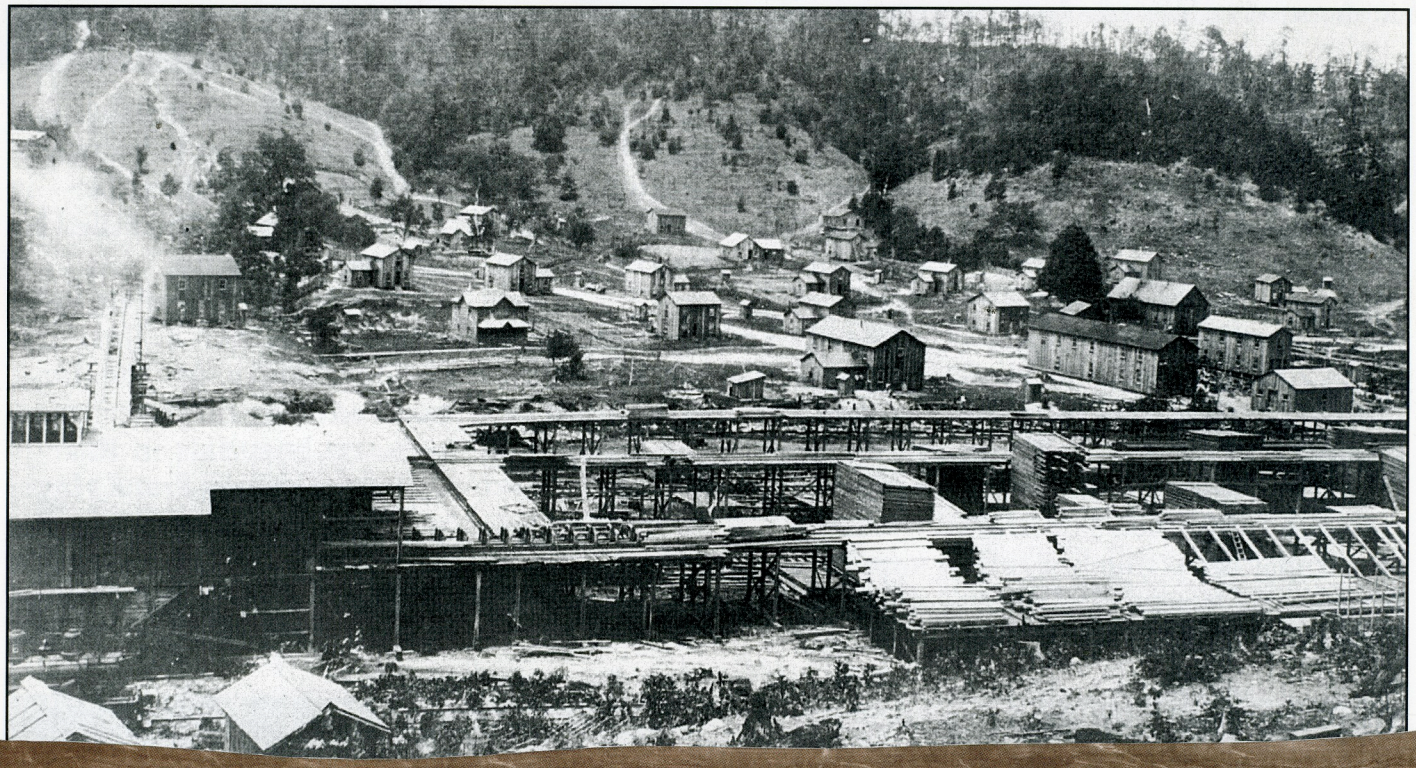


Log trains transported the timber from local cutting areas to the Blue Jay mill. All photos courtesy of our author.

If you're in Raleigh County and take Blue Jay Drive south from the town of Beaver, you'll soon run into the little community of Blue Jay. Archaeological evidence shows that prehistoric cultures date back thousands of years in the area. Very little is known about these prehistoric people, except, based on some rock carvings discovered by archaeologists, they clearly loved birds. It's fitting, then, that the town would one day become known as Blue Jay.

Blue Jay's modern history dates to 1903, when a Pennsylvania lumber company noticed the quality hardwoods growing in the region. The company was started by a Mr. Billinger and Frank Hayes, who, along with the Billinger family, four drivers, 13 horses and wagons, household goods, food, tools, and sawmill equipment made the 13-day trek from Corry, Pennsylvania, to Raleigh County.

This birds'-eye view of Blue Jay shows the massive milling operation and the beginnings of a lumber company town during the first decade of the 20th century. In the surrounding area, notice how most of the hardwood trees have already been cut down.



Blue Jay, West Virginia

Frank's son Theron, born in 1908, recalled his father's pride in founding Blue Jay and how his father described the timber as "being so thick, that a person could hardly see the sun, except at noon." On the first day the sawmill went into operation, Frank erected an American flag on the site.

The land was co-owned by P. C. Lynch, C. L. Goodwin, and P. P. Griffin. A group of hardy workers cleared trees to make room for a small circle sawmill, which was used to build a larger band mill. The band mill cut boards for the first homes and toolsheds in Blue Jay. A small number of original homes "were built out of rough lumber," noted Theron, "and were built Jenny Lind style, which is vertical boards with other vertical boards to cover the cracks." Four boarding houses were added to accommodate the growing number of workers. The company's holdings also

included docks, a millpond, an oil house, various logging camps, and five coal mines. From its rough beginnings in 1903 to its full development in 1921, an estimated 300 families made Blue Jay their home.

The company's steam locomotive brought logs from the cutting areas, such as Camp Creek, and dumped the timber into the millpond. The train also transported finished lumber for sale across the United States. Ruth Payne remembers a common occurrence where workers "stack[ed] lumber to whistle at the girls who had to walk under the lumber docks to get to the store or post office."

Eva Lykins remembered her father, Gilbert Richmond, working on the log train until he lost his hand coupling cars. After recovering, Gilbert worked inside the mill and was superintendent of the Blue Jay church. Theron could remember only a small number of accidental work deaths, and only one murder is known to have occurred in Blue Jay—in 1918, a man shot and killed his common-law wife.

Theron did remember, however, his father suffering a serious injury on the large band saw. At this time, there were no hospitals in Raleigh County, so when Frank Hayes was hurt on the job, he had to be transported by horse and wagon to Dugout—a small unincorporated town in Ra-



This great photo shows a group of woodhicks cutting logs near Blue Jay around 1910. Despite the more commonly remembered term *lumberjacks*, most West Virginia loggers referred to themselves as woodhicks.

leigh County—then by train to Prince, and by the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway to the hospital in Hinton. Theron observed that his father "must have been very tough to survive that sort of ordeal."

There was a doctor in Blue Jay. Dr. Wylie H. Cunningham practiced there from 1904 to 1936. Theron's mother, Arminta, was a midwife. He remembers her walking at night with her lantern to people's houses. Eva Lykins' mother was also a midwife. "I remember that Mom would stay with the family for up to 10 days after the delivery," said Eva, "helping the new mom and the baby." Eva's mother got paid $5.00 for helping in the days after delivery. Often, the midwives delivered the babies because Dr. Cunningham couldn't get there in time. When he'd show up late, he'd invariably say, "Everything is OK." On January 14, 1904, Blue Jay's first baby was born and named Brook Carter (Hall).

The town had its own company store, which sold anything a person could need. Ruth Payne recalled, "It was possible to buy furniture there, toys, piece goods, clothing, jewelry (not costume either), hats, laces, ribbons, shoes, linoleum, and, of course, groceries." She smiled as she remembered buying a bag full of candy for a penny or two. "Young girls walked all the way from Richmond District," said Ruth, "bringing eggs to [trade] for piece goods for dresses."

She recollected that calico sold for seven cents a yard and that gingham sold for 15 cents. The company store also sold more expensive silks and satins. Theron felt that credit from the company store helped families survive the Great Depression.

The lumber company had its own ice plant, which sold huge blocks of ice to folks as far away as Thurmond—more than 20 miles away. Billie



Just like in coal towns, the company store was the economic and social center of lumber towns. Here, stylish adults, children, and a very patient terrier hang out in front of the Blue Jay Lumber Company store.

Dobbins used a horse-drawn wagon to deliver items such as ice, coal, wood, and groceries to houses. The thriving little town had its own post office, established in 1906. Its first employee was P. C. Lynch, and the last postmaster was Mary H. Oakes, who retired in 1998 after 38 years of service. After Mary's retirement, the post office closed. The approximately 100 remaining families in Blue Jay had their mail transferred to nearby Beaver.

The Blue Jay United Methodist Church also has a long legacy that continues to this day. Frank Hayes and his wife held the first nondenominational church gathering in 1903 under a shade tree and later used their home as a church and Sunday school. The community church grew quickly and had to be moved into a two-room schoolhouse, built by the Blue Jay Lumber Company in 1904. Church services were led by visiting ministers. In 1916, the congregation reorganized as a Methodist denomination. The first service in the current church was held on Easter Sunday 1950, but it was more than five years before the building was completed and dedicated on Christmas Eve 1955. The bell in the steeple is from an old logging train and was given to the church by F. H. Lynch, who built the structure. Many congregation members were baptized in nearby Beaver Creek before it got polluted.



Millworkers pose at Blue Jay in January 1919.



The Blue Jay Lumber Company provided electricity to houses built after 1918. Ruth Payne remembered that the electricity was turned on at 5 p.m., turned off at 10 p.m., and turned back on again at 5 a.m. for breakfast.

As with all logging towns, all the hardwoods in the surrounding area were eventually cut and milled. The Blue Jay Lumber Company finished its work in Raleigh County in 1936, but the town persisted. Folks still gathered for square dances and threw parties. Margaret Jones remembered how neighbors would meet at one another's houses to sit, sing, and talk until bedtime. She recollected how children played hide-n-go-seek or red rover and created their own toys, such as ink made from elderberries, playhouses composed of dyed rocks, and makeshift beds and blankets fashioned from moss. The boys and girls played in the woods, and the boys cut grapevines to swing over cliffs and rocks, making playtime more adventurous.

Helen Lytton recalled how they made up their own games. "[We] threw the ball over the roof of the house, and the kids on the other side had to catch the ball and run around the house to throw the ball at us to get us out," said Helen.

The boys caught little red lizards to use as fishing bait or gigged for frogs using a pole with a nail on one end. "They would cut off the legs of the frogs for Mom to fry them," remembered Helen.

Ruth Payne remembered traveling shows coming through town and boys and girls walking a lot on Sunday afternoons. She also recalled getting up at 5 a.m. in the summer—dressed in overalls and hurrying to the railroad tracks with buckets in hand—to hitch a ride on the log train to pick berries. In the evening, the conductor would stop the train to let them gather all the berries they'd picked. "Without a refrigerator," Ruth remembers, "the berries had to be cleaned that night in order for our mothers to can them before bedtime."

Margaret Jones said there were five places to swim: Beaver Creek, the C&O dam, the trestle, the little hole, and the big hole. "We didn't have much, but we were happy," Margaret recalled. "My Grandma would make a homemade sheet cake once a week and made a sauce on the stove to put over it. It was the best thing we ever ate."

In the winter, the neighborhood kids would build a big bonfire "in the bottom," which was at the end of Rabbit Street Hill. They rode their sleighs down toward the bottom but usually didn't make it all the way.

Halloween was fun as well. The kids dressed in old rags and always went to Dollie Lynch's house because she handed out big Hershey bars. The older boys got into some mischief by blocking the roads with cut trees or turning over outhouses. It was understood that on November 1, the boys had to go back and reset all the outhouses they'd turned over.

Helen Lytton remembered one Halloween party at the youth church in particular. Her mother made her a gypsy skirt from different materials. "It was sooo pretty," she recalled. "I was a teenager and thought I was the prettiest girl at the party."

Margaret Jones also remembered a beautiful skirt that Lola Shrewsbury made her from feed sacks, with flowers on the top and ruffles on the bottom. "I thought I was the cat's meow," Margaret said.

Theron Hayes summed up most people's memories of Blue Jay, "After all is said and done, there was a bunch of good people in little ole Blue Jay. We had lots of fun, lots of heartache, and lots of memories—some good, some bad—but it is still 'Home Sweet Home' to me."

JANETTA CRAWFORD was born on her paternal grandmother's (Loreta Crawford) bed in Blue Jay. Daughter of the late Galen Crawford, Janetta now resides in Virginia. She acquired the history of Blue Jay from her aunt, Margaret Jones, who loved history and collected historical facts about the town, including family genealogy, the history of the Blue Jay Methodist church, and photos of the small lumber town. This is Janetta's first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

Cook's Old Mill: You Can't Help but Stop

Text and photographs by Carl E. Feather



If Cook's Mill were on a major highway, perhaps Route 219 rather than the little-traveled Route 122, its owners, Fred and Barbara Ziegler, could operate it as a bed and breakfast or resort. The Monroe County landmark, though, has "back roads" status, which hurts its income-producing potential but adds to its rustic intrigue.

As a result, Cook's Mill is one of the last free yet privately owned roadside attractions in the United States. Visitors can walk the grounds and take photos of the scenic setting. All Fred and Barbara ask is that you leave nothing behind. Fred says most visitors follow that request and show respect for their retirement property—an old gristmill that could be functional with a new vertical turbine.

The 1857 mill—built on the foundation of an earlier mill from about 1797—brought

Cook's Old Mill in Greenville is a photographer's delight. The owners maintain the property as a roadside park and welcome guests to stroll the grounds and take photos.

the couple from Chicago to Greenville. The 1991 Spring issue of GOLDENSEAL noted that Cook's Mill's owner was looking for a buyer [see "A Man and His Mill: Jim Wells Takes on the Greenville Mill" by Michael M. Meador]. The sale was then advertised by The Society for the Preservation of Old Mills (spoom.org) in its quarterly magazine.

"My brother had owned a mill since 1975," Fred says. "We looked at nine different mill properties, from New Hampshire to West Virginia. This one was attractive to us for a lot of reasons, and also for the fact we have relatives in the area."

Fred, a Massachusetts native, and Barbara, from Michigan, had no trouble adapting to the rural lifestyle of Monroe County. Nor was the task of continuing Wells' renovation and preservation work unfamiliar to them. The couple had rehabilitated old homes in Chicago, and Fred is a skilled woodworker.

"I'm also interested in alternative energy, which comes with the mill," he says. "But we have not gotten the mill to the point where it will generate electricity—yet."

The couple moved to the property in 2003. Their first big project was to renovate and expand the miller's home, located across the highway and down the road from the mill. The miller had to live close to the mill. They added to the back of the home using post-and-beam construction. At one end stands a clay fireplace that mimics the fossil seabed Fred studied for his doctorate in geology—right down to the tracks left by an ancient salamander. At the opposite end, an elaborate wood railing on the balcony fuses gothic and Romanesque arches. Below the railing, which Fred turned himself, the massive beam bears the inscription, "Happy is the house that shelters a friend."

The stream that feeds the mill pond rises behind the house and becomes Indian Creek after flowing under the highway and through the mill property. It's one of the



Owners Fred and Barbara Ziegler pose along the road to Cook's Old Mill in Greenville.



The grounds of Cook's Old Mill are maintained in a park-like condition and include the 1797 mill, a mill pond, a machine shop, and a log cabin.

few places in Monroe County underlain by limestone with a flowing stream sufficient for milling.

A restored log cabin, maintained as a guesthouse for family and friends, stands near the mill pond and opposite the mill. First-time visitors are confused by the placement of a water wheel on a row of buildings that faces the mill. Fred notes the wheel has nothing to do with Cook's Mill, which has a vertical turbine.

Since water isn't diverted through the mill at this time, the flow spills over a concrete dam, which has been a major maintenance item for the owners. Fred reinforced the base of the dam with 13 cubic yards of concrete. He also is addressing a problematic wood gate at the bottom of the dam. A custom-built metal gate awaits installation, but Fred must first drain the pond. The steady accumulation of leaves and other organic matter necessitates dredging the pond every 25 to 30 years. The biggest challenge is to find a place to put the muck once it's removed from the pond. It needs to dry out for a year or so before it can be used for fill.

Such are the pragmatic challenges to owning a mill property, even an idle one. Tending the property is enough to keep several people busy; the Zieglers employ a handyman to assist them and contract out the big tasks. A blacksmith leases one section of the machine shop building, and another section holds artifacts destined for the county historical society's planned carriage museum—yet another of Fred's projects; he's president of the society.

As owners and stewards of a historic mill, the couple feels obligated to making it accessible. The grounds have been used for numerous weddings, and the site is a favorite backdrop for prom- and portrait-photography sessions. The owners even provide a parking lot for visitors.

"The previous owner explained to me that there is no way to keep people out, and you can't build fences around it," Fred says.

In studying the mill's history, he's learned that most of its owners have had trouble making money from the structure.

"This mill has gone belly up probably a half-dozen times," he says. "I have found notices where it was to be sold at the courthouse steps for back taxes, and sometimes it was bought back by the same guy, at a lower figure than the debt."

While the mill hasn't yet brought financial success to Fred and Barbara Ziegler, it's produced a quarter-century of good memories for them. For more information, please visit the Web site cooksoldmill.com or give the Zieglers a call at 304-832-6060.

Mountain Music Roundup

By Paul Gartner

West Virginia musicians have been busy since our last musical outing. Here are some capsule previews of releases over the last year.

Qiet: *Kiss of the Universe*
This Charleston-based sextet mixes horns, keyboards, strings, and percussion with great vocals. This is a very theatrical-sounding band, mixing vaudeville, pop, and jazzy elements.

Kiss is a very ambitious project. The liner notes do not credit the super arrangements, however.

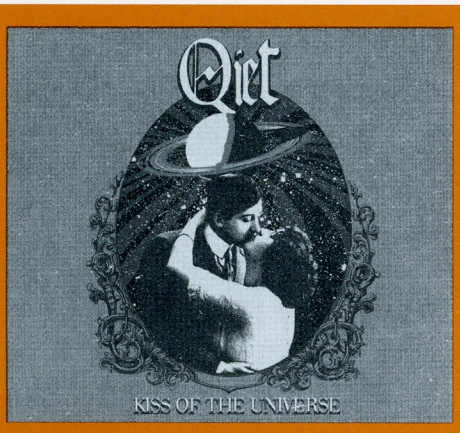
Love those horns on "Dionysian Dream." "Brush, Brush" makes good use of backing vocals with rock-solid drumming. "War of 8" is an instrumental with Middle Eastern rhythms, featuring the viola with percussion and horns. "Wild and Wonderful" pays homage to West Virginia with somewhat topical, ironic lyrics: "We can't drink the water, but it's good for building fires!"

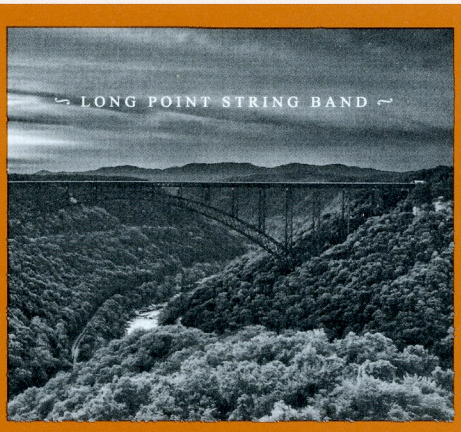
These guys could fill auditoriums with their big sound. Maybe a great live recording and video is in the future. Available at qietmusic.com.

Long Point String Band: [self-titled]
This Raleigh County duo features Hunter Walker on dulcimer and clawhammer banjo and Brian C. Bell on guitar. These guys play old-time with a modern edge, as on "North Carolina Breakdown," which has a snare drum driving things along. "John Brown's Dream" sets a new record for speed. Whew! "Red Prairie Dawn," a new tune from Garry Harrison, has some nice vocalizing with a dash of bluegrass. The first part of the medley "Snake Charmer Reel/Snake River" is a Walker original. J. P. Fraley's "Wild Rose of the Mountain" and the fiddle standard "Kitchen Girl" make another nice medley, with that late-night Clifftop festival groove.

Available at Long Point String Band on Facebook.

Johnny Staats and Robert Shafer: *Music from the Mountains*
The guys kick things off with "Leather Britches," full of nice variations and killer tone. "La Gitana" is reminiscent of Django Reinhardt's gypsy jazz. More nice vocals and breaks on Mac Wiseman's "By the Side of the Road." The hymn "Pass Me Not" takes you back to the days when jazz guitar branched off from country. Or was it the other way around? The old Clark Kes-







singer showpiece "Redbird" gets a good workout.

First-class guitar and mandolin playing from two West Virginia masters. Available for $18 at www.johnnystaats.com, or from Robert Shafer, 8813 Sissonville Drive, Charleston, WV 25320.

Trevor Hammons & Benjamin Davis:
The West Virginia Way
Old-time fiddle and banjo music is alive and well in Pocahontas County. Still in their teens, banjo player Trevor Lee Hammons and fiddler Benjamin Davis have released a CD of 16 instrumentals, produced with the help of the Yew Pine Culture Tradition organization, Dwight Diller, and Callum Lane.

Trevor is the great-grandson of banjo and fiddle player Lee Hammons and has learned from Tim Bing, among others. Ben is a student of Pocahontas County fiddler Jake Krack and learned from longtime Williams River resident Pam Lund as well.

Tradition is the word, with all the tunes well played. Some standouts here are the solo banjo pieces "Last Chance" and "Sugar Babe" and the nice fiddling on "Shakin' Down the Acorns" and "Three Forks of Cheat." The banjo-fiddle interplay on "Santa Ana's Retreat" is note perfect.

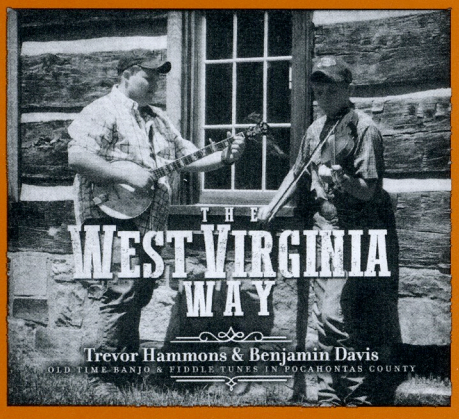
The West Virginia Way is available from Trevor Hammons, 2366 Edray Rd., Marlinton WV 24954 for $17.

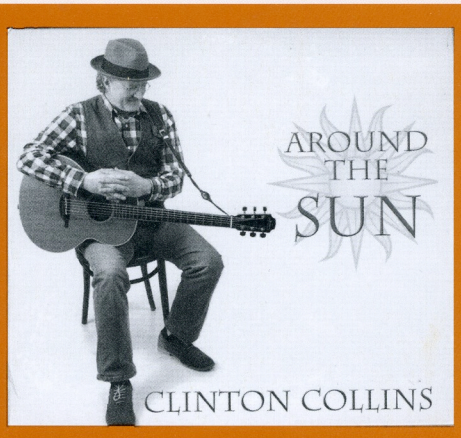
Clinton Collins:
Around the Sun
Collins is a Bluefield musician and songwriter with a pleasant voice. He is joined here by a slew of all-star musicians, including GOLDENSEAL editor and fiddler Stan Bumgardner, ace Dobro player Chris Stockwell, and many more.

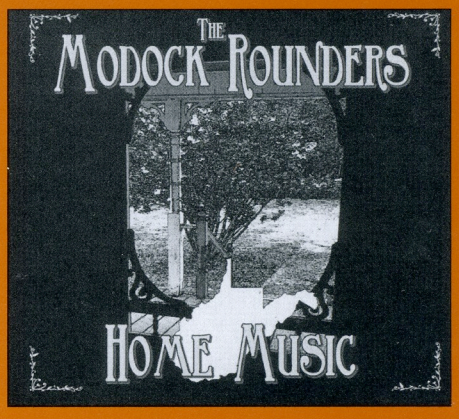
"My Sweet Baby and Gravity" is a nice take on love. "Chicken and Dumplins" is a bluesy ode to the finer things in life. "Silvertone" is spare, with the right amount of reverb.

And speaking of which, the CD is well produced. Available at www.clintoncollins.com.

The Modock Rounders:
Home Music
West Virginia's Modock Rounders (which boasts two good fiddlers) is a mainstay of Mountain State traditional music. This recording echoes the music of Clay County fiddler John Morris ("Blue-Eyed Gal" and "Brand New







Five Cents") from fiddler Jesse Pearson. "Barlow Knife" and "Jordan am a Hard Road to Travel" (with guitarist Cody Jordan on fiddle) come from Roane County fiddler Frank George. Another tune here, "Keep that Skillet Good and Greasy," was recorded by the Morris Brothers back in the early 1970s. More good taste, with nice banjo work by Kim Johnson. The late Calhoun fiddler Harvey Sampson's "Tom the Booger" gets the full band treatment. The CD also features Jordan on vocals, joined here by Karen Byington on backup vocals. The pair sound great on "Walk Around my Bedside." Also of note are "Cherry River Line" from the late Lester McCumbers and the fiddle sticks on "Jimmy Johnson." Available for $15 from Kim Johnson, P.O. Box 333, Dunbar, WV 25064.

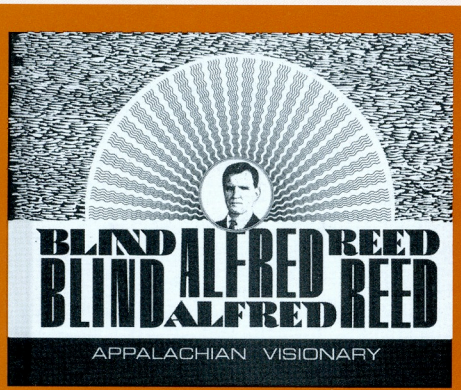
Blind Alfred Reed:
Appalachian Visionary
This CD and beautiful hardcover book chronicle the life and recording career of Summers County musician Alfred Reed. Reed was inducted in the West Virginia Music Hall of Fame in 2007.

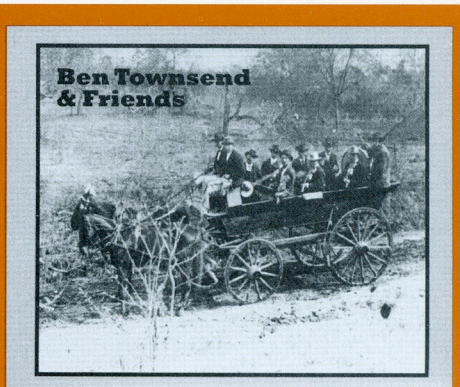
Reed wrote about current events of his day—the early 20th century—as in "The Wreck of the Virginian." He would accompany his not-unpleasant singing with his violin. He also took on gospel music with another original, "I Mean to Live for Jesus." These lyrics capture true life: "Well, take some of our leaders, some call them clean and pure / They'll pray and say, "Oh Jesus, have mercy on the poor!" / But when it comes to trading, just let me say right now / They'll surely trade some poor man out of his best horse and cow."

The book includes lyrics and many photos, with a biography and overview of his music.

Ben Townsend & Friends:
Deep End Sessions, Volume III
In what has to be a first, this recording, the result of a cross-country bicycle trip Ben Townsend made with friends in 2015, has been nominated for a Grammy. As of this writing, it had made it through the first round of elimination, against hundreds of other recordings. The tunes were inspired by musicians in each state they traveled through and recorded with different lineups of friends in the Los Angeles old-time music community.

"Old Christmas Morning" kicks off the CD, with Stewed Mulligan alum and former West Virginia resident Joe Wack. Twin fiddles, spare, but rich. Next up is "Middle





Ridge Waltz," a tune from the late Sloan Staggs. This wonderful melody features great accordion playing from Erin Schneider with Kelly Marie Martin on guitar. "Sit at home" features the same ladies, with super vocals on the old-time blues tune. Love that whistling, and man, that guitar sounds fine.

Townsend takes a solo turn on the slippery Fiddlin' Arthur Smith tune "Florida Blues."

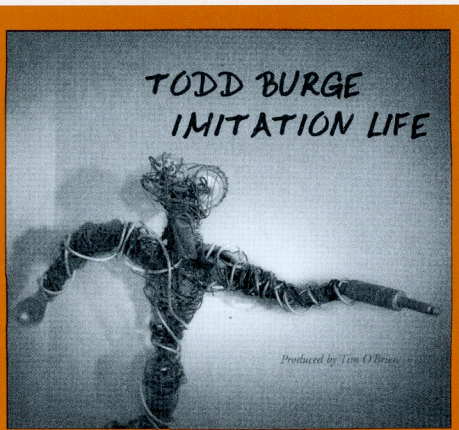
The stately "I Jumped on the Bull and the Bull Ran Across the Creek" comes from the Polish fiddling tradition in Texas. Nice!

This is a great collection of tunes from super players. Townsend, who engineered this project, has been nominated for another Grammy for his engineering skills on a CD he recorded for West Virginia storyteller and musician Adam Booth. Available at www.deependsessions.com.

Todd Burge: ***Imitation Life***
There is a wide variety on this 11-track CD. Burge, a Parkersburg singer-songwriter, has a unique way of seeing, and singing about, the world.

"Ask Them To," a fresh take on finding love, shows Burge's rich voice can hit those high notes. "Good Times of Life" is a look back at youth—how did we survive? And wit, as on "If This Tree Could Talk: "If this tree could talk/He would cuss at us/For carving our names in his bark/Happy were we as we cut that old tree/But to him, it was way too sappy." His phrasing adds the unexpected to a song with a lead guitar break worthy of the Carter Family. "Change (for Clean Water)" tackles environmental issues and the future of our youth: "Short-term gain is taking away everything our great state has got to gain/And when there's nothing left to lose, our kids will just pack it up and simply move away/It's true what they say, 'Mountaineers are always free' in their hearts and minds with freedom to leave/Change, change, if not it all, will stay the same/Change, change, we've got to break and make some change."

Recorded in Nashville and produced by Tim O'Brien. Another new release from Burge, *Live on Mountain Stage 2006-2015*, features live recordings of his many appearances on the public radio show. Insightful liner notes from *Mountain Stage* host Larry Groce.



PAUL GARTNER moved to West Virginia from Ohio in 1977 and lives in Lincoln County. He's a multi-instrumentalist who has placed in the old-time banjo competition at the Vandalia Gathering. He performs with his band Born Old and is a copy editor for Charleston Newspapers. His most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in the Winter 2015 issue.

Films of Appalachia: 2015-2016

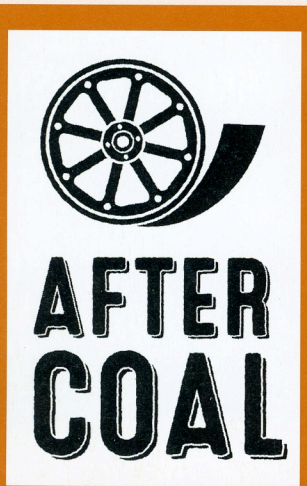
By Steve Fesenmaier

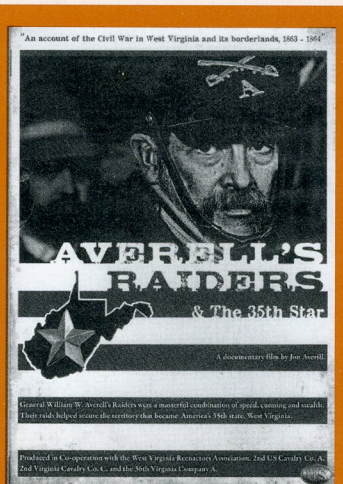
After Coal
Appalshop, 55 mins.
Tom Hansel, director of *The Electricity Fairy*, compares traditional coal-mining towns in Wales and eastern Kentucky that are trying to rebuild their economies. The documentary is less about competing economic theories and more about how people in both lands still have hope for the future despite recent economic downturns. *After Coal* has been featured at various local film festivals, including the West Virginia International Film Festival. Available at aftercoal.com.

Averell's Raiders and The 35th Star
Averill Vision, 125 mins.
Jon Averill directed this film about his relative, Civil War General William Woods Averell, whose campaigns against Confederate forces helped protect West Virginia when our state first entered the union. Reenactors and authors cover various aspects of Averell's actions, including the battles of Droop Mountain and Moorefield, the Salem Raid, and Hunter's raid in the upper Shenandoah Valley. The film pays tribute to Averell, who was often disparaged by his contemporaries—such as generals Joseph Hooker, David Hunter, and Philip Sheridan—despite a track record of military success in West Virginia. Available at www.averellsraiders.com/.

Big Stone Gap
Altar Identity, 103 mins.
This film adaptation of Adriana Trigiani's popular novel is set in a small coal-mining community in Virginia in 1978. It stars Ashley Judd, who discovers her real father is Italian. U.S. Senator John Warner visits the town with his movie-star wife, Elizabeth Taylor, on a chaotic day in Big Stone Gap. An interesting aspect of the film includes Melungeons—a mixed-race population thought to be of European, African, and Indian ancestry—who live in Central Appalachia. It was filmed entirely on location in Big Stone Gap. It also stars Whoopi Goldberg and Beckley native Chris Sarandon. Available through Amazon and other online sellers.

Blackwater Canyon–Portrait of the Wild Lands
Walkabout, 30 mins.
Leann Hughes and Andrew Price of Wheeling-based Walkabout directed this historical film about a beau-





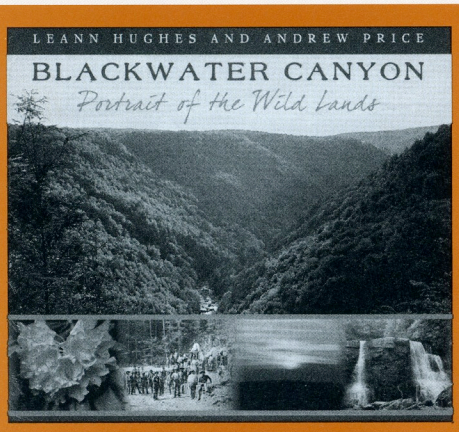


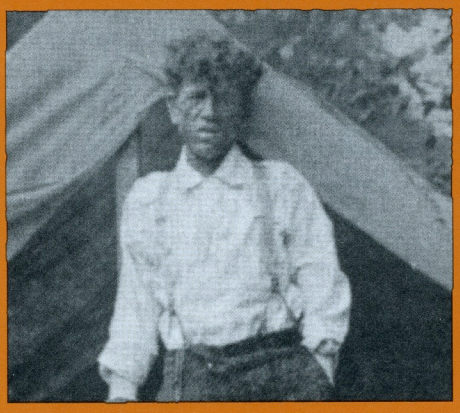
tiful part of Tucker County, called the "crown jewel of West Virginia." The short documentary covers early surveying and the Fairfax Stone, the logging and coal industries, deforestation, the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s, ecotourism, and recent controversies about preserving the area. The filmmakers dedicate the documentary to the late West Virginia historian Stuart McGehee. Available at www.facebook.com/blackwatercanyon.

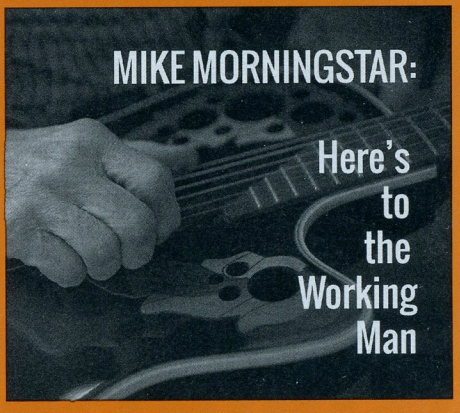
George Rashid: The Leper of Pickens
Peggy and Jason Harman, 29 mins.
In 1906, George Rashid, a 21-year-old Lebanese/Syrian man with leprosy, arrived in Elkins to work for his brother Charley. At one point, Rashid hopped a train in an attempt to return to the Middle East, thinking that a swim in the Jordan River would cure him. However, police detained him in Cumberland, Maryland, and Baltimore & Ohio Railroad officials sent him to the town of Pickens—the most remote location on the railroad line. When locals learned of his condition, some rejected him, but others helped him as much as they could. He died soon after, likely due to a terminal heart condition. The filmmakers suggest the possibility that Rashid never even had leprosy. His troubled medical case helped lead to the creation of the public health agencies of West Virginia state government. This documentary was screened at the West Virginia FILMmakers Festival. Available from Dr. Peggy Harman, 304-696-3146.

Mike Morningstar: Here's to the Working Man
Richard Anderson Productions and Laffin' River Films, 88 mins.
Mike Morningstar is a prolific Gilmer County musician who's written poignant songs about the Mountain State, with themes ranging from working people to environmental issues. Among his best known songs are "West Virginia Girl" and "Buffalo Creek Disaster." Mike began his musical career in 1964 when, at age 16, he joined a predominantly black rhythm & blues soul band. Baltimore-based filmmaker Richard Anderson's documentary examines Mike's music and personal struggles, such as losing his musically talented son in a fatal car accident and overcoming mental and physical challenges from his service in Vietnam. The film, an official selection of the 2016 West Virginia International Film Festival, includes interviews with Mike and his wife, Donna, as well as 14 songs, mostly performed live.

The Mine Wars, American Experience
PBS, 120 mins.
Executive Director Mark Samels, director of *West Virginia–A Film History* (1995), has produced perhaps the most definitive documentary about the West Virginia Mine Wars to date. The film focuses on labor





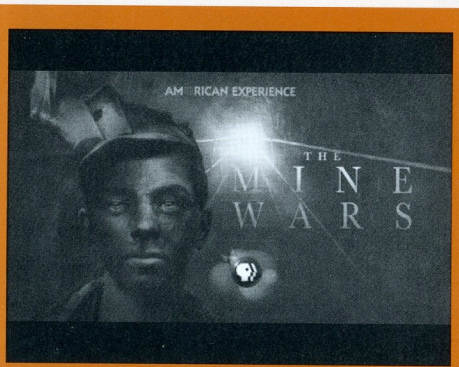


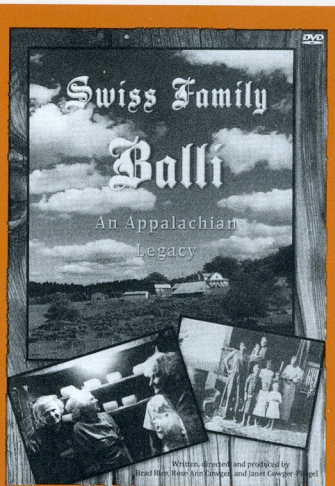
leader "Mother" Jones, who rallied West Virginia coal miners numerous times over two decades, and key events of the bloody time period in southern West Virginia, including the Paint Creek-Cabin Creek Strike (1912-1913), the Matewan Massacre (1920), Sid Hatfield's assassination (1921), and the Battle of Blair Mountain (1921). Available at www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/theminewars/.

Swiss Family Balli–An Appalachian Legacy
NWCC, 103 mins.
West Virginia filmmaker Brad Rice, whose work is featured weekly on Charleston's WCHS-TV, teamed up with Rose Ann Cowger and Janet Cowger Fliegel to direct, produce, and edit this film about the Ballis, a Swiss-American family from Webster County. The film, which received a special screening at the 2016 West Virginia International Film Festival, focuses on the triumphs and struggles of John and Hulda Balli and their children. Three of their daughters became internationally known through a 1976 *National Geographic* article that showed how the Balli sisters were keeping alive various Swiss and Appalachian traditions, such as cheese making and quilting. GOLDENSEAL has featured two stories about the Balli sisters, both written by Alan Byer: "Visiting the Balli Sisters of Helvetia," Summer 2010, and "Swiss Family Balli: The Movie," Winter 2015. Available from NWCC, P.O. Box 32, Hacker Valley, WV 26222.

West Virginia My Home–Musicians and the Mountain State Experience
West Virginia Music Hall of Fame, 60 mins.
Michael Lipton and the West Virginia Music Hall of Fame have produced a landmark film about the great musicians from the Mountain State. West Virginia native Kathy Mattea talks about how the values she learned growing up have carried throughout her life and career. Bobby Taylor, an internationally recognized fiddler and former programmer of the Vandalia Gathering, comments on the deep connection between West Virginia families and music. From bluegrass to jazz to rock 'n' roll, West Virginians have played key roles in developing contemporary American music. The documentary also profiles Bill Withers, Brad Paisley, Little Jimmy Dickens, Hazel Dickens, George Crumb, Kathy Mattea, John Ellison, Everett Lilly, Charlie McCoy, Billy Edd Wheeler, Billy Cox, and many others. You just have to watch this fascinating film. Available at www.wvmusichalloffame.com/homepage.html.

STEVE FESENMAIER was the state film librarian for the West Virginia Library Commission from 1978 until 2009. He is one of the foremost experts on the history of cinema in West Virginia. His latest contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in our Summer 2013 issue. You can contact him directly at (304)345-5850 or at mystery12@suddenlink.net.







A Call to Action: Let's Save West Virginia's Film History

By Steve Fesenmaier

Ever since I retired from the West Virginia Library Commission in 2009, I've become obsessed with saving great films made by West Virginians and about West Virginia. The 2013 death of Charleston's Bob Gates—in my opinion, the state's most important filmmaker ever—was a big impetus for me because I know that generations of people will want to see his important films about coal mining, music, and other topics.

Thanks to folks like Dennis Strom, Mollie Moorhead, Richard Fauss, and Greg Carroll, Bob's work was literally saved from the trash heap. They prevented much of his film footage, photos, and other items from being thrown away. Now that Bob's wife, Mollie, has also left us, who will give us access to Bob's films?

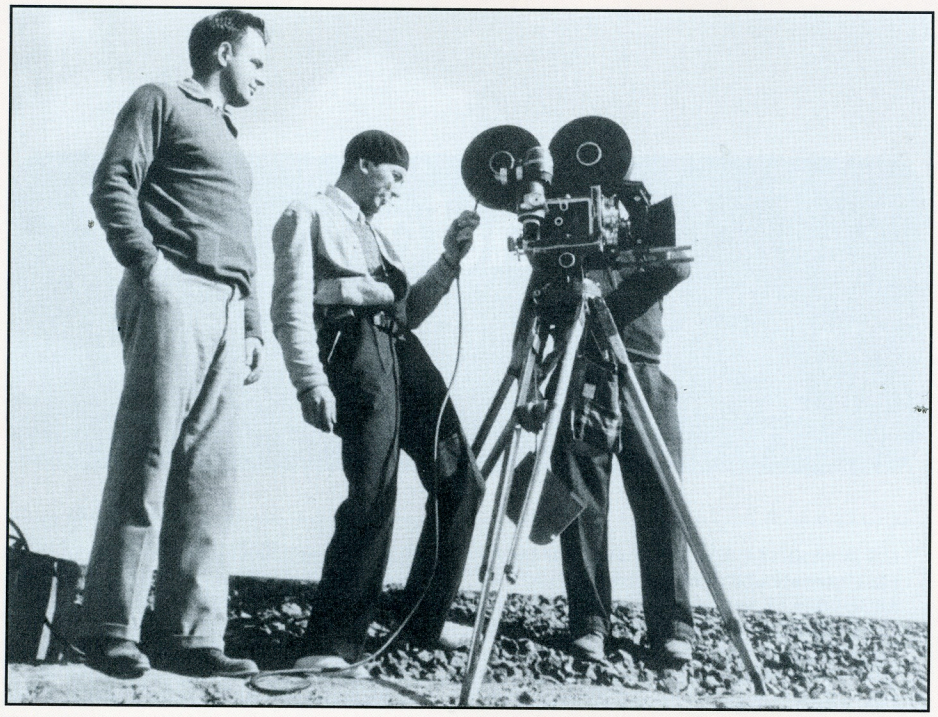
Another great filmmaker, Ray Schmidt of Hardy County, also passed away recently. His son Ray is a fellow filmmaker and continues his father's legacy. Sadly, though, he also suffers from Marfan Syndrome, the same disease that took his father's life.

As far as I know, no retail outlet in the state is currently carrying the films of Bob, Ray, and many other important West Virginia filmmakers. And despite our 21st century technologies, particularly the ability to download and stream films, many filmmakers are finding it harder than it was 30 or 40 years ago to get their movies distributed.

So, this is a call to action to Save West Virginia's Film History. A concerted collective effort should be made by the state Filmmakers Guild, Film Office, Archives, Library Commission, and other interested individuals and groups to preserve movies made by the state's

Bob Gates (1944-2013) of Charleston—a former chemical and computer engineer for Union Carbide—was one of West Virginia's most significant filmmakers of the late 20th century. He's remembered for such films as *Morris Brothers Old-Time Music Festival*, *In Memory of the Land and People*, *All Shaken Up*, and *Building a Cello with Harold*. Courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives.





Ellis Dungan (1909-2001) was a landmark filmmaker in India from the 1930s to 1950s. In 1958, he returned to his native Ohio Valley and began making films based in Wheeling, including *Wheels to Progress* and *For Liberty and Union*. Courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives.

notable filmmakers. I donated my own collection of more than 100 films to the State Archives. Richard Fauss, the archives' audio-visual archivist, will process and preserve them, making them available to researchers forever.

West Virginia has a long filmmaking history. The Spring issue of GOLDENSEAL profiled a long-lost film about the Hatfield and McCoy Feud (1915). More than a century later, we have our latest film about the Mountain State: the two-hour *American Experience* documentary on PBS about the West Virginia Mine Wars. It was produced by former West Virginia filmmaker Mark Samels, who made *West Virginia: A Film History*, which first aired on PBS in 1995.

I'll be writing an annual column for GOLDENSEAL about Appalachia-related films. I've been reviewing films for the magazine since 1978. This is just one way people across the country can learn about West Virginia films. We also need libraries and schools to acquire and promote West Virginia-related films, just as they do for our authors.

I continually ask my fellow West Virginians if they have seen the two most famous films set in our state: Charles Laughton's *The Night of the Hunter* (1955) and John Sayles' *Matewan* (1987). Relatively few have seen both or know about their West Virginia connections. That's sad. It would be like West Virginians not knowing that Pearl Buck and Homer Hickam were born in West Virginia.

Many West Virginians also don't realize our state's connection to recent box-office smashes. For instance, how many know that filmmaker J. J. Abrams' co-scriptwriter for the new *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* was Lawrence Kasdan? Kasdan, who grew up in Morgantown, also wrote *The Big Chill*; co-wrote *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, and *Return of the Jedi*; and wrote and directed *Body Heat*.

Dennis Strom, B. J. Gudmundsson, Danny Boyd, and many other Baby Boomer filmmakers still make world-class films right here. I watched a great West Virginia-themed movie last summer, *Angel's Perch*, which is set primarily in the old logging town of Cass in Pocahontas County.

As a start to saving West Virginia films, all West Virginia filmmakers—or anyone making films related to Appalachia—should send DVDs of their movies to the GOLDENSEAL office:

GOLDENSEAL
Culture Center
1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East
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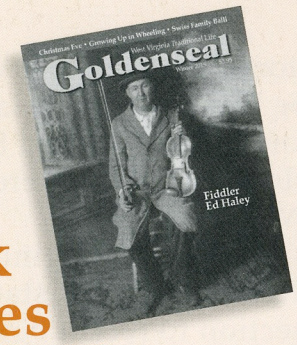
While not all movies submitted will be reviewed in the magazine, all will be donated to the West Virginia State Archives for preservation.



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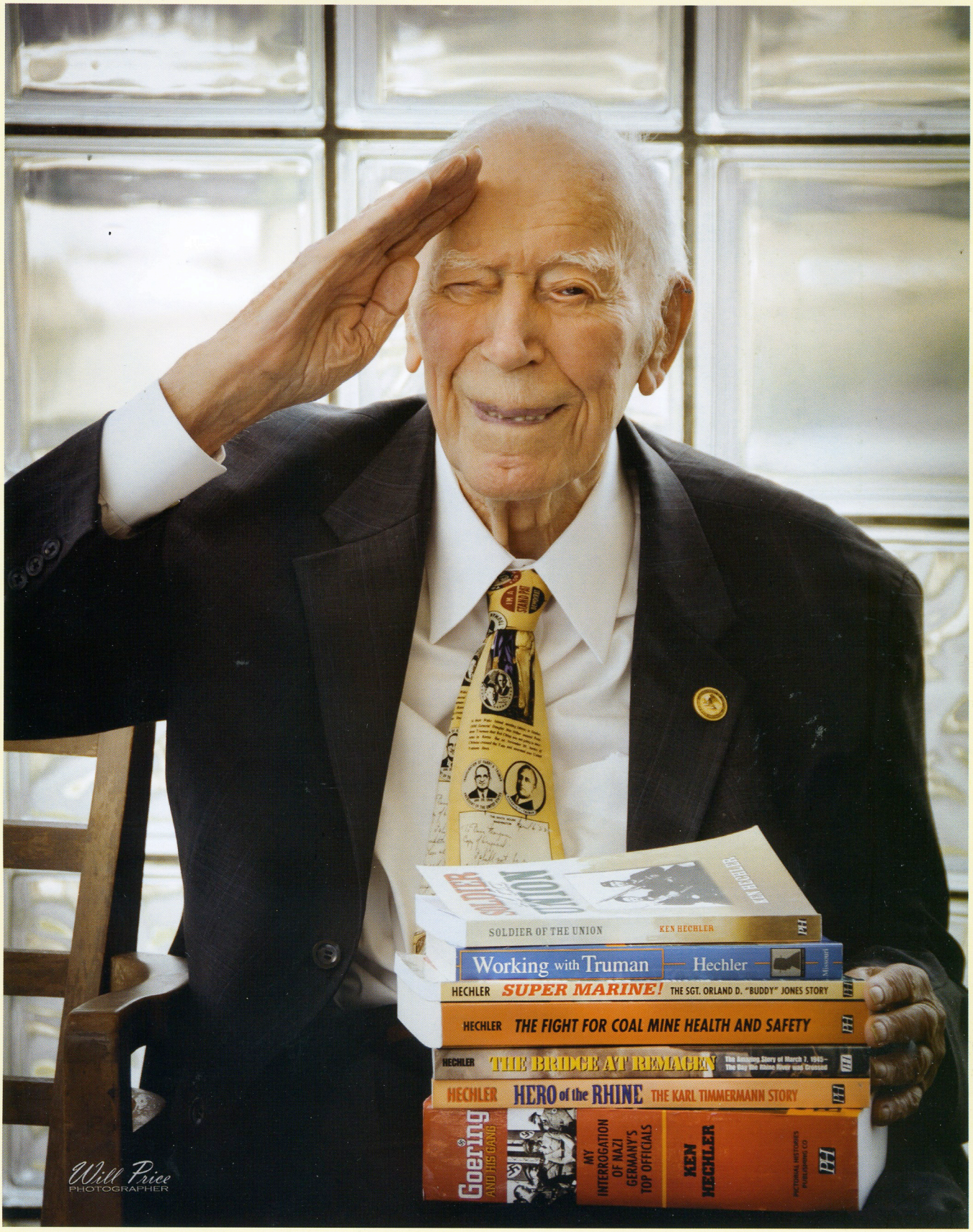

Will Price's photo of statesman, author, historian, teacher, and activist Ken Hechler was featured in "West Virginia Photographers: Capturing the Mountain State," a recent exhibit at the West Virginia Culture Center. Please see page 5 for a short tribute to Ken, who passed away in Romney on December 10, 2016, at age 102.

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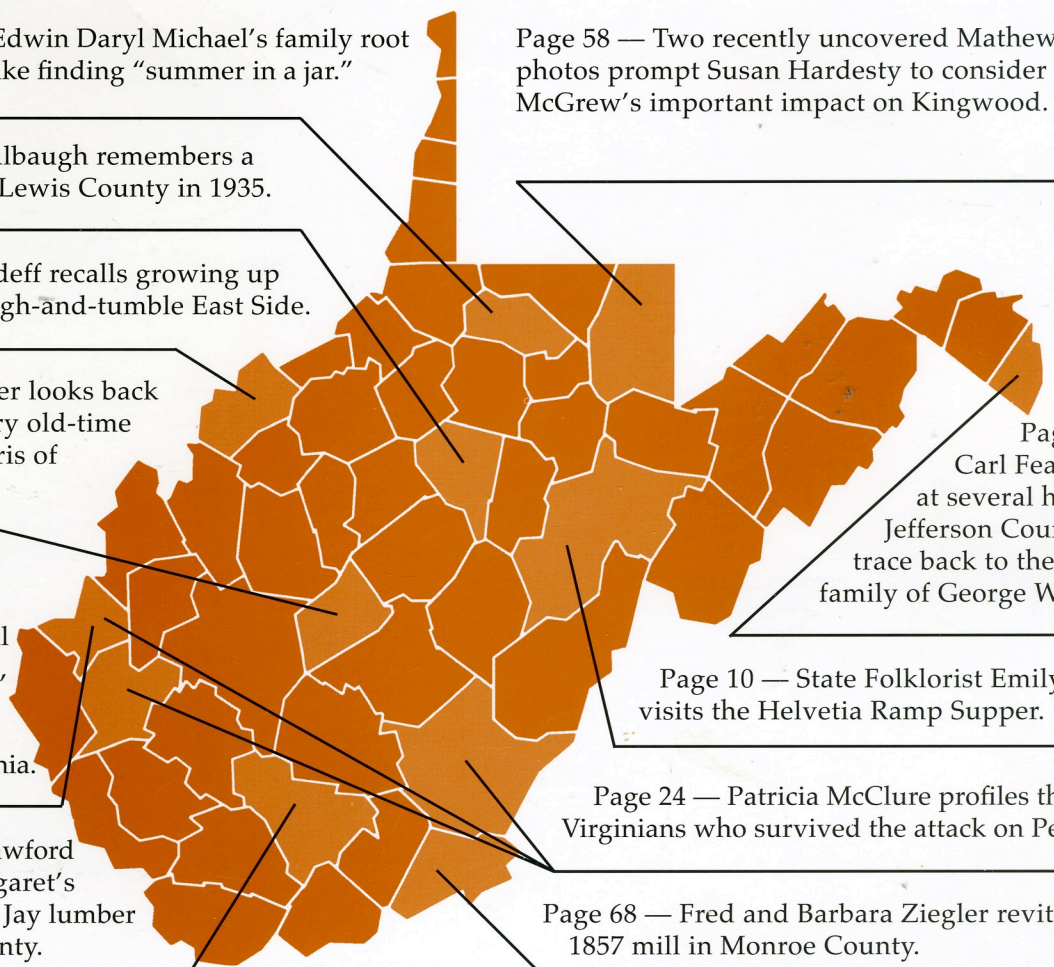

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