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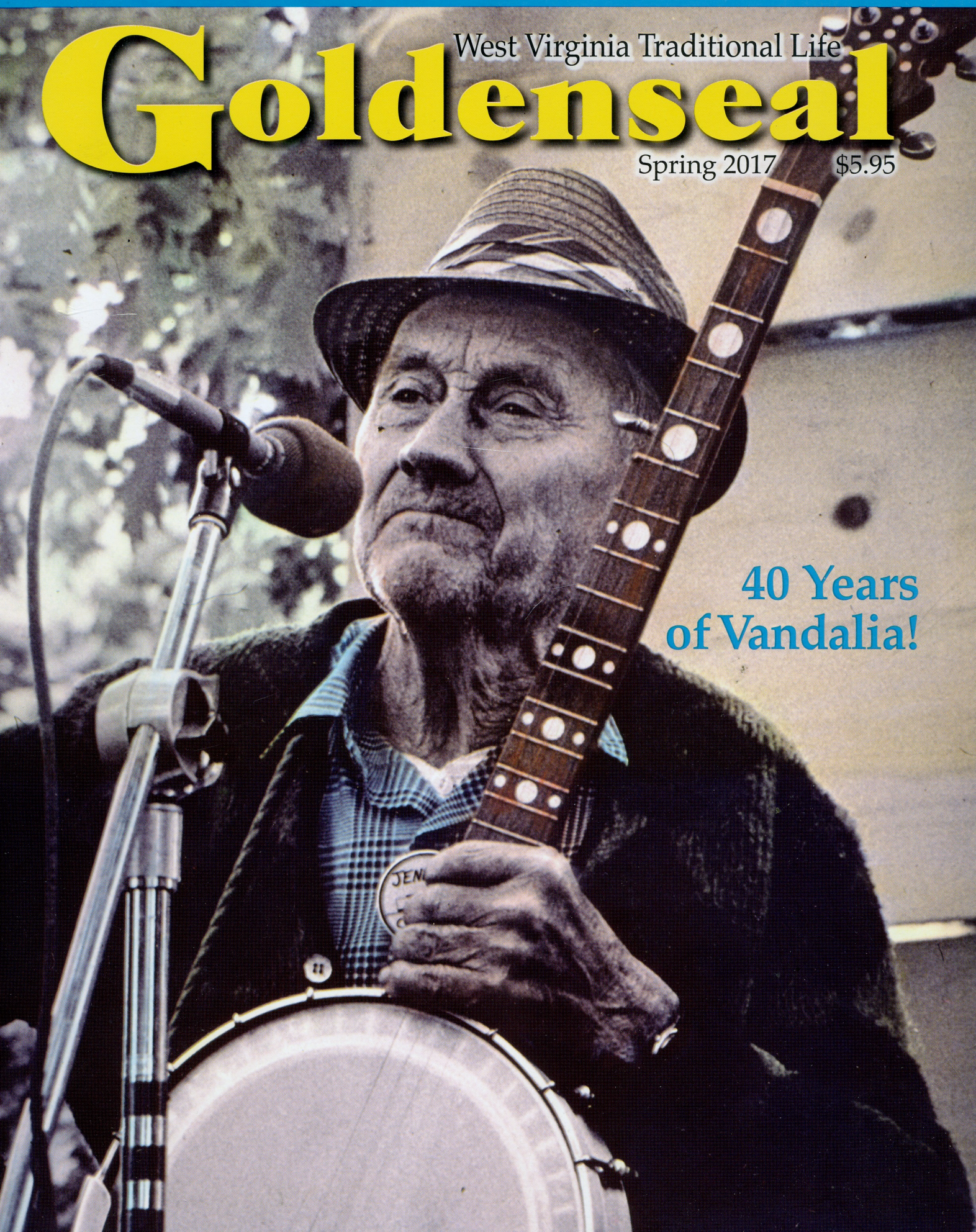
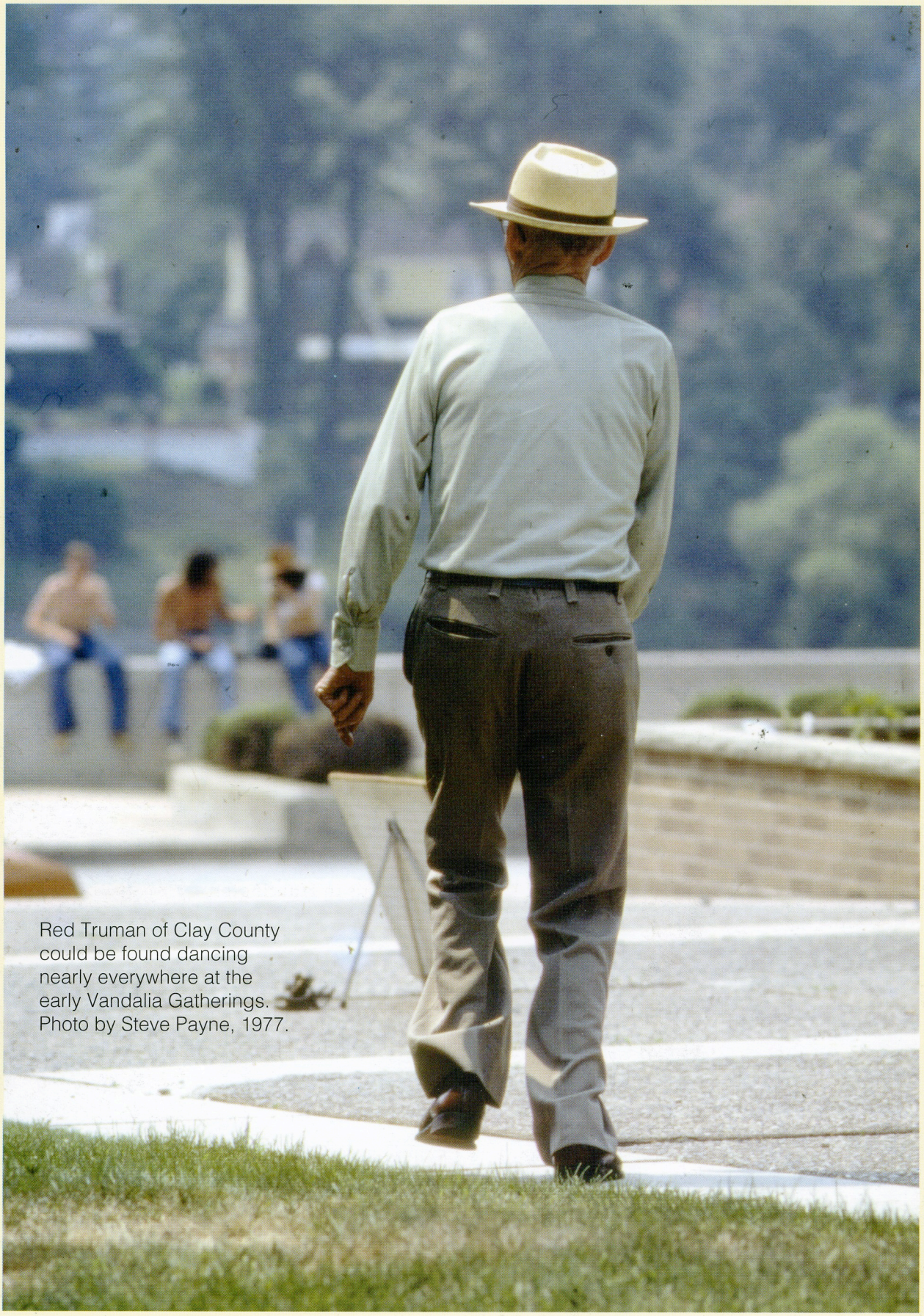
West Virginia Traditional Life

Goldenseal

Spring 2017 $5.95



40 Years of Vandalia!



Red Truman of Clay County could be found dancing nearly everywhere at the early Vandalia Gatherings. Photo by Steve Payne, 1977.

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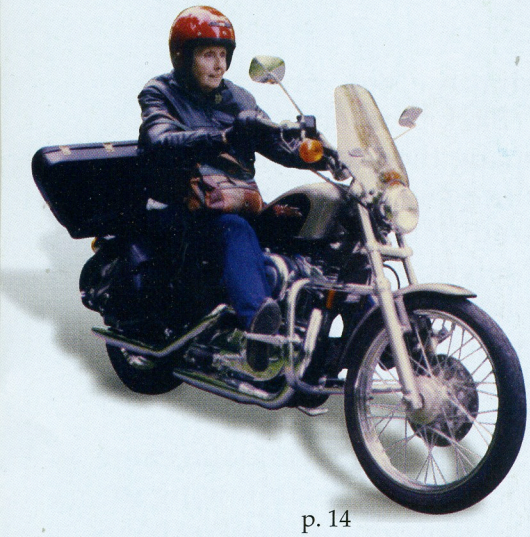

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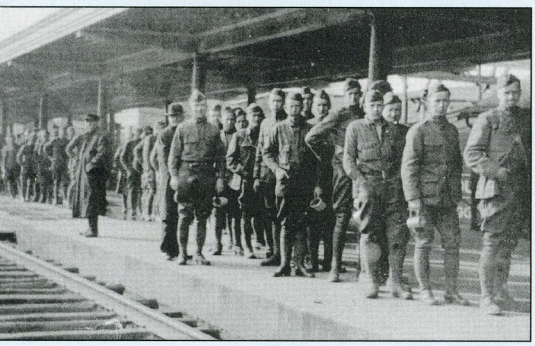

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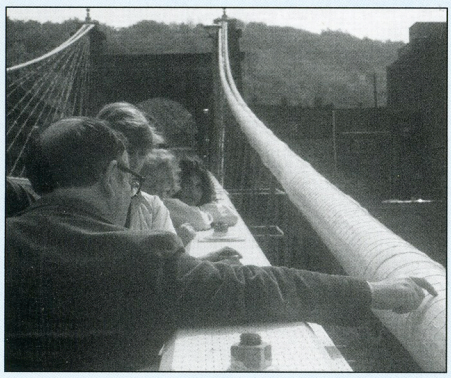

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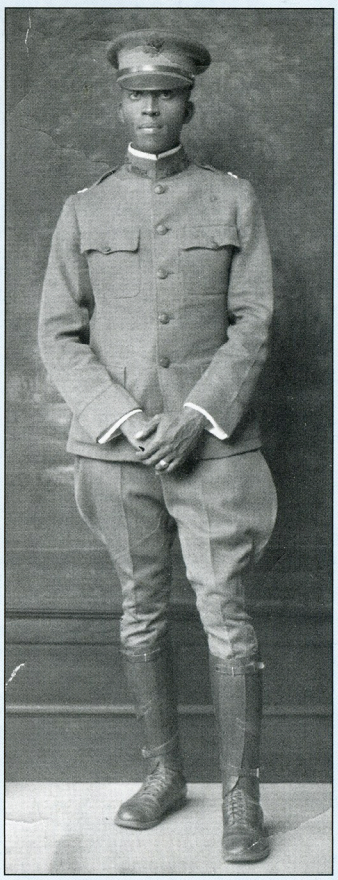

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On the cover: Jenes Cottrell (1901-1980) of Clay County was a great banjo player and talented woodworker who made everything from rolling pins to banjos crafted from Buick torque converters. A legend of West Virginia folk music, he's shown here at the 1979 Vandalia Gathering. Photo by Rick Lee, courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives.

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From the Editor

I worked my first Vandalia Gathering in 2001. I'm not sure "worked" is accurate. Led by longtime Culture & History events coordinator Pat Cowdery, Vandalia was running like a fine-oiled machine by its 25th year. My main "job" was to drive musicians around the Capitol Complex in a golf cart.

At the time, I didn't realize I was witnessing the last of Vandalia's old guard. Such folk music legends as Phoebe Parsons and Sylvia O'Brien would pass away within the year. Staff carried Sylvia, age 92, onto stage in her wheelchair to compete in one last senior banjo contest. And we'd lost Glen Smith, another Vandalia Award recipient, just weeks before the 2001 event.

But one other stalwart was still going strong. One of my assignments was to drive then 92-year-old Melvin Wine of Braxton County to the outdoor stage where he was about to perform. Melvin was the first recipient of the Vandalia Award (1981). As we drove through the parking lot, fans—from children to seniors—kept waving and yelling, "Hey, Melvin!" He'd always wave back with a smile.

I eventually turned to him and said, "You're a rock star here!"

Melvin grinned and replied simply, "Yep, pretty much."

Back then, that's what made the Vandalia Gathering so special. For decades, traditional musicians, like Melvin, Phoebe, and Sylvia, had played at community dances but rarely on concert stages, let alone in front of thousands of fans.

Fortunately, Vandalia came along in 1977—following in the footsteps of the West Virginia State Folk Festival at Glenville (founded in 1950) and the Mountain State Art & Craft Fair at Cedar Lakes (founded in 1963)—and gave these amazing musicians the platform they truly deserved. Although I didn't work at Vandalia until 2001, I attended my first one in 1977 and kept coming back year after year. When I was young, the music didn't capture my attention as much as the crafts, especially the toys made by Wetzel County's Dick Schnacke—including his Whimmydiddles and FlipperDingers. I'd never seen such highly technical low-tech toys. After all, it was the time of Pong, a revolutionary video game that seemed like the pinnacle of technology to an 11 year old in the '70s.

As a child, I didn't understand everything that made Vandalia so special or that I'd fallen into a 19th-century mountain-culture theme

park—right smack in the middle of our capital city. All I knew was that I loved everything about Vandalia.

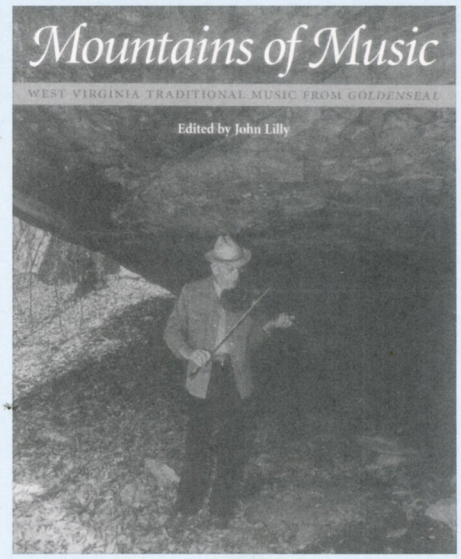
Today, all of the original "old-timers" are gone. We are blessed with many from the next generation, including Frank George and Lou Maiuri, who still make regular appearances in their late 80s.

In the last few years, though, I've noticed something very different. More and more young people are coming to hear these ancient songs and learn licks from the next generation of masters. I'm proud to call many of these folks my friends, and when they play, or even listen to, traditional music, I see genuine excitement in their eyes. As a result, our rich folk traditions continue.

In this issue, GOLDENSEAL pays tribute to many of the people who've made Vandalia one of the nation's finest folk-heritage festivals. Quite simply, their music, dance, and crafts *are* West Virginia history.

Stan Bumgardner

Our editor still enjoys everything Vandalia has to offer. Please stop by the GOLDENSEAL booth this year and say "hi" to Stan and Kim—the one doing all the work. Photo by Steve Brightwell, 2016.



Mountains of Music: West Virginia Traditional Music from GOLDENSEAL features 25 years of stories about our state's rich music heritage in one volume. This 231-page book, compiled by former GOLDENSEAL editor John Lilly, is the definitive title on West Virginia traditional music and the mountain culture from which it comes. The book is available for $33.95, plus $2 shipping per book. West Virginia residents, please add 7% sales tax (total $38.33 per book).

Please make check or money order payable to GOLDENSEAL. Send to:

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GOLDENSEAL Good-Bye

By John Lilly

Folklorist, fiddler, administrator, and documentarian Alan Jabbour passed away on January 13 at his home in Washington, D.C. A Florida native, Alan played violin in the Jacksonville Symphony and several other orchestras before moving to North Carolina and developing a strong interest in traditional fiddle music. He received his master's degree in 1966 and his doctorate in 1968, both from Duke University.

While a student at Duke, Alan made extensive trips throughout North Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia in search of nearly forgotten fiddle music. His greatest find was West Virginia native Henry Reed, an extraordinary fiddler with a repertoire of rare and beautiful tunes. Alan studied under Henry Reed and became an authority on Reed's style and music. Living at that time in nearby Glen Lyn, Virginia, Reed gladly took Jabbour under his wing and taught him such tunes as "Over the Waterfall," "Cold Frosty Morning," "Magpie," "Kitchen Girl," "Green Willis," "Ebenezer," and "Ducks on the Pond."

Alan took these tunes with him back to North Carolina, where he was part of a growing musical community that soon gave rise to the Hollow Rock String Band. This influential group, which included Alan as well as St. Albans native Tommy Thompson, recorded its first album in 1967 for Ken Davidson's West Virginia-based Kanawha label. The tunes Alan Jabbour collected from Reed formed much of that group's repertoire and were spread widely thanks to that recording and a 1974 release from Rounder Records.

After receiving his Ph.D. in 1968, Alan took a job teaching English, folklore, and ethnomusicology at UCLA in California. He was surprised (and no doubt pleased) to discover that many of the Henry Reed tunes he'd collected in Virginia were already being widely played on the West Coast.

In 1969, Alan moved to Washington, D.C., where he made his home for the rest of his life and worked for several federal agencies until his retirement in 1999. From 1969 until 1974, Alan was the head of the Archive of Folk Song at the Library of Congress and later became director of the folk arts program at the National Endowment for the Arts.

Beginning in 1970, Alan spent extensive time in West Virginia, where he worked with folklorist and photographer Carl Fleischhauer and freelance researcher and musician Dwight Diller on an ambitious project to document and present the music and stories of the Hammons Family. [See "West Virginia's Hammons Family" by Wayne Howard in the Winter 2014 GOLDENSEAL] A number of recordings resulted from that research, including the 1973 Library of Congress double LP *The Hammons Family: A Study of a West Virginia Family's Traditions* and a companion LP for Rounder Records called *Shaking Down the Acorns*.

Alan became the founding director of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress in 1976. He led what was without question the preeminent repository for field documentation of American folklore and folklife for the next 23 years.

Alan's accomplishments during this time were many. In 1977, he founded the Festival of American Fiddle Tunes in Port Townsend, Washington. He served as president of the American Folklore Society and served on numerous boards and panels dealing with folk culture and traditional music.

He also continued his own

Alan Jabbour (1942-2017)

Photo by Carl Fleischhauer, 1999.

fiddling. After retiring from the Library of Congress in 1999, Alan became a familiar presence at festivals and music gatherings across the country. He frequently played—and often recorded—with banjo player Ken Perlman.

Alan also continued to research and document various aspects of traditional life, especially in Appalachia. Together with his wife, Karen Singer Jabbour, Alan authored a book about burial traditions in the Upland South: *Decoration Day in the Mountains*. [See "Decoration Day" in the Spring 2012 GOLDENSEAL]

Tall and gangly, nearly always smiling, Alan exuded a spirited and joyful presence. This was particularly true when he played the fiddle, elbows and knees flying and his eyes darting around at other musicians in the room. He was a humble and soft-spoken man, quick to encourage and always a little surprised at the huge impact of his work.

He once told a story of traveling in Eastern Europe and coming across a circle of old-time musicians. None of them spoke English, but they delighted Alan by playing a danceable version of "Over the Waterfall"—a Henry Reed tune Alan had collected years ago—some 5,000 miles away.

JOHN LILLY of Charleston was editor of GOLDENSEAL from 1997 to 2015.

Talking Turkey Calls

"I ain't sold one yet"

It's early November, and I'm sitting in the small, dusty woodshop of Aaron Parsons, age 20. A large woodworking lathe spans the width of the room, a fox hide and metal traps hang from the walls, and strange sounds emanate from inside: *cluck cluck cluck, scrrrrrrraaaaape scrrrrrrraaaaape, purr purr purr purr.*

Aaron isn't showing me a new video game, nor tormenting the family cat, but demonstrating turkey calls he makes from materials found on his family's Jackson County land. This particular call was made from red slate repurposed from an old house shingle, paired with a black-walnut *striker*, dragged across it to produce sound.

As with many of Aaron's hobbies—which include trapping, skinning and tanning hides, bow-hunting, and making sinkers and bullets—he has absorbed some knowledge of the craft from his family but is largely self-taught: "My family's been turkey hunters as long as I can remember. My grandpa's in the turkey-hunting hall of fame, and it's just been a family tradition."

Years ago, Aaron found a turkey call his grandfather had made out of a broom handle and a dowel, and it inspired him to make his own. His first calls were crafted from old snuff cans and slate, which he cut with a file, scissors, and a hacksaw to fit into the can. He hand-carved his first striker from a piece of white oak firewood. Now, he uses a lathe to fashion his strikers.

Turkey call-maker Aaron Parsons of Jackson County. Photo by Emily Hilliard.

To be good at making turkey calls, you have to have a keen understanding of turkey behavior and turkey-hunting strategy. In the spring, when the gobblers, or male turkeys, are look-

Aaron Parsons of Jackson County

By Emily Hilliard

ing for a mate, hunters use calls to mimic hen sounds, drawing a gobbler to them. A hunter needs to be able to make several different types of hen sounds, depending on the time of day, point in the season, and position of the turkey.

Aaron says, "In the morning, you want to get them gobbling on the roost so you know where to start. Then, once it's daylight, you use different calls to get them to respond to you on the ground, and then, so you can get close enough to actually get a shot on them. The rhythm of the yelp changes from time to time throughout the day." In the first few weeks of spring season, trees are bare, so sounds travel farther than they do later in the spring when leaves are lush and muffle sound.

Aaron takes this into consideration when he's crafting his calls and strikers: "The softer the wood, the more mellow of a call you can get, but [with] these real hardwoods, you get that raspy, scrapey sound. I have one carved from pine that I lathed down, but it was too soft—it wouldn't even make a sound at all, so I had to fire-harden the tip." Aaron's calls are beautiful as well as practical. His newest striker, turned on his lathe, looks like a fine chair leg or stair railing: "It's just a personal thing. I like having the arch. . . . I like having the lines on there. I just think it looks better like that," he says of the fine detailing. He's drawn to the craft for the aesthetics as much as the functionality.

While Aaron could probably sell his calls—there's a decent-sized market for them now—most companies produce them from plastic and glass. "It's hard to find a wooden slate call store-bought anymore," he says. But he's not particularly interested in selling his calls, offering them as gifts, rather than commodities. "I've never sold a call," he says. "I've gave a lot away to family members and stuff, but I ain't sold one yet. I probably should, but it takes some of the fun out of it. Then it's a job instead of just a hobby."

For Aaron Parsons, making turkey calls and hunting are family pursuits that allow him to develop a close connection with his people—past and present—and the land they've lived on for generations. Whether he's sourcing materials for calls, following his traplines, or hunting, he walks the family's acreage daily, learning its specific geography and ecosystem. His hobbies are not passing fancies; rather, they lead him to other, deeper studies and skills in hunting, trapping, fishing, and land husbandry. "I see something and I want to try it and start into it," Aaron says. "Then I just get way overboard, and it's the only thing I do for a year, and then the next year—same thing. It's been like that ever since I was little."

At age 20, Aaron has found what promises to be a life of learning, and craft, bound up with people and place.

To learn more about turkey calls, see "Turkey Talk with Peck Martin" by Bruce Ingram in the Fall 2005 GOLDENSEAL.

The 2017 spring turkey season in West Virginia—for bearded turkeys only—runs from April 17 to May 13. To learn more about hunting in the Mountain State, visit www.wvdnr.gov/Hunting/Hunting.shtm.

EMILY HILLIARD is our first official state folklorist with the West Virginia Folklife Program, a project of the West Virginia Humanities Council. She writes a regular column for GOLDENSEAL. Learn more about the Folklife Program at wvfolklife.org.

40 Years of Vandalia!

Come rain or shine, through blazing heat or perfect May weather, the annual Vandalia Gathering brings West Virginia's traditional musicians, dancers, storytellers / liars, and craftspeople together for a weekend of tunes, laughter, and food—three things West Virginians do best. Quite simply, Vandalia is one of the premier folk heritage events in our nation and the unofficial kickoff of the folk festival season.

Left: Award-winning fiddler John Morris of Clay County has been a regular at Vandalia and was a driving force behind the folk-music revival in the 1960s and 1970s. Photo by Michael Keller, 2000.

Below: Although not included in the first couple Vandalia Gatherings, music contests have become the heart of the event. Here, longtime Vandalia veterans Jimmy Costa (left) of Summers County and David O'Dell, a Roane County native, perform at a 2005 contest. Photo by Michael Keller.

Left: Dwight Diller of Pocahontas County led a banjo workshop at the first Vandalia in 1977 and has been a fixture ever since. A Mennonite minister, he's taught banjo at his Pocahontas County Yew Pine Mountain Old Time Music Retreats for decades. Photo by Kim Johnson, 2007.

Below: For years, the Vandalia Gathering kicked off with a grand parade led by Kanawha Valley Pipes and Drums. Photo by Michael Keller, 2005.

Below: Year to year, jams beneath the shade trees are probably the most popular activities. Photo courtesy of Division of Natural Resources.

< < < < < THE FIRST VANDALIA > > > > > >

Above left: Sylvia O'Brien of Clay County often performed with her brother Jenes Cottrell, who's playing a mountain stomper doll here. In addition to her music, Sylvia was known for her handmade dresses, which she fashioned on a treadle sewing machine set up outside because her house didn't have electricity and the front yard provided better light. All photos in this section by Steve Payne.

Above right: Steve Payne took this great shot of Blackie Cool (left) and Woody Simmons, both of Randolph County, on stage at the first Vandalia. Blackie and Woody first played together in 1932.

THE SCIENCE AND CULTURE CENTER PRESENTS

VANDALIA GATHERING

A FESTIVAL OF WEST VIRGINIA TRADITIONAL MUSIC

Welcome to Vandalia Gathering! We hope that you will join us at the Science and Culture Center in welcoming the participating musicians who will entertain you and explore the world of music, which is so much a part of our heritage in West Virginia. Below is a list of performers, presenters and craft demonstrators and a SCHEDULE OF EVENTS for Vandalia Gathering's four days. FOR SPECIFIC NAMES, ORDER OF APPEARANCE AND GENERAL INFORMATION CONSULT THE FRONT DESK DAILY. The Festival was designed to bring you together with the music and music-makers of West Virginia . . . so enjoy the concerts, participate in the workshops and meet the artists! Have a great time!

PERFORMERS, PRESENTERS and CRAFT DEMONSTRATORS

PERFORMERS:

OLIVE ABRAMS, Racine
GRACE ALSABROOKS, Bluefield
ELMER BIRD, Hurricane
ANDY BOARMAN, Hedgesville
PHYLLIS BOYENS, Sharon
THE CARPER FAMILY, Princeton
DORA CHAPMAN, Corton
TRENT CHINAULT, Peterstown
VIOLA CLARK, Bluefield
MOSE COFFMAN, Lewisburg
BONNIE COLLINS, West Union
CLARENCE COTTRELL, Sand Ridge
JENES COTTRELL, Ivydale
NOAH COTTRELL, Sand Ridge
HARRY DICKSON, Lindside
JOE DOBBS, Lavalette
WILSON DOUGLAS, Maysel
RUSSELL FLUHARTY, Mannington
WILLIS GARDNER, Brilliant
WORLEY GARDNER, Morgantown
FRANK GEORGE, Sinks Grove
BROOKS GORE, Princeton
CURRENCE and MINNIE HAMMONS, Huttonsville
THE HELVETIA DANCERS, Helvetia
DELBERT HUGHES, Ohley
MIKE HUMPHREYS, St. Albans

PRESENTERS:

DR. THOMAS S. BROWN, Morgantown
ROGER BRYANT, Davis
JIM BUSH, Ripley
ED CABBELL, Princeton
JIM COSTE, Hinton
DWIGHT DILLER, Marlinton
B. J. ESTILOW, Marlinton
CARL FLEISCHHAUER, Washington, D.C.
JUDY GALLOWAY, Charleston
FRANK GEORGE, Sinks Grove
BILL HAIRSTON, Charleston
RODDY MOORE, Ferrum, Va.
DAVE MORRIS, Charleston
PAUL REISLER, Montrose
MACK SAMPLES, Glenville
PAT SHIELDS, Keyser

PERFORMERS:

WILLIAM IMAN, Charleston
CLETUS JOHNSON, Mill Creek
E. E. JOHNSON, Meadow Creek
PAULINE LEATHERMAN, Burlington
EVERETT LILLY FAMILY, Clear Creek
PHYLLIS MARKS, Tanner
FRENCH MITCHELL, Buffalo
GRUDER and JENNIE MORRIS, Ivydale
IRA MULLINS, Clay
SYLVIA O'BRIEN, Ivydale
PHOEBA PARSONS, Orma
HERB PITZER, Lindside
KELTON ROTEN, Romney
HARVEY SAMPSON, Nicut
WOODY SIMMONS, Mill Creek
LAFE SPRY, Oak Hill
SLOAN STAGGS, Romney
REV. FREDDY STEELE, Mount Hope
CLARENCE and HAZEL STOVER, Clay
ROBERT and LINCOLN TAYLOR, Dunbar
LEE TRIPLETT, Clay
HOMER WALKER, Narrows, Va.
AUNT JENNIE WILSON, Peach Creek
MELVIN WINE, Copen
MARY BELLE WORKMAN, Maysel
NIMROD WORKMAN, native of Mingo County

CRAFT DEMONSTRATORS:

SUSI BAILEY, Bickmore
NEMA BELCHER, Elkview
FRANCES CASTO, Clendenin
JO CHILDERS, Indore
JENES COTTRELL, Ivydale
RAYMOND EPLER, South Charleston
ASEL GARDNER, Kingwood
VENUS GILLESPIE, Nellis
C. S. (JIM) JENNINGS, Nitro
ALBERTA JOHNSON, East Bank
MAGGIE MORRIS, Lizmore
JUDY PARCELL, Indore
HARVEY SAMPSON, Nicut
WILSON STOLLINGS, Chapmanville

This impromptu jam session in the Culture Center's Great Hall during the first Vandalia drew a packed crowd. The musicians are Joe Dobbs, then of Wayne County, on fiddle; Mack Samples of Kanawha County on guitar; Frank George of Roane County on banjo; and an unidentified bass player.

The first Vandalia Gathering was held at the Culture Center on the State Capitol Complex, May 27-30, 1977. State Division of Culture & History Commissioner Norman L. Fagan saw it as a way to showcase West Virginia's finest performers and craftspeople, many of whom had never shared their talents beyond their home counties.

Phoebe Parsons, known for her banjo playing, sense of humor, storytelling, and ballad singing, is shown here playing the fiddlesticks with her brother Noah Cottrell, both of Calhoun County. In addition to the fiddle, Noah also played banjo and loved to dance.

Here are four Vandalia greats (L-R): Clarence Stover, Dwight Diller, Wilson Douglas, and Gruder Morris, performing on the steps of the capitol. All were from Clay County except Dwight, who's from Pocahontas County.

That first Vandalia Gathering 40 years ago showcased more than 70 performers, nine quilters, five instrument makers, and various other craftspeople. Intended as a way to "pass along traditions," the first Vandalia had 25 workshops, covering everything from coal-mining songs to fiddle playing, and from black gospel and mountain music to a session highlighting women banjo players. There were dancers from Helvetia, storytellers, cloggers, and, of course, lots of great food.

Lincoln Taylor, from a long line of Roane County fiddlers, performs on the steps of the capitol at the first Vandalia. Lincoln, the father of 2010 Vandalia Award recipient Bobby Taylor, came in second in the senior fiddle contest at the Appalachian String Band Music Festival at Clifftop in 2001, when he was 90.

Sloan Staggs (right) of Romney plays banjo on the capitol steps with his sister Pauline Leatherman on guitar and an unidentified fiddler. Sloan and his friend Worley Gardner founded the Gardner Winter Music Festival in Morgantown in 1978.

Roger Bryant of Logan County, 2014 Vandalia Award recipient and grandson of the legendary Aunt Jennie Wilson, emcees a concert on the steps of the capitol in 1977.

Norman L. Fagan, who came up with the idea for that first event along with the late David Morris, knew Vandalia was a unique opportunity since many of the performers were already in their 70s and 80s. Fortunately, he had many of the performances filmed and photographed. Thanks to his foresight—and the dedicated photographers and staff of the Archives & History Library—we still have these beautiful color photos from the first Vandalia, documenting many of West Virginia's folk legends.

VANDALIA AWARD

Each Vandalia Gathering since 1981, a West Virginian has been presented with the Vandalia Award, our state's highest folklife honor. The individuals who receive this award embody the spirit of our state's folk heritage and are recognized for their lifetime contributions to West Virginia and its traditional culture.

In the early years, the award recognized musicians who had helped carry on old-time traditions by passing them on to new generations. In recent years, the award has been expanded to include people who have helped preserve various folk arts. Randall Reid-Smith, commissioner of the West Virginia Division of Culture & History, which hosts Vandalia, notes, "It's difficult each year to select only one individual to honor. We look for artists with genuine humility who've openly shared their craft and knowledge with others. The Vandalia Award, in essence, is really intended to honor the art form as much as the artist."

Here's a tribute to the 39 individuals who've been honored with the Vandalia Award.

Our Vandalia Award winners are also some of the most colorful characters in West Virginia history. Here's 2007 recipient Patty Looman of Mannington riding a Harley-Davidson, with her purse in her lap and hammered dulcimer strapped to the back. Courtesy of Lynette Swiger.

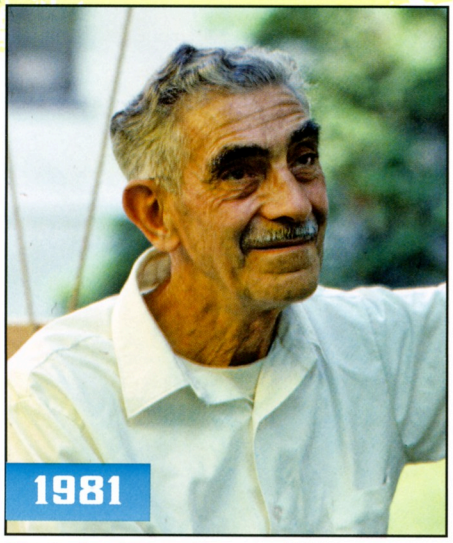


Photo by Steve Payne, 1977.

MELVIN WINE

(1909-2003)

This Braxton County fiddler's extensive repertoire and rustic fiddling style came from a long family and regional music tradition. His live performances were often mesmerizing, even in his 90s. Perhaps even more important, though, was his willingness to teach and share his music with others. Recipient of the first Vandalia Award, Melvin was also honored with the National Endowment for the Arts' prestigious National Heritage Fellowship in 1991.

See "Melvin Wine" by Susan Leffler, Summer 1991 GOLDENSEAL.

Photo by Kim Johnson, 1982.

IRA MULLINS

(1902-1987)

This champion fiddler from Clay County was one of the most memorable characters in Vandalia history. A natural performer, Ira (pronounced I-ree) had a unique repertoire and an outrageous personal style. His competitive spirit, exaggerated gift for storytelling, and gifted ability to entertain an audience made him one of the most beloved musicians in West Virginia history. He ran a sawmill for his living and was known in Clay County to be one of the finest sawyers in the area. Woody Simmons said of Ira that he could look at a tree and tell you exactly how many board feet of lumber it contained.

Photo by Michael Keller, 2000.

WOODY SIMMONS

(1911-2005)

Woody was a multi-instrumentalist from Randolph County. An intense competitor, he won countless prizes for his fiddling and banjo playing. He was born on Becky's Creek, near Huttonsville, and lived close by in Mill Creek for most of his life. Woody told stories of his long and adventurous life in the mountains and was one of our state's most colorful personalities.

"I always played with anybody, it didn't matter, now, they didn't have to be the finest players. . . . There'd always be a good note made somewhere on the fiddle."

–Woody Simmons

Photo by Steve Payne, 1979.

AUNT JENNIE WILSON

(1900-1992)

Aunt Jennie learned to play banjo and sing ballads from the many talented family members and other musicians in her Logan County community. She was among the first women in her region to play the banjo publicly. Strong-willed and articulate, with a raucous sense of humor, Aunt Jennie became a folk legend during the folk revival of the 1960s and 1970s. An annual Labor Day weekend festival is held in her honor at Chief Logan State Park.

"Don't take no more on your head than you can kick off at your heels."

–Aunt Jennie Wilson

Photo by Kim Johnson, 1983.

MIKE HUMPHREYS

(1919-1986)

Mike, a native of Elkview in Kanawha County, was one of our state's purest and most polished fiddlers. Known for his quiet and genial personality, he earned the respect and admiration of all who knew him. He was equally comfortable playing old-time, bluegrass, or country music. A popular performer at local festivals, Mike also appeared regularly on radio and television throughout the Kanawha Valley and across West Virginia.

See "'I Just Use a Bow': Oldtime Fiddler Mike Humphreys" by Robert Spence, Winter 1985 GOLDENSEAL.

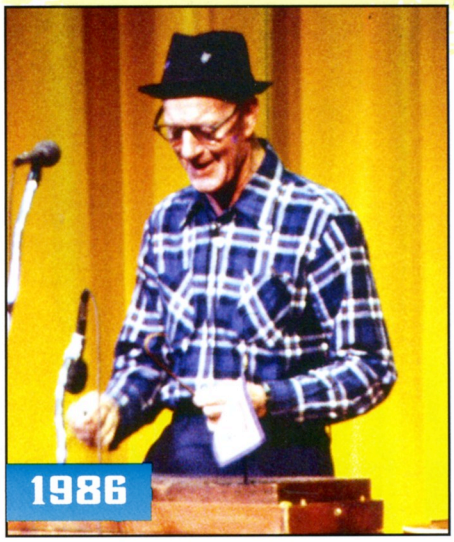


Photo by Rick Lee, 1979.

RUSSELL FLUHARTY

(1906-1989)

Russell, known as "The Dulcimer Man," was born in rural Marion County, north of Mannington. He could play several instruments but was a champion of the hammered dulcimer. He's often credited with popularizing this ancient and beautiful instrument in West Virginia. Russell tirelessly supported local history and folk culture and loved to perform traditional music at every opportunity. One of his hammered dulcimers—adorned with U.S. flags—is on display in the West Virginia State Museum.

Photo by Rick Lee, 1979.

Photo by Kim Johnson, 1988.

Photo by Kim Johnson, 1998.

PHOEBE PARSONS

(1908-2001)

Phoebe was born near Arnoldsburg and lived much of her life near Orma, in Calhoun County. She grew up surrounded by music and dance and became a fine banjo player. Her father, John Cottrell, a fiddler, taught young Phoebe to play the fiddlesticks; she later became a skilled flatfoot dancer and ballad singer. Phoebe shared her talents with others well into her 90s, and even thrilled audiences with a little flatfoot dance when she was in the right mood.

ERNIE CARPENTER

(1909-1997)

Ernie was born in rural Braxton County—the son of legendary riverman Shelt Carpenter. His fiddling echoed the stories, legends, and musical styles passed down by his forebears. The Carpenters are musical royalty in West Virginia. Many of Ernie's tunes, which he later shared with a new generation of fiddlers, commemorated important events in central West Virginia history. The revered old-time tune "Shelvin' Rock" is often credited to Ernie's ancestor Jeremiah Carpenter.

"I don't care about mixing anything else with oldtime music. I'll just play it as it is. If they call me old-fashioned, if they call me out of date, okay, that's all right. I'm out. But, I'll stick to it!" –Ernie Carpenter

SYLVIA O'BRIEN

(1909-2001)

Sylvia was born in a remote area of Clay County and lived much of her life on the family farm where she was raised. A respected banjo player, Sylvia was equally admired for her knowledge of traditional mountain ways and her unassuming and ingratiating personality. She often performed with her brother Jenes Cottrell and played one of his handmade banjos. She competed in the Vandalia banjo contest nearly every year from 1977 to 2001—for the last time at age 92.

See "'We Lived Good Back Then': Vandalia Award Winner Sylvia O'Brien" by Ken Sullivan, Fall 1989 GOLDENSEAL.

Photo by Rick Lee, 1979.

BONNIE COLLINS

(1915-2011)

Bonnie was one of West Virginia's best-loved storytellers, poets, and songwriters. Born Bonnie Mae Starkey in 1915 on Franks Run in Doddridge County, she learned music from her family early in life. She had a distinct gift for humor that helped establish the storytelling tradition at Vandalia. A popular performer, Bonnie attended the first Vandalia Gathering in 1977 and served as a judge for the state Liars Contest into her 90s. She performed at the 2003 Smithsonian Folk Festival shortly before her 88th birthday.

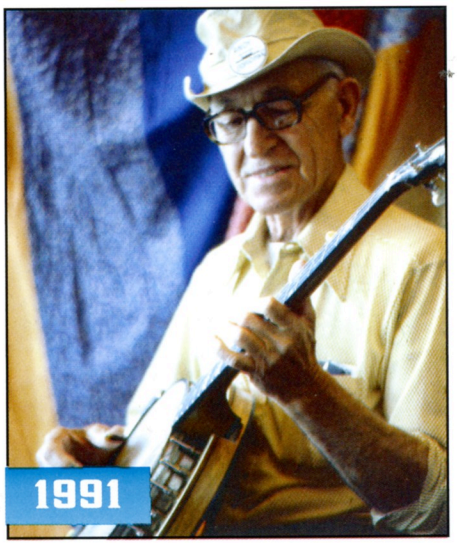


Photo by Rick Lee, 1979.

ANDY BOARMAN

(1910-1999)

This Berkeley County native lived his entire life in the apple orchard country of West Virginia's Eastern Panhandle. Best known for his unusual and intricate finger-style banjo playing, Andy also played the autoharp and built and repaired instruments. His barbershop in Hedgesville doubled as a music store and an instrument-repair workshop until it closed in 1974. Andy was well loved at fairs and festivals across the state.

See "Andrew F. Boarman, the Banjo Man from Berkeley County" by Peggy Jarvis and Dick Kimmel, January-March 1979 GOLDENSEAL.

Photo by Genny Johnson, 1982.

WILSON DOUGLAS

(1922-1999)

Wilson was born on a farm in the Rush Fork area of Clay County. He was an accomplished fiddler who played with an intricate style that tapped into an ancient repertoire. He's remembered for his outstanding fiddling, generous personality, and great storytelling ability.

"You're as close to heaven on this earth as you will ever be if you have the music in you. I don't put that above an eternal life, but in this world, that's my paradise."

–Wilson Douglas

Photo by Kim Johnson, early 1990s.

"When I was playing music, nothing else was on my mind but music at that time. You could walk up and say something. You might have to speak to me three times before I'd know you were talking with me."

–Nat Reese

Photo by Mike Keller, 2006.

JANE T. GEORGE *(b. 1922)*
Jane has worn many hats. Born Jane Taylor in rural Roane County, she has enthusiastically supported West Virginia's folk heritage and devoted her adult life to teaching and promoting traditional arts. Basket weaving and highland dancing are areas of special interest to Jane, who was instrumental in establishing several of our state's heritage arts education programs, including the Mountain State Art and Craft Fair at Cedar Lakes.

See "Jane George: Proud to Be a West Virginian" by Danny Williams, Winter 1993 GOLDENSEAL.

FRANK GEORGE *(b. 1928)*
Frank was born in Bluefield and later moved to Roane County, where he and his wife, Jane, now live. Frank is a respected fiddler and expert on the history of West Virginia traditional music. He's particularly interested in the Irish and Scottish roots of mountain culture. In addition to the fiddle, Frank plays the Scottish bagpipes, pennywhistle, fife, mountain and hammered dulcimers, and old-time banjo. Frank was a member of the Big Possum String Band and frequently performed Celtic music with the band Poteen at Vandalia.

NAT REESE
(1924-2012)
Nat was born in Salem, Virginia, moved to Itmann in Wyoming County when he was four, and later lived at Princeton. Nat grew up in coal camps, surrounded by gospel, swing, and blues music. A former coal miner himself, Nat eventually turned to music as a profession, plying his skills as a guitarist and singer of various styles. He was one of the all-time favorites at Vandalia and anywhere else he played and told stories.

Photo by Steve Payne, 1978.

Photo by Rick Lee, 1979.

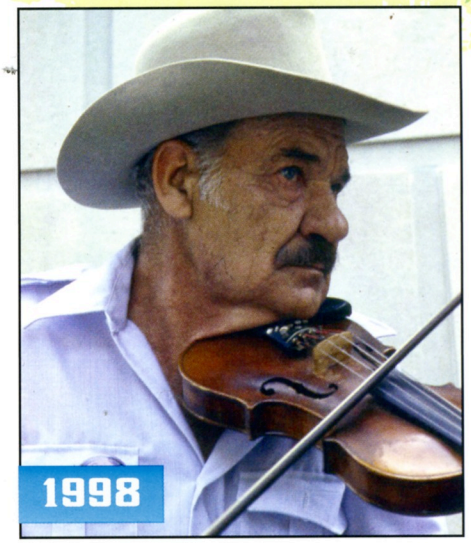


Photo by Michael Keller, mid-1980s.

ELMER BIRD

(1920-1997)

Elmer, "The Banjo Man from Turkey Creek," was born in rural Putnam County. He learned his music from family members and neighbors on Turkey Creek and, as a young man, began appearing locally with his fiddling cousin George Bird. Later, as a solo performer, Elmer developed an impressive "double drop-thumb" banjo style and attracted a wide following across the country.

See "Elmer Bird: The Banjo Man From Turkey Creek" by Paul Gartner, Summer 1997 GOLDENSEAL.

LEFTY SHAFER

(1915-2004)

This fiddler, whistler, and singer was born in rural Roane County and later lived in the Charleston area. A clean and meticulous fiddler, Lefty won hundreds of awards, including the 1987 West Virginia State Fiddle Championship. Though he was a formidable competitor, Lefty was also a patient and encouraging teacher who shared his knowledge with many aspiring fiddlers over the years.

See "'A Lot of Good Music': Lefty Shafer Talks Fiddling" by Robert Spence, Winter 1984 GOLDENSEAL.

GLEN SMITH

(1923-2001)

Glen was born in Woodlawn, Virginia, and moved to the Elizabeth area in Wirt County in the 1960s to work in the timber industry. Glen quickly became a fixture at West Virginia traditional music events, winning numerous awards for his hard-driving fiddling and entertaining audiences with his dry sense of humor.

"I started out to be a millionaire, but I found out fiddling was easier and a lot more fun."

–Glen Smith

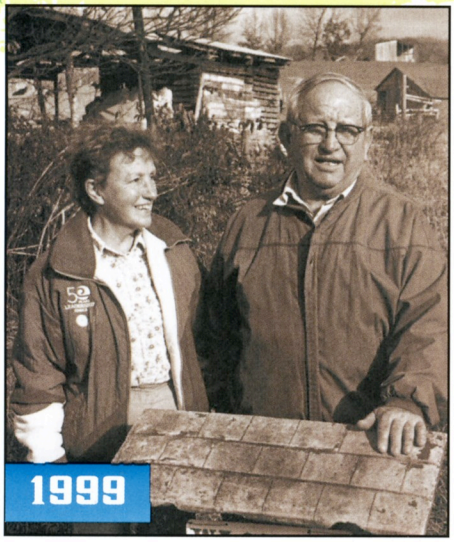


Photo by Doug Chadwick, 2000.

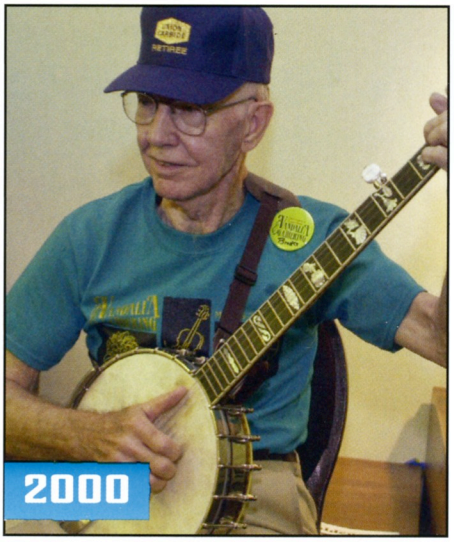


Photo by Michael Keller, 2000.

Photo by Rick Lee, 1981.

RUSH BUTCHER *(1923-2012)*
RUBY BUTCHER *(1928-2014)*
The Butchers were the first dancers and the second husband-wife tandem honored with the Vandalia Award. Rush and Ruby taught and promoted international folk dance in West Virginia for some 60 years. Rush, a native of Braxton County, and Ruby, a native of Fuget, Kentucky, met while attending Berea College. They married and moved back to West Virginia. They lived, farmed, and taught dancing in Nicholas County, and led square dances in the Culture Center's Great Hall during Vandalia.

BROOKS SMITH
(1923-2007)
Brooks, from Dunbar, Kanawha County, played the banjo for more than 70 years. Equally comfortable with clawhammer or traditional finger-style playing, Brooks won numerous contests across the state. He was a decorated Army veteran of World War II and a draftsman for Union Carbide. Brooks was well loved and generously shared his music with others, particularly younger musicians.

See "Brooks Smith: The Making of a Banjo Player" by Andrew Dunlap, Spring 1996 GOLDENSEAL.

NORMAN L. FAGAN
(b. 1932)
Norman was the first commissioner of the West Virginia Division of Culture and History. He had a profound impact on our state's traditional arts and culture. An early advocate of recording, documenting, preserving, and presenting the folkways of West Virginians, he is credited with founding the Vandalia Gathering in 1977 and ensuring the festival's growth through its first 13 years. As commissioner, Norman also was instrumental in building and establishing the Culture Center as a nationally acclaimed showcase for West Virginia performers, artists, and craftspeople.

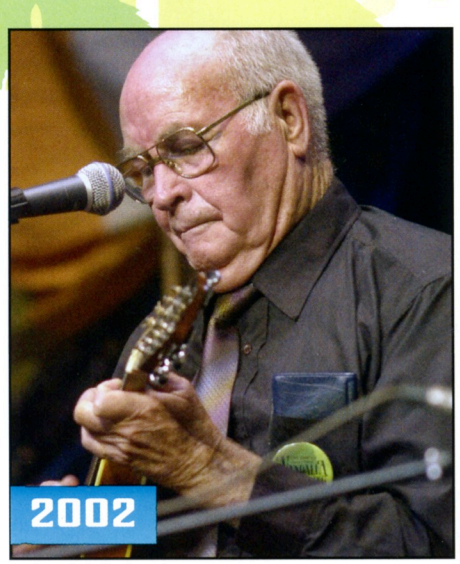


Photo by Michael Keller, 2000.

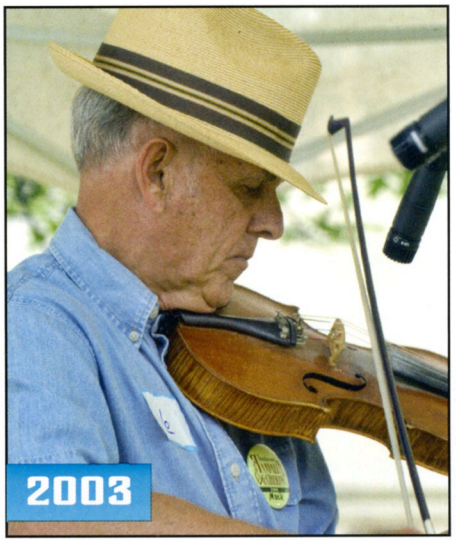


Photo by Michael Keller, 2006.

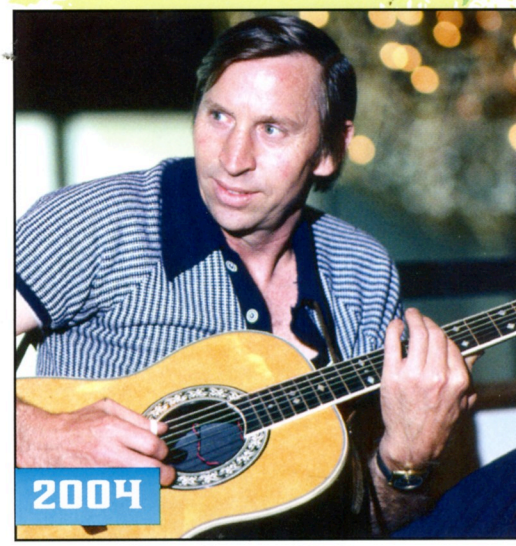


Photo by Steve Payne, 1978.

BOB KESSINGER

(1926-2004)

Bob was a Kanawha County native and resident of Roane County. He won many awards at mandolin competitions across West Virginia. The nephew of famed fiddler Clark Kessinger, Bob was an outspoken advocate for preserving and promoting traditional music and culture. Hailing from a long family of talented musicians, Bob grew up listening to his father and uncle and learned to play the banjo and mandolin at an early age. His sons Robin and Dan have followed in his footsteps.

MACK SAMPLES *(b. 1939)*

Mack is a folklorist, musician, and square-dance caller. A native of Corton in Kanawha County, he's spent his entire life learning, collecting, and sharing the traditional stories, songs, dances, and folk culture of the Mountain State. He is well known in Appalachian music and literature circles and has traveled the folk festival circuit for years. Mack has been a regular at the Vandalia Gathering, West Virginia State Folk Festival, and Stonewall Jackson Jubilee as a solo performer and with the popular Samples Brothers Band, which included his brothers Ted and Roger. Roger passed away in 2016.

CARL RUTHERFORD

(1929-2006)

Carl Rutherford, of War, could trace his family's roots in McDowell County back to the 1890s. He became a coal miner when he was 18 and was deeply moved by the determination, suffering, and hardships he witnessed in the mines. Carl preserved a unique and challenging style of guitar playing that blended mountain blues, old-time, big band, country, honky-tonk, and gospel music reminiscent of southern coalfield music of the 1920s. He was also an award-winning songwriter whose distinctive compositions told of coal mining, faith, romance, and his mountain home.

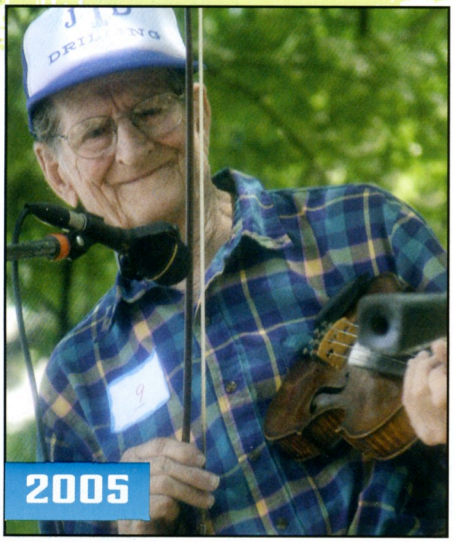


Photo by Kim Johnson, 2007.

LESTER McCUMBERS

(1921-2015)

Lester, from Nicut, Calhoun County, carried on a rich tradition of fiddling, singing, and guitar playing that has thrived in his family for generations. He performed old-time and bluegrass music for 80 years. His music was an integral part of his life, and his personal style was marked by sincerity, drive, and emotion. He and his wife and performing partner, Linda (1921-2010), met as children, married in 1937, and raised nine children while performing with various bands. For four years in the mid-1960s, they hosted a weekly radio show on WSPZ in Spencer.

Photo by Michael Keller, 2000.

ETHEL CAFFIE-AUSTIN

(b. 1949)

A native of Mount Hope, Fayette County, Ethel is known as West Virginia's "First Lady of Gospel Music." She began playing piano at age six, started accompanying church services at nine, and directed her first choir at 11. She carries on a rich tradition of African-American gospel singing, piano playing, and worship. Ethel has taken her music and ministry into prisons, schools, and government housing projects. She has presented gospel workshops at the Vandalia Gathering and founded the Black Sacred Music Festival at West Virginia State University.

Photo by Michael Keller, 2007.

PATTY LOOMAN

(1925-2012)

A Mannington native, Patty studied organ, piano, cello, and trumpet when she was young and played the hammered dulcimer with masters Russell Fluharty and Worley Gardner. She was once the most active hammered dulcimer performer and teacher in West Virginia. She was the namesake for PattyFest, held yearly at a 4-H camp near Morgantown. She also was a master artist in the West Virginia Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program, chaired the Mountaineer Dulcimer Convention of West Virginia, and performed in bands such as Hammers and Strings.

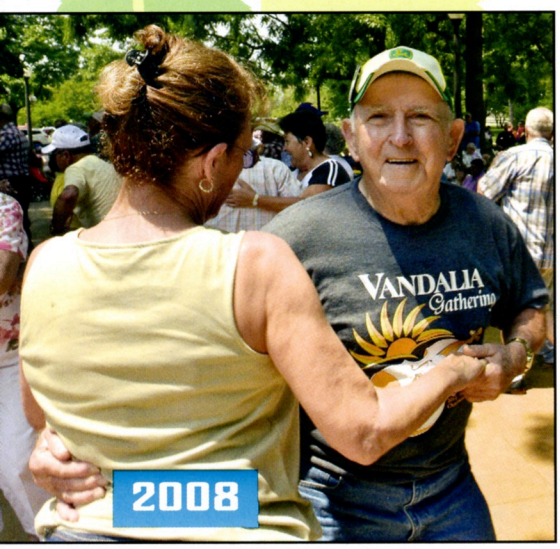


Photo by Tyler Evert, 2012.

LOU MAIURI *(b. 1928)*
Lou is a nationally acclaimed flatfoot dancer and square-dance caller from Summersville. The son of Italian immigrants, Lou was born in Fayette County and grew up in the upper Kanawha Valley. Visits to Pocahontas County exposed him to traditional mountain dance at an early age. Lou is an impassioned advocate of mountain dance and a skilled teacher. He travels throughout West Virginia and across the country, performing and presenting dance workshops and sharing his infectious enthusiasm for Appalachian dance.

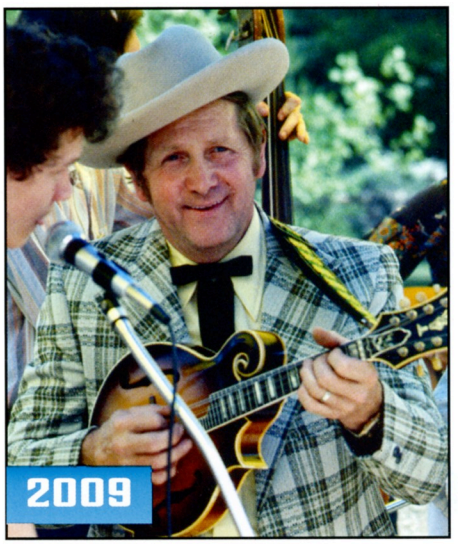


Photo by Steve Payne, 1978.

EVERETT LILLY
(1924-2012)
Everett was an icon in traditional mountain music. Born in Clear Creek, Raleigh County, Everett and his brother "B" (1921-2005)—better known as the Lilly Brothers—were old-time and bluegrass music pioneers from New England to Japan in the 1950s, '60s, and '70s. Everett was known for his piercing tenor voice, driving mandolin, and fiddle playing. The Lilly Brothers' repertoire of old-time songs and "brother duets" struck a chord with many audiences.

"I think fiddle playing is taking the past and holding it very dear." –Bobby Taylor

Photo by Karen Heyd, 2007.

BOBBY TAYLOR *(b. 1952)*
Bobby is a fourth-generation fiddler from the Charleston area. One of the most accomplished musicians of his day, Bobby learned from his father, fiddler Lincoln Taylor, as well as from master musicians Clark Kessinger and Mike Humphreys. Bobby's clear tone and unparalleled technique have garnered many prizes and the universal respect of his peers. He has coordinated music contests at the Vandalia Gathering for more than 30 years and cofounded the Appalachian String Band Music Festival at Clifftop. Bobby also worked some three decades for West Virginia Archives & History and managed the State Archives Library.

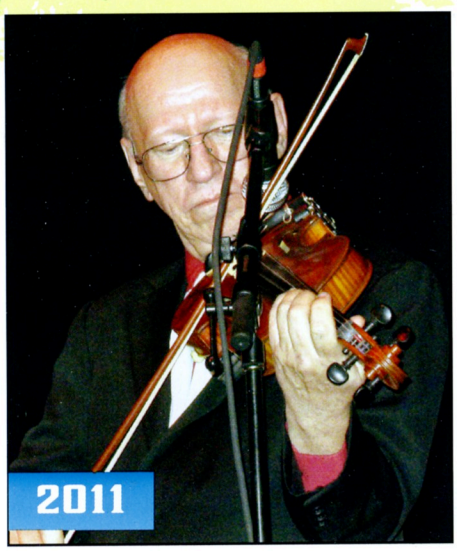


Photo by Tyler Evert, 2011.

Photo by Rick Lee, 1980.

Photo by Michael Keller, 2005.

BUDDY GRIFFIN *(b. 1948)*
Buddy, a Nicholas County native who grew up in Braxton County, is a master musician on several instruments and a dedicated teacher and mentor. Raised in a musical family, he began performing at an early age, excelling at banjo, fiddle, guitar, and mandolin. He traveled extensively, appearing and recording with many top-name bluegrass and country music artists. In 1997, he returned to West Virginia and taught at Glenville State College, where he developed the world's first degree program in bluegrass. Buddy remains active in the bluegrass and traditional music worlds.

THE BING BROTHERS
The Bing Brothers were the first band to be honored with the Vandalia Award. Mike *(b. 1951)* on mandolin, Dave *(b. 1955)* on fiddle, and Tim *(b. 1958)* on banjo, are accomplished old-time musicians from the Huntington area with family ties to Wayne County. Mike founded Allegheny Echoes, a heritage arts education program in Pocahontas County. Dave, a respected woodworker and fiddle maker, also plays the banjo and guitar. Tim has won numerous awards for his distinctive clawhammer banjo playing.

GERALD MILNES *(b. 1946)*
Gerald, of Elkins, is a folklorist, author, filmmaker, teacher, and musician who has contributed immeasurably to the preservation and understanding of West Virginia traditional culture. He served for 25 years as Folk Art Coordinator for the Augusta Heritage Center at Davis & Elkins College, amassing more than 2,000 hours of audio and video documentation of native West Virginians engaged in folklife activities. Gerald is also an accomplished musician, winning multiple awards on both the fiddle and banjo, and performing with the group Gandydancer.

Photo by Tyler Evert, 2014.

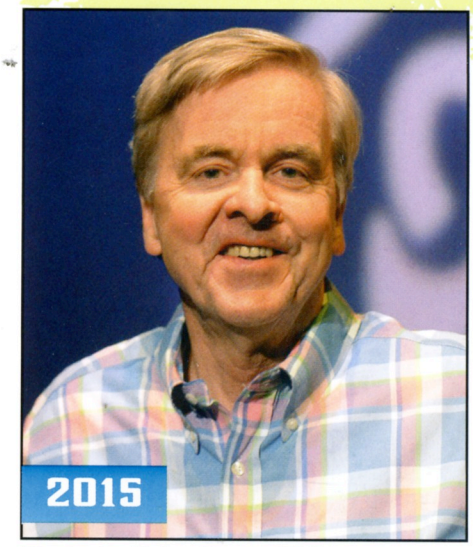


Photo by Tyler Evert, 2015.

"My first semester in engineering school, I had four F's: engineering, calculus, chemistry, and physics. They had a course called humanities, and I got an A in it. I saw the light!"

–Ken Sullivan

ROGER BRYANT *(b. 1948)*

Roger, of Logan County, is the grandson of 1984 Vandalia Award recipient Aunt Jennie Wilson. After spending several years traveling and performing with his famous grandmother, Roger carved out a niche of his own, featuring his original songs and engaging stage presence. He has been a fixture as a performer and announcer at Vandalia Gatherings dating back to the first one in 1977. A U.S. Marine veteran, he later became the executive director of the Logan Emergency Ambulance Service Authority (LEASA) and director of the Logan County Office of Emergency Management. Roger continues to travel around southern West Virginia, emceeing concerts and entertaining audiences with his songs.

"My dad taught me three or four chords, and that was all I ever needed."

–Roger Bryant

See "Finding Balance in Logan County: A Visit with Roger Bryant" by John Lilly, Winter 2013 GOLDENSEAL.

KEN SULLIVAN *(b. 1949)*

Ken thought he would be a history professor. That is, in fact, how he began his professional career. Life had other plans for this son of the Appalachian coalfields. After only two years in academia, Ken became editor of GOLDENSEAL magazine—a position he held for 18 years—then executive director of the West Virginia Humanities Council for the last two decades. An astute scholar of regional studies and mountain literature, Ken has contributed much to the appreciation and documentation of West Virginia's folk culture, including founding the Vandalia Gathering Liars Contest in 1983.

Photo by Steve Brightwell, 2016.

"Quilting is my blessing and my curse. A blessing because it gives me peace when I am at the frame; a curse because the frame is always calling me."

–Joni Hoffman

JONI HOFFMAN *(b. 1953)*

Joni, of Duck, Braxton County, is the first quilter to be honored with the Vandalia Award. A native of Wheeling, she discovered quilting in 1969 while visiting a high school friend. The friend's mother was sitting on a wrap-around porch at an old-fashioned floor quilting frame, and Joni stopped to watch. Sensing she had an interested observer, the quilter invited Joni to give it a try. Although Joni believes her friend's mother probably quietly ripped out her beginner stitches as soon as she left, she was hooked.

Joni started quilting in earnest when, as a young bride, she moved to Europe with her husband. She discovered she also had a knack for teaching, so as her own skills improved, she began sharing with others. After returning to West Virginia in 1989, she joined two quilt guilds, read quilting books, and went to quilt shows. For eight years, she was part of a group of women who quilted together as the All Thumbs Quilters. She has won prizes at the Mountain State Art and Craft Fair at Cedar Lakes, Three Rivers Quilt Show in Pittsburgh, and shows in Virginia. She has also won the Best Hand Quilting Award twice at the West Virginia Quilt Festival. Joni teaches a basics-of-hand-quilting class for West Virginia quilt guilds, has taught elementary school children to make a log cabin quilt block, and is active with West Virginia Quilters. In addition, she quilted our state's Sesquicentennial Quilt in 2013, featuring quilt pieces made by men, women, and children from across the state.

<< Vandalia Through the Years >>>

Left: The Morris Brothers Band of Clay County was on the forefront of the folk-music revival in West Virginia. For nearly a decade—and on special occasions after that—John (left) and David Morris were one of the best brother musical duos around. David came up with the name for the Vandalia Gathering. Photo by Michael Keller, 1987.

Right: 1984 Vandalia Award recipient Aunt Jennie Wilson of Logan County apparently gets off one of her memorable sidesplitting stories right before Michael Keller snaps this photo of her and Governor Arch Moore on the steps of the Culture Center in 1987.

Left: Jimmy Costa (left) of Summers County listens to 1991 Vandalia Award recipient Andy Boarman of Berkeley County spin a yarn at an early Vandalia Gathering. Photographer unknown.

Left: Harvey Sampson (left) of Calhoun County finishes a tune with Larry Rader of Wirt County on the back dock of the Culture Center in 1988. Harvey and Larry played together in the Big Possum String Band, along with Frank George and Charlie Winter. The band name came from one of Harvey's sayings, "Big possums stir late." Photo by Kim Johnson.

Below: Charlie Loudermilk of Greenbrier County was a fine banjo player but even better remembered as the life of the party at Vandalia, particularly the old late-night jams. Photo by Kim Johnson, 2005.

Bil Lepp of Kanawha County has won the Vandalia Liars Contest many times (at least according to him). Here, he holds his young son Noah at the 2000 contest. Seven years later, Noah won his first golden shovel in the inaugural Kids' Liars Contest. Photo by Michael Keller.

In its first years, Vandalia hosted a number of West Virginia's early country music legends.

(Top) Don Stover, who was born in the Raleigh County coal camp of Ameagle, helped popularize the Earl Scruggs style of bluegrass banjo and influenced players from Jerry Garcia to Béla Fleck. Photo by Steve Payne, 1978.

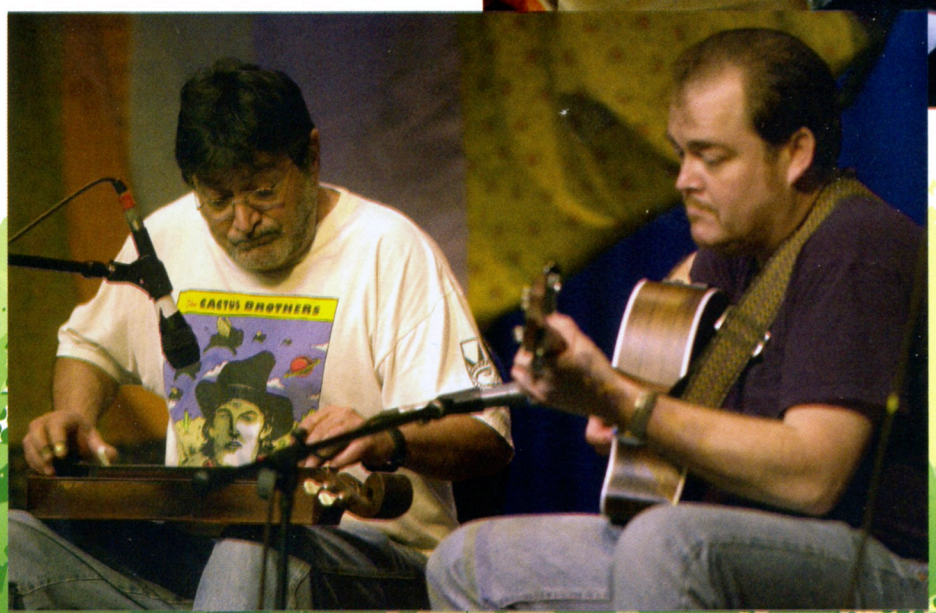
(Middle) Randolph County native Wilma Lee Cooper and her husband, Stoney, were regulars on the Grand Ole Opry for two decades. Wilma Lee plays here with Raleigh County's Everett Lilly at the 1978 Vandalia. Photo by Steve Payne.

Left: In 1979, Vandalia played host to a big reunion of West Virginia's early country radio stars. Front (L-R): Doc and Chickie Williams, Mary Ann and Buddy Starcher. Back (L-R): Slim Clere, Everett and B Lilly, Homer and Walter Bailes, Lee Moore. Photographer unknown.

Left: Dan (left) and Robin Kessinger are the sons of 2002 Vandalia Award recipient Bob Kessinger and great-nephews of fiddle legend Clark Kessinger. Both have regularly won or placed in Vandalia contests and performed at many concerts. Photo by Michael Keller, 1988.

Right: The great blues fiddler Howard Armstrong (left) attended Vandalia for several years in the mid-1990s. In the 1930s, Howard began playing with his brother Roland, Carl Martin, and Ted Bogan in the groundbreaking Tennessee Chocolate Drops. He's shown here jamming with his friend and 1995 Vandalia Award recipient, Nat Reese. Photo by Kim Johnson, 1995.

Below: Here are two of Vandalia's all-time-great performers and contestants: dulcimer whiz Alan Freeman of Greenbrier County and flatpick guitar master Robert Shafer of Roane County. Photo by Michael Keller, 2000.



Vandalia would not be Vandalia without dancing—lots of dancing! The top photo, by Steve Payne, is from the second Vandalia in 1978. The middle and bottom photos were taken by Michael Keller at the outdoor dance stage in 2000.

Other than providing a great time, the main goal of Vandalia is to pass along folk traditions to the next generation. The best way is to put musical instruments in the hands of little ones and see what happens. Photos by Michael Keller, 2000.

West Virginia crafts are another mainstay at Vandalia. (Top) David Morris serenades blacksmith Michael Snyder of Harman, Randolph County, in 1979. Photo by Rick Lee.

Demonstrations of folk traditions have always been popular. At the 1981 Vandalia, an unidentified man shears the wool from a sheep under a red-hot Memorial Day weekend sun. Photographer unknown.

(Left) Gary Shaffer of Hinton gives a young boy a close-up view of pottery making. Photographer unknown.

Right: Claude Kemper of Gilmer County intricately carved birds from one piece of wood. He's shown here at the 1984 Vandalia Gathering. All photos on this page by Michael Keller.

Above: The Culture Center's annual quilt and wall-hangings exhibit debuts annually during the Vandalia Gathering. Awards are presented to the winning quilters before the Friday evening concert each year. This photo shows the winning quilts and wall-hangings displayed in the Culture Center Great Hall during the opening Vandalia parade in 2000.

Below: Vandalia is also known for its local food flavors. One of the most popular food vendors is Charleston's St. George Orthodox Church, serving Greek delicacies.

<< 2016 Vandalia Winners >>>

Youth Old-Time Fiddle *(age 15 and under)*
1st place – Ben Davis, Marlinton
2nd place – Hannah Snuffer, Beckley
3rd place – Liam Farley, Chapmanville

Old-Time Fiddle *(age 59 and under)*
1st place – Dan Kessinger, St. Marys
2nd place – Jesse Pearson, Huntington
3rd place – Bob Smakula, Elkins
4th place – Jenny Allinder, St. Albans
5th place – Cody Jordan, Point Pleasant

Senior Old-Time Fiddle *(age 60 and over)*
1st place – Greg Bentle, Huntington
2nd place – Gerry Milnes, Elkins
3rd place – John Morris, Ivydale
4th place – Terry Vaughan, Cross Lanes
5th place – Jim Mullins, St. Albans

Mandolin *(all ages)*
1st place – Karl Smakula, Elkins
2nd place – Joshua Brown, Summersville
3rd place – Jake Eddy, Parkersburg
4th place – Dan Kessinger, St. Marys
5th place – Silas Powell, Salem

Bluegrass Banjo *(all ages)*
1st place – Andrew Kidd, Morgantown
2nd place – Jake Eddy, Parkersburg
3rd place – Josh Lanham, Buckhannon
4th place – Levi Sanders, Fairview
5th place – Karl Smakula, Elkins

Lap Dulcimer *(all ages)*
1st place – Hunter Walker, Beckley
2nd place – Jesse Pearson, Huntington
3rd place – Patricia Westman, Beckley

Photos of the 2016 Vandalia Gathering by Steve Brightwell.

4th place – David O'Dell, Glenville
5th place – Ezra Drumheller, Prosperity

Old-Time Banjo *(59 and under)*
1st place – David O'Dell, Glenville
2nd place – Hunter Walker, Beckley
3rd place – Nick Freeman, St. Albans
4th place – Ben Townsend, Romney
5th place – Cody Jordan, Point Pleasant

Senior Old-Time Banjo *(age 60 and over)*
1st place – Jim Mullins, St. Albans
2nd place – Paul Gartner, Yawkey
3rd place – John Morris, Ivydale
4th place – Warren Owings, Hamlin

Youth Flatpick Guitar *(age 15 and under)*
1st place – Silas Powell, Salem

Flatpick Guitar *(all ages)*
1st place – David Watson, Huntington
2nd place – Bryant Underwood, Charleston
3rd place – Matt Lindsey, Culloden
4th place – Joshua Brown, Summersville
5th place – Rick Hall, Princeton

Favorite Family Cookies *(all ages)*
1st place – Ella Hoffman, South Charleston
2nd place – Jennifer Foreman, Red House
3rd place – Toni McCullough, Bridgeport
Youth (age 15 and under) – Victoria Scarberry, Charleston

Pound Cake *(all ages)*
1st place – Ella Hoffman, South Charleston
2nd place – Casey Pruitt, Charleston
3rd place – Bridget Pauley, Pinch

2017
VANDALIA GATHERING
MAY 27-29, 2017

For a complete schedule of events:
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For information,
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2016 Liars Contest

Biggest Liar – Jacob Hall, Charleston
Bigger Liar – Ian Nolte, Huntington
Big Liar – Pete Kosky, Charleston
Youth (age 15 and under) – Claire Kosky, Charleston

Photo by Steve Brightwell.

Biggest Liar: **Jacob Hall**, Charleston

I'd like to share with you a dream I've had ever since I was a child. I want to be a hero—like a comic book hero. I want to save someone's life. That dream began when I was in second grade. Let me tell you a little bit about myself at that time. I was not big into sports. I excelled in only two things. I had a great eye and good hustle. Those were the only things I had growing up.

So, we were playing a game of freeze tag. And I was not "it"; a guy named Chris was it. We called him Chris Cat because one time he ate a Kit Kat, and that qualifies as a nickname for the rest of your life. So, Chris Cat was "it." Everyone else was tagged except for me. I was the only one not frozen. So, I was running around. Everybody was cheering my name. And I realized at that point that I want to be a hero. People do that to heroes—they cheer for heroes and throw parades for them.

So, I jumped over a root. Unfortunately, Chris cat did not see that root. He tripped on it, knocked the breath out of him. The teacher picked him up and took him back inside. She called everyone else in, but she did not say, "Game over." So, for the past 20 years, I've been playing the same game of freeze tag with Chris Cat. And I've got to say, it's been pretty easy. Elementary school was easy, middle school was easy, high school was easy. The hardest part was his grandmother's funeral. I had to sneak past by the door, right behind the flowers that the local Rotary had donated. I was able to get by him.

I actually even thought more about my hero. I want to have superpower, obviously, but I want my superpower to be unique. My unique superpower is I want to sweat butter. That way, I'm really slicky, and I can just glide across the floor, and no one can catch me. I even have a name for myself: Cholesterol. I even have a backstory. I'm going to be the hidden child of Orville Redenbacher and Paula Deen. And actually, judging by the number of grilled corn I saw outside the festival, I think butter as a themed hero would really work out well.

As soon as I got to be teenage age, I realized that superpowers might not be necessary. There are real heroes out there. There are military, police officers, fire departments. But, unlike superheroes in comic books, I had two things they didn't have: parents who cared about my safety. So, the only thing they let me join was the lifeguard force. So, I was a lifeguard. I can't tell if you guys can see me well in these theater lights or not, but I'm very pale. So,

Claire Kosky, Charleston

my first day as lifeguard, I burned very bad. Also, that was because I was wearing butter all over myself. In the five years of being a lifeguard, I was not able to save a life. I saved one woman's wig from falling in the pool. She was very happy, but it was still not saving a life.

I wasn't able to save a life until about last year. I was back in my hometown, walking around this giant lake, and this woman came screaming up to me and said, "Oh, my gosh, my child! You have to save my child!"

So, without thinking, I quickly ran to save the day. I was a little disappointed I didn't have my butter with me, but I was going to deal with that. I jumped in the water, reached down, grabbed up the person, pulled him up to the top, and said, "Don't worry, I've got you."

He's like, "No, man, I've got you." It was Chris Cat. I had to stay there frozen.

There's this program at our school called Strings. We go there every Thursday and Friday and play violins, or violas, or cellos.

When my friend was going to sign up for it, she had to get a violin because she didn't have one. When she went to get it, there was this guy named Joe, and he tuned it for her. Every day when she would come into Strings, she wouldn't have to tune her instrument because it was already tuned. She didn't know why it was always tuned because her dogs would play with it and stuff. Her dogs would kick it around when it was in the case.

We tried to think of ideas why it was tuned. We thought her parents might be tuning it when she was asleep. So, she said her parents wouldn't do that because they were too lazy to do it—they would have to do it at night. I went over to her house one night to spend the night and see why it was always tuned. We were staying up, and around 12:00, this mist came in through the windows and under the door. It went over to her violin case and took the shape of a man, and the man was Joe. He got out her violin and tuned it, and then he put it away, waved, and went away. And that's why my friend's violin was always tuned.

Photo of emcee Bill Hairston and Claire Kosky by Steve Brightwell.

Clyde Case (1910-2002) of Duck. Braxton County, was a banjo player also known for shaped-noted and ballad singing as well as basket making. In the great mountain tradition, he would use nearly anything at hand to make and repair his banjos, including brass from an old flashlight case, a heifer horn, apple wood, and a Prince Albert tobacco can. All photos by our author unless noted otherwise.

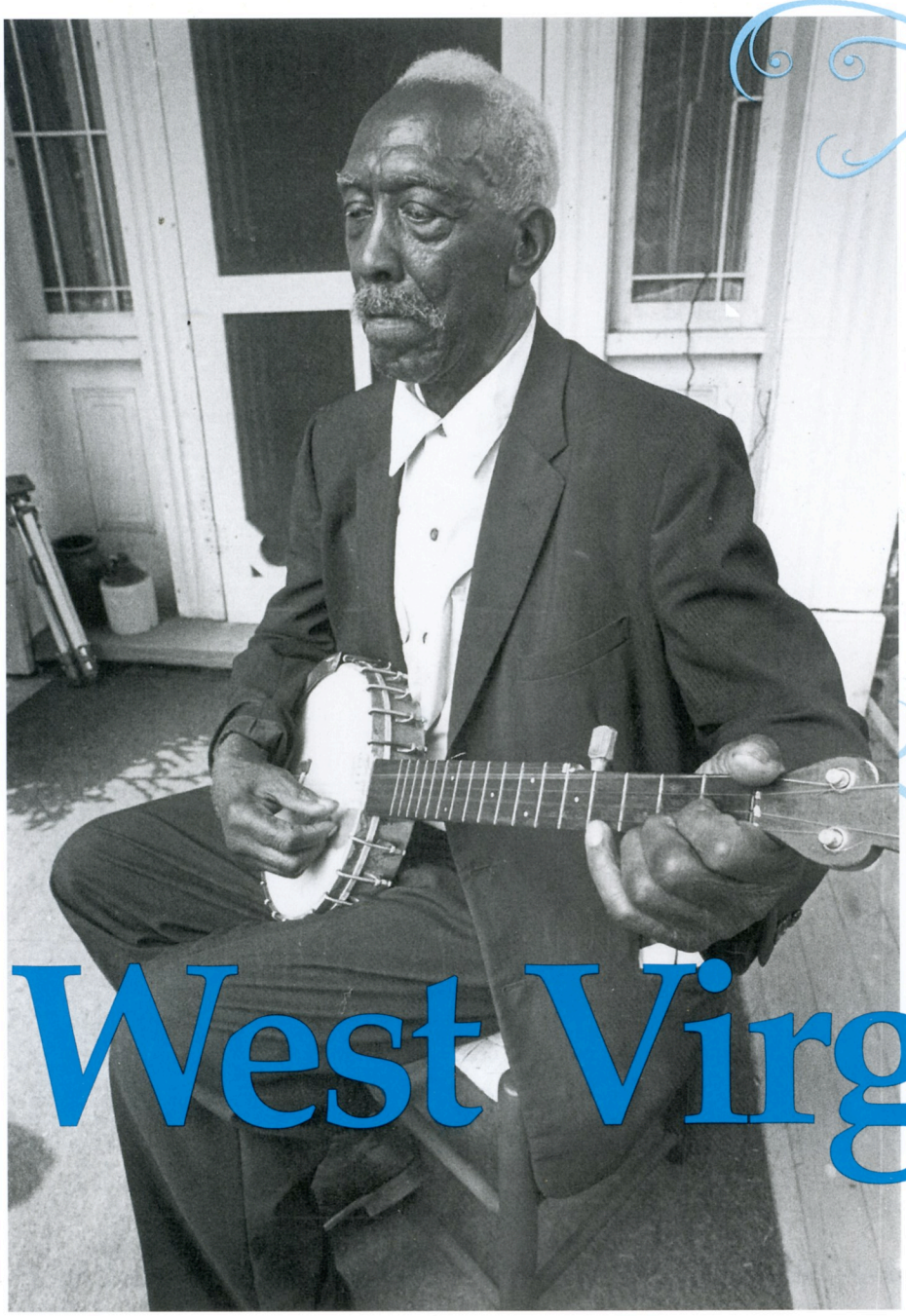
The Banjo in

By Gerald Milnes

The five-string banjo is a symbol of the Appalachian Mountains—from the older "plunky" sound of the old-time clawhammer style to the more modern, driving sound of the three-finger Scruggs, or bluegrass, style. The banjo provides the soundtrack for many festivals, family reunions, and community homecomings in the Mountain State.

We've had our share of top-notch players who've gone on to recorded fame; people like Don Stover, Ray Goins, and Buddy Griffin are well known. Opry star Grandpa Jones advanced his career in 1938 playing over WMMN radio in Fairmont. Many players were unknown outside their communities, playing just at home, at family gatherings, or for local square dances. While collecting old-time music over 40 years, I've encountered many players who rarely played publicly.

Some say the banjo is the only "truly American instrument," but that's not quite correct. The banjos of today have greatly evolved from the crude homemade instruments that first found their way into what is now West Virginia. In fact, we can be sure that instruments played here—beginning as early as the late 18th century—were a far cry from the modern factory and custom-made banjos of today. Most of these early



Clarence Tross (1884-1977) of Hardy County learned most of his tunes from his father, Andy, who was born a slave in 1850. Photo by Tom Evans, courtesy of Hardy County Public Library, Marjorie Zirk Collection.

West Virginia

banjos probably were African in style, made by stretching a skin across the large end of a gourd or calabash with a protruding neck.

Those first banjos originated in West Africa. Actual banjos—or the concepts of how to make and play them—were brought across the Atlantic Ocean in slave ships. Early references in this country call the instrument a "banza" or "bangil," which evolved into the colloquial "banjer," noted in the *Maryland Gazette* in 1754. In 1781, speaking about African slaves, Thomas Jefferson said, "The instrument proper to them is the Banjar which they brought hither from Africa." Many older West Virginians, like Frank George of Roane County, still refer to the instrument as a "banjer."

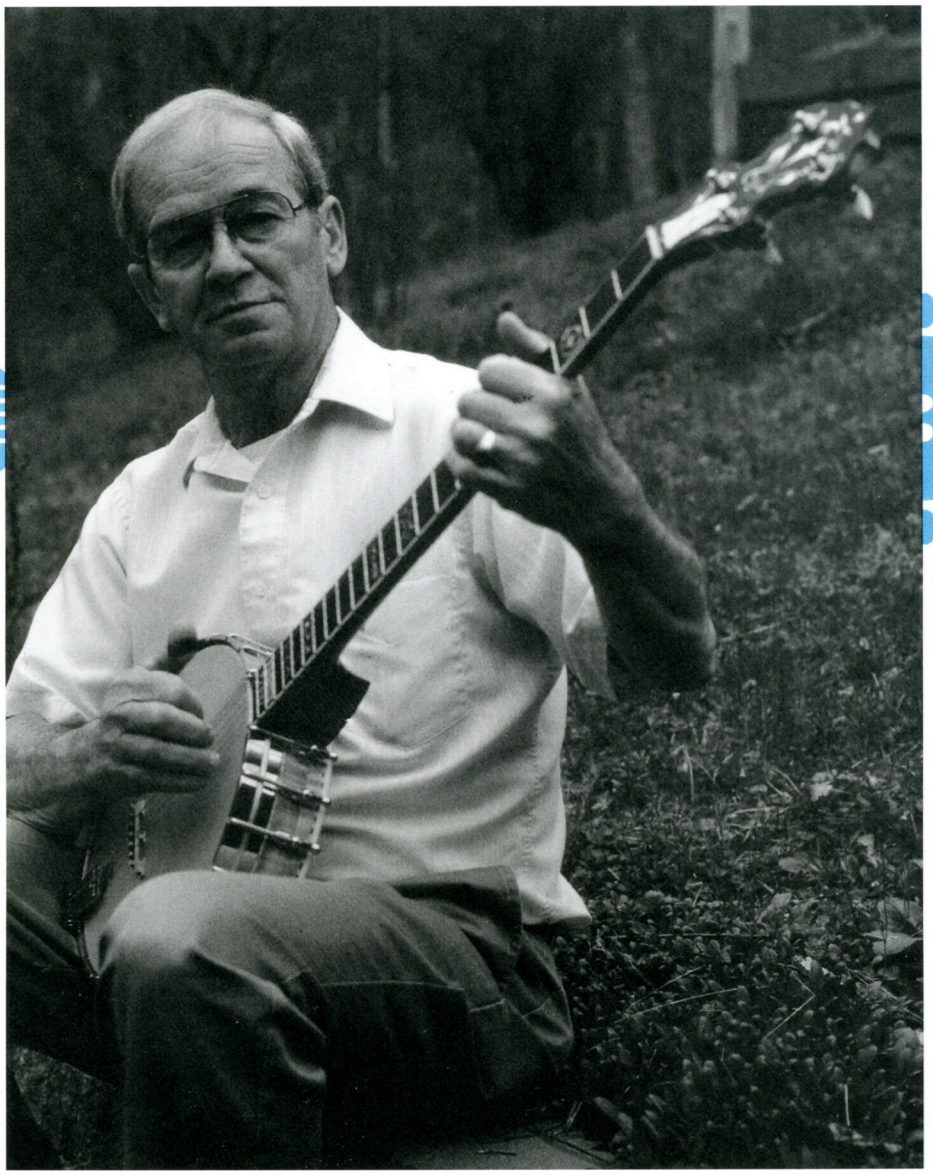
In his classic book *Trans-Allegheny Pioneers*, Kanawha County historian John P. Hale described family slaves playing the banjo in the very early 19th century. Numerous early newspapers describe runaway slaves as banjo players. Considering that hundreds of slaves were brought to work in the Kanawha County salt industry in the early 1800s, it's a sure bet that banjo music was in-

Charlie Blevins (1923-2004), who played banjo with a "loping style," operated the Red Robin Inn at Borderland in Mingo County. The Red Robin was a combination beer joint, music hall, and museum. Photo by Doug Yarrow.

troduced then to the Kanawha Valley. In pioneer days, the salt works that stretched from Malden 10 miles east to Charleston were a major destination for early white settlers, so it's possible that the African style of banjo playing—notable by its down-stroke clawhammer style—started spreading throughout the region some 200 years ago. Historically, musicians have typically shared their art across color lines even as the general public has maintained segregated societies.

This African down-stroke method is still the predominant style of West Virginia's old-time banjo players today. But there are other old-time styles. Some, like Clyde Case, played with a two- or three-finger up-picking style. Jimmy Dowdle of Webster County played a combination up-pick with a down brush. Mingo County's Charlie Blevins played a "loping style" to back up his singing. Clyde Howes of Upshur County played popular old-time tunes around the lumber camps years ago in an up-picking style.

Today, the banjo is rarely played by African-Americans. One reason for this is the rise of minstrel shows in the mid-1800s. At minstrel shows, white performers, in black face, mocked and belittled all forms of African-American folk culture, including their love of the banjo. Minstrel shows were largely big-city enter-



Bernard Cyrus (b. 1939) of Wayne County plays the banjo, makes dulcimers, and is also a self-taught botanist known for his stunning photos of orchids. Photo by Michael Keller.

tainment, so, in some areas, such as rural West Virginia, African-Americans proudly played banjos into the late 20th century.

In the 1960s and 1970s, there were still a good number of African-American banjo players in central West Virginia and at the base of the eastern panhandle—in Hardy, Grant, and Pendleton counties. Clarence Tross was a Hardy County player of note who passed away in 1977. Uncle Homer Walker may have been the last black banjo player in southern West Virginia. He performed widely at music festivals in the 1960s and 1970s.

Old banjo player "Uncle Bud" Sandy of Braxton County learned "John Henry" from an African-American banjo player in the Burnsville area. Mose Coffman and Dena Knicely both knew of and learned tunes from black banjo players in Greenbrier County. Mose spoke of two Johnson brothers who were excellent fiddle and banjo players in that area. Dena and Mose credited black fiddle and banjo players as the source for the tune "Greenbrier River." By the way, women banjo players were far from unusual. Other exceptional West Virginia banjo players have included Aunt Jennie Wilson of Logan County and Gussie King, Sylvia O'Brien, Phoeba Parsons, and Ruth Lyons, all of Clay and Calhoun counties.

Sylvia O'Brien (1908-2001) was one many talented banjo-playing women in the Clay County area in the 20th century. For decades, she was a popular performer at the Vandalia Gathering and West Virginia State Folk Festival.

Most older banjo players in the Mountain State started out on homemade instruments. The only evidence of African-style gourd banjos survives through early American artwork as time and use have turned the originals to dust. These were replaced by homemade hard-rimmed banjos of all sorts. Rims could be made from wooden hoops, coffee cans, or lard buckets. They were covered with heads using everything from flour pokes to groundhog and cat hides. Hand-carved wooden necks were fitted, and gut strings were standard. Woody Simmons of Randolph County made homemade strings by "raveling" out the wire of old screen doors to put on his childhood banjo, which his father made. The metal fret wires across the neck that change the pitch were not seen on banjos until the 1880s. Before that and well into the 20th century, the strings were noted on blank necks, like fiddles. The first tune most older banjo players learned—usually on fretless banjos—was "Old Man, Old Man, Can I Have Your Daughter?"

The first commercially made banjos in this country turned up in the 1840s and are credited to former drum maker William Boucher of Baltimore. Jimmy Costa of Summers County—perhaps the

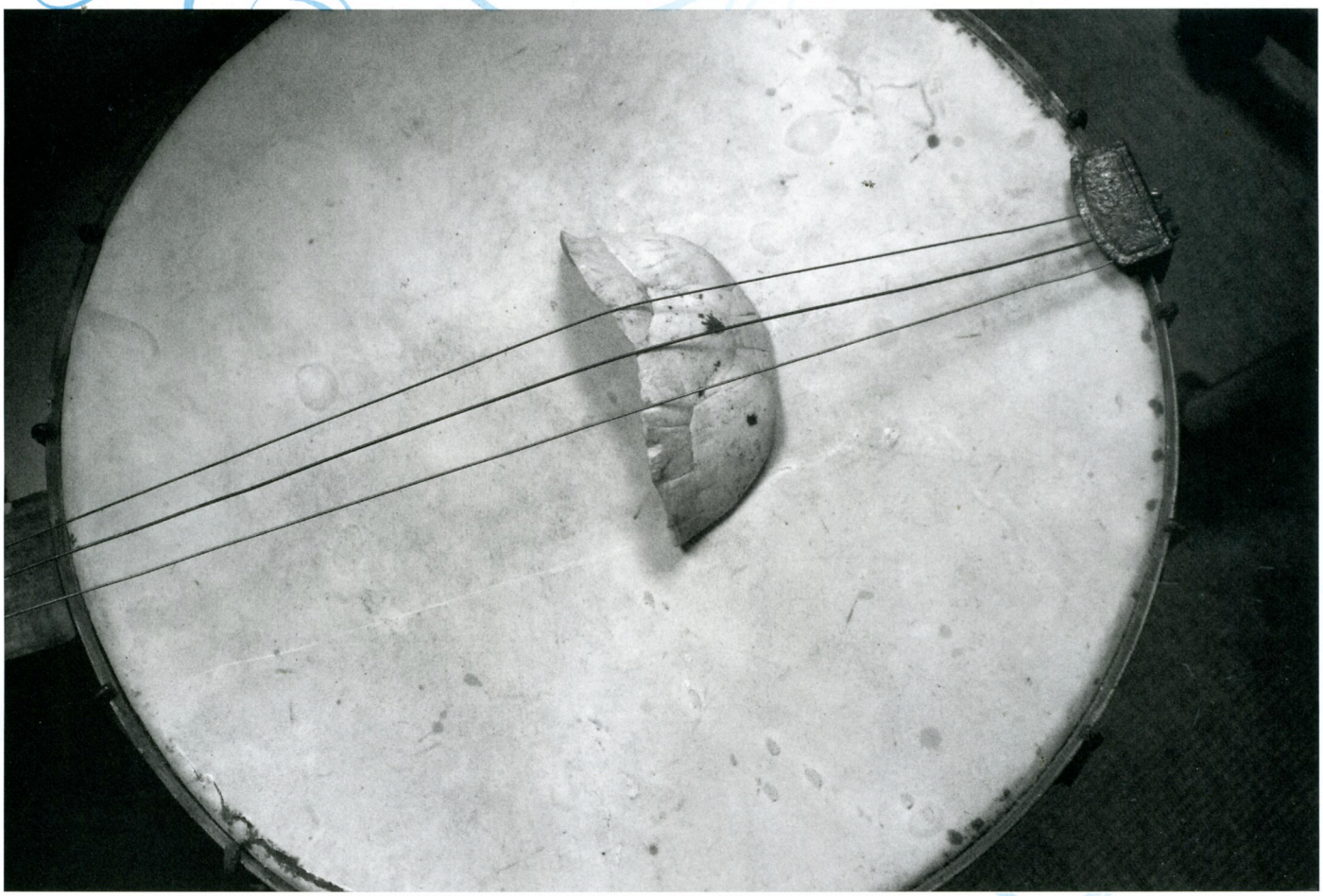
Frank George (b. 1928) of Roane County still plays the songs he learned from his grandfather while growing up in Mercer County. His grandfather learned many of his tunes firsthand from former slaves.

state's foremost collector of old homemade instruments—has even found some banjos credited to Boucher.

By the late 1800s, commercial fretted banjos were available for a few dollars but often needed repairs if they were constantly played. Clyde Case from Duck in Braxton County replaced his worn-out frets with brass from an old flashlight case. He used a heifer horn for the nut—where the strings pass on the headstock. He fashioned his bridge from a piece of apple wood from his farm, his tail piece from a Prince Albert tobacco can, and a brass support under the head from the whistle of a locomotive that wrecked into Elk River. One old fellow in Braxton County, Venton Crislip, notched out a turtle shell for his replacement bridge, invoking the old "make do" attitude.

Today, many craftspeople are making high-quality handmade instruments with native woods that are as good as, or often better than, what the commercial makers can do. They can even replicate or improve upon banjos from the turn of the 20th century, remembered as the "golden age" of vintage banjos.

Banjo player Bernard Cyrus of Wayne County is known for making high-quality instru-

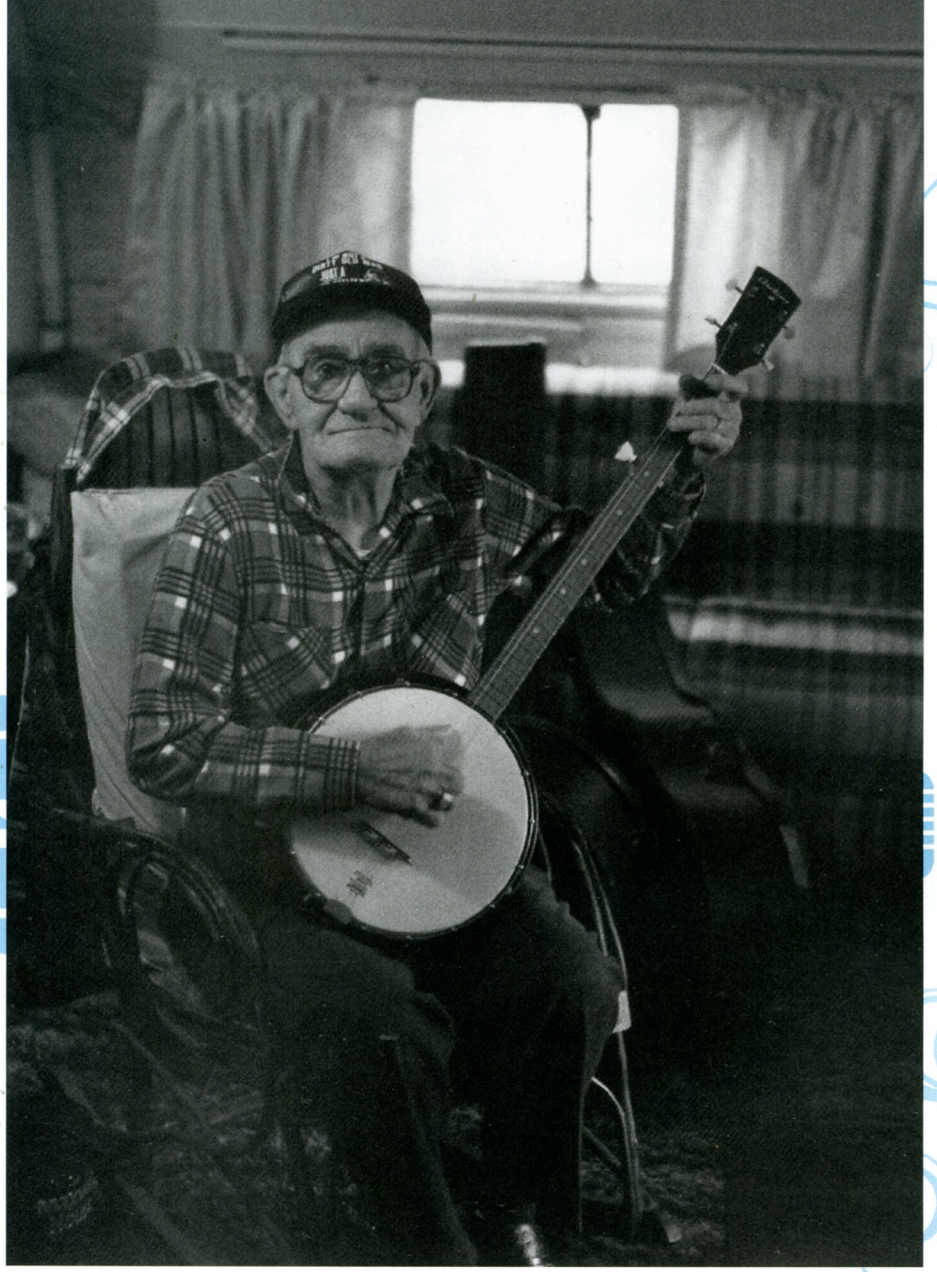


West Virginians always seem to make do with what they have. Here, a clever banjo maker has fashioned a bridge from a turtle shell.

ments. Many West Virginians make new necks to replace worn-out ones on older "pots," or the round base of banjos. Some convert quality four-string banjos from the jazz era of the 1920s by adding new five-string necks to play old-time and bluegrass music. This fifth string, often called the "thumb string," is found on the oldest surviving banjos and has always been used in traditional playing styles.

Some West Virginians, like Norman Adams of Braxton County, made fine bluegrass-style banjos—the main difference being resonator backs, which give them a larger sound. Andy Boarman made and played resonator-backed banjos at his barbershop in Hedgesville in Berkeley County. His playing was highly admired by the great bluegrass pioneer Don Reno.

While some musicians differ over which style is better—old-time or bluegrass—many, in fact, enjoy both styles. A good example was Pete Humphreys, who played a lot of square dances with his brother Mike and famed fiddler Clark Kessinger in Kanawha County. Most older players, though—like Cletus and Arthur D. Johnson, Dona Gum, Fred Hedrick, Anthony Swiger, Currence Hammonds, and Russell Higgins, all of Randolph County; and Carl Alkire, "Uncle Bud" Sandy, Brooks Hardway, and Carson Dobbins, all originally



"Uncle Bud" Sandy (1903-1991) of Braxton County learned some of his banjo tunes from a former slave who lived in the Burnsville area.

of Braxton County—stayed with a straight clawhammer style. Additionally, almost all old-time players could pick a few two-finger pieces.

We'll never know who first brought the banjo to West Virginia, or when. My guess is it was a black person, free or enslaved, sometime around 1800. It's too bad we cannot give that person credit for introducing such an indelible symbol to the Mountain State. The banjo has evolved over time, and to be sure, its unique sound has lifted the hearts of many. No one has expressed the many feelings the banjo gives us better than Mark Twain, who noted:

When you want genuine music—music that will come right home to you like a bad quarter, suffuse your system like strychnine whisky, go right through you like Brandreth's pills, ramify your whole constitution like the measles, and break out on your hide like the pin-feather pimples on a picked goose—when you want all this, just smash your piano, and invoke the glory-beaming banjo!

"Enthusiastic Eloquence," *San Francisco Dramatic Chronicle,* June 23, 1865

GERALD MILNES is the retired Folk Arts Coordinator at the Augusta Heritage Center of Davis & Elkins College. An author, musician, and folklorist, he makes his home in Elkins. He has written more than 20 articles for GOLDENSEAL and was the 2013 recipient of the Vandalia Award. His most recent contribution was in the Spring 2015 issue.

"Profiteers, Charity Charlatans, and Anti-Mother Propagandists"

Mother's Day Founder Anna Jarvis (1864-1948). Courtesy of West Virginia & Regional History Center (WVRHC).

Anna Jarvis and the Enemies of Mother's Day

By Katharine Lane Antolini

In 1933, a week before Mother's Day, Anna Jarvis spent the afternoon in her Philadelphia home composing a lengthy 14-page letter to her "dear cousin." The home Jarvis shared with her younger sister, Lillian, also served as headquarters for her Mother's Day International Association (MDIA). Jarvis incorporated the organization in 1912 to legitimize her movement to honor all mothers on the second Sunday in May. Years later, she dedicated the bulk of the association's resources to defending Mother's Day from

those who tried to exploit it for profit or self-aggrandizement. Jarvis saw threats to her holiday everywhere and took each one to heart. Now, at age 69, Jarvis reflected upon a life committed to a single cause. She thanked her cousin for the opportunity to get "out of my system some pent-up feelings" and her willingness to share her time. "My experiences are a new kind to you," Jarvis wrote, "but 25 years old to me."

Nearly three decades earlier, Jarvis had forever entwined her life with Mother's Day by fulfilling a graveside promise to her mother, Ann Reeves Jarvis. In 1905, she vowed, "by the Grace of God," to create a day commemorating American motherhood as her mother once envisioned. "I hope and pray that someone, sometime, will found a memorial mothers' day commemorating her for the matchless service she renders to humanity in every field of life," Jarvis recalled her mother's words at the funeral. "I went directly from the grave to my room and began to plan for Mother's Day."

A young photo of Anna Jarvis, likely taken during the 1880s. Courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives.

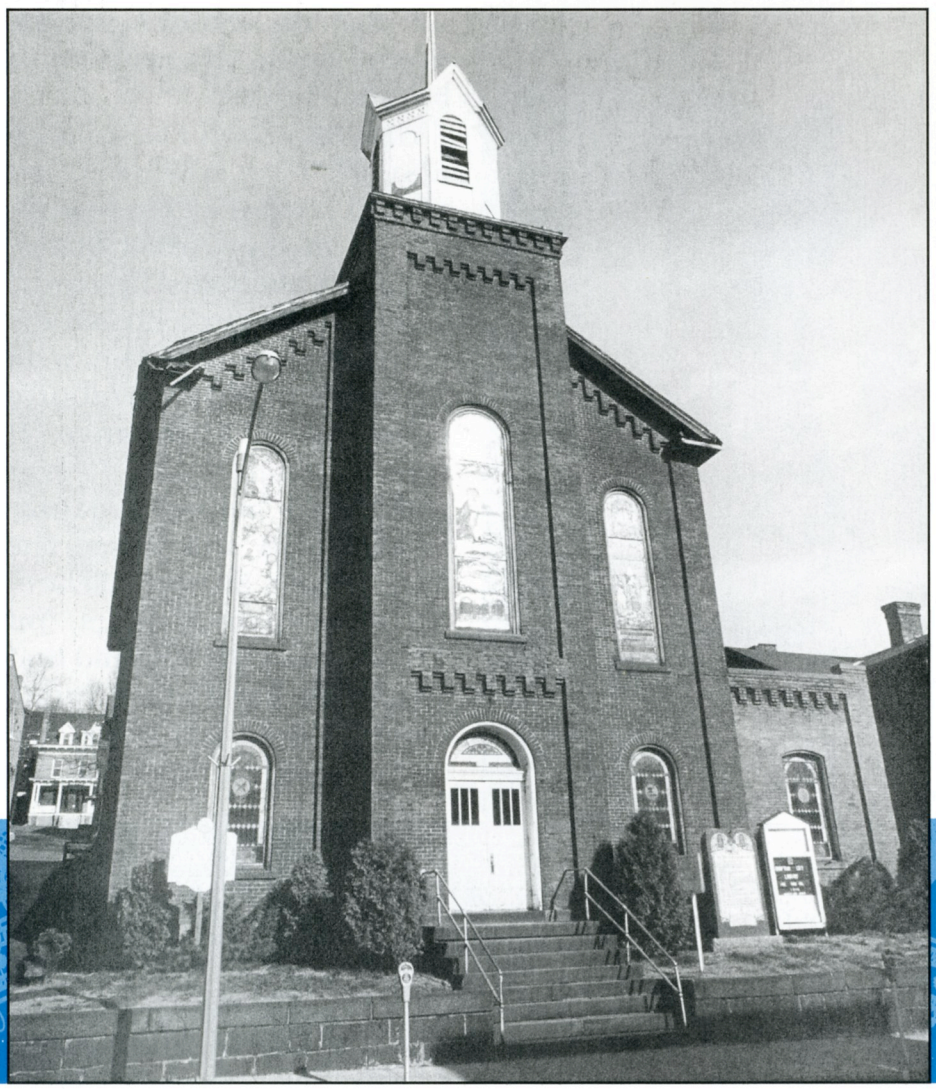
She spent the next three years orchestrating an aggressive letter-writing campaign to any local or national figure—any merchant, minister, or mayor—who could advance her self-proclaimed Mother's Day movement. Such figures included commercial giant John Wanamaker, humorist Mark Twain, acclaimed minister Russell Conwell, and former president Theodore Roosevelt. She emphasized the need for Americans to take one day out of their busy, selfish lives to remember the "mother of quiet grace, who through her self-denials, devotion, and patience" ensured her children's brighter futures.

That day finally arrived on May 10, 1908, when the first official Mother's Day was observed in the United States. Andrews Methodist Episcopal Church in Grafton hosted the first morning program with more than 400 community members in attendance. It was the church Ann Reeves Jarvis had helped organize in the 1870s and where she had taught Sunday School for more than 20 years. Yet Anna Jarvis didn't attend that service in her West Virginia hometown. In her place, she sent a telegram detailing the

purpose of the day as one to "revive the dormant love and filial gratitude we owe to those who gave us birth" and 500 white carnations. Jarvis, meanwhile, remained in her adopted hometown of Philadelphia to attend the afternoon Mother's Day service at the Wanamaker Store Auditorium along with 15,000 other people, no doubt drawn by John Wanamaker who devoted his usual advertising space in local newspapers to publicize the event. Jarvis spoke at the service for more than an hour. The Rev. Russell Conwell, so moved by her oration, reportedly told Jarvis that her Mother's Day idea would honor her "through the ages to come."

The popularity of that first Mother's Day initially gratified Jarvis. She reveled in the "thousands and thousands of persons in all walks of life, with the mother-hunger in their heart" who found Mother's Day "a blessing, a comfort and an uplift." She dedicated her life to making Mother's Day a national and international celebration. By 1911, every state –as well as parts of Canada, Mexico, South America, Africa, China, and Japan—was hosting a Mother's Day service, a testimony to Jarvis' determined leadership. Three years later, after countless letters and trips to Washington D.C., Jarvis sat proudly in the gallery to witness Congress formally designate Mother's Day as a national holiday. The next day, May 9, 1914, she graciously accepted the pen Woodrow Wilson used to sign the first Presidential Mother's Day Proclamation.

One of the first two Mother's Day observances was held at Andrews Methodist Episcopal Church on May 10, 1908. The Grafton church still stands and is recognized as the Mother's Day International Shrine. Courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives, Department of Commerce Collection.



By 1933, however, Jarvis' "dear cousin" already knew this early history of the holiday's origin and didn't need its retelling in a letter. What consumed Jarvis' thoughts were the battles to come. The official recognition of Mother's Day didn't mark the end of Jarvis' work. On one hand, she welcomed the holiday's national designation as a validation of her vision and hard work. But on the other, she never considered Mother's Day legally part of the public domain, like other national holidays, and refused to renounce her creative ownership or leadership of the observance. Jarvis asserted copyright of the holiday and trademark of the words "Mother's Day," "The

Second Sunday in May," and the logo of the white carnation under the incorporation of her Mother's Day International Association in 1912. Copyright warnings frequently appeared on official association documents to reinforce her claim:

REPEATING: ANY PERSONS OR FIRM THAT USES THE NAME, WORK OR CELEBRATION OF MOTHER'S DAY FOR BUSINESS OR SECURING FUNDS IN ANY MANNER, OR ON PRINTED FORMS (WHETHER PRINTED BY HIM OR NOT) WITHOUT AUTHORITY EXPRESSED BY THIS ASSOCIATION WILL CERTAINLY BE LIABLE TO PROSECUTION, AND THE DAMAGES SPECIFICALLY SET FORTH BY LAW FOR INFRINGERS.

Her copyright charges were more than a vain desire to maintain national notoriety or to stop the holiday's crass commercialization, although both were major concerns. Above all, she wanted to defend the day's original meaning as she had initially fashioned it in 1908. For Jarvis, the holiday was intended to be a "homecoming" and "thank offering" from grateful sons and daughters to their mothers. It was meant to be a personal day, hence the holiday's possessive singular spelling: Mother's Day. Likewise, it wasn't designed to honor just any woman or to encourage market forces to intrude into the sanctity and serenity of family life—rather, it was a day to honor "the mother who in your heart is 'the best mother who ever lived'" and to give to her the gift of your

Sunday school room at Andrews Methodist Episcopal Church in Grafton, 1911, with portraits of Anna Jarvis and her mother on the wall. Courtesy of WVRHC.

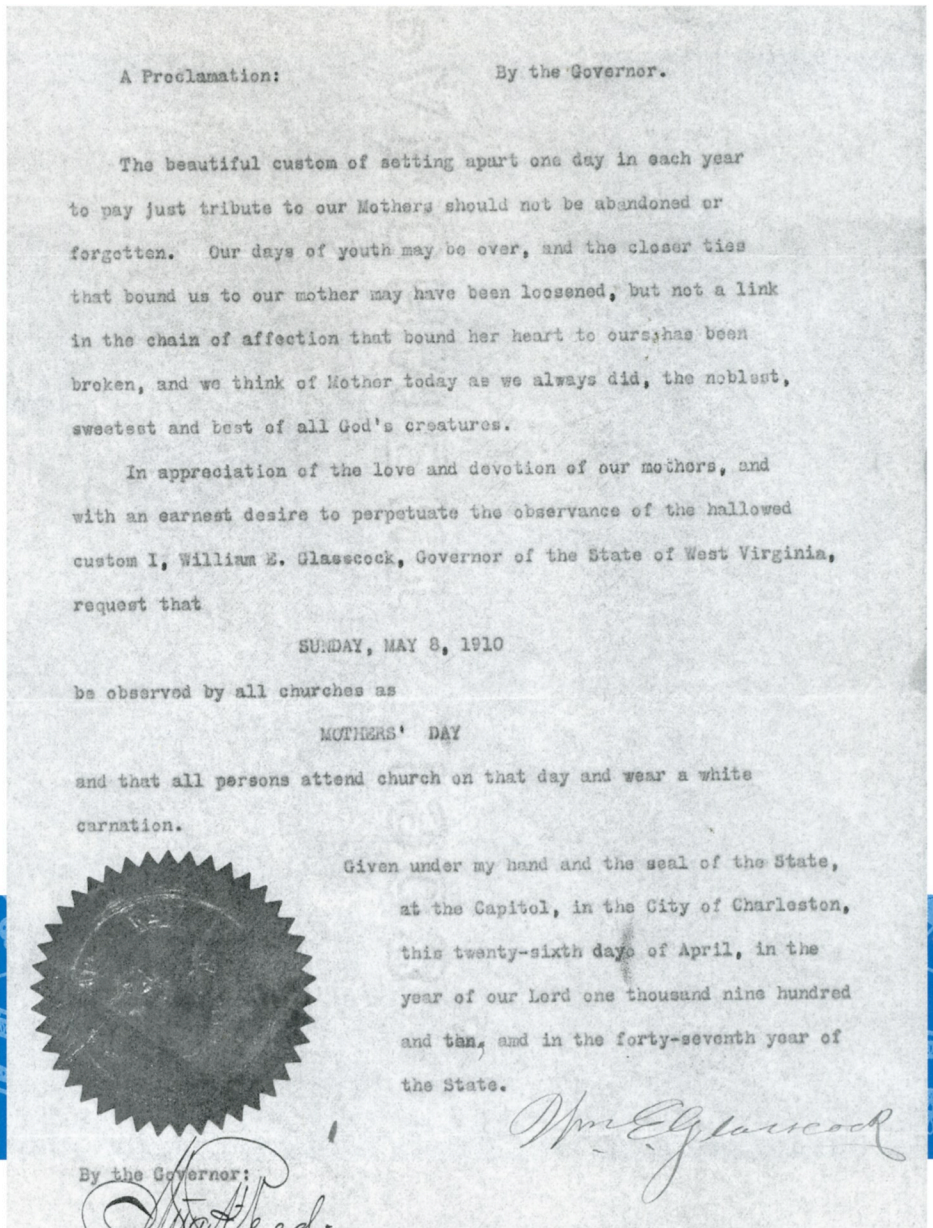
undivided attention and a "day of gladness and of beautiful memories."

Jarvis railed against those who challenged both the original intent and copyright of her holiday work. "But without means, and only with sincerity, I have developed Mother's Day for their envy," she wrote. From the start, Jarvis had funded her movement primarily from her personal fortune—first, from money inherited from her parents and then with financial assistance from her older brother, Claude, who owned the Quaker City Cab Company in Philadelphia. Jarvis had left Grafton to live with her bachelor brother in 1898. Baby sister, Lillian, joined the siblings in their three-story brick house in 1904. Even though Jarvis became the executrix of her brother's estimated $700,000 estate after he suffered a heart attack in 1926, she lamented how creditors had "looted" the bulk of that fortune within just a few years. Because of her financial situation, she refused invitations to speak at Mother's Day services, claiming she no longer possessed appropriate clothing to wear.

Jarvis' declining finances in the face of the blatant profiteering of others obviously heightened her frustrations. She was determined that 1933 would be the last year she would struggle to defend the "altruistic" design of her Mother's Day. "I love to work but it has cost me too much misfortune to continue on its high standards while profiteers get their rake off, and dishonor me at the same time." While Jarvis identified the floral industry as the "leaders in causing me so much trouble," she also abhorred the greed of other commercial industries, such as confectioners and greeting-card chains, which unapologetically violated her legal claims to the holiday. "All of these trades people using Mother's Day want copyrights and trademarks and charters to protect their affairs, but would void similar legal protection of other persons," she asserted.

Commercial industries certainly remained at the top of Jarvis' list of enemies. Her resentment of the holiday's

Proclamation issued by West Virginia Governor William Glasscock declaring May 8, 1910, as Mother's Day and noting that all people should attend church that day and wear a white carnation. Courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives.



A Proclamation: By the Governor.

The beautiful custom of setting apart one day in each year to pay just tribute to our Mothers should not be abandoned or forgotten. Our days of youth may be over, and the closer ties that bound us to our mother may have been loosened, but not a link in the chain of affection that bound her heart to ours has been broken, and we think of Mother today as we always did, the noblest, sweetest and best of all God's creatures.

In appreciation of the love and devotion of our mothers, and with an earnest desire to perpetuate the observance of the hallowed custom I, William E. Glasscock, Governor of the State of West Virginia, request that

SUNDAY, MAY 8, 1910

be observed by all churches as

MOTHERS' DAY

and that all persons attend church on that day and wear a white carnation.

Given under my hand and the seal of the State, at the Capitol, in the City of Charleston, this twenty-sixth days of April, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and ten, and in the forty-seventh year of the State.

Wm E Glasscock

By the Governor:

commercialization was well documented in the popular press by the 1930s, and remains today one of the most discussed aspects of her life's story. Yet, commercial industries were merely a passing mention in her letter to her cousin. Instead, Jarvis enumerated many other Mother's Day offenders. Over the last 25 years, she had categorized all her holiday adversaries under special monikers: Commercial industries were "Profiteers, Infringers, and Trade Vandals"; those whose Mother's Day efforts allegedly predated her own movement were labeled "Mother's Day Impostors"; political and judicial figures who used Mother's Day for self-promotion or sanctioned the holiday's "pilfering" by other groups were deemed "Grafters"; and those who promoted alternative celebrations, like Parents' Day or Father's Day, were considered "Anti-Mother Propagandists."

Perhaps most shocking to modern observers was Jarvis' disdain for private organizations and charitable foundations that used Mother's Day to raise money to aid poor mothers and children. Many of these organizations and fund-raising drives were led by professional charity promoters. Jarvis intuitively questioned the integrity of these "smoothed-tongued" promoters and believed their salaries far surpassed the amount collected for their causes. She classified such groups as "Charity Charlatans," "Welfare Profiteers," and the "Expectant Mother Racket." Jarvis reserved the brutal title of "Christian Pirates" for the worst offenders. "In New York City, there is a clique of charity profiteers that someday will be revealed as operators rivaling Wall Street," she exclaimed. In her view, these slick operators would stop at nothing to line their own pockets. "Everything I write or do, and even the negatives of my pictures, original phrases, slogans, names, etc. of Mother's Day are seized by pirates," she contended. "It is amazing the state of the minds of Christian pirates."

This threat of charitable organizations weighed heavily on Jarvis' mind in 1933 due to a recent congressional amendment to the 1914 Mother's Day Resolution. The original resolution empowered the president to call on the American people to display the U.S. flag on all government buildings and private homes on the second Sunday in May. In the midst of the Great Depression, however,

Anna Jarvis, as she appeared in April 1910, during her campaign to have Mother's Day declared a national holiday. Courtesy of WVRHC.

By the mid-1930s, Anna Jarvis had become greatly disillusioned over the holiday she'd created. In 1935, she wrote First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt a terse letter denouncing various charity groups that were using Mother's Day for fund-raising purposes. Courtesy of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library.

P. O. BOX 3473

STEVENSON 34-47
BEFORE 10 A. M.

SECOND SUNDAY IN MAY
Mother's Day
ANNA JARVIS, FOUNDER
T. MS. REG'D U. S. PAT. OFF. AND CANADA

CABLE ADDRESS
"MOTHERSDAY"
PHILADELPHIA

JARVIS

PERSONAL

REFERRING TO LETTER OF

MOTHER'S DAY, INC.

PHILADELPHIA March 17, 1935

MRS. FRANKLIN D ROOSEVELT
THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON
My dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

As you have been the big influence with C V Vickrey, Golden Rule Foundation, Inc., and Maternity Center Asso., Inc., per Wald-Krech Outfit, to have our Move ment and celebrations represented as under leadership of these persons and concerns, it must be insisted that you immediately stop these promoters use of Mother's Day names celebrations and Movement for solicitations, publicity, etc.

Their publicity agents and plotted plans are for making Mother's Day name connected with them and their concerns, and to use it for getting funds for uses that are unauthorized here.

Miss Perkins, Mrs. Kermit Roosevelt, Mrs. James Roosevelt, Mrs. F.D. Roosevelt, The President, and other persons of official standing are listed with the activi ties of these infringers, detractors and unauthorized solicitors.

An accounting is demanded of all funds collected by these concerns and operators-- Vickrey, Wald-Krech, etc- and for what they have been disbursed.

Now, it is understood Vickrey has "~~xxxi~~ "instituted by the Golden Rule Foundation, Inc." ~~xx~~ his latest organization called Religion & Welfare Recovery, Inc.

The President's letter proclaiming this concern for Vickrey, and permitting its circularization as adver tising is unfortunate.

It is understood Vickrey's plans are for a big national drive Mother's Day Week of May 6th-13th, preceded by Dan Poling's, etc. "Youth Movement Week" of last of April. Dan and Charlie seem to have quite a hook-up for Mother's Day.

It is expected that you see to it that this new Movement, and the drive named, and Golden Rule Foundation, and Maternity Center Asso. projects call off at once all plans for use of Mother's Day names and celebrations to get funds, etc., etc. There would not have been such activities of this Vickrey without your patronage.

It is deeply regretted you are always vs Mother's Day work and workers and allied with infringers you know we wish to avoid. It is a calamity to have such enmity as as you and your associates progressively show.

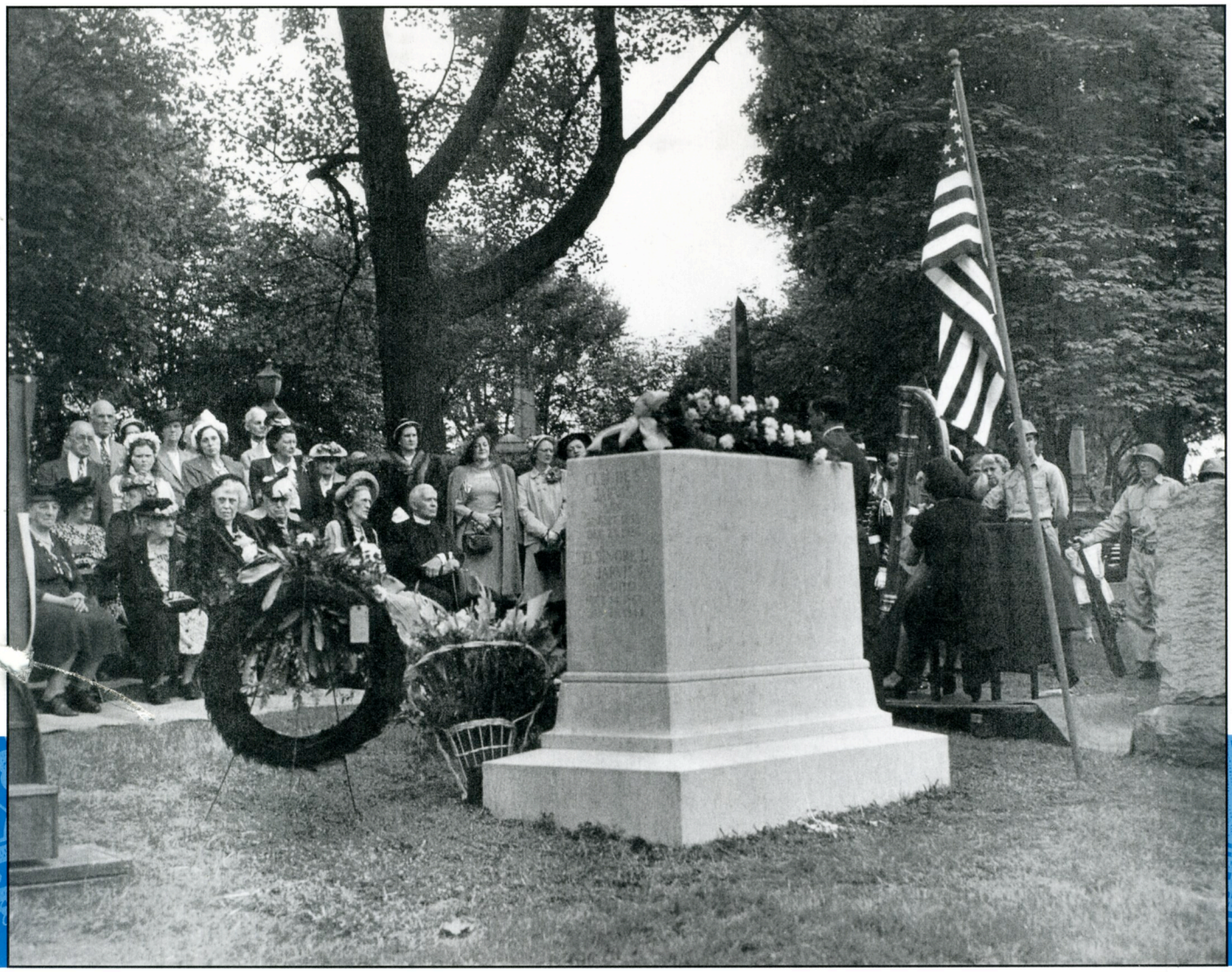
Very truly, Anna Jarvis Founder, Mother's Day

Congress believed more could be done to benefit American mothers. A senate resolution requested Americans to observe the holiday by contributing to churches, fraternal organizations, and welfare agencies, providing relief to the "unprecedented large numbers" of needy mothers and children victimized by the Depression. The 1933 resolution immediately legitimized the work of charitable foundations that hoped to extend the holiday celebration into month-long fund-raising drives.

Jarvis tried to block this "vicious legislation" by sending 50 personal letters and telegrams to Washington officials. She ultimately suspected Charles Vickery, president of the Golden Rule Foundation in New York City, as the mastermind behind the senate resolution. His foundation had been using Mother's Day to promote its Golden Rule Mothers Fund since 1931. Jarvis dismissed Vickery as a corrupt salaried promoter, often referring to him as "Golden Rule Charley." She encouraged her cousin to read about his "gold hunting" schemes, noting, "His plans for getting funds are daring and far-reaching, as you may see when you receive his printed matter. I think he is one of the biggest rascals out of Sing Sing." Through this legislation, Jarvis knew, Vickery merely sought legal authority to profiteer free from charges of copyright infringement.

The Golden Rule Foundation was not the only New York City charity Jarvis condemned in her letter. She complained of the annual Mother's Day luncheon

A memorial service dedicated to Anna Jarvis was held in Philadelphia's West Laurel Cemetery on Mother's Day, May 8, 1949—less than six months after her death. Courtesy of WVRHC.



at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel hosted by the wealthy female supporters of the Maternity Center Association (MCA). Formed in 1918, the MCA advocated for prenatal and postnatal medical services to combat the country's alarmingly high maternal and infant mortality rate. By the 1930s, Mother's Day was a key source of MCA's fund-raising and a means to promote awareness and educational programming about maternal and infant health. New York socialites and national figures, such as First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins, publicly endorsed MCA's work, and, to Jarvis' chagrin, both women were slated to speak at the annual luncheon. Jarvis demanded transparency with regards to all groups that were distributing and collecting funds through Mother's Day campaigns. She doubted the significance of the total money raised after deducting for other expenses, especially MCA luncheons. Moreover, she knew that these wives of influential politicians, businessmen, financiers, media men, doctors, lawyers, and even a New York Giants baseball player had enough personal wealth to save the lives of expectant mothers without exploiting Mother's Day. "It will be an interesting picture for these rich women to ride up to the Waldorf-Astoria next week in their rich clothes, diamonds, cars, etc. for feasting," Jarvis quipped, "and they talk of 'poor mothers' dying thru maternity."

Ann Reeves Jarvis (1832-1905) was the mother of Anna Jarvis and the inspiration for Mother's Day. During the Civil War, Ann Jarvis organized Mother's Day Friendship Clubs, which later helped soldiers from both sides mend fences in heavily split Taylor County. Courtesy of WVRHC.

Each spring, she tried to stop the MCA's holiday campaign with little success. Jarvis described MCA President Mrs. John R. Sloane, the wife of a New York City multimillionaire, as "shifty in her promises" and as "always on conference" whenever Jarvis called. But she was used to such dismissive treatment: "They would use Mother's Day for their advertising, pictures in the papers, and money-getting, and snap their fingers at me for protesting year after year." Jarvis, however,

shared with her cousin her ingenious method to combat the New York socialites who ignored her—sending their husbands telegrams admonishing their wives' behavior. "Men do not like their wives oftentimes giving their time to these clubs and are glad of an excuse to stop them," she contended.

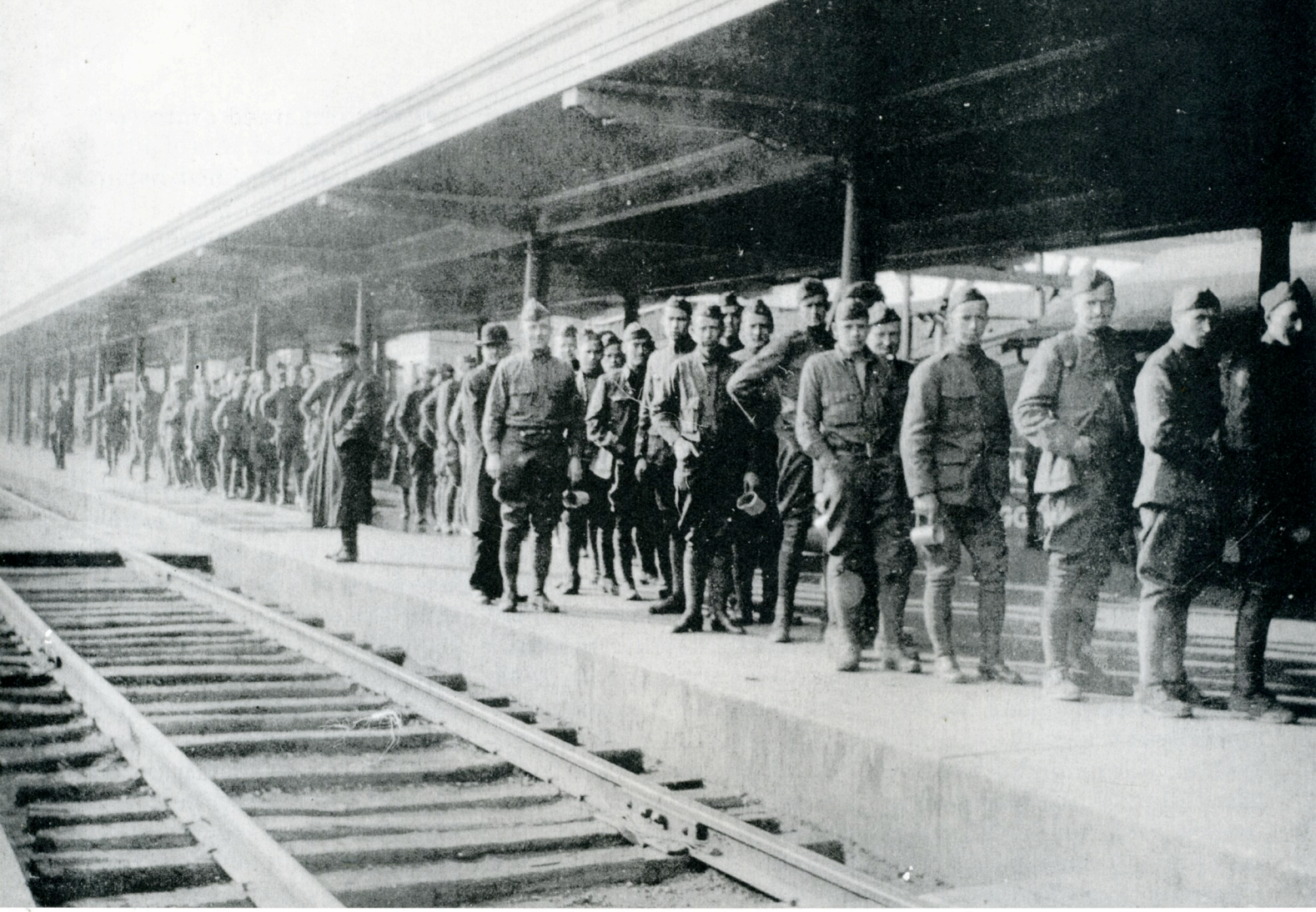
Even President Franklin D. Roosevelt received letters from Jarvis regarding the Mother's Day charity work of his mother, Sarah; wife, Eleanor; and Secretary of Labor Perkins. In April 1933, Jarvis urged President Roosevelt to protect Mother's Day from those using the day "to wheedle money out of the public." She reminded him that the Golden Rule Foundation, which both Sarah and Eleanor had supported, had been "banned from all celebrations of Mother's Day" because of its unauthorized fund-raising methods. Two years later, Jarvis directed her frustration squarely at Eleanor Roosevelt and Frances Perkins. She accused the first lady of "grand larceny of human reputation and achievement" for her continued support of the Golden Rule Foundation, and compared Secretary Perkins to Italian dictator Benito Mussolini for her work with the Maternity Center Association. "Pray, do not talk 'peace' or criticize the invaders of Africa. They are only seizing property for greed as your Maternity concern has done versus Mother's Day," she charged.

To her cousin, Jarvis named more than 20 individuals and organizations as clear threats to the holiday. Thus, despite the gratification and fame she earned from Mother's Day, she was observably succumbing to the pressure to defend her life's work. Throughout the 1930s, stories of Jarvis' faltering health and finances were fixtures of the annual Mother's Day press coverage. In 1938, *Time* detailed her increasingly erratic behavior, such as writing "violent telegrams" to the Roosevelt Administration and walking the streets with a black satchel full of press releases and publicity photos of herself as a young woman. According to the article, Jarvis had grown more reclusive, preferring to spend much of her time secluded at home behind heavy curtains. Allegedly, one needed to know a secret number of doorbell rings to visit her. Jarvis, of course, condemned such media depictions as libelous. Yet, just five years later, *Newsweek* broke the story of a frail, disoriented, and impoverished Jarvis wandering into a Philadelphia hospital seeking assistance. It was obvious to the *Newsweek* reporter that the years of bitter fighting had "crushed her in body and soul."

By the following Mother's Day, 1944, Anna Jarvis was residing in the Marshall Square Sanitarium. Her sister Lillian, age 76, refused to enter the sanitarium with her. In February 1944, police discovered Lillian's body in the dilapidated Jarvis home. The coroner ruled the cause of death as carbon monoxide poisoning. Anna remained at Marshall Square until her death on November 24, 1948.

Evidence of the emotional and economic strain that ultimately landed Jarvis in a sanitarium was already woven into the 14-page letter to her cousin. By May 1933, she no longer wished to participate in Mother's Day observances, electing instead to remain "just an observer of the fakers." Nonetheless, she wished her cousin the best. "That is," she joked, "if you recover from reading this lengthy letter."

Dr. KATHARINE LANE ANTOLINI is assistant professor of History and Gender Studies at West Virginia Wesleyan College and author of the book *Memorializing Motherhood: Anna Jarvis and the Struggle for the Control of Mother's Day*, published by WVU Press. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.



World War I enlistees line up at Huntington's C&O Railway Station as they wait to be fed at the station's Red Cross canteen. All photos courtesy of Marshall University Library, Special Collections.

A Warm Welcome

By James E. Casto

When the United States declared war against Germany on April 6, 1917, President Woodrow Wilson urged his fellow citizens to help the newly formed American Red Cross assist the thousands of young men joining the Allied forces on the battlefields of Europe. The Red Cross responded in a number of ways but surely the most widely known and longest remembered was by providing coffee, snacks, and personal items for members of the military crisscrossing the country on troop trains.

During the war and for months after the fighting ended, Red Cross volunteers—almost all women—operated 700 canteens at railroad passenger stations across the nation, with several in West Virginia. One

Canteen Commandant Lula Wellman Mossman stands in front of the modest wood building that served as headquarters for the Red Cross Canteen at the C&O Railway Station in Huntington.

of the busiest was in Huntington, at the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway Station at 7th Avenue and 9th Street.

The Huntington canteen opened on September 9, 1918, and closed exactly a year later. Even though the Armistice ended the war just two months after the canteen opened, the troop trains kept coming, carrying thousands of men on their way home or, in some cases, to a hospital. So the canteen workers remained on the job to help them.

A small army of 650 volunteers worked at the Huntington canteen under the direction of Lula Wellman Mossman, the canteen's commandant, who was the wife of prominent Huntington businessman Dan A. Mossman.

In the early months of the war—before the canteen opened—Lula and a group of her friends had met in the basement playroom of her 6th Avenue home to make bandages for the wounded. When the Huntington chapter of the Red Cross set about opening its canteen, she was a logical choice to take charge.

The Huntington Lumber & Supply Company donated a small wood building that was moved to the C&O station. Volunteers had to be at least 23 years old. They were divided into groups and strictly scheduled. Each woman had to be certified by the Red Cross and outfitted in a long white uniform, with a white apron and head covering with the Red Cross emblem. A volunteer motor corps was organized for those who had no way of getting to the station and then back home.

World War I Troop Trains in Huntington

In addition to feeding soldiers on troop trains, Huntington's World War I Red Cross Canteen also served regular C&O passengers who were traveling through town.

The troop trains pulled into the station for a brief stop at all hours of the day and night, and a dozen or more women met every train, even those that arrived at 3 a.m. or so. The women prepared the food, cleaned the building (known as "the hut"), and boarded the trains—inviting the men to come to the canteen and serving the wounded who couldn't leave the train.

The food was plain but hearty—sandwiches, home-made cake or pie, candy, fruit, milk and, of course, coffee. The women also passed out free cigarettes, pipe tobacco, magazines, and postcards. At the canteen's peak, the women served an average of about 5,000 men a week. The record for one day: 2,333 men.

Food was donated by townspeople and local businesses. Others donated money so the volunteers could buy what was needed. Almost daily, Huntington's newspapers published lists of donors and what they had supplied. On a day when three troop trains had gone through, the list included 39 people who'd made contributions, large and small—a jar of jelly, one or more pies, quantities of milk, two dozen eggs, and three dozen doughnuts, plus gifts of money.

At one point, the canteen was notified to expect 700 soldiers for supper. The meal was served at the National Guard Armory. Most of the food was donated. One hotel supplied the meat and another hotel the vegetables. Plates and silverware were loaned by stores, and the soldiers were served by 70 canteen volunteers.

The Red Cross enthusiastically praised the cooperation of the C&O: "They arrange to let the boys stay here as long as possible every time."

The commanding officer of one train refused for his men to be served at the canteen, saying they needed exercise more than food. He then proceeded to march them up and down the street.

The canteen had its share of poignant moments, as reported in the daily newspapers. For instance, one soldier, after re-

Here are some of the volunteers who operated the Red Cross Canteen at the C&O Railway Station in Huntington during World War I.

alizing he was in Huntington, remarked that he had a brother he hadn't seen in years who worked at C. M. Love Hardware. A bystander hurried off to the hardware store and, shortly before the troop train pulled out, returned with the soldier's brother in tow. The two men hugged and had a great reunion, while the crowd cheered.

When the war ended, the canteen remained a busy place as the volunteers helped soldiers on their way back to their homes. Sensing a marketing opportunity, the Huntington Chamber of Commerce printed and distributed thousands of small leaflets praising the city and urging the returning soldiers, once they were discharged, to come back and settle down.

"Hurry home and see your folks and your girl," the leaflets advised. "Then pack your grip and come back and grow up with us. There's a hearty welcome here always for the right sort. We are building the biggest and best town on the Ohio River between Pittsburgh and Cincinnati and are only sorry that you cannot drop off and look it over."

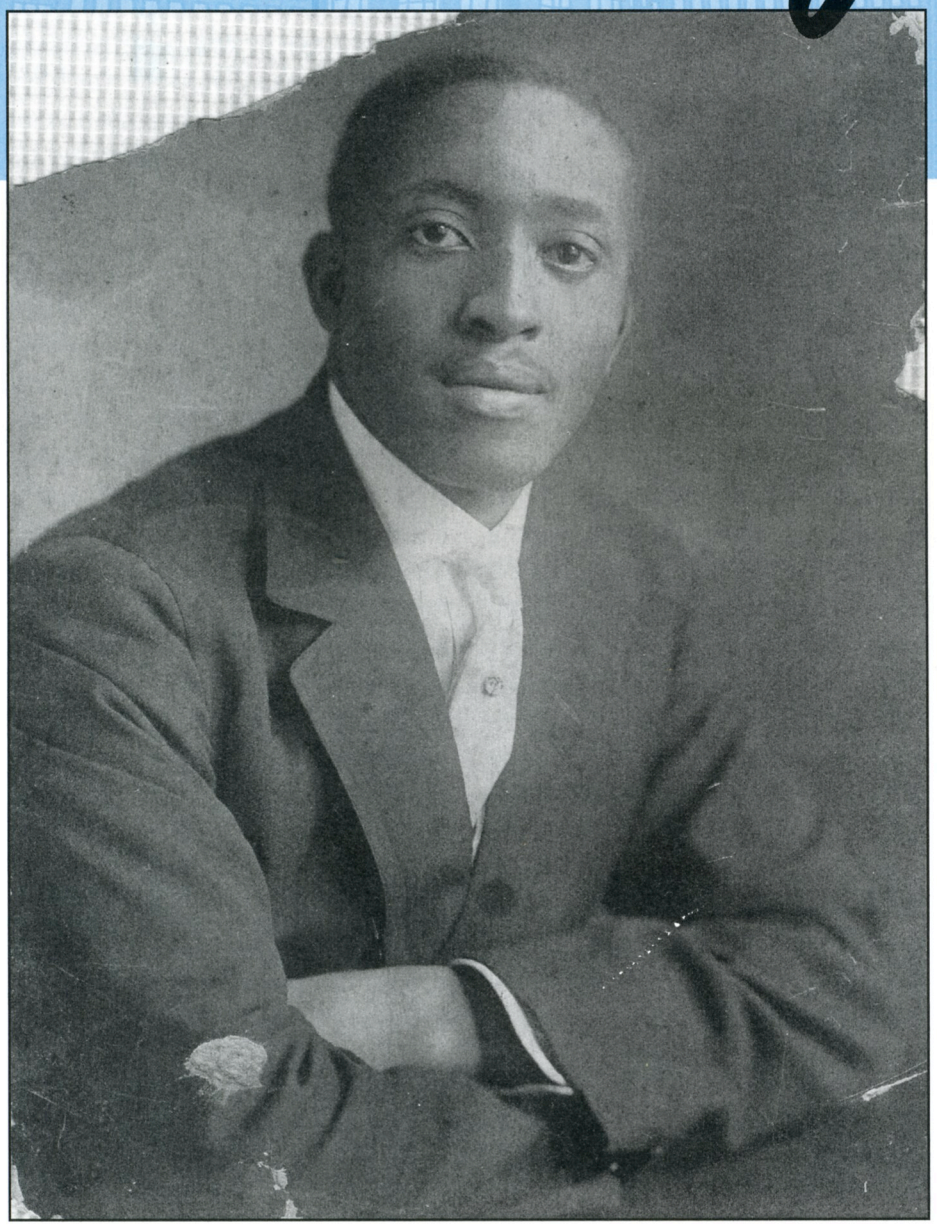
The chamber leaflet also urged the soldiers to share it: "Hand this card to some manufacturer who is looking for the best located factory town in the country. Tell him to write us and challenge us to prove the assertion, and we will do it conclusively."

When the canteen finally closed, a newspaper noted it had been a great success, "largely through the untiring efforts of Mrs. Dan A. Mossman, canteen commandant." Until her death in 1964, Lula Mossman regularly received grateful thanks from many former World War I soldiers who recalled the warm welcome they received when their train stopped for a few minutes in Huntington.

JAMES E. CASTO of Huntington is the retired associate editor of *The Herald-Dispatch* and the author of a number of books on local and regional history. This is his 10th contribution to GOLDENSEAL, the most recent being in the Spring 2016 issue.

"Cap" Ferguson

By Maria Sisco
and
Stan Bumgardner



Above: Gurnett "Cap" Ferguson, 1910s. All photos courtesy of Maria Sisco unless noted otherwise.

Facing page: Cap Ferguson in his World War I Army uniform, 1917.

"Cap" Ferguson was born at Edgewater in Fayette County on October 17, 1888, the son of Daniel and Sarah Elizabeth Eddens Ferguson. His full given name was Gurnett Ferguson. However, when enlisting in the Army, Cap was told he needed a middle name. According to a family story, he perused a map of the world, looked toward Europe, and randomly picked a middle name—Edinburgh.

Cap spent most of his younger years growing up in West Dunbar, just west of Charleston, and graduated from Garnet High School and the normal school of West Virginia Collegiate Institute—now West Virginia State University—in 1912. He taught school for several years in Fayette County and Huntington.

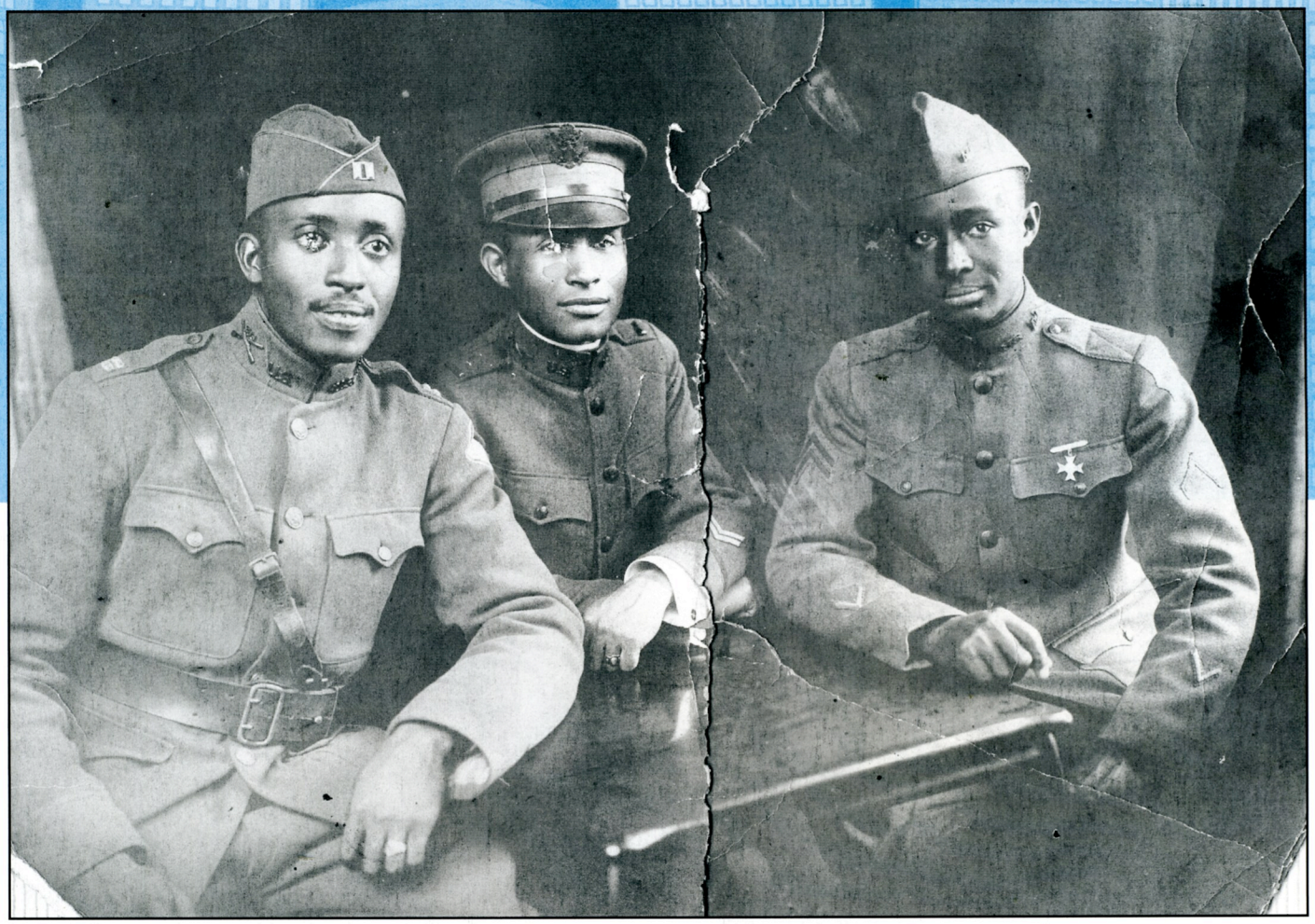
In 1914, he married Lily Foster. They remained together more than 60 years, until her death in 1975.

While training to become a teacher, he began dabbling in real estate, later recalling, "In June 1912, I didn't have $5. I

A Black Trailblazer

remember that because I got in on a real estate deal with three others and $20 was needed for an option. I didn't have my share, but we succeeded in having the option reduced to $15."

When the United States entered World War I in 1917, Cap was assigned to the 17th Provisional Training Regiment at Fort Des Moines, Iowa—the first site ever designated by the U.S. military specifically for training black officers. After three months of training in Iowa, Cap was commissioned as one of 105 African-American captains. At the same time, two other graduates of the West Virginia Collegiate Institute Normal School were commissioned second lieutenants at Fort Des Moines: Lafayette Campbell and Norwood Fairfax. Cap's brother Daniel, later to become a dean at the West Virginia Collegiate Institute and introduce the school's ROTC program, was in the second class of cadets at Fort Des Moines. Another brother, William, also served in the war.



(L-R) Brothers and World War I veterans Cap, Daniel, and William Ferguson, 1918.

Cap spent four months in basic training at Camp Grant in Rockford, Illinois, and became captain of Company M of the 365th Infantry, part of the all-black 92nd Division. According to family tradition, he was once commended by his division's commanding general, Charles "Iron Pants" Martin—who was openly racist toward most of his soldiers—for defending a group of African-American soldiers from damaging accusations that would have destroyed their lives. In summer 1918, Cap led an all-black 1,700-troop transport across the Atlantic. As ranking officer aboard the ship, he became the only African-American to command a transport during the war, earning him the lifelong nickname "Cap." Throughout his life, Cap Ferguson achieved his goals, regardless of the odds, and fought even harder when the odds were against him. So, his commanding presence certainly must have had a profound impact on the young soldiers who served with him.

Few specifics are known of Cap's time in Europe due to the fire at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis in 1973. In the latter weeks of the war, the 365th was actively involved in the fighting in the Vosges Mountains. The French awarded the entire regiment the Croix de Guerre.

For years afterward, Cap spoke fondly of his time in Europe and returned home with beautiful fabrics and gifts for his Lily. He was a very civic-minded man who, in 1919, founded the first African-American American Legion post in West Virginia and was a founding member of the state's Veterans of Foreign War.

After World War I, there were about 5,000 African-Americans in Charleston—living almost entirely in a segregated world. Cap realized that Charleston's black community desperately needed quality businesses of its own. His brilliant idea was to build a magnificent business complex in the

Cap Ferguson having dinner with his wife, Lily, in the late 1940s or early 1950s.

traditionally African-American section on the north end of the downtown. The nucleus of his Ferguson Business Center was the Ferguson Hotel.

Cap was inspired by his own experience of not being able to find an available room in New York City: "You know, a colored man who wants good lodgings has a difficult time when he is traveling. I spent an hour and a half in a taxi in New York city looking for a place to stop. I didn't want to go to a cheap, unattractive and unsanitary colored lodging house and there was no good colored hotel."

The Ferguson Hotel, which opened in 1922, took up an entire city block bounded by Washington, Sentz, Lewis, and Broad (now Leon Sullivan Way) streets. It cost some $200,000 to build, included 72 rooms, and quickly attracted other black businesses to the area. It was designed by West Virginia's first licensed black architect, John C. Norman of Charleston, and built by Charleston contractor J. H. Love. A local black newspaper said the Ferguson was "one of the foremost most modern and elaborately furnished and equipped hotels catering to Negro patronage around the country."

Since other large hotels were segregated, the Ferguson became the staying place of choice for African-Americans passing through Charleston. Many famous people stayed there and appeared in either the hotel's night club or theater—Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong, and Joe Louis, to name a few. The hotel also was home to a movie theater, a dance hall, barber and beauty shops, a restaurant, a poolroom, and business offices.

Cap explained his approach to business in a 1922 newspaper article, "You see, everything is interlocking. Whenever there is a dance here, the dancers step right through this door to the café. . . . Guests of the hotel wish amusement and they go to the moving picture show or to the poolroom. A man comes to play pool, gets hungry and goes to the café. If he needs a shave, he goes to the barber shop."

Even with so many businesses, though, Cap knew he couldn't make the equivalent of white businesspeople: "Now I can follow the white hotel men so far, but then I have to stop and pioneer for myself. I have to meet the problem of giving the best service for a smaller amount than the white hotels receive. A colored man cannot afford to pay as much as a white man, generally speaking."

Because Cap's vast businesses were under one roof, he was able to keep his costs reasonable and his rooms affordable. He emphasized business accountability, saying, "Each department of my business is run separately, just as if they did not all belong to the same man. The hotel, for instance, cannot take a dustcloth from the café unless it pays for it.

The Ferguson, which opened in Charleston in 1922, was described by a local paper as "one of the foremost most modern and elaborately furnished and equipped hotels catering to Negro patronage around the country."

In that way I am able to keep a check on each department and see just how each is paying."

He also understood the importance of a strong black middle class and gave his managers incentives: "I have a manager in charge of each department. I pay him a small salary and I allow him a certain percentage of the proceeds of his department. In this way I encourage them to do their best and make them feel just as if they were in business."

The Ferguson was also the social center of African-American Charleston. Along with an adjoining row of businesses along Shrewsbury Street owned by Anderson H. Brown, this area is still remembered affectionately as "The Block."

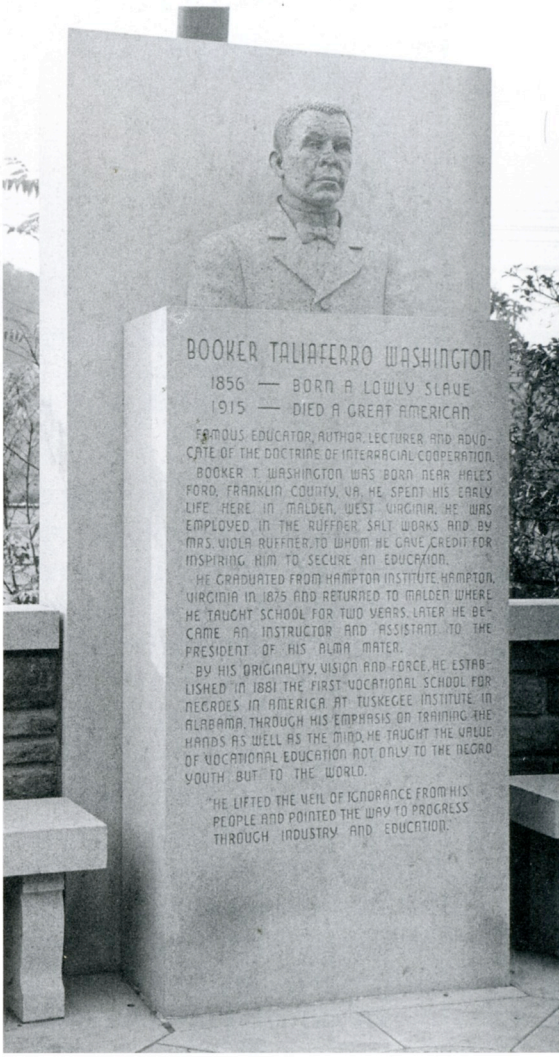
Cap Ferguson held many positions in his fight for racial equality. He joined with attorney and former legislator T. G. Nutter and other civil rights leaders to help block the screening of the controversial film *Birth of a Nation* at Charleston's Rialto Theatre in 1925. He was a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), director of the state Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics during the early years of the Great Depression, and a member of the Mayor's Commission on Human Relations. He also was an unsuccessful candidate for the West Virginia House of Delegates, an alternate delegate to the Republican National Conventions in 1940 and 1948, a 33rd Degree Mason and Shriner, and a board member for the original Charleston Civic Center.

Even with all of his success, Cap continued to give back to the community and his fam-

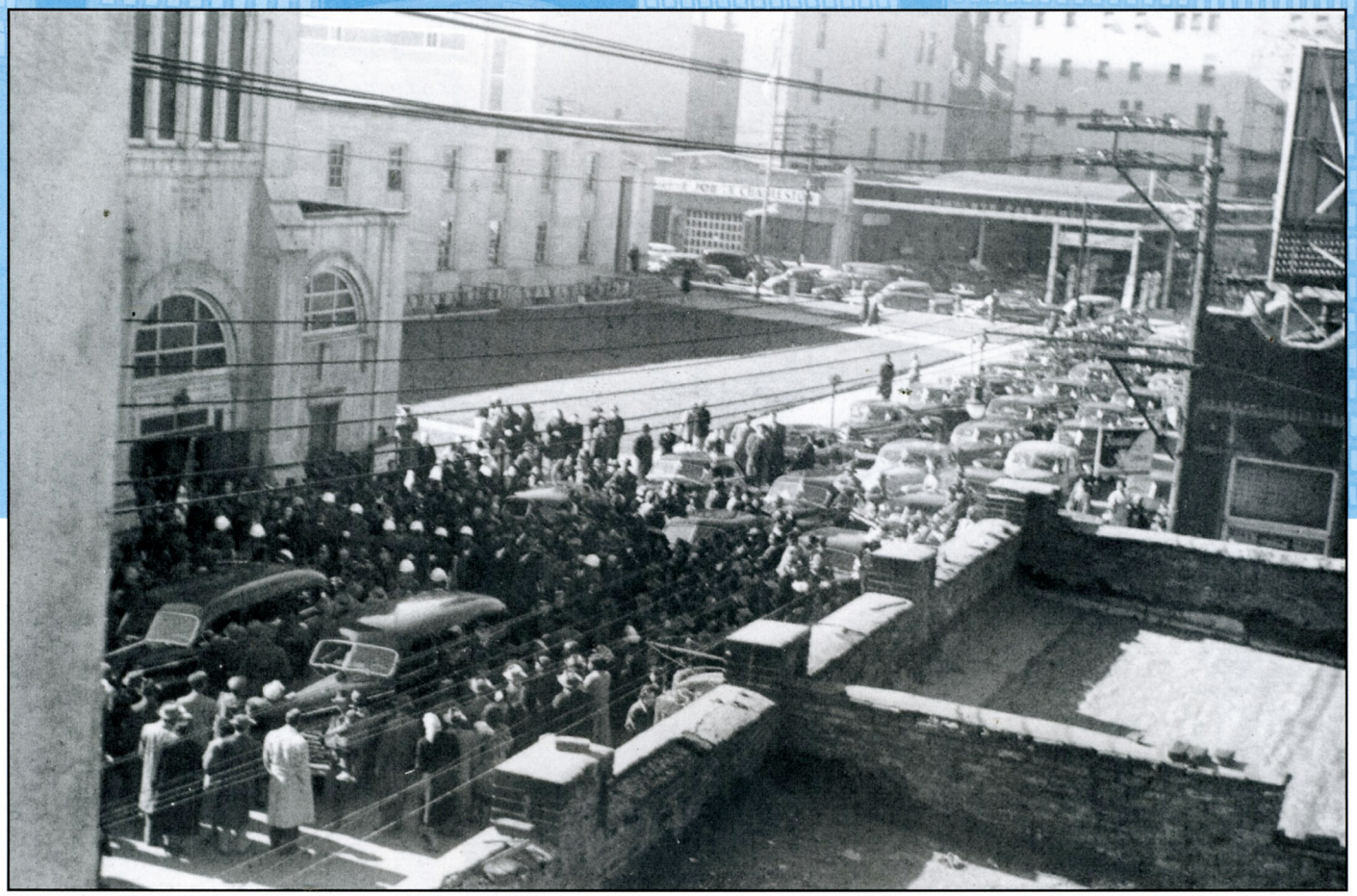
Cap Ferguson was a founding member of what would become the Colonel Charles Young Post 57 of the American Legion. In this photo of Cap and Lily, likely from the 1970s, he's wearing his American Legion hat.

ily. In 1918, he donated land to build Dunbar's Ferguson Memorial Baptist Church, with his mother, Sarah Elizabeth Ferguson, as a trustee. He commissioned a monument to Booker T. Washington, a distant relative, in Malden, Washington's childhood home east of Charleston. Due to recurrences of vandalism, the monument was later rededicated and is now on the State Capitol grounds.

He also was a prominent real-estate developer in Dunbar and Institute. In particular, Dunbar's Pinewood Park



Cap was the driving force behind commissioning the Booker T. Washington monument in Malden. It is now located on the Capitol Complex. Courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives.



This photo, taken from the roof of the Ferguson Hotel, shows a large funeral at the African-American First Baptist Church on Washington Street. It appears to have been taken during World War II, so the funeral could possibly be for a military serviceman.

expanded suburban living opportunities for people of color. He and his wife, Lily, moved to Pinewood when their new home was completed about 1960. Ferguson provided his family and their friends with a summer home on Elk River, just outside of Ivydale in Clay County. This place, simply called "The Camp," offered the Fergusons a rural retreat during summers. It featured well water, an outhouse, no television, and no telephones but lots of swimming, boating, card playing, horseshoe pitching, laughing, and singing.

But things were not all smooth sailing for Cap and his enterprises. Early in his business career, he had plans to build a chain of hotels across the country to serve people of color. He soon met resistance, though. In 1927, creditors filed a lawsuit against Cap, and Circuit Court Judge Arthur P. Hudson ordered him to sell the Ferguson. The sale never occurred, and the Ferguson lived on for nearly four more decades.

Years later, as Charleston's downtown expanded, Cap was approached over and over again to sell his hotel, which was on prime real estate. He refused each time, concerned less about his income and more about not displacing the residents who'd lived there for years. On March 26, 1966, a mysterious fire broke out in the hotel's attic. Although the blaze was brought under control, the smoke and water damage were extensive, so he sold the property. The site soon became the Heart-o-Town Motor Inn (later part of the Holiday Inn chain). A few years later, he was approached about selling his Elk River camp. Again, he refused, and The Camp was burned to the ground. The only thing left in the wake of the fire was the fireplace. Understandably saddened and angered by the incident, Cap's family and friends went to The Camp, retrieved bricks from the fireplace, and distributed

Cap and Lily relax at their Pinewood Park home in Dunbar in the 1960s. Pinewood, developed by Cap, was one of the first planned suburban communities for African-Americans in the Kanawha Valley.

them to family members.

It's difficult to imagine all the roadblocks Cap Ferguson faced—from the Great War to racism in his hometown, but none of that ever depleted his fighting spirit for good or his strong convictions toward equality and peace. During the 1950s, even as the integration of public places meant a decline in his own businesses, he worked resolutely with fellow Republican, Governor Cecil Underwood, to end segregation and promote equality.

Cap retired when he was in his 70s. One day, Cap ran into a reporter downtown who asked how retirement was going. Cap replied, "The doctor says I'll make it 'til tomorrow."

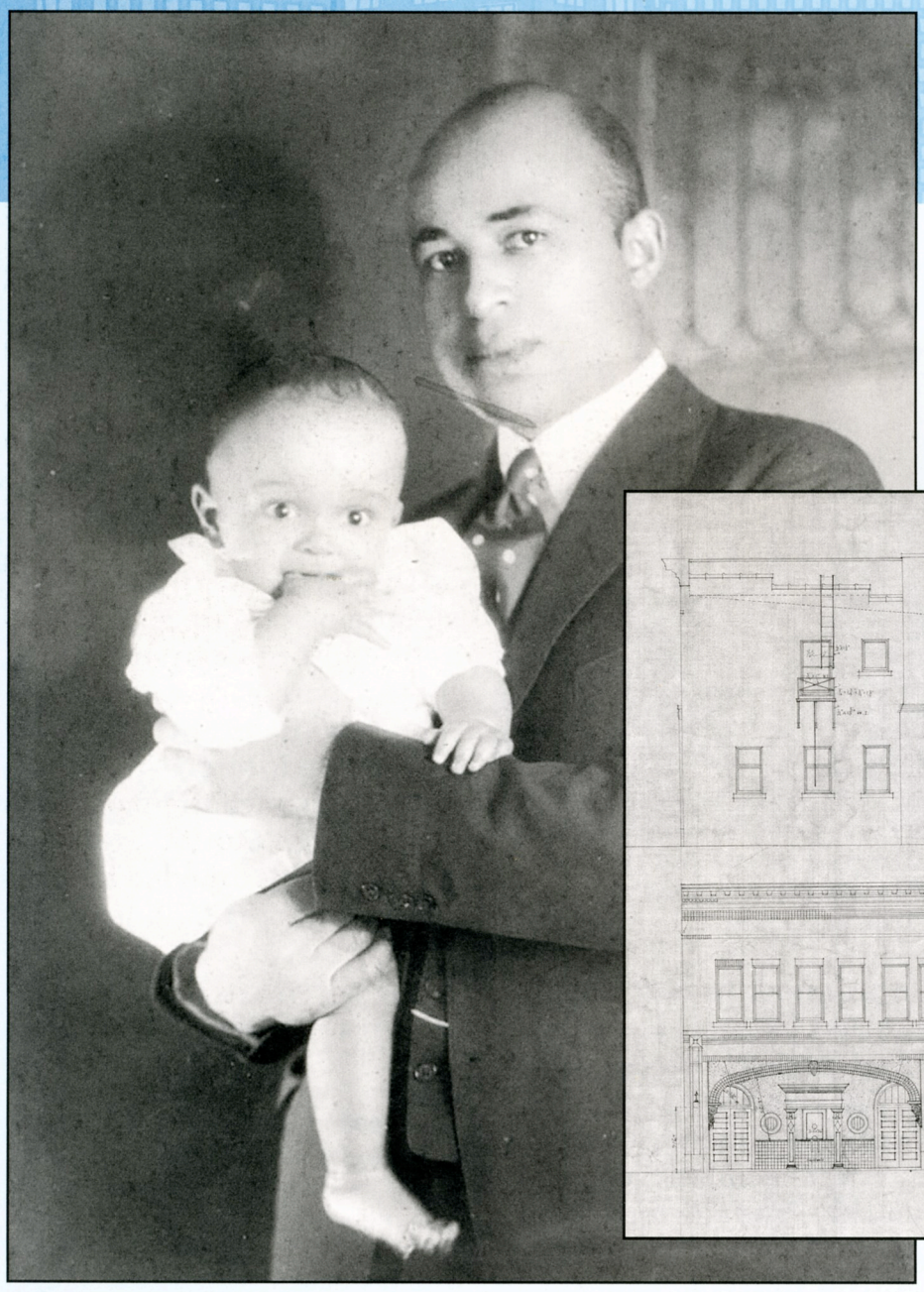
Turns out, he had many tomorrows left. Gurnett Edinburgh "Cap" Ferguson died in a St. Louis hospital the day after Christmas in 1982 at the age of 94. He's buried beside Lily at Tyler Mountain Memorial Gardens in Kanawha County.

The Ferguson Hotel is still a memory of pride and historical benefit. Equal rights in the Mountain State are now more front and center in our society—in part because of Cap Ferguson's dedication. He had the courage to be different and go through uncharted waters. Captain G.E. "Cap" Ferguson, a man before his time and a most extraordinary man indeed.

MARIA SISCO was born and raised in Charleston—one of Gurnett and Lily Ferguson's 15 grandchildren. A West Virginia State University alumnus and member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, she resides in the Kanawha Valley with Cap's sole surviving daughter, retired educator Barbara Sisco-Hill, who she cares for along with her daughters Jerrica and Jessica, and her "dad," James "Butch" Hill. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

STAN BUMGARDNER is the editor of GOLDENSEAL.

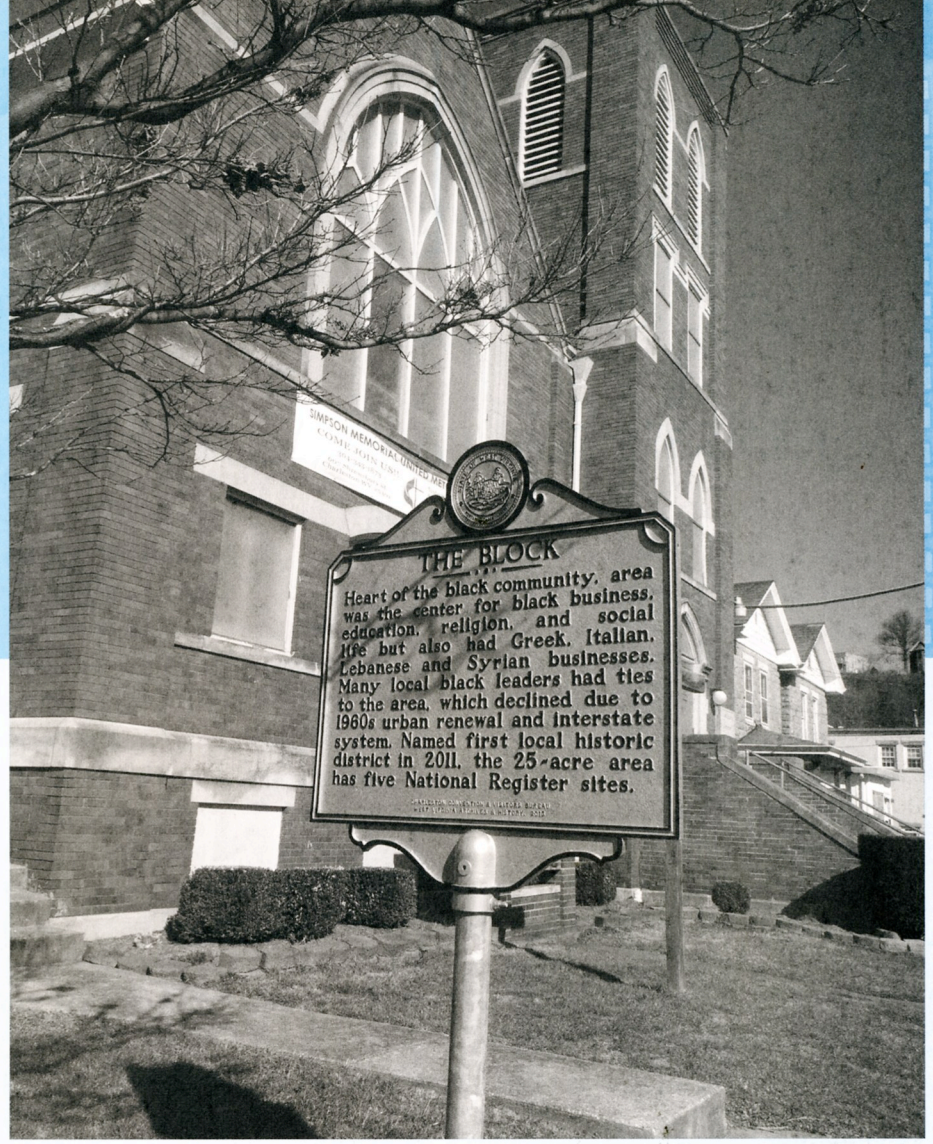
John C. Norman, Sr.



Images courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives

The Ferguson Hotel was designed by John Clavon Norman, Sr., West Virginia's first licensed black architect. Norman designed many buildings in Charleston and the Kanawha Valley, including the old Staats Hospital, structures on the campus of West Virginia State College (now University), and homes in the West Side and South Hills sections of town.

The Block



The historical marker for The Block at Simpson Memorial Methodist Church in Charleston. Photo by Anthony Kinzer.

By Anthony Kinzer

The Ferguson Hotel was the social and economic center of the African-American business section of Charleston, known affectionately as "The Block." It embodied many facets within and around a supportive community.

The Block—an extended area bounded by Washington, Shrewsbury, Lewis (now John Norman), and Broad (now Leon Sullivan Way) streets—was a hub of activity that reached beyond Charleston. It wasn't just the business entities that tied together this tight-knit community; the people who lived in this area were connected by similar motivational schooling, religious teachings, and social factors that led to lasting friendships.

Very little remains of The Block these days. Only a few architectural remnants are left of this once-bustling neighborhood: Garnet High School (now Garnet Career Center), A. H. Brown Building, First Baptist and Simpson Memorial United Methodist churches, Preston Funeral Home, Elizabeth Harden Gilmore House, and Samuel W. Starks Home—Starks was the first African-American in the nation to serve as a state librarian. Most of the other buildings in the area fell victim to Charleston's urban renewal effort of the 1960s.

The Block encouraged individuals to make their mark on the world and to work hard for better living conditions for themselves, their families, and their community. It created a sense of pride and confidence for these folks to know they could make a difference, regardless of the circumstances of their lives. The things they learned and accomplished on The Block gave rise to a strong black middle class, and the name "The Block" still brings a tear to the eye along with a smile to those who grew up there.

Since so few original buildings in The Block remain, the district is ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places. However, in 2011, the Charleston Historic Landmarks Commission named the area to its local district of historic places.

ANTHONY KINZER is director of the West Virginia Center for African-American Art & Culture. He played a leading role in getting The Block recognized by the Charleston Historic Landmarks Commission.

Dr. Emory Kemp

Text and photographs by Barb Howe unless noted otherwise.

West Virginia University (WVU) historic preservation students lined up around the walls of an 18th-century room in Albert Gallatin's home near New Geneva, Pennsylvania. It was a few years after the National Park Service acquired what would become known as Friendship Hill National Historic Site. The instructor rocked slightly on his heels, grinned, and asked, "Feel that?" as the floor vibrated underfoot. Yes, everyone, including this author, felt it. "There are structural problems here." Welcome to a field trip led by Dr. Emory L. Kemp!

Emory is a national leader in industrial archaeology—which combines the study of history, engineering, archaeology, and architecture—providing a bridge between what novelist C. P. Snow called the "two cultures": sciences and humanities. For more than six decades, Emory has embodied those two cultures, employing innovative methods while establishing organizations to protect the built environment.

His interest in the built environment started early, with his father, an architectural engineering graduate of the University of Illinois. As Emory recalls, history and structural engineering "have never been separated for me." When he was a student at the University of Illinois Laboratory High School during World War II, two teachers encouraged him to study history. "I was really pretty good at this," Emory remembers, "even receiving a Daughters of the American Revolution history award. The war being on, I really got into it as only teenage boys can. Historical things were really important, but I went into civil engineering. That got me into structural work."

After receiving the Ira O. Baker Award as the outstanding civil engineering graduate

In June 1983, Emory Kemp and WVU historic preservation students examine the unfortunate wrapping installed on the Wheeling Suspension Bridge.

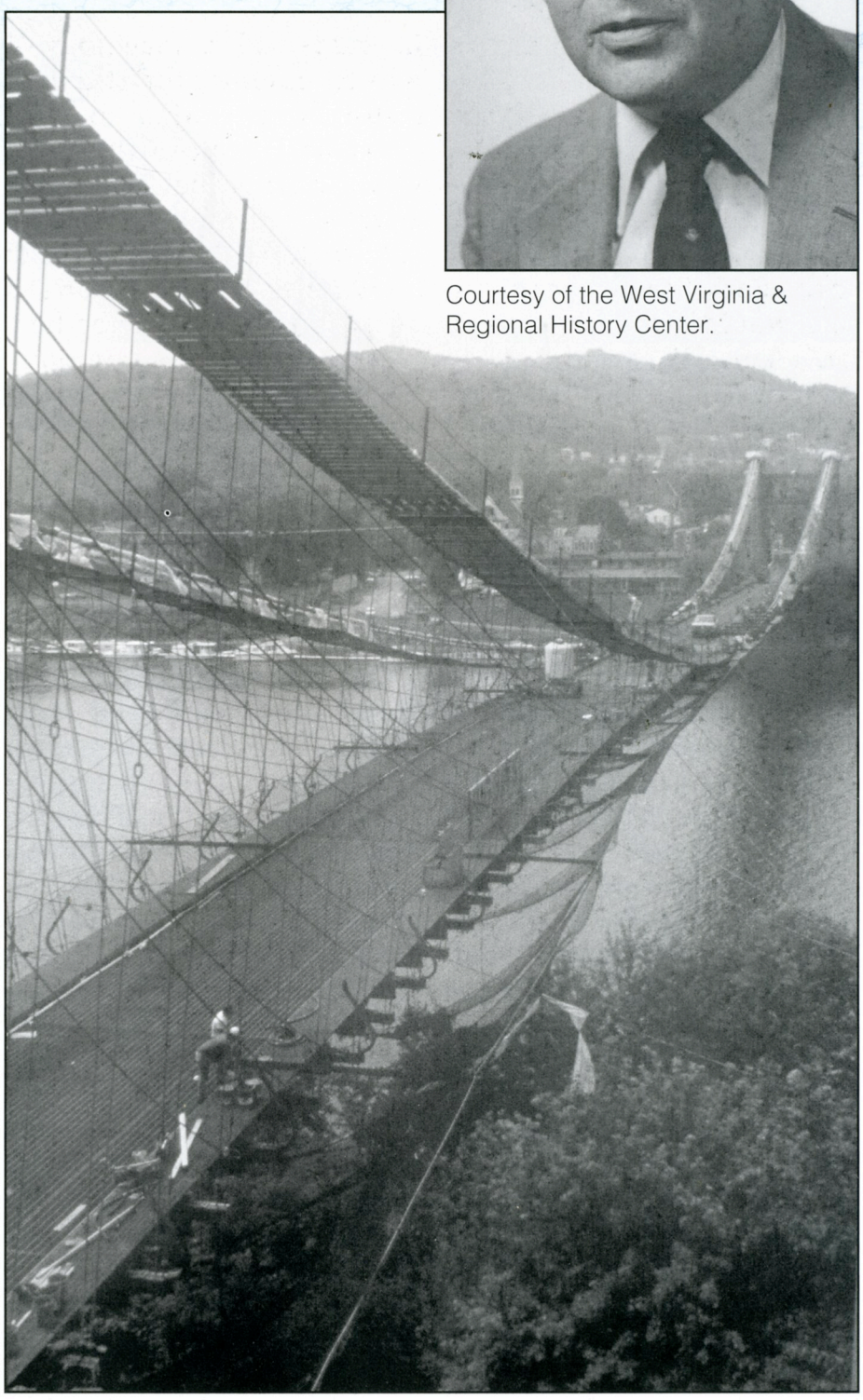
A West Virginia Preservation Pioneer

Courtesy of the West Virginia & Regional History Center.

at the University of Illinois, Emory went to London on a Fulbright scholarship to study for a master of science degree at Imperial College London. In the 1950s, he started his career with Ove Arup, a global firm of consulting engineers, where he worked on the calculations for the roof of the Sydney Opera House in Australia, helping to transform Jørn Utzon's sketch into an international landmark. Instead of overseeing the construction of the Opera House in Sydney, Emory earned his Ph.D. in theoretical and applied mechanics from the University of Illinois.

In 1962, WVU hired Emory as an associate professor of civil engineering. He chaired that department from 1964 to 1977 and then established the History of Science and Technology program in the Department of History. With the launch of WVU's Public History Program in 1980, he taught courses on the history of technology and industrial archaeology.

Most students research a building's history at a local library or archives. Emory's students, however, learned to use surveying equipment, take large-format photographs, measure structures, and then translate that data into measured drawings. In 1991, he established the Institute for the History of Technology and Industrial Archaeology (IHTIA)



The Wheeling Suspension Bridge, which first opened in 1849, is one of the many restoration projects Emory Kemp has worked on in his more than 50 years in the Mountain State.

Emory with his daughter Susie Doughty, age 10, on top of a tower during the Wheeling Suspension Bridge restoration in 1982. Susie—now Nelson—is executive director of the Community Foundation for the Ohio Valley. Photo by Jeanne Finstein.

and eventually brought in more than $13 million in funding. Although he retired from teaching in 1993, he continued to lead the IHTIA until 2002.

Wheeling: An Industrial Archaeologist's Dream

Emory has had a long fascination with Wheeling. The city was an early transportation hub as people and goods moved west on the Ohio River, even before the National Road was completed to Wheeling in 1818. The Wheeling Suspension Bridge was the first bridge across the Ohio River, and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad was completed to Wheeling in 1852. There was so much commerce that the federal government opened offices in the new custom house in 1859. Wheeling was also a center for manufacturing glass, paper, textiles and clothing, and nails before the Civil War. The discussions leading to the creation of the new state took place here, and it was the first state capital. Later, Wheeling also would be known for its cigars and steel.

One of the city's most exceptional structures—and most challenging from a preservation standpoint—is its suspension bridge, a National Historic Landmark that crosses the east channel of the Ohio River to Wheeling Island. Preservationist Beverly Fluty first piqued Emory's interest in the span, which was the longest suspension bridge in the world when it opened in 1849.

"When I came in 1962," says Emory, "I got associated with Beverly and got really intrigued by suspension bridges, back to the early Chinese. I was determined to do this on a historic basis, but suspension bridge analysis is pretty tricky." In the process, he added to the work of Wheeling's Father Clifford Lewis in proving that Charles Ellet, Jr., had designed the bridge.

Emory looks back on his work: "In the early 1980s, we put a covering on the bridge cables that was going to be waterproof, but we got leakage. The water ran down the cables, so you never knew where the water was coming from. The cables were packed in red lead when the bridge was built, and that preserved the wires. Red lead is wonderful stuff, but you're not allowed to use it now. It's toxic." The problem kept challenging Emory until he worked with the bridge contractor, who made a machine that could wrap the cables correctly.

"When the south cable came down during a storm in 1854, it had caused a big crack in the top of the stone tower on the Wheeling Island side. After really careful analysis, we drilled a hole from side to side through the tower and pulled the whole tower together with a tensioned bar."

Emory and Beverly also worked together with the West Virginia Independence Hall Foundation to restore the Wheeling Custom House. Emory gives Beverly tremendous credit for the building's restoration: "I think she guided Tracy Stephens, the architect on the project, in all the aspects of what we did there. If it weren't for Beverly, it wouldn't have been done correctly. She was so meticulous."

The building was constructed between 1856 and 1859. Emory's unique contribution to the restoration was his "very

Emory (right) and Larry Sypolt (1949-2012) document Lock #5 of the Little Kanawha Navigation Works near Elizabeth in 1986. Larry was an ardent preservationist, Emory's right-hand man at WVU's Institute for the History of Technology & Industrial Archaeology, and one of the most kind-hearted gentlemen ever to pass through the halls of WVU.

close analysis" of the 1856 wrought iron beams that support the interior structure: "It was a great triumph of the iron industry that they could roll a nine-inch beam, and this was one of the first applications. I did the work with a colleague from Loyola University Baltimore. This requires considerable background in metallurgy, and it finally vindicated me as an undergraduate in taking chemistry. The question is, 'How do you roll this beam without getting the rolls caught in the flanges?' There's a minute line that goes through the bar; they had to add another layer of iron to this and forge it onto the other one. That was never known. This was revolutionary. I think people really don't understand just how important these beams are. This was one of the first uses of these beams."

The first engineer who analyzed the building's floors said they couldn't support the live load needed for safe public assembly. Emory did the analysis in a different way and found it could support nearly 100 pounds per square foot. Under the direction of the West Virginia Division of Culture and History, West Virginia Independence Hall has now been restored almost entirely to its 1859 appearance.

Other Historic Bridges in West Virginia

When the West Virginia Department of Highways (DOH) needed to inventory its historic bridges in the early 1980s, long before laptops and smartphones, it hired Emory. He started by looking through DOH files for all bridges in the state at least 50 years old.

To do the field work in all 55 counties, he developed a technique using IBM punch cards, which served as a "mechanical sorting device that worked extremely well because one of those dots [represented] some characteristic, like a timber bridge. You could run a needle through, and it would pick up all these cards with that characteristic.

"The gross list was several hundred bridges," says Emory. "It was finally reduced to 58 that, in my judgment, were eligible for the National Register of Historic Places."

When the historic Philippi Covered Bridge burned on February 2, 1989, the DOH called Emory to lead the restoration. "It was Governor Gaston Caperton behind it," Emory recalls. "He wanted it done, and it was the same thing with Arch Moore, who was very supportive of this kind of work."

Emory devised a plastic covering that allowed him to use the bridge as a workshop. He recalls, "We wouldn't ask for, say, $100,000 to build a warehouse where this work would be done. You have your measuring tape right there to get an accurate measurement."

Thanks to Emory, workers were able to save as much of the original structure as possible: "I think there was a tendency of engineers to see that, if you had a crack in a big timber, you had to replace it. I was dead set against that. There were ways of injecting epoxy. We saved a lot of the burnt timbers on the Philippi Bridge. We cleaned out all the rot and char and put a timber insert on the outside, which is called a Dutchman, so that what you see on the outside is wood and not epoxy.

"Using the bridge as a workshop worked well, except when the Tygart River flooded. After receiving notice of the flood, my son Geoffrey and I drove to Philippi late at night to see what could be done to save the bridge. I don't think we got to bed that weekend. You could see the water coming up on the abutments while we were moving everything possible off the bridge—all the tools, the timbers. I thought the bridge was in real danger. It did get the floors wet, and then it started to recede. That's when we wanted to make sure we had storm cables and had the abutments right. Many covered bridges have been floated off the abutments in floods. It was our idea to use wrought iron rods and anchor them down into the masonry work on the abutments and try to hold the bridge down. You can do a lot of analysis of it, but you don't know the forces exactly."

The Philippi Covered Bridge survived the high water, was restored, and reopened to traffic on September 16, 1991.

Emory notes the importance of combining structural analysis with historical research: "Engineers are terribly guilty of not having any historical perspective. You just learn an awful lot if you do that. You know what decisions have to be made and what sort of equipment and analytical work are possible."

Asked about techniques to help people understand the importance of structural issues, Emory replies, "You have to do it on a case-by-case basis. This is a real problem in historic preservation. Are you there to improve the structure with modern techniques, or are you there to preserve the essence of the bridge from a historical point of view? I think there's this inherent misunderstanding among the public that, if the bridge is up, it will take any load that is placed on it. It just ain't true."

Emory helped save and restore the historic Philippi Covered Bridge after it burned in 1989. He saved the original dark timbers, which were damaged by the fire. The lighter beams are replacements for ones that were too badly damaged.

A Preservation Advocate

In addition to his work on historic sites, Emory has been a leader in national and state preservation organizations. In 1971, he was one of the founding members of the Society of Industrial Archaeology (SIA) and later served as president of both SIA and the Public Works Historical Society. As advisors to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Emory and Beverly Fluty convened a 1981 meeting in Clarksburg that led to the founding of the Preservation Alliance of West Virginia. The organization later named its Lifetime Achievement Award for Emory.

As founding president of the Vandalia Heritage Foundation, incorporated in 1998, Emory worked with Representative Alan B. Mollohan to preserve properties in West Virginia's Congressional First District. Some of the leading Vandalia Heritage projects included restoration of Grafton's Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Station, High Gate in Fairmont, and properties in the Eastern Panhandle and Wheeling.

Emory has received numerous awards, including being named a Distinguished Engineer by the American Society of Civil Engineers in 2004. He also has written or collaborated on books on such varied topics as the Weston and Gauley Bridge Turnpike (coauthored with his wife, Janet K. Kemp), public history, historic houses, bridge patents, the Wheeling Suspension Bridge, and Kanawha River transportation—a fascinating blend of the sciences and humanities. C. P. Snow would be pleased.

Bringing Technology to History

One of the qualities that has best served Emory is his openness to the latest technologies, whether the punch-card system he used with the historic bridges or new developments in photography. In the early 1980s, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers contracted with WVU's Department of History to document the Bulltown Historic Area. Emory suggested using photogrammetry—measurements based on photos—to record Bulltown's Cunningham-Skinner House.

"Close-range photogrammetry," Emory says, "had been used for other purposes, but it seemed an ideal thing for the house. You could take the drawing and show the Corps what to do when they restored it. It was actually a restoration technique, and I think we were amongst the very first to do this. This made photogrammetry much more acceptable to preservationists." He also led the effort to document many of the state's structures through the Historic American Engineering Record, a federal program that uses measured drawings, photographs, maps, and written reports to record resources.

Emory illustrates the method he used to document historic bridges in the field for the Department of Highways, 2016.

Dr. BARB HOWE was the first director of the West Virginia University Public History Program and the first president of the Preservation Alliance of West Virginia. She and Emory co-edited *Public History: An Introduction* and coauthored *Houses and Homes: Exploring Their History* with Dolores A. Fleming and Ruth Ann Overbeck. She also is the Kemps' neighbor. This is Barb's first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

Text and photographs by
Carl E. Feather

Selling Bikes in Bath

David Yost says his wife can't believe he'd go sit in a cold, old building all day when he could be home, warm and comfortable. But Dave, wearing his very experienced U.S. Silica coat, says his wife simply doesn't understand the nature of his business; if Yost Bicycles and Antiques is closed, there's a good chance he'll miss the opportunity to make a sale or get a bargain.

And Dave always has a story or two to prove his point. "I had this man pull up out here and ask me, 'Do you buy bicycles?'" Dave says. "I had 20-some bicycles setting out in front of the store that day. He said, 'I got a 1980 Schwinn in my basement. I'm 93 years old, and I'm not going to ride it anymore.'"

David Yost stands outside his Berkeley Springs bicycle and antiques shop with one of his vintage offerings, a Monark bicycle with its space-age design.

Dave went to the man's house and verified his claim. The bicycle was in excellent condition. The seller's asking price, $150, was just $7 less than what he'd paid for it new. Dave purchased the bike, did a little research, and priced it at $450.

It's mid-January when I stop by Dave's store in Berkeley Springs, the 1700s town in Morgan County that also goes by its original name of Bath. A yellow Schwinn and dozens of other vintage bicycles are awaiting warmer weather and buyers flush with cash—Dave's preferred way of doing business.

Dave's examining a bag of jewelry he purchased for $30 the day before. Among his finds are a Bulova watch that still keeps time and a gold tie clasp that's easily worth what he paid for the whole lot. Pleased with yet another good deal, Dave put his treasures aside to talk to me about buying and selling.

Dave spent 43 years, to the day, working for the U.S. Silica plant just north of town. He worked night shifts at the factory and built houses by day. His retirement in his second-hand business is well earned.

"I've always been one to accumulate things," Dave says. "My wife always said, 'Why do you keep buying that junk?' Then, 10 years ago, I had an auction that brought in $23,000. And I said, 'Now, do you still think it's junk?'"

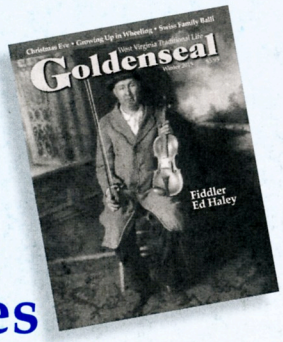
The auction spurred more buying, and eventually led to his renting two distressed buildings on North Washington Street. In addition to buying and selling just about anything, Dave paints bucolic scenes on crosscut saws, a talent he developed out of necessity.

"Years ago, I was buying up all these crosscut saws, and I told my wife that someday, I was going to be an artist and paint on them," he says. And that's exactly what he did.

Bicycles, however, have become his specialty. Dave used to ride one to work, but after several customers and friends died in bicycling accidents, he retired his electric bike.

"My wife says I'm too old to be out on the highway on a bike," he says. "It's too dangerous."

David Yost built this goat cart from parts taken off bicycles and other items. He peddles it in front of his store on North Washington Street in Berkeley Springs.



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Dave does a good business; in 2015, he sold 127 bikes. A key is having exactly what the customer is looking for, whether it's a tandem vintage Monark or antique with wooden rims. He takes pride in his disheveled shop, which can fill the shopping list of just about anybody who comes through the door.

"Are you looking for anything in particular?" he asks each shopper. "There's a lot of stuff in here. I got it piled on top of everything else."

Dave keeps an inventory in his mind but can't always remember exactly where everything is. Dozens of bicycles line the perimeter of the store; a narrow path separates them from the merchandise, piled in the center and overseen by Dave from a simple wooden chair that faces the front door. To his left, a computer monitor displays views from four strategically placed security cameras. A radio plays in the background; a variety of snacks surround his chair. When he's not taking care of customers, he works on restoring his latest purchase.

If the weather gets too cold to sit in the shop, he drives to Winchester, Virginia, gets $1,000 in rolled pennies from the bank, and then sits at home looking for old wheat pennies among the chaff.

He never knows what will walk through the door next. That anticipation motivates him to get out of bed and go to "work" every morning, even though he's in his mid-70s.

He takes a few days off every year to go hunting in Ohio, but even those trips turn into buying excursions.

"I hunt in the mornings and, in the afternoons, go to Amish houses, knock on the door, and ask them if they have anything to sell," he says. He bought a load of buggy wheels one time, a Whizzer motor bike another time.

"I came back with an icebox from one hunting trip, and I almost laid awake that night after I'd paid so much for it," he says. "I was afraid I would not get my money back."

The icebox turned a handsome profit. The money he takes in always goes toward purchasing the next item that comes through the door, pulls up out front, or catches his attention alongside the road, at a flea market, or at an estate sale. He rarely keeps anything for his own pleasure or use; even a stuffed gobbler, a prize from one of his hunting trips, is for sale.

"Just me and (his friend) Marvin are about the only things in there that are not for sale," he says.

Buying and selling stuff, it's just in his blood. He adds, "My son says, 'Dad can buy anything at all and make money off of it.'"

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.

Cora Dunlap sits with her father, Andrew Dunlap of Kanawha County, at the 2006 Vandalia Gathering. Andrew has won the Vandalia Gathering banjo contest many times and is one of our state's best guitarists. Photo by Michael Keller.

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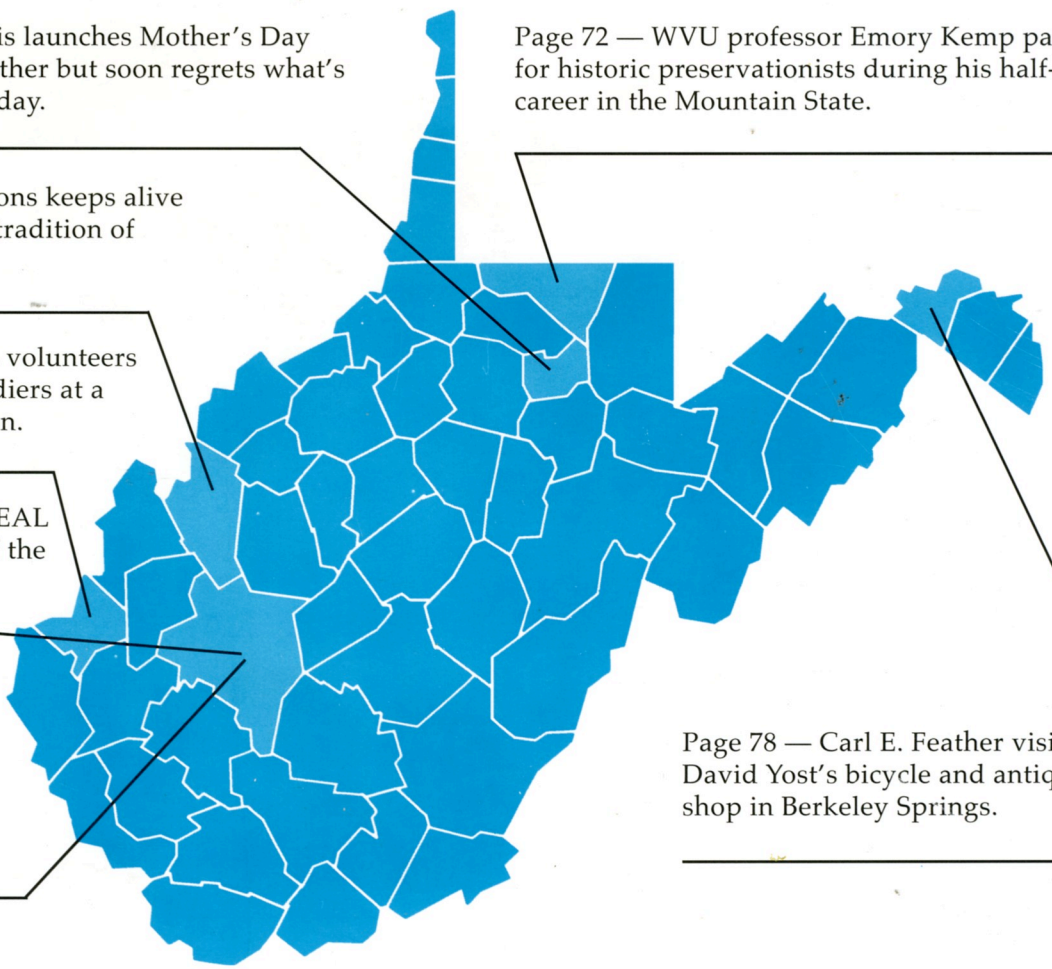

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