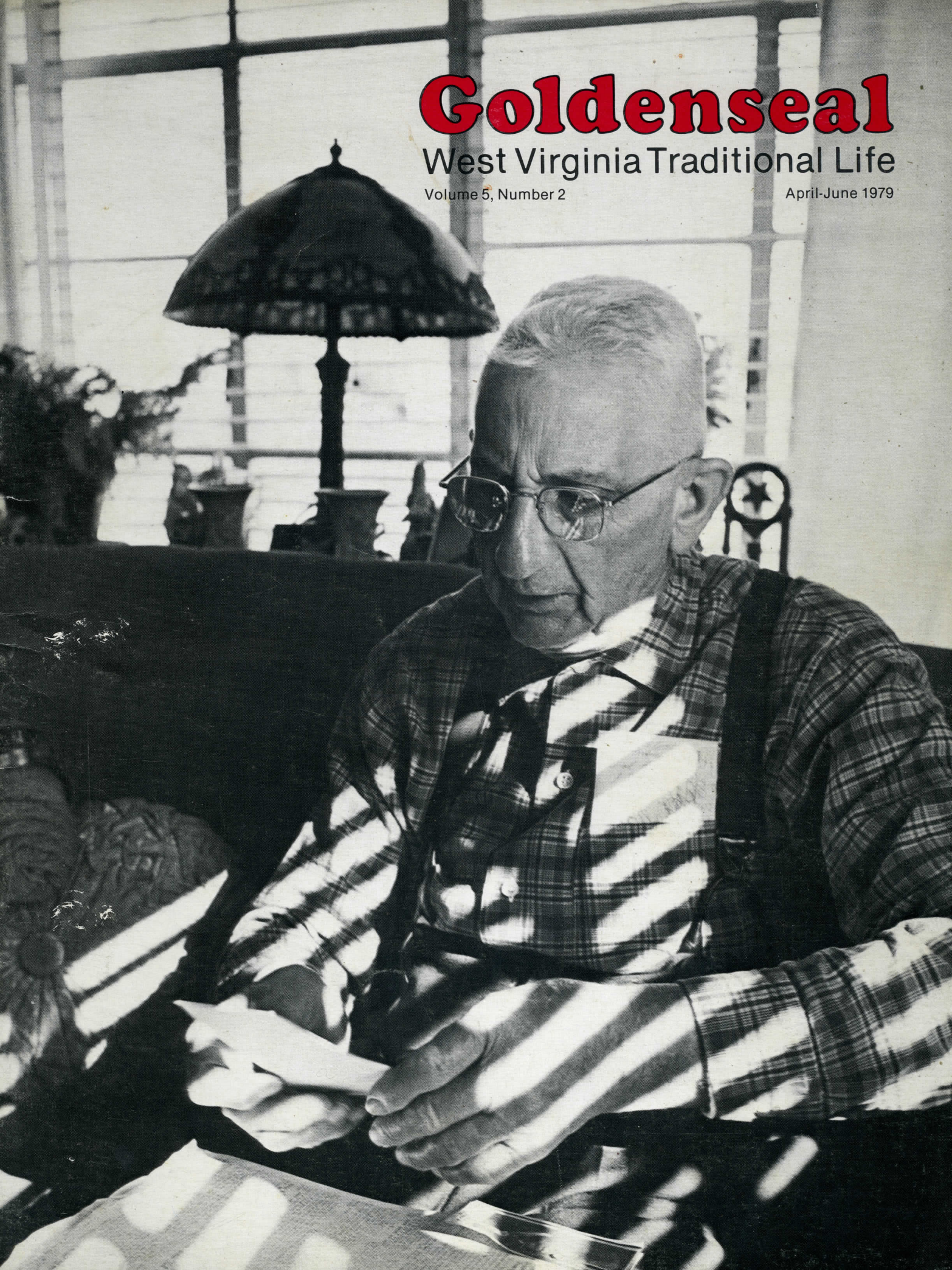

Goldenseal

West Virginia Traditional Life

Volume 5, Number 2 April-June 1979

Published by the
STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA

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through its
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History

Norman L. Fagan *Commissioner*

Ken Sullivan
Editor

Margo Stafford
Editorial Assistant

Colleen Anderson
Graphic Design

GOLDENSEAL is published four times a year in Jan., Apr., July, and Oct. and is distributed without charge. Manuscripts, photographs, and letters are welcome. All correspondence should be addressed to The Editor, GOLDENSEAL, Department of Culture and History, The Cultural Center, Capitol Complex, Charleston WV 25305. Phone 304-348-0220.

Inside the covers are photographs of the craft work of Boyd M. Henry, Buckhannon gunsmith; Mr. Henry is at the upper left, back cover. Elaine Morrison Foster's interview begins on page 11. Color photography by Ruth Belanger.

Goldenseal

A Quarterly Forum for Documenting West Virginia's Traditional Life

Volume 5, Number 2 ✱ April-June 1979

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Notice to Subscribers

To Those Wanting Back Issues:
We are grateful for the fast-growing response to GOLDENSEAL, but we must stress the scarcity of back issues. Copies *are* available of the October-December 1978 issue and the January-March 1979 issue, and a *limited* number of copies are still available of two issues which were reprinted: April-June 1977, and January-March 1978. All other issues are in such short supply we feel we must save them strictly for library replacement. If your library does not have a particular back issue, please ask your librarian to write us.

GOLDENSEAL for the Blind

Beginning with the October-December 1978 issue, readings of GOLDENSEAL are being broadcast by the Periscope radio service in Buckhannon. The regular Periscope readings mean that, for the first time, West Virginians with normal vision will be sharing the contents of GOLDENSEAL with their neighbors who are blind or visually handicapped.

Periscope, a radio information service for persons blind or in other ways physically impaired in their ability to read print, went on the air January 22, 1979. Periscope is broadcast from the studios of WVPW-FM, and is a cooperative service of West Virginia Wesleyan College, the Junior Women's Clubs of West Virginia, and the West Virginia Library Commission. WVPW, a West Virginia Public Radio affiliate, broadcasts the readings directly into the homes of eligible persons. Special receivers are provided by the Library Commission.

Those desiring more information, or wishing to volunteer time or other services, should contact Linda Luther, Periscope Coordinator, Box 134, West Virginia Wesleyan College, Buckhannon, WV 26201. Phone (304) 473-8436.

New State Arts Magazine

WV Arts News, which has just published its second issue, includes coverage of the traditional crafts and music of West Virginia as well as trends in theater, dance, art, film, and literature in the Mountain State. The publication also features a calendar of arts events, an Arts Exchange column for special notices and queries, magazine and book reviews, and a Letters column.

WV Arts News is sponsored by the WV Arts and Humanities Commission, the WV Federation of Women's Clubs, Parkersburg Art Center, and Pappas Brothers Color Lithographers. Managing editor is Damienne Grant Dibble. For subscription information and advertisement rates, write *WV Arts News,* P. O. Box 60, Kenna, WV 25248.

John Henry Folk Festival '79

The seventh annual John Henry Folk Festival will take place September 1 and 2 on the grounds of the old mineral health spa in Pence Springs on Routes 3 and 12 between Hinton and Alderson. The festival is an annual event which features authentic blues and gospel music, and is sponsored by the John Henry Memorial Foundation, Inc.

This year's festival will roughly follow the format of the past three years, offering intercultural arts and crafts, films, children's programs, various workshops, and evening concerts. However, the festival's director, Ed Cabbell, expects this year's presentations to more closely define the minority heritage in terms of "oppressed" and "neglected" cultural forms. In addition to the usual country blues and gospel music, presented from an Afro-Appalachian perspective, this year's program will expand to include what the director terms "low-down urban blues" and reggae.

Martin, Bogan and the Armstrongs, a black string band popular in West Virginia in the 1930's, will be featured again at this year's festival by popular demand. For more information, contact Ed Cabbell, Director, John Henry Memorial Foundation, Inc., P. O. Box 135, Princeton, WV 24740.

Outdoor Musical Dramas

The outdoor musical theatre at Cliffside Amphitheatre in Grandview State Park near Beckley opens its 1979 season on June 23 with a performance of *Hatfields & McCoys,* the musical drama based on the history of the feuding families. Performances of *Hatfields,* now in its tenth season, will alternate during the summer with performances of *Honey in the Rock.* Now entering its 18th season, *Honey* tells the story of the birth of West Virginia during the Civil War period. The dramas close on September 2, and tickets for both plays are available in advance. For more information write Theatre Arts of West Virginia, Box 1205, Beckley, WV 25801. Phone (304) 253-8313. Within the state you can call 1-800-642-2766 toll-free during June, July, and August.

Archives of Appalachia Opens

On September 1, 1978, the Archives of Appalachia opened its doors to serve the greater Appalachian community. Established by East Tennessee State University in conjunction with the Institute for Appalachian Affairs, the primary purpose of the Archives is to identify, collect, and preserve materials documenting the history of the Southern Appalachian region. The Archives seeks the papers of indi-

Spike driving contest at the 1978 John Henry Festival. Each year the winner goes to Baltimore to demonstrate spikedriving at the B & O Museum.

viduals and organizations active in shaping the region's past and present.

For further information contact Dr. Richard M. Kesner, Director, Archives of Appalachia, The Sherrod Library, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN 37601. Phone (615) 929-4338.

The Stacy Family Album

Ted and Libby Stacy of Beckley have recently released a record album, *For the Good Times,* consisting mainly of country music classics. Stacy, formerly a Delegate from Raleigh County, earlier this year resigned a sixth term in the West Virginia Legislature, in part to promote the new recording. Sales to this point have been encouraging, he reports.

For the Good Times is available in major cities across the state, or may be ordered directly from Trans-World Records, 13 Moore Street, Bristol, Virginia 24205.

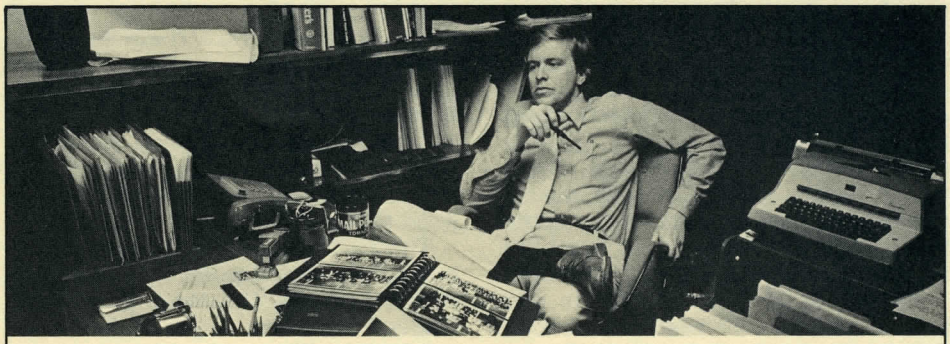
Appalachian Mobile Bookstore

The Council of the Southern Mountains has recently received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities for a mobile bookstore. The purpose of the project is to enlarge upon the service currently offered by the CSM Bookstore in Berea, Kentucky, by carrying its literature to destinations throughout the region. The Council of the Southern Mountains is the oldest grass-roots organization in the Appalachian region, and its magazine, *Mountain Life and Work,* is now in its 55th year of publication.

Another phase of the mobile bookstore project will be bookfairs held at central locations, the purpose of which will be to help stimulate interest in the literature on the region, primarily through the use of speakers, book displays, and sales. The staff will also be available to attend conferences, workshops, library meetings and festivals. The Mobile Bookstore made its first West Virginia appearances at Jackson's Mill and Charleston in mid-March, and will travel to other parts of the state later in the year.

Mountain State Art and Craft Fair at Cedar Lakes

Every year since 1963, more than 100 of the best West Virginia artists and craftspeople have met at Cedar Lakes for the Mountain State Art and Craft Fair. Now in its 17th year, the Fair will



From the New Editor

On February 15 I became editor of GOLDENSEAL, replacing founding editor Tom Screven who resigned in December. In taking the job I have a great respect for what Tom did before me, and for what he has made of GOLDENSEAL. Beginning in the days of *Hearth and Fair,* our parent publication, Tom devoted himself wholeheartedly to the creation of a magazine documenting West Virginia's rich traditional culture. The idea was to draw upon the sophisticated techniques of oral history and folklore, but to address the magazine, not to professional historians and folklorists—there are more than enough scholarly journals already—but to all the people of West Virginia. In large part I think Tom succeeded in what he set out to do, and the monument to his work is the GOLDENSEAL of today—now midway through its fifth year, a robust magazine with a circulation approaching 10,000.

As the responsibility for GOLDENSEAL passes from Tom Screven's hands into mine, I will strive above all to maintain the traditional high quality of the magazine. Over the years GOLDENSEAL has evolved an attractive and serviceable format, and I see no need for abrupt changes there. Evolution in appearance will naturally continue as the magazine matures, but GOLDENSEAL will continue to emphasize content over style. Content itself will change to some extent, I'm sure, reflecting my own interests and my training as an historian, but GOLDENSEAL will continue as a magazine of popular history and folklife.

GOLDENSEAL will be judged, as it always has been, primarily by you, its readers, and it will continue striving to serve your interests. This makes it critical that a dialogue between readers and the magazine be maintained. An important part of this dialogue reaches us daily in the form of letters to the editor. We receive far more letters than we can print in our letters column, but each one is given careful consideration—reading the morning mail, in fact, is one of the most gratifying aspects of my new job.

But the interaction between GOLDENSEAL and its readers must go beyond letters to the editor. GOLDENSEAL, after all, is unique in being *about* the very people who read it, and its only job is to tell your story—to document, that is, the life experiences of West Virginians past and present. To do that job adequately, the magazine must have the help of its readers. GOLDENSEAL has built up a valuable stable of more or less regular contributors, but many of our best manuscripts—and most of our ideas—come directly from readers. The West Virginia story is too big for us to cover without your assistance, and every reader should regard himself or herself as a potential contributor of stories and ideas.

I take my new job, then, with the sense that GOLDENSEAL's readers are its most valuable resource, and I will rely upon you to help me in my work. It is in this spirit that I offer "my" first issue of the magazine. Editorial assistant Margo Stafford and I have worked hard on it, as have the contributors, photographers, designer, and printers, and I think it's a good one. We intend to continue working hard, and with your help, we hope to make each issue better than the one before it.

Culture and History Commissioner Norman Fagan joins with me in dedicating this issue of GOLDENSEAL to former editor Tom Screven.

Ken Sullivan

run from June 30 through July 4, offering a blend of Appalachian heritage crafts with contemporary modern craft trends. Mountain music plays all day long; traditional craft techniques are demonstrated; and folk dancing offers a lively change of pace. Buckwheat cakes, cornbread and beans, home-made ice cream, and apple butter slowly stirred over an open fire tempt the appetites of hungry visitors.

Admission is $2.00 for adults and 50¢ for children 12 years and under. Fair hours run from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday through Tuesday, and from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Wednesday. Special rates are available for groups of ten or more by writing the Mountain State Art and Craft Fair, Cedar Lakes, Ripley, WV 25271. Free parking, eating areas and rest facilities are provided.

Film About Instrument Maker Released

A new film, *H. E. Matheny: Musical Instrument Making,* is now available for rental or purchase. The film documents the craftwork of H. E. Matheny, a Ritchie County native with West Virginia roots back to 1750, now living in Uniontown, Ohio. While he works at rebuilding an old cob organ, Matheny discusses the long history of instrument making in his family and imparts some of his philosophy of life and work. Matheny works primarily for his own satisfaction, and he says, "I have accomplished as much as Stradivarius did. I've done what I wanted to do."

The 14½ minute color film by director Mark Turner is available for borrowing at local public libraries, through the West Virginia Library Commission. The film may be rented or purchased through the distributor, Carousel Films, 1501 Broadway, New York, NY 10036. WWVU-TV in Morgantown has secured broadcast rights.

Seventh Annual Augusta Heritage Arts Workshop

The Augusta Heritage Arts Workshop is for those who wish to recapture the mood and talents of Appalachia's past. The dream of two Elkins craftswomen has evolved into a community project sponsored by the Randolph County Creative Arts Council, with classroom facilities and housing made available through the courtesy of Davis and Elkins College.

Now entering its seventh year, the workshop offers a varied program of one to five week classes in folklore, folkdance, tole and china painting, basketry, weaving, spinning, stained glass, wood-working and woodcarving, Appalachian music, pottery, musical instrument construction, herb lore, quilting, and turkey calling. In addition to the workshop courses, mini-residencies in music are available, during which "old masters" will share their expertise.

The 1979 program will begin July 2 and run through August 4, culminating in the Augusta Mountain Music and Crafts Festival on August 3 and 4—a celebration filled with old-time music, quality crafts, and traditional dancing. Headlining this year's festival are Wilma Lee Cooper, a Randolph County native, and Bessie Jones, of the Sea Island Singers. Outstanding Irish music will be presented by Mick Maloney, Eugene O'Donnell, Tim Britton, and Billy McComisky.

Augusta Dance Week, July 30 through August 3, focuses on traditional regional dances and will feature some of the finest dance callers and teachers in the country.

A $35 non-refundable registration fee for each course is required with every application. The registration fee is applied toward the remainder of the tuition. Cost of materials is extra; materials will be available for purchasing from the workshop. Room and board are $87.50 per week. Applicants must be at least 14 years of age. For more information contact Ellie Lesser, Director, Augusta Heritage Arts Workshop, P. O. Box 1725, Elkins, WV 26241. Phone (304) 636-0006 or (304) 636-1405.

Fort New Salem Events

Fort New Salem opens its regular public season on May 26 with a weekend commemorating the first settlers of New Salem, Virginia, in 1794. During the season, which closes on November 19, the hours will be 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday.

Other events scheduled for this season include an Independence Day Celebration, to be held from June 30 through July 2, in the manner of the early 19th century, capped by a special program on July 4.

Throughout the summer the Fort will offer public workshops in a number of heritage arts and crafts.

On September 1 through 3, Colonel Joseph Crockett's Western Battalion will recreate an historical situation of 1793, with the "Muster of the Home Militia."

From September through November students of the Heritage Arts Program will conduct exercises in 18th and 19th century lifestyles and crafts as part of their daily classroom procedures, in addition to holding weekend craft workshops. The public is invited to visit.

For more information on the Fort and its events contact Fort New Salem, Salem College, Salem, WV 26426. Phone 304-782-5233.

West Virginia String Bands

In the October-December 1978 issue, GOLDENSEAL published a listing of 36 West Virginia string bands which play traditional or tradition-related music. Realizing that there are many more string bands in the state, we requested that groups not included in that listing contact us for inclusion in future updatings. We also asked to hear from a band when any part of its current listing changes. (Our address is on page 1.)

Three more bands have since contacted us for inclusion in the listing. We are presenting the information here, and will continue to present information sent us on other bands in future issues, pending the printing of a complete update of the listing.

Butler Brothers
R. D. 2, Box 189½
Proctor, WV 26055

Homer Butler, 304-899-6017

Strictly bluegrass-gospel, traditional and modern.
Banjo, mandolin, guitar, bass (non-electric).

Professional, union; weekend availability; fee negotiable.

The Log Cabin Boys
615 Drew Street
St. Albans, WV 25177

Robert L. Simpson, 304-727-8119

Country hoe down band. Fiddle, guitar, banjo, bass, vocals.

Weekend availability; fee negotiable.

Bill and Carlotta Wellington
Box 432
Petersburg, WV 26847

Bill or Carlotta, 304-358-7103

Traditional Appalachian songs, dance music, and tales. Specialize in school programs. Banjo, fiddle, guitar, lap dulcimer and hammered dulcimer.

Professional, non-union; general availability; fee from $200/day, residencies negotiable.

Letters from Readers

GOLDENSEAL welcomes letters of general interest from readers. Our address is Department of Culture and History, The Cultural Center, State Capitol, Charleston, WV 25305.

An Open Note to Tom Screven

We miss you, Tom. It's sadder and quieter here without you, even knowing that you're galavanting around the flea markets of the South, buying comic books, selling antiques, and acquiring a tan that makes us all envious. It seems that I've known you for many years beyond our actual acquaintance. I guess going through the birth-process together (GOLDENSEAL) sort of gives that feeling of sharing that only comes from a long, fruitful relationship. GOLDENSEAL is undoubtedly your child. You conceived it, nurtured it, birthed it, and brought it safely through the diaper stage. It's grown into a child that any father would be proud of—all "A's" on its report card, and very few times tardy (except through the courtesy of the U.S. postal service). As it grows older, GOLDENSEAL will take on new dimensions, but the core, the character, its very soul will remain as you intended. You should feel very proud of it. We do, and we are very, very proud of you. You are missed.

Norm Fagan
Commissioner of Culture and History

Ft. McCoy, Florida
January 25, 1979

Editor:

I have had the pleasure of reading your great GOLDENSEAL article, "The Golden Age of Radio in West Virginia" (July-September 1977), and found it very enlightening. It brings back memories of the days that I spent in and around Parkersburg, Charleston, Bluefield, and most of the little towns in between. I never pushed myself to the forefront in country music then, but was always on the fringe of it in many, many ways.

I knew most all of the performers then, but we did not call them stars. Today, most of them would be stars in their own right. You mentioned several old time music makers in your article. As you suggested, I am sending in names of some of the first radio and stage bands that ever played in West Virginia. For instance, my own uncles and brothers were members of the first known organized string band in West Virginia. I believe they go back to the early twenties. We used to play for schools, churches, company picnics or any place there was enough room to hold a square dance.

Edward and Edwin, the Yerkey twins, have played country and western music since they could walk. They were back-ups for the Delmore Brothers of Nashville fame. They appeared on the first radio stations in Clarksburg, Fairmont, Parkersburg, and Charleston. In Wheeling, they appeared on Doc Grey Feather's Medicine Show, also his radio show in Charleston in the early 1930's. They went on to Michigan and played on radio, stage, and in clubs there.

My twin uncles, who are now 63 years old, learned to play fiddle and guitar standing on a sewing machine with the instruments hanging upside down in a closet. They had not gone to school yet, they were less than six years old. Now they both can play anything that has strings on it except a shoe.

My oldest brother, better known as "Hank" Harrigan, was also one of the foremost entertainers in West Virginia radio, stage, etc. He started out at Fairmont in the late 1930's. He was with the Buskirk Family, Merle Pore and Cowboy Loy. Grandpa Jones came to West Virginia and was a roommate with Hank in the lean years of the Depression. I have been told they split a lot of biscuits with each other. Both went on to radio and television, Hank went out West and hooked up with the Newman Brothers, Elmer and Pancake Pete. They married the Murray Sisters and formed the famous "Sleepy Hollow Ranch Gang" in Pennsburg, Pennsylvania, then went on to head up the one and only "Hayloft Hoe Down" in Philadelphia, Pa. "Hayloft Hoe Down" was on WPHL radio and television just after World War II.

My name is D. "Hoss" Williams. I kept a close eye on all these pickers and singers down through the years. I used to be the backup singer for anyone who didn't show, or was sick. I drove trucks in and around Charleston, Huntington and all the other towns in West Virginia. I played and sang in the army with several former radio pickers and singers. Gene Lovel, of the Raleigh County Fiddlers, was in my outfit. We would sing and play for the Army hospitals and the U.S.O. shows when they came along.

I have since retired and play and sing at fairs, festivals, retirement centers, hospitals, etc. I play for fun mostly, and as a hobby. I know most of the old timers that appear in the Folk Festivals around West Virginia, Kentucky, and Ohio; and I am very much in favor of holding more "Old Time Singers" festivals in West Virginia and not so many "Blue Grass". They are great, but not enough is said about the original music that was played and sung long before "Blue Grass" came along: down-to-earth, old time mountain songs, ballads too. But most old time songs are mountain ballads, songs with a true story to tell, along with good picking sounds to go along with them.

Right now, I am in Florida trying to recover from an operation I went

through last summer. I would very much like to get with someone who is wanting to put one of these old time radio shows together, and also get a few of these old time singers' and pickers' names in the "West Virginia History of Country Music," also their pictures and life stories.

Sincerely,

D. "Hoss" Williams

San Diego, California
February 5, 1979

Editor:
Thank you for the October-December 1978 GOLDENSEAL.

Enjoyed the articles on Orris and Ruth Poling. Orris happens to be my brother. Also was delighted to read the letter from Rev. and Mrs. D. W. Poling. Mr. Poling is my first cousin. So happy to locate him again, through your GOLDENSEAL.

My maiden name was Poling. I was born in Randolph County, Ethel Maye Poling. My husband, Charles D. Smith, was born in Jackson County. We were married in Charleston. Charles was with Charleston National Bank at the time; I was with the Educational and Compensation Departments, Capitol Building, State of West Virginia.

Would appreciate receiving this beautiful magazine, GOLDENSEAL.

Thank you very much,
Charles and Ethel Smith

Utica, Ohio
February 6, 1979

Editor:
I just found out about your fine publication and do hope you can add me to your mailing list. I was born in Henderson, W. Va. in 1909 and lived there till 1950 when we moved to Ohio.

Please start sending me your GOLDENSEAL. I will treasure each issue.

Sincerely,
Thelma Rose Williams

Prescott, Arizona
February 16, 1979

Editor:
I am originally a West Virginian, born and raised in Harrison County. I've moved out of state and still miss home. How might I receive your GOLDENSEAL magazine? My grandmother had a copy the last time I was home, and I was impressed and wishful.

Thank you for your time, will be waiting to hear from you.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Tonia Fortner

Parkersburg, WV
February 19, 1979

Editor:
Recently while I was in the hospital a friend let me read and look through a copy of your magazine GOLDENSEAL. I liked it very much and would like to be put on your mailing list to receive it. I understand it is sent free.

Thank you so much,
Edith Hartley

Burton, WV
February 20, 1979

Editor:
My neighbor loaned me her copy of your magazine. I was impressed with one of the articles, the one about the 1936 flood in Wheeling. My brother, Dewey Taylor, Buss Taylor, and I took our truck and went to Wheeling to help out. We got pinned in with the water and had to stay there three days before we got out.

I was born and raised in West Virginia, and I enjoy reading about the old happenings in West Virginia. Will you please include me on your mailing list? You are doing a fine job. Thank you very much.

James L. Taylor

Unionville, Indiana
March 1, 1979

Editor:
Please put me on the GOLDENSEAL mailing list. A West Virginian now living in Fort Wayne, Indiana, introduced me to your publication. I'm impressed. We are working on a Folk Music Collection of Northern Indiana. Our goal is not only to preserve folk culture, but to present it to the public. Indiana could be well served by a publication like yours, to help the people be aware of what they have around them. Thank you.

Paul Tyler

Wheeling, WV
March 3, 1979

Editor:
The reason I haven't thanked you for sending me the copy of GOLDENSEAL (Vol. 4, no. 2 & 3) I requested last fall is because, barely had I reviewed it when the whole ethnic community which the article portrayed "borrowed" it, passing it from family to family. I just got it back the other day, and can't compliment the Cultural Center enough for this type of P. R. they are doing for West Virginia. Wish the whole state could know more about the Center.

Would you kindly place my name on your mailing list? Thanks again.

John G. Moses

Kerrville, Texas
March 12, 1979

Editor:
I have just come across the April-September '78 issue of GOLDENSEAL and it is a masterpiece. Please add my name to the mailing list.

I noticed in the Letters From Readers section a reference to a story about "Big Andy" Boggs in a previous issue. Would it be possible to send me a copy of that issue? As a matter of fact, is there any chance of getting a complete set of back issues? I am a Buckhannon native and browsing through GOLDENSEAL was almost like a visit back home.

Sincerely,
Katharine Gravell

Tucson, Arizona
March 12, 1979

Editor:
My brother Paul of Mannington has been visiting us, and brought with him a copy of GOLDENSEAL.

It is truly an excellent magazine on our home state. We especially enjoyed the article written by Arthur Pritchard, "A Circus Is Coming." Not only have we known the author and his family for many years, but I also worked my way into the circus, as a boy, in the manner he described.

We would like very much to be added to your mailing list and would appreciate a copy of the October-December issue if it is available.

Thank you,
Robert H. Ryan and Roberta S. Ryan

Vincent, Ohio
October 3, 1978

Editor:
I have just received my copy of GOLDENSEAL. This was a most delightful issue. The pack peddler called back many happy memories of my childhood, when the pack peddler arrived. I have told my grandchildren about the pack peddlers. I would like very much to have two extra copies of GOLDENSEAL for them.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Gladys Thornton

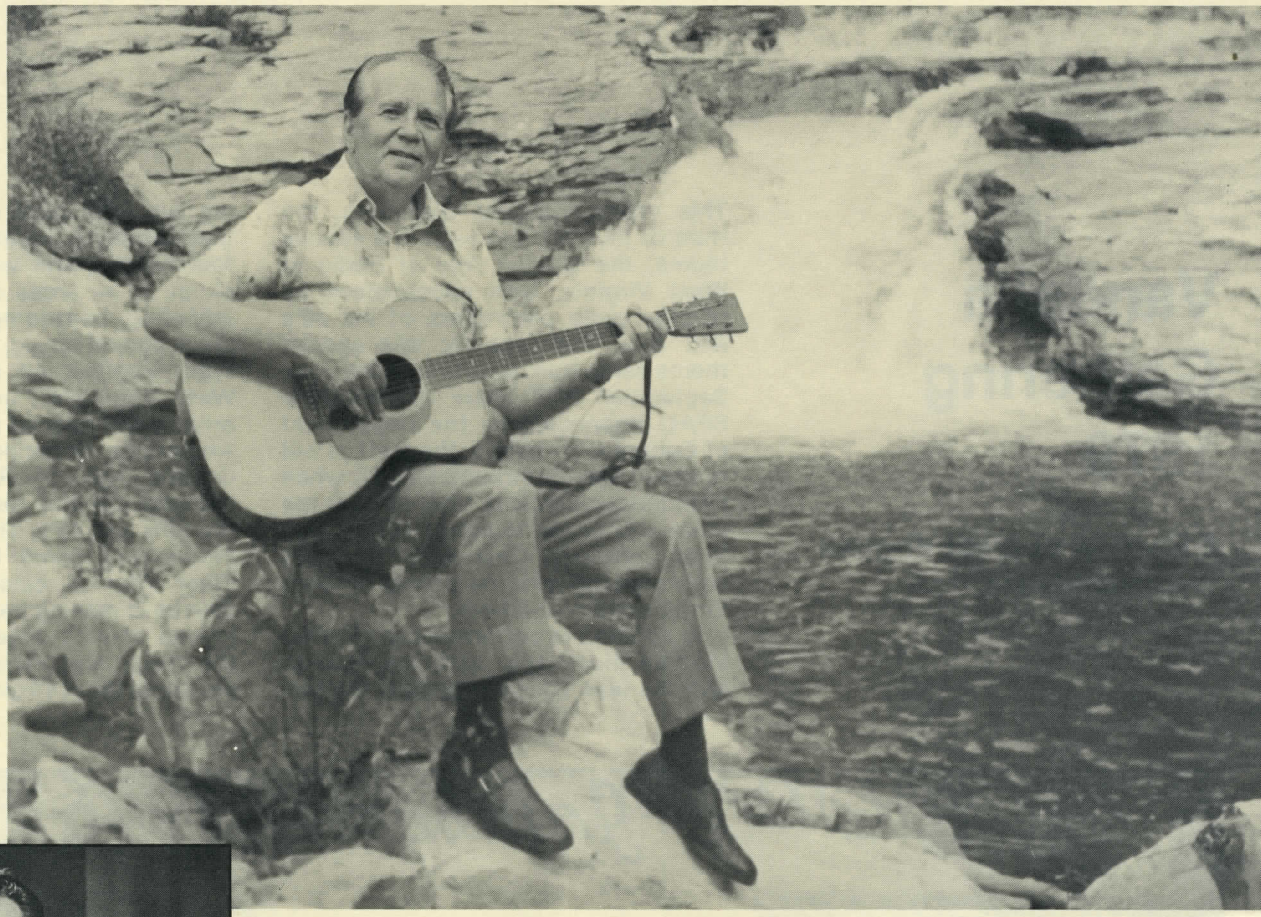
Vandalia Gathering 1979

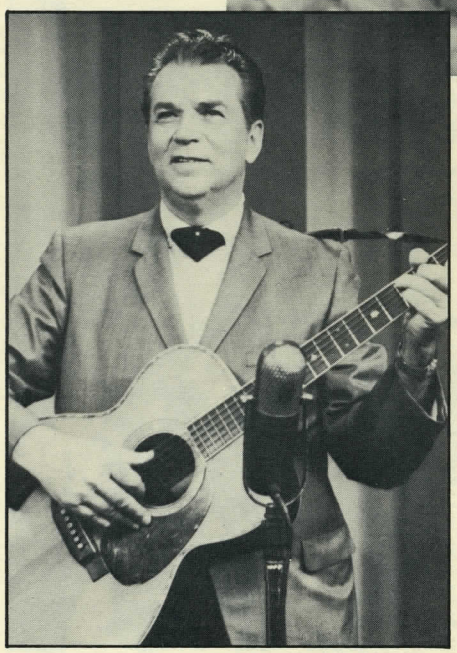
A Festival of West Virginia Traditional Arts

This year's Vandalia Gathering, the third of its kind, will feature a special theme, the Golden Age of Radio in West Virginia, with appearances by favorite radio performers of the 30's and 40's. The idea for this special theme came from an article in the July-September 1977 issue of GOLDENSEAL. Sponsored by the Department of Culture and History, the festival will run from May 25 through May 27, when traditional musicians from all over the state will come together at the Cultural Center in Charleston to share their heritage with the people of West Virginia and our visitors.

In addition to performances by West Virginia musicians, both the famous and the less known, Vandalia Gathering will offer craft demonstrations in blacksmithing, leathersmithing, pitchfork-making, and woodcarving; workshops in all areas of traditional arts, including balladsinging, storytelling, black gospel music, and black blues in West Virginia; art exhibits featuring West Virginia's "undiscovered" folk artists; and special performances and workshops honoring West Virginia's Golden Age of Radio, which will recreate the live radio broadcasts of the 30's and 40's. There will also be a Fiddle and Banjo Contest, open to West Virginia residents of all ages. Join us in making Vandalia Gathering a joyous coming together to celebrate the many and varied talents of the people of West Virginia.

W. Va's Golden Age of Radio





Top: Buddy Starcher in 1978.

Above: Buddy Starcher began his radio career at WFBR, Baltimore, in 1928. Two years later he returned home to West Virginia, first playing on WOBU, Charleston.

Right: Doc and Chickie Williams are the king and queen of the WWVA Jamboree, Wheeling.

Vandalia Gathering Schedule

Friday, May 25

7:00 p.m.	Concert—State Theater

Saturday, May 26

1:00 p.m.	Concerts, Workshops, Craft Demonstrations, and Fiddle Contest—State Theater, Outdoor Stage, and Great Hall
7:00 p.m.	Concert—State Theater

Sunday, May 27

10:00 a.m.	Religious Music Program—Outdoor Stage
1:00 p.m.	Concerts, Workshops, Craft Demonstrations, Banjo Contest—State Theater, Outdoor Stage, and Great Hall
5:00 p.m.	Wrap-up—State Theater

Below Left: The Bailes Brothers, Walter and Kyle, in 1977.

Below: The Bailes Brothers, Johnnie and Walter, in 1943, with Del Heck (fiddle) and "Little Evy" Thomas.

Right: Lee Moore today.

Above: Lee Moore played with the Buddy Starcher band in the 1930's, and also made a name for himself as an individual entertainer.

Below Left: Rex and Eleanor in 1979. The couple now perform "bluegrass gospel" music. Photograph by Steve Payne.

Below Right: Rex and Eleanor Parker as they appeared on WHIS Radio, Bluefield, in 1946.

Boyd M. Henry, Gunsmith

By Elaine Morrison Foster

Boyd Henry of Upshur County is a gunsmith, practicing a trade passed down through his family. He builds flintlock rifles, turning out some of the finest guns ever made in West Virginia. Mr. Henry scorns the "kit-builders," and his rifles are made "lock, stock, and barrel." All pieces, from the rifled barrel to the wooden fore and end stocks, are crafted by hand. The resulting guns, works of art and noted for their accuracy, are treasured by riflemen throughout the country.

Boyd Henry, who will be 81 this July, lives at Buckhannon with his wife of 60 years. Elaine Foster interviewed Mr. Henry at his home.

ELAINE Foster. Mr. Henry, there are a number of people today who build muzzle loading rifles. What do you mean by the statement that you are one of the last of the old gunsmiths?

Boyd Henry. So many people today are just assemblers of parts. They say they're gunsmiths. They're not. They're an assembler of parts, because they'll buy kits. I have sold barrels, I have sold stocks, I have sold locks, I've made main springs. I've made sear springs and put them in, and I have made main springs and trigger springs for the old modern guns that they couldn't get anymore.

EF Your ties to the Pennsylvania tradition are rather direct, are they not? Are you not a descendant of the Charles Henry who, in Ned Roberts' classic study of the muzzleloading rifle, is pictured outside the Henry Rifle Shop in Boulton, Pennsylvania?

BH That's my great uncle. And I had an uncle, Charles Henry. The name comes down the line. At Boulton was where Charles lived and later he moved to come west and started, they told me, the Great Western Gun Works in Pittsburgh which was later bought out by Johnson.

EF Did you learn the tradition from this uncle?

BH No, I learned it from two other relatives. One was a Shinnifeldt and one was a Showalter. I worked with these fellows during the summers. They didn't pay me; you learned something. They did blacksmithing, they did horseshoeing, and anything like that. My father thought it was a good thing to learn. And he built a shop on the farm. I shoed our own horses. If it was blacksmith work that needed to be done, I did it in our own shop.

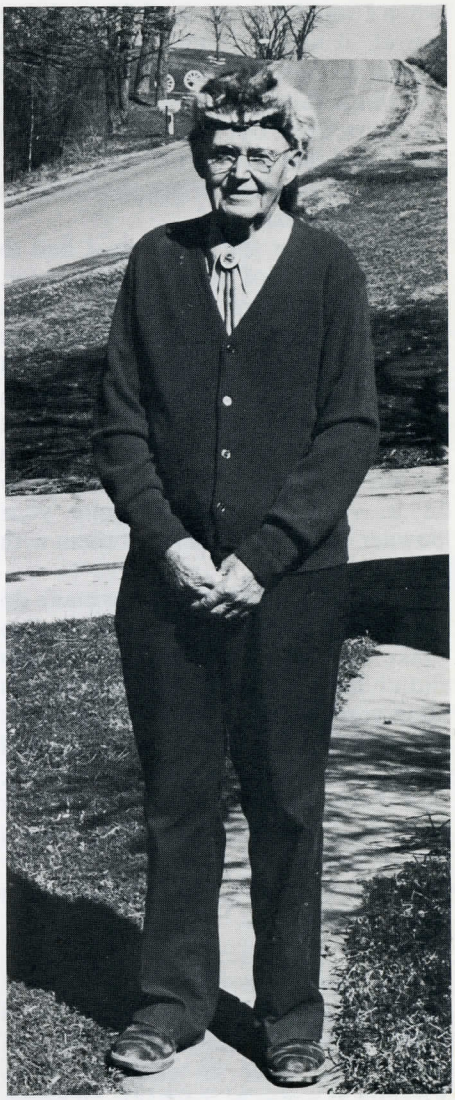
EF Are you saying that blacksmithing goes along with gunsmithing?

BH You had to be a blacksmith, you had to be a woodworker and the whole thing. Because it all went together. If you wasn't you couldn't make the stuff.

EF Was your father a gunsmith also?

BH My father was James Madison Henry. He was Irish, in Fairmont City, Pennsylvania. We lived on a farm. My father was not a gunsmith, was not a mechanic; he was a shooter and a mine foreman. He won numerous prizes all over the country. I have saw him time after time, with a muzzle loading rifle, shoot the head off of a grouse flying. He was well-known as a shooter in that part of the country. He won cash prizes, he won chickens, he won pigs, he won cows, he won horses, and he won a double-barreled Greener shotgun in an English cowhide case. I don't know what that cost at that time. It was a beautiful gun. The night my sister took my father to the hospital someone broke into the house and stole it. Everybody in that country knew that gun, and somebody knew that he had been taken to the hospital.

EF Have you any of these original guns made by your relatives?



Boyd Henry, gunsmith. Photograph by Bob Bouch.

BH In an antique gun shop in Florida I run across one of my great uncle Henry's guns and also one of George Showalter's. And I have also saw a number, in Pennsylvania, of Shinnifeldt guns. They are entirely made by hand. There's no bought parts, because there was no place to buy these parts. The barrel was made by hand: it was made "lock, stock, and barrel." They made everything, and they got from 15 to 16 dollars for that gun regardless; it might have taken two or three weeks to finish it. The barrels were bored by hand, they were reamed by hand, they were rifled by hand, they were ground octagon on a water grindstone. And it was just soft iron; there was no gun barrel steel then. I worked off of them, and I built my first rifle

when I was fourteen. And I bored that barrel. It was a 36-inch barrel; a .38 caliber as near as I could tell. I made the whole thing and I had it for almost 14 years until our farmhouse burned down and that gun burned up.

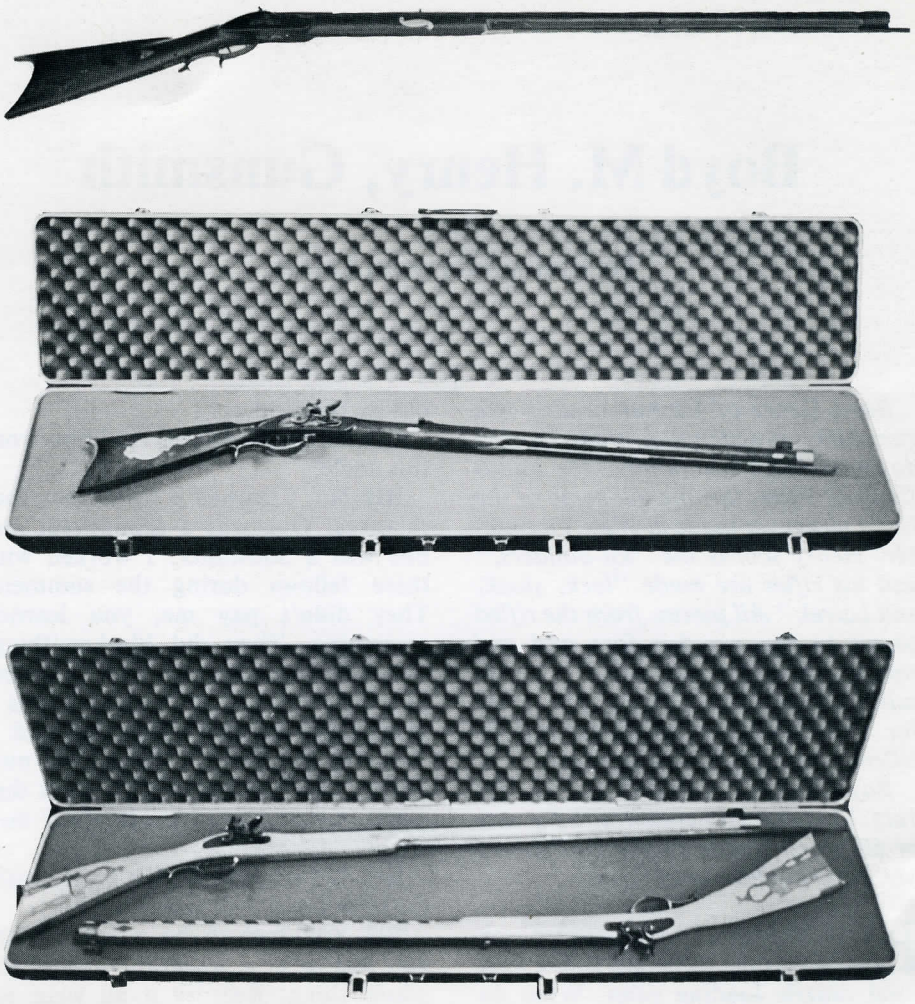
EF Did your father use your rifles in his shooting matches?

BH He shot the first one. I had to get money off of him to buy powder. Lead wasn't hard to come by; you could get a piece of lead pipe pretty near any place and melt it up. If I didn't have caps I'd soak the head on a country match, push it off and let it dry, and get a lot of them and set them on top of a nipple and put some tallow in it. And that would ignite your powder charge. I did a lot of them with that.

Today they don't believe in make do with what you have. Then we had to make do with what we had. If you didn't have a handle in a blacksmith shop you made it; if you wanted a pair of tongs you made them; if you wanted punches and chisels you made them; and if you wanted a butcher knife you made it. I made lots of butcher knives out of hay rake springs. Used that for the blade and then ground it down on a water grindstone.

When asked to describe the most outstanding guns he had made, Boyd Henry recalled a flintlock rifle he had made soon after he came to West Virginia as a master mechanic on heavy equipment in the early 1940's.

BH I couldn't find a barrel, so I got a 36-inch piece of an axle of a Walter A. Wood hayrake, and I bored that one by hand, and made the square reamer. You have to have a square reamer; you can't ream them with a spiral or a fluted reamer. They won't ream real smooth. Rifled it and ground that one on the grindstone. I sold it to an undertaker that was at French Creek. Later he sold it to Ray Reed when he was here on vacation from Alaska. Ray took it back to Alaska and was up there a number of years with that gun. And he told me he could have got any price at all for it. It's all hand-made. And Ray had come back from Alaska when he retired. And after he come back he brought it to me and had me to go over the rifle and clean it up, fresh the bore, recherry the molds and sight it in. And the gun shoots as good today as it did when I made it.



Top: This rifle belongs to Jerry Dean of Adrian, West Virginia. Mr. Henry has made several guns for Dean. Photograph by Gary Simmons.

Center: This Henry rifle is owned by Ray Reed of Buckhannon. Photograph by Gary Simmons.

Bottom: These matched Henry rifles belong to officers of the Woody Lumber Company of Buckhannon. Boyd Henry made a gun for each of the five Woody brothers. Photograph by Gary Simmons.

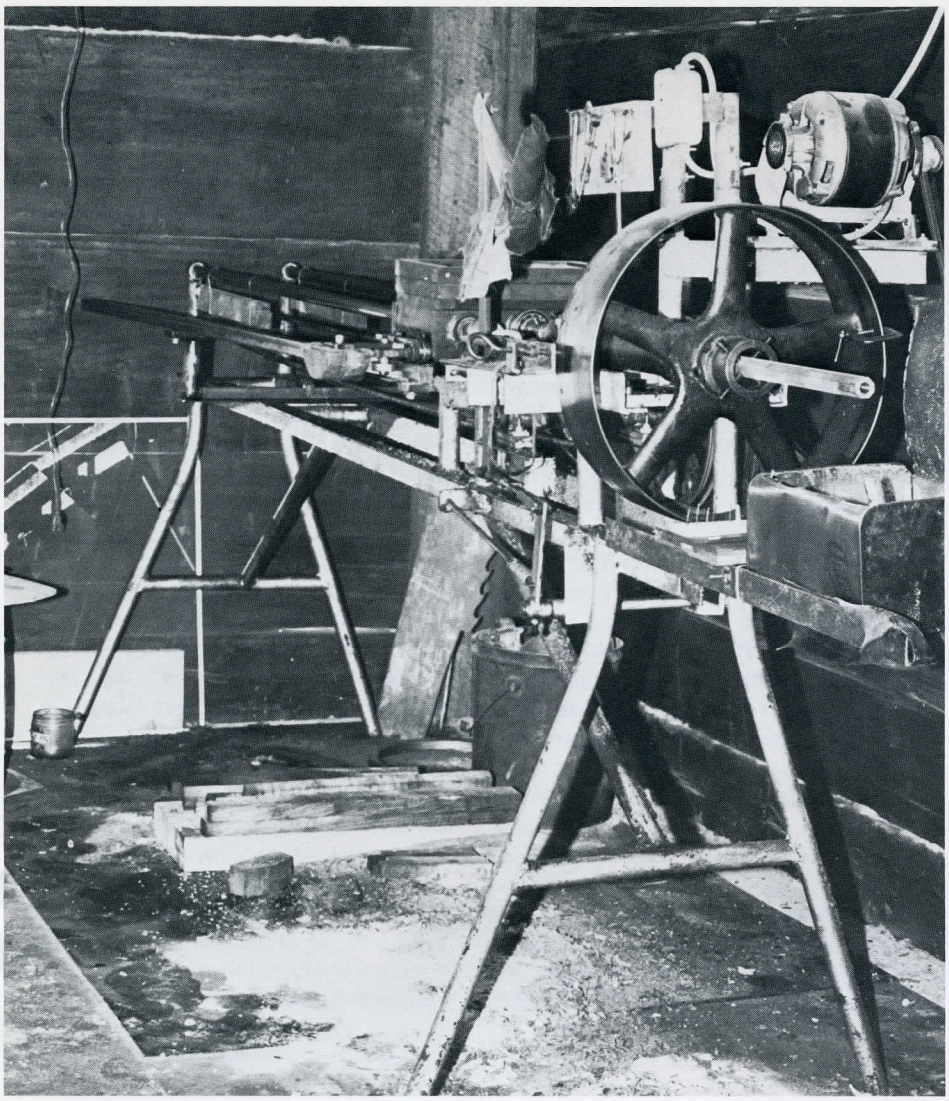
I have built, I believe, some of the prettiest guns in the state. And I can show them. Guns that people have been offered a thousand and fifteen hundred dollars for. I have two of them here to show. I built five of them for the Woody boys of Woody Lumber Company. Those are all .45 calibers, all flintlocks and all very accurate. There's no man ever got a gun from me or a barrel from me that wasn't accurate, 'cause if it wasn't I sawed it up. The thing that will spoil a gun the most is a fiberglass ramrod. They will spoil one just about as fast as a file will. It seems they hold the perspiration off your hands and you pick up dirt. It just files the inside of them out.

EF What is the most important part of making an accurate gun?

BH It's the boring of the barrel, the reaming, the rifling. And you make the molds. I made my own cherries to cherry the mold to make it round. I think I'm the only one in the country that makes a cherry like I do—one of the old-time cherries. I can make a cherry in an hour. To see whether it's true or not I would hold them up to the window, turn them around and look at them. I didn't use micrometers; they called me an eyeball machinist. My bullets always shot good.

EF I understand that you built a rifling machine that is unique. There is not another one like it anywhere.

BH I was three years building a



The unique rifling rig that Mr. Henry took three years building. Rifling grooves cut into a gun barrel cause the bullet to spin, increasing accuracy over a smooth bore gun. Photograph by Ruth Belanger.

machine to suit me. Because I got tired walking back and forth three and a half to four steps rifling a barrel and take all day to rifle one.* So at the end of about three years I had the machine built and I could rifle a barrel in from two to three hours. And that machine will cut any twist from straight to one turn in ten inches. It will cut three, four, five, six, seven, or eight grooves. You can change grooves or twists in less than two minutes. It will handle a barrel fifty inches long, an inch and a half across the flats.

*Conventional rifling rigs require the operator to walk forward and backward the length of the barrel with each cut of the rifling grooves.

Ninety percent of the bearings in that machine are out of old Chevrolet cars. The pulleys came from Montgomery Ward. It had Chevrolet connecting rods, and a rear sprocket off a bicycle. I saw a hydraulic machine and I saw one that had wheels on it to change your twist. But I didn't think any of them was as strong and as simple and as fast to operate as this. This machine, it's simple when you look at it—it operates fast. You can sit right on this stool here and you can go right ahead and operate it. And you can't on a lot of these machines.

It is the outcome of three machines. Some of the stuff is from my first machines. I tried driving it once with small steel cables, but four or five barrels and the cable would break. And I was in Western Auto one day and I saw this bicycle chain and those sprockets, and I bought them and come out and put them in and it worked nice. They've been there ever since. I never changed nothing as long as it worked.

It's the only machine of its kind in existence I know of. I've never experienced any trouble with it. That's because a dumb eyeball mechanic made it. There has been numerous pictures taken. There was a draftsman here drawing pictures of it. Mechanics has been here and looked at it. They're all going to build one. I have yet to hear of a completed machine, because there's a lot on that machine that don't meet the eye. There's a part of it there in an iron box. I've never told anyone what's in that box. I do not believe without they were acquainted with the business that they could even operate the machine.

EF I was surprised to find that the rusty appearance of a muzzleloading rifle barrel is deliberately achieved by the application of a browning solution. What does browning actually do that makes it so desirable?

BH It forms a rusty coat over it. Browning is something that you make. I don't buy my browning solution. I use a cold browning solution and Jim uses the same thing because I give him the formula. That formula, I know, is over a hundred years old. And when a barrel is buffed bright, you put it on. You have to wear rubber gloves. It'll eat your skin. It will turn that barrel copper-colored right away, and it takes about two weeks. You may put seven or eight coats of it on and rub it down between each coat with fine steel wool until you've got a real smooth brown patina. And you can't do that with some of this browning they put out. They say to heat the barrel, to put it on and heat till it fizzes. Well! You can distort that barrel. The cold browning will not distort the barrel, and it's on there to stay. The first time you go over it with steel wool a lot of it will come off. But each time you go over it there's more of it that stays on. And the more you rub it until you finish it up and, after the last coat, when you're satisfied with it, take and rub it with a cloth and some raw linseed oil till it shines. And it'll always be that way.

I got the browning solution from

another old fellow named Schrenkenghost. His first name was Link. He had got it from some of his forefathers. It's hard to pick up everything today that's in it. Some of it you can find in the Southern States Store where they handle agricultural supplies. And the drug stores handle some of the stuff. There's two things that you can pick up that doesn't cost you anything. One is rainwater, but I don't think I should tell a woman what the other is.

EF But I'm a very broadminded woman.

BH Well, it's urine.

EF What does urine do for the browning solution?

BH I don't know. All I know is that it does the work. When I was busy in the summer I have made ten and twelve and as high as sixteen gallons and sold it.

EF When I talked to you earlier you mentioned another method in which you bury the barrel.

BH I don't know where you can bury them anymore. My one great uncle used to bury them under a big pile of horse manure. Dig a trench down in there, oil the barrel on the inside, put a cork in the ends so that nothing can get in, lay it down in there polished bright, cover it all up. Let it stay in there for a couple of weeks, take it out and wash it off. Get a handful of fine sand and some water and rub it and clean it up, and then dry it. Rub it with some machine oil. And I never saw that browning ever come off either. But at that time people did with what they had. You didn't run to the store to get something.

EF Dr. Melvin Graffam at Union, who has been one of those responsible for the revival of interest in muzzle loading rifles in West Virginia, has spoken very highly of a rifle barrel which you sent to him. He said that it was "beautifully rifled, one of the finest gun barrels that was ever made." Have any of your guns been used to win championship matches?

BH One of the last barrels I cut this year won the West Virginia Offhand Championship at Nancy Hanks Memorial Park this spring. Now, offhand shooting is where "you stand up on your hind legs and shoot like a man," as Abraham Lincoln said. Then this fall they shot the Benchrest Championship and also they shot the Offhand at Charleston at the Leonard Meadows

Gunsmithing: The Revival of a Tradition

By Elaine Morrison Foster

The mountain rifle was developed in direct response to the needs of the people who settled the mountainous regions of West Virginia and neighboring states. European rifles brought to this country during the 1600's were much too heavy to meet the requirements of the American pioneer attempting to conquer a wilderness. What our settler needed was a comparatively small-bore rifle that would shoot accurately and with good killing power up to 150 yards. He needed a rifle which would conserve the limited quantity of powder and lead which he must carry upon his person for long periods of time in the wilderness many miles from a source of supply, the powder being especially scarce in the Colonies. He needed a rifle whose bullet could be lubricated in some way to facilitate its easy and rapid loading. He needed a rifle with a long barrel containing as much metal as possible so as to absorb the sound of its firing, since a light report would be less likely to arouse the attention of an enemy lurking nearby. And finally, he needed a rifle with a well-balanced stock so as to make offhand shooting as easy as possible.

The answer to this was the American flintlock rifle, which was developed by the German and Palatine Swiss who had settled in eastern Pennsylvania around 1730. These guns were made with slender stocks and long, carefully rifled barrels. Improvements were gradually made in the shape of the rifling grooves cut into the interior of the barrel, but the masterstroke in the improvement of the rifle's accuracy was the invention of the patch, the lubricated circle of cloth or paper in the center of which the rifleman placed his ball so that it could more easily be loaded into the bore of the gun without deforming the soft lead. Bear's oil, being water-white, nearly odorless, and of an especially high lubricating quality, was preferred for greasing these patches.

By 1760 this American flintlock rifle reached its highest development, becoming known as the Kentucky rifle because of the good use to which it was put by the pioneers who settled our neighboring state. The use of the term did not mean that the rifle was developed in Kentucky. The guns were either made by Pennsylvania gunsmiths, or by artisans who had learned the gunsmithing tradition in Pennsylvania and had carried it to the new settlements in other areas.

In the beginning the charges in these rifles were ignited by flintlocks. Flintlocks could not be depended upon, however, to give proper ignition in wet weather. Consequently, the invention, around 1814, of the percussion cap, which permitted the quicker and more certain ignition of the powder charge, was quickly adopted by American gunsmiths.

West Virginia's early gunsmiths, unlike those from bordering states, have been generally neglected in any comprehensive survey of muzzle loading rifle-making. A cursory survey of gun collectors has, however, identified enough old gunsmiths to convince one that the documentation of original West Virginia rifle-makers would make a fascinating and rewarding study: Charles Miller of Greenville; a Benson of whom nothing else is known; the Honakers—uncle and nephew; Harvey Fox of Raleigh County; J. Buzzard of Scott's Depot; Samuel Todd Sherwood of West Union; a Burkhammer believed to have lived in Gilmer County; the Boggs brothers—Andrew and Wesley—of Webster County; and more recently, William Andrews of Buckhannon. While the single family name of the maker is often the only information an owner has about the making of his gun, each gunsmith, even in the absence of his name or initials, has usually left some identifying characteristic of workmanship by which other

Leonard Meadows and Hacker Martin. Martin, a legendary gunsmith from an older generation, was known to Boyd Henry as the owner of a gun shop in Appomattox, Virginia.

guns with similar characteristics may be assigned to him and some idea of his activity may be conjectured.

Not all of West Virginia's gunsmiths are shrouded by the distance of time, either. A name revered among West Virginia riflemen is that of Leonard Meadows of Shady Spring whose recent premature death cut short a highly productive career in gunsmithing and, as a natural consequence, sent the price of owning one of his artistically crafted guns to around two thousand dollars. Dr. Melvin P. Graffam of Union knew Leonard well. The two men worked together to organize the Mountaineer Flintlock Rifles in 1962 which, Graffam claims, is a charter member of the National Muzzle Loading Rifle Association and the only exclusively flintlock club chartered in the United States. Graffam says of his friend: "He was the best of the old-time gunsmiths. He was only 56 when he died. It is not known how many rifles he made. It is thought that he made between five and six hundred. He made all the parts, and he cut the grooves on the inside of the barrel."

Robert Beckelheimer of Oak Hill, who inherited Leonard Meadows' rifling rig, also speaks of his friend: "Leonard started making guns way years ago, you know, back in the '50's. And when Leonard started making guns you couldn't find any pieces, you know. He told me he used to take, when he wanted a barrel, he'd go down someplace and get him a piece of round stock—metal—and he had a rig that he bored a hole through this with. And he had it arranged where he turned the metal, the piece, instead of the bit, so it would go straight. And then he ground the flats on it with a grindstone. And he made flintlocks by hand himself. So he was not one of these Johnny-come-lately kit gun builders."

Leonard Meadows' guns are characterized, says Beckelheimer, by the quality of the workmanship. "I asked him one time what his first rifle looked like. He said he knowed an old man who made violins one time, and he asked him the same question. And the old man told him, 'You either can or you can't.' And then he said the first one was just about as good as the last one. You've either got it or you haven't got it."

Dr. Graffam, who is a frequent contributor to the National Muzzle Loading Rifle Association's official magazine, *Muzzle Blasts,* calls our attention to the recent revival of interest in muzzle loading firearms. "In 1950 you couldn't buy anywhere in the world a brand new muzzle loading gun of any type. Now just a little after twenty-five years, the interesting thing is you have a whole gun industry that has been reborn. Rifles, shotguns, revolvers, pistols, even cannons. You can even buy cannons now if you want and the whole industry has been reborn." This is evidenced by the activity among marksmen, nearly every one of whom has made, is making, or dreams of making his own muzzle loading firearm.

Range. Leonard Meadows was a very good friend of mine. He's passed on and he was a good gunsmith. He was at Shady Spring, West Virginia. About the last three or four years or so, Bill Boyd has taken the Championship down there.

And the barrel that he took it with this year, I made that barrel. I made it last year and he stocked it during the winter, shot it and took the trophy this year. Most of the ones that belong to the William Andrews Club here shoot my barrels. Some of them are shooting my guns, and I'll say this club here will give any club in the state a real rough time.

Of the three winners of the Offhand Championship held at Nancy Hanks Memorial Park in August 1977, two were from Boyd Henry's own rifle club, the William Andrews Muzzle Loading Club. Jim McCartney became the West Virginia Flintlock Offhand Champion and Jan Crites, in the first competition open to women, earned the title of Ladies Offhand Champion. Jim is the current president of the William Andrews Muzzle Loading Club. He is also the apprentice whom Boyd Henry chose as most worthy and able to inherit his gunsmithing skills and equipment. Jim is now in possession of the unique rifling rig which Boyd Henry spent three years building.

EF The William Andrews Muzzle Loading Club was named to honor a revered gunsmith of Buckhannon, was it not?

BH Yes. And we're the oldest club in the state, and I'm the oldest member in this club; and I'm a lifetime member of the Mountaineer Flint Rifles of Charleston.

I know riflemen from a good many states. I have shot against a lot of them. I never held any animosity against anybody that ever beat me. My father told me that if you can't stand to be beat, come back and practice more. Don't get mad at that fellow. Shake hands with him. He's a better shot that day than you was. Maybe the next time you'll be a better shot than he is. So that's the way I always tried to work.

EF All of these trophies and ribbons indicate that you may have inherited some of your father's marksmanship skills. Which ones make you the proudest?

Jim McCartney with Boyd Henry. McCartney apprenticed with Mr. Henry, and was given the shop with the understanding that he will teach his own son the trade. Photograph by Ruth Belanger.

BH These I won in a four-state championship at Harpers Ferry in 1962. There was West Virginia, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. And then the champion from Pennsylvania come in on the second day—that made five. Well, there was an offhand match with a rifle; an offhand match with a smooth bore rifle which is not rifled; and a revolver match—a cap and lock revolver match. Well, we shot two days. We shot smooth bore and rifle one day. One day we shot revolvers. There they sit.

EF You took first in each of them?

BH You see them there. And Governor Barron said, "I have the honor of presenting to a West Virginian the three first prizes."

EF Do you still compete in the shooting matches?

BH If I get this eye straightened back up again I'll be back in it. I have the same enthusiasm as I had when I was 14 as far as shooting is concerned. But I don't have the urge to win like I used to. I used to—I just *had* to win—I shot for blood all the time.

EF But you still go to the matches. In fact, I first met you at the rifle range.

BH Well, I like to go. I like to talk to the contestants, I like to visit with them. I know them—like Jerry Dean. I've built Jerry several rifles. I sold Jerry a pistol. I remember when he came to the club. Jerry was a pretty fair shot when he came to the club and I watched him improve. I have an interest in him.

EF Why did you choose Jim McCartney as the person to inherit your skills and your gunmaking equipment?

BH Well, I took Jim McCartney in with me because he wanted to learn the trade. Jim tried to find some place to get someone to teach him to shoot and somebody to show him how to make a rifle. Somebody told him I was out here, so he come out and talked to me. And he said, "Well, how much will you charge me?" "Well, if you want to help, I won't charge you nothing. It all depends what you do—whether you're adaptable to this work."

Well, Jim just took right to it—like a duck to water. I taught Jim to make stocks. I taught him to make patch boxes, locks, mainsprings, double-set triggers. Jim knows how to make a barrel if he has to. He knows how to ream one or rebore one and rifle it, and to make molds. In about two and a half to three years, Jim could build a good rifle.

My ancestors taught me, and said, you're the only one we're teaching. And then I taught McCartney. I gave him the shop, on the condition he can't give it away and he can't sell it. And he's got to learn the trade to his son.

Herman P. Dean Firearms Collection

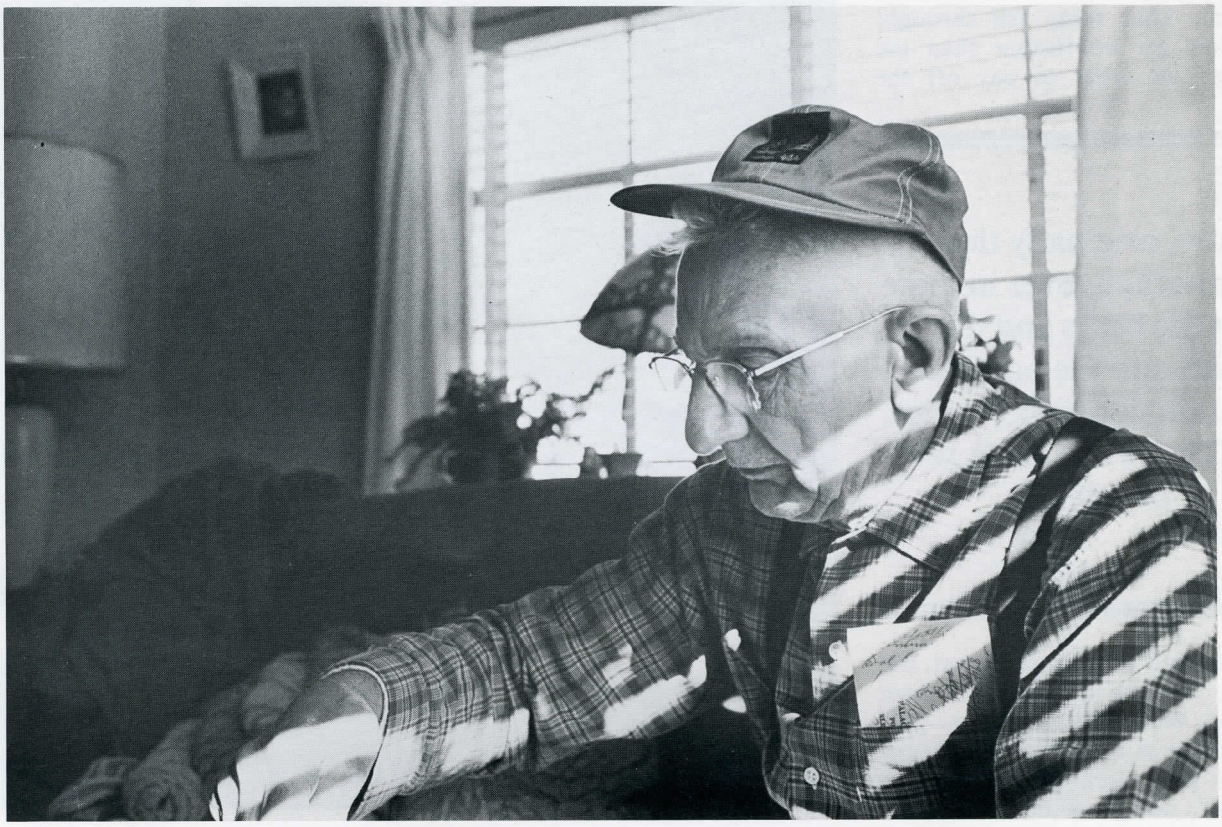
On Sunday, April 29, Huntington Galleries reopened its popular Herman P. Dean Firearms Collection. The reopening followed two years of intensive work in reconstructing the exhibition area and researching the guns. The renovation project was made possible through grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The Dean exhibition is one of the most outstanding firearms collections in the county. There is an extensive representation of mountain or "Kentucky" rifles, and other long and short guns and accessories. The collection numbers 393 items from 20 countries, some dating back 450 years.

The arms collection is a permanent exhibition which will be on display during regular viewing hours, Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sunday, 1 to 5 p.m. Admission is by voluntary contribution.

"Just 48 Years, That's All": Harry Sydenstricker, Company Store Manager

By Ken Sullivan



HARRY Sydenstricker worked for nearly 50 years as an employee of the Beury coal family, spending most of that time as manager of the company store at Quinnimont on New River. Visitors to Mr. Sydenstricker's home in Beckley ask about his experiences in the company store, but they find that he has a richer story to tell. For Harry Sydenstricker can tell not only of personal experiences, but of much of the history of Fayette County as well. He particularly excels in narrating the long and complex interaction of his own family with the coal industry, especially with Colonel Joe Beury and his heirs.

Sydenstricker was born on a Fayette County farm in 1900, and his roots reach deeply into county history. His father's father had moved north to Fayette from Greenbrier County in the 1850's, disturbed by the openly southern sympathies there as the Civil War crisis approached. In Fayette County George Washington Sydenstricker acquired a good farm, and he served as a teamster with the Quartermaster Department of the Union Army during the war. Harry Sydenstricker is proud of his grandfather's commitment to principle, but it is of his mother's people, the Gentrys and the Andersons, that he talks most. The Andersons in particular arrived in West Virginia very early, settling northeast of New River in the early 19th century, and Sydenstricker gives a vivid description of the time and place.

"Now, originally there wasn't nothing over in there in north Fayette County but the bears and the wildcats and the panthers," Sydenstricker says. "Mountain lions, they called 'em. That's all, and a few people. John Anderson, my great great granddaddy on my mother's side, settled out in there in Maplewood in 1814, right after the second war with England. You know, the Revolution and then the War of 1812."

Sydenstricker recalls that his ancestor came to Fayette County as a result of an investment in the abortive James River and Kanawha Canal. This canal, originally proposed by George Washington, was projected to be built

from the James River to the Kanawha, thereby linking Virginia to the trade of the rich Ohio Valley. The intervening mountains proved to be insurmountable, however, and the Canal reached no farther than Buchanan, Virginia, barely across the Blue Ridge.

"Now, my great great granddaddy was a Scotsman," Sydenstricker says, noting that his knowledge comes by way of his grandmother Anderson. "He had some money in that canal that they was trying to build across from Richmond. That thing fell through; they didn't get no further than the mountains. In order to pay off the

"Now, originally there wasn't nothing over in there but the bears and the wildcats and the panthers. Mountain lions, they called 'em. That's all, and a few people."

people that had stock in the canal, the State of Virginia—you know, there wasn't no West Virginia then—give 'em land west of the Allegheny Mountains. My great great grandfather on my mother's side got 10,000 acres.

"Well, now, he had to settle west of the Alleghenies and north of Lewisburg. There was no road down in there. George Washington had surveyed and Fairfax come through what is supposed to be the Midland Trail, you know, Route 60. But it was just a blind pass, you might say, cut out through the woods. My great great grandfather's people was six weeks coming out here. They left out there in June and they got out here some time in August. They had some cows and a ox cart to haul their things on. Come to a place, pretty good spring and all, and they settled out there in 1814."

For a generation the Andersons farmed the plateau north of New River Gorge, peacefully unaware that their land was underlain by rich deposits of high quality bituminous coal. The existence of New River coal was widely known in the scientific and industrial worlds, however, although dismissed as non-minable due to a lack of transportation. All this changed when the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad came pushing through the New River country in the years after the Civil War, realizing Washington's old dream of linking east and west, and opening Fayette County coal to market. The new developments brought northern entrepreneurs to New River, and Sydenstricker's aging ancestor secumbed to their financial enticements along with other mountain farmers.

"Later on, that old man sold his mineral rights for three dollars an acre. That's what my great great grandfather done. Joe Beury, big coal operator, come down from Pennsylvania right after the Civil War. The railroad wasn't open no further than White Sulphur Springs. I don't know what the people were told, but they were led to believe the railroad would never be down through here." Sydenstricker adds that "three dollars was three dollars," and certainly better than nothing.

"Now, Mr. Beury—old Colonel Joe, they called him—he was a colonel in the Union army. They always called them colonels. His brother was a banker in Philadelphia, William Beury. They tell me he's the one that had the money. And C. C. Beury was the old man's brother. George Lawton was the old man's cousin, Beury's mother was a Lawton. George Law-

Left: Colonel Joseph Lawton Beury came from Pennsylvania to Fayette County after the Civil War. He was the first operator in the New River coalfield, shipping the first coal on the new Chesapeake & Ohio line from Quinnimont in 1873. Harry Sydenstricker's people were involved with the Beury operations from the very first, and Harry himself worked for the Beury heirs for nearly half a century.

Below: The Beury Mansion. Photographer unknown.

ton—old Uncle George, we called him—was the general manager for the old man."

The extended Beury family, led by Colonel Joe, gained control of vast mineral acreages in Fayette and surrounding counties. For the most part the surface of this empire was left in the hands of native landholders, with the Beurys buying or leasing only the mineral rights. Joe Beury became the first operator in the New River Coalfield, shipping the first New River coal from Quinnimont in 1873, and he operated other mines at the town of Beury and elsewhere. But the Pennsylvania patriarch made his biggest profits in leasing and sub-leasing family holdings, with other operators assuming the risks of mining.

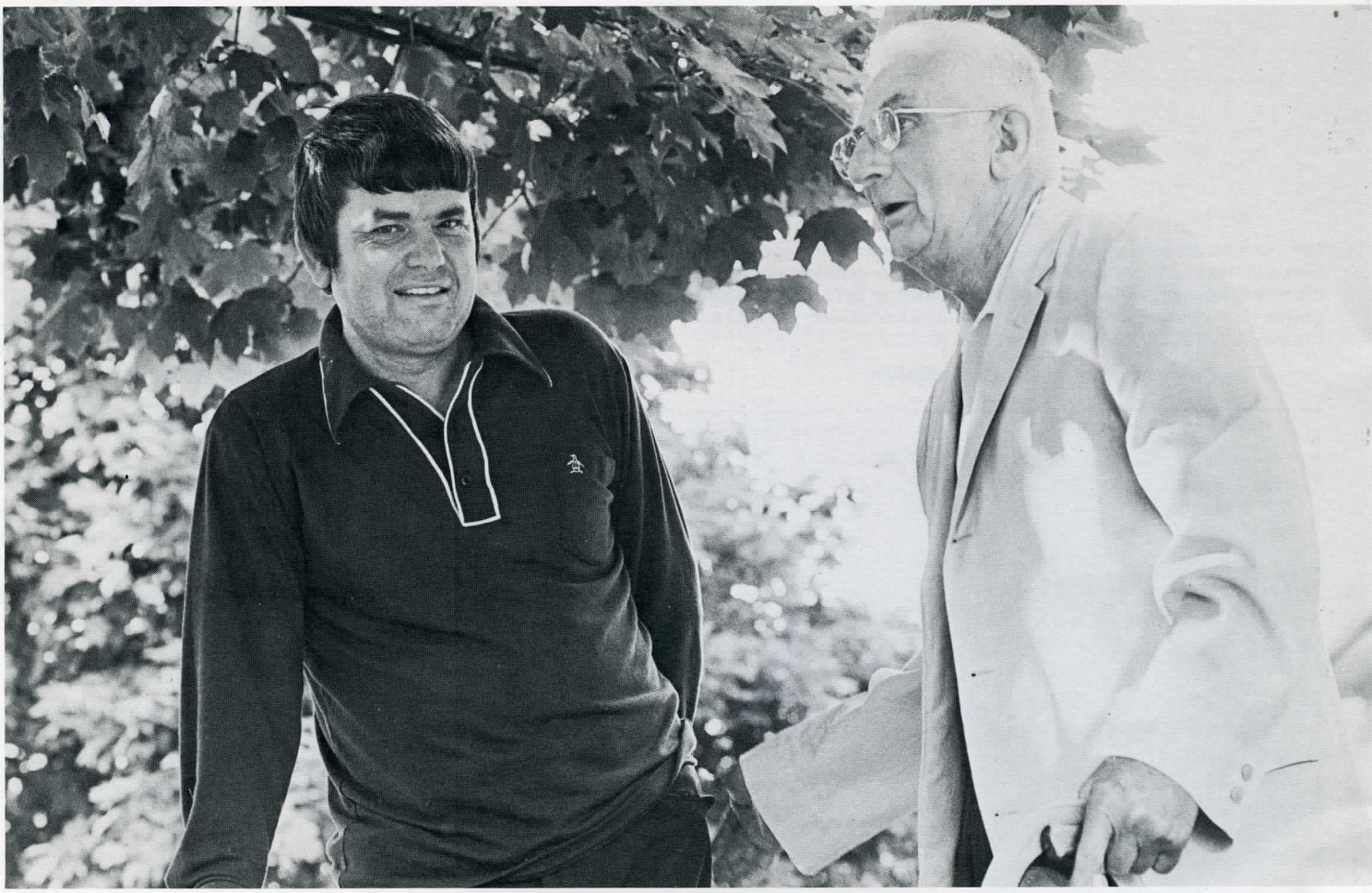
"Joe Beury come because he could make a million dollars down here in this coalfield," Sydenstricker emphasizes firmly. "He was a smart man. He secured all these leases and mineral rights. Got it for a song, as the old saying goes; a lot of it he didn't pay three dollars for. He didn't own the land, though he did own 8,700 acres outright at Quinnimont—owned that in fee, as they said. And at one time he had 49,000 acres under lease, everything from New River to Meadow River. That's 49,000 estimated—there wasn't no surveying going on then much, more or less guess work. I wouldn't doubt if it wasn't more than that. He had Fire Creek and Caperton, on the same side of the river as Quinnimont, and Claremont, then the place they called Beury.

"Now, the first car of coal ever shipped on the C & O Railroad, he shipped from Quinnimont, in 1873. But all these leases he had he never operated. He sold 'em, the leases, to somebody else. This Gauley Mountain Coal Company that he organized up there beyond Ansted, William Nelson Page got that from Beury. And that fellow Thayer, W. T. Thayer, Beury sold a big lease to him. Beury had land all the way in here back of Mount Hope. Had New River Mining Company, Turkey Knob, and a place called Elmo between Fayette Station and Cotton Hill."

A new force entered the local coal industry with the appearance of truly large northern financiers around the turn of the century. One such man was E. J. Berwind, who had made a fortune in mining in central Pennsylvania and who eventually monopolized the supplying of coal to steam ships in New York harbor and much of the Caribbean. As a major northern producer, Berwind originally attempted to use his influence with the railroads to suppress competition from the new southern coalfields. Failing in that, he decided to buy into the southern industry. Young Harry Sydenstricker was on hand to witness the flamboyant entrance of E. J. Berwind into Fayette County, and through his boyhood years he watched with fascination as the northern capitalist surveyed and developed his new holdings.

"Joe Beury come because he could make a million dollars down here in this coalfield. He was a smart man."

"Beury sold a big lease back in next to Layland to E. J. Berwind, of the Berwind-White people. Now, Berwind came in here from Pennsylvania. Gave a million dollars for Minden, gave a million dollar check to old man Paddy Rend, at the Dun Glen Hotel. When he came to transact the business on Joe



Harry Sydenstricker with Owen Cox, Jr. Mr. Cox is a descendant of the Beury-Lawton-Cox family which Sydenstricker served for nearly a half-century.

Beury's Layland lease, I seen him. I was just a small boy, but I saw him. He came down from Philadelphia in a private coach, on the end of this here Night Train Number One. They took that car off at Quinnimont, whole car. Put it on the hook-up they had down there for steam and all, to keep 'em warm. Had a special train to take him from Quinnimont up to Layland, paid nearly $700 for that train. That car sets up there, two or three days. He's got a colored cook and all, everything he needs. Chickens in the back—had a place down under there to pull out, like on these big coaches, big buses, that goes down the road. Ice in there, and chickens, and things laying down in there, on ice. Berwind gave Beury $250,000—that's a quarter-million dollars—for this lease, from Layland on back, out through the woods clear into Meadow River. Nothing but a wilderness."

"All right, now, after Berwind gets this, he don't know what he's got. So he had ten engineers survey all this land down here. They surveyed that when I was just a little old fellow. My daddy worked some for them. They were five or six years in surveying that doggone place. Everywhere and every place. Now, they was real nice to everybody. If they wanted to come into your fields, they paid five dollars. Nobody got less than five dollars, even if they'd just walk through. And they'd tell 'em what they was doing, real nice about it."

Sydenstricker's own family entered coal mining in his father's generation. Cash was scarce in the mountain subsistence economy, and the elder Sydenstricker was drawn to an industrial job by the lure of steady work and relatively good pay. Like other native farmers, however, he retained a base in the agricultural economy and eventually was able to move in and out of the mines at will. The mountaineers were fortunate in this regard, compared to uprooted blacks and European immigrants in the coalfields, who had no choice but to accept the industry on its own terms.

"Now my father used to work in the mines. For $1.25 a day he worked ten hours, for Beury's at Fire Creek. Started up with the Beurys down there, when they opened the mine. Before he got married he lived down right close to Fire Creek, in the bend of the river down there. Worked seven years, from 1814 to 1891. He finally got so he could survey in there. He didn't have no education and he had to have somebody else to run the transit, to help him. Worked for Clark and Krebs, out of Charleston. They were the mine engineers for the Beurys.

"When he married mother, she got 200 acres of land for a wedding present. And when he got that, well, lord, wasn't no use to go back in the mines!" Sydenstricker's father could now "dig

a living out of the top of the ground," and returned to the pits only on special assignment. "After my dad and mother got married, the only work he ever done in the mines was to survey in there for this here Clark and Krebs. Just occasionally, you know, when they needed him. They didn't survey every day like they do it now. They didn't have all these maps and stuff like they do now, but once in a while they'd have to have somebody. Well, they'd send for him to come out there, tell him they'd like to have him. He'd go, and maybe he'd be gone for a week sometimes."

Harry Sydenstricker in his turn went to work for the Beurys, continuing the long interaction between the two families that had begun with the sale of his great great grandfather's mineral rights. Harry never labored in the mines, but instead went to work in the company store. He started as a delivery boy, driving a mule for the New River and Pocahontas Company's Layland store. "I was sixteen years old when I started to work. I'd been up as far as grade school, and I started off as a delivery boy." Sydenstricker was soon promoted to butcher and clerk, but his big advancement came only after a sudden turn in coalfield labor relations gave him an unexpected chance to resume his education.

"I went down there to Charleston to Capitol City Commercial College when they had that labor trouble here in 1921. The union was trying to organize in 1920 and 1921, went from '20 over into '21, and they held out for nine months. They closed the mines down, closed everything down except the Post Office. Wasn't nothing going on then, no work in the store. I had $800 or $900 saved up, and I went down to Charleston and went to school, maybe seven and a half or eight months. Then I worked as a billing clerk for a place down there for a year or two."

The Layland company had operated under a Beury lease, and Sydenstricker went to work directly for the Beurys only after the Charleston interlude. During those years he had continued to visit back and forth to Fayette County. "All my people lived back in there," he explains. He had a good job and a new car in Charleston, but he never cared much for life in the capitol city. The offer of a job with the Beury organization presented a personal quandary for him.

"Well, they wanted me to come on back up here," Sydenstricker remembers. "I didn't know what to do. I didn't like Charleston much. I did have a little old Ford car down there, and I'd have to get rid of that. There wasn't no roads into Quinnimont, I mean no paved roads." He eventually decided to sell his Ford and return to the new job. "When I came back from Charleston, I started in as payroll man. Kept the mine payroll."

Sydenstricker returned in 1923, to move into a room over the Quinnimont company store. Colonel Joe Beury had died in 1903, and Sydenstricker worked for George Lawton and for Lawton's heirs, the Coxes. As payroll clerk he was paid $150 a month, and in 1924 Lawton promoted him to store manager, with a $50 raise. Sydenstricker

> "When my father married mother, she got 200 acres of land for a wedding present. And, well, lord, wasn't no use for him to go back in the mines!"

was given a free hand in running the company store, but was ordered to beware of the coalfield "drummers," or traveling representatives of the regional wholesale houses. "George Lawton said, 'Mr. Sydenstricker, now you run the store and don't let them traveling men run it.' " The itinerant salesmen offered "everything from toothpicks to an elephant's raincoat," and Sydenstricker remembers the patent medicine men as the worst of the lot.

Sydenstricker continued as Quinnimont store manager for nearly three decades, and he developed a keen awareness of the importance of the company store in the economics of the early coal industry. He believes that smaller companies would not have survived without company store revenues. He is sensitive to the charges of company profiteering at the expense of a captive population, but insists that high mark-ups were placed only on furniture and dry goods. "But when it come to this here white meat and beans and stuff people had to live on, there was very little made on it."

Sydenstricker also served as Quinnimont postmaster for years, turning the job over to his wife with the advent of the New Deal. "Politics, you know. I was a Republican, and she's a Democrat. When Roosevelt got in, she got the job." He belonged to the Masonic lodge, and recalls that "you had to be a first class gentleman" to get in. He served as the treasurer of the church.

Harry Sydenstricker, in short, was a pillar of the community. The Quinnimont he recalls was a small town, 128 houses in all. It was owned entirely by the coal company, which imposed a rigid social order of its own choosing. Sydenstricker remembers the Quinnimont population was about 20% immigrant and 40% black, and that a strict segregation prevailed. "The colored lived in one section, foreigners lived in one section, and the white American people all lived in one section. That's the way they had it set up. The colored had their church and the Catholics went to Hinton, 22 miles on the train, to Father Jenkins. I think everybody was happy."

Years passed, and Sydenstricker watched Quinnimont decline with the declining fortunes of the local mine. "When it got so the company wasn't making no money, they wasn't putting no money into the houses," he says. He remained with the Beury-Lawton operations, however, transferring to their Laurel Creek store when Quinnimont closed down. Laurel Creek itself closed in 1953, and Sydenstricker moved to the Bellwood Coal Company store. Harry Sydenstricker was of retirement age now, and he ended his career at Bellwood.

Sydenstricker still keeps in close touch with the Cox family, the Beckley descendants of the Beurys and Lawtons. In retirement he recalls his long service with the three families. "Old Colonel Joe Beury started it. I worked for old man George Lawton, and when he passed down and got so he couldn't handle it, Mr. Cox got it, his son-in-law. I worked for them for 29 years in one place, right there at Quinnimont. And altogether, I just put in 48 years, that's all."

Holiness People

By Yvonne Snyder Farley

Photographs by Doug Chadwick

In most ways the Besoco Church of Jesus in Raleigh County resembles hundreds of other pentecostal and holiness churches scattered across West Virginia. Worship is emotional, with lively music and enthusiastic participation by members. As in many fundamentalist churches, the practices of footwashing and baptism by total immersion are observed. But the Besoco congregation has one belief—that in "taking up serpents," as they understand the Bible to command them to do—which sets them apart. For this belief, church members have suffered the ridicule and morbid curiosity of outsiders. They generally feel that press coverage of serpent-handling religion has been unnecessarily sensationalized, but they agreed to a recent visit by Yvonne Snyder Farley, formerly a religion reporter for a Beckley newspaper. No snakes were present at the service Farley attended, but she did interview members extensively about their beliefs and experiences. Her sensitive report follows.

GOLDENSEAL does not endorse any form of worship over any other, but believes that the snake-handling sects deserve attention as one part of West Virginia's varied religious heritage.

"WE don't want to be anything but exactly what we are," said Brother Ray Stewart, pastor of the Church of Jesus in Besoco, Raleigh County. And by their own definition they are *holiness* people. They believe in Jesus and in holiness living. Holiness living makes for a strict life—close to the church and away from the world. "We're trying to get pure enough to see God," preached Brother Ray at a Wednesday night meeting in March of this year.

The Besoco congregation shares many beliefs and practices with other holiness churches. But while the other churches worship in peaceful obscurity, the world takes notice of the Besoco group because of one of its beliefs—serpent-handling. For church members, snake handling is but one part of a larger form of worship, practiced only at certain times of the year and then not by all worshippers. But they believe it is this practice which has singled them out for curiosity, ridicule, and even persecution by non-believers.

They've read books on serpent handling which they feel unfairly portray them as fanatics. Brother Tom Puckett, a soft-spoken church member, held up a book about serpent handling written by a couple of professional writers from Tennessee. The cover, as he pointed out, was indeed sensational—the frenzied face of a snake handler, a big rattlesnake, and the words "Snake Handlers" dripping down the page in voodoo-like lettering. The book's appendix featured "100 exciting photographs of serpent handling." Brother Tom also had a hardback book which he didn't think was quite as bad as the paperback.

At best they are condescendingly described as naive, misguided Appalachians; at the worst, as psychologically disturbed cultists. To themselves, they are ordinary people living a religious life.

Yet their religion leaves them free from any resentment towards those they feel exploit them. "You'll not find a cold shoulder in a holiness church," said Brother Gary Blankenship, a church member. The men and women at the Besoco church are remarkably friendly, open, and honest. They are confident and sincere in what they believe. Perhaps it is the same sincerity that leads them to follow so literally the passages from the scripture which other Christians reject.

To the dedicated believers at the Church of Jesus, they are simply carrying out the words of Jesus in St. Mark 16:17-18:

"And these signs shall follow them that believe: in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents and if they drink any deadly thing, it

Church leaders observe another of the five signs in faith healing ceremony.

shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."

According to Brother Ray, most fundamentalist churches take the healing sign, but very few take the Bible literally on serpent handling. "Believe me," he said, "If it didn't say it, I wouldn't do it."

They do not handle serpents to test their faith. And they don't feel they are "tempting God" as they are frequently accused of doing by other Christians. They wouldn't handle snakes, said one brother, unless they felt that the power of God was sufficient to protect them. They feel they are protected because they take the Bible as it is written. The five signs mentioned by Jesus are "confirmation of the word."

Church members also observe the signs in faith healing and in speaking in tongues, but they do not purposefully "drink any deadly thing." Brother Ray explained that Jesus said "if"—not "shall." There's a difference, he said. He believes *if* a believer would drink poison, he would not be hurt. However, there are other churches where strychnine and other poisons are taken in the course of worship.

Brother Ray thinks many of the beliefs held by the Besoco church were once held by other fundamentalist churches which have now "fallen away." The Church of God, a large pentecostal denomination, allowed snake handling as recently as 1920, according to one source.

As in other holiness churches, women take an active role in the Raleigh County congregation. It was Sister Violet Halsey Stewart of Besoco who left the Church of God in the early 1950s and along with several other women founded what is today the Church of Jesus. She is, said her son Brother Ray, a kind of "spiritual mother" of the church. The group, which included sisters Margerie Spears, Mildred Mercer, and Erma Justice, first met in their homes.

The practice of handling serpents came to them after attending a meeting of Sister Effie Gilmore's in Pearisburg, Virginia—but no one remembers exactly when that was. The earlier history of serpent handling is, however, well known to church members. The movement was begun in 1909 by George Went Hensley, of rural Grasshopper Valley in East Tennessee. But it was in the 1940s and 1950s that the practice flourished and spread throughout the region. Practitioners suffered jailings and other persecutions for their beliefs, and laws were enacted in many states and municipalities to forbid serpent handling. In West Virginia it is legal.

Brother Ray said he would see a law forbidding the handling of serpents as the starting place for the state to interfere in religion. For him it is an issue of religious freedom. He stated without hesitation that passing a law against the practice would not stop people from handling snakes.

The Church of Jesus has 75 members. The present church building was completed in 1967. There is no name on the outside of the unpretentious grey building lodged between the mountains beside a narrow stream. A blacktop road curves in front of the church. Brother Tom Puckett explained that it's only a building. Tapping his chest, he said, "The real church is here—inside."

The Besoco serpent handlers are not poor people. The interior of their church reflects the prosperity of the membership—plush pew cushions, attractive carpeting, wood paneling, bright red drapes, an electric organ and a good sound system. The membership is a working one—with a high percentage of mine company foremen, union miners, truck drivers and other workers.

Many of the members are related to each other. Many were brought up in the church. Brother Ray said he began handling snakes at age 14 or 15 and has never "known anything else." He emphasized that at the Besoco church no one under 18 is allowed to handle the snakes, however.

No one is required to handle the snakes. In fact, it is possible to belong to the Besoco church and never do it, although most members do. The snakes are kept away from those who do not participate and one member said, "We'd never force it on anyone."

"We don't hang salvation on it," said the preacher.

The Besoco church has much in common with other holiness churches and fellowships with churches which do not sanction snake handling. Preachers from other churches hold revivals with the Besoco church. And, for five years, the Besoco church went without any serpent handling at all.

When they do have serpents, it's in the summer and fall. The serpents they handle are mostly "mountain rattlers."

Brother Ray described the snakes they use: "We believe in wild rattlers. We don't believe in handling fish worms."

Church members capture their own snakes. Two particularly plentiful areas for snake hunting are in Babcock State Park on the cliffs facing the New River in Fayette County, and at Glen Fork in Wyoming County. Brother Ray keeps the snakes locked up near his house. Some snakes are used more than once and others not—depending on their health.

No one at the Besoco church has ever died from a snake bite. Some members have never been bitten. Others have. Bucky Woolwine of Meade was bitten 20 months ago by a black timber rattler, one of the most severe bites anyone at the church has ever suffered. He recovered and is currently working in the mines.

Sister Eva Tucker, 62, was bitten a year ago by a rattler. That was on a Friday night, recalled Brother Bill Spencer. By the next Monday morning Sister Eva was outside her house hanging clothes on the clothes line. The mother of 13 living children, Sister Eva has been bitten twice with 20 years between bites. Sister Mildred Mercer, one of the founding members, has never been bitten in 36 years, although once a snake did try to bite her. During one meeting, recalled Brother Ray, three members were bitten by a four-foot long rattler without any ill effects.

Brother Ray, 47, has been bitten four times. He was bitten in the temple two years ago by a rattlesnake. Bitten at 8:30 p.m. on a Saturday night, Brother Ray remembered that he came to church the next day. By Monday he had begun to recuperate. He won agreement from those sitting around him when he described the bites as painful.

The same commitment and devotion that leads them to follow their understanding of God's word so faithfully pervades church life. Members of the Church of Jesus don't believe in owning television sets. According to Brother Ray, television promotes violence and fornication. They don't smoke or chew tobacco. They abstain from alcoholic beverages and from soft drinks. Some older members don't drink coffee. And they don't go to ballgames. When they are moved by God to fast, they do so. Holiness women dress modestly in long skirts or dresses. They wear no gold, nor do they cut their hair. Such ascetism is hard to maintain in the modern world, and church leaders say they lose more members because of the high standards of holiness living than they do because of serpent handling.

Members of the Besoco church don't believe in divorce, although a marital problem recently caused some legal difficulties for them. The husband of a woman member attempted to seek custody of their two children in Raleigh

Brothers Ray Stewart, Butch White, Gary Blankenship, and Bill Spencer at Wednesday night worship.

County circuit court last year by claiming his wife was not a fit mother because of her church membership. Church members said the father claimed that serpent handling endangered the children's lives and that the church music was loud enough to damage their ears.

The court ruled in the young mother's favor. She said she felt her ability to mother had been called into question because of her religious beliefs. And, Brother Ray fears that the court case opened up all church affairs to legal scrutiny. "We definitely take care of our children," he said. Although the adults may believe in divine healing for themselves, they take their children to doctors. Serpent handling is not permitted to the young.

Like the Baptists, the Church of Jesus believes in baptism by total immersion in water. They baptize in "the name of Jesus" because they believe that Jesus is God in three manifestations. Like many fundamentalist churches they practice foot washing. They do not take communion or the Lord's Supper because, said one member, "when the spirit is within you, you are partaking."

Dedicated to the scripture, members quoted chapter and verse from the Bible when they explained any doctrine. In testimony and preaching, their speech was full of Biblical quotations as reference.

Church members talk freely about their beliefs, discussing them at length with visitors in their homes. But like other religious people they are most content when putting their beliefs into practice in actual worship services. This happens three times weekly at Besoco, on Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings. At a recent Wednesday service, the church music was happy music. "Every time I think about Jesus, I feel good!" They repeat and sing it, clapping and moving as Brother Ray plays the organ. There is a freewill offering collected in the front of the church.

Some people, said Brother Bill Spencer of East Gulf, "live to put a boat in the water." But for him and his holiness brothers and sisters happiness is going to church. They attend the three weekly services faithfully, and there's no doubt that they rejoice in their worship.

The services move with the spirit, perhaps with singing, clapping, testifying, preaching the word, or speaking in tongues. Speaking in tongues, preaches Brother Ray, is evidence of the Holy Ghost. "A lot of people fight us on that," he said, "but when we hear tongues we have to witness that the Lord is on the inside."

In church the children may sit quietly in their seats, sing with the music, or play away from the front of the church. Some mothers cuddle small children while other adults vibrate the floors with "I'll be Alright Someday."

Sister Patsy Taylor moves with the spirit.

Sister Violet may start singing the old hymn, "Just Over in Glory Land." Or there's a quiet "How Great Thou Art." The religious experience of the participants is personal and involved.

A brother speaks: "Get in the spirit. Quit sitting around. I feel the spirit. God's calling . . . I'm flyin' and I can't see . . . the spirit can see. I praise God! Get in the spirit of God. The only way is for this old man to die . . . Get in it . . . it's here . . . it won't make you take it . . . Pray for me, saints!"

A woman in black with long, straight dark brown hair stands and speaks without break . . . "I want to thank Jesus tonight. I praise him for the food

on the table, my home, my kids, and my health." Another woman thanks God for her mother and her mother-in-law.

A younger brother in the front speaks. He tells about accidentally running over his small daughter with his truck. She wasn't injured. "It's so simple," he testifies. "It's so simple we miss it. We miss the simplicity of the Gospel trying to get into something deep."

An older sister who sits on the platform stands and begins to testify: "We're not ashamed of the gospel tonight. I praise him because he's been my doctor for many years. God has been my healer. I've suffered two serpent bites. He's healed my body. When we need him, Brother Ray, he's right at our side." Many other members testify of God's healing powers in their lives.

The spirit moves another brother to speak: "People think we're crazy because we want to get excited about God! I get excited about the Word of God!" Pacing back and forth he tells how his employer threatened that if he got bitten again by a snake, he'd be fired. "God give it to me and no man can take it away!" Barely pausing, he continues to tell how he was bitten again and that he recovered. "Hallelujah! I want to get up and thank God for being here!"

"We're not some kind of religious fanatics," he testifies while moving back and forth up and down the aisle. "These signs will follow and they're going to follow the believers!"

Now Brother Ray comes to the pulpit. Discharged honorably from the army because he would "salute no man" (St. Luke 10:4) and because he refused to take medicine, Brother Ray guesses that the last time he had a pill was around 1949. A retired mine foreman with black lung disease, he was injured in a mine accident when a rock fell on him several years ago. He was taken to the hospital and X-rayed. The holiness preacher says he refused any treatment and signed himself out of the hospital—even though the doctor told him the ankle was broken. Holding up the ankle for examination, Brother Ray recounted that he was back again preaching on that same foot three weeks later. Members who refuse treatment are denied workman's compensation benefits for work time lost from their jobs.

Brother Ray is a forceful speaker. "The world knows us not, because they know him not." He tells the people that "holiness" is defined in the dictionary as "freedom from sin." And he adds, "I believe God's people can live above sin!"

He begins to preach about the world scene and tells them, "America needs healed tonight! If God don't get us back up, this nation will fall. We've got away from God!" He says there are devil worshippers in California. "Used to be a witch was put to death in this country—now we're sanctioning it!" He asks the congregation if they can call this a religious country. Hitting upon a recent incident where a male teacher was alledgedly discovered in sexual activities with a 14-year-old female student, he concludes, "This is not even a religious county!"

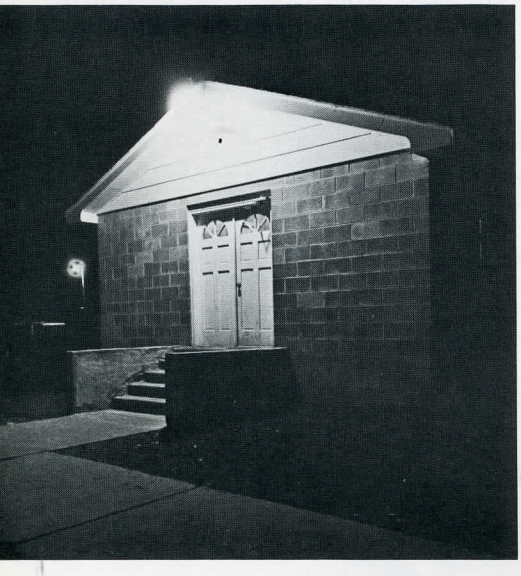
Brother Ray believes, as do many fundamentalist Christians, that the world is coming to an end. For him "God's time clock started ticking when Israel became a nation." He predicts fearful days ahead. Drawing from prophecies in the Bible, he believes current Mideast politics signal the

Sister Stewart, wife of the pastor, gives praise.

Brother Tom Puckett.

Apocalypse. The events of the day are pointing the way to the final battle between God and the forces of evil.

And that is why the saints of the Church of Jesus in Besoco are getting ready. That is why they are trying so hard. They believe there will be no real peace in the world until Jesus comes again. They want to go to heaven. Their understanding of signs in St. Mark assures them that they're on the right road.



Other Sources

The following books, articles, and films offer other views of the religious practice of serpent handling. The two films are available for borrowing from the West Virginia Library Commission, through local public libraries.

Karen W. Calden and Robert W. Pelton, *The Persecuted Prophets.* Cranberry, NJ: Barnes and Company, 1976.

Weston LaBarre, *They Shall Take Up Serpents.* New York: Schocken Books, 1969.

Nathan L. Gerrard, "The Serpent-Handling Religions of West Virginia," *Trans-action* (May, 1968), pp. 22-28. Fayette County snake handling, by a Morris Harvey College professor.

"Jolo Serpent Handlers," 28 minute color film. The Jolo, West Virginia, congregation.

"They Shall Take Up Serpents," 24 minute color film. Serpent handling in Boone County.

Taking Up Serpents

The Besoco Church of Jesus is an independent holiness church, unique in many specifics of belief and practice. Although the church has much in common with other holiness churches and with other serpent handling sects, it would be unfair to generalize about its theology and history. Care has been taken in the accompanying article to adhere to what members describe as the beliefs of their church, and to avoid projecting upon them doctrines which may be found in other churches. Nor would it be fair to project the beliefs and practices of the Besoco congregation upon other holiness churches—certainly few others practice serpent handling, for example.

Despite variation from church to church, however, there does appear to be a common thread of doctrines uniting a large number of holiness churches. Many have sprung from Methodist or Baptist backgrounds, and their staunch congregationalism is perhaps partly a rejection of the more structured organization of those mainstream churches. Certainly, most holiness churches work independently of any denominational organization, and a great variety of names is evident.

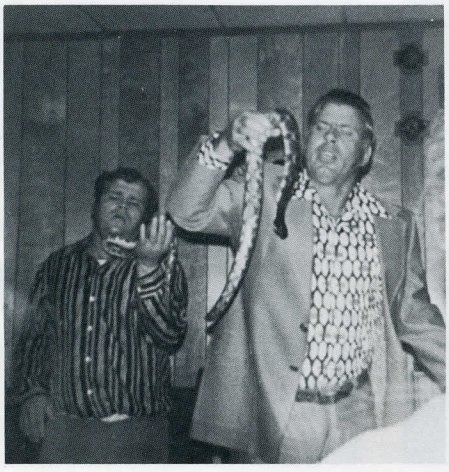
The holiness churches are primarily concerned with attaining perfection and holiness itself. Most of them believe in the trinity, original sin, salvation through Christ, the infallibility and divine nature of the scriptures, and the blessings of the Holy Spirit, including divine healing and speaking in tongues. Most are premillenarians, believing that the visible return of Christ will precede his reign of a thousand years on earth. There are usually two sacraments in the church—holy communion, or the Lord's Supper as it is commonly called, and baptism by immersion. Foot-washing is a common practice.

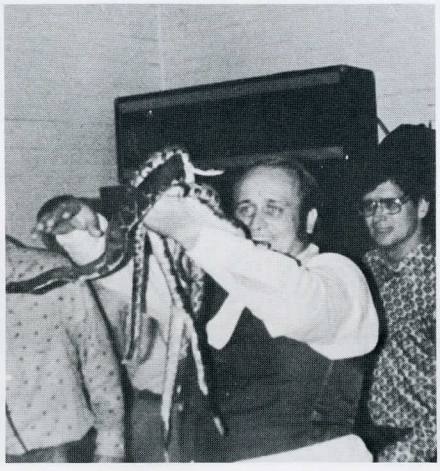
The emphasis on direct action of the Holy Spirit and the believers' personal interaction with the Spirit are at the heart of holiness religion. In the New Testament, after Christ has returned to Heaven, the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles like a "mighty rushing wind" at the celebration of the Jewish Pentecost (Acts 2:3). Holiness people seek to recapture this pentecostal experience. Individual sanctification, a belief common to many Christian churches, is attained when the believer is set free from sin and exhalted to the true holiness of life.

Serpent handling is a splinter movement within the larger holiness religion. Churches which honor the practice believe that God confers certain powers upon the believers—divine healing, speaking in tongues, drinking of deadly poisons, and casting out devils, as well as handling serpents. Some serpent handlers speak of the "annointing power" of God through the Holy Ghost. They say they are "annointed" to pick up serpents and that without this divine intervention, they would be bitten. The annointing feeling varies from person to person—a numbness of the hands, a tingling somewhere, a great calmness, an inner voice—but no matter what the manifestation, believers recognize it. The facial expression of those handling serpents point to the trance-like state induced by strong, intense emotions.

"God has moved the hedge back," it is said when a believer is bitten, drawing a descriptive metaphor from Ecclesiastes 10:8. Some say that when the serpent bites, it is because God ordained it. He might

intend the bite as a sign to nonbelievers to let them know that the snakes are dangerous, or, God may be disciplining a transgressor. One often-bitten snake handler in McDowell County avers that the bite itself is the evil work of the devil, but that God allows the devil to act through the snake. Whatever the reason, when a snake bites, the result is painful swelling, discoloration, and sometimes death. Herpetologists claim that the snakes' venom loses potency in captivity, but there is no doubt that bitten believers suffer great pain. However, in approximately 70 years of serpent handling by hundreds of people, there have been surprisingly few fatalities. Those who believe enough to take up serpents usually do not accept medical treatment, but resort to prayer and faith, believing that the same spirit which moved them to handle snakes can also heal them.





Left: Brother Ray Stewart (foreground) says of serpent handling, "I guarantee you if it (Bible) didn't say it, I wouldn't do it." Photo courtesy of Besoco Church of Jesus.

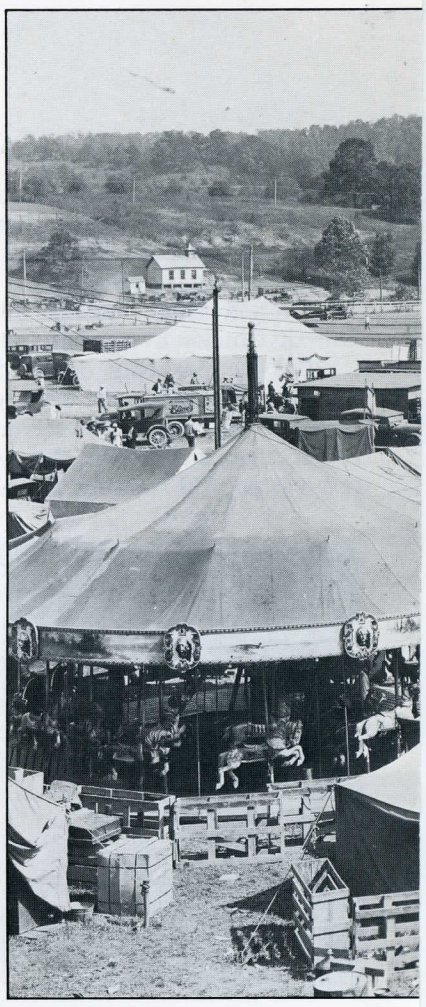
Right: Brother Bill Spencer of East Gulf handling serpents. Brother Gary Blankenship in background. Photo courtesy of Besoco Church of Jesus.

According to religious scholars, the practice of handling serpents is an ancient one whose origins precede Christianity. Probably the best known ancient snake handlers were initiates of the classical Greek mystery cults. In the history of human mythology, the serpent appears as a universal religious symbol. In Christian writings, the snake invariably appears as a representation of evil, beginning with Eve's temptation in the Garden of Eden.

The practice of handling serpents among some southern fundamentalists was begun by George Went Hensley of Grasshopper Valley, Tennessee, in 1909. Hensley traveled throughout the area, introducing the practice to nearby Kentucky at the East Pineville Church of God and at the Pine Mountain Church of God, both near Harlan. The first publicity came in 1938 when an irate husband of a church member brought suit against the Pine Mountain church. The members were acquitted, but snake handling was eventually to be outlawed in all Appalachian states except West Virginia.

Hensley left Tennessee, and the practice of serpent handling had by the early 1920s all but disappeared without his encouraging leadership. Hensley himself died in Florida at the age of 70, of snakebite. It was left to one of his converts, Raymond Hays, to revive Appalachian snake handling, which he did in 1943 at the Dolley Pond Church of God With Signs Following. This church in eastern Tennessee is sometimes referred to as the "mother church of snake handling," although the practice apparently spread to West Virginia by way of Harlan County, Kentucky.

In 1945, the snake handlers again came into the limelight with the death of a man during a Dolley Pond meeting. Around the same time, church members attempted to hold revival meetings in Chattanooga, and were arrested. The accompanying trial and publicity brought the prohibition of religious serpent handling by the Tennessee state legislature in 1947. Following years brought similar sensational publicity and persecution of believers. There were numerous jailings, confiscation of snakes, and trials. Nonetheless, traveling preachers and others spread the practice into most of the southern states and as far away as California. In 1955, nearly 4,000 people gathered for an outdoor meeting in Harlan, Kentucky, which was recorded by photographers for *Life* magazine. Controversy has continued to the present, and a 1973 court case against Carson Springs, Tennessee, church members brought the American Civil Liberties Union to the defense of two preachers.



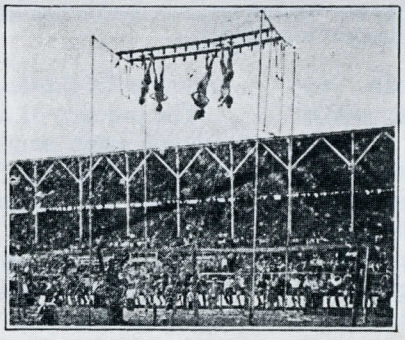
THE LATLIP FAMILY

Rosaline Madline Virginia Rita Marion Mary

After 3 Days Return to

209 Elm Street — Charleston, W. Va.

Capt. LATLIP, Gen. Mgr.



THE ONLY ACT OF ITS KIND IN THE WORLD

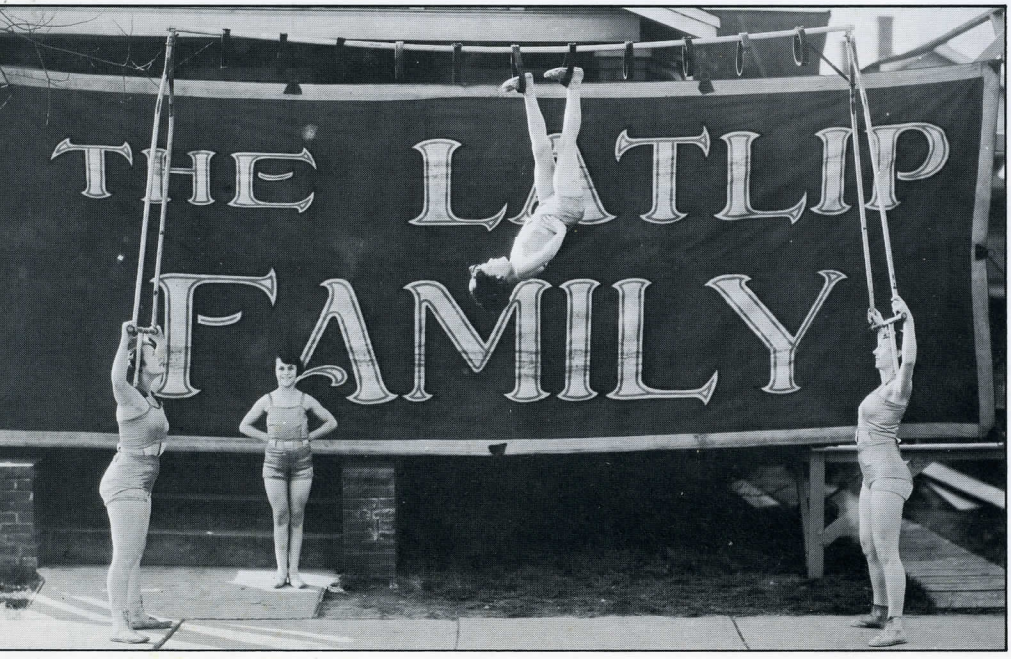
THE HUMAN DERBY

ALL GIRLS --- RACING UPSIDE DOWN

Far Left: The "Human Derby Race, Upside Down" was the Latlip daughters' feature act. Photographed at the West Virginia State Fair by an unknown photographer.

Below: The Latlip Midway.

Bottom: The Latlip daughters.



The Famous Latlips, Charleston's Premiere Show Family

By Louise Bing

IN the days before television, traveling shows toured the large and small towns of West Virginia and the nation. Burlesque shows, vaudeville, carnivals, magicians, acrobats, jugglers, and other acts would appear for a few days in a local theater or vacant lot, then pull up stakes for the next community. Show families spent the "season" on the road, but each claimed a home base somewhere along the tour, a place to start from and to return to. In the early 1900s, Charleston was home to one such act, the Latlip Family of acrobatic and diving fame.

The Latlip Family was founded by David Latlip, born in 1884 in Waterville, Maine. From the beginning, David had show business in his blood. When he was eight years old, he startled neighbors by diving from high rooftops into nets he made from potato bags. By the time he was a teenager, he was diving into nets from high ladders. At 27, Latlip set a world record for high diving by plunging 112 feet from a pole.

Latlip was of French-Canadian ancestry, and the original family name was Latulippe. He was born David Lewis Latulippe, but Americanized the name to Latlip. David early took for himself the show business title of "Captain." This was shortened to Cap, and for the rest of his life he was known as "Cap" Latlip.

Latlip wanted to be a showman and

Top Left: Virginia and Rita Latlip during the early days of their careers. Photographer unknown.

Above: Captain David Latlip. Photographer unknown.

Left: The early Latlip Family—Cap, Lady Marion, Baby Virginia, and Baby Rita. Photographer unknown.

Below: The Latlips at dinner with Governor Howard Mason Gore, late 1920's. The Governor is seated, with the twins in his lap, Rita to his right and Virginia to his left. Cap Latlip is standing, far left. The young women at the rear are beauty contestants.

he entered the business professionally with his own organization, Hall and Latlip Shows. The group traveled all over the eastern states, and into Canada as far as Nova Scotia. Because so much equipment was needed, to say nothing of horses, elephants, lions, and tigers, Latlip and partner Hall assembled 37 railway cars to transport their show. It was through Hall that Cap Latlip met and married Marion Hoyle of Boston, an expert acrobat, diver, and swimmer. The new bride became "Lady Marion" Latlip, and the family act was born.

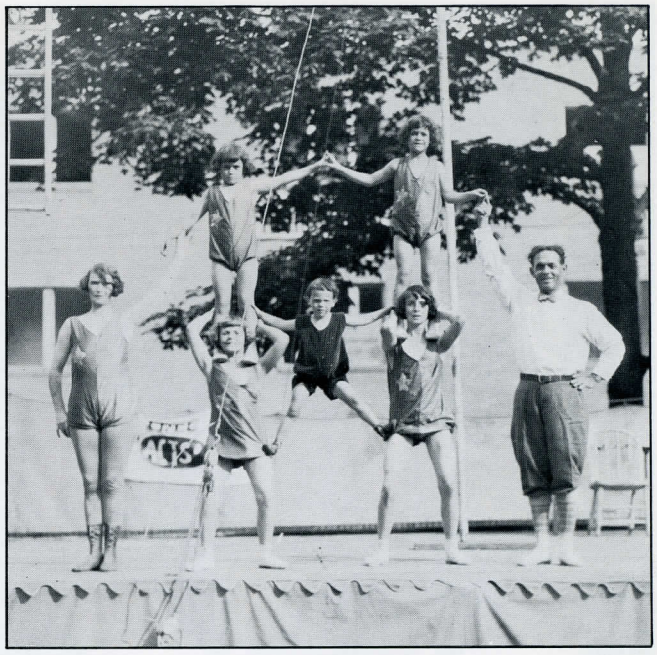
In 1913, disaster struck Hall and Latlip Shows in the form of a train wreck. Valuable equipment was lost, and several animals killed. Cap Latlip disposed of the circus train, and by other means hit the road with his new wife. They continued to tour the East, and the Latlip fame grew.

In 1914, a baby girl was born to the young couple. They named her Rita. When she was about three Cap began to train her for show business, teaching her to walk the high wires and to do acrobatic dancing.

About 1917, the Latlip family moved to West Virginia, settling in Charleston. The old Burlew Opera House on Capitol Street was active then, and Cap soon became stage manager. He also erected tents, merry-go-rounds, and ferris wheels to put on carnivals and outdoor shows. It appeared that the family had everything going its way, and the best was yet to come.

In Charleston, the Latlip family continued to grow. In 1918, another girl was born. They named her Virginia, but before long she was known as "Ginger." When she was about three years old Cap trained her, and she joined Rita before the crowds. Then in 1921, twin girls were born. They were named Roseline and Madeline, and as soon as they could toddle they joined the show.

On Reynolds Street, where the Civic Center now stands, Cap set up one of his most ambitious carnivals. Later it was moved to Luna Park, on Charleston's West Side, from there to South Charleston, St. Albans, Kanawha City, and finally to the Dunbar Fair Grounds. Thousands poured in to watch the trapeze acts, the high diving, high wire walking, and acrobatic dancing. They also rode the merry-go-round, ferris wheel, and ate hot dogs, as well as cotton candy, which was a Latlip specialty.



Lady Marion, Cap, and the Latlip daughters around 1930.

The Latlip family established a permanent home in Charleston, but eventually returned to the road during the summer season. By the late 1920s, Cap Latlip had assembled another large touring show, Latlip Attractions. According to a notice in the October 1927 *Big Eli News,* a trade publication put out by a ferris wheel manufacturer, the Latlip show featured several carnival rides, including a carousel, a "Merry Mix-Up" swing ride, and a No. 5 Big Eli ferris wheel. There were more than a dozen concessions, all owned by the family. The automobile age had arrived, and the show moved from town to town on three large trucks. As usual, the prime attraction continued to be the family's own performances, including acrobatics and trapeze acts. The five-year-old twins were now a regular part of the show, and a new daughter, Ida May, was in training at the age of two.

As time went by, the Latlip Family entertained in practically every community of any size in West Virginia. They traveled to most of the other states, and much of Canada, including the cities of Quebec, Montreal, Winnipeg, and Ottawa. In the winter they returned to the family home in Charleston, where they had a fully equipped 40-by-60 foot training gymnasium. During these off months they performed regularly in the Kearse Theater on Summers Street. Old timers who worked with Cap Latlip remember that he always had plenty of music in his indoor shows. Roy Rogers once played in Latlip's string band. Rogers, "The Singing Cowboy," was actually born in Cincinnati, and his real name was Leonard Slye.

With the birth of Ida May, there were five daughters in the Latlip Family. In some acts all five worked together. Their best known act was "The Human Derby Race, Upside Down." At the top of a high frame, loops hung from cross bars. Hanging by their feet, the girls walked upside down from one end of the frame to the other. None ever had a serious fall. Another of their acts, "One Good Turn Deserves Another," featured acrobatic dancing of a high order, with the girls throwing themselves back and forth over each others' heads.

From the time of World War I, the Latlips were nationally famous as one of the country's top acts. Once when Cap was running his show in Boston, motion picture pioneer D. W. Griffith filmed one of his silent movies on the Latlip Midway. Griffith brought Charlie Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, and Mary Pickford to the set with him. In 1916, *Billboard* featured a photo of Cap on the magazine cover, and sixteen years later ranked the Latlip

The Latlip Sisters vaudeville trio—Virginia and the twins. Photographer unknown.

Family as the most outstanding outdoor performing act in the nation.

Constant travel took its toll, and in 1935 tragedy struck the Latlip show again. During an engagement in Ohio, daughter Rita was killed in a family automobile accident. The death was a shock to the entire family, but it was not their end as entertainers. Virginia Latlip and her twin sisters formed a vaudeville trio, playing the Atlantic coast circuit from Miami northward to New England. During the Big Band era, the Latlip daughters performed with such famous bands as those of Benny Goodman, Shep Fields, and others. In New York, they played with Judy Garland for six weeks at the Palace Theater.

Cap Latlip never recovered from the blow of his oldest daughter's death, and he himself died a few years later, in 1943. "Lady Marion" Latlip followed her husband in 1963, and the couple is buried beside Rita in Sunset Memorial Cemetery in South Charleston. Today the second and third generations are scattered about the country, but several still live in the Charleston area.

Most important, for this family of entertainers, the connection with show business is still strong. Daughter Virginia, whose family occupies the Latlip home in Charleston, now follows the carnival circuit with her husband, William Picozzi. The Picozzis have a traveling food concession, offering candied apples, pop corn, and other snacks, including the old Latlip specialty, cotton candy. Like the Latlips before them, the Picozzis go on the road each spring, returning to Charleston in the late fall.

The third generation also serves the public. Connie Picozzi Dawson operates a dance studio on Lee Street in Charleston, offering professional instruction in tap, ballet, and other forms of dance. William R. Picozzi, Jr., recently opened a restaurant at the old Schrader's location on Charleston's West Side.

Virginia Latlip Picozzi Remembers

Early spring is normally the off-season for those following the carnival circuit, but Virginia Latlip Picozzi and her husband William made an exception for the Charleston Home Show in late March. When they set up their concession stand to serve the crowds at the Civic Center, GOLDENSEAL editor Ken Sullivan and photographer Jim Balow dropped by to see the Picozzis in action. As she helped sell cotton candy, Mrs. Picozzi offered her personal recollections of how the Latlips happened to end up in Charleston and of what 60 years of West Virginia life has been like for the famous show family.

In New England, my father had had a big 37 railroad car show, and when the train wrecked he decided to come to Charleston. In show business, every showman as a rule tries to look for what they call virgin territory. There were not too many shows, too much competition down in West Virginia.

I was born the first year, in the old Hatfield Building. That's one of the reasons they stayed here, because my mother was expecting me. Then the twins were born, on Summers Street where the old bus station is now. We had a house there; the governor lived behind us in his house. We all went to St. Anthony's and to Charleston Catholic High

Virginia Latlip Picozzi at work. Photograph by Jim Balow.

School.

Then my father started up his show again, after they settled for the insurance on the first show—you know how long it takes that from the railroad companies. He started out all over again. When we started up in West Virginia, my older sister Rita was the first one of us to perform in my father's show. My mother and father always were professionals, too, you know. My father was a high diver. And my mother was a fancy diver with Annette Kellerman, but she married my father and he made a net diver out of her. Papa was a hard worker all of his life. He made all his own nets that he dove in, and he never let us dive or fall in a net that he didn't make himself.

My father started training Rita and me. We started first on the trapeze; worked with them with the acrobatic act, and then the swinging ladder acts, and the double traps, and the loop-the-loops. Then the twins started getting their training. He always started us at two or three years old. And by the time they were four or five they were up on the trapeze. So then he put the four of us on one long bar of the trapeze—started that way.

Then we formed the "Human Derby Race, Upside Down." We were the only girls in the United States to do that type of act. We used to race upside down on the loops. We used to do two on one rigging and two on the other rigging. And at the end I'd race with one of the twins and my sister Rita would race with one of the twins. That was our feature, and we were voted—I'll do a little bragging here—we were voted the most outstanding act in show business.

My father played all the fairs in West Virginia. And every year we were always welcome back because everybody used to remember our free acts. We used to do a different act every night. One night we'd do an acrobatic act on the specially-built truck that he had built with a big platform on it. Another night maybe we'd do the swinging ladder or the double trapeze act, then another night we'd do the loop-the-loop. We played in West Virginia, Ohio, and Pennsylvania—but mostly West Virginia, because there were enough fairs to keep us here.

As we got older, the twins and I had what you call a trio. My older sister got killed in an automobile accident, and my other sister Ida May was a little bit too young to go on the road with us—she was still in school. We started out in vaudeville. And in the first two years we played all the circuit: Philadelphia, Baltimore, Newark, Miami, Jacksonville, Tampa, with our act. We came home two different summers with the show.

Then my father became quite ill, and had to go to the sanitarium. From all his diving, and everything, I imagine, he'd contracted TB. And of course it broke our hearts. So I came home and my mother and I leased the show out to other parties which played in different territory. And then us girls went back on the road and stayed in vaudeville. We played all the theaters. Worked six weeks with Judy Garland in New York, and we worked with all the name bands. We got word, when we were working in Worcester, Massachusetts, that my father had passed away. So we came home, and after we buried my father, we stayed home a few weeks in mourning for him, and then we went back in vaudeville.

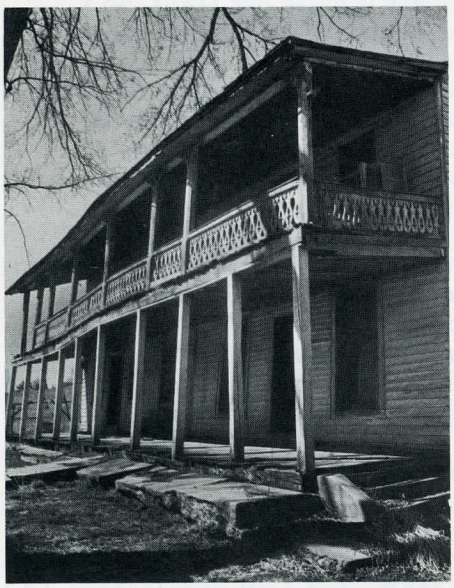
And then we came home and got married. Ida May was the first one married—the youngest one, and the first one married. I got married, and then my sister Roseline got married a year later. Then Madeline. I met my husband when I was in vaudeville in Cleveland. He saw my picture in the paper and decided he'd come to the club. It was a supper club in Cleveland, and it just happened that a girl that he had went to school with was dancing on the show, so she introduced us. But I didn't marry him until five years later.

We went back into show business, my husband and I, because I always had it in my blood. I never could get it out, you know. So we had a few rides at first, took our own show out, but it was a headache. Right after the war, we sold everything. Then we bought concessions, and a few rides. We kept a couple of rides, which we have now, and we have what you call confection trailers, that we go on the road with in the summer. We sell cotton candy, popcorn, candied apples, peanuts, caramel corn, snow cones, and drinks. And I really enjoy it.

Cabell County Poor Farm, 1853 to 1929

By Joe Cosco

Photographs by Jack Burnett



Over the hill to the poorhouse
I'm trudgin' my weary way—
I, a woman of seventy, and only a trifle gray—
I, who am smart and chipper, for all the years I've told,
As many another woman that's only half as old.

Over the hill to the poorhouse—
I can't make it quite clear!
Over the hill to the poorhouse—
it seems so horrid queer!
Many a step I've taken a-toilin' to and fro,
But this is a sort of journey I never thought to go.

—Will Carleton

LIKE the paupers it once sheltered, the old Cabell County Poor Farm has fallen on hard times. Once described as "one of the most palatial of the old-fashioned country homes still in existence," today the main farmhouse lies abandoned to age and the elements. It attracts as much notice in disrepair as it did the day it ceased serving the county's poor.

A newspaper account written by F. B. Lambert for the (Huntington) *Herald-Advertiser* on April 14, 1929, describes the closing of the poor farm:

"A few weeks ago, the newspapers carried a statement that the old Cabell County Poor Farm was being abandoned . . . It is doubtful whether this short news item attracted more than a passing notice, but behind it lies a story of absorbing interest.

"Perhaps the reason why this old poorhouse never attracted much attention is because it is situated off the main traveled roads, and is rarely seen by the average person passing through the county."

The house sits atop a gentle bluff off Tyler Creek Road in the McComas district just north of the Lincoln County line. The outbuildings that housed most of the paupers are long gone, but the spirit of the place survives in the main building which served as the master's quarters.

Framed by a lone towering elm, the dilapidated building now beckons the curious traveler, its allure stronger than the "No Trespassing" warnings tacked to the worn exterior. From its rusted-red metal roof to the precariously sloping second floor porch to the sturdy stone foundation, the building is a picture of age.

Most of the boards have been scraped gray by the sun and wind, but there are areas where the off-white paint clings to the wood, its cracked pattern like the underbelly of an alligator. Some of the windows wear a chicken wire veil. Off to the side of the two-story, 10-room house, there is a well. The pulley is rusted and the chain has no bucket.

Inside the house, all is dark and dusty. Gaping holes have been ripped through the linoleum, exposing the bare floor beams. The thick multi-layered wallpaper has peeled and hangs in stiff sheets, exposing the wall slats. The fireplaces have all been boarded. A tinny piano with the notes penciled on the keys sits in a corner. A 1975 calendar hangs on the wall. Stray shoes, assorted junk, and some old furniture are proof of recent tenants.

However, there are no visible clues to the building's almost 80 years as the main quarters of the Cabell County Poor Farm. The only reminder of that period is the field near the rear of the building, where, in summer, plots of grass, greener than the rest of the field, identify the unmarked pauper graves.

"My husband and I helped dig those graves," recalls 84-year-old Demma Morrison, who was born in the old house and now lives less than a mile away. Morrison and a niece currently own the property.

The history of the poor farm is in great measure the story of Morrison's family, the McKendrees. Morrison's grandfather, Aaron Flood McKendree,

The old Cabell County Poor Farm now stands solitary on its hillside above Tyler Creek Road.

became poor farm master in 1870 and with several short interruptions in tenure, he or his son George William, known as Uncle Bill, directed the life there until Uncle Bill, at age 71, had to give it up in 1929.

The McKendrees brought to the poor farm a firm administration and a stability and continuity it lacked in its early troubled years. The Lambert article speaks eloquently, if not completely factually, of the McKendree tenure: "Thus, most of the long period of three quarters of a century, this devoted family has mothered and fathered the poor and unfortunate of this county. It has been a life and sacrifice such as is rarely equaled."

The McKendrees' service, in fact, lasted almost 60 years.

The Early History

The early, pre-McKendree history of the poor farm is sketchily drawn in *Extracts from Cabell County Court Records from 1809 to 1863,* compiled by then County Clerk R. S. Douthat in the early 1930's.

First mention of a poor house comes in the spring of 1853, when seven commissioners were named by the court to "inquire upon what terms a good tract of land, not less than 100 acres, can be procured in Cabell County, for the purpose of erecting a poor house thereon, for the support of the poor of Cabell County." Later that year, a contract was closed for the purchase of Richard "Uncle Dickie" McCallister's farm on Tyler Creek.

The next year's *Extracts* are full of items concerning wills, citizenship applications and requests "to keep houses of public entertainment," but there is no apparent mention of the poor farm. However, in the records for that year, there are occasional references to allowances paid the Overseers of the Poor, elected officials who generally bound the paupers over to individuals offering the lowest bid for their keep.

Then in the spring of 1858, the Overseers of the Poor of the various districts recommended in a report that the poor farm property be sold. The court's objection is summarily reported in the *Extracts.*

We can assume that most of the paupers continued to be bound over to individuals, while a few were kept at the poor farm. As the *Cabell County Annals and Families* (1934) states it, "this poor farm continued as a county institution until some time during the Civil War, when the man in charge of it disposed of all the personal property thereon and the court had some difficulty in getting a settlement from him."

The man was Alexander McCleary, then steward of the poor farm. McCleary brought the poor farm back into the news, forcing a special meeting of the county Board of Supervisors.

The *Supervisors' Record of Cabell County,* also compiled by R. S. Douthat, tells the story. On July 24, 1865, notice was brought to the board "that

This cabin, once occupied by a black woman pauper, is the only surviving pauper residence at the poor farm.

the property belonging to the county, known as the Poor House Farm, together with the stock, grain, etc., on and belonging to said farm, are being squandered." Two commissioners were ordered to settle with McCleary and sell what remained of the property.

The accounting was for a three-year period. McCleary was credited $135.50 for caring for five paupers over a two-year period. The county claimed $710.25 from McCleary—$200 yearly for back rent, $2 each for five sheep, $100 for a horse, and 25 cents for a meal sieve. On paper, McCleary owed the county a balance of $574.75, but the case dragged on for four years before disappearing from the records.

After discovering McCleary's mismanagement, the board tried to do what the Overseers of the Poor had recommended more than a decade ago—sell the poor farm property.

However, unable to sell the property, the board at a special meeting in February of 1870 ordered the poor farm rented to the highest bidder under the following terms: " . . . bond and security required for the faithful performance of the duties to the paupers of this county to be kept at said poor farm, the renter of the said farm to keep the paupers by the month at so much per head and furnish suitable clothing and food."

On March 7, Aaron Flood McKendree, just the man the board needed, placed the highest rent bid ($135 per month) and the lowest bid for keeping the paupers ($6.25 per head per month). In addition, McKendree posted bond and security in the sum of $500.

For his three months of service as poor farm master, Aaron Flood McKendree was credited $75 for keeping four paupers three months and $14.56 for keeping two paupers two months and ten days. Deducting the quarter's rent, McKendree's allowance for the period was $55.81.

During that time other keepers of the poor were granted allowances by the board for either sheltering or building caskets for paupers. Then in 1871, when McKendree again won the bid (with a $20 reduction in rent), the board ordered that "all paupers (except soldiers of 1812 and wives) who are able to be moved shall be sent to the Poor House and the Overseers of the Poor of the several townships are hereby prohibited from letting out to the lowest bidder any of the paupers of this county." With his competition reduced, McKendree's quarterly balances increased. For the quarter ending December 1, 1871, he was paid $164.15.

Perhaps because he was the only bidder in 1872, McKendree was granted a five-year lease with rent at $100 per month. The master's monthly allowance per pauper was $8, with the master providing food, clothing, and shelter, and the county providing for medical needs. In addition, McKendree was obliged to build a fence around the property, clear the land and seed it. At the end of the five-year term, the farm was to have 75 acres sown with grass.

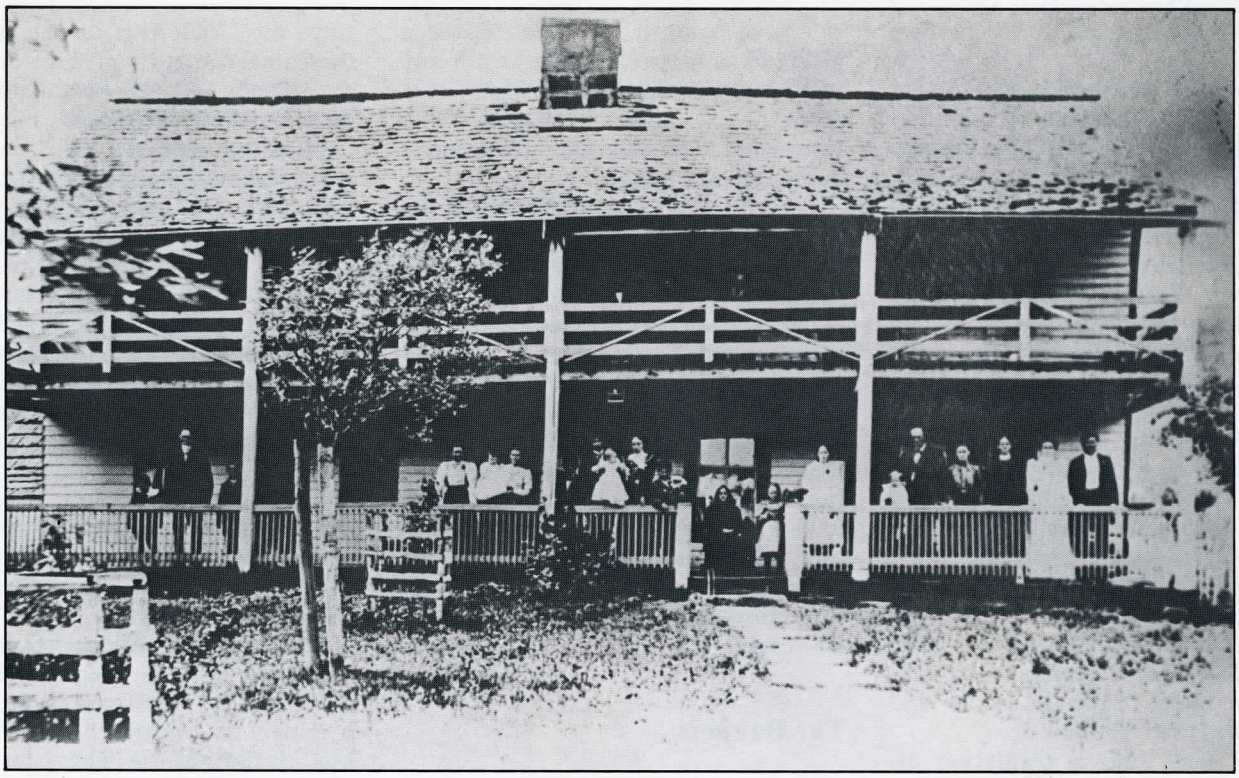
The McKendree Family

The McKendrees were a Virginia family. Aaron Flood (1805-1891) was born in Franklin County and moved to Cabell County in 1835. Before becoming master of the poor farm, he had formed a shoemaker partnership with James H. Ferguson, who later became the well-known attorney, Judge Ferguson.

George William "Uncle Bill" McKendree (1850-1931) took over the poor farm when his father died. Prior to that he had been a school teacher, an interesting fact in that he had started his own schooling at the late age of 15. Says Demma Morrison of her late father, "He said it was somewhat of an embarrassment to be going to school at that age."

Both Morrison and her daughter, Evelyn Paugh, describe George William as a lover of games—checkers, dominoes, and baseball—and a kind man. Lambert's newspaper account pictures George William as "a typical Virginia gentleman of the olden days" who always impressed one with his boundless hospitality. "If you came out to our house you had to eat before you left," Morrison adds. "Everybody liked him. I don't think that man had any enemies. He said it would hurt him to know he had any enemies."

George William's hospitality existed on a shoe-string budget. He received between $10 and $16 per pauper per



This 1901 photograph is of the McKendree family and relatives. Catherine McKendree, mother of George William and wife of Aaron Flood McKendree, is seated at center, and Demma McKendree Morrison is standing by her. Photographer unknown.

This 1915 photograph of George William "Uncle Bill" McKendree's family shows Demma McKendree Morrison at the left rear. Photographer unknown.

month for approximately 60 paupers during the poor farm's peak period. The farm itself was more self-sufficient than profitable, because as Lambert flatly states, "many of the inmates have been of low mentality, hence it has not been found profitable to work them on the farm."

Morrison says that while many of the paupers did their washing, ironing and cooking, most were unable to help maintain or provide for the farm. Those who did work on the farm were paid for their services.

Morrison adds that much of the food was either grown or raised on the farm. Five hogs were butchered every fall and the family made honey, apple butter, and ice cream. There was also a peach and apple orchard. Still, some food had to be bought. In addition, coal was hauled in by wagon from nearby Salt Rock, spring water was stored in tanks inside the house and carbide was used for lighting.

If the farm had a plantation atmosphere, especially on Sundays when visitors came and the Victrola was played, it was a plantation without a master. According to Lambert, "while we have spoken of Billy (George William) as master, neither he nor any of his charges ever thought of him that way . . . . Instead of master, they considered him and Mrs. McKendree as mother and father."

Evelyn Paugh says, "He treated the paupers like his own. That was his life—just to make a happy home for the people. He tried to make them happy and did what he could to keep them content."

Demma Morrison adds: "I know the paupers had plenty to eat and wear. It was comfortable or they wouldn't have liked it the way they did." She says she remembers one poor lady who was sent to live with her sister in Seattle. Not long after, the lady returned to the poor farm. And when the poor farm was closed, the paupers cried, Morrison says.

The Paupers

And what of the paupers themselves, those broken representatives from all walks of life?

The court records simply refer to them as "John Doe, a pauper." But these unfortunate men and women had real names and real personalities that have long been forgotten.

Morrison says she can't remember many individuals, although she remembers that they were old, young, and children. There was one lady of 21 who came to the poor farm "to rest." She never left. There were women and children deserted by the breadwinner. And there were two old men who said their sons had taken everything they owned. When they died at the farm, the sons came to retrieve the bodies for burial.

For character sketches of two paupers we must rely on Lambert, who chose as his subjects two quite colorful characters, both of whom were, aptly enough, schoolteachers.

First there was Michael Loller, who was said to have been a very good carpenter in his spare time. While helping to weatherboard Richard McCallister's house (what later became the poor house), he jokingly prophesied that he was building himself a room there. Lambert says of him, "Like Ichabod Crane, his favorite drink was whiskey, and he kept account of his pints by cutting notches on a board which he kept in his room at the house."

The second was Dangerfield Bryant, who in addition to being a schoolteacher was a teacher of singing and instrumental music. "It was said his fiddling was hard to beat," Lambert adds.

Both teachers ended up as cripples and both lie in unmarked graves behind the old poor farm. Of the other paupers, Lambert says, "They represented all classes of broken humanity—human wreckage—many from good families."

All found some measure of peace at the poor farm. When the place was closed in 1929, the 31 remaining paupers were moved to one of three places —the Everett farm in Ona, a county home east of Huntington, or the Huntington City Mission.

George William McKendree would have had it different. Asked by Lambert for his thoughts on providing for the paupers, he said he believed pauper families should not be kept at a poor farm, but rather with private families, to spare the children the future disgrace.

Robert Byrd, Mountain Fiddler

By Dave Wilbur

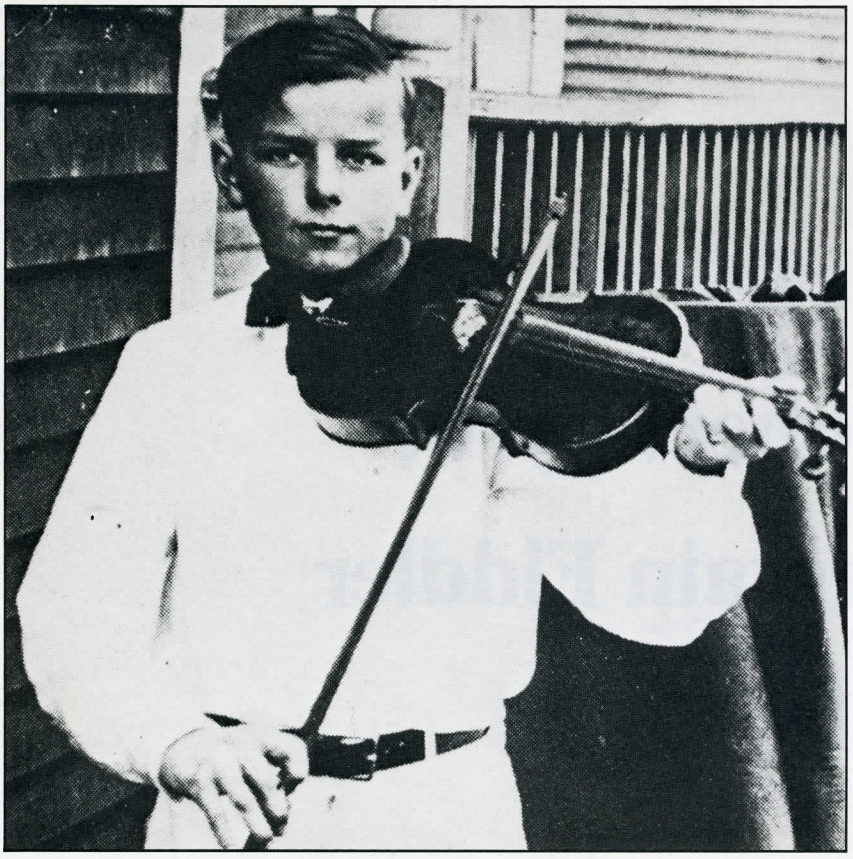
Photographs by Blanton Owen

The year, as Robert Byrd remembers it, was his tenth. It was a year for heroes like Charles Lindbergh and Babe Ruth. One of my musical heroes, Bill Monroe, was just starting his professional career in the mill towns of northern Indiana. A train rather than a car more likely than not got you in and out of the hollows of Raleigh County. There was no New Deal yet, no welfare state. John L. Lewis had been President of the United Mine Workers for seven years already. No doubt many fathers in those West Virginia coal towns spent their Sunday afternoons pitching baseball with their sons and pitched coal the rest of the week. It was the height of normalcy. The year was 1927 and that is when the persistent youngster who would become a U. S. Representative, Senator, and Senate Majority Leader prevailed upon his foster father to travel ten miles up to Beckley and get him a violin.

It was no small gift. Senator Byrd told me the violin, case, and bow cost somewhere between twenty and thirty dollars, more than most miners made in a week. Titus Byrd, himself a coal miner, must have been convinced that his son would stick with the fiddle once he had it.

There was plenty of reason to think young Robert would stick with the fiddle. Musicians were plentiful around the coal camp of Stotesbury where the Byrd family lived at the time. The man who one day would be his father-in-law inspired Byrd with his violin playing. Another fiddler, who was left-handed, played a version of "Old Joe Clark" that the young boy just had to learn. A banjo picker by the name of Dana Blevins was a prominent influence. There was also the wife of the principal at Mark Twain High School. "Mrs. Cormandy taught me classical violin from the 7th grade through the 12th grade at Mark Twain," the Senator remarked in a recent interview. "I played first violin in the school orchestra."

Though Mrs. Cormandy might not have approved of it, the first violinist in her orchestra kept right on listening to the local musicians and began to hear musicians who lived far from Stotesbury. "The Grand Ole Opry was our kind of Saturday night entertainment. I particularly recall it in the



Robert Byrd as a 12 year old fiddler. Photographer unknown.

Depression years, '33, '34, and I thought Arthur Smith was the best fiddler I ever heard." Through phonograph records, the teenage fiddler became acquainted with the most famous West Virginia fiddler of that era, Clark Kessinger.

Relatively few mountain musicians were professional in the 'thirties compared to the enormous numbers of so-called amateurs who entertained themselves and delighted those within earshot of their string music. Senator Byrd said he never dreamed of playing on the Grand Ole Opry or making a record in those days. In his formative years as a fiddler, he learned to play in the relative isolation and thorough directness of his Appalachian heritage. The boarders who stayed with his foster mother were mountain people from Tennessee, Virginia, and Kentucky. Songs like "Cumberland Gap" were learned by the young West Virginian from folks who came from that area. The traditions of learning the music directly and making your own music for entertainment or for use in worship were an integral part of the environment that Byrd grew up in.

As a young man, Robert Byrd worked hard as a butcher and, for a time, as a welder, before setting up a grocery store in Crab Orchard. His favorite recreation in the late 'thirties and early 'forties was to play at square dances. One of his foster mother's boarders, Ed Milsap, played the guitar, and a coal miner named Jess Childers got together with him on many a Saturday night to entertain at the dance halls of Raleigh County. My wife's mother remembers Byrd playing at a family reunion. At the time Mr. Byrd first entered politics in 1946 he was undoubtedly better known as a fiddler than as a politician among his future constituents.

As the course of that '46 campaign unfolded, being known as a fiddler turned out to be much more of a blessing than a liability. As the Senator now recalls it, "I had no connections then, no political ties through my family. In a field of 13 candidates for three Democratic nominations for the House of Delegates, I had to do something to become known." A Beckley lawyer, Opey Hedrick, is the person Byrd credits with suggesting to him that he use the fiddle in his campaign. "Now, Mr. Hedrick was a Republican but he convinced me nonetheless to take the fiddle wherever I spoke. He told me, 'Take that fiddle and make it your briefcase.' The idea was to play a tune, show people you were down-to-earth like them, give your speech and play some more."

A quick perusal of back copies of the *Raleigh Register,* the pro-Democrat Beckley daily paper, reveals what happened. When the Democratic Women's Club hosted a Candidates Night prior to the August primary, the sub-headline of the story read "Byrd Fiddles While Democrat Opponent Jigs." This opponent was one of the three incumbents Byrd beat out for the nomination a few days later. As the general election in November approached, a young Democrat named Hulett Smith organized a rally that included the top Democrats of that era, like Governor Meadows and Senator Kilgore. He also announced to the paper that entertainment at the rally would "feature the fiddling of Robert Byrd of Crab Orchard, candidate for House of Delegates, as well as 'Lost John' and his Allied Kentuckians." Numerous other, smaller rallies in that month of October, 1946, were headlined "Demos to Conduct Rally at Lester," "Demos to Conduct Rally at Rhodell." These were organized by candidate Byrd, and it was invariably stated that "the program will include string music under the direction of Byrd." Nothing distinguished the young politician from the rest of his opponents as much as identifying him as the fiddler. His ads in the *Register* highlighted it to the public: "Come and see this candidate who campaigns in the true style of the old-fashioned south with his trusty fiddle and the bow."

The fiddle and the bow are not new to American politics, and Robert Byrd would be the first to tell you. Thomas Jefferson played the instrument and once remarked to his friend, Nicholas Trist, "I suppose that during at least a dozen years of my life, I played no less that three hours a day." Jefferson is supposed to have played the fiddle on horseback, while making his rounds as a young lawyer in colonial Virginia. The *Dictionary of American Biography* states that Robert L. Taylor (1850-1912), former populist governor and

Byrd jams backstage with "Big Howdy" Forrester.

U. S. Senator from Tennessee, was known as 'Fiddlin' Bob' to his constituents for his prowess with the fiddle on the campaign trail. He also conducted a lyceum tour in 1895 with his lecture "The Fiddle and the Bow" and is said to have reaped $40,000 in seven months. Although depicted as "a shallow fiddler" by his political enemies, he was immensely popular with the common people and is credited with saving Tennessee from the excesses of the agrarian revolt in the 1890's.

Anyone who has heard Robert Byrd play a fiddle could not depict him as "a shallow fiddler." His style and repertoire abundantly demonstrate his depth as a musician. What is noteworthy in the story of Robert Byrd the fiddler, though, is that he went into some long periods of not playing his fiddle at all.

Following his successful campaign for the West Virginia House of Delegates in 1946, he continued using the fiddle until he won a seat in the U. S. House of Representatives in 1952. From 1953 until 1963, as he recalls it, he seldom played the fiddle because he seldom had the time. This was a period in which he forged his political career while doggedly pursuing a law degree at night, a degree which he finally earned in 1963 at the age of 45.

He picked the fiddle up again but did not play it with the intensity of interest he'd shown in his earlier years until about 1974 or '75. He found it to be a hobby that complemented the pressures and responsibilities of his duties on Capitol Hill. "It gave me a great release," he told me, "and gave me an outlet for my creative energies." Besides the pleasure of redeveloping a skill, he found playing was "tremendous therapy" and a political asset once again. "Any Senator who invites me to speak in their home state insists that I bring the fiddle along. People tap their feet in the North the same way they do in the South." Indeed, last June he quipped to a *Newsweek* reporter: "My colleagues have discovered they like my fiddling better than my speaking."

This resurgence of fiddling led to a solo recording session at the Library of Congress in December of 1977. Alan Jabbour, Director of the American Folklife Center in Washington, had arranged for these tapings and made a further suggestion to the Majority Leader that he consider making an album. Jabbour contacted record producer Barry Poss of North Carolina

Byrd performs on the Opry stage.

and let him hear the Library of Congress tapes. "Poss assured me he could get the right kind of musicians to back me up on an album," said the Senator. In mid-1978, Poss recruited Doyle Lawson and Jim Bailey from the prestigious bluegrass band, the Country Gentlemen, and Spider Gilliam, a Washington bass fiddler, to make the album with Senator Byrd. Released in October 1978 by County Records of Floyd, Virginia, one of the most distinguished companies in bluegrass and old-time music, "Mountain Fiddler—U. S. Senator Robert Byrd" has been doing brisk business ever since, particularly in West Virginia.

Robert Byrd's name, of course, is by no means a sales handicap, especially in the Mountain State. However, to cynics who scoff that "Mountain Fiddler" was made only because a prominent person wanted to do it, it should be said that this album fully justifies Mr. Jabbour's and Mr. Poss' contention that the Senator fiddles well enough to be recorded. Bluegrass giant and banjoist J. D. Crowe once remarked to me that "all too many bluegrass records are being made these days, and there's many that don't merit being made." Unfortunately, that's true, but whether Bob Byrd was still a grocer in Crab Orchard rather than where he is now, his first album of bluegrass music would be enjoyable listening. It is distinguished by the energy and style of his fiddle playing and the authentic lyrics of the songs he learned fifty years ago.

The Senator told me he would like to broaden his repertoire, especially in traditional (as opposed to "Progressive") bluegrass, and in Scottish tunes. Recently he received an album from Scottish fiddle champion Ron Gonala and is attempting to learn the tunes by his own unique method. He says he listens to the tune, then transcribes it in his own tablature on paper, practices it until he can throw the paper away and play by ear. The Scottish tunes appeal to him because they constitute the origins of much of the Appalachian music he learned as a boy. "They have a plaintive, haunting tone that just follows you," he remarked.

There are always new worlds to conquer in the live playing of his music as well. After numerous performances at political rallies over the past few years, Byrd went to Nashville on March 3, 1979 for, as he puts it, "one of the most enjoyable times in my life." It wasn't just playing on the Grand Ole Opry show that he enjoyed

Roy Acuff welcomes Robert Byrd to the Grand Ole Opry, March 3, 1979.

so much. Meeting Roy Acuff and Howdy Forrester and jamming with the greats of country music backstage was a lot of fun, too. "I don't know how many times I heard Roy Acuff sing 'The Great Speckled Bird' when I was a young man," he said. He mentioned that Acuff felt the Opry hasn't had, in recent years, the kind of old-time fiddling that Robert Byrd does, the music that helped make the Opry the popular institution it is today. The Senator expressed his own concern that the Opry may be getting away from its unique role in our culture.

I'm not so sure. If the Opry would invite more guests like Robert Byrd, people whose roots verify their authenticity as musicians, it might again strike a musical chord in the American people. Even though our participation in Senator Byrd's Opry performance came through the electronic media of radio and television, the point of his performance was to reinforce an invaluable folk tradition: you don't have to be a "professional" to make your own music, nor do you necessarily have to turn to the professionals to gain pleasure from music. No *real* fan of bluegrass music just sits and listens to other people doing it. It was clear that night that there has always been something worthwhile to Senator Byrd in playing "Will the Circle be Unbroken" simply for the pleasure it brings him. That it also brought pleasure to millions of others is relevant only in connection with keeping alive the idea that a folk art like fiddling is an art that is still made by the folk as well as by professionals.

Most Americans know Robert Byrd as the distinguished Majority Leader of the United States Senate. But those who have had the opportunity to hear him play and sing know that he is also a distinguished musician. On this record for the first time he shares that art with a wider public.

Senator Byrd's music is part and parcel of the cultural landscape in the West Virginia countryside where he grew up. Thus, though he is self-taught, it must be added that he had many models to emulate. Chief among them was the late Clark Kessinger, whose early 78-rpm records of West Virginia fiddle tunes inspired the young Robert Byrd. The same community of appreciation for old-time country music in the state made it possible for Senator Byrd to play and sing at homecomings, public gatherings, and on the campaign trail throughout his career. His music, in short, touches a deep responsive chord in his fellow West Virginians.

The selections on this record are all "country music," but they represent different categories and different sources. There are the classic fiddle tunes of the old frontier, well represented by "Forked Deer," and "Durang's Hornpipe"; the frolic tunes with playful verses, like "Cripple Creek" and "Cumberland Gap," which resonate with the spirit and energy of the Southern Uplands; the traditional lyric songs like "Roving Gambler" and "There's More Pretty Girls Than One"; the modern country pieces like "Come Sundown She'll be Gone"; and the hymns and gospel songs like "Will The Circle Be Unbroken."

All these songs and tunes constitute an art that evokes the traditional life of the American countryside. It is a tribute to Robert Byrd that he has continued to treasure and preserve that art, and a tribute to the art itself that it has proved so well worth preserving.

Alan Jabbour
Director, American Folklife Center
From the Album Cover

Doyle Lawson, Spider Gilliam, Senator Byrd, and Jones Bailey at the 1978 Democratic Congressional Dinner. Photo by Carl Fleischhauer.

McDowell Countians, 1979

Student Photography from Big Creek High School

Photography classes began at Big Creek High School in War, McDowell County, several years ago under a photographer in residence grant from the West Virginia Arts and Humanities Commission. State aid was provided until the current academic year, when the county school system decided to continue the program entirely with local funds.

Doug Yarrow, this year's photographer in residence, says that Big Creek students "learn basic camera operation and darkroom technique and then use these skills to explore their world through picture taking and picture making." Yarrow teaches six photography classes daily, and has a waiting list of students wishing to enter the program. New student work is displayed each week at the school.

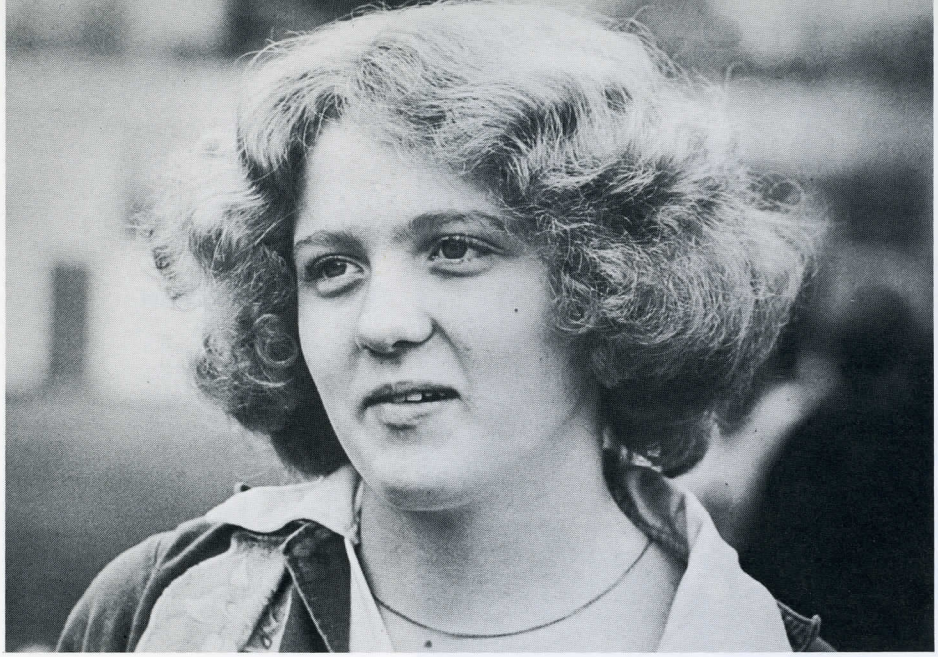
Big Creek students are encouraged to record the full daily variety of school, home, and community life, but—as the accompanying pictures demonstrate—seem to do their best work in photographing themselves and their friends.

Photograph by Kenneth Billings.

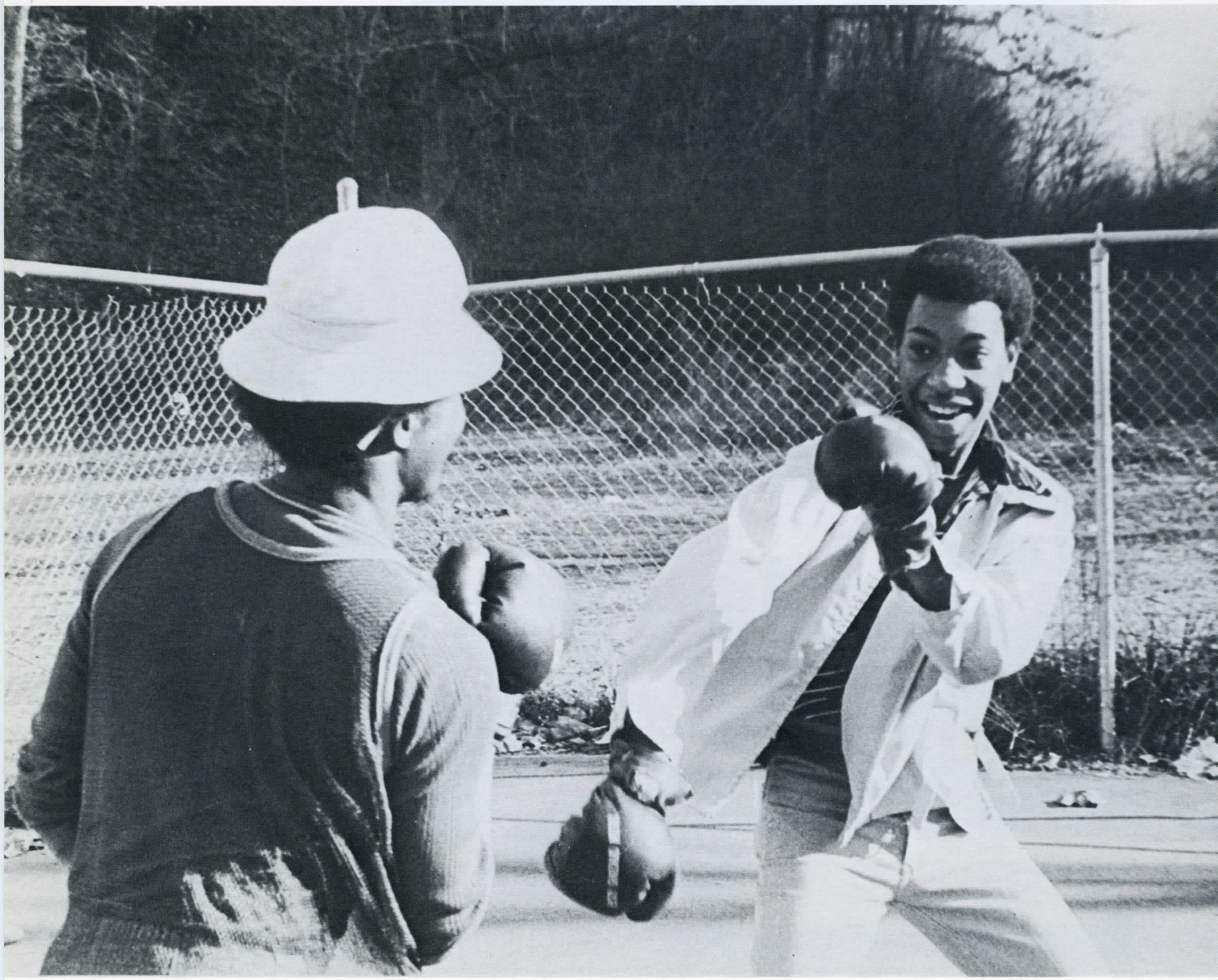
Photograph by Joyce Young.

Photograph by Judy Baker.

Photograph by Debbie Lundy.

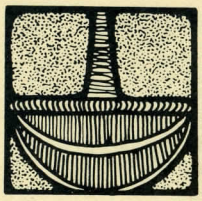
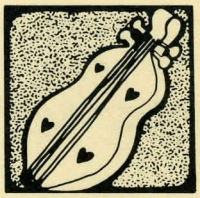
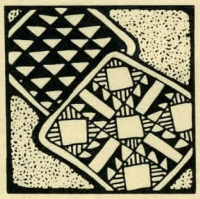
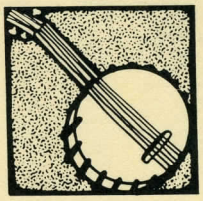
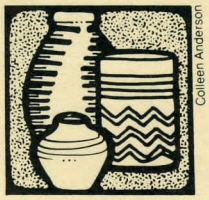


Photograph by Joe Estep.



Photograph by Mark Lambright.

Summer Craft and Music Events in West Virginia






Colleen Anderson

May 18-20	Mountain Grass '79 (Aunt Minnie's Farm)	Stumptown
May 25-27	Early Bird Bluegrass Festival (Cox's Field)	Walker
May 26-28	Vandalia Gathering	Charleston (State Capitol)
May 27	Webster County Woodchopping Festival	Webster Springs
May 30-June 3	West Virginia Strawberry Festival	Buckhannon
May 31-June 3	Memorial Day Celebration (North Bend State Park)	Cairo
June 2-3	Mountaineer Open Horseshoe Tournament	Ronceverte
June 3	Rhododendron State Outdoor Art and Craft Festival	Charleston (State Capitol)
June 7-9	4th Annual Skyline Bluegrass Festival (Blake's Farm)	Ronceverte
June 8-10	Mountain Heritage Arts and Crafts Festival	Harpers Ferry
June 9-10	26th Annual Craft Festival (Wheeling Park)	Wheeling
June 9-10	2nd Annual Bluegrass Festival (Bunner Ridge Recreation Area)	Fairmont
June 15-17	Monroe County Arts & Crafts Fair	Peterstown
June 15-17	Wild 'n Wonderful West Virginia Weekend (North Bend State Park)	Cairo
June 19-23	Arts & Crafts Show (Grand Central Mall)	Parkersburg
June 23-Sept. 2	"Hatfields & McCoys" and "Honey in the Rock," outdoor musical dramas (Cliffside Amphitheatre, Grandview State Park)	Beckley
June 29-July 4	July 4th Celebration (North Bend State Park)	Cairo
June 30-July 4	Independence Day Celebration (Fort New Salem)	Salem
June 30-July 4	Mountain State Art & Craft Fair (Cedar Lakes)	Ripley
July 1-4	July Jamboree (City Park)	Fayetteville
July 2-7	Lions Club 4th of July Celebration	Sistersville
July 2-Aug. 4	Augusta Heritage Arts Workshop (Davis & Elkins College)	Elkins
July 4	4th of July Celebration	Helvetia
July 4	4th of July Celebration (Oakes Field)	South Charleston
July 4	Charleston 4th of July Celebration	Charleston
July 4	Franklin Firemen's 4th of July Celebration	Franklin
July 4	Independence Day Celebration	Weston
July 4	Keyser Kiwanis 4th of July Celebration	Keyser
July 4	Mountaineer Days	Thomas
July 4	Wellsburg 4th of July Celebration	Wellsburg
July 13-15	Pioneer Days	Marlinton
July 14-15	Wood County Open Horseshoe Tournament (City Park)	Parkersburg
July 20-22	Chatauqua Tent Ceremony (Pearl S. Buck Birthplace Foundation)	Hillsboro
July 20-22	Quilt Show (North Bend State Park)	Cairo
July 20-22	14th Annual Appalachian Folk Festival (Appalachian South Folklife Center)	Pipestem
July 21-22	Moundsville Open Horseshoe Tournament	Moundsville
July 27-28	9th Huntington Square Dance and Festival (Marshall University)	Huntington
July 27-29	6th Annual Pocahontas County Mountain Music & Bluegrass Festival	Huntersville
July 27-29	7th Annual Bluefield Old Time and Bluegrass Fiddlers Convention (New Glenwood Park)	Princeton
July 30-Aug. 4	Jackson County Junior Fair (County Farm)	Cottageville
July 30-Aug. 4	Magnolia Fair with string music (Surosa Ball Park)	Matewan
Aug. 2-5, & 9-12	"The Aracoma Story," dramatic presentation (Chief Logan State Park Amphitheatre)	Logan
Aug. 3-4	Augusta Mountain Music and Crafts Festival (Davis & Elkins College)	Elkins
Aug. 3-5	"Devil's Grease," a tribute to oil and gas production (North Bend State Park)	Cairo
Aug. 6-12	Tyler County Fair	Middlebourne
Aug. 7-11	Mason County Fair	Point Pleasant
Aug. 8-11	Wirt County Fair (Camp Barbe)	Elizabeth
Aug. 8-12	Cherry River Festival	Richwood
Aug. 9-11	Doddridge County Fair	West Union
Aug. 10-12	Mountain State Bluegrass Festival (Mountain State Park)	Webster Springs
Aug. 10-12	7th Annual Logan County Arts & Crafts (Logan Memorial Field House)	Logan
Aug. 10-12	West Virginia Square & Round (Salem College)	Salem
Aug. 11, 15-19	Town & Country Days (Wetzel County 4-H Camp)	New Martinsville
Aug. 13-18	Mineral County Fair	Fort Ashby
Aug. 14-18	20th Annual Winfield District Fair (Bunner Ridge)	Fairmont
Aug. 14-18	Tri-County Fair	Petersburg
Aug. 17-19	Ohio River Festival (Ravenswood Riverfront Park)	Ravenswood
Aug. 17-19	Potomac Highland Bluegrass Festival (Potomac Highland Park)	Moorefield
Aug. 17-19	Squaredance Festival (North Bend State Park)	Cairo
Aug. 18-25	State Fair of West Virginia	Fairlea
Aug. 20-25	Hampshire County Fair	Augusta
Aug. 21-25	Mannington District Fair	Mannington
Aug. 24-26	West Virginia Bluegrass Festival (Cox's Field)	Walker
Aug. 25	Sternwheel Regatta	Charleston
Aug. 27-Sept. 1	Jefferson County Fair	Charles Town
Aug. 27-Sept. 1	Nicholas County Fair (Memorial Park)	Summersville
Aug. 28-Sept. 1	Barbour County Fair	Philippi
Aug. 31-Sept. 2	Stonewall Jackson Arts & Crafts Jubilee (Jackson's Mill)	Weston
Aug. 31-Sept. 3	Heaven '79 Bluegrass Music Festival (Aunt Minnie's Farm)	Stumptown
Aug. 31-Sept. 3	Appalachian Arts & Crafts Festival	Beckley
Aug. 31-Sept. 3	Paden City Labor Day Celebration	Paden City
Sept. 1-2	John Henry Festival	Pence Springs
Sept. 1-3	Labor Day Weekend (Heritage Village)	Huntington
Sept. 1-3	West Virginia State Horseshoe Pitching Contest (Lake Riley)	Weston
Sept. 2	Roane County Homecoming	Gandeeville
Sept. 1-3	Lincoln County Tobacco Fair	Hamlin
Sept. 7	Rhododendron Sternwheel Regatta Art & Craft (Capitol Street)	Charleston
Sept. 8	Putnam County Homecoming (Courthouse lawn)	Winfield
Sept. 8-9	Helvetia Community Fair	Helvetia
Sept. 9-15	Tucker County Fair and Firemen's Homecoming	Parsons
Sept. 10-15	Heritage Weekend & King Coal Festival	Williamson
Sept. 12-15	West Virginia Harvest Festival	Grafton
Sept. 13-16	West Virginia Oil & Gas Festival	Sistersville
Sept. 14-16	Treasure Mountain Festival	Franklin
Sept. 15-16	17th Annual Harvest Moon Festival (City Park)	Parkersburg
Sept. 21	Hot Licks & Vanilla, Music of the 30s & 40s (Marshall University)	Huntington
Sept. 27-29	West Virginia Molasses Festival (West Fork Community Park)	Arnoldsburg
Sept. 27-30	Preston County Buckwheat Festival	Kingwood
Sept. 28-30	Golden Delicious Festival with string music (Bradley Field)	Clay
Sept. 28-30	Hardy County Heritage Weekend	Moorefield
Sept. 28-30	"Through the Looking Glass" Glass Industry Weekend (North Bend State Park)	Cairo

Films on West Virginia and Appalachia

The rich history and culture of West Virginia and the larger Appalachian region is of growing interest to natives and "outsiders" alike. The mountain experience is regularly interpreted by GOLDENSEAL and other magazines, and lately has attracted the attention of professional filmmakers. The work of these artists brings an immediacy and intensity to the subject that is hard to match in print.

The number of Appalachian films grows regularly. Steve Fesenmaier, head of film services for the West Virginia Library Commission, keeps abreast of new releases and compiled the following filmography for GOLDENSEAL. Fesenmaier notes that many of these films have West Virginia locales, and that all of them may be borrowed through county public libraries anywhere in the state.

Appalachian Genesis
30 minutes Color
1971 Appalshop

Presents Appalachian youth discussing coal mining, the educational system, job opportunities, recreation, health facilities, politics, and poverty.

Appalachian Spring
31 minutes B & W
1973 Phoenix

Themes of youth and joy, ritual and religion, and the love of a man and woman are presented through Martha Graham's interpretation in dance and Aaron Copeland's music.

Appalachian Trail
30 minutes Color
1968 Walter J. Klein

Shows the 2000 mile hiking path up the backbone of the United States. Includes winter trail sequences, unusual aerial shots, and historic scenes of the changes the trail has gone through.

Appalachian Woodcrafters
15 minutes Color
1970 Walter J. Klein

Visits the Southern Highland Handicraft Guild to see the great woodcrafters at work. The experts show how they make clocks, furniture, musical instruments, lamps, and carvings.

Before the Mountain was Moved
58 minutes Color
1971 McGraw-Hill

Shows the determined efforts of one coal miner to save the mountains of Raleigh County from the "strippers." Demonstrates how he succeeded in obtaining strong state legislation in the name of environmental conservation.

Brush Creek Bounces Back
22 minutes Color
1970 Stu Finley

Shows the results of the Brush Creek Water Shed project—filmed in West Virginia near Princeton.

Buffalo Creek 1972: An Act of God?
30 minutes B & W
No date Appalshop

Covers the destruction and clean-up following the Buffalo Creek flood, interviews with survivors, the people's hearing, wildcat strikes in Logan County mines, the demonstration at the Pittston Coal Company stockholders meeting, and an interview with the president of Pittston.

Catfish, Man of the Woods
25 minutes Color
1974 Appalshop

Portrait of Clarence Gray, a fifth generation herb doctor who collects and sells a mixture of roots and herbs called "bitters" for all types of ailments. Discusses his philosophy of life including straightforward comments on his views about sex, religion, and the way of the woods.

Chairmaker
20 minutes Color
1974 Appalshop

Presents the craft of Dewey Thompson, an eighty year old chairmaker who does everything by hand including chopping down the tree. Presents his simple yet interesting lifestyle.

Coal Miner: Frank Jackson
12 minutes B & W
1971 Appalshop

Illustrates what it is like to have spent your life working in the coal mines. Frank Jackson discusses coal mining today and in other times, with scenes in and around the mines.

An Echo of Anger
53 minutes Color
1974 Xerox

Shows the struggle between strip miners and individuals opposed to this method of mining. Filmed in Appalachia, it includes interviews with local politicians, spokesmen for coal companies, ecology group members, and individuals who have suffered personal losses by this mining method.

The Feathered Warrior
20 minutes Color
1973 Appalshop

Shows the illegal sport of game cock fighting. Emphasizes by slow motion close-up sequences the sweeping motion of the birds as each tries to cut to victory. Some people may find cock fighting objectionable and/or inhumane.

Fixin' to Tell About Jack
25 minutes Color
1974 Appalshop

Presents Ray Hicks, a mountain farmer who is master of the art of storytelling, as he tells his folk or "Jack Tales" to a group of children. Each "Jack Tale" contains specific details and histories that have been passed on from generation to generation.

Foxfire
21 minutes Color
1974 McGraw-Hill

Explores the techniques of recording oral history, writing, designing, and running of the magazine "Foxfire," which covers the lore, legends, and crafts of the Appalachian folk heritage. Recorded by a group of high school students in Georgia.

High Lonesome Sound
30 minutes B & W
1963 MacMillan

Demonstrates that the people of eastern Kentucky sing gospel and folk music as a way to maintain tradition and dignity. Emphasizes the hard times of an area where farming land has worn out and men have been replaced by machinery in the mines.

Hiking the Appalachian Trail
30 minutes Color
1975 Walter Klein

Shows the popular hiking trail which runs 2,000 miles up eastern America while demonstrating correct backpacking techniques. Includes historic coverage of the area as the hikers walk it.

In the Good Old Fashioned Way
30 minutes Color
1973 Appalshop

Shows the spirit and faith of the people of the Old Regular Baptist Church, the oldest and one of the most unique churches in the mountains. Explains that religion, which has a tremendous impact on the members' lives, is uniquely a product of the Appalachian culture.

In Ya Blood
20 minutes B & W
1971 Appalshop

Follows Randy, an Appalachian youth, as he makes the difficult decision as to whether to leave his home and go to college or to stay in Appalachia and become a coal miner.

Judge Wooten and the Coon-on-a-log
10 minutes B & W
1970 Appalshop

Portrays Leslie Co. Kentucky's Judge George Wooten in the Fourth of July coon-on-a-log contest. He discusses subjects ranging from tourism to moonshine.

The Kingdom Come School
20 minutes Color
1973 Appalshop

Shows the 22 students and their teacher as they work and play together during a typical day at the Kingdom Come School in Eastern Kentucky. Demonstrates that the contemporary teaching methods employed by the teacher and the enthusiastic attitude of the pupils have helped the one-room school survive the threat of consolidation.

Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Coal
53 minutes Color
1974 Xerox

This film shows that although West Virginia has an enormous wealth in coal, its health services, education, housing and quality of life are all substandard. Explores the role that coal companies play in this economic imbalance.

The Millstone Sewing Center
10 minutes Color
1972 Appalshop

Shows the Millstone Sewing Center in which elderly, widowed seamstresses use a combination of Salvation Army castoffs, food stamps, and OEO funds to organize a community center and sew clothes for needy children in the community. Emphasizes the relationship between generations in an Appalachian community.

Morgan Sorghum
12 minutes Color
1974 Appalshop

Covers three craftsmen that were featured at the Morgan County, Kentucky, Sorghum Festival—a knife maker, a broom maker, and a woman who spins her own yarn on a spinning wheel.

Mountain Farmer
8 minutes B & W
1974 Appalshop

A tribute to a true mountaineer—a strong, independent man who finds joy in his work and harmony with the land. Shows him tilling the soil with his horse and wooden plow and using methods barely different from his ancestors.

The Mountain People
24 minutes Color
No date Wombat

Includes interviews with Appalachian mountain dwellers, describing their desolate situations. The narrator is a man working with them to improve their standard of living.

Music Fair
10 minutes Color
1972 Appalshop

Shows the first annual Appalachian People's Music Fair at High Knob, Virginia. Presents five of the musical numbers performed there that range from folk to jug band, bluegrass in between.

Nature's Way
20 minutes Color
1974 Appalshop

Shows several mountaineers as they explain their cures and remedies for ailments using herbs, home remedies and Indian folklore. Also includes a midwife as she assists in the delivery of twins. Note: Some segments may not be suitable for younger age levels.

Nimrod Workman: To Fit My Own Category
35 minutes B & W
1975 Appalshop

Shows 78-year-old Nimrod Workman, a retired coal miner and singer who writes and performs songs and traditional ballads. He reminisces about life as a miner and sings traditional Appalachian songs.

North American Regions: The Appalachian Highlands
14 minutes Color
1967 Coronet

Explores the Appalachian Highlands which stretch from northeastern Canada to southern Alabama, characterized by an extensive mountain system, flowing waters, and large and small valleys. Gives insight into traditional uses of the region, light manufacturing, cash crop farming, and mining, which did not utilize its full potential compared with present uses, conservation, public work projects, and new industries.

Pioneer Journey Across the Appalachians
14 minutes Color and B & W
1956 Coronet

Presenting the Appalachians as a barrier to westward movement, this film shows a North Carolina family's journey across the mountains before the Revolutionary War. Discusses why the settlers moved West, how they traveled, and other concepts underlying the movement.

The Ramsey Trade Fair
20 minutes Color
1974 Appalshop

Presents a close look at the art of trading and at the traders themselves. Shows that the Ramsey Trade Fair is more of a social event than a business venture, with music and preaching and people coming to meet each other.

Red, White and Bluegrass
27 minutes Color
1974 Time-Life

This documentary concerns the heartland of America and its bluegrass music. Includes famous singers of bluegrass music—The Little Family of North Carolina, Lost John, the Bushy Mountain Boys and the Gritty Band.

Report on C. O. R. A.
30 minutes Color
No date National Council of Churches of Christ (BFC Films)

The Commission on Religion in Appalachia (C.O.R.A.) is a combination of religions and activist groups that are bringing a multifaceted ministry to Appalachian people. This film shows its activities to help the people in one West Virginia community where residents lacked knowledge of welfare rights and were victims of the strip mining system.

Stripmining in Appalachia
25 minutes B & W
1973 Appalshop

Shows the beauty of the mountains, the humanity of the people, and the attitudes of strip mine operators. A local biologist with the aid of aerial photography explains what strip mining does to the land.

The Struggle of Coon Branch Mountain (McDowell County)
13 minutes B & W
1972 Appalshop

Presents one community's fight for better roads and schools through their first community meeting, a march on the governor's office, to a partial victory and determination to continue their struggle.

They Shall Take Up Serpents
24 minutes Color
1973 Films, Inc.

Follows the fundamentalist religions in rural areas of our country—especially Appalachia. Talks with snake handlers in the Holiness movement about their philosophy of God and religion.

Todd: Growing Up in Appalachia
12 minutes Color
1970 Learning Corp. of America

Presents the life of an Appalachian mountain family whose father was forced out of the mines due to illness. Todd, the young son, finds some government food stamps and realizes the opportunity for a better dinner for the family, but he knows the stamps could belong to a family who needs them worse and turns them in to be returned.

Tomorrow's People
25 minutes Color
1973 Appalshop

Presents mountain music—a sight and sound experience of mountain culture without narrator. Includes visual montage of old time photographs accompanied by a dulcimer to a square dance in a one-room school house high on a mountain in Kentucky.

Tradition
20 minutes Color
1974 Appalshop

A moonshiner tells what it's like to have been "sent up" four times for making liquor, while IRS agents talk about tracking down stills and arresting moonshiners.

UMWA 1970: A House Divided
15 minutes B & W
1971 Appalshop

Presents a portrait of W. A. (Tony) Boyle filmed two years before he lost power. Includes parts of his speeches along with statements from dissident miners and exposes the weaknesses of the union under Boyle's leadership.

The Valley
28 minutes Color
No date Stu Finley

Shows water quality management programs being practiced on a daily basis along the Ohio River. Compares what the water was like in 1960 to today.

A Well in West Virginia
15 minutes Color
No date Stuart Finley

Demonstrates some of the problems faced by the men who try to find the natural gas that plays a vital role in the United States' energy resources.

West Virginia Coleslaw
12 minutes Color
1975 Eleanor Grand

West Virginia Coleslaw, or chewing tobacco, is the impetus for this documentary on the work of Harley Warrick. Over the past two decades, this man has painted "Mail Pouch Chewing Tobacco" barn signs in a multi-state region.

Whitesburg Epic
10 minutes B & W
1970 Appalshop

Shows problems faced by young people in Appalachia in the early seventies by presenting a series of interviews on the streets of Whitesburg, Kentucky. Voiced are opinions about the Vietnam War, Kent State, college unrest, the draft, and recreation.

Banjo Man
26 minutes B & W
1978 Texture Films

Prize-winning film narrated by Taj Mahal, about the life and music of John "Uncle" Homer Walker. Walker, an 80-year-old Summers County native, has been playing the banjo for sixty years.

The Bicentennial in West Virginia
27 minutes Color
1977 WWVU-TV (Morgantown)

A look at America's 200th birthday as celebrated in the northern part of West Virginia. Includes scenes of music club performances, school programs, and historic interviews.

Discovering Country and Western Music
23 minutes Color
1977 BFA

Traces the development of country and western music from its beginning in the mountain people's folk music to its virtual merging with popular music.

Foot Stompin' Music
12 minutes Color
1975 Films, Inc.

Jimmy Edmonds of Virginia is a third-generation fiddler who performs regularly with his family. He is profiled along with Tammy Richard, a young country singer who is shown planning her career and cutting a record.

Full of Life A-Dancin'
29 minutes Color
1978 Phoenix

Deep within the Great Smokey Mountains of North Carolina one of America's oldest folk dances, "clogging," is still enjoyed. The champion Southern Appalachian Cloggers are featured.

Hansel and Gretel: An Appalachian Version
16 minutes Color
1975 Tom Davenport Films

Real life reenactment of the famous fairy tale. Note: Not advised for very young children.

Harlan County, U.S.A.
103 minutes Color
1976 Cinema 5

This Academy Award winning documentary shows the year-long strike by 180 coal mining families to win a standard United Mine Workers contract from the owners of Brookside mine in Kentucky.

If Elected
57 minutes Color
No date Wayne Ewing Films

A complete look at the campaign of State Senator Warren McGraw. Gives evidence of the "hard campaign trail in the West Virginia coal fields." A close look at the issues, feelings, and situations that affect the West Virginia political mind.

In Memory of the Land and People
50 minutes Color
No date Omnificent Systems

This documentary is an independent production by Robert Gates on the ravages of stripmining. Music of Bartok is woven with songs and dialogue of people who live in the stripped regions.

Jolo Serpent Handlers
28 minutes Color
No date Karen Kramer

Interviews with members of the church, and an interview with a woman whose father and husband died due to a snake bite. Shows a bite victim as he suffers and recovers.

Mountain Music
9 minutes Color
1976 Pyramid

Using clay for both background and characters, Will Vinton creates a colorful and peaceful mountain setting. A trio of musicians plays a country folk tune which becomes increasingly electric until the mountain explodes in a volcanic eruption.

Mountains of Green, Streets of Gold
27 minutes Color
1978 Films, Inc.

Story of returning West Virginians from Cleveland to their mountain state homes. Emphasis is on religion and rejection of urban materialism.

New American Glass: Focus on West Virginia
28 minutes Color
1976 Huntington Galleries

Huntington Galleries and WMUL-TV take a look at glass plants in West Virginia. The craftsmen are shown as creators of fine works of art and carriers of skill and tradition of the state.

Pearl S. Buck
30 minutes B & W
1960 Films, Inc.

Nobel Prize winning author Pearl S. Buck talks about her childhood in China, points out the differences between Western and Oriental living, discusses changes brought under Communism, and considers how America can recover the goodwill which has been lost in Asia.

You Touched Me
24 minutes Color
1978 Omnificent Systems

A volunteer program to provide recreation for retarded persons is documented in this film about the Kanawha-Putnam Association for Retarded Citizens. "A positive film about a positive program."

"This One Is Ready, You Can Lock It Up"

Black Ghost Lore from Southern West Virginia

Collected by Sedena and Rene McDowell

There have been a number of collections of West Virginia ghost lore, including Ruth Ann Musick's *The Telltale Lilac Bush* and Dr. Patrick Ward Gainer's *Witches, Ghosts and Signs.* William Lynwood Montell, in *Ghosts Along the Cumberland,* and others have collected supernatural tales from other parts of Appalachia. However, as with other aspects of regional culture, the contributions of black Appalachians have been largely neglected. This may be understandable in parts of the region where the black population is small to nonexistent, but in southern West Virginia it is unfortunate and regrettable.

For southern West Virginia has a large and culturally important black population. Blacks, along with eastern European immigrants and native whites from other parts of the region and nation, flocked to the southern counties with the opening of the coalfields between 75 and 100 years ago. The Chesapeake and Ohio, Norfolk and Western, and Virginian railroads were built in part by black migrants, and black labor was important in the operation of the new coal mines. Blacks and immigrants together outnumbered American-born whites in places, and in McDowell County blacks alone undoubtedly outnumbered white natives of the county by World War I.

The black newcomers brought their own culture and folklore with them, including a rich lore of the supernatural. New to the mountains, this lore was deeply rooted in the historical and spiritual experience of incoming blacks. In time, the tales and beliefs would pick up regional locales and become a part of the general body of Appalachian folk culture.

The following ghost lore was collected as part of a college research project by Sedena and Rene McDowell of Beckley. The McDowell sisters interviewed members of the black community in and around Raleigh County, and the stories published here represent only a few of the ghost tales, death tokens, and signs and superstitions their research turned up. These stories are set for the most part in Raleigh and surrounding counties, but some take place in the southern states from which the story tellers or their families originated. Professional folklorists will recognize a number of standard themes, but the important thing is that these tales are believed or at least respected by the people who recount them.

Unknown Escort

This incident took place in my hometown, Danville, Virginia, when I was a little girl. Times back then were hard for Mother and Father, and eleven children didn't make things any better.

Anyway, we had to move out of the house in town to an old house on the outskirts, sort of in the woods like. One night, after we'd moved, it began raining and thundering. Lightning flashed across the gray skies. Father Lemuel had gathered all the kids together in front of the fireplace to tell them stories.

He began talking and the more he talked the more it seemed to rain, thunder, and lightning, to the point where Lemuel said the prayers and everyone was dismissed for bed. It seemed like hours it rained, shaking the house, and the wind was stirring so badly it blew what few little candles we had right out.

We kids were awfully frightened. Virginia and I shared a room away from the other children in the very back of the house. We were shivering under the covers when all of a sudden the front door flew open and began banging backwards and forwards. We were waiting on Dad to get up and shut it. Instead, he hollered for Virginia and me to get up and close it. Virginia and I went to the door arm and arm together, because we were very frightened.

When we got to the door, I reached out and shut it, then with full speed fled and jumped back into bed. I hollered out, "Virginia, I'm in bed." Virginia yelled, "No, you're not, Carrie Mae. I've still got your arm."

When Virginia got back to the room, she told me someone had escorted her all the way back to bed and she could have sworn that we were still arm and arm together.

Well, we shivered the rest of that cold rainy night. The next morning we told Mom and Dad, and they said it was probably the ghost of a Mr. Wayfield who had lived there before we moved in. From then on, we made sure we were in the right company—the living, not the dead!

Told by Mrs. Carrie M. McDowell
Raleigh County

The Withheld Secret

This woman named Louise Mitchell was stricken with a bad heart and had been hospitalized for some time. Her family kept anything they thought was very stressful away from her for fear it would give her a heart attack that would take her away from them.

One night as she was tossing and turning, an apparition of her dear brother appeared to her. He had the sorriest look on his face, which seemed to be full of grief. He called her by her name and told her, "Louise, the family has done you wrong, for they didn't tell you that I had died. They hid newspapers from you, also clippings of my obituary. Before I could rest, I had to tell you that I will always look upon you and if you ever need me I'll be there."

The next morning she confronted her husband and asked why he and the family had withheld her brother's death from her. He told her because of her bad heart they didn't want anything to happen to her. Still filled with grief, she laid down to rest. Hours later they found her dead with the picture of her brother on her breast. Now they're both at rest.

Told by Dakota Smith
McDowell County

The Flower Garden

There was an old woman who lived in the country. All the neighbors around her made fun of her, because she wasn't as fortunate and well-to-do as they were. No one had anything to do with her. She had only one thing to cherish, and that was her flower garden.

Every year as spring would come around she'd plant her flower garden. All the other women of that neighborhood grew flowers, too, and each year they'd have a contest. Seemed as if everyone else's flowers turned out much better than the old woman's, and she wondered why. The judges would come around, and hers always came last. The old woman knew someone had been tampering with her garden before each contest and she finally discovered who. Her next-door neighbor would drown them in some kind of solution to make them look dead.

Near Christmas the old woman became very ill and died. Next spring, she appeared to her neighbor and told her, "Josephine, I knew you had been messing with my flowers all along. I was too kind-hearted to start any trouble, but now I will get you back some way." Her neighbor thought about it for awhile, but planted her garden anyway. Her flowers grew until they were so beautiful she knew without a doubt she'd take the prize on the day of the contest. The day finally arrived. The neighbor woman got up to look out the window to admire the beautiful garden she had produced. To her astonishment she found her garden withered up. Looking across to where the old lady lived before her death, she found her garden most beautiful. Flowers had sprung up everywhere.

Told by Mrs. Stephanie Brown
Pigchin, WV

The Ghost of Old Man Twyman

My father never believed in ghosts until one night he had a visit from Old Man Twyman. It happened when we first moved to Beckley. One night, Daddy was sitting in his favorite chair in front of the floor heater. He had been apple picking all evening and had gotten very tired and a bit chilled.

He sat by the heater nodding but was then awakened by a strange sound. Looking up he saw the former owner of our house, the late Mr. Twyman, coming toward him with his white bleached bones shaking and rattling. He hollered at him but the ghost still kept coming. Then Daddy swung at him and he disappeared. Daddy then got up and went to bed as fast as his legs could take him.

Told by Sedena McDowell
Raleigh County

The Watery Grave

Many years ago a couple moved into a mansion across the street from a graveyard. The people that had once lived there had died and were buried in this graveyard. The new couple decided to buy the graveyard and replace it with a private swimming pool.

The husband wanted to have the tombstones removed immediately, and he hired a crew to do this. Accidents began to happen. The crew foreman's leg was broken, and the tractor's motor would cut off as if under the control of someone. Then the man and his wife began having strange dreams of warning not to put the pool in. At first the couple called off the crew and the dreams stopped. But the husband, being a stubborn type fellow, began the removal of the gravestones again, and the dreams started anew. The ghost of the first owner began appearing in the house doing annoying things.

They still paid no attention and the pool was finally built. One morning the husband decided to take an early dip in his new pool. As he dived in he tripped over a stone and broke his neck.

Told by Aunt Clara Stewart
Pemberton, WV

The Ghost of Tobbie Givens

My sister Carol had a friend named Geneva who lived nearby. One night Carol's husband had to work late, so she decided to take her two boys over to Geneva's for awhile.

They arrived and Carol began knocking on the front door. She knocked and knocked, with no answer. She decided she'd look in the window, for the curtains hadn't been drawn. The house was dimly lit, and there sat a figure in the chair by the furnace. Its head was bent. Carol knocked, but the figure made no move to get up. She thought it was Geneva's son James ignoring her.

The next morning Carol called Geneva to fuss about the incident with James. Geneva listened to Carol, then told her, "James spent the night out. That had to be Tobbie, my dead husband. He appears around the house every now and then."

Afterwards whenever Carol decided to visit Geneva, she always called ahead to make sure someone was there and up.

Told by Rene McDowell
Raleigh County

The Courthouse Window

This particular incident happened in Alabama. There was a man by the name of Ben who had committed a very serious crime. He was tried, and the jury passed the verdict for him to be executed.

A couple of days before he was to be executed, Ben hung himself. He was found in his cell in the courthouse. Shortly after his burial, a strange thing occurred. In the big window of the courthouse the man's face appeared. The window was washed but the face appeared again. The window was stained but the face reappeared. It was then replaced by a whole new window but that didn't help—his face appeared again.

Ben's face can still be seen on the courthouse window in this small town in Alabama.

Told by Mr. Fitch L. Parrish
Raleigh County

Death Tokens

The Lady in White

It is said that in Lester, West Virginia, before a person dies, a lady dressed in white appears. She walks up and down the hollow three or four times, then disappears into thin air.

Told by Aunt Ruby Hannah
Stanaford, WV

Kelly's Token

Mr. Kelly's occupation was grave digger. If a person in the coal camp became sick, he'd come visit them and before he left he'd know what size grave to dig.

Late one evening, Mr. Kelly himself took real sick and was confined to bed. Mother and I went to sit with him. When we returned home, Daddy went over to sit with him. Instead of going the long way round he decided to take the short cut through the baseball field. It was dark and raining awfully hard. When he got middle ways of the ball diamond he saw a figure about three feet tall. It looked like a little girl all draped in white. She was coming down the hill as fast as she could come. He hollered out. The figure stopped, turned around and started back up the hill where it came from.

While sitting there by Mr. Kelly's

Appalachian ghost lore, interpreted by artist Andy Willis. Willis and other members of the Miners' Art Group have exhibited at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in Washington, and in Chicago and other industrial cities. Their show is now touring the West Virginia coalfields, under the auspices of the West Virginia Humanities Foundation.

bedside after arriving, Daddy said that something came and shook Mr. Kelly's doorknob three times. Very shortly that same night he died.

Told by: Mrs. Carrie M. McDowell
Raleigh County

The Token of a Neighbor

One night my sister Helen was coming from a neighbor's house from watching television. Coming out from the tipple hollow, she had just passed a neighbor's house, a man named Pete McCoey. At this point fireworks started shooting out of the earth and she said it was the most beautiful sight she'd ever seen.

A few days later Mr. McCoey was killed in a mining accident.

Told by: Sedena McDowell
Raleigh County

The Hand of Death

There was a young lady who lived in Stanaford years ago. One night she and her family were sitting around the fireplace entertaining each other.

Suddenly there was a knock on the door. She got up and opened it but no one was there. Then something cold reached out and shook her hand. A few days later she died, for the chilly hand of death had shaken hers.

Told by: Elder James Stewart
Fireco, WV

The White Casket

Before my brother died I had a visit. One night I woke up when I heard the door open and close. A man appeared pulling a white trunk that later I figured out was a casket. I looked up and this man turned out to be my father, who had died 18 years ago. My father looked at me and said, "This one is ready, you can lock it up." I said alright. I got up, locked the casket, and then my father and the casket disappeared.

This worried me tremendously for a few days. Then I received a phone call from the hospital one Thursday morning, early before day started breaking in. It was to let me know that my brother had expired.

Told by: Ginny Bates
Greenbrier County

Signs and Superstitions

If you hit your mother, your hand will never die.

Roosters crowing in the middle of the night is the sign that someone's going to die.

Dreaming of fish is a sign that someone's pregnant.

Dreaming of babies is a sign of death.

If you curse old people, your tongue will grow long.

New lumber takes away ghosts.

Body hair means wealth.

Sweep your feet, you'll never get married.

To take off the feet-sweeping curse, put salt on the broom and spit on it.

A falling dream means you'll die soon.

Kiss your elbow, you'll turn into a boy.

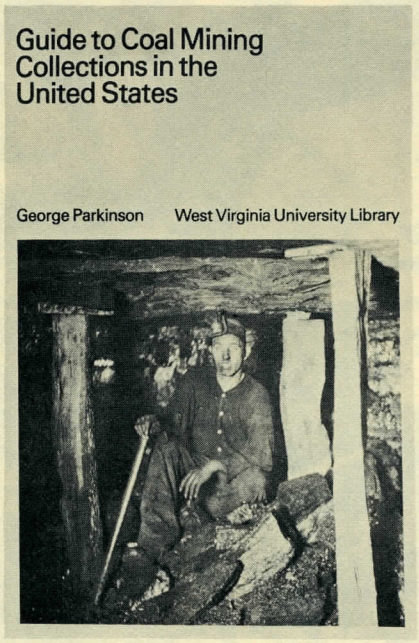
Dreaming of snakes is a sign of enemies.

Writing on the wall means writing on your gravestone.

Book Review

GUIDE TO COAL MINING COLLECTIONS IN THE UNITED STATES, by George Parkinson. Morgantown: West Virginia University Library, 1978. $7.00.

By Paul J. Nyden



Three decades ago, the great black historian W. E. B. DuBois commented: "We have the record of kings and gentlemen *ad nauseum* and in stupid detail; but of the common run of human beings, and particularly of the half or wholly submerged working group, the world has saved all too little of authentic record and tried to forget or ignore even the little saved."

Fortunately, this statement is a little less true today, as more and more historians and social scientists are devoting their attention to trade union history and working-class culture, to the experience of black people and other oppressed minorities, and to the role of women in society. Dozens of scholars around the country are studying various specific groups of workers: steelworkers, loggers, autoworkers, longshoremen, coal miners, and many others.

George Parkinson's newly-published *Guide to Coal Mining Collections in the United States* follows in this tradition of looking at the "submerged working group" and makes an important contribution to that tradition. Parkinson is the Curator of the West Virginia Collection at the Library of West Virginia University, which today possesses the most comprehensive collection of research materials and books on American coal miners in the world.

Parkinson's guide was prepared with financial assistance from the National Endowment for the Humanities, and was developed in conjunction with the Coal Miners Research Project, a group of scholars from many parts of the coalfields interested in preserving coal miners' history. In his capacity as Curator, Parkinson himself is actively gathering primary source materials on coal mining for the library, including: union and company archives, personal papers of prominent individuals, taped interviews both with individual miners and of miners' meetings and rallies, photographs, and movies.

The *Guide* catalogs holdings from 148 different repositories, most of them libraries at universities and scholarly societies; it provides information on contacting and utilizing materials in these repositories, on the research services they provide, and on the extent of their specialization on coal. The *Guide's* 926 specific entries include 588 for archives, manuscripts, motion pictures, and photographs; the remainder refer to oral history tapes and collections; these entries are indexed at the conclusion of the guide, by name and topic.

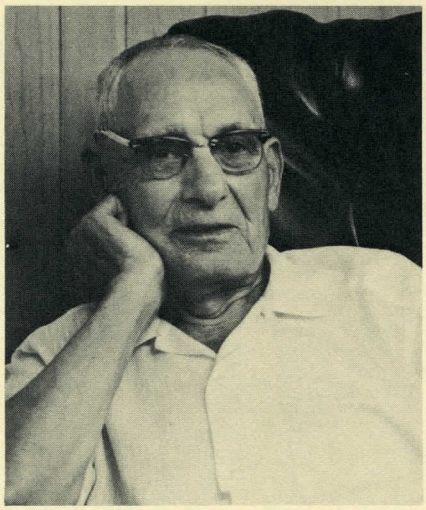
The value of this *Guide* is immediately apparent to active researchers in labor history. Although I have been doing research and writing on the coal industry and miners' unions for about 12 years, I was unaware of the existence of the overwhelming majority of entries in Parkinson's work. The formidable task of locating primary materials relevant to particular topics or areas of study has now been made infinitely easier. Rather than having to write or visit dozens of collections simply to determine the nature and extent of their holdings, one can now read through this guide in a few hours.

Leafing through Parkinson's manuscript, one can locate the whereabouts of: private correspondence carried on by famous UMW leaders such as John Mitchell or John L. Lewis; the complete papers of UMW organizer Van Bittner; an unpublished manuscript on Black miners in 1934; field notes on investigations done on conditions in the West Virginia and Kentucky coalfields in the early 1930's; papers of U. S. senators on committees studying conditions in the industry; papers of early independent coal entrepreneurs such as Justus Collins or Walter Thurmond; records and reports from defunct and still-existing coal companies; original material on women organizers such as Mother Jones or Fannie Sellins; and much more.

Particularly valuable to scholars are the 338 listings of taped interviews and collections of interviews with leaders such as John Brophy or Pat Fagan; with scores of rank-and-file activists in the UMW, Progressive Miners Union, and National Miners Union; and with others knowledgeable with life in the coalfields of Appalachia, southern Illinois, and the West. These interviews focus on early union organizing struggles, on the organization of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, and on more recent events. Most have been transcribed, some running to several hundred pages. Most are completely available to the public, although some have been partially restricted. Tape recordings also exist of public speeches, miners' meetings, and testimony given before Congressional committees.

George Parkinson plans to update the 1978 *Guide* as more historical materials come to light and are deposited in various archival collections around the country. He asks that readers report errors, old collections missed, and newly-accessioned coal-related collections. One would also hope that West Virginia University will continue to support both his gathering of more primary materials and the publication of more works such as his own and Keith Dix's recent study on work relations during the hand-loading days (reviewed in the October-December 1978 issue of GOLDENSEAL). Finally, this pioneering *Guide* should help stimulate the preparation of similar bibliographical and archival work for other industries important to the economic and social history of our country.

Sidney Box, West Virginian



Sidney Box of Beckley died on March 8 of this year. Mr. Box was 82 years old. In those years, he had travelled from his birthplace in England to the anthracite mines of South Wales, to a German POW camp while serving with the British Army in World War I, and finally to southern West Virginia.

Constant through that long life was an attachment to coal mining and to the miners' union. Mr. Box came from a strong union family, and he himself became an ardent unionist as a young man in the Welsh mines. In fact, his decision to emigrate to America in 1921 stemmed directly from a squabble with a mine boss.

"I had no more idea, on that particular day, of coming to America than you have of going to Australia right now," Box recalled in a 1977 interview. "I went to work in the mines, on the afternoon shift, and the man ahead of me had left a pile of rock that he had no business doing. The boss came 'round—and he jumped on me about it! One thing led to another, and finally I said, 'Well, you can have it,' and I got my tools and went home. In three months, my wife and I were on our way."

They came to Glen White in Raleigh County, where Mrs. Box had relatives. In fact, her brother was mine foreman at the Glen White mine, and when a job opened up he put his brother-in-law on the payroll. Box found West Virginia mining to be different from what he had known in Britain.

"I've always been a union man, joined when I was ten years old," he recalled. "So the third day I was in the mines here, I asked my brother-in-law, I said, 'Arthur, where is the mine committee? I've brought my union card, and I want to turn it over to the mine committee.' He said, 'Don't you mention mine committee here! This is non-union.' A four-ton car, loaded with that 'graveyard hump' on top, brought us 69¢ at the time."

Union or no, Box had a family to support and he stayed on the job. He kept his union card in his pocket and his thoughts to himself, biding his time until 1933, when he was instrumental in bringing the United Mine Workers to his workplace. He worked ten years under union contract. Then, on January 14, 1944, the Glen White mine fell in on Sidney Box, breaking his back and permanently disabling him.

Unable to return to the mines, Box signed on as a paid organizer for District 50 of the United Construction Workers, one of John L. Lewis' original CIO unions. Box reported to his new job in Beckley the day he left the hospital.

"The man I worked for there told me, 'Now, I don't want any man working for me that doesn't want my job.' He said, 'I want you to want my job, then you'll be on the ball.' Little did he think, or me at that time, that in eleven months I would have his job! He got promoted to Washington, DC, and I got promoted to Regional Director."

Box stayed with District 50 for the rest of his working life, passing back into the UMW when the district became part of that union. He too was eventually promoted to Washington, where he worked with Lewis for several years. Box had stories to tell of his time in the union leadership, but his most moving recollections were from his years as a working miner.

In 1977, Sidney Box addressed the West Virginia Labor History Association Conference at the federal Mining Academy in Beckley. He recited a poem which he had written after doing rescue work in the 1923 Glen Rogers explosion which claimed 27 lives. He regretted never having had the poem published, and GOLDENSEAL is proud to present it here posthumously:

Will you kindly spare a copper,
For a copy of this rhyme?
Toward the widows and the orphans
Killed by the explosion in the mines.

In a village, close to Beckley,
Glen Rogers is the village name;
It's a name to be remembered
Filled with sorrow once again.

Years ago, the same thing happened
Though perhaps . . . it was not so bad.
Let us ponder o'er the present
Now that things have turned so sad.

There was hope for those down under,
Underneath the ground so deep;
Now the rescuers only find them
In a last long peaceful sleep.

They had started and had parted
With their friends forevermore.
Let us hope we shall meet them
On that bright and shining shore.

A full interview with Sidney Box may be found in the October-December 1976 issue of GOLDENSEAL.

In This Issue

RUTH BELANGER was born in Trenton, New Jersey, and received a B.A. in English from Trenton State College. Her father's people, the Shumans, are from Mannington, and she now lives in Elkins. She works for the Elkins *Intermountain,* and does freelance public relations and photojournalism. She is working on an article on Senator Henry Gassaway Davis' Graceland Mansion for a future issue of GOLDENSEAL.

LOUISE BING was born near Gallipolis, Ohio and has lived in Charleston since 1918. She served at the Naval Ordnance Plant during both World War I and World War II, and worked in the Charleston restaurant business for 35 years—starting with a Broad Street "dog wagon" diner, converted from a street car. Mrs. Bing has written for the *Charleston Gazette,* and has done "hundreds of articles" for the West Virginia *Hillbilly.* She organized the "Sing Out, West Virginia" concert at the Cultural Center last June, and continues with her writing and other interests at the age of 81.

DOUG CHADWICK was born in North Carolina and grew up in Maryland. He attended Reed College in Portland, Oregon, Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington, and the Institute de Stato per Cinematographia et Televisione, a state school for filmmaking and video in Rome. At Evergreen he received a B.A. degree in film, photography, and video. Chadwick moved to West Virginia in 1970 and has worked on the staff of the *Fayette Tribune* and the *Raleigh Register.* He has shown his work in Beckley and Washington, D.C., and had a one-man show in March 1978 at Sunrise Art Gallery in Charleston. He has periodically contributed to GOLDENSEAL.

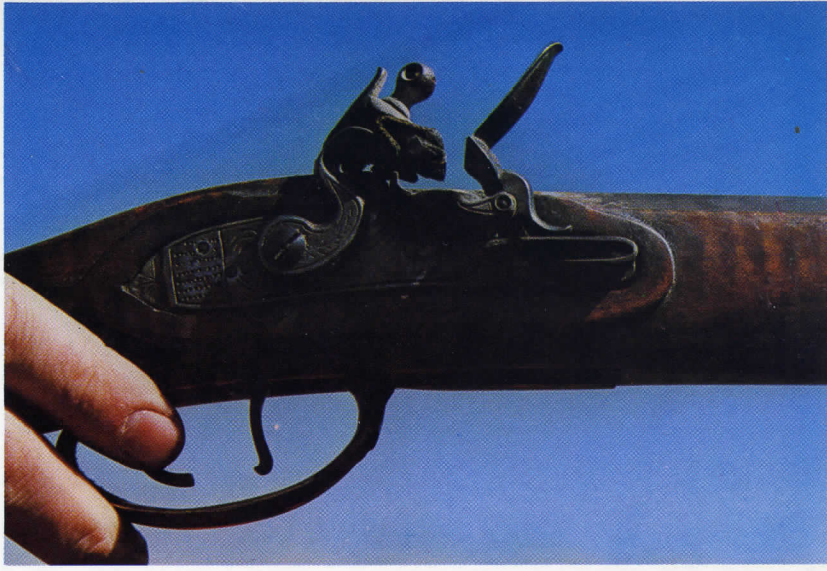
JOE COSCO was born in Orange County, New York. He studied literature at Dartmouth College, Columbia University, and Trinity College in Dublin. He now lives in Huntington where he works as a staff reporter for the Huntington *Advertiser.*

YVONNE SNYDER FARLEY was born and reared in St. Mary's, Pleasants County. She graduated from Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio, and worked for several years as a staff member for Antioch's Appalachian Center in Beckley. She now lives in Beckley with her husband Sam, a coal miner, and son Luke. Yvonne worked most recently as a religion reporter for the Beckley *Post-Herald,* and now does general free lance writing.

ELAINE MORRISON FOSTER, a native West Virginian, has returned to the state to pursue historical and genealogical research, and "to write about the people [she] loves." She holds a B.M. degree with a major in piano from Shenandoah Conservatory of Music; an M.A.T. in English from Jacksonville University; and a Ph.D. in Humanities from Florida State University. In 1975 at Ohio State University, under a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities, she studied music in medieval culture. Her background includes a ministry of music in a Florida church; the musical arranging and directing of numerous dramas including Richard Boone's initial offering for the establishment of a repertory theater in St. Augustine, Florida; and a professorship in Humanities at Flagler College. She finds her present work the most rewarding of all her endeavors in that it includes the three activities she most enjoys, research, writing, and interviewing people.

PAUL NYDEN has written widely on coal mines; his articles have appeared in the *Nation, Working Papers for a New Society, Mountain Life and Work, Mountain Eagle,* and a number of journals. His Ph.D. dissertation on Miners for Democracy will appear as a book early next year. Paul has taught at Bethany College, University of Pittsburgh, Antioch College/Appalachia, and the University of Cincinnati, and is currently studying patterns of alcohol consumption in Appalachian coal towns for the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

DAVE WILBUR lives in Beckley, West Virginia with his wife, Sue Beaver. Originally a native of western New York state, he studied philosophy at Antioch College in Ohio and in Besancon, France, and did two years of hospital work in Boston, Mass., as a conscientious objector before settling in West Virginia in 1972. Nowadays he works at the Welfare Department in Raleigh County as does his wife, and actively pursues happiness as a part-time sportswriter, baseball fan, and bluegrass nut. His summers are not complete unless he makes it to at least two bluegrass festivals where he is more of a parking lot singer than a parking lot picker.



Department of Culture and History
The Cultural Center
State Capitol
Charleston, West Virginia 25305

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