Goldenseal

West Virginia Traditional Life

Volume 5, Number 4 October - December 1979

Black Culture in the Mountain State

TWENTY

KANAWHA SALT COMPANY

RUFFNER, DONNALLY & Co

20

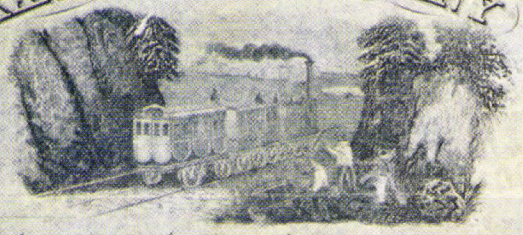
We promise to pay to _____ days after date or order at the

TWENTY DOLLARS value received

Kanawha salines

TEN

KANAWHA SALT COMPANY



RUFFNER, DONNALLY & Co

X

We promise to pay to _____ or order at the

TEN DOLLARS value received

Kanawha salines

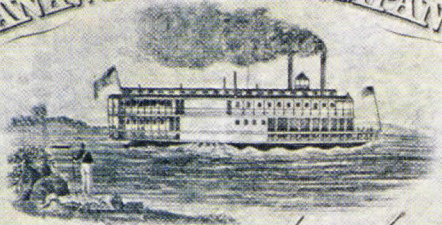
FIVE

RUFFNER,

KANAWHA SALT COMPANY

DONNALLY & Co

5



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5

_____ days after date

We promise to pay to _____ or order at the

FIVE DOLLARS value received

Kanawha salines

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Inside the front cover are $5, $10, and $20 Kanawha Salt Company notes, courtesy Kanawha Coin Shop, Charleston. Used in area salt and coal operations, these 1837 notes are the oldest surviving company scrip from the Kanawha Valley. Robert W. Craigo's "Coal Company Scrip" begins on page 68. Other scrip inside back cover; color photography by Rick Lee.

Goldenseal

A Quarterly Forum for Documenting West Virginia's Traditional Life

Volume 5, Number 4 ✱ October-December 1979

CONTENTS

COVER: Homecoming congregation spills down the steps of New Salem Baptist Church in Tams, Raleigh County. "Homecoming," by Yvonne Snyder Farley, opens up a special section on Black Culture in the Mountain State, beginning on page 7. Photograph by Doug Chadwick.

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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.

July 3, 1979
Falls Church, Virginia

Editor:
I want to commend you and your staff on your first edition of GOLDENSEAL. I read it from cover to cover and thoroughly enjoyed it. I congratulate you on its "new" look and I look forward to your future publications.

I am not a West Virginian but feel fortunate' in having me and my family included among your readers.

We wish you the very best in the future.
Sincerely,
Mrs. A. F. Kroner

June 13, 1979
Boomer, WV

Editor:
First I wish to thank you for running the story and pictures of my interview by Ms. Eff [GOLDENSEAL, January-March 1979]. After reading it, a nice couple in Washington, D. C.—a Mr. Rosenak and wife, who are attornies—called me and asked if I would sell them one of the paintings. I informed them I would not sell to them but would give one to them if they came by.

They came at the last of April, and I refused to take any money from them. They knew from my article I had two other hobbies, feeding my pet fish peanut butter and smoking several cigars per day. So they went away and came back in a few moments with 15 pounds of peanut butter and six cartons of my favorite cigars. Then a couple weeks ago I received a box of cigars by mail from them. So I thank you and the pet fish thank you.

The picture my friends wanted was the worst picture I had painted —the one you ran, "West Virginia Son in the Eyes of the Famous Mr. Brinkley," who wishes to be addressed as the Honorable David Brinkley.

Any time any of your friends or you wish to see my pets, come up any evening at 6:30 and you can see the performance of them coming and eating out of my hand.
Remaining respectfully,
Dave Tamplin

We at GOLDENSEAL are aware that our articles bring featured folk artists to the attention of collectors throughout the country. We are proud of the growing interest in West Virginia folk art, and will do whatever we can to assist buyers and sellers in establishing mutually satisfactory prices.—ed.

June 15, 1979
West Haven, Connecticut

Editor:
Just received my second copy of GOLDENSEAL. I enjoy reading the book very much.

Even though we don't get back home very often we still try to keep up with what goes on in and around West Virginia.

My husband and I are both from Seth and we still have relatives living there. I have a son, one brother and two sisters living there. My brother-in-law is the one with the "novelty art fence" in Seth (Omehaw Kessinger, GOLDENSEAL, January-March 1979).

My husband, children and I will be traveling through our home town this summer and my husband expects to do some fishing while we're home.

Thank you for GOLDENSEAL.
Sincerely,
Mrs. Kelsey Barker

June 26, 1979
Loveland, Colorado

Editor:
Recently I have had the privilege to see and read an issue of GOLDENSEAL. I am fascinated with the stories of the people of West Virginia and interested in the historical content of the articles. I should very much like to be able to receive this publication regularly. Would you please put my name on your mailing list?

I am a native of West Virginia, county of Roane. Each summer we travel back to West Virginia to visit the relatives there and the land we still own near Walton.

Thank you very much if you will please add my name to your mailing list.
Sincerely,
Mary A. (Ryan) Sands

May 17, 1979
Martinsburg, WV

Editor:
My wife and I have read and enjoyed your fine magazine. We have been impressed with the fine quality of articles concerning the state.

I would like very much to be placed on your mailing list for future issues but would be particularly interested in receiving the January-March issue since it contains an article on Mr. Andy Boarman, a resident of this area.
Sincerely,
James E. Brown
LTC USAF (Ret)

June 2, 1979
Fairmont, WV

Editor:
I had an opportunity to read through your latest edition of GOLDENSEAL and I must say I was very impressed with many of the articles and stories, particularly the one about Senator Byrd.

Would you please put me on your mailing list to receive future editions? I frequently travel throughout West Virginia and can relate extremely well to most of the topics dealt with in your magazine. Thank you very much.
Sincerely yours,
Barry R. Pritts

(Continued on page 67)

West Virginia Foodways: The Lock, Stock and Barrel Restaurant, Williamson

By Bob Spence
Photographs by David Ferraro

The Lock, Stock and Barrel restaurant in downtown Williamson is a place where both the earlier days and the recent concerns of the surrounding region are valued. At least, that is the impression that the restaurant's young owners, James Hannah and Jerry Hildebrand, try to cultivate. "We try to reflect the best features of what Appalachia is, and has been," they say.

The interior of The Barrel — as many folks refer to it—is an interesting blend of cluttered informality and warm hospitality. The walls are weathered chestnut barn boards from the Dee Marcum farm in Dingess, built in 1865. The wall boards are hung with old-fashioned plows, pitchforks, and photographs of persons who once lived in the Tug Valley. Photographs of the Hatfield clan line the walls above the fireplace, which Hildebrand and Hannah claim "is a replica of the pioneer hearth." The fireplace in winter crackles as pine logs are burned in the Franklin stove placed inside it.

The Barrel began life as a project of the Mingo County Economic Development Corporation, an agency established in Williamson as part of the federal government's war on poverty in the 1960's. The idea itself came from Hildebrand, who discussed his plans with a chef for Robert Kennedy's family one summer when Hildebrand worked as a guardian for Kennedy's children.

The chef, Joseph Pirozzolo, completed the original design for The Barrel and trained its first help before leaving. "At first it was like an English pub," Hildebrand says. "We had a carpet on the floor then, linen cloth on the tables, and wine bottles and all."

Yet in the summer of 1971, employees of the restaurant called a strike to protest what they saw as abusive management restrictions imposed by the local poverty agency. It was that strike that changed the atmosphere of The Barrel. After 14 weeks—a period when very few people crossed the picket line—the agency agreed to sell The Barrel to Hannah and Hildebrand for the $8,500 lost during the strike. In the meantime, some changes had come.

"We talked a lot with the people on the streets during the strike," Hildebrand says, "and they told us to make the place more characteristic of Appalachia. That was the most important lesson we learned then because it forced us to strengthen our credibility."

The carpet came up, the wine bottles disappeared, and the redecoration made The Barrel more homey. "The antiques and personal mementos have been do-

Above: The loafers' bench outside the Barrel is a popular Williamson attraction.
Below: The Lock, Stock and Barrel staff gathers for a group portrait.

nated and acquired from local antique dealers, flea markets, auctions, and from the private collections of many interested customers," they say.

The emphasis now is on the four basic industries that have contributed to life in the Tug Valley: farming, railroading, mining, and timbering. "We found that people who come in from out of state are very curious to learn how people live here," Hildebrand states.

Along with the change in atmosphere came a change in the restaurant's food. When The Barrel opened, it served gourmet food; today there are more home-style dishes. Part of the charm is the unusual names for these: "Railroader's Special," "Coal Operator's Breakfast," "Big John Henry," "Worker's Alliance" (served for two), "Mighty Mountaineer," and the "John L. Lewis." Dessert is the "Dingess Tunnel."

As often as not there is mountain and bluegrass music on the weekends and The Barrel has been described as "A crossroads for visiting folk singers, country-rock groups, and traditional bluegrass musicians. One group that appeared often was the Outdoor Plumbing Company, with members from Mingo and Pike County, Kentucky.

The Barrel, of course, has had its troubles. At one time Hannah and Hildebrand acquired a prohibition-days slot machine to add to The Barrel's traditional appeal. Possession of the machine, unfortunately, was illegal, and The Barrel was raided by state police.

In April 1977 Williamson was hit hard by the Tug River flood and the restaurant was deluged with 15 feet of water which caused $150,000 in damage. Perhaps the essence of The Barrel lies in the attitude toward the region that caused Hannah and Hildebrand to reopen later that year. Hildebrand says their great hope is that the people of the area will begin to draw on the rich resource of their own past as a way of defining values.

"When out-of-town people first come here," he says, "they are often struck by the commercial isolation of the place. They are curious about what people do for entertainment and stimulus. Later, though, many of them begin to appreciate the hospitality.

"There is an attitude here about life and family that is being destroyed in cities, and many people are beginning to try to think and live as people once did in Appalachia. This resource is very rich, and is too often overshadowed by other interests."

Once, he adds, a visitor asked why he and Hannah did not move to a location near more people. He answered by explaining that they believe The Barrel is at the heart of the attempt to save those values. "The Barrel," he said, "is exactly where it should be."

current programs·festivals·publications

Eastern Panhandle Sketchbooks

Artist Diana Suttenfield-Abshire of Shepherdstown has recently published the third volume in her series of Jefferson and Berkeley County sketches. *Harpers Ferry: Pen and Ink Drawings,* published in April of this year, was preceded by *Martinsburg Sketchbook* (October 1978), and *Shepherdstown Sketchbook* (1976).

Each book features fine pen-and-ink drawings, primarly of historic buildings in the three panhandle communities. The Martinsburg book, with its sketches of architectural details as well as entire buildings, is the finest of the three and will be of interest to architectural historians. Each sketchbook features handwritten text by the author, with the Martinsburg volume including a glossary of architectural and building terms.

The panhandle sketchbooks are among the finest self-published works to appear in West Virginia recently. They may be ordered from Diana Suttenfield-Abshire, P. O. Box 832, Shepherdstown, WV 25443, at the following prices: *Shepherdstown Sketchbook,* $2.00; *Martinsburg Sketchbook,* $5.95; *Harpers Ferry,* $3.00. Include 75¢ postage for each volume ordered.

New Education Foundation Book List

The Education Foundation of Charleston has released its latest price list of West Virginia books. The Foundation now has 15 books in print, including several popular titles by Phil Conley.

The most notable items in the current listing are several recent reprints, including Boyd Stutler's *West Virginia in the Civil War* and Roy Bird Cook's *The Annals of Fort Lee.* The latter book, a facsimile reproduction of the original 1935 edition, is enhanced by the addition of a new index by Foundation managing editor Frank J. Krebs. Since 1977 the Foundation has reprinted three important books by Ruth Woods Dayton: *Pioneers and Their Homes on Upper Kanawha; Greenbrier Pioneers and Their Homes;* and *Lewisburg Landmarks.* Prices for Foundation publications range from 95¢ to $18.50.

The Education Foundation is a nonprofit corporation, organized in 1950 to publish books about West Virginia and by West Virginians. The address is Education Foundation, Inc., P. O. Box 1187, Charleston 25324.

New Highlander Center Publication

In Our Blood: Four Coal Mining Families was recently published by the Highlander Research and Education Center of New Market, Tennessee. The book, by Matt Witt and photographer Earl Dotter, features moving accounts of the lives of representative mining families from America's eastern and western coalfields.

Of particular interest to West Virginia readers will be the stories of the Martin and Lockhart families from McDowell and Logan counties. Napoleon Martin and his relatives recall the good times and bad times of a black family's life in the U. S. Steel company town of Gary. Elmer Lockhart, who contracted black lung disease in the Paragon mine on Rum Creek, has been driven from Logan County to a life of forced retirement in Cleveland. His story, and the story of his family and friends, is that of pressing compensation claims against industry and the federal government. *In Our Blood* is rounded out by accounts of other mining families, in Pennsylvania and in the new Navaho Reservation coalfield in the Four Corners area of the Southwest.

Witt and Dotter are uniquely qualified to tell these stories. Both men joined the *United Mine Workers Journal* after the Miners for Democracy victory, and, working as editor and photographer, built it into the country's leading union publication. They left the *Journal* in 1977, but both have kept in close touch with the troubled coal industry.

Highlander Center is a non-profit organization which has been active in labor and civil rights causes since the 1930's. *In Our Blood* may be ordered for $6.95, from Highlander, Box 32313, Washington, D. C. 20007. Proceeds from sales will go into a special coalfields education fund.

Labor History Association Annual Coal Industry Conference

The West Virginia Labor History Association will present the third annual coal research conference on November 2-3 this year. The program, which has become the state's most important forum for coal history and sociology, will again be held at the National Mine Health and Safety Academy on Airport Road, Beckley.

As in past years, the conference will feature new and in-progress social sciences research relating to the coal industry. Friday evening's program will preview Ken Fink's film documenting the experiences of several generations of McDowell County miners. Research papers by Steven Brier, David Corbin, and others will be presented from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday. Conference Coordinator is Professor Keith Dix, of the Institute for Labor Studies of West Virginia University. Dix emphasizes that the conference is open to the public, and particularly invites miners and retired miners to attend.

Registration will be from 5:00 to 7:00 on Friday evening, November 2. The conference's local coordinator is Labor History Association president Lois McLean, 217 Granville Avenue, Beckley 25801.

The Lilly Brothers outside the Hillbilly Ranch in Boston in 1978. Photograph by Henry Horenstein.

Lilly Brothers Film Premiere

True Facts . . . In A Country Song, a new film about the Lilly Brothers, will premiere at the Cultural Center at the State Capitol at 8:00 p. m., December 1. Showing of the film will be followed by a live performance by the Lilly Brothers and a public reception. There will be no charge for the evening's entertainment.

True Facts is by filmmakers Doug Chadwick and Susan Burt. Burt, of Hillsboro in Pocahontas County, in 1976 produced the TV documentary *What Have They Done to the Old Home Place?,* concerning the problems of community planning in Raleigh County. Doug Chadwick, of Beckley, works for the *Raleigh Register,* and as a freelance photographer. He has been a regular contributor to GOLDENSEAL since the early days of the magazine.

The Lilly Brothers, Raleigh County's best-known string band, perform a bluegrass-related music which Everett Lilly describes as American mountain folk country music. Everett and "Bea" Lilly began their professional career in the late 1930's. They began appearing on WJLS Radio in Beckley in 1940, and later on WCHS, Charleston, WWVA, Wheeling, and other stations. Everett left to work with Flatt and Scruggs in 1950, but in 1952 the Lilly band was reborn, with Tex Logan and Don Stover accompanying the brothers. This time they took their music north, to become regulars at Boston's famous Hillbilly Ranch bar. Remaining at the Ranch until 1970, the band took time off to tour the college circuit during the folk boom of the 1960's. In 1970 the tragedy of son Jiles' accidental death marked a turning point in Everett's life, sending the family home to West Virginia. The musical career of the Lilly Brothers was revived by the emergence of a large Japanese following, with the first of several tours of Japan coming in 1973. Since then the Lilly Brothers have played at the annual Vandalia Gatherings, and at other places in West Virginia and elsewhere.

True Facts was funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and by a completion grant from the West Virginia Arts and Humanities Commission. The December 1 premiere will be sponsored by the Department of Culture and History.

Black Culture in the Mountain State

The Department of Culture and History will sponsor a Black Cultural Festival beginning October 22 and running through October 28. The purpose of the festival is to pay tribute to West Virginia's black cultural heritage.

The festival will open on Monday evening, October 22, with a reception in the Great Hall of the Cultural Center. The week's events will include dance performances, jazz and gospel music, theater productions, and poetry readings. Olive Abrams will return to the Center with more of her popular singing games. There will be an exhibit of work by black West Virginia artists, as well as craft demonstrations, and workshops in various aspects of the black heritage. The festival will also include the dedication of the Fannie Cobb Carter memorial plaque. The late Mrs. Carter, a Charleston native, was a well-known black educator and humanitarian.

All festival events and performances are open to the public free of charge on a first-come, first-served basis.

Copies of GOLDENSEAL will be available at the festival, and we offer the following articles as a sampler of West Virginia's rich and varied black heritage.

Homecoming

By Yvonne Snyder Farley

Photographs by Doug Chadwick

M. J. DAILEY came all the way from Denver, Colorado, to the July, 1979, homecoming at the New Salem Baptist Church in Tams, West Virginia. This year was his first trip back to Raleigh County in 50 years and there were tears in his eyes. When Dailey left Tams all the houses were there. Now there's nothing left of the coal camp's black section but the wooden church on the hill.

After commencing operations in 1908 and carving a unique spot for himself in the history of southern West Virginia coal mining, Major W. P. Tams sold his Gulf Smokeless Coal Company in 1955. The next year the coal company which owned the houses began to clear the people out to construct a tipple. "After the Major sold Tams, every year different ones had to move," said lifelong resident Ivory Lavender. "When people packed to move, you'd thought there was a funeral going on." Most people moved to the county seat of Beckley or to nearby coal camps such as Stotesbury. Ivory said she held on until the end and was the third from the last to leave Tams. She relocated in Stotesbury, just up the hollow. People were allowed to purchase their old homes when they left, and today part of Ivory's house is constructed from her family home at Tams. Others, perhaps in response to widespread unemployment in coal at that time, left the area.

"There were houses all the way on both sides," said Beulah Anderson, a Tams native who came from Beckley for the reunion. "Just Negroes—now there's not a house left!" At one time the town of Tams surpassed Beckley in size, with a maximum population of 1200 people and around 200 houses in

Watching for new arrivals at the church door.

Black Culture in the Mountain State

1920. The town was composed of southern blacks, eastern European immigrants, and native Appalachians who were segregated by the Virginia-born Major Tams into three sections. Today a few houses in the white section are still standing along with the white Protestant church and the abandoned cottage of the Major. Westmoreland Coal Company used the land for headquarters of its Winding Gulf Division. But up the narrow hollow where the black miners and their families once lived a coal preparation plant and sprawling supply yard share the level ground with the railroad tracks. Across the tracks surrounded by a split rail fence the New Salem Baptist Church looks strangely out of place against the hillside.

Early on the chilly July morning of the homecoming, Sarah Wiley busied herself in the church kitchen. She mixed flour and seasoning for coating to fry chicken. Then she went into a small room beside the coal cook stove and returned with a shovelful of coal for the fire. "Look like when the wind blow, it just go right through me," she said, now warming herself. Mrs. Wiley, who came to Tams as a child from Virginia in 1927, said she was at a standstill for now because her sister-in-law, Ivory Lavender, had forgotten to leave some Crisco with her to fry the chicken.

Soon Mary Waddy and Irene Smith arrived with more chicken and sweet potato pies. The three women spent some time talking about the unusually cold weather and the way supermarkets today cut up chicken in "party-paks"—not the way they think chicken should be cut up. Irene was originally a member of a church in nearby Big Stick, she said, but when the coal company tore it down she joined the New Salem Baptist. Irene walked into the dining room to look at the stove in there, and cast an eagle eye at the children who were now arriving in the church basement. She told them to stay inside or outside, but not to run in and out. Meanwhile in the kitchen, Sarah had reinforced the command by telling the kids to go outside. The children obeyed and went outside on the church lawn. Some went around to the front and played on the wooden steps leading up to the sanctuary.

Standing outside the dining room door on the side lawn was one of the first men to arrive — Joseph

Mr. and Mrs. Lonzo Ross welcome a friend to homecoming.

Berger, who was born at Tams in 1944, had traveled from Lima, Ohio, with his wife for the homecoming. He stood quietly watching the trees on the now uninhabited hillside. Vernon Goldston soon came out the door. Goldston grew up in Tams and worked in the mine there until he left in 1950 for Buffalo, New York. This was his third year back for the homecoming. "I used to pick blackberries and cut wood up in those mountains," he answered, "I wouldn't take anything for the experience. I'll always cherish it. You know I got to feel something to come back here. It's wondefrul!"

Around 11 a.m. one could hear feet patting and singing coming from the upstairs of the two-story building. The morning service was to have a smaller crowd than the afternoon. Inside the sanctuary on

The homecoming congregation settles in for the morning service.

The New Salem Baptist Church

In October, 1909, the Virginian Railroad reached the mine site at what would be within a few years, Tams, West Virginia. And it was in that month that the Gulf Smokeless Coal Company shipped out its first carload of coal. Earlier a sawmill had been constructed, and within a year 125 houses for miners were finished. At the end of 1909 there were around 300 foreign and white and black American men working at Tams. By 1910 the company store and office was completed.

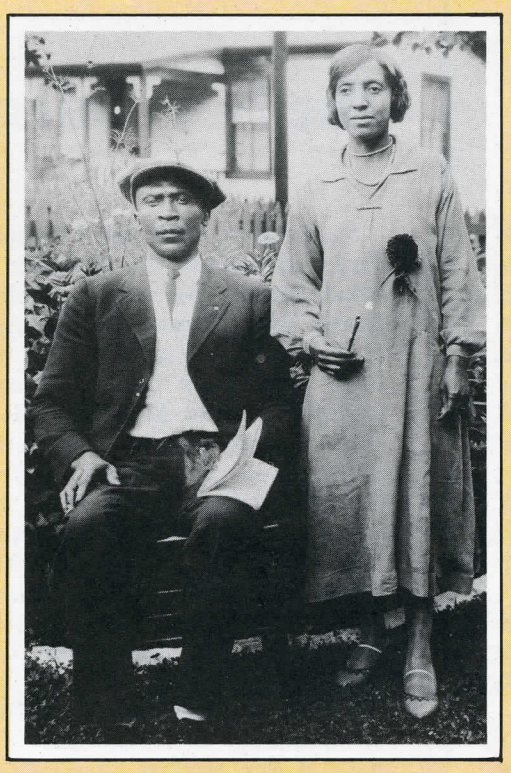
It was in 1910, during this era of booming activity, that the New Salem Baptist Church was organized in a house on the hillside. The preacher was a Reverend Martin, but nothing else is remembered about him. The town grew, and by the 1920's things were good for the southern West Virginia coal business. In 1925 the board of trustees for the church approached the town owner—coal operator Major W. P. Tams — to build a church. He asked them, recalls George Broadnax, if they'd picked out a place. They had, and the company obliged by building the New Salem Baptist Church — a narrow, wooden two-story building with a high steeple. In the beginning, black Baptists and Methodists shared the building, until the Methodists were able to get their own. (That church has been demolished.) In 1928 the congregation was able to repay Major Tams and obtained clear title to their church. According to the deed, the church building will belong to the people as long as there's a church there and people who belong. The New Salem

Reverend T. J. Brandon, one of the first pastors of the New Salem Baptist. Photographer unknown.

Baptist was fortunate to have obtained a clear deed because other coal camp churches owned by the companies have since disappeared.

Traditionally at homecomings church clerk Willie Hughes read the church history. It was not until after the church records were lost in a fire at Mrs. Hughes' house and after she had died, that the congregation realized the written history was gone. But with the help of Ivory Lavender and Frances Hughes some of the details can be reconstructed.

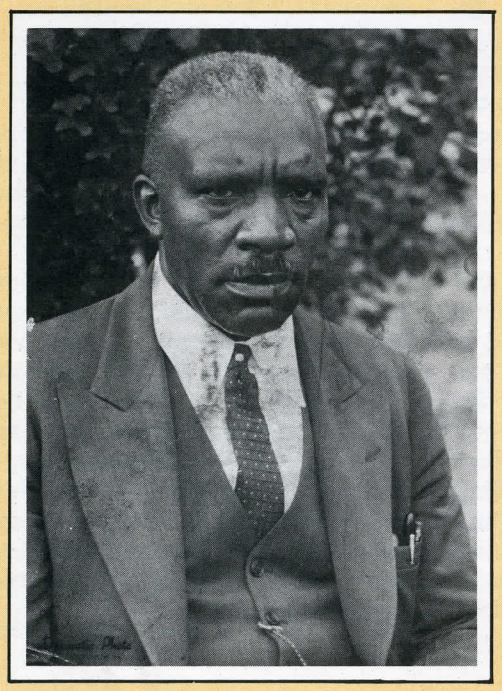
Above: Reverend B. L. Zeiglar, pastor 1926-30, came to Tams from McDowell County. Photographer unknown.



Above: Nursie Mae Cropps, first church pianist, and husband Jim in their yard at Tams. Ivory Lavender says this photograph was taken during the annual garden contest sponsored by Major Tams. Photographer and date unknown.

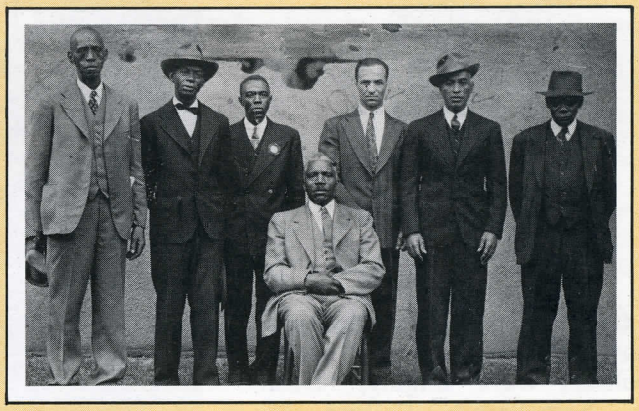
Top: Usher Board, 1944. Photographer unknown.
Bottom: Deaconess Board, 1944. Photographer unknown.

Below: Reverend H. E. Davis, pastor 1950-58. Photographer unknown.



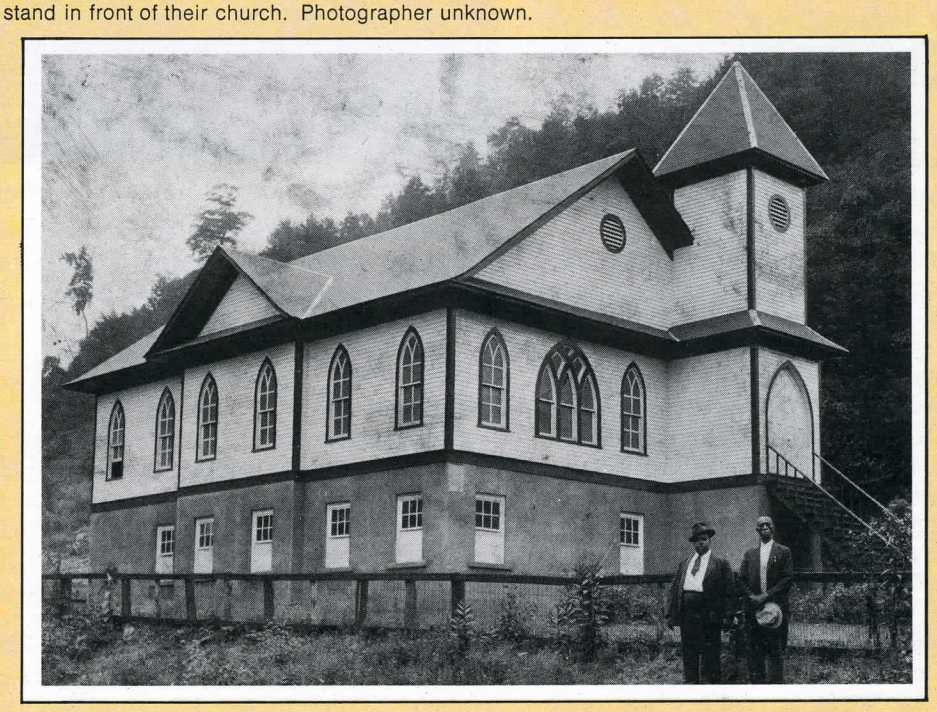
After Reverend Martin came the Reverend T. J. Brandon. Under his leadership in 1912 the church's No. 1 Choir was organized. In 1926 Reverend B. L. Zieglar of McDowell County came to lead the congregation. It was during his tenure that the congregation was able to pay off the church debt. Zieglar stayed until 1930, and it was Reverend J. H. Brown of Rocky Mount, Maryland, who was pastor when the miners at Tams signed a union contract in 1933. Upon Brown's death in 1934, Reverend J. B. Johnson came to pastor the church. Ivory Lavender remembers that Johnson took an interest in young people and organized the junior deacons and the junior prayer band. In 1938 the Floral Club was organized to beautify the church and lawn and to prepare flowers for the deceased.

Preacher Johnson was followed by Reverend H. E. Davis (1940-58) and by Reverend C. H. Clemons in 1958. But by then things began to drop off, said Ivory Lavender. "Things were very low and hope was almost gone. When Elmer Day came (1958) we were low in everything." Reverend Day stayed until 1965. Under his leadership a men's choir was organized once again, and "souls were coming back to God." But it was only a matter of time until the church would succumb to the social disruption of houses being torn down and people moving away. Membership again began to fall. Reverend O. T. Moore came



Above Left: Mission Circle, 1944. Mrs. M. J. Davis, president, is seated. Photographer unknown.
Above Right: Trustees of the New Salem Baptist Church at Tams, 1944. Pastor H. E. Davis is seated. Coal operator and town owner W. P. Tams was also a church trustee. Photographer unknown.
Right: Sunday School officers, 1944. Ivory Lavender (rear left) is still a leader in the church. Photographer unknown.
Far Right: The Sewing Circle, 1944. According to Frances Hughes, each year the Sewing Circle and the Usher Board competed to see who could raise the most money, with losers treating the winners to a banquet. Photographer unknown.

Below: New Salem Baptist Church at Tams, 1932. Pastor E. B. Johnson (left) and T. H. Wiley stand in front of their church. Photographer unknown.



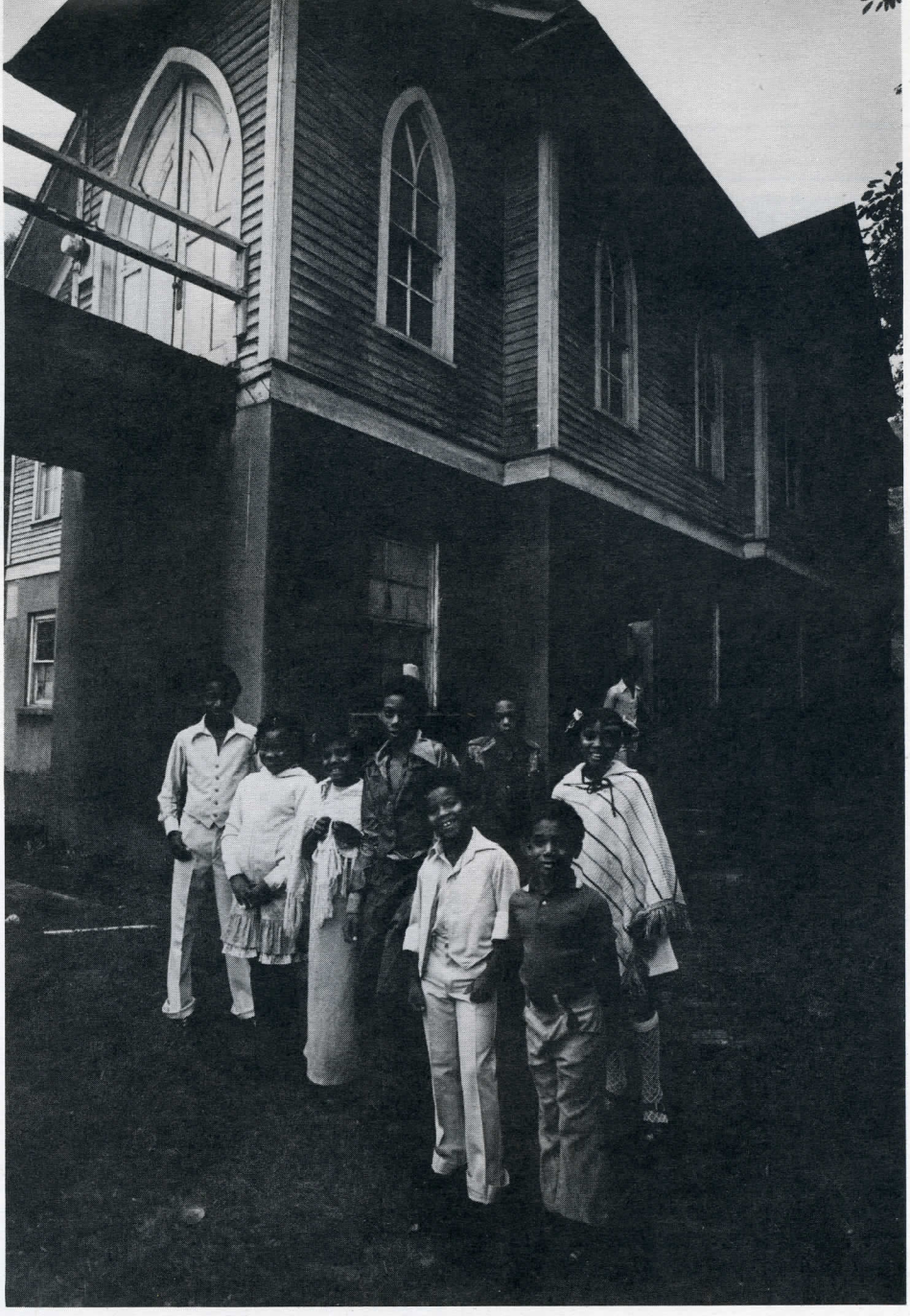
briefly and organized a junior usher board during his stay. He left and was followed by Reverend Archie Johnson (1966-67). It was Reverend Charles Lawson, a Tams native and church member, who came to the rescue. He had served as a deacon under Reverend Clemons. Lawson is still church pastor, and according to Ivory Lavender, 16 have been converted since Lawson's term began. The church has been remodeled and bathrooms were put in. Today the church is a member of the West Virginia State Baptist Convention.

"We are determined to go on although we are few," concludes Ivory. "You see, God is looking for us to be faithful to the end. With that love, trust, and God as our leader, we can't fail."

Black Culture in the Mountain State

the front row, Ivory, chairman of the homecoming, and Queen Schoolfield were singing, "Hush, Hush, Somebody's Calling My Name," a very old Black American song. The stragglers drifted in. "I'm so glad, I got my religion in time," continued the two women. After a prayer by pastor Charles Lawson, a Tams native, Brother George Broadnax rose to lift the offering. However, being the oldest member present, Brother George, 74, couldn't resist saying a few words. "We've had some homecomings that've been hard to beat. We've had some," he interrupted himself to shake hands with a couple who had just walked in and sat in a front pew. "We've had some people we don't think have ever missed coming. [The first homecoming was in 1959.] You know, all these kids growed up since I came here. They weren't known of here when I came." He smiled broadly and looked around the room at everyone. "Well, I don't know, but if we keep on, we goin' to have a homecoming sure enough — a homecoming for our SOULS!"

Two young men collected the offering, and then Ivory Lavender stood. Ivory's father, T. H. Wiley, was an early trustee of the church. Along with the Lawsons, Clarks, Broadnaxes, Bergers, Dodsons, Bentleys, Hughes, Canadas, Fountains, Rosses, and others, the Wileys were at the heart of the black community. Ivory's parents moved to Tams in 1923 from Collins, Virginia, and lived at the entrance of the mine. Her parents reared 12 kids and eventually when they realized none of the children would ever return to Virginia, sold what land they had there.



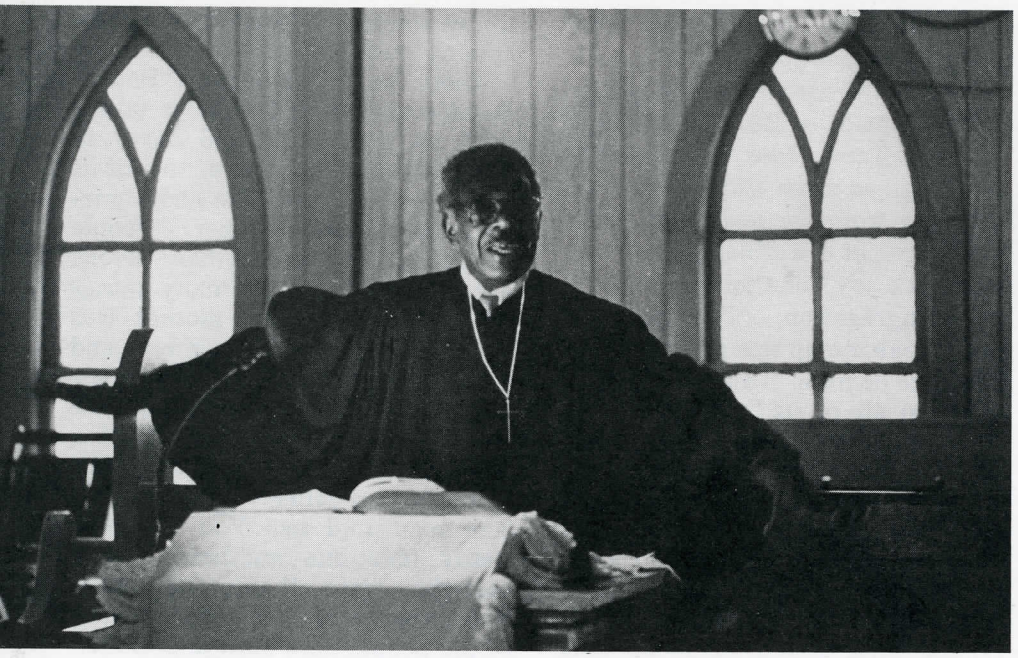
Children gather outside church before morning services.

It was for the funeral of Ivory's father in 1950 that Major Tams made his last visit to the New Salem Baptist Church. This was to be the Major's last visit to the church, Ivory explained, because Tams said so many of the older residents were dying "he just didn't have the heart" to return. Frances Hughes remembered the Major's words at Wiley's funeral exactly. He said he'd never "seen the righteous forsaken or their seed beg bread."

"I'm glad to see your smiling faces," Ivory told about 40 men and women. "Glad to see that you're still in the land of the living. It's a blessing to be able to stand here this morning and tell you that we love you. There might not be any houses left, but the memories are still here. Through God the little church on the hill is still here."

"Amen," said some.

After a solo from Queen Schoolfield of "One More Valley," and some testimony from the visitors, Reverend Lawson rose to speak. He told them, "Many are passed and gone on. I'm speakin' of the old ones from Tams—the ones I played with, the ones I worked with, the old community gone to meet their maker, to give an account of their stewardship. Today is a great day



Top: Reverend Charles Lawson.
Bottom: Mrs. Emmeline Broadnax cuts ham in the church kitchen, as Sarah Wiley (background) fries chicken.

in our lives because we are still in the land of the living." It was truly a great day for Reverend Lawson, who remembered working in the church lawn as a small boy, because during the morning service he was able to officiate at the dedication of his one-month old granddaughter, Virginia Marie Thomas of Charleston. As the baby's parents held the little lace-clad child, George Broadnax, her great-great-uncle, and Marie Richardson, her great-aunt, stood and looked on beaming with pleasure. The continuity of generations was preserved as Reverend Lawson held the baby up high for everyone to see. The houses were gone, but here was another generation tied officially to the church in Tams. Reverend Lawson told the parents, Royal and Jennetta Thomas, to tell Virginia about the day because she wouldn't be able to remember it. He concluded by saying, "We pray God's richest blessing on her journey through life."

The morning services concluded with everybody singing, "Remember Me, Oh Lord, Remember Me." Downstairs, lunch was ready and the aroma of good food had drifted up the steps. Brother Broadnax was the last to leave the sanctuary. He remembered the church's early pastor, Reverend B. L. Zieglar of McDowell County, whose photograph hangs on a wooden pillar in the front of the room. Zieglar is remembered as the pastor who helped the congregation pay off the church debt. Brother Broadnax, who was born at No. 4 Tharp Mine in McDowell County, said the Tams church building is set right at the forks of the creek surrounded by three coal companies — Westmoreland, Slab Fork and Eastern Associated Coal Corporation (Stotes-

bury). The church reached its peak in the 1930's, he said, with about 350 members. Broadnax came to the Tams area in 1905, and worked in the Tams mine for most of his life. He and his wife of 53 years now live down Winding Gulf Creek at Ury. The cemetery with many former black Tams residents is near there.

Downstairs, the church women had the meal in full swing. There were four tables with places already set. The women brought out platters of ham, fried chicken, turkey, green beans, macaroni and cheese, dressing, homemade chow chow, rolls, sweet potato pies, and cakes, in what seemed to be an endless feast. Those who attended morning services elsewhere in the county began to arrive and there was noise and confusion as old friends reunited. "If we make a lot of noise," said Ivory, "it's because we're glad to see each other." Those who had eaten first gradually relinquished their seats to new arrivals. Many out-of-towners were in the area for the Byrd-Prillerman reunion at the Ramada Inn in Beckley that week. There was lots of conversation about Byrd-Prillerman, the black high school for the Gulf area of Raleigh County. There, students from the segregated Tams school made friends with other blacks from nearby coal camps. People remembered the excellent football teams, the scholarship, the fellowship, certain teachers. Soon the crowd had swelled to over 100 people.

Without formal announcement, around 2 p.m., services resumed upstairs. The New Hope Baptist Church Choir of Beckley sang, "How Long Has It Been?" as people began to file into the wooden pews and fans were passed out to the congregation. Soon the fans were fluttering and feet were tapping as some began to sing along. Others rocked in unison with the beat of the music. An older woman wiped away a tear. "All right," "Amen," and "Oh yes," could be heard as people responded to the singing and began to get into the service. A woman stood and welcomed those who had come home: "We want you to feel free to shout, sing, talk, and even eat again if we've got it."

Jay Johnson of Beckley, originally from Tams, rose to sing. She wore a green dress with a gold cross dangling from her neck and held a handkerchief in her hand. "To come home is a joy," she told an approving congregation. "I'm glad the Lord woke me up this morning. I'm happy to be here. This song is dedicated to all of us." She took the microphone and sang a song suited to the occasion: "Somewhere Around God's Golden Throne." The song told of returning home after all the loved ones are gone. "I went to the house, where I used to live; the grass had grown up. . . ." Finally, the song stated, someone tells the homecomer that the missing loved ones are "somewhere around the throne of God." A woman sitting near the aisle was visibly moved and dabbed her eyes. A man in the back said, "Sing that song!" in approval of the sentiments.

Beulah Anderson Boyden of Beckley, originally of Tams, stood to speak for those who had come home. She was a teacher at Byrd-Prillerman for many years. "As I came down the mountain and turned the curve, I looked over and saw the space where I used to live. I thought of so many beautiful people. I thought of all the families. I looked at the little wooden church and thought about the ministers. I thought about the third bench where I myself received Christ. When I thought of all these memories I felt I was already welcome—that I was home. We who return are somewhat like the prodigal son. Thanks so much for letting us have the privilege of coming back." She sat down and the Men's Chorus of the Central Baptist Church in Beckley sang "I'll Fly Away." By then things had warmed up enough that someone opened a door in the front of the sanctuary and a cool wind blew gently over the congregation. The overhead lights were turned on as the afternoon light began to dim. There was more preaching and singing as some people moved downstairs to help with the clean-up, to stretch or to work on homecoming business.

There in the basement Beulah Boyden and Ivory Lavender talked with us about the "old days" in Tams. Beulah explained, "All of us were just together. We had a oneness with one another. People really cared for each other." Ivory agreed with her, "So many things we had here. If the mother was sick, the ladies would come in and help. They didn't ask any questions. One time a man from the power company came to cut off a lady's lights. We went from house to house and collected that money. The man told us, 'You all must really love one another.'" Ivory said they were all like one family. She remembered, "We called most of the people here aunt and uncle." She was just as afraid of Beulah's mother as she was of her own, she said.

Most of the black people in Tams came from Virginia and Alabama. Beulah said the Virginia families

Saxophonist Charles Parham.
Right: **Soloist** Jay Johnson sings a sentimental "Somewhere Around God's Throne." Pianist Oscar Berger.
Far Right: Reverend Lawson officiates at the dedication of his granddaughter.

were a little bit closer—that there was "a little something there" which the Virginia people felt for one another. Asked about racism in Tams, Ivory replied, "Major Tams thought as much of the blacks as everyone else. We were all human beings." Both women said they also felt close to many of the whites who grew up in Tams. Beulah added, "The first time I ever heard Latin was in the Tams Catholic Church." And, if there were those who felt differently about the social situation of the coal camp, they were not at the reunion. In fact, according to one Tams historian, it is all the more remarkable that the black community of Tams has remained so close because so many of West Virginia's black miners held lower paying jobs in the mines — leaving them less incentive to stay on.

But for those who returned, there was no end to the memories of community and family life. Tom Wiley, 78, now of Harper, joined his sister Ivory and Beulah in reminiscing. He vividly remembered himself at 19 working in the mines. He skipped Sunday School one day to get into mischief and remembered that his father came with a stick and marched him from one end of the coal camp to the other. Ivory added, "Daddy said he didn't care if you was 90—he was still the boss. I never talked back to him or I'd been buried."

Tams was a unique coal camp. It had the first bath houses for miners. Tams miners worked the first nine-hour day while the other mines worked from "sun up to sun down." Ivory remembered that people could paint their houses whatever color they wanted with paint provided by the Major. There were the beautification contests, tree plantings, whitewashed fences, a bowling alley, cafe, pool hall, gymnasium with indoor swimming pool, and a movie theater. And the Major was an unusual operator who never married and lived modestly in the town of Tams. Ivory remembered that before law enforcement officers could come into Tams, they had to check with Major Tams first. There were memories of the midwives, the doctor, and the school.

Meanwhile, Reverend McClung, the guest preacher, was talking upstairs about the 133rd Psalm. Dressed in flowing white robes, he told them that "This old world is only a camping ground." He said although he was now crippled with arthritis, when he went to heaven he expected to "go struttin' in, there to meet with the saints of all ages." Again, there were thoughts of all the "old ones" from Tams who were deceased.

The service came at last to the closing testimonies of those in the congregation. Lonzo Ross, now of Beckley, said he was baptised in the New Salem Baptist Church. Speaking seriously he told them to hold onto the church because, "When we lose our churches we're in trouble." Then he joked that at the Beckley

Vernon Goldston traveled from Buffalo, New York, for the 1979 homecoming.
Below: Old friends get together outside the church.

Central Baptist Church other choir members often tell him to put a "little Winding Gulf beat" into the music he sings. Another man testified that, "When you talk about Tams, it strikes a bell deep down."

Tom Wiley stood. He came to Tams in February, 1922, and left in 1941. He's the oldest Wiley living, he told them. He recalled working in the mines with Reverend Lawson and other memories of his childhood there.

Another man stood and pointed backward through the door. "My house set right there across the tracks. We had good services then, just like we're having now." Jack Lavender was asked to stand because he was the first black baby born at Tams. George Broadnax kidded him from a nearby bench saying that Jack stands every year. Queen Schoolfield stood to say this was the most beautiful homecoming ever. There was more. One by one they stood and recalled their ties to the church and to the community . . . married here, baptised here, saved here, reared a family here, worked in the mines here. . . .

Outside the white church the mountains were green. The coal mine tipple was idle on Sunday and the hollow was quiet except for the singing which came from the church. These were the people who had been children when Tams was in its heyday. They had come back and they had held on to the old times.

It is said you can't go home again, but in Tams they do go home. One is left with a feeling that the living and the dead are joined in the homecoming—that the old souls are close by. You can see it in the tears wiped away by a woman in a straw hat, and in the old people who guessed it might be their last homecoming. It's universal to come home, but it is perhaps a special strength of mountain people that they are so rooted in the sense of place.

As the members left New Salem Baptist Church around 6 p.m. they were greeted by a light summer rain. They got into their cars and drove away. The hollow was again empty of people.

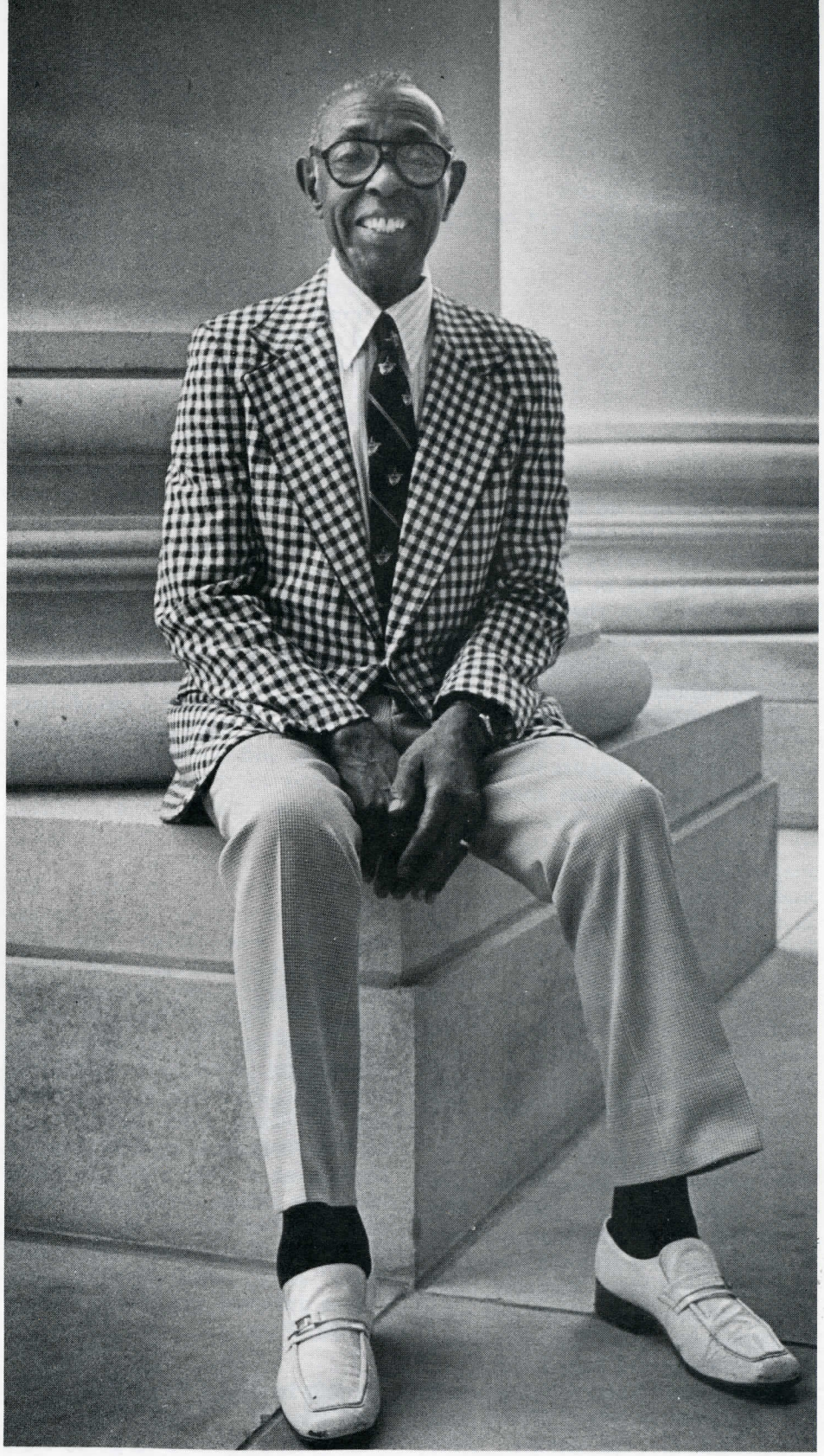
Clint Thomas and the Negro Baseball League

By Paul J. Nyden

BEING a baseball fan has been one of the few constant things in my life since I was a small kid. I've moved around a lot, changed jobs, lost jobs, and tried to deal with various personal difficulties. But I've always followed baseball. The first major league game I ever went to was in Yankee Stadium when my favorite team, the Boston Red Sox, were in town. I was ten, and looking forward to seeing my boyhood idol, Ted Williams, in person. That afternoon, August 11, 1955, he got his 2,000th hit—a line-drive single through the right side of the infield. The Red Sox still had no Black ball players in 1955, and their management were to be the last to hire a Black player, although they had passed up many opportunities to sign Black players, including Jackie Robinson himself.

When he was inducted into the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York, 11 years later in July 1966, Ted Williams made a speech. Among the things he said was: "The other day Willie Mays hit his 522nd home run. He has gone past me, and he's pushing, and I say to him, 'Go get 'em, Willie.' Baseball gives every American boy a chance to excel. Not just to be as good as someone else, but to be better. This is the nature of man and the name of the game. I hope that some day Satchel Paige and Josh Gibson will be voted into the Hall of Fame as symbols of the great Negro players who are not here, only because they weren't given the chance."

This GOLDENSEAL interview is with one of those hundreds of men who "weren't given the chance." It is a sad interview in some ways, for the name of Clinton Thomas would be known by young and old baseball fans around the country if major-league baseball hadn't enforced its Jim Crow policy for the first half of this century against both Black and Latin American players. Thomas and other Black American players could be part of integrated ball teams only when they went to play in Cuba and Puerto Rico during the winter months. But when back home in their own country, first-class play-



Clint Thomas outside his Capitol office. Photograph by Steve Payne.

Black Culture in the Mountain State

ers like Thomas had to play on all-Black teams in towns wherever games could be set up, games which sometimes ended in near-violence. They had to plan their road trips carefully, for most transportation, hotel, and restaurant facilities were still segregated.

But it is a positive story in many other ways. Despite all their problems, Black ball players left a lasting mark on American sports history, organizing a whole structure of Negro Leagues parallel to the major leagues. The accomplishments of Black players who played in these Negro Leagues are finally being recognized. And it was men like Clint Thomas who paved the way for breaking down the racial barriers in major-league baseball. So today, all of us know the names of such great players as Luis Tiant, Jim Rice, Roberto Clemente, and Dave Parker.

Clint retired from baseball in 1939, with an ankle injury. He spent the World War II years in the Brooklyn Navy Yard, working part of that time as a security guard on the battleship West Virginia, *then under construction. After the war he moved to West Virginia, where his brother helped him to get a job in state government. Clint worked for the Department of Mines, and after 1954, for the Senate. Clint Thomas is now Chief Messenger for the Senate and, though past 80, has no intention of retiring.*

I was born in Greenup, Kentucky; that's just 30 miles west of Huntington, West Virginia. Greenup's a farm town, a couple of banks there. My father worked as a janitor in those banks. It's a little place, 4,000 or 5,000 people, that's all. I left there when I was 14, just a kid; there was six boys and two girls. My mother was sick in 1914, and died later that year. My father couldn't get no job, you know what I mean. I was the oldest and we had a big family, so I left home and went to Columbus; my grandfather and my uncle were both mail clerks there. My father died in 1919.

I played baseball since I was a kid on sandlots in Greenup, and then in Columbus when I moved up there. I got a job working as a porter in a self-service restaurant, and then in Kroger's grocery store. When I became 18, I joined the Army. I said, "I'm gonna enlist." I reported to Camp Sherman in Chillicothe, Ohio. But when they had that flu epidemic, I ran off back to Columbus. But I came back after ten days, and the captain told me, "You was courageous, very courageous," and made me a corporal. By me running to keep from dying, I was very courageous!

But we didn't go nowhere. We was packed up to go on the day the Armistice was signed. We were going to Texas, and were all setting around waiting. We had our duffel bags, and the train was out there; then they said the Armistice was signed, and that was it. The Army was segregated then into all white and all Black units. When I got back to Columbus in 1919, I began playing on a little semi-pro team; we were called the Bowers Easterns and we played on Sundays. They had three white ball clubs there. Every other Sunday, we'd play a different one of them in old Dryden Park.

Trying to Make It as a Ball Player

In 1920, I decided to go to New York to see if I could make good playing ball up there. I always read two Black newspapers, the *Pittsburgh Courier* and the *Chicago Defender;* they also had the *Amsterdam News* in New York, but that was smaller. I saw ads that they wanted ball players, so I wrote to this man by the name of John Henry Lloyd *[who was a great shortstop for the Brooklyn Royal Giants].* He wrote me back and told me to come to New York and he'd meet me at the train. So I went to New York in April 1920. I was scared to death. I started practicing in the spring; we was playing up at Columbia University on 116th Street and Broadway at their ball field.

Lou Gehrig was up there *[he attended Columbia College as a student].* The Yankees were interested in him, and they were training him at Columbia. They wanted a pitcher who was real fast and could throw hard. So they used Cannonball Dick Redding; a fast ball, that's all he could throw. He could throw as hard as Satchel Paige or Smoky Joe Williams back in them days. Cannonball — he weighed about 220 and was six foot three. It's a funny thing, they don't say nothing about them two guys—Cannonball and Smoky Joe Williams—they was great, great. When Cannonball wasn't playing, they paid him to go up there and pitch to Gehrig. But they wasn't thinking about letting none of us get into baseball in them days.

"Cannonball" Redding was in the Negro leagues for 27 years between 1911 and 1938, most of them as a pitcher, but also as an outfielder and manager. He played for six teams, but most of his playing time was with the Lincoln Giants. "Smoky" Joe, or "Cyclone" Joe, Williams was in organized Negro ball between 1897 and 1932, both as a pitcher and manager. Affiliated with eight teams, he spent most of his time with the Lincoln Giants in New York and Homestead Grays in Pittsburgh.

I didn't do so well in 1920, when I was with the Brooklyn Royal Giants. I was scared to death. I'd sit around in the corner of the pool room they had in the headquarters. I'd loaf around; and some of the older players would say, "Hey, youngster, why don't you get up? Nobody's going to bother you here." But I used to sit around when they were practicing, so the old ball players began helping me along. They thought the kid had possibili-

Clint Thomas is at the right in this 1927 picture of the Philadelphia Hilldale Giants. His teammates (from left) are Hubbard, Mackey, Beckwith, and Dixon. Photographer unknown.

ties. Then I got on with the Lincoln Giants in 1921. I really started learning how to play ball; I was a second baseman. In 1922, I went to Detroit; they had a good ball club there called the Detroit Stars. I played second base for them, but I couldn't make the double play. So one day I said, "The only thing I can do is play center field." "You can play second," they said, "yes, you can, kid. You keep on." They had a real good center fielder there by the name of Jess Barbour. *[Barbour had been playing since 1910, most of the time with the Chicago American Giants, but would play with six other teams before retiring from baseball in 1926.]*

Then one day, we was playing a doubleheader and Jess got sick. After the first game, when we went back to the clubhouse to change sweatshirts and uniforms, our manager Bruce Petway pointed to me and said: "Well, we're gonna put him in right field and put somebody else on second base." So I played right field, but kept running over into center to catch balls there. So after the second game was over and we went back to the clubhouse, he says: "That's gonna be my center fielder, right there. You play center field next game, 'cause you gonna run over and kill the SOB there now. And we gonna give him a nickname—the Hawk." And that's where I got my nickname "The Hawk." Buddy Petway was both our manager and catcher; he was a great catcher. *[Petway, who also caught for the Leland Giants, Brooklyn Royal Giants, Philadelphia Giants, and Chicago American Giants since 1906, played and managed the Detroit Stars until his retirement in 1925.]*

They were just starting to form two leagues between the East and the West then. I was making $200 a month with the Stars, that's all. That winter I went out and got a job working in Ford's factory in River Rouge, right outside of Detroit. One day, I met a couple of superintendents at Ford's, and I said to them: "How about giving me a job out there in the winter time?" And they gave me a job working as a flow-coat man. We put on the first coat on the naked body of the cars—Model-T Fords. We used a spray gun to put this black stuff onto the frame and down each side. The work was fast, 1500 or 1800 cars a day. That turpentine was bad on you, you know; it was bad on your eyes. I started there at Ford's in late October or the first of November, and worked up till the time to go into training about the last of March. There were lots of Black workers there even back then. I made a little piece of money that winter.

Five Years with the Hilldales in Philadelphia

Nineteen twenty-two was the year they formed the two separate leagues. During the spring, the Philadelphia Hilldales came out to Detroit looking for ball players. They wanted the Stars' second baseman Frank Warfield and me; so they picked us off and gave us $350 to jump. So we jumped and went to Philadelphia. We had a great ball club. I started in left, but I was very fast, so they put me back in center field. *[That first year, Thomas led the team with 14 home runs in 100 games, batted .374, and stole 21 bases.]* I played with the Hilldale club through '23, '24, '25, '26. We won three pennants. *[In 1923, when they won the pennant,*

the Negro World Series had not yet been established. It began the following year in 1924, and Hilldale lost to the Kansas City Monarchs, five games to four. In 1925, they beat the Monarchs, five games to one.]

At that time, the western league had the St. Louis Stars, Kansas City Monarchs, Indianapolis ABC's, Chicago American Giants, Detroit Stars, and Cuban Stars (West). That was the west, the Negro National League. In the Eastern Colored League, they had the New York Lincoln Giants, Brooklyn Royal Giants, Philadelphia Hilldales, Washington Potomacs, Harrisburg Giants, Bacharach Giants, Baltimore Black Six, and Cuban Stars (East). We had iron-clad contracts, and that's when the Leagues really started.

Then they had the Pittsburgh Crawfords and the Homestead Grays; they wouldn't join the league. They was playing "outlaw" baseball; they'd play anybody. The Grays were a good team; so were the Crawfords. *[Some argue that the best teams ever in the Negro Leagues were the 1931 Grays or the 1934 Crawfords.]* Gus Greenlee had the Crawfords, and that's when they got Satchel Paige, "Josh" Gibson, "Cool Papa" Bell, and that bunch—a powerful ball club. *[W. A. "Gus" Greenlee was an officer of the Pittsburgh Crawfords, founder and president of the second Negro National League, and founder of the United States Baseball League; he was active between 1931 and 1945.]*

I played with the Hilldale club for five years between 1923 and 1928, before I went with the New York Black Yankees. Philadelphia was the most prejudiced place I ever played. They had all kinds of teams, good teams. They had a lot of players who belonged to big-league clubs. But the big-league clubs wasn't paying much money for men to go into their own farm clubs. So they was making more money staying at home; they had good jobs and played baseball too. We had lots of good players on the Hilldale club. Our third baseman was "Judy" Johnson; he's in the Hall of Fame now. *[William J. "Judy" Johnson played with Hilldale, the Homestead Grays, Darby Daisies, and Pittsburgh Crawfords between 1921 and 1938.]* We'd often go on trips and play four or five games against other teams in the league like the Baltimore Black Sox, the Washington Potomacs, and the Harrisburg Giants.

We had three catchers on our ball club. One of our catchers, Joe Lewis, had a Hudson Roadster; he was my roommate on the road. *[Joseph "Sleepy" Lewis played for nine different teams between 1919 and 1934.]* Even in Philadelphia, he'd drive me in his car to the ball park; we were buddies. One night, we were getting ready to go on this three-day trip. He came out to my house to pick me up and he said, "Did you get your laundry?" And I said, "No, I haven't got my laundry yet." Joe said he hadn't gotten his either. The little lady who lived next door to me also asked me to pick up her new dress, which was in the same cleaners where my clothes was.

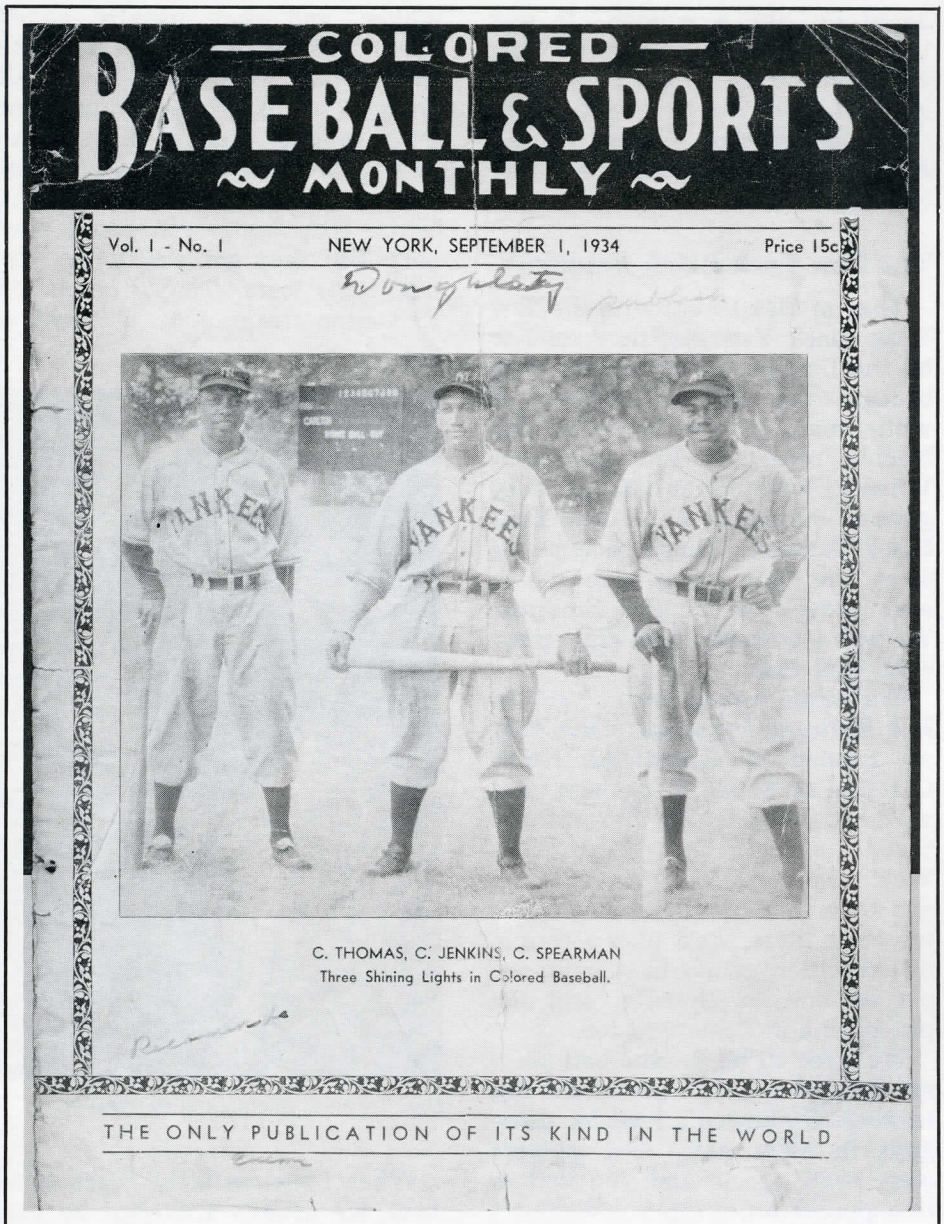
> "Philadelphia was the most prejudiced place I ever played in. One white team had "Sock" Seabo. He was awful prejudiced. When he pitched, he used to throw at our heads."

We picked up the laundry and was coming back across the Susquehannah River, and about 50 men and boys stopped us. It was about ten o'clock that night. They took our laundry and throwed it in the river; they took her new beaded dress and throwed it in the river; then they was trying to get our bags with our uniforms and bats in them. We had an awful time to keep them from hurting us; we had to beg them. Three cops come and they stayed in their car. They just sat down there and watched and laughed. Finally, someone in the crowd said, "Let them niggers go." They made us get out of the car; they was gonna take the car. See, they didn't allow Black people to come across that bridge back in them days. We had played in our own park that afternoon, and was just getting ready to go away.

Then they had another team in Philadelphia that had "Sock" Seabo, who used to pitch for the Boston Red Sox. He was awful prejudiced. He had salary problems with the Red Sox at that time, and decided he'd quit. When he pitched, he used to throw at our heads. He couldn't ever get me out, but he was dirty. He was a big fellow, and he could throw bullets; he had a good curve ball too. Next year, we played him again. I think I got three hits off of him that day. So after the game, "Sock" Seabo came over to me and said, "Well, Clint, I want to shake your hand. I've been cruel to your team, but you're a good ball player." Our owner wasn't gonna book us there any more; he was afraid we'd get killed.

Philadelphia had all kinds of different parts. North Philadelphia was all right, but if you went into West Philadelphia and South Philadelphia, you was in trouble. Yeah, you was in trouble. The umpires would cheat us. The fans wanted to see us play, but they didn't want us to win. None of their teams could beat us, but they wanted them to play against a good ball club. We had so much trouble that we quit playing down in South Philadelphia. The police wouldn't do nothing to protect our players. One day, our owner wanted to get away from a fight and tried to jump over a high fence. They pulled him down and busted him up side of the head a couple of times, slapped him up side of the head. We all got bats; luckily, some decent white person come in and stopped it. They begged us and begged us to come out to play the following year, but we didn't.

Once when we were playing in Shamokin, Pennsylvania, they were



Clint Thomas, with fellow Black Yankees Jenkins and Spearman, made the cover of the first issue of the Colored *Baseball and Sports Monthly* in 1934. Clarence "Fats" Jenkins was Clint's favorite teammate.

going to lynch us down there. We had to get the state police to take us out of town. Shamokin, Pennsylvania. Them great big bastards down there, they was gonna kill us! The umpire was cheating, then some of our players got hot with the umpire. Our catcher, who weighed 220 and was six foot two, hit the umpire. He was a Texas boy, and he was mean. Then we had a hell of a time. The state police took us 12 or 15 miles out of town, but some of them followed the state police. So they took us further out of town. That umpire was calling balls when our pitcher threw strikes. Steal a base, and he'd call you out. And when you'd get a hit, he'd say it was a foul ball. They had a nice ball park down there; it was way down in a valley and this mountain was all up high. But we had a hell of a time getting out of there; we left our bats, gloves, everything. 'Course, some of the boys had bats in their hands, but there was no use to try to fight back. You'd get killed! You'd get all of us killed!

Every place wasn't like that. We played in York, Pennsylvania; that was a good place to play. They had their own ball park up there, and a separate league. "Lefty" George, the big-league pitcher, became the manager up there after he went out of baseball. When our own shortstop went out of baseball, they made him the Deputy Sheriff. It wasn't just a local team in York; they had an organized league. That was usually a better situation for us when they had a regular league.

Winter Baseball in Cuba

I also played two years in Puerto Rico and three years in Cuba, in the winters. Adolph Luque, who was pitching for the Cincinnati Reds in them days, he was our manager. *[In 1923, Luque was the major league's top pitcher, when he compiled a 27-8 won-lost record.]* We made a lot of money. They had all the white big-league players down there too. The team I played on, we had Al Lopez as catcher; Joe Rodriguez, he was a Cuban, was playing first base; Max Bishop of the A's was at second; a Black player by the name of Dick Lundy, from the Bacharach Giants in Atlantic City, he was shortstop; and Charlie Dresser was at third. *[Lundy was affiliated with nine different Black teams as infielder or manager between 1916 and 1948.]* Our outfield was Jose Ramos, Valentin Dreke, and me. *[Ramos played for the All Cubans and the Cuban Stars of the Eastern Colored League between 1921 and 1929; Dreke was with the Cuban Stars of Havana and the Cuban Stars in the Negro National League between 1919 and 1928.]* We also had Eddie Brown of the Brooklyn Dodgers playing left sometimes, and Don Brown from Dallas, Texas, in right. I always played center. The pitching staff was Paul Derringer from the New York Giants, Freddy Fitzsimmons, Adolph Luque, Sam Ross from the Boston Red Sox, and two more pitchers who were from Cuba. We always made plenty of money down there. We played to much bigger crowds in Cuba than in the United States; people down there are baseball fanatics. They had

much less prejudice in Cuba than in the United States.

On Sunday mornings, we'd play a game starting at ten o'clock. Then we'd all go to the racetracks on Sunday evening. They had beautiful racetracks and tropical gardens there. It didn't cost us nothing; they'd give us a little button on our coat lapel. And then they had restaurants and liquor and everything up there. When you went to Cuba, they gave you a round-trip ticket and money to eat with on the train or the boat. If you took your girl friend or wife, you had to pay their way.

We were playing "percentage" baseball. The first time I came back, I had $7,000; so then they started paying salaries. When they paid us percentage, it was based on the number of people that came to the games. After each game, here's a man a-sitting at the clubhouse; he come in with all this money stacked up real high and pay off everybody. No wonder all the big-league players was coming down there. It was beautiful down there; everything was wide open down there, right on the sidewalks; people'd go by and see you eating and drinking. They didn't have no liquor or nothing at the ball park; but Luque, he had a saloon out there.

They didn't allow no women in the ball park in them days. Them guys would come in with guns and had them sugar-cane knives hanging down, and they'd bet on the game. Some of them would bet $400 or $500 that you wouldn't even get on base, or wouldn't steal a base. They'd fight too. Goddammit, they'd fight in a minute! They had mounted police around the ball park, all dressed up and faces powdered up like a woman. It was beautiful. Young kids would follow you everywhere. We'd pick out a kid that we'd take in the ball park; they'd allow you to bring in one. And he'd be out there every day waiting for you.

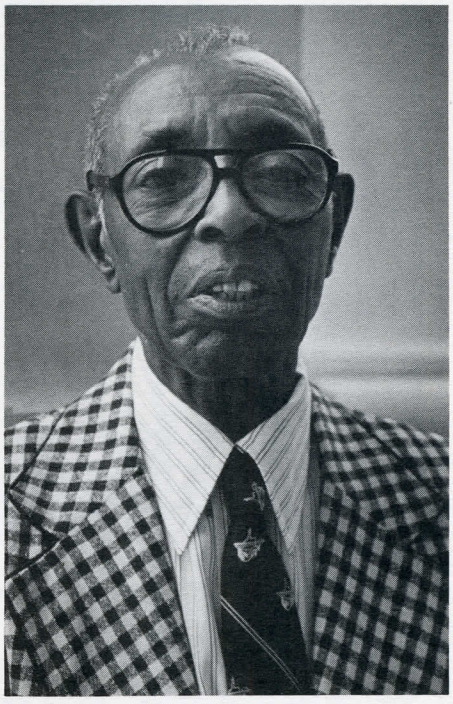
The New York Black Yankees

Then in 1929, I went with the New York Black Yankees; they used to be the Lincoln Giants before they became the Black Yankees. A white man, by the name of Jim Keenan, owned the Lincoln Giants. When he went out of baseball, they gave us the name of the New York Black Yankees. That's because we were the first Black club which ever played in Yankee Stadium. We was a powerful ball club, powerful ball club.

Our team trained every year in Hot Springs, Arkansas. One year we trained in Greenville, North Carolina at A. and T. College. But we'd always go to Hot Springs and take those health baths down there. We'd stay there four or five weeks and then we'd come on back. While we were there, we'd play a couple of exhibition games in Austin; we played one in Houston and we played one in Beaumont too.

We were all big-league ball players, but we couldn't get in the big leagues. We blazed a trail for these guys in there now. Our players were really good, and you had to be a gentleman, or else you wouldn't be in our league. We had 19 men on a team back then, rather than the 25 they have now. We'd get paid the first and 15th of every month. If we was on the road, we'd get $5 eating money. Sometimes we played Pittsburgh on a Saturday, then drove our way from Pittsburgh to New York, and played a doubleheader the next day. But I never missed a ball game with the Yankees or the Hilldale team all the time I played baseball.

Sometimes we travelled by cars and sometimes by train. When I was playing with the Hilldale club, we used to catch the Excursion in Philadelphia and go to Baltimore and Washington and Harrisburg. The whole team would travel together, and they usually added about eight or nine cars—they'd be full of fans. White and Black, all going to see us. Funny thing about white people. They revilish as the devil, you know what I mean? But they want to see you, they love you, 'cause they know you could play ball. But they get mad when you beat their team. They'd be on the Excursion train too; we had a crowd.



Clint Thomas. Photograph by Steve Payne.

When I was with the Black Yankees, we usually travelled by car. We had three Buicks with racks up on top for our baggage and things. Once we went up to Pittsburgh and played the Crawfords. They had a nice ball park, and they had Cadillacs. Satchel Paige was pitching for them then. Gus Greenlee, one of their owners, was a wealthy fellow; he owned a hotel and a restaurant; and he had a young prize fighter, Jack Thompson, a middleweight. Greenlee was a sport, a wonderful guy. He said to our owner: "I tell you what I can do. I bet you these two Cadillacs here against those three Buicks that we'll beat you in a doubleheader." Our owner said: "Well, that's a bet!" We beat them in the doubleheader; we got the Cadillacs.

When we travelled, we stayed in hotels. Our travelling secretary, he made all the arrangements. We didn't go places we knew we couldn't go. We had plenty of Black hotels. We had a beautiful hotel in Washington, beautiful hotel in Baltimore, nice hotel in Harrisburg. In Kansas City, we stayed in the Streetser Hotel; big lobby, big glass window, you know. Had a nice dining room and good food. Other guests stayed there too.

Some nights, we would slip out late. My favorite Black Yankee—this guy Jenkins—and I was roommates. *[Clarence "Fats" Jenkins played the outfield and was a manager between 1920 and 1940, most of the time with the Lincoln Giants and the Black Yankees; but he was also associated with a half dozen other teams. In the winter, Jenkins was also a professional basketball player.]* When Fats and I would want to slip out at night and have a little fun, our owner would let us have one of the Cadillacs. "But don't tell none of the rest of the boys," he'd say. "And when you come back in the hotel at night, don't be making no noise. Park the car around the corner." We stayed at the same hotel Duke Ellington and his band stayed at whenever they played in Philadelphia. It had a little roof in the back. And we'd get our same room every time, Fats and me.

Once there were people doing contract work, painting down below in the alley. So we were talking to them and asked: "How about borrowing one of your ladders one of these nights so we can get down off the roof?" They said, "Yeah, boys, yeah. You are all Black Yankees? That's my team!" We waited until after this guy came along and knocked on our door: "Are you in?" "Yeah, we here, in the bed now." Then we climbed out the window, took off our shoes, walked to the end of the roof, and went down the ladder. The man who owned the hotel, he got on to us. He said: "You and Jenkins are slick boys, but I won't tell on you." We got them gals, see.

We'd play night games in New York. We both lived on 47th Street; when we'd play night games, cars would take everybody home. "Take Jenkins and I first," I'd say. "Take us two first, put us out at 47th Street; we both live in the same block." They'd say, "Good night, see you guys tomorrow." There was a saloon on 48th Street. They had free cheese, crackers, bologna, hard-boiled eggs, and a bunch of other things. Had them great big schooners of beer, 10¢ apiece, great big glasses. We'd get all this food free, and we didn't want the rest of them spoiling our fun. You know what I mean, 'cause if they'd known of

"Satchel Paige was some pitcher, but he couldn't beat our ball club. When I saw him in Charleston a few years ago, he said, 'How long has it been since you hit that ball out of the park and beat me one to nothing?' "

that place, the whole daggone team would have stopped in. We'd go in and get two big schooners of beer; we'd spend 20¢ and get $4 worth. *[Many saloons in the early decades of the century would provide their patrons with free food, as long as they purchased beer.]*

I think the Black Yankees was the best ball club ever put together. We dressed like the Yankees, with white uniforms and blue pinstripes. When the Yankees was on the road, we played in the Stadium; when the Giants was on the road, sometimes we played across the river in the old Polo Grounds. And sometimes in Bushwick Park too; they had a great white ball club; all of them were young players that belonged to the Pittsburgh Pirates and different big-league ball clubs. But they wasn't paying them enough money for white players. I think it was $900 a month. Most of those guys had good jobs when they was home, and they'd make a hundred dollars a Sunday playing in the Bush League.

Satchel and Josh

Satchel Paige was some pitcher. When he was playing with the Crawfords, the first game he ever pitched against us, he had us beat in New York one Sunday, five to three. But we knocked him out in the seventh inning; we beat him eight to five. Satchel couldn't beat our ball club. I saw him a couple of years ago when he was in town as the guest of the Charleston Charlies. *[The Charlies were then the Triple-A farm club of the Pittsburgh Pirates, who sold the franchise to the Houston Astros in 1978.]* When he saw me, he said to me: "How many years has it been since you hit that ball out of the park on me and beat me one to nothing?" I always called him Cousin Satch.

Dizzy Dean, the legendary white pitcher, commented: "A bunch of the fellows get in a barber session the other day and they start to arguefy about the best pitcher they ever see. Some says Lefty Grove and Lefty Gomez and Walter Johnson and old Pete Alexander and Dizzy Vance. And they mention Lonnie Warneke and Van Mungo and Carl Hubbell, and Johnny Corriden tells us about Matty and he sure must of been great and some of the boys even say Old Diz is the best they ever see. But I see all them fellows but Matty and John-and Carl Hubbell, and Johnny Corson and I know who's the best pitcher I ever see and it's old Satchel Paige, that big lanky colored boy."

Once we was playing in York, Pennsylvania, in the Central League ball park there, and it started raining. Satchel was pitching against us, and they had us, one to nothing, in the first of the fifth inning. It began raining harder. Their manager was playing first base, and he told Satchel to knock me down. Everybody was kinda surprised that he'd tell Satchel that, 'cause Satchel was never knowed to throw

at nobody. But he throwed at me, and he come near to getting me. My cap, my bat, and everything went flying. Our manager, he got a towel, and he come out and dried my hands and face and the baseball bat off. On the next pitch, I knocked a letter off of the top of the scoreboard.

In July 1948, Satchel went up to the Cleveland Indians in the major leagues. *[Bill Veeck, owner of the Indians, was the first American League owner to hire a Black player, when he brought second-baseman Larry Doby up from the Newark Eagles earlier in 1948. Four years earlier, Veeck had planned to buy the Philadelphia Phillies franchise. "With Satchel Paige, Roy Campanella, Luke Easter, Monte Irvin, and countless others," he wrote, "I had not the slightest doubt that in 1944 . . . the Phils would have leaped from seventh place to the pennant." The purchase, however, was blocked by higher baseball authorities when they learned of Veeck's intentions. A couple of years ago, while owner of the Milwaukee Brewers, Veeck offered the first major-league contract to a woman, who later chose not to play professional ball. Now owner of the Chicago White Sox, Veeck still intends to offer contracts to qualified women players.]*

The only thing that I was disappointed at was that they never took Josh Gibson. Josh Gibson was the greatest ball player I ever seen as a catcher; he caught for Satchel a lot. He was about six foot two, weighed 190 pounds. Ain't no ball park he didn't hit a ball out of, including Yankee Stadium. He's the only hitter ever to do that, white or Black. *[In 1934, Slim Jones was pitching to Josh Gibson for Philadelphia against the Crawfords in Yankee Stadium in the second game of a four-team doubleheader, when Gibson hit a home run over the third deck next to the left field bullpen. That has never been done before or since.]*

One day, we was playing the Homestead Grays in Yankee Stadium; we had about 9,000 people there. Gibson got up to bat, and he hit the ball. It hit right on the pitcher's mound and then bounced 13 rows up into the bleachers and wedged between two seats. I was playing center field and Fats was playing in left. "Jesus Christ," I said to him, "have you ever seen a ball hit like that?" And a fan threw the ball back out to me. That night, it was Sunday, they took me down to WOR radio; Ed Sullivan said for me to come on down there. Bo Jangles was on the show that night, and I gave him that ball.

Another time we were playing the Grays out in Homestead. Josh came up with two men on—one on first and one on second—with two down in the last half of the ninth. We were leading one to nothing. The fans just roared. Josh's mother kissed him just before he come up to the plate, so I knew he was going to hit the ball a mile. He did; he hit it a solid mile. But I caught it 500 feet away from home plate, right against the deep center field fence. Josh Gibson, he was the greatest catcher of all time. *[Gibson played for both the Homestead*

Clint Thomas' State Capitol office is hung with memorabilia of a long life in sports and government service. Photograph by Steve Payne.

Grays and the Pittsburgh Crawfords between 1930 and 1946. If he had been in the major leagues, many people believe, he would have rivalled Babe Ruth in hitting home runs. Old-timers have credited him with hitting 75 home runs in one season, 89 in another.

The Negro Leagues

We played 187 or 190 ball games every year back then, sometimes three in one day. In the Negro Leagues, players started from $300 or $350 a month, up to around $700 a month, according to your ability. At the end of the year, some guys would make around $8,500; or even more, depending on how much you played. But not everyone made that much. You could save a little bit. A lot of the players was going to college, too; they lived down South.

"I got hurt in 1938, the only accident I ever had in baseball. I was sliding into third base, caught my foot on the turf, and my ankle snapped."

We never played much in the South; it was either in the North or in Cuba. We never went no farther west than Kansas with our teams. I played in St. Louis; I didn't like St. Louis. That was when I was with Detroit. I also played in Chicago, Indianapolis, and Kansas City. They had a new ball park in Kansas City where we played in the World Series against the Monarchs, when I was with the Hilldale club. We did play some exhibition games once in California, when I was with the Hilldales. On Sunday nights, we'd leave Los Angeles, where we were playing, and go down to San Diego, 150 miles away. The next day, we'd go over to Tijuana and spend $200 or $300 on the racetracks and having fun.

Most of the teams in the Negro Leagues were in the North, but most of the players came from the South. When I was with the Black Yankees, our first baseman came from Birmingham *[which did have the Birmingham Black Barons];* our pitcher came from Memphis; and our catcher came from Richmond. The only ball player we had that came from the big city was Fats Jenkins. He was born in New York, the only one. Most of them heard about us through the *Courier,* or the *Defender,* or by word of mouth.

Injury Ends Clint's Career

As I was saying, I never missed a ball game when I was with the Hilldale team or the Yankees. But I got hurt in 1938; I got an ankle broke. That's the only accident I ever had in baseball. I was sliding into third base, and I didn't raise my foot up high enough, caught it on the turf, and it snapped. I didn't play no more in '38. Then in '39, the papers come out: "When is Clint coming back?" And I come back, playing in Dexter Park. In September, I reported to the ball club, playing over in Brooklyn. I hadn't seen a ball in a year. The first time I was up, I hit a line drive to right center, made a turn around first base toward second, and something snapped. My ankle started puffing up, so I quit. I was 39 years old when I quit.

In his two decades in the Negro Leagues, Clint compiled a lifetime batting average around .350; he usually hit about 25 home runs a year, his season high being 28. In 1952, a Pittsburgh Courier *poll of former players and managers placed Clint on the second unit of the all-time great Negro League team. A few years ago, long after the Negro Leagues were disbanded in 1954, the Hall of Fame selected a panel of 25 of their players eligible for election to the Hall of Fame. Earlier this year, Monte Irvin, now assistant to the baseball commissioner, commented he could not predict whether or not Clint would be elected. "But if it were up to me," Irvin added, "Clinton would be enshrined tomorrow."*

Within eight years of the time Clint was forced to retire due to his injury, the end of the Negro Leagues was already in sight. For in 1947, Branch Rickey, owner of the Brooklyn Dodgers, signed Jackie Robinson, who had been playing shortstop with the Kansas City Monarchs. Rickey later signed a number of other Black players, including catcher Roy Campanella. Bill Veeck broke the color line in the American League the next season, signing Larry Doby. Major-league baseball was immeasurably strengthened, but the leagues which had provided opportunities for Black players for 50 years saw their own attendance figures and gate receipts drop. They were disbanded only seven years after the entry of the first Black player into major-league ball.

Black men had not always been barred from major-league baseball. Back in 1872, Bud Fowler, who played most any position but excelled at second base, became the first Black player to be paid; he played for a white team based in New Castle, Pennsylvania. In 1884, when Toledo entered the new American Association, their catcher Moses Fleetwood Walker became the first Black major leaguer; Walker had graduated from Oberlin College three years earlier. A total of 30 black players played on major-league teams between 1884 and 1898, when Black players were barred. The establishment of Jim Crow on the diamond coincided with the passage of laws preventing Black citizens from voting in the South, laws establishing segregation of public facilities, and a general resurgence of racism in American life. The end of Jim Crow in baseball in 1947 also coincided with the breakdown of discrimination in other areas of American life, culminating with the Supreme Court's desegregation decision in 1954 and the beginnings of the Civil Rights movement.

I saw Jackie Robinson playing shortstop one Sunday in Yankee Stadium with the Kansas City Monarchs. There was a couple of other

Black ball players sitting up there with me and I said: "That fellow's gonna make a ball player." They said: "I believe he will, Hawk." Roy Campanella used to play in our league too. We gave him a nickname—"Chester." The next spring after I saw Jackie Robinson play, Branch Rickey had signed him into the International League, before he brought him up to the Dodgers. Back in my day, we never tried to get on major league teams. We was finished playing ball when they began to get in there. It's like I say, I was born ten years too soon. There would have been a whole lot of our guys got in there. Ted Page, "Cool Papa" Bell, "Judy" Johnson, a whole bunch of them. I got a letter from Cool Papa Bell just the other day; he's 76 now, and he has a nervous condition.

Retirement from Baseball

After I had to retire from baseball with my ankle injury, I was out of work. When the Second World War started, by my being in the Army in World War I, I was able to get a job in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. You had to go down to the Woolworth Building to take an examination. Then you went out to the Navy Yard to learn how to load and unload a gun, and how to shoot. They made me a guard; you watched everybody enter the yard, 'cause there was 62,000 people working there. They made you think if you didn't look over everywhere, the Navy Yard was gonna get blowed up. I was a guard on the big Battleship Normandy the day Mrs. Roosevelt cut the ribbon. Boy, that was some ship when she went down into the water. Then I was working on the building of the West Virginia. Wasn't making no money, wasn't making but $2,300 a year.

You worked three different shifts. Boy, it was cold standing out there. You had to stand on the gangplank of those ships. We were dressed just like the New York City police —blue suit, blue overcoat, white belt and gun, white top. You stand out there on the gangplank, and them Marines had them big fur coats on. You freeze to death, and they ain't freezing! You'd walk all night long, with everybody going by. All kinds of workers going back and forth, and you got to stop them and say, "Let me see your badge."

When a liner ship come in, that's when the trouble started. British sailors come in, and American sailors in there on their ship. Then the fights broke out. You talk about horns blowing, and this and that, and police coming, and lieutenants and captains in their station wagons. They used to fight like dogs. I saw battleships come in with holes in them bigger than this room, just barely getting in. I seen the West Virginia; she come in with a hole that looked like a big building; she was laying on one side. I seen a whole lot in my day, and I learned a whole lot in my day, you understand what I mean?

> "In my day, we never tried to get on major league teams. Like I say, I was born ten years too soon. But there would have been a whole lot of our guys got in there."

Clint Thomas in West Virginia

In 1945, after the war, Clint began a third career—in the Capitol building in Charleston, taking a job as a messenger for the state Department of Mines. In 1954, he moved up to the third floor of the Capitol and became messenger for the State Senate. He has worked there ever since, and told a Charleston Gazette *reported earlier this year: "You see, these are my friends here. I have to make over 1,000 cups of coffee a day and I'm proud of it. I have senators who've been out of office for seven years come back and see me because they remember me." At 83, Thomas never misses a day of work; no one can remember when he last took a vacation; and he says he has no intention of retiring.*

After I went out of working as a guard in 1945, I decided to come here to Charleston and see my brothers and sisters; they lived all around here — in Huntington, Charleston, Beckley, and back in Greenup. I was gonna stay two weeks. But one of my brothers said to me, "I can get you a job here if you want to stay." He was working with the state Liquor Commission then. So I said "OK," and went on up there the next day. The man asked me a few questions and said, "I heard you was a ball player. You think you'd like to have this job here?" The job didn't pay but $250 a month, but it didn't cost me a whole lot of money to live on; I was still single. So I said I'd like the job, so here I am. I been here ever since.

I never got married till 16 years ago; I was always having too much fun. The girl I married, she was working as a keypunch operator for the Motor Vehicles bureau. It'll be 17 years we've been married this November the sixth. She's a Beckley girl; I had to come all the way to West Virginia to get a good wife.

I met a lot of interesting people since I've been here — governors, senators, state legislators. My favorite governor was William Marland. He was something else. He was smart, awful smart, but he drank. He never had a penny short in his administration while he was governor. And he'd do anything in the world for you, long as it was on the up and up. I used to drive him home sometimes. But I don't think they did him right after he turned into an alcoholic and had to drive a cab in Chicago. That broke my heart; that man didn't deserve that treatment, 'cause he was a damned good governor. There's other people did worse than him. He never stole anything, he just drank liquor. After he died, his ashes were all spread out on the mountain right up there above the Capitol. Ain't nobody can tell me anything about the State Capitol. I don't talk too much about it, but I've been here for almost 35 years now. The people here have always been nice to me, and I don't plan to retire—ever.

"Make a Way Out of Nothing"

One Black Woman's Trip from North Carolina to the McDowell County Coalfields

Interview by Randy Lawrence

Eliza Broadnax declined to have her picture taken for publication, for religious reasons. The accompanying photographs are of Caples and Hemphill, in the period following Mrs. Broadnax's move to McDowell County. The photographs were taken in 1946 by Russell Lee for the Coal Mines Administration of the United States Department of the Interior.

MRS. ELIZA BROADNAX and her sister, Mrs. Mary Allen, live now in Hemphill, McDowell County, just a mile up the river from the mining community of Caples. In 1934 these two women and their mother moved to Caples from Durham, North Carolina. In recalling the old days, Eliza Broadnax recounts her family's experiences in North Carolina and West Virginia. In doing so, she tells the larger story of the migration of thousands of black families to the coalfields of central Appalachia. Her family was one of many which moved from southern plantations to sharecropping tracts in the wake of the Civil War, from sharecropping to the industrial towns of the southern piedmont in the late 19th century, and from the piedmont to the coalfields during the great coal boom of the early 20th century. This is the story of the rise from slavery, told in the determination of sharecroppers, tobacco factory workers, and miners laboring to improve their families' lives.

Black Culture in the Mountain State

Eliza Broadnax is descended from slaves on both sides of the family. Her maternal grandfather, Dave Scott, was a native African, evidently illegally smuggled into the United States after the 1808 ban on the importation of slaves. Born a free man, Scott "wouldn't be no slave," in Eliza's words, and he worked to buy his freedom. Eliza's father's people, the Ostends, were freed at the time of national emancipation following the Civil War. Afterwards, they worked as sharecroppers on the great Cameron Plantation in North Carolina. Unhappy as a farmer, father William Ostend trained himself as harnessmaker and cobbler, and made his living as a skilled craftsman. The family moved to Raleigh, North Carolina, where Eliza could attend school.

Eliza was born on the Cameron place, but her earliest memories are mainly of Raleigh and Durham. She grew to womanhood in those towns, but when the time came she left them in hopes of finding a better life elsewhere. Her father had earlier left the farm for essentially the same reason, and the decision made him what she calls "an independent person." Eliza Broadnax traveled the same hard road a generation later. As often as not she was swept along by events beyond her control, but she too ends up an independent person, closing a long life with a sustaining faith and the belief that she has something to teach younger people.

Eliza Broadnax. I was born on July 22, 1896. My sister Mary was born in 1899. We was born in Durham County, North Carolina, at Stagville. Down between the Eno River and the Flat River, on the Cameron's farm. My granddaddy, he worked on that farm, and my daddy did the fixing the harness. My daddy fixed the harness for all the people — sharecroppers was what they called them where I was born.

My father's father, William Ostend, was a sharecropper for the Camerons. He had been a slave; his parents were slaves. My mother's father would'nt work like that. He called hisself an "issue free." That's a Negro back in that time that worked his way free. He wouldn't be no slave; he wouldn't be no sharecrooper. They put him off up yonder, off the ship, you know. You know how they brought the slaves over here. He worked and toiled and he bought hisself free. His name was Dave Scott, oh, he was a sure enough catbird. He

worked and bought his freedom.

My daddy moved when the Camerons moved down to their home by St. Mary's School in Raleigh, North Carolina. Daddy moved down there to do harness work. I had an independent daddy. He was a harnessmaker and a shoemaker. He even made artificial legs. Learned by going around to shops and watching. He would start out going to the harness shops and cleaning up—he would get a dime or 15¢. But the important thing is he learned to do harness work. Then when he growed up and got to be a big strong man he knew harness-making. He was an independent person.

I went to school in Raleigh. And then I come to Durham; my momma carried me to Durham. I worked 18 years in the Duke tobacco factory. When I went in there I was just a sweeper. I would go in that factory on the 15th day of May and had to come out on the 15th day of September, to go to school. If you stayed in North Carolina you worked as a sharecropper or in the tobacco factory. You worked like a dog. After awhile I learned to grade tobacco. But the factory cut down in 1929, 1930—cut off a lot of people. I gave my job to my sister Mary, and I went out to work for the white people. I took training to be a governess. Three months I stayed on the road, going to beaches working for white people. Then I would cook.

I worked all over; worked with the white people, traveling around. I been from Maine down to Florida. I've been up the Hudson. I went to take care of the children. The 20th day of August, 1920, I was right there in New York when the women marched down that avenue to get the freedom to vote.* I said to Mrs. Fulton, the woman I was working for, "I am going downstairs to see what is going on." I went down there, and that crowd carried me along. I went about four blocks! I went back to the hotel and Mrs. Fulton said, "Where have you been?" I said, "I've been marching!"

Well, they wanted people to come to West Virginia to work in the coal mines. They went all over hiring people; to Durham, Raleigh, Apex, New Hill — everywhere down in North Carolina. So my brother come up here to West Virginia. My mother became blind, and after awhile we moved up here to West Virginia, to live with my brother. Moved to Caples, West Virginia, the first day of May, 1934; come up here on a Monday evening. Some men toted my mother up the steps on a chair. She pulled us up to her and said, "Children, tell me what this place is like." We sat down and told her; we told her how we was setting up 26 steps from the ground. And we counted the pillars up under the house. And how you couldn't turn the water off in the kitchen. Momma said, "Where is the bathroom?" We said out in the back yard. "Lord have mercy," Momma said.

My sister Mary, she was in Caples three or four days. Then she left—we didn't know where she was for two days. Mary says, "There wasn't any work to do. I just thought I would walk back to Durham." Oh, we tried to tell Momma about this place. That first day, Momma asked for her harp. She said, "Children, where is my music?" We had it packed up still. Well, we had one of those phonographs that had a big old horn and a dog sitting in front of it. So she said, "Play some records then." But it was packed up too. She said, "Well, I don't know what I'm going to do. Y'all get around and let's sing." So we sang.

My momma was a curious thing; she had real good remembrances of things. She could make a dog laugh telling stories about Caples. She would say "Lord, why did you send me to Caples after I got blind?" She was blind, but she could tell about the slate dump burning. She could tell you when that fire would blaze up, just as quick as you like. And she could tell you when the train was coming. She said, "There's a rail down there that needs repairing. I can hear the train's coming by it." She told the railroad man; he fixed it. Said it could have caused an accident.

When we first come to Caples I would walk to Welch to work for the day. Then, if you got a dollar a day it was a heap of money. I'm afraid to say what Caples was like then! People was filling up the houses and sleeping on the floors. Had rocks for chairs! Just one night 20 foreigners got off the freight train. Went up to the Clubhouse—they had it full. Oh, them houses up on the hill was full of men from Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina —come in on freight trains. And payday night, you try to go to sleep! The women be hollering and whooping and gambling and drinking. Sure—the women be drunk as much as the men. They wouldn't stop for Sunday. One Sunday, my

*Young Eliza Ostend was still making her living primarily as a tobacco worker at this time. However, like other black women in this highly seasonal industry, she alternated as a domestic worker during slack periods. As indicated in the preceding paragraph, she quit the tobacco factory for good around 1930.

momma died. And Sunday night we was on the porch when they come to get Momma's body. This boy lived right there — and his father got killed the next morning on the tipple. When his daddy got killed we heard them coming, and they was still gambling down there in that holler!

In 1935 I married Mr. Broadnax. In 1940 my momma died. Oh, it was tough down there in those times. Then, the sixth day of August, 1948, my husband got covered up in the Caples mine. That's what started him down in his health. And my brother, 15th day of September, 1942, had got messed up in the mine. My son, he left here in '52. He died in '74. He worked at Harvard University School, worked on the maintenance.

After I was married I went to work at the Miners' Hospital in Welch. I didn't have nothing else I could do, didn't have no other hope. I worked for the State of West Virginia, the Miners' Hospital, for 19 years, five months, and six days. I had to like it—had to make a living, to survive. I cut meat—Swift Company meat. They gave me a chart to cut meat by. I would sit down and draw the cut of meat first. I used to get up every morning at four. I walked from Caples to the hospital in Welch. They had 17 nurses going to school there. I made hot cakes and syrup for them girls. I washed all day; I would be in there in the morning cooking hash. You talk about working, I worked.

You want your children to do better; you don't want to go backwards. I went to school, and I teach the children I come in contact with all I know. I've taught them how to sing, how to take care of themselves. Teach children to work honest. If you have a job, give a person an honest day's work, and you'll gain.

You know, I was a songster for 15 years on the Baptist Choir, in Durham, North Carolina. I was a great soprano songster. I sang so many songs. "God Will Take Care of You" was my favorite. You know, He will. He will make a way out of nothing.

Black Migration to Southern West Virginia, 1870-1930

At the close of the Civil War few blacks lived in southern West Virginia. There were small black communities along the Kanawha River and in the valley farming districts of Monroe and Greenbrier counties, but most of the new state's rugged terrain had not been suited to the plantation-style agriculture which produced large enslaved populations farther south. After emancipation, 20 percent of southern West Virginia's black residents moved out of state, further reducing their already small numbers. Scattered black families continued to live in most areas, but the 1870 Census reported only 5,540 blacks in the state's southern counties. Kanawha, Greenbrier, and Monroe counties together claimed 78 per cent of these people, with McDowell and Lincoln reporting none at all. Great changes were afoot in the southern counties, however, and by 1900 McDowell County would boast the largest and most progressive black community in the state.

The black community in southern West Virginia expanded with the coming of industrialization. In the 1870's and 1880's two major railroads pushed across the state's southern counties. The Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad entered Greenbrier County and extended westward to Hinton and down the New and Kanawha Rivers to Charleston and beyond. The Norfolk & Western Railroad entered Mercer County and followed the Tug Fork and Twelvepole Creek watersheds through McDowell, Mingo, and Wayne counties.

Jobs on railroad construction crews attracted black laborers from sharecropping districts in Virginia, the Carolinas, and the deep South. These jobs provided opportunities for direct wages, as opposed to the cropsharing system under which most blacks in the South worked. Jobs on the railroad were not burdened by the economic and social constraints imposed by the sharecropping system. "Working on the railroad" was not a ticket to freedom and prosperity, but for most black laborers railroad jobs provided some opportunity for social mobility. John Henry and his fellow railroad workers in southern West Virginia hoped to secure a better future for their families by working for the N & W and the C & O.

Many blacks came to southern West Virginia to work on the railroad, but the larger migration followed the competion of the rail lines. The opening of hundreds of coal mines on the new rail lines created thousands of new jobs in the sparsely populated mountains. Blacks traveled to southern West Virginia after hearing from friends or relatives of job opportunities. Mining companies hired recruiters to work in southern cities. Recruiters organized whole trainloads of black families, departing from cities like Durham, North Carolina, for

The N & W served as an agent in the hiring of Blacks for railroad and mining jobs and as the means of transporting them to those new jobs. Black families in Virginia and North Carolina often boarded N & W trains in Norfolk, Durham, and Lynchburg for the journey to Bluefield, Keystone, and Welch.

points in southern West Virginia. Consequently, West Virginia's black population increased dramatically:

Black Population of Southern West Virginia, 1870-1930

1870	1890	1910	1930
5,540	18,866	46,731	88,214

Blacks became an integral part of the labor force and the larger community through hard work and participation in community affairs. In the 1890's an epidemic of lynchings in the Pocahontas coalfield erupted; 700 blacks met in Elkhorn and appointed a committee to demand action by county officials. Blacks were eager to organize schools and political groups. Black miners strengthened their positions in the mine and the community through participation in the Knights of Labor and in later UMWA organizing.

The history of southern West Virginia's black community is something of an anomaly in the Appalachian experience. Southern historians have usually characterized Appalachia as overwhelmingly white and racially repressive. Yet by 1930 almost 90,000 blacks lived in southern West Virginia in one of the South's most progressive black communities. Small towns—Keystone, in McDowell County, for example—boasted thriving black profesional communities. Black lawyers, doctors, and educators won the respect of the entire community. Keystone even supported a black newspaper. Black colleges in Bluefield and Institute educated graduates from the area's segregated secondary schools.

The Great Depression, mine mechanization, and the decline of the coal industry in the 1950's and the early 1960's combined to change the history of the black community. Black and white West Virginians fled the depressed state to seek better opportunities in northern cities. This outflow has reversed itself in the last decade, as thousands have returned home to West Virginia. It appears, however, that blacks, with roots only a few generations deep in the region, have been under-represented in the reverse migration. Since blacks—generally "last hired and first fired" in the coal industry as elsewhere — were over-represented in the original out-migration, the combined result has been a waning black population in the southern counties. Today, black strongholds exist only in McDowell County and a few other places, and the trend is not likely to change itself soon.

Bob Withers

Upshur County Logger, Lumber Camp Cook, and Game Warden

Photographs and Text by Skip Johnson

THE intersection of West Virginia routes 4 and 20 at Rock Cave, Upshur County, isn't exactly the crossroads of the world, but from that vantage point Bob Withers sits on his porch and watches a tiny part of the universe go by. Withers, 79, is a retired former conservation officer for the Department of Natural Resources. Before that, he worked for the Department of Highways in Upshur County, and before that he cooked in logging camps.

He became a conservation officer when that title hadn't yet become fashionable, and officers were called game wardens. Not one to tamper with history, Withers refers to his former calling as simply that of game warden. He also belonged to an era when officers were, more often than not, political appointees. Withers, for example, was recommended for a job with the Department of Natural Resources because he worked for the Democratic party and Matthew Neely in the 1940 election.

Before that, he was a Republican for a brief time. "That was back during hard times," he recalled, "and I had a woman and three kids and no job. I worked in timber for a while, and a man I worked for was running for sheriff of Upshur County on the Republican ticket. He asked me to change my politics to vote for him, and I did."

Later, a member of the Democratic executive committee in the county offered Withers a job hauling voters for Neely in his gubernatorial race against Republican Carl Andrews if he would rejoin the ranks of registered Democrats, so he switched back. He solicited campaign contributions and hauled voters, and had $17 left to return to the party treasury.

After Neely took office, Withers was given a job with the highway department as foreman of a crew building wooden culvert bridges. He also supervised the first crew that cleared ground for the site of a state garage between Buckhannon and Weston.

Later he was approached by the county road supervisor, who asked if he would like to become a game warden. The former Upshur County officer had been fired, Withers was told, for stomping on a campaign picture of Governor Neely.

Withers was uncertain how to take the new job offer. "I thought it was a diplomatic way of getting rid of me," he recalled, "and I told the supervisor if he didn't like my work he should tell me straight out." But the offer was genuine, Withers was assured, so he filled out an application and in about a week received a letter from Charleston asking him to come down for an interview.

The interview was with then-director T. D. Gray, who asked Withers pertinent questions about hunting and fishing. When Gray was finished, Withers told him: "Mr. Gray, I think I've answered your questions satisfactorily, and I think you're going to appoint me, but there's one thing I want to add. If I catch you, Had McCutcheon [Gray's assistant who was present] or Governor Neely violating the game laws in Upshur County, I'm going to arrest you."

Withers made this point, he said, because he had noticed that the "big shots" of Upshur County could break the game laws with impunity, while lesser mortals got arrested.

The remark hit a responsive chord with Gray, a man who is remembered by his modern counterparts as a good director. He told Withers to raise his right hand, and he swore him in on the spot.

Then Gray beckoned J. H. Branham into his office. The tall, uniformed Branham, a Kanawha County conservation officer for many

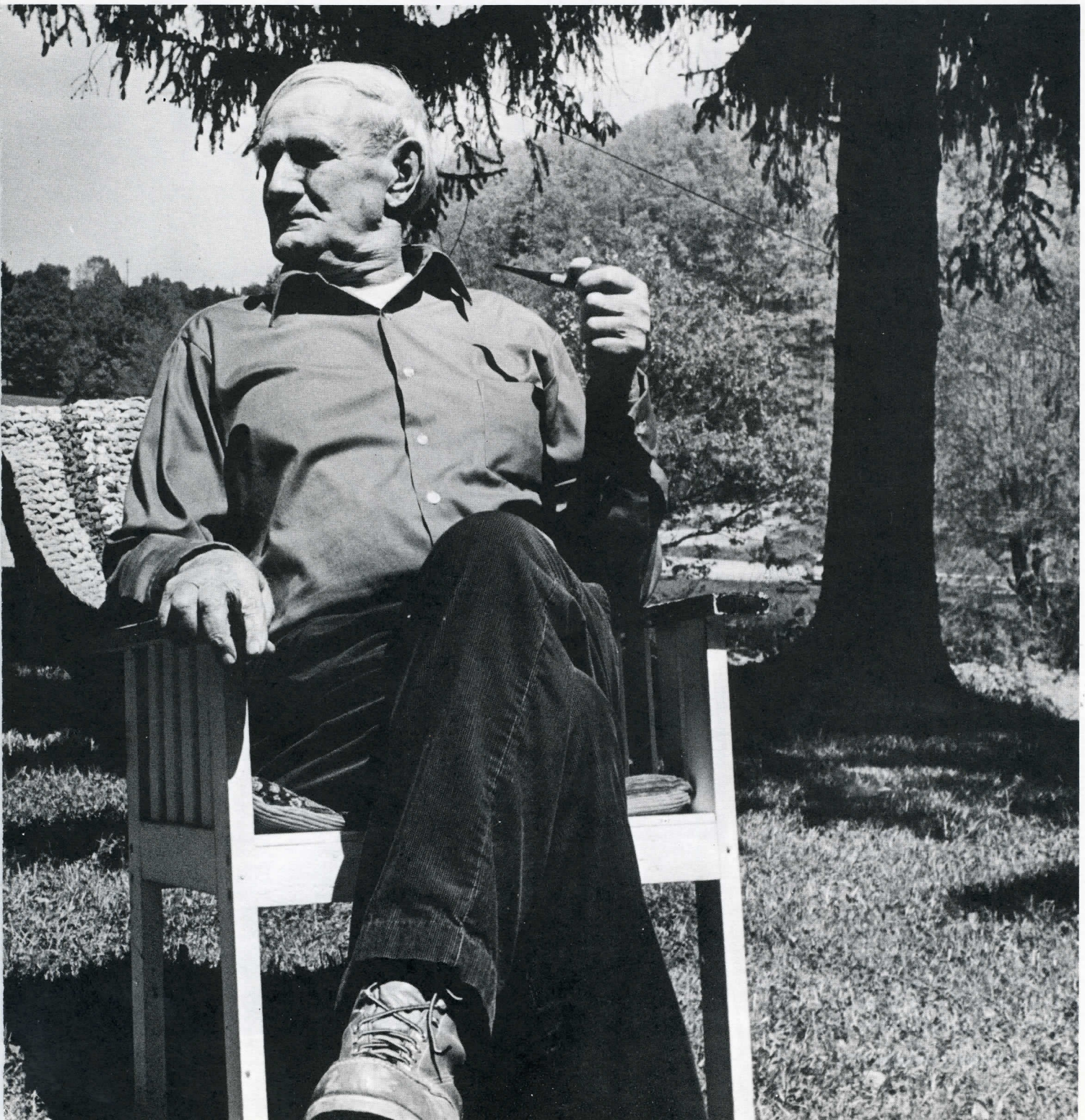
years and now something of a legend, was instructed to accompany Withers back to Upshur County and break him in.

"He stayed at my home," Withers continued, "and the next morning at breakfast he advised that we visit the area of the county where I thought we would be most likely to find some violations in progress. So I suggested we go to Kanawha Head."

The choice was a good one for Withers and a bad one for the man they arrested for having two more squirrels than the law allowed, and for the man they arrested for hunting without a license. Ironically, the latter violator had previously asked Withers to "clean out" the Kanawha Head section of the county, where he said considerable illegal hunting was taking place.

They made additional arrests the following day, and on the third day, Branham packed up and returned to Charleston, having decided that Withers could do the job by himself.

True to his word to director Gray, the new Upshur County officer ar-



rested the high and the mighty as well as the lowly. Among his victims were two preachers, including one from West Virginia Wesleyan College. Their sin was keeping brook trout shorter than the 6-inch size limit. Withers wrote out tickets and advised them to go and sin no more.

Withers and former officer Hillary Gregory were offered $1,000 by a doctor they had arrested on a fishing violation. Withers said the doctor didn't want his name published in the DNR magazine as a violator, and he offered them money to forget they ever saw him.

But the good doctor received a ticket and his name was published in the magazine, which was the custom at that time. Withers believes that practice, which has since been discontinued by the Department, was a bigger deterrent than fines.

Although Withers is from the old school of conservation officers, he doesn't necessarily bow in deference to today's college-educated officers. "Let me tell you," he said, "some of the best game wardens they had was fellows like myself who just got out of free school."

Withers retired in 1962 at age 62, after falling and injuring his back while feeding quail during the wintertime. In addition to serving in Upshur County, he also served in Webster and Lewis Counties. He has a particular fondness for Lewis Countians. "Those people were awfully nice to me down there," he said.

Of Withers' recollections of his job as game warden, one stands out as a particularly sage commentary on human nature: "I could always tell when someone was violating the law," he said, "by the expression on their face."

The most dramatic wildlife change that took place in the central part of the state during Withers' tenure as an officer was the rebirth of the deer herd. "In 1941 there wasn't a wild deer that I knew of in Upshur County," he said. "In 1942, Russ DeGarmo [former DNR game biologist] released five does and two bucks at Alexandria, and a few more deer were

Opposite: Bob Withers, a "wood hick" in younger years, prefers leaning on trees to cutting them now.
Above: Bob and Mildred Withers at home at Rock Cave, Upshur County.

released at Holly River. Others gradually came in, and now there are deer everywhere in Upshur County."

Bob Withers' working career began at age 16 when he hired on at a sawmill for the princely sum of $1 per day, pay your own board. He advanced to the coal mines at Adrian for $1.50 per day, but returned 50¢ of this amount for board.

During the beastly cold winter of 1917-18, he worked in the woods near Pickens, Randolph County — the hardwood timber capital of West Virginia. "It was so cold one morning that we wouldn't turn out," Withers remembers, "and they fired all of us." The roving Withers moved to the Dry Run Lumber camp between Helvetia and Mill Creek, where his first cousin was the cook. Providentially, the "cookee," or cook's helper, had just quit, and his cousin offered him the job.

"I didn't know a thing about cooking," Withers confided. "The next morning when we were preparing breakfast, my cousin told me to make brown gravy. Well, I didn't know how to make gravy, but he said, 'Bob, you're gonna learn how or else.' By gosh, it wasn't long until I was cooking."

He moved to the Croft Lumber Company's Camp 27 on the Back Fork of Elk River, where he helped prepare meals for 75 to 85 hungry "wood hicks." "When they sat down to eat, they ate like horses," he said. "They worked 10 hours a day, and they ate accordingly."

The prodigious appetites of the wood hicks are preserved in Withers' memory. A typical breakfast included ham and eggs, fried potatoes, biscuits, oatmeal, jellies, jams, coffee and tea. Occasionally there was steak, too, to be sure nobody went away from the table hungry. The noonday dinner was a formidable affair consisting of beef or pork, beans, potatoes, peas, corn, lightbread and cornbread, and dried peaches or apricots. Homemade pies, cakes and donuts were always available, too. The evening meal, called supper, followed along the same hefty lines as dinner. "Listen," Withers said, "if you didn't feed them well, you couldn't keep men back in the woods."

Cooking in a logging camp was done in gargantuan measures, Withers pointed out. For example, biscuits were baked in a double oven in square pans that held 100 biscuits, and donuts were fried in a large kettle on top of a wood-burning stove. Whole beef or pork carcasses often went into a single meal.

From the Back Fork of Elk logging camp, Withers bounced around to several other camps, working as a cook and occasionally in the woods. But the days of the logging camps were numbered, and eventually their number ran out. It was then that Withers began a second career as a conservation officer — pardon, game warden.

Today, Bob Withers and his wife, Mildred, live in retirement on a 50-acre farm at Rock Cave. They have four children, including Mrs. Avis Nine of Plymouth, Michigan, Bobby, Scott and Fred, all of Rock Cave; and 13 grandchildren. Withers met his wife at a logging camp on Elk River below Webster Springs. "She thought I'd cook for her," he said with a wink in the direction of the interviewer. "Well I got fooled," replied Mrs. Withers.

Phoebia G. Moore, M. D.

First Woman to Study Medicine at West Virginia University

By Arthur C. Prichard

WHAT KIND of person was the woman who broke the wall of sex prejudice thrown around the medical courses at West Virginia University? The 26-year-old woman accomplishing that feat was of Scotch-Irish ancestry, had grown up on a West Virginia farm, sharing life with her parents, three sisters and a brother. She had attended a crowded, one-room country school, then one in town, and had studied a year at a nearby normal school, preparing to teach. As a school-marm she had become convinced teaching "was too cut and dried" and that the field of medicine would provide her more freedom and satisfaction. The University's announcement that women would be admitted to the medical classes in 1898 prompted Phoebia Gean Moore to study medicine there.

From the school year of 1869-70, when a Morgantown physician, Dr. Hugh W. Brock was a part-time teacher of anatomy, physiology and hygiene, until two years after a full one-year curriculum in medical education was inaugurated in 1896, the WVU medical courses were for male students only. Men didn't think medicine was a proper subject to be presented in a mixed class. Upon a woman's attempt to enter Harvard Medical School in 1850, according to Robert Karolevitz in *Doctors of the Old West,* the male students submitted two protesting resolutions:

"Resolved, That no woman of true delicacy would be willing in the presence of men to listen to discussions of the subjects that necessarily come under consideration of the student of medicine.

Resolved, That we object to having the company of any female forced upon us, who is disposed to unsex herself, and to sacrifice her modesty by appearing with men in the medical lecture room."

The Harvard faculty, unwilling to face a student revolt, denied the woman entrance, even though she had been practicing medicine without a diploma for 15 years.

Upon West Virginia University's opening the medical courses to female students, a few brave young women registered. However, the 33 men taking those subjects were resentful and tried to embarrass their female classmates by speech and acts. All the women except Miss Moore dropped out. As she explained later, her desire for a chance to study medicine was too great to allow male prejudice and persecution to defeat her.

"They didn't know I had grown up on a farm and could take a lot. Both at the University and at Bennett Medical College in Chicago, where I completed my medical course after studying at the University, the boys at first made it rough for me, giving me the dirty jobs. But I just ignored them and did the work, and pretty soon they were my friends."

Phoebia Moore needed determination, both to obtain a formal education and to practice medicine. Although her father, Theophilus "Thof" Moore, believed in girls getting a basic education, he frowned on their going beyond that. Consequently, Phoebia had to provide the money for her medical school expenses. It isn't known if he gave her financial aid when, at the age of 21 years, she attended the Normal School at Fairmont (in 1893-94), or if he helped his daughter Margaret (Tocie), three years younger than Phoebia, go to the Normal later. But Phoebia earned money for her medical studies by teaching before she entered West Virginia University in 1898, and during one or more periods prior to receiving her M. D. from Bennett in 1903.

In her first year at the University the authorities announced that the medical course would be enlarged to a two-year curriculum the following year. The records reveal that Miss Moore remained a medical student for the second year (1899-1900) and also for 1900-01. Maybe she was out of school part of those three years, working to restore her bank account.

After getting her M. D. in 1903, Dr. Moore began practicing in her home town of Mannington. When she hung out her shingle a prominent Marion County physician declared, "I think it is very noble, but she won't last long."

Whether he was thinking of the general prejudice against women doctors, or of the strenuous demands of a country practice isn't known. During rainy periods the the Mannington District roads, unpaved and deeply rutted by the heavy loads of oil field equipment, were quagmires. On occasions even empty wagons required two or three teams of horses to pull them through axle-deep mud. Not long before Dr. Moore opened an office a horse had sunk so deep into the mire of Water Street, near the center of Mannington, that it suffocated before it could be extracted.

Snow drifts and inclement weather presented great difficulties for doctors traveling up hollows to deliver babies, perform emergency

Phoebia Moore while a student in Chicago, probably in 1902-03. Photograph by Hartley Studio, Chicago. Courtesy of Mary Moore Wolfe.

operations or to attend seriously ill patients. Having been born and reared on a farm (on Llewellyn Run, four miles from Mannington) and having broken colts and handled horses, Miss Moore could ride and drive horses well. In the early years of calling on patients she traveled on horseback, not riding sidesaddle, but sitting astride her mount. Some times in good weather she rode in a buggy. Then before many years Dr. Moore was at the steering wheel of a Model-T Ford. Yet in the early years, there were times when, having gone as far as a buggy or car could take her, she finished the trip on foot.

Her niece, Josephine Moore (Mrs. William Fox) tells of "Aunt Doctor," the name Josephine and Josephine's sister, Mary, often called their aunt, having exciting experiences in navigating treacherous roads in a car.

"There was the time when Aunt Doctor's Ford slipped off the road and started over the side of an embankment. Leaping from the car, Aunt Doctor called out, "Lizzie, if you want to go over the hill, you can, but I'm not going with you!"

Once when her car got stuck in the mud of a road near Four States, Marion County, the farmers, who used their work horses to pull the car out, couldn't figure out what a female was doing with such an impractical contraption.

In an interview given to Ethel Clark Lewis in 1930, Dr. Moore stated, "I've worn out five Fords and have had two other makes of cars since."

While curiosity or necessity may have prompted some people to call her at first, soon her medical skill and knowledge became well known and the basis for a successful practice was laid. Although she was a general practitioner, a large number of women and children were her patients. Dr. Moore delivered hundreds of babies, many of whom were to receive the name of Phoebia or Gean by appreciative parents.

Recognition of Dr. Moore's expertise in treating female diseases brought women from other communities to her office. Charlotte Koen recalls that a number of women registered at the Bartlett Hotel in Mannington, before that fine hotel burned in the 1930's, and remained in town several days to be treated by Dr. Moore, as their hometown doctors had recommended her to them.

A niece, Mary Moore (Mrs. Dorwin Wolfe) remembers her Aunt Doctor's expertise. Mary had accompanied her aunt on an emergency call to the country. Upon examining an eight or nine year old girl's injured arm, Dr. Moore told the mother it was broken and could be set easily.

"Aunt Doctor set the arm deftly. She did it quickly, in fact, I hadn't

thought she had started to do it, when it was done. Then Aunt Doctor told the mother to get her two smooth boards and indicated the preferred size. The mother was a skilled workman, too," Mary laughingly added. "She took an axe and went to work on some lumber in the back yard and soon shaped two boards which seemed to suit my aunt fine. Aunt Doctor had the broken arm splinted quickly.

"On another occasion when I went with her on a call I was a little more nervous. It was a terribly hot July day when we visited a camp of gypsies near Mannington to treat an injured child. After setting the youngster's broken bone, Aunt Doctor spied a woman whose twin babies were wrapped in heavy red flannel.

" 'Get those babies out of those blankets before you roast them!' ordered Aunt Doctor. This set off a hot argument, but in the end Aunt Doctor had her way. I was glad to leave the gypsies as I was scared."

There were times when Dr. Moore worked long periods without much rest. Once was during the flu epidemic of 1917. To enable her to visit more patients than otherwise she would have had energy to have seen, she employed someone to drive her car, so she could sleep as they traveled from house to house in the country.

Another exhausting period followed the disastrous tornado which left a path of destruction, injury and death through Mannington District and an adjoining portion of Harrison County the evening of June 23, 1944. Along with other physicians, nurses and people of the area, she labored long hours to care for the victims.

Dr. Moore performed a significant service by attending the women at the Farm Women's Camp held annually at Jackson's Mill. As an experiment, Director Nat Frame invited Dr. Moore to be on the camp staff in an effort to help the women healthwise. Preparing an office and a temporary hospital room there, she waited for people to come to her. While the women looked curiously at the health headquarters and at the lady doctor, they didn't enter. Tired of waiting for them, she approached a group of campers gathered by one cottage.

"How many of you can dance the Virginia Reel?" she startled them by asking.

Slowly recovering from surprise, a number of the women admitted they could. Soon, to the accompaniment of clapping hands, a dance was under way and a spirit of merriment prevailed. Shortly after she returned to her office, women began dropping in to be examined. Among other results of these examinations, two cases of early cancer were discovered.

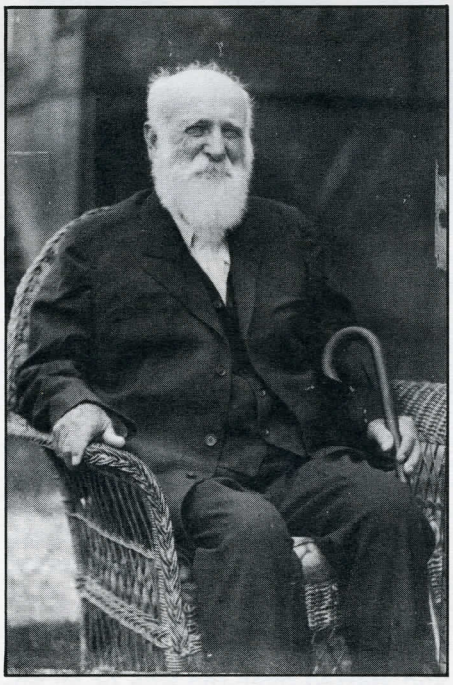
In a 1952 article in the Fairmont *West Virginian,* Dr. Moore said, "One woman followed my advice to take treatments; the other one didn't, and died within the year. The following summer the woman who took treatments ran to meet me with open arms at the entrance, shouting, 'You saved my life!' Oh, my, that was a thrill! The work I did at Jackson's Mill was far-reaching in its educational value."

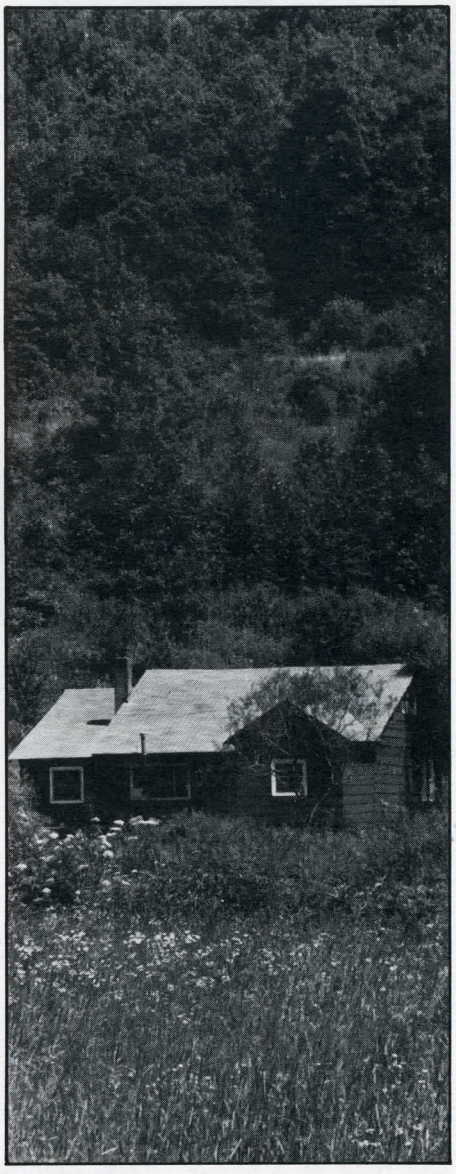
Phoebia Moore possessed a lively sense of humor. Charlotte Koen tells of the doctor entering Matthews Drug Store one stormy winter evening. After indicating to Harry Matthews the drugs and supplies needed to refill her medicine case, she chatted with friends assembled in the comfortable confines of the store.

"Do you have to go out in the country on a night like this?" someone asked.

Phoebia laughed. "Oh, yes. I've got a baby treed out there."

Mrs. Madelyn Frye of Mannington remembers Phoebia speaking of the time when the Marion County doctors and their wives gathered in





Above Left: Father Theophilus Moore served in the Union Army through the entire Civil War and passed his Republican politics on to daughter Phoebia. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Josephine Moore Fox.
Above Right: The Theophilus Moore farmhouse, remodeled, where Phoebia Moore was born and lived as a child and young person. Photograph by Arthur C. Prichard.

the Fairmont Hotel. The wives were together on the mezzanine, while the doctors assembled in the ballroom. One of the bellhops started toward the ballroom.

"What you goin' to do?" a fellow worker asked him.

"I'm going to tell that lady she's in the wrong place. She ought to be on the mezzanine."

"Are you crazy? That's no lady, that's Dr. Moore."

Mrs. Frye recalls another favorite story of Dr. Moore's. A husband and wife, members of a family which often sought her services, but didn't always pay, were visiting the doctor's office.

"Doc, I wish you'd look at my wife. She's real porely."

Examining the woman, Dr. Moore told them, "There's nothing to be alarmed about; she is going to have a baby."

"Another baby?" Then a pause. "Doc, we've got enough kids now. Can't you correspond her so she won't have no more babies?"

Although she was good natured, even bordering on being jolly, Phoebia Moore could be stern on occasions. One such time was when a good friend of hers, a teenage girl, was in such a hurry to become a nurse that she falsified her age, claiming she was a year older than she was, in order to get into a nurses' training school. Although the girl was doing well in the school, a talkative neighbor went around saying she intended to tell the school the girl's real age. Dr. Moore engaged the woman in conversation.

"Doctor, I'm going to write them just how old that girl really is, so they will put her out."

"Mrs. Blank, do you happen to remember that day about two years ago when you . . . "

The woman interrupted Dr. Moore. "Doctor, you know, I've decided I won't write the school after all."

Like many other physicians, Phoebia Moore had numerous charity patients, whom she cared for when they needed her. She not only gave free medicine and medical service on occasion, but was generous with other gifts. Someone said that once when calling on a poor family Dr. Moore discovered the sick mother didn't have any shoes. After leaving medicine for the woman, Dr. Moore took off her own shoes, gave them to the woman, and returned to town in her stocking feet.

Many times when friends protested she was far too generous to folks, she would exclaim, "But I just love to give things to people."

Keenly interested in the affairs of her town, state and nation, she belonged to a number of organizations which she believed were helpful: The First Methodist Church of Mannington; the Woman's Club; the West Augusta chapter of the chapter of the Daughters of the American Revlution, as well as the county, state, and national medical associations. She had helped to organize the Mannington Republican Women's group, and was a member of the West Virginia League of Women Voters.

Knowing of her father's record in the Civil War helps one understand Dr. Moore's strong Republican views. When the War began, Theophilus Moore, then 17 years of age,

Top: Phoebia Moore and brother John at West Virginia University, probably during school year of 1899-1900. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Mary Moore Wolfe.
Bottom: "Hick House," West Virginia University's first building for the dissection of human cadavers, where Phoebia Moore studied anatomy. Students named the building in an irreverant reference to the Latin epitaph *hic jacet* ("here lies"). The site in Alling Run Hollow is now occupied by Mountaineer Stadium. Photograph courtesy of West Virginia University Archives.

Left: Dr. Moore. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Josephine Moore Fox.

Above Left: Phoebia Moore ready for graduation, probably in 1903. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Mary Moore Wolfe.
Below: Dr. Moore fashionably dressed early in her practice, possibly during 1904-08 period. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Mrs. Nelle Dibus.

walked from Mannington to Wheeling to enlist in the Union Army. A member of one of West Virginia's most prestigious Civil War fighting units—the West Virginia Seventh Volunteers Infantry — "Thof" fought throughout the conflict and was present at Appomatox Court House, Virginia, when General Lee surrendered.

After casting his first ballot for Abraham Lincoln, the first Republican president, Mr. Moore voted in every presidential election until his death in 1930. Being confined to his home by illness one national election day late in his life, he insisted on being taken to the polls so he could vote. Doubtlessly, it was for the Republican candidates.

In March, 1952, friends gave Phoebia Moore a reception in honor of her 80 years of life and about 50 years of practicing medicine. We say "about 50 years" since it isn't known exactly when she began her practice. The West Virginia State Medical Association's records reveal she was graduated from the Illinois Medical College (then Bennett Medical College) in 1903. Yet on January 25, 1902, she delivered a baby boy to Mr. and Mrs. Jack Wetzel; it was the first baby she delivered in Mannington. She was teaching school in Mannington then and helped save many of the library books when fire destroyed the school building January 24, 1902. Evidently, she had dropped out of college to earn money so she could continue her medical education. Maybe in addition to teaching school, she was assisting a local physician on a part-time basis. Or it could have been that there wasn't a doctor available to bring Percy Wetzel into the world when the time of his birth arrived, and Phoebia took care of the emergency. Incidentally, Dr. Moore later delivered seven more boys to the Jack Wetzels, but was in Baltimore taking a medical refresher course when the only girl, Eula, arrived in the Wetzel home.

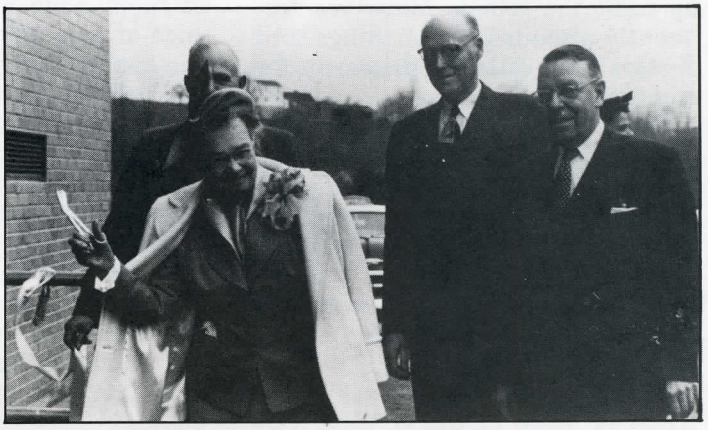
The March 6, 1952, reception for Dr. Moore took place in the Elks Club rooms in the Bank of Mannington building, the same edifice in which her office and apartment were located. Friends, wishing to honor her with a gift, asked what project would please her most, and were told: "the establishment of a Premature Baby Room in the Fairmont General Hospital."

More than $1,100 was contributed to furnish such a room in the hospital annex, then under construction. On the room's door was placed a plaque, reading:

Dedicated to
Dr. Phoebe Moore
By the
People of Mannington

The plaque slightly misspelled Dr. Moore's name, but there was no mistaking the genuine community gratitude it represented.

Among the many presents re-



Top Right: Dr. Moore's 80th birthday party, March 6, 1952. Standing are Miss Frances Bowers and Dr. Moore. Seated to Dr. Moore's left is nephew Kenneth Hess. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Josephine Moore Fox.

Left: Dr. Moore liked to fish, and this Corpus Christi, Texas, picture demonstrates her skill. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Josephine Moore Fox.
Bottom Right: Dr. Moore cutting ribbon to open Fairmont General Hospital's Annex, April, 1953. Second row, left to right: R. H. Dollison, Sr., member of hospital board; Dr. N. H. Dyer, Director of State Department of Health; third man unknown. Photographer unknown.

ceived at the reception was a bouquet of beautiful red roses sent by Percy Wetzel from Texas, where he was working in the oil fields. Of the gifts given her on that occasion she exclaimed, "I'm the most fortunated person in the world as I'm getting my flowers while I live."

Suffering a stroke in 1948, Dr. Moore was forced to limit her practice the last five years of her life. A few days after she cut the ribbon to open the Fairmont General Hospital Annex in April, 1953, she was admitted to Fairmont General as a patient. She remained there until her death on June 4, 1953.

Phoebia Moore was laid to rest in the Bee Gum United Brethern Church Cemetery in the family plot where her father, mother (Prudence Varner Moore), and sister Tocie were buried. For some time prior to her death, Dr. Moore had urged members of that Church to form a committee and establish a trust fund for the maintenance of its cemetery. The money she willed to the Church's cemetery committee was the beginning of such a fund, which has become large enough to maintain the cemetery.

A larger amount was left the Mannington High School Library for books. Placed in a trust fund under the capable management of the Dr. Phoebia G. Moore Memorial Library Fund Committee, thousands of dollars of books have been bought, and yet the fund has tripled in size during its quarter-century existence. Mrs. Margaret Atha, Miss Elizabeth Tabler and others believe that Phoebia Moore's interest in library books grew when she saved library books in the 1902 school fire.

The great host of people who were blessed by Dr. Phoebia Moore's healing hands and warm heart, and the others who are and will yet benefit from the provisions of her will, are thankful she had determination to break the barrier around the medical courses at West Virginia University, and that she persevered to become a doctor. And we rejoice that she was a woman who could say truthfully, "I love to give to people."

Midwives' Tales

Photographs and Text by Ruth Belanger

IF you are over 55 years old, and were born in West Virginia, chances are excellent that you were born at home. Most everyone was up until the 1930's. Midwives frequently attended the birthings, and doctors were called in primarily for emergencies.

Sometime in the '30's the shift began toward having babies in the hospital. New doctors starting practice wouldn't attend home births. Younger women chose not to learn the craft of midwifery. Home births, once a normal, everyday event, seemed to be a thing of the past by 1970.

There has been a revival of interest in home births in West Virginia in the past decade. Some young couples have decided to have their babies at home. Younger women are training themselves, as best they can, to be midwives.

Barbara Kline of Elkins, one younger woman, gave birth to her two children at home. She talks about some of the reasons she and her husband had for their home birth decision. "It just made total sense to do it at home, especially for us all to be together; for the baby's benefit as well as for the rest of the family. That's when the relationships are begun. We wanted to have our babies at home because we wanted to be in control. I felt safer having it at home. We wanted our baby to be with us and not taken right away. We just didn't treat having a baby as being 'sick.' "

Many women who gave birth at home and a few of the old midwives themselves are still around. I spoke with three of those midwives about home births: Minnie Hammonds, 81, of Huttonsville; Annie Brake, 81, who midwived in the Valley Head area; and Hazel Finlen Libert, 86, a licensed midwife who attended births in Cassity, Mabie, Norton, Buckhannon, and Elkins. The three of them have a combined experience of over 500 birthings, without the loss of a single mother and only one baby.

To a woman, they vigorously propound home birth for a variety of reasons—they claim that it's better for the mother, better for the baby, and no one can deny that it is less expensive than hospital births. Most important to them, however, is their shared conviction that having a baby at home is "the natural way that God provided for having babies."

Minnie Hammonds

Minnie Hammonds started accompanying her mother, also a lay midwife, to birthings when she was 16. At 18 she had her own first child. The following is her account of that event.

Minnie Hammonds. My mother and my sister, they was scairt, you know.

Ruth Belanger. Why? Your mother was a midwife.

MH I was awful big with him.

RB You mean you were fat, or were you just big and pregnant?

MH He weighed 12½ pounds when he was born. They went huckleberry picking and they was gone all day. Well, I was sick all day. My back was hurting. My husband, he was over at his father's and my mother lived over on Indian Lick and I came there until my baby was born to stay, you know. They went to pick huckleberries, my sister and mother, when they come back, why, I was sick all day but I wouldn't tell them about it.

RB How do you mean sick, were you having cramps?

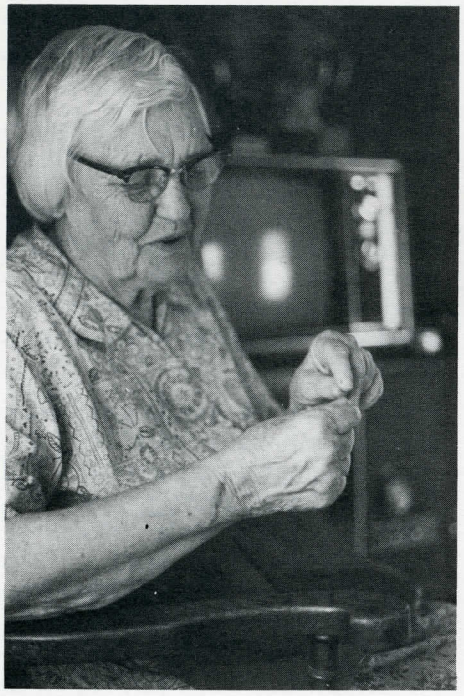
MH Pain. Just aggravating pain. When they come back why I had supper ready and went outside. I was getting hot and the pains were coming quicker.

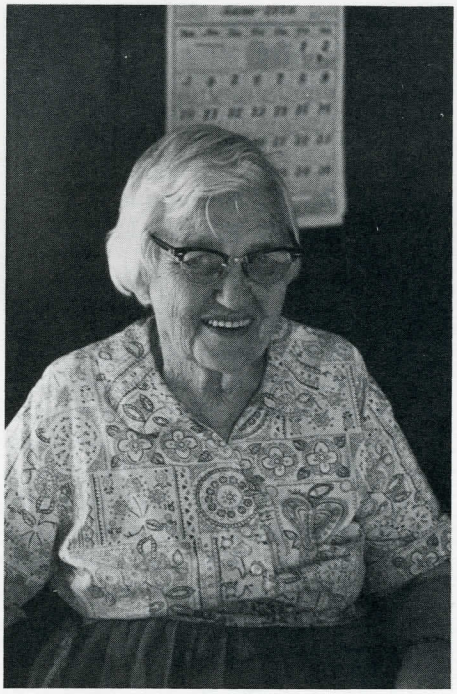
RB What time of year was this?

MH August. The 18th of August. We had a little log barn, a little log house behind the house where we smoked meats and stuff in, you know. I went out there, and by the time I got out there and got hold of the end of the logs, I was having bad pains. My uncle come up the road. He walks up to me and he said, "You're sick, aren't you?" I said yeah. He said, "I've got some good medicine for that." I said, "Oh, yes, I know your medicine." He had taken an old bottle of whiskey out of his pocket and he said, "Now take a drink of this." I said no, my mother'd kill me if she knowed I drank any of that, and he said, "No, she'll never know."

So I turned it up and taked a drink, you know, I took a pretty good drink. I felt I was getting worse and my pains were getting harder and I thought I'd slip in the back door and get in my bed. Mom had me one fixed away from all the rest so I just went in the back door and the chamber [pot] was setting there by the bed. I got in the bedroom where she had my bed fixed.

The chamber was a setting right by the side of the bed and I just got down on it. Well. I couldn't get up and so I just bore down hard and the baby come in it. [Laughter] I hollered after the baby was done there. I hollered for Annie, and that's my sister, 'cause I didn't want my mother to know. Annie come in





Midwife Minnie Hammonds recalls, "I had two of mine completely alone. I had one out behind the barn, and carried it in in my dress tail and that's no lie."

and she said, "Oh, Mom, run here. This old sow's had a pig in the pot." So Annie said get up off there. I said, "No." I just raised up easy and the baby come right off and Annie said, "Well, how'll we get you in the bed." I said, "I'm not going in the bed." My mother had my father's raincoat and saddle hanging back in the little room right by my bed, so if I got sick he could go for the doctor quick. She was afraid there'd be something wrong with me, I was so big. When Annie hollered she said, "What in the world is wrong with you?" I said not a thing, just lay that raincoat down there. She laid the raincoat down and I just got on over there and laid down on it. She'd taken the afterbirth right there, and I just washed and got up and got in the bed. And that's the way I had my first one.

Minnie talked at length about midwifery and her experiences in home births from 1914 to 1976.

RB Minnie, you said before that you started at being a midwife when you were 16, is that right?

MH Yes.

RB How did you get started doing that?

MH Well, my mother. Going out with my mother at night when she would go. She wouldn't go by herself. I went along with her, and when we'd get there I'd help her.

RB Do you mean to say that until you were old enough to go with her that your mother didn't deliver babies in the night time, only in the day?

MH No, she would go at night if she could get someone to go with her. Somebody else had to walk and carry a lantern after night and I always carried the lantern.

RB Were you scared?

MH No, I was never afraid.

RB What area of West Virginia was this that you are talking about when you were 16?

MH We lived over on Indian Lick, that's about four miles from here.

RB From Huttonsville?

MH Yes.

RB How old were you when you first went out and delivered a baby by yourself?

MH Well, I delivered them when I was 17.

RB All by yourself?

MH All by myself.

RB How did doctors back then feel about midwives?

MH I worked with Doc Liggett down here at Mill Creek, and he would give me permit, you know, to deliver babies. If he wouldn't go he would have me to go.

RB You mean you had a license, a permit?

MH I didn't have no license, no. He would just give me permit. I would go there and tell him, and he'd give me a permit to go and deliver the babies.

RB Was this a written permission? Was it registered in the courthouse?

MH Well, now, I don't know that.

RB How much did you charge when you delivered a baby?

MH I didn't charge nothing. But they mostly gave me something.

Hazel Finlin Libert and Annie Brake

Unlike Minnie Hammonds, Hazel and Annie did not learn midwifery from their mothers. Annie tells how she got started attending home births back in 1921.

Annie Brake. Doctor Lambert told me, in Valley Head, he said, "You're gonna have to learn [how to be a midwife]. The old ones is getting too old to do it anymore." I never had no license. He just told me how to do it, and that's all.

Ruth Belanger. Did you charge anything for your services?

AB You weren't supposed to charge if you weren't licensed. The doctor charged $30, though, when he come.

Hazel, however, was licensed and she did get paid for her services. She relates her beginnings in midwifery in 1928 as follows.

Ruth Belanger. How did you get started?

Hazel Finlin Libert. The neighbors around Cassity—it was a little mining town then—it seemed like all they done was have babies. They would call me and I'd go and deliver the babies. Just got in the habit of it.

RB When you first started out and you were going to go to a woman's home, did you go to a doctor and get his permission?

HFL No. They would come after me and I'd go to the house. I would check and see what was needed when I got there, and I let the mother stay up as long as she wanted to. Do what she wanted to until she was ready. Then we put her to bed. I would get ready, fix her bed.

RB Did you use newspapers?

HFL Newspapers, yes. We didn't have plastic then. I would make pads out of newspapers and put a cloth over the top of them.

RB How did you first learn about having babies and being a midwife?

HFL Well, I don't know. We were raised on a farm, and my father was sick so much and my mother was dead, and me and my brother took care of the stock. So we brought lambs, pigs, and everything else into the world. I guess that's what fascinated me and I wanted to do it.

RB What was the process to get licensed?

HFL Dr. McCoy was the doctor from—well, he was at Junior, and he was at Buckhannon. He helped me get it. I had been with him so many times, and he had learned me and showed me.

RB So did you just have to go and register? Did it cost you any money?

HFL I had to pay for the license. We went over here at the "Y", and they showed pictures of having a baby and all a person had to do. I attended that. I just took it up myself. It's wonderful to go through with it and see what you've done after it's done.

There were drawbacks, however, to having a midwife's license. Minnie explained why she wouldn't have one.

RB Did he write out this permission, or did he just tell you to go on?

MH He'd just tell me to go on. I'd always take somebody else with me though, my sister or somebody, to tell that he told me. I was afraid something may happen, you know. Listen, they done told me they'd give me a license for midwife, but I wouldn't have it. The doctor wanted to give me a license but I wouldn't have it. Well, no matter who got sick or how far they lived, if I had it I'd have to go, you know. I said, "No, Doc, I don't want no license. But I'll help anyone I can, as long as you tell me I could go with them."

Unusual Birthings

Most of the home birthings were routine and normal. However, each of the midwives have one or two tales to tell of unusual happenings. Annie Brake told about the time a three week old infant took sick and the parents sent for her to see what she could do. When she arrived, the baby was thin and "black as a pot in the face." It had kept the parents awake for several nights by its incessant crying. She took the child and bathed it in a pan of warm water with two drops of turpentine in it. The baby was quiet for awhile after that. When it started crying again, Annie looked in its mouth. She saw a long worm coming out of its throat. She told the parents and they called the doctor. The doctor came and pulled the worm out of the baby's throat and the child was fine after that. Amazingly, the doctor had been there several days in a row and hadn't discovered what was wrong with the baby. As Annie says, "Young people won't listen to what us old folks tell 'em. They think we don't know anything."

Hazel related a sad tale of a baby who was dead at birth. "I got one baby at Cassity that was just rotten when it was born. The mother had been out and picked cherries and fell out of the cherry tree. But she didn t tell me that. In nine days the baby was borned. Of course, she pretty near died and after that she never could have no more children. But when the baby come it was just—well, I just had to wrap it up in a blanket. It was just borned to pieces. It caused a lot of trouble in there."

RB Was it full term or premature?

HFL Full term. I told them they better go to the doctor. They didn't at the time. They had to go later, and she pretty near died. 'Course, that wasn't my fault.

According to Minnie, doctors didn't like to deal with illegitimate births during the early part of the century when she was midwifing. Nor did they like to attend women who drank too much. Minnie's toughest case occured when she assisted a woman who was drunk at that time.

MH I went to young girls when doctors nor nobody would help 'em. Just young girls that went out and got 'em without being married.

RB Oh, illegitimate babies.

MH It was awful, yes.

RB The doctors wouldn't deliver illegitimate babies?

MH No, they wouldn't go.

I had one of my feet burnt; my husband Currence dropped a pan of meat grease on my foot and I couldn't get no shoe on it. Well, this woman was drunk and she'd been drunk for a week and she was laying in this old bed.

RB She was giving birth you mean?

MH Yes, she was ready to have the baby and nobody'd go help her.

RB Because she was drunk?

MH She'd been drunk for a week they said. My sister said they wanted to know if I would go down with her and I said yes. So I went down to Doc Liggett with my sister and I went in and I asked him, I said "Won't you go and help Mrs. _____?" And he said, "You needn't name that woman to me. I was up there once and she was so drunk she didn't know what she was a-doing, and I will never go back." And I said, "Well, she's a-wanting me to come and help her and I said I wouldn't come without I got permit from you." He said, "Go ahead, you'll never be bothered for it. Just go on. I'll give you permission to go and do what you can." But he said, "I'll not go."

So I went up there. She had been in the bed for a week and she had a big hole down in the middle of the bed, you know, and from here down was right down in the sink hole and she was awful heavy. I went in and said, "Mercy, Vernie" — that's my

Above Left: "I don't want you to think there's no pain involved but if you have a baby in the natural way that God provided, it's just part of life. It's just natural. It takes pain to do it—but it's worth it." Hazel Kittle, 81, of Harding, mother and expostmistress. *Above Right:* Hazel Finlen Libert, now 86, figures she could still attend a birth "in a pinch."

sister's name — "What'll we do?" She couldn't talk to us. Vernie said, "I don't know what you're gonna do, I'm going home." I said, "Oh, no, you're not. You come with me and I'm going to keep you here 'til I help this woman." So she had some stuff in the corner, and I said, "Just get anything you can, 'til I get it under her to get her hips up out of there." So we got, I don't know, a bunch of clothes or anything we could get, and put under her. I got a pillow I put right under her head, for I knowed them rags and stuff was a-killing her. I got up in the bed there with her and I took a piece of sheet and tied it to the foot of the bed, you know, so she could pull as I tried to get the baby.

RB Did you often do that?

MH When I didn't have nobody to help me, and Vernie wouldn't help me. I tied this old sheet and I told her, now, if she didn't want to die she better pull on that sheet until I got that baby. I said, "Or you're gonna die." So when I said that, she did. She bore down hard and I got the baby, but it was black as that, it didn't have a bit of breath in it when I got it. I held it up by the heels and I spanked it and I grabbed cold water and washed it in cold water all over. About the second time I stuck it in the water it squalled, and I said to my sister, "Now you keep rubbing this baby's face 'til I help her."

I was going to take the afterbirth, you know, and Vernie said, "Just lay it on that chair and let it die. Hit'd be better off if it was dead, 'cause it don't have no mother to take care of it, if she' going to drink like that." I said, "Oh, no, now Vernie, don't you do that." As it would lose its breath I'd rub it down over its face with camphor on my hand and hit would catch its breath. I done that about two hours, and oh, my burned foot was a-hurting so I couldn't hardly stand. I thought that baby was dead but after I got it out I spanked it a little, you know, and it finally flinched. Then I put camphor on my hands and I'd hold it easy to its nose. Just let it breathe a little bit of it, and I got it to breathing right. I told Vernie to do that, and she said lay it on that chair here and let it die.

I talked to the mother awhile after I got the baby. I said, "Now, you'll have to take good care of this baby or hit's gonna die." I said, "Hit's blue now." She went to crying and she said she wouldn't drink no more, but she did raise the baby.

RB Was he healthy?

MH No, well, it was just because she had been that way. She had never eaten or anything. She didn't have no milk for it 'cause she had been drinking.

RB So what did she have to feed it?

MH I don't know, I didn't go back there no more. But I saw the boy after he growed up, he was good looking then.

RB Was he mentally all right?

MH Yes, he was all right, only he was just about dead, that's all.

Tools and Medicine

Minnie had mentioned that she used camphor in working with that birthing. Annie had used a few drops of turpentine to bring out the worm in another baby. I asked each of them what herbs or tools they took with them when they went to attend birthings. Castor oil seemed to have the most widespread use. Minnie used it during the birthing process to make the birthing easier, Annie used castor oil only to rub the baby down with after it had been born and washed. Hazel would come back a few days after the birthing and give the babies an oral dose of the castor oil. As Hazel says, "They used castor oil a lot for babies then."

Once when Annie had a woman

Right: Marie Loudin is the mother of 12 children. Nine were born at home with no complications. For her last three children she couldn't find anyone to attend her at home, and had them at the hospital.

whose breast milk didn't come in right away she mixed up a brew of water, sugar, and "cat tea" and fed the baby that for a week until the mother's milk came in.

Boiling water was used to sterilize the scissors used to cut the umbilical cord, and to take the afterbirth, if it didn't come easily. Minnie tells about using boiling water to take the afterbirth.

MH If I couldn't get the afterbirth I always put about a quart of boiling water in a big chamber, you know. Most people calls 'em pots, maybe you never saw one. But after I delivered the baby and cut the cord and everything, if it wasn't loose I could get it loose easy with my hands.

RB You mean the afterbirth?

MH Yeah, if the afterbirth wasn't loose then, why, I would just set her out over this big chamber over this hot water, you know, and just rub her belly and in just a little bit it'd come by itself.

Hazel's version is just a bit different from Minnie's. She recalls, "Now, sometimes it come natural, but if it was slow I would take told of the cord and just move it a little bit to try to bring it. Not pull on it —if you pulled on it, you'd break it. But if it just failed to come, I'd put them up on the slop jar with some warm water and that never failed. The afterbirth would come then. The steam coming up from the warm water would help it, I guess. Then I put drops in the babies' eyes."

RB Why did you put drops in their eyes?

HFL To keep 'em from having sore eyes, I guess, or maybe from going blind. I don't know.

Hazel was the only one of the three midwives who used eye drops. Their methods also varied a bit on the use of castor oil and boiling water, but all three were united in their belief in the need for a nine day confinement.

HFL When I had a baby a woman laid in bed nine days. The tenth morning she got up. Once in awhile some of them would outwit me and do things you told them not to do, but that was my rule. I always went back once to check on the baby. If it was close enough that I could go. They take them to the hospital and they rush it. Everything is rush now. Now they get the mother up in two or three hours. The ninth day all the mother's organs went back into place. And then she was ready to get back up. But now they have 'em going to dances the very next day! Very near. I've always fought against that. And when a mother works herself and has this baby, they walk the floor and grab things when they have a contraction and hold on and walk some more 'til they get 'til they're just ready to have the baby. And then lay down and have it, is more normal than the way they do it at the hospital.

Hazel speculates that the current rise in uterine cancer is due to the fact that women no longer stay in bed long enough for their organs to return to their proper places after giving birth.

The women who served as midwives in West Virginia during the first half of the 20th century did not think of themselves as "professionals." They were not in it for the money—in fact, one of these three was never paid at all. Theirs was a labor of love, of neighborliness. None of them was able to hand her skills down to younger women. Minnie talks about that with great humbleness.

RB Did you ever try to teach anybody else how to be a midwife?

MH Oh, yeah. I took a lot of people with me but they'd get scared and run. Younger people, you know.

RB Do you think it takes something special to be a midwife?

MH I never took no training. I was with my mother and she was a midwife from the time I can remember until she died. No, no, I wasn't nothing special, just an old hillbilly and that's all I ever was.

Hazel offers the following advice to women who are pregnant today. "Well, I would tell you to just live your normal life, take care and eat plenty. If you want to go dancing, go dancing. But don't climb up in cherry trees!"

Don West, Poet and Preacher

Interview by Ken Sullivan

Don West with a summer camper at the Folkiife Center. Photograph by Doug Chadwick.

DON WEST of Pipestem, Summers County, has lived a long life in and around the Appalachian region. Born 75 years ago in the hills of northern Georgia, West has worked in the cotton mills and coal mines and in other manual occupations, and as a teacher and clergyman. In whatever way he has earned his living, however, his real life's work has been that of a social activist, working toward his vision of a better world, particularly for the people of the mountains. To this end, West has worked as a labor organizer and, more recently, as the director of the Appalachian South Folklife Center in Pipestem.

Although an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ, West has not pastored a church since a 1940's dispute with a Georgia congregation over an attempted lynching involving some of the church elders. Since that time he has been a minister at large, preaching in small churches in southern West Virginia, in the mountaintop chapel at the Folklife Center, and in the borrowed pulpits of liberal congregations in New England and elsewhere. Don West preaches a strong social gospel, aimed at improving conditions in the present world.

West has reached his biggest audience through his poetry, in such books as *O Mountaineers!* and *Clods of Southern Earth.* West takes a utilitarian view of poetry, as he does of preaching, using both as the tools of his reform work. In a 1951 poem, "Advice to the Would-Be Poets," he advises:

> Away with pious references
> To patriotism and to prayer,
> As the naked child is born
> Let the truth lie warm and bare!
> If there is a thing to tell
> Make it brief and write it plain,
> Words were meant to shed a light,
> Not to cover up again!

West's own poetry is primarily about Appalachia, and speaks particularly of union struggles in such places as Logan County, Paint and Cabin creeks, and Harlan County, Kentucky.

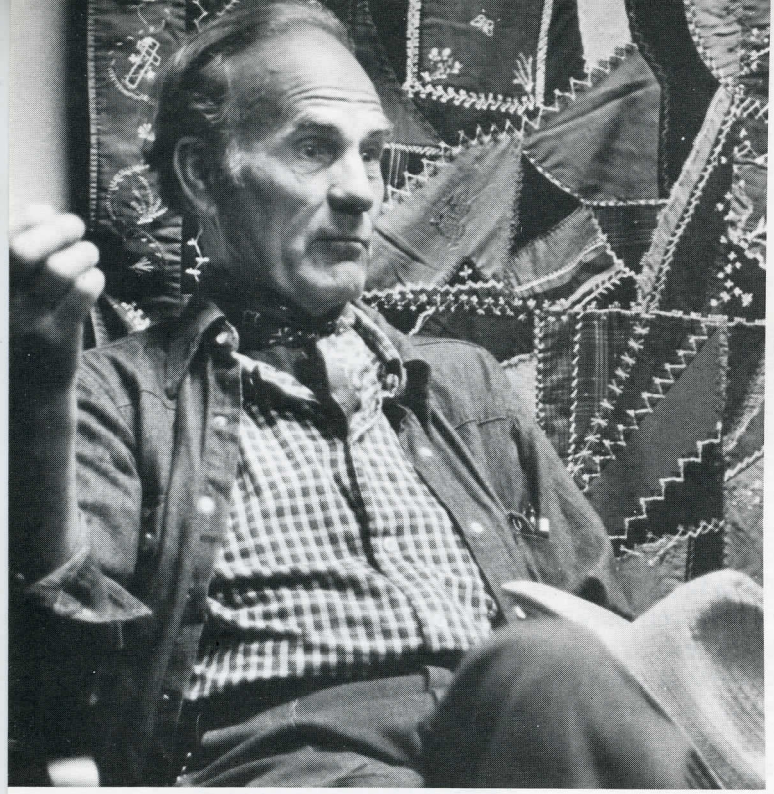
In recent years, Don West has become something of a celebrity, featured in religious journals and in such national magazines as *National Geographic.* He regularly travels in this country and aboard to promote his work, but is most at home at the Folklife Center's mountain farm in Summers County. The following interview was recorded in the GOLDENSEAL office in late May of this year.

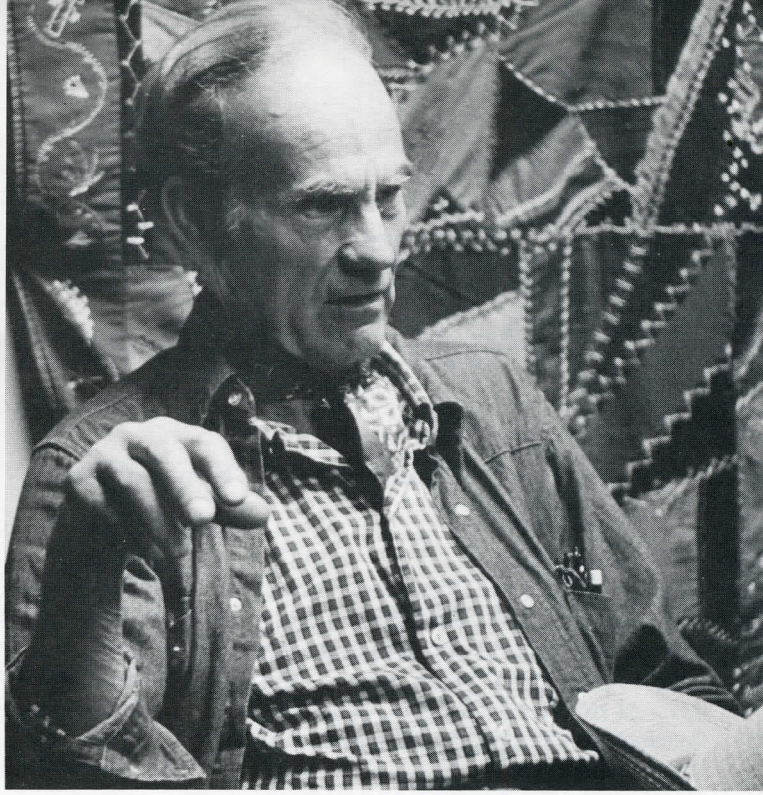
Ken Sullivan. Why don't you talk about your background to start us off?

Don West. Well, first of all, I'm a native mountaineer. And for practically all my life I've been particularly conscious of the kind of heritage we have in the Appalachian South. My wife Connie and I finally managed to start the Appalachian South Folklife Center at Pipestem, after a long period of work outside the area. We worked at teaching and at many different places, but mainly the last ten years we were located in Maryland, in Baltimore. Connie was teaching in the public schools and I was at the University. We wanted to come back to the mountains and start the Center, so we began saving one salary and living on the other one. Each month we'd put one salary in the bank and live on the other one. Both of our kids were out on their own feet, so we could do that.

After a ten-year period we had this savings, and we went back to Pipestem, West Virginia, and bought this 300-acre farm there and began to build the buildings and start the program of the Appalachian South Folklife Center. Our purpose is long-range — we're not fly-by-night, we've been at it all of our lives. Our purpose is to work toward helping, particularly mountain young people, to appreciate and know about their own heritage here in the mountains, in the Appalachian South, particularly.

We confine ourselves to the Appalachian South because it has played a peculiar role in the history of our country. It's an area that in the old days was geographically in Confederate territory, but actually





much of its sentiment was contrary to Confederate ideology and thinking and purposes. So many of our people were opposed to slavery before the Civil War. As a matter of fact, the first newspaper started in the United States dedicated wholly to no other purpose than the abolition of chattel slavery was in the mountain South. Around 1800 to 1820, *The Emancipator,* at Jonesboro in East Tennessee, was launched by a bunch of mountain people. The first issue, the editor made it very clear that his whole purpose was to work for the elimination, the abolishment of the evil institution of chattel slavery. There were then already organized in the mountains of the South many chapters of the Manumission Society, a freedom society. Now when this was started there in the East Tennessee mountains, William Lloyd Garrison, the great internationally-known abolitionist, was only a kid of nine years.

This is some of the background of why we are operating the Appalachian Folklife Center. We bring young mountain people there for the whole summer, up into August when it's time for school to start back. We have regular classes in mountain history, Appalachian history, and culture; we have music teachers that teach the fiddle, the banjo, the dulcimer, the harp, the guitar, all the different folk instruments. Our kids can take private lessons on these instruments. We have top-flight musicians, such people as Frank George and Charley Profitt, Oscar and Jean Wright, Brook Gore—all these are teachers, or have been teachers on our staff, for full summers. In between these sessions, we have lots of shorter terms for a week at a time. We have a lot of young people who come for a work camp. They spend, say, a week with us, they do a little bit of work, and we have programs every evening for them. The chairman of our board of directors is Dr. Donald Rasmussen at Beckley. He is one of our regular speakers on these occasions, and we have others.

We have folk music and we have different kinds of programs every evening. We have all of the various crafts that the mountain people are good in and that have been traditional with us. Like weaving and spinning, and folk music, quilt making, all of this kind of thing. But we feel that these are peripheral things when it comes to the heart of what the Appalachian heritage is. *Foxfire,* down in Georgia, does all of this kind of thing. But I've always felt a little bit disappointed in *Foxfire* in that they only present what I consider to be the quaint, the picturesque, and the romantic part of our heritage.

KS What is the heart of our culture?

DW The heart of our cultural heritage is that we've had a people who from the very early beginnings were dedicated to human rights and freedom and independence. Before they came here, many of them. The old Celtic people — the Irish, the Scottish, and the Welsh, plus the Huguenot French and some of the German revolutionaries and so on, who came over—had been in the old country contending for human rights and for the kind of freedom that this implies. When they came here, they found themselves pretty well out of harmony with the Tidewater cavalier element and they pushed on into the frontier which was Appalachia, sank roots there, and for many, many years they were pretty well cut off.

Very little was known about the mountain people. In fact, Edgar Allen Poe refers to the "wild men across the mountain" way back in 1845. And Toynbee, the great English historian, says the mountain people have reverted to barbarism. So there's a lot of ugly things that have been said about us. But

actually, there were three declarations of independence written and advocated before Jefferson, all three of them out of the mountain South. That was over in the Watauga area. The Watauga Association.[1] Way before Jefferson's document or these other constitutions were drawn up, our people were thinking in these terms. And then as I mentioned, the newspaper, the first newspaper dedicated wholly to the abolition of slavery, was here in the mountain South.

Now this is the kind of thing I think is the heart of our Appalachian heritage, not the pretty little doodads—and I don't write off the beautiful quilts and the music, we have all of that. But really, the heart of it is this dedication and this willingness on the part of the people to take principled positions on controversial issues. That has happened all down through our history.

For example, when the Civil War came, our people in the mountains all the way down to Georgia and Alabama joined the Union Army by the tens of thousands. Take a little town like Jasper, Georgia, right across the mountain from where I was raised — throughout the four years of the Civil War, they put the Union flag on the courthouse every single day, which is indicative of the sentiment of the people of the area. I was there, spoke in the high school there several years ago, not a single student knew this. All the seniors had had Georgia history classes, of course. This kind of history just gets swept under the rug, and we present Appalachian heritage as the quilts, and the quaint, the ox yokes, and the log cabins, this kind of thing. All that was part of it, but not the heart of it at all.

KS Why do you think we've lost this part of our heritage?

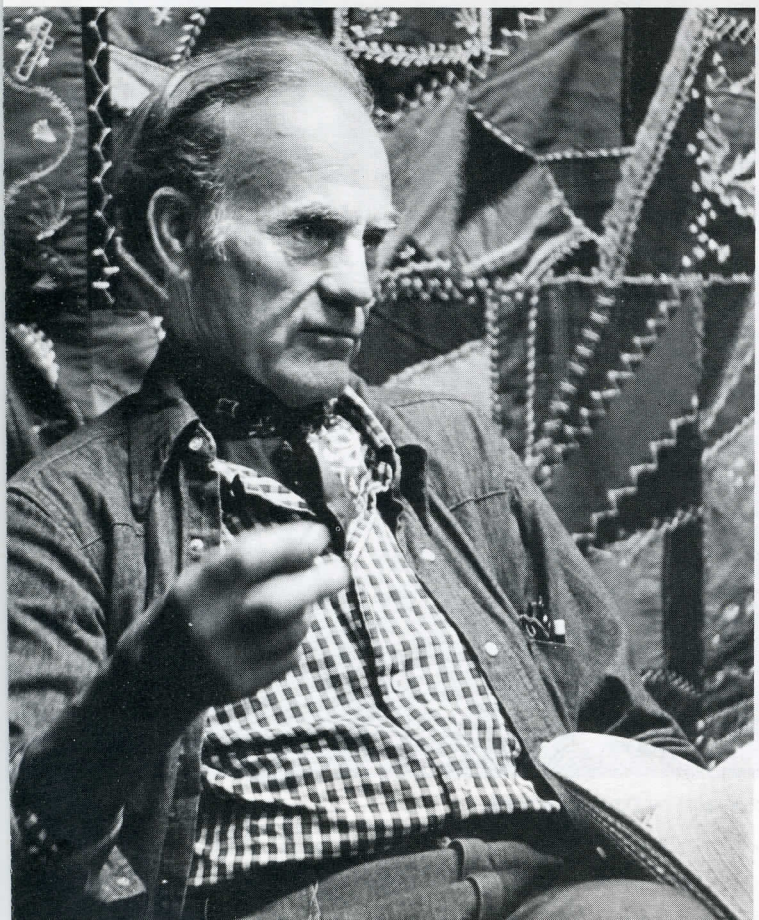
DW I think because it's so controversial. The real heart of our heritage is this dedication to principled positions, and we've lost it because we're still not a nation dedicated to those kinds of things.

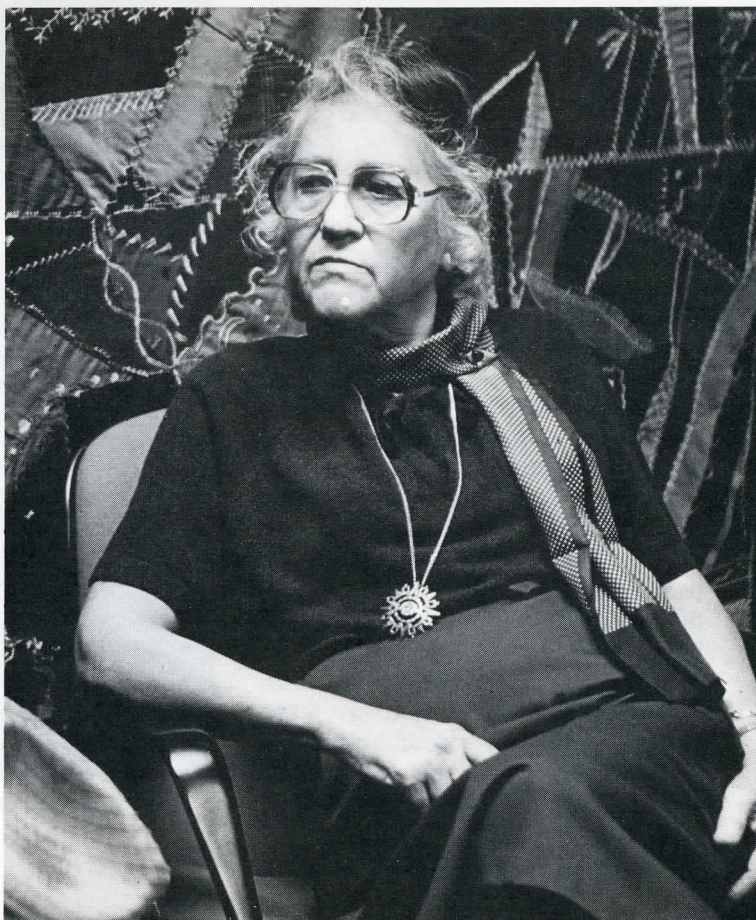
KS What impact do you think the industrialization of West Virginia and Appalachia has had on our heritage?

DW Well, naturally, I'm for jobs. I think people need to eat and I'm for everybody having food. I think everybody ought to have to work for it that's able-bodied. I was raised on a farm so far back that we never saw any cash money. My dad—I doubt if he ever saw as much as $5 in his life that belonged to him, that somebody wasn't reaching for. We dug it out of the hillsides, very rugged hillsides. People on welfare today live sumptously compared to the way we lived when I was coming up.

Now, after the Civil War, it was discovered that we had very valuable resources here in Appalachia. And so the entrepreneurs and their representatives came in, they bought up mineral rights for a song —50¢ an acre when there'd be a million dollars of coal under the ground—and they began to mine the coal and put our people to work in the coal mines. At very low wages, long hours. It was nothing to spend 18 or 20 hours in the mine, and no pay for overtime or anything like that, of course. They built company houses; the miner lived in the company house; he had to trade in the company store; he

Opposite and Below Left: Don West in conservation at the GOLDENSEAL office. Photograph by Rick Lee.
Below Right: Constance West met Don during student days at Lincoln Memorial University in Tennessee. Photograph by Rick Lee.





was paid in the company scrip. And if he didn't like it, he was simply told, "Buddy, if you don't like it, get along. We'll hire someone else in your place."

This ran very hard against the grain of our mountain sentiments, what we felt, what we thought. And eventually our people began to try to organize, to get a union. And immediately the corporations brought in professional gunmen. They brought in the Pinkerton's, they brought in the Baldwin Felts detective agency, and so on. And they began a reign of terror over our people. And this was all the way from Harlan County, Kentucky, to Cabin Creek and Paint Creek and Logan, here in West Virginia. Now this was a hard reality that our people had to face.

Some people have said that mountain people are too clannish, too individualistic to do things together. Jack Weller, who wrote that terrible book, *Yesterday's People,* took that position. Anybody that knows the history of our area and of our people, they realize what terror existed. I was in Harlan County in the 1930's, trying to help organize a union during that period. I know what it is to be arrested by deputies who have badges on, but who are actually thugs. They told me once in Harlan they were taking me to jail, but the gunmen took me out on the mountain in front of Harlan town, beat me unconscious and threw me out on the road. Now that was typical. Our mountain people faced these kinds of difficulties, this kind of terror, and they still had the guts to stand up and finally push through and organize a union.

KS You see, then, an actual dispossession of property and wealth, with the coming of industrialization. Was there a similar cultural dispossession?

DW Oh, yes, surely. Our natural resources, naturally, we were deprived of those. About ten corporations own 50% of the land in this state, for example. Today. And these corporations dominate the picture. But they also changed our whole perspective, our whole culture. It's been diluted, it's been

Don West at work. Photograph by Doug Chadwick.

polluted. History has been warped and twisted to such an extent that we don't know our own history. This is why we work so hard at Pipestem to help bring back this awareness.

KS When did you start the Folklife Center?

DW Fourteen years ago. We had our 14th music program there this summer. We've had up to 22,000 people with us for a weekend. And the festival has been playing the last few weeks in Europe, on European TV.

KS You're pretty much an institution yourself. What are some of the things that you've done for a living?

DW Oh, well, I've been a preacher. I'm an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ. I was pastor of a church in south Georgia, way back in the early '40's. And one Saturday night one of my deacons led a mob that took an old black man out and just about beat him to death because he'd accidentally brushed against a couple of white ladies on the sidewalk that night, Saturday night. Sunday morning I took the text, "Even as you have done it unto the least of these . . . ,"[2] and resigned. And I said that never as long as I lived would I ever pastor a church for a salary. I'd make my living some way or other, and I'd do my preaching on the side. And I do preach a lot now. We preach in these little churches in the Pipestem area, down at Cash's Hill, and different places.

From that I've done lots of other things. I've been a cotton mill worker, a coal miner. I've been a deckhand on a riverboat, on the Mississippi River. I've been a teacher, I've been a public school superintendent, I've been a university professor, and I've been a farmer. Yes, I'm a farmer.

KS You're best known as a poet, wouldn't you say?

DW Well, I've been a poet, yes. I write poetry. This is the way, incidentally, that we mainly support our work at Pipestem. I make long lecture and poetry-reading tours through New England every winter, spend two to three months at it. And I read at New York University, Connecticut University, Yale, Boston University, many other colleges and schools, and to groups of various kinds. I have a regular itinerary worked out. I get an honorarium for this, and that's how we pay our bills.

KS Your background and upbringing were in the southern part of the mountain region. How did you happen to settle at Pipestem?

DW Well, we wanted to come back to Appalachia. This area where we are is a pretty central location for the Appalachian South area. We have a daughter who lives in Charleston. We liked the idea of being reasonably close to some of the family. We looked around; we looked all over, East Kentucky, all around. We bought three farms before we bought the place here. We bought one over in Virginia, we still own a farm up the Elk River, up about Frame. We finally found this thing at Pipestem, and it was such a beautiful spot that we fell in love with it right off. It was the place we wanted. I don't think we could find a nicer, more beautiful location.

KS What was the community reaction at first?

DW The community's always been very good. Now, we've had some flack. We have good relations with our neighbors. But there was a paper over at Princeton that had a young editor, who was trying, I suppose, to make a reputation. Anyway, he wrote 13 of the most vicious editorial attacks I've ever had made on me. And I've been attacked in the press all my life. He called us everything from a "free love colony" to a "hippies' camp" to a "Communist cell." All of these things. There were two lawyers here from Charleston who offered to take a libel suit against this editor, and I said, "No, I've never taken a man to court in my life. And I don't intend to. And neither do I spend any time defending myself when I'm attacked. If my life can't speak for me, then I think my tongue's a pretty feeble instrument to defend myself with."

So I refused to defend myself. Anyway, to make a long story short, this editor now is one of my best friends. His wife, she's an expert typist, and if I need anything typed, specially, you know, she does it for us. And he comes to our home for dinner, I go to his home for dinner. He's a good friend. Now, had I won the libel suit, he'd have been my enemy, I'm sure.

There was a lot of effort to queer us with the area. For example, back in the McCarthy period I was supoenaed before these various committees, like the House Committee on UnAmerican Activities, the Senate Internal Security Committee—that was Mr. Eastland, the great patriot from Mississippi. They would have you in there and they would give you the third degree. And unless you became what they called a "cooperative witness" — a stooge—unless you did that, if you had a job at a university or a college or a church or whatever, you had no chance at all of holding that job.

KS How is the Folklife Center governed? Is there a board of directors?

DW We have a board of directors. I mentioned Dr. Donald Rasmussen, he's our chairman. And we have others, like our festival committee that works on the festival. That was July 20th through 22nd this year. We like to keep it clean —we don't want drugs, we don't want alcohol, we don't want dogs, we want it to be a place where people can bring the family and enjoy old-time music.

We absolutely have no racial distinctions whatever at the Center. My granddaddy advocated that. And that was one of the first things I learned from my grandpa who'd never been through more than two years of school, two grades.

KS What has been the position of the black population in the Appalachian region?

DW In the first place, there were very few slaves here in the mountains in the beginning. You take McDowell County, down here in West Virginia—in 1850 there was not a single black man in McDowell County. Now there's a greater per capita concentration of blacks in McDowell than in any other part

Some Poems by Don West

The following poems are from *O Mountaineers!*, copyright 1974 by Appalachian Press, reprinted by permission of the author.

Song of the Saw

Ever hear about the song of the saw
Ever hear of
John McCarty . . . ?

We were working a saw mill
Twenty miles from nowhere
On Troublesome Creek . . .

John was a sawyer—
Ran a hot steel saw
Sixteen hours
Thru long Georgia pines.
Loved to hear
The song of the saw
Ripping thru the guts
Of a yellow pine,
Loved to sing about
His wife and baby
Back home . . .

John was young.
Muscles bulged out
Like iron hoops
On a whiskey barrel,
Soft blue eyes
That laughed like a child's . . .

The belt slipped
That Saturday.
John's belly struck the saw.
Ripped him open
Like a yellow pine log,
Straight thru the belly . . .

We picked up the pieces,
One on the saw dust,
One on the slab pile.
We tried to fit
The bloody things together
Before burying them
Under a tall Georgia pine . . .
But somehow they wouldn't fit.
Our hands were messy
With blood and grime.
We were clumsy
And felt cold
Under a broiling sun . . .

No one wanted to go
Tell John's wife and baby
Twenty miles up Troublesome.
We pulled straws
And it fell my lot . . .

Nancy just looked
And said nothing—
Looked out thru the pines,
Tall yellow pines,
Like John loved to saw.
I wondered if she listened
For the song of the saw,
For John's big voice singing,
If the splotches of sky
Clutched by the little fingers
Of the pine trees
Reminded her of John's blue eyes
And his laugh,
Soft, like the sound
Of a Southern wind
Walking thru the tree tops.

—1933—

Clodhopper

I'm the Clodhopper—
Have you heard about me?
The lump that feeds the world.
A lowland Georgia Cracker,
Song singer from the mountains—
A cotton-picking Brown Skin—
I'm the Clodhopper
Who puts clothes on the world . . .

Who said:
"Clodhoppers of the world,
Unite!
You have nothing to lose
But your clods—
Unite!"

Was that Jesus
Or another Jew?
Or maybe it was me
Said that
And:
"Down with clodhopper jokes!
Up with the dignity of the clod.
To every clodhopper a clod
To wiggle between his toes!"

Isn't it written:
"The laborer is worthy
Of his wage,
And the Hopper
Of his clod?"
If it isn't,
I'll write it now . . .

Oh, I'm the Clodhopper
Who makes the tall corn grow,
The artist that smears dignity
Through the speckled cotton patch.
I'm the man that fills
The belly of the world,
And slips a petticoat
Over her nakedness . . .

—1933—

There'll Be A Tomorrow

In all my wanderings
I've gone most to the poor
Who are adept at hiding pain.
Sometimes the mountain man
does it stolid, ox-like,
revealing scant emotion.
But I know there is a cry inside
a flute song hungering for words
and maybe a curse . . .

On Cabin Creek I eat and sleep
in the makeshift home
of a disabled miner.
Hurt lies heavy on the house
But the deepest hurt is still unworded.

There is a today on Cabin Creek—
ghost-town mining camps
miners who sit idle
drawing DPA checks
while machines drag coal from under the mountains
and bulldozers tear the mountain down

Photograph by Doug Chadwick.

mixing with cess-pool creek
filth—
a today swallowed in poverty's
greedy gullet.

There was a yesterday on Cabin
Creek
Paint Creek, Matewan, Logan—
a yesterday with heroes, heroines
and hope—
Mother Blizzard, Mother Jones
and women ripping up the rails
and crossties
that the Baldwin Felts armored
train
might not pass,

A yesterday with Bill Blizzard
and a hundred others indicted for
treason
by courts doing corporation bid-
ding,
a yesterday with Steve Mangus
shot dead
and the long march to Logan.
Seven thousand Kanawha Valley
miners
with rifles, shotguns and pistols
on the long march to Logan . . .

There was a yesterday of hurt
and hope
and solidarity
when a virgin Union's inspira-
tion
stirred mountain men and
women
to heroic feats.
Born on Cabin Creek,
"Solidarity Forever"
went on to stir lowly hearts
in all parts of the land.

And there may be a tomorrow
On Cabin Creek
a clean tomorrow,
child of hope and hurt and
solidarity.

—1969—

Don West, at the entrance to the Appalachian South Folklife Center at Pipestem. Photograph by Doug Chadwick.

of West Virginia. Coal operators brought the blacks in. Back around the turn of the century, they brought lots of black people in to be coal miners. As they brought in immigrants from Europe. And oftentimes they would be brought in as scabs and strikebreakers. Now they didn't know what they were coming to, at all. They just were told they were to have good jobs and they'd get paid for their work and so on. So they came in and some of them were used that way. But in McDowell County it backfired. When they did get organized in McDowell County, the first president of the local union was a black man. The majority of the members were white, but they elected a black president.

We've never been the tap root of racism in Appalachia. We've sometimes been presented as hillbilly racists, you know. I spoke at the First Congregational Church in New Canaan, Connecticut, last year. And the first thing I said when I got up, I said, "I'd like for any one of you to tell me what's the first feeling you have when you hear 'southern mountaineer'?" And one beautiful young woman raised her hand and said the first feeling she had was fear. She had seen "Deliverance"[3] — this movie, this terrible movie. And she had read about the Hatfields and McCoys and heard the myths that our people hide behind bushes to shoot strangers, and this kind of thing. So she had the feeling of fear. She came later with a group of young people from her church and spent a week with us, and she completely changed her whole concept of the mountain people. We take such people around to visit our neighbors and our friends and they see that we're human. Our purpose is not only to help mountain people know more about their heritage, but as we get groups of outsiders in, to help spread it around.

KS Have you been successful in that?

DW What one person can do is very little, maybe, but we work at it like we're going to do more than we're able to do. We've had many examples of individuals like this young woman that I mentioned. We get letters from these kids, scores of letters about how they've changed their attitudes and so on.

KS What would be a typical program that you would offer to a child in the summer camp?

DW We had a girl from Matoaka who was 14 years old and couldn't read. She had been expelled from school when she was

Log structure at the Folklife Center. Photograph by Doug Chadwick.

just a little girl. So she never got a chance to read. Kids like that, we help to learn the basic things like reading and so on.

But our main program is regular classes in the morning for these kids. We have one class that everybody takes, "Appalachian Heritage." I teach it sometimes myself, but if I have a student that's taken my classes like at Antioch,[4] I get one of them to teach it. It's one of the classes that everybody takes. And then we have weaving, we have fine arts—that is, painting and this kind of thing, drawing — we have a woodworking shop, typing, and, if they need help in learning to read, the basics. And the various crafts that I've mentioned.

And then every student can take private music lessons with teachers like Frank George or Charley Profitt or Jean and Oscar Wright. Private lessons on any instrument they want—fiddle, banjo, dulcimer, and whatever. We had this beautiful child from one of those isolated coal camps that learned to play so well. She was from a very poor family, and kids like that, we know they don't have instruments back home, so we get instruments for them to take back with them. I heard that this girl had been playing for the black lung societies after she went back and so on. Very pleasing to know.

KS I understand that you went to school at Lincoln Memorial University with James Still and Jesse Stuart, two of Appalachia's best-known writers.

DW Jim and Jesse and I were classmate. I later went to Vanderbilt — I got expelled from college when I was a senior. I was expelled from high school when I was a senior and then I got expelled from college when I was a senior. In high school, among other things, I was opposed to the showing of a movie called "Birth of a Nation."[5] And in college we had a student strike, that was in 1929.

Jesse was not involved in that kind of thing, he just played safe. I went to Vanderbilt and the next year he came down. I got a job—I was coaching basketball in a settlement house, and got my board and room and $45 a month in cash. That was big money back in those days, you know. And Jesse, he was not much of a provider then, and he was having a hard time of it. So I bought his meal tickets. We had a place there where you could eat for 35¢, just farm family style, you know. For one meal. And the poor woman didn't make anything on Jesse and me, I'm sure, because

we'd get one meal a day, and that was it. But I bought his meal tickets, and he says in one of his books, Don "East" kept him from starving. He talks about Don "East," you know. It sort of amused me. But he's changed a lot, and we correspond. I was speaking over at Ironton some time ago, and he came over to see me, and had me come over to have dinner at his home. We're good friends, I guess, as friends go.

KS Have you kept in touch with James Still?

DW Jim? Not exactly. I was leaving Hindman, Kentucky, was going to Denmark, back in 1930, I guess it was. And I helped Jim get a job at Hindman.[6] And he got a job as librarian for his board and room. That was all he got. That was on. So he stayed around there. was in the 30's when the Depression Jim was not an Appalachian. He went to LMU, where we were, but he comes from down in Alabama. But he's written a lot of good things. I think he's really a better craftsman than Stuart is.

KS With three well-known Appalachian figures, characters, coming out of the same LMU class, was there something special about the time, or the place?

DW Well, we had an unusual teacher, Harry Harrison Kroll. He's a man that ought to be better known. He wrote some excellent novels. Harry Harrison Kroll. His first novel was *Cabin in the Cotton,* and it was centered around the poor whites and the poor blacks of Alabama stealing cotton from the landlords. They got together, the poor whites and the poor blacks, to steal cotton from their oppressors. He wrote a number of novels. LMU had a lot of ups and downs, and Kroll was fired, couldn't hold a job. He later went out to Martin, in West Tennessee, was teaching in a junior college.

The last time I saw Kroll was over there at Martin. I had a Rosenwal Fellowship, at Columbia University, and one day I had a call from a man who said, "I own a shirt factory in Martin, Tennessee. And I wondered if you'd be willing to go down there and spend six weeks teaching the workers the principles of unionism." The union had come in and he wanted his workers to know what the union meant. So I went down and that was the last time I saw Harry Harrison Kroll. We had a lot of time together while I was there. That was a unique experience I had, to have a factory owner to ask me to teach his workers about the union.

KS How does your artistic life mesh with what I take to be your primary life as an activist?

DW My poetry and Connie's painting is not abstract at all. I don't put down anybody who wants to paint abstract pictures, or to write abstract poetry, even those that want to start their sentences with little letters. If they want to do that, OK, but I'm not trying to revolutionize the alphabet, myself. I'm trying to communicate, and I regard poetry as a medium of communication. And if it communicates, OK. If it doesn't, why, what good is it for anybody?

So all of my life my poetry has been a part of what I'm trying to do. I had a book come out in 1946 that my publisher said made a record for a modern book of American poetry. Sold more copies, he said, than any book except Whitman's *Leaves of Grass.* And I'm willing to take second place to old Walt any time, you know. I was glad, when that book came out, people bought it that had never bought poetry. A few years ago I was out here on Bottom Creek just visiting with an old disabled miner; I was just moseying around, and he asked me to come in. We were talking and he said, "I used to read after a fellow West." And I said, "Well, tell me a little more about that." And he said to his wife, "Go back there and get that book." So she went back there and brought out an old dog-eared copy of *Clods of Southern Earth,* in paperback. I've always insisted on paperback. If someone wants a hard cover, OK, but I want them as cheap as possible. The publisher said that he had sold 15,000 copies of that book before it came off the press. It went to 100,000 and then some.

People bought *Clods of Southern Earth* that ordinarily didn't buy poetry. And that's what I mean. I want to communicate. That's my purpose—to write for people. I'm not writing for other poets, I'm not writing for little smart, cute effects.

That's not my purpose at all. If I want to say something, I want to make it so it will touch people. And I think a poet has a responsibility for trying to sensitize his time and place to the deep hurt and hopes and needs and yearnings of just plain ordinary human beings.

Notes

[1] The Watauga River country of eastern Tennessee was first settled by whites in 1769, on land belonging to the Cherokee Nation by treaty. In 1772 the Watauga Association was formed for self-government, and to arrange terms with the Cherokee. In 1774 the Wataugans joined other mountaineers at the Battle of Point Pleasant.

[2] Matthew 25:40 "Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

[3] "Deliverance," from the 1970 novel by James Dickey, was controversial for its presentation of Georgia mountaineers as debased and amoral.

[4] Antioch University's Southern Appalachian Center in Beckley was closed in 1978. Mr. West occasionally taught at the Center, and served for years as a member of Antioch's national board of trustees.

[5] This 1915 film classic by D. W. Griffith remains controversial for its glorification of the Ku Klux Klan.

[6] Hindman Settlement School, at the Forks of Troublesome, Knott County, Kentucky, was founded by the Women's Christian Temperance Union in 1902. James Still wrote his famous novel, *River of Earth,* while working there.

Songs of the Silver Bridge

By Ivan M. Tribe

THE SILVER BRIDGE connected the town of Point Pleasant, West Virginia, and the hamlet of Kanauga, Ohio, on the Ohio River at the mouth of the Kanawha. Highway 35 which runs from Charleston to Chicago crossed the Ohio at that point. The bridge was constructed in 1928 and received its name because its coating of aluminum paint projected a silver appearance. By the 1960's it was no different from numerous other bridges that modern transportation had begun to render obsolete, although its "eyebar suspension" mode of construction was somewhat unusual. In its early years the bridge had been held in awe by local residents for no particularly important reason other than that it was the first bridge constructed on the river between Parkersburg and Huntington, a distance of more than 120 miles in a somewhat isolated area. Its generally attractive and symmetrical appearance was widely admired.

During rush hour traffic on the late afternoon of December 15, 1967, the Silver Bridge suddenly collapsed. There were many cars and trucks on the bridge at the time and although it took some days to ascertain the death toll, it was eventually concluded that 46 lives had been lost. These ranged from local citizens of the Ohio-West Virginia area to truck drivers and others of more distant origin. Some truckers, slumbering in sleeper berths, evidently perished without ever knowing what had happened. Several persons managed to survive the tragedy by means of rescue by boats or by falling onto river bottom land instead of into the water channel.[1]

Modern communication made the Silver Bridge Disaster known to most of the civilized world within a matter of hours. Although the tragedy was of an unusual nature, it probably failed to create much lasting excitement throughout most of the nation. In the surrounding area, however, the impact of the event was more deeply felt. Persons who lived nearby, had lost a friend or relative, or had themselves crossed the bridge many times were more likely to realize the human tragedy involved than those who merely heard of the event on a national TV network or read a wire service report in a distant newspaper. It was primarily in this local area and adjacent states that the accident aroused enough interest to generate songs and a market for such songs.

John Edwards Memorial Foundation

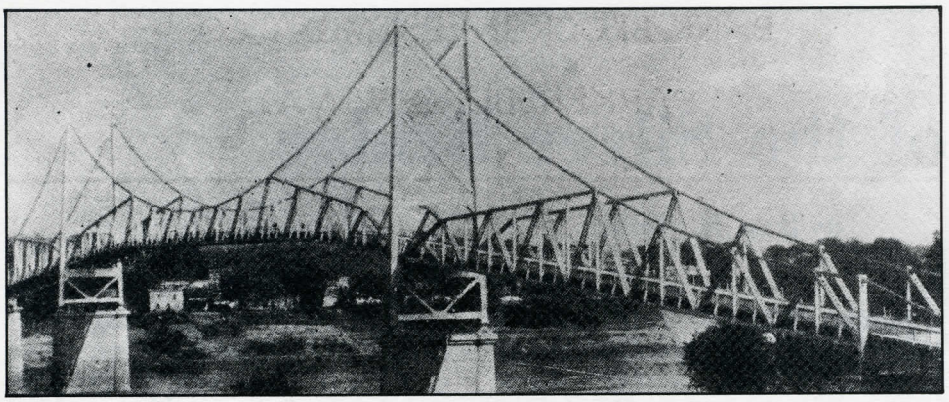
Parts of this article appeared in an earlier article by Mr. Tribe in the *JEMF Quarterly*, published by the John Edwards Memorial Foundation. The nonprofit foundation is an archive and research center located in the Folklore and Mythology Center of the University of California at Los Angeles. Its purpose is to further the serious study and public recognition of American folk music as disseminated by the commercial media of print, recordings, films, radio, and television. JEMF lists bluegrass, hillbilly, old time, country, gospel, and cajun music among its interests.

The Foundation's address is: John Edwards Memorial Foundation, Folklore and Mythology Center, University of California, Los Angeles, CA 90024. Donations are tax deductible.

Had the Silver Bridge tragedy occurred in the late 1920's and subsequently inspired one or two recorded songs it would not have been unusual. However, for an incident of this nature to inspire at least 11 recorded songs, all different, plus a minimum of three other unrecorded ones was a bit unique 40 years later. While the tragedy song is far from dead, no other human disaster is known to have inspired so many ballads.

As recent studies have shown, songs are frequently written and recorded very quickly after the event has taken place. Perhaps the first song written about the collapse of the Silver Bridge was composed within hours after the tragedy occurred. Among the curiosity seekers who visited the scene of the accident was Billy Hill, Jr., a teenaged farm youth living on the outskirts of Racine, Ohio, a town some 30 miles upriver from the bridge. Hill was a devotee of contemporary country music, and possessed some familiarity with such old standards as "Wreck of the Old Ninety-Seven" and "Wreck on the Highway." Like many others who visited the scene, he was deeply moved, and while returning home made up a song about the event. Hill amused himself by singing the song while going about his farm chores and also sang it for a few friends. After a time, he largely forgot about his song until recent quizzing led him to reconstruct it:[2]

On a cold and gray December day the bridge was loaded down
With 40 cars and 17 trucks, the bridge was bound to fall down;
At the bottom of the river lay many tons of steel;
Within this tragic tangled mess there were many people killed.



An early view of the Silver Bridge. Photographer and date unknown.

Chorus:
Many people died when the Silver Bridge collapsed,
Many people died when the Silver Bridge collapsed,
Many people died when the Silver Bridge collapsed,
On the fateful day.

Many people mourned this senseless tragedy;
For Friday night at 5 p.m. the bridge came down, you see;
While newspapers of the world made it their headlines,
Nobody ever will bring back the ones who lost their lives.

The first recorded verson of a Silver Bridge song was made almost as quickly. At Richmond Dale, Ohio, some 54 miles up Route 35, the Reverend Ray Anderson served as pastor at the First Church of God. Although he had been in the ministry for some years, Anderson had also spent more than 15 years in country music. He tended to favor more traditionally-oriented styles. After World War II he had been part of the Radio Dot and Smoky Show, worked as both an individual performer and as an Osborne Brothers sideman on the WWVA Jamboree, and as a disc jockey at WCHO in Washington Court House, Ohio. Even after entering the ministry in 1962, Anderson retained close ties with music. He operated a recording studio in the church annex, had a music publishing company, and issued recordings on the GRS and Victory labels.

The Silver Bridge had collapsed on Friday night, December 15. On Sunday morning, Reverend Anderson was in his study going over his soon-to-be-delivered sermon. However, the recent bridge tragedy weighed heavily on his mind:

"This was something that really got to me, because I had crossed that bridge so many, many times. In fact, I had been across it just about a month before this happened. And on Sunday morning . . . the words just kept coming to me regarding this Silver Bridge, and I thought, well, as soon as I get through here at the service, I'm going down to the office and see if I can write them down . . . So I came down . . . to the office, and sure enough . . . just as fast as I could put them on paper I was getting (the song). So I called in a group that we have in the church . . . the Roar Family . . . and said let's make a tape and see what it sounds like . . . I thought . . . I'll put it on a single, so we did that. It was a rush job; we put it through and got it out somewhere around Christmas . . . but it done real well. It was a tribute, of course, to those who lost their lives on the Silver Bridge when it went down. There was about eleven or twelve thousand that were sold."[3]

Although the Anderson recording had a brisk sale, it seems likely that most purchasers were local residents since the record was advertised over local radio stations such as WPKO in Waverly, Ohio. Some local stations, however, most notably WJEH in Gallipolis, the station nearest the bridge site, did not play this or any other Silver Bridge songs because of the emotional effect on relatives of the survivors and the belief that some people were trying to capitalize on the tragedy.[4] Anderson reported, however, that some requests for the record came from distant states and foreign countries.

Anderson's song was patterned closely after "The Titanic," first recorded in 1924 by Ernest V. Stoneman, one of the best known tragedy ballads. Instrumentation was in a contemporary country-gospel style featuring piano and electric guitar with the Roar Family joining Anderson on the chorus:

Chorus:
It was sad when that great bridge went down,
It was sad when that Silver Bridge went down,
There were husbands and wives, little children lost their lives,
It was sad when the great bridge went down.

In the twinkling of an eye it had happened,
The great Silver Bridge it gave way,
With the cars and trucks lined up on it,
I wonder if they had the time to pray.

A man cried out "My God help me,"
From the cold icy waters there below,
He was calling to God in his troubles,
For he knew that his time had come to go.

There were husbands and wives with their children,
They'd been shopping for Christmas that day,
They were thinking of living, not of dying,
When that great Silver Bridge, it gave way.

Oh, my friends, do you know
that we're traveling,
Day by day as we journey along,
And someday we must cross
death's chilly river,
Cross the bridge to our eternal
home.

Let's prepare now to meet all our
loved ones,
In that land where no bridges
give way,
And no heartaches will come to
God's children,
For my God will wipe all their
tears away.

Several months after the single release of "The Silver Bridge Disaster," Anderson released the song as the title number of a predominantly gospel album which also featured a second song on the tragedy entitled, "Why Did it Happen?" The latter ballad was similar in style to Jack Cardwell's 1953 recording, "The Death of Hank Williams." Anderson's vocal style was also reminescent of the Cardwell recording and the instrumentation was also of that period with a prominent steel guitar:

Between Ohio and West Virginia
about the hour of five,
The Silver Bridge between those
states took many a precious
life,
They were coming home from
work and from shopping, to
their homes across the way,
Never thinking they would be
dropping to a cold and icy
grave.

The load was too much to carry,
so the Silver Bridge fell down;
Yes, on that cold December day,
Point Pleasant became a sad
town;
There were cars and trucks a-
falling, they were lined from
shore to shore,
And once they felt that bridge
give way, they would cross
that river no more.

You could hear the screams of
the dying, they were calling to
God in prayer,
On the cold Ohio River, their
pleading filled the air.
Oh, God, why did this happen,
I'm sure their loved ones say,
But we must all prepare to die,
for death may come today.

This bridge of life that we travel
from here to the great beyond,
Just like that Silver Bridge that
fell, a short time here and then
gone;
We must prepare to meet our
God, our life is but a span;
Repent, be saved while here we
trod, to meet in a better land.

After the fall. Photograph by Max Tawney, from "Silver Bridge History. (Saddle Record S-105).

"The Titanic" served as the model not only for Anderson's first song about the bridge tragedy, but for another song on the incident as well. However, the lyrics were completely different except for two lines in the chorus. Penned by M. D. Ralph and recorded by Charles Alexander and the Carolina Five, this song, "The Great Silver Bridge," appeared on the Mohawk label. Unlike the gospel-oriented Anderson recording, Ralph's song was totally secular containing only an account of the tragedy:

Way up in West Virginia and
Kanauga, Ohio,
Where the great Silver Bridge
was built so long ago,
On one cold December evening
at about 5 o'clock,
The great Silver Bridge began
to reel and rock.

Chorus:
It was sad when that Silver
Bridge went down,
And the bars of twisted steel
came tumbling to the ground,
There were prayers, screams, and
cries, many people lost their
lives,
It was sad when that great
bridge went down.

They were crying out for mercy
but no comfort did they feel;
They were pinned beneath the
wreckage and the bars of twist-
ed steel,
In the cars of Christmas shoppers
who'd bought so many toys;
But now there'll be no Christmas
for their orphan girls and boys.

The bridge had been inspected
but the flaws they did not find,
And the constant flow of drivers
kept their usual frame of mind,
It was made of steel and concrete
and painted silver bright,
But it rusted through and weak-
ened and tumbled in the night.

It was sung as a vocal solo throughout and although the instrumentation was relatively modern, a twangy steel guitar helped to preserve a down-home flavor.

Perhaps the most archaic sounding Silver Bridge song was that written and recorded by Cecil Pigott. This recording, unlike the others, features only a solo vocal and simple guitar accompaniment and is much longer, containing eight stanzas. Were it not for the modern subject matter, a listener might easily assume this song to have been written and recorded a half-century ago. The composer is said to be a minister living somewhere in West Virginia and the reverse side of the record is another original tragedy ballad about the Richmond, Indiana, explosion of April 1968. The Pigott ballad also utilizes an old-fashioned tune bearing considerable resemblance to the old cowboy ballad, "Little Joe, the Wrangler":

A tractor-trailer truck lies entangled in the bridge wreckage. Photograph courtesy of the Charleston Newspaper Corporation.

The Fate of the Silver Bridge

From Charleston, West Virginia,
to Chicago, Illinois,
U. S. Highway 35 winds its way;
It's a very scenic highway
through the woodland hills
and dales,
Where sightseers travel every
day.

It winds through hills and valleys as it goes from town to
town,
And it crosses many rivers we all
know;
At Point Pleasant, West Virginia,
where the Silver Bridge once
stood,
It crossed the mighty river, Ohio.

Now the Silver Bridge had stood
for years and served its purpose well,
But modern times are changing
every day;
Its duties were increased so
much it could not bear the
load,
And under heavy traffic it gave
way.
It was built back many years ago
when cars and trucks were
small,
And modern heavy traffic made
it fall;
There were husbands, wives and
children, crossing on the bridge
that day,
And they never knew that death
had come to call.

You could hear the people
screaming as the Silver Bridge
went down;
They were crushed beneath the
wreckage below;
And within a few short moments
they went to meet their doom,
Their time had come to die, they
had to go.

In the cold and chilly water
where they went to meet their
doom
The rescue party found them one
by one.
And many weeks had vanished
before they met their doom,
But the saddest part of all had
just begun.

Many people lost their loved
ones and they watched with
anxious eyes
As the searching party pulled
them from below;
And somehow I'm led to wonder
as it lingers in my mind,
How many of them were prepared to go.

Now friends the time is coming
and we never know how soon,
And we all should be preparing
for that day;
Sometimes it comes too quickly
and it takes us unaware,
And in times like this we don't
have time to pray.

Another song based on an older ballad was "The Day the Silver Bridge Went Down," which although unrecorded has been publicly performed many times before small audiences. In 1968 Mike Watson, Richard Straw, and two other Ohio University undergraduates made up the old-timey and bluegrass group, Sunday Creek String Band, named after a local stream in a former coal mining area. Playing at folk music concerts and at a local coffee house called the Cellar Door, the group performed a variety of old-time and bluegrass numbers most of which had been learned from records. They also performed two tragedy songs written by themselves on local tragedies, one of which was the bridge disaster of some months past. Watson wrote the lyrics and patterned the tune and form after the Charlie Poole recording of "Baltimore Fair," but performed it in a more up-tempo style suitable to bluegrass. For several months local audiences favorably received the number:

On a cold day in December on
the dark Ohio River,
At Point Pleasant there was
heard an awful sound;
There was steel and concrete

groaning and the people still remember
The day when the Silver Bridge went down.

Chorus:
Gone, gone, the Silver Bridge is gone,
And its shining beams no longer span the sky;
There were poor ones and the rich on that shining Silver Bridge,
There were 46 who never had to die.

When that Bridge began to tremble and the beams began to break
And the Silver Bridge began to fall apart,
All the people they were running and their lives they tried to save;
There was fear and there was prayer in every heart.

There were cars and trucks a-floatin' in that cold and icy stream,
And the boats were pulling people to the shore;
Though a few would soon be rescued from that lonely awful spot,
There were 46 who'd ne'er return no more.

For many months the people searched the sad Ohio River,
And they wondered if their loved ones would be found;
And there's many sad and lonely ones who always will remember
The day the Silver Bridge went down.[5]

Most of the other Silver Bridge songs were performed in a contemporary country and western vein. One of these was "Silver Bridge History," a Stan Lane composition. The recorded version featured a narration relating factual details of the bridge's construction and subsequent collapse, by Jim Stout, a Portsmouth, Ohio, deejay. A vocal chorus sang in the background before, during, and after the narration. Unfortunately, the narative at times makes it difficult for the listener to understand all of the song's lyrics. The entire arrangement smacks of the Nashville sound—the chorus, the modern instrumentation, and the smooth recording job suggest that, unlike some of the other recordings, this particular one may have been the product of a Nashville studio production:

The great Silver Bridge that once stood so proud,
Started twisting and bending and roaring so loud;
(*Narration begins here*) It collapsed and was falling to the waters below,
Brought forth many stores on the Ohio.

(*Spoken*) Friends, this is a tragic but true history about the rise and fall of the great Silver Bridge, that monster of beauty, as it was called upon completion, spanned the Ohio River between Kanauga, Ohio, and Point Pleasant, West Virginia. It was one third of a mile long and had a 700-foot channel span one hundred feet above the water level. The Silver Bridge was the first in the world pioneering in and suspended by heat-treated "eyebar" chains. Due to its unusual method of construction it was proclaimed by many visitors and tourists as the most beautiful bridge across the Ohio River. It was first opened to traffic on May 19, 1928, and dedicated on Memorial Day of the same year. There were 1800 tons of high quality steel and 10,000 yards of concrete used in the construction of the Silver Bridge. The original flooring was made of 250,000 feet of California redwood. This later was replaced by grilled steel covered with concrete.

Oh, the great Silver Bridge once standing so high
Was a pillar of strength reaching into the sky;
(*Narration begins here*) And God only knows why its strength gave way,
Taking so many lives on that December day.

(*Spoken*) The bridge was painted with aluminum paint, being the first bridge in the world to adopt this protective coating, the bright appearance of which was responsible for its unusual name, the Silver Bridge. For nearly forty years the Silver Bridge proudly stood as the gateway to the South. It withstood the ravages of time, but could not withstand the stresses of man forced upon it by the march of progress. At 4:58 p. m. on Friday, December 15, 1967, while lined from end to end with pre-holiday and rush hour traffic, the great Silver Bridge began to twist and bend and suddenly collapsed. It quickly submerged into the icy waters and crashed onto the frozen banks of the Ohio River below carrying with it many lives and total destruction. Within minutes the shocking news was flashed around the the world. Rescue and salvage operations were initiated and the inevitable task of facing up to this catastrophe was realized. Yes, friends, that monster of beauty which stood so proudly for nearly forty years, in just a matter of seconds on that cold December day became a monster of death.

The great Silver Bridge will stand nevermore;
It brought death and destruction to people by the score;
The nation was shocked, people prayed anywhere,
When that monster of beauty became a monster of death.

Another song featuring a modern sound was "Tragedy of Silver Bridge," written and recorded by Wayne and Bobby, the Barnett Brothers. The Barnetts were a duo who were playing in the Cincinnati area at the time and later moved on St. Louis.[6] The song was recorded on the Vetco label, which is affiliated with the Jimmie Skinner Music Center, one of the nation's best known retail outlets for country and bluegrass music. Whereas the Pigott approach to the song em-

phasized the bridge's location on Highway 35, the Barnetts stressed the Ohio River as a locale, perhaps reflective of their Cincinnati-St. Louis orientation. The song featured a spoken introduction, an apparently original tune, and a contemporary country vocal and instrumental style. The song was not a particularly good seller, which was probably also true of most of the other ballads on the topic:

(*Spoken*) There are many rivers large and small in this great country of ours. Many are broad and long while others are narrow and short. Joining cities from one point to the other are bridges made of wood, concrete and steel. This is the story of one of those bridges spanning the Ohio River that runs from Chester, Pennsylvania, to Cairo, Illinois, where it empties into the mighty Mississippi. This is the tragedy of Silver Bridge . . .

From Point Pleasant, West Virginia, to Kanauga, Ohio,
Ran the mighty Silver Bridge over dark waters below;
Manmade of concrete and steel, stood for twenty-odd years,
On the 15th of December caused tragedy and fear;
Seventeen trucks, forty cars, proved too much that day,
Great and small met their doom while the Maker called the play.

He said, "I need you here with me,"
So He called them home;
In nineteen hundred and sixty-seven
Their one big moment was gone.

Workmen came from far and near, retrieving the ones who died
From forty feet of watery graves while their loved ones cried;
Still they searched the dark waters for some are yet to be found,
Flowing deep and swift, washed them far on down;
For weeks they have tried to find why the Silver fell on that day,
But who can answer, who can say,
(*Spoken*) Why God in heaven called so many that day.

Another song in the modern vein, "When the Silver Bridge Went Down," was composed in 1968 by Opal Skaggs of Logan, Ohio. A native of Paintsville, Kentucky, and a teacher of classical piano, the author also had the song published in sheet music. The song was recorded in a Nashville studio on Pacer records and featured Jim Wayne of Columbus on vocal, with Boots Randolph playing a prominent saxophone.[7] Unlike other versions of the tragedy this waltz-time song gave little detail about the event but concentrated on the human pathos of drowning children and other loved ones:

Oh the great Silver Bridge it crumbled and fell;
What was the matter, just who can tell;
It gave us no warning but oh what a sound,
We heard children scream when the great bridge went down.

Chorus:
Truck drivers prayed as their rigs went down;
They watched little children in the cold water drown,
Tiny dolls floating, and little toy clown;
Please tell me, Jesus, what brought the Silver Bridge down?

All the mothers had shopped for Christmas that day,
Children were anxious to get home and play,
They knew that old Santa was coming to town;
They never got home 'cause the great bridge went down.

You could see all the toys in the water below;
Little ones buried 'neath rubble we know;
They said they had checked it, no fault could be found;
But our loved ones died when the great bridge went down.

A vocal group called The Three J's recorded "Silver Bridge Disaster" on the Crist label. Their song resembled older ballads in some respects, but cannot be readily identified with any particular ballad. Although only guitar instrumentation was used, the recording has a more modern sound and is shortest of all the songs, containing only three four-line stanzas and no chorus. The lyrics suggest that the song was written soon after the tragedy because details (such as the death toll which was established some days later) seem to have been unknown to the composer:

One cold day in December to a place we all know well,
Many people lost their lives that day near the places that they knew well;
The Silver Bridge that spanned the Ohio at the town of Point Pleasant they say,
In a heavy load of traffic began to swing and sway.

With a crash that sounded like thunder it fell in the water below,
And how many people lost their lives only the mighty Ohio will know;
The rescue workers at once from far and near they came,
But only eight people's lives were saved; for the rest, their work was in vain.

They worked all through the long dark night, the townspeople stayed close by,
And each one asked himself many times, "O why, O God, O why?"
The bridge piers are standing like tombstones to mark the tragic site,
And all the people who lost their loved ones will never forget that sad night.

"The Silver Bridge," composed by Howard M. Stockdale, an ASCAP songwriter residing in Baltimore, Maryland, has recently been copyrighted, although it was actually

written some years ago. No commercial recording has been made although the author cut a demonstration disc of the song.[8] His rendition of the ballad indicates a more urban folk style influence rather than the country tradition which influenced the other songs describing the disaster:

It was five p.m. on the fifteenth of December,
The year was sixty-seven and a year we will remember;
There came a rumbling sound and the panic seemed to grow,
The Silver Bridge was falling in the river far below.

Folks were bound for home from the ending of a work day,
And cars were standing idly and were blocking up the roadway;
And then a crackling sound and the nightmare was for real;
The Silver Bridge was falling in a mass of twisted steel.

Cars and trucks were thrown in the darkness of the down stream,
And people splashing madly seemed an eerie sort of bad dream;
And objects floating by people tried to grab and hold;
The Silver Bridge had fallen in the river now so cold.

Years will pass by, yes, the years will go their own way;
And we will share this sorrow since that one sad December day;
And we will not forget though a hundred years have gone,
The Silver Bridge has fallen but the mem'ry lingers on.

The only singer with a national reputation to write and record a Silver Bridge song has unfortunately not had his work released yet. Buddy Starcher, a West Virginia native with long-standing experience in radio, television, and records composed "The Silver Bridge." He subsequently recorded the number for a German firm then known as CMH (but since changed to Bear Family), owned by Richard Weize. Starcher performed his song with simplicity and sincerity, accompanying himself on guitar. In a spoken introduction, the vocalist linked the tragedy to past history, suggesting a relationship with the alleged curse of the murder of Shawnee Indian Chief Cornstalk. It should be noted that Starcher erred in his contention that Cornstalk was killed at the Battle of Point Pleasant in 1774. The Indian leader actually survived that encounter only to be killed at Fort Randolph, located at Point Pleasant, in 1777. The Starcher lyrics contained all the elements of the tragedy ballad, placing a heavy emphasis on the moral:

(*Spoken*) In 1774, a great battle was fought at what is now the site of Point Pleasant, West Virginia; more than one thousand white men and approximately the same amount of Indians. The Indians were under the leadership of a much feared and respected chief, Chief Cornstalk. Chief Cornstalk was killed during the battle, but with his dying breath, he wished a curse on the entire area. Several tragedies occurring in the area have given cause for remembrance of this curse. A few years ago an unexplained accident that blew up a barge near Point Pleasant and now the worst tragedy of all, the Silver Bridge has fallen down.

There's a town in West Virginia, Point Pleasant is its name,
It's had a place in history since the white man came;
Then an awful tragedy befell this little town,
In December '67 the Silver Bridge fell down.

'Twas on a Friday evening and the bridge was loaded down,
Some were going home from work or shopping in the town;
A lady said to her husband, what if the bridge would fall?
Little did she know just then, the Master soon would call.

So sudden, without warning, the bridge came crashing down,
No earthly hand could save them, most of them would drown;
In a moment it was over, so little time to pray;
Some will ne'er be seen again until the Judgement Day.

Many times I've crossed that bridge and I may cross some more,
There are two that we must cross to reach the golden shore;
The first one is the bridge of life o'er waters that's so deep,
Then we cross the bridge of

Former Congressman Ken Hechler tours the disaster site. Photograph courtesy of the Charleston Newspaper Corporation.

death to take our last long sleep.

Now many hearts are sad tonight, the nation mourns the loss,
And many hearts will skip a beat, the bridge of life to cross;
This lesson soon will be forgot, we crowd our way through life;
The bridge of death comes falling down to end our earthly strife.

Our Silver Bridge comes falling down to end this earthly strife.

Another song bearing the same title but different lyrics appeared on Rem Records by Lowell Varney and Jim Horn, written by this duo and a third person named Marcum. Varney resides in Crum, West Virginia, and is well-known as a bluegrass banjo player and vocalist. Jim Horn is a blind minister. During the 1960's Horn and Varney recorded two albums of bluegrass gospel music. However, they recorded "The Silver Bridge" with a modern country music background. Like some of the other songs, it appears to have been written shortly after the disaster when an accurate count of the death toll had not yet been ascertained:

Silver Bridge, Silver Bridge,
I heard of your falling that day.

The bridge began to tremble, the steel started to bend,
A noise that sounded like thunder and the big bridge fell in;
Many cars and trucks upon it as the angel of death passed by;
Fifty-some people that day had to die.

Chorus:
Silver Bridge, Silver Bridge,
I heard of your falling that day;
Fifty-some souls in the cold water below
Went to meet God that day.

Little children, they were cryin', and that whistle was sad to see;
Their little lives were taken in the muddy water so deep;
The crowd began to gather for miles and miles around,
To search for their loved ones that may never, never be found.

Unidentified man examines the wreckage. Photograph courtesy of the Charleston Newspaper Corporation.

John W. and Eva White composed "Tragedy of the Silver Bridge," which the Sunshine Twins recorded on the Sunshine label. The Whites may indeed be the Sunshine Twins, and apparently live in or near the village of Evans in Jackson County. Their song's tune bears close resemblance to the Hank Williams' sacred composition, "A House of Gold." By and large, the lyrics of the Whites' song seem to be more impressionistic than descriptive. The lines do not, therefore, fall into the classic mold of the tragedy ballad. The Twins' rendition of the song featured a male solo vocal and an electric lead guitar accompaniment. Like Anderson's work, that of the Sunshine Twins appears to have been recorded and on the market fairly quickly:

For 40 years I want you to know,
I crossed the river to the Ohio;
I felt so safe to come and go
'Cross the bridge to the Ohio.
Now the Silver Bridge this story I'll tell,
My heart stood still when I'd heard she'd fell;
She fell so slow when she went below
To the bottom of the Ohio.

Chorus:
The Silver Bridge it stood so high,
It spans across the old Ohi',
Her silver beams they shine so bright,
All through the day, all through the night.

The time has come when her work is o'er,
Her beams lay stretched from shore to shore;
The story now is going around
That some remain that will never be found.
Cars and trucks are pinned below
The Silver Bridge of the Ohio;
Her victims scattered all around,
No way of escape so they had to drown.

She took her toll as she went down,
Some were rescued, some were drowned;
It seems that some just floated away
And can never be found until Judgment Day.

As far as can be determined, the above songs are all that have been written or recorded on the Silver Bridge tragedy, although it is possible that some have been overlooked. However, a poem which evidently has never been set to music was also written on the event that contained all of the

characteristics of the disaster ballad. Oleta Singleton, a resident of Weirton, West Virginia, composed a poem entitled "Silver Bridge Disaster," as a memorial to the tragedy. She submitted her composition to Jim Comstock of Richwood, who published it in *The West Virginia Hillbilly* in December 1968, the first anniversary of the accident:

Point Pleasant was bustling,
Christmas drew near,
It was that blessed time of year;
Evening had come, the sun sank
in the west,
The people hurried home to the
ones they knew best.
Mothers and fathers with children they loved well
Made up the crowd on the bridge
when it fell;
The Great Silver Bridge went
down with a crash,
Forty-six human lives went out
like a flash.

Some were more lucky and conquered the waves,
While some long remained in
their watery graves;
God rest their souls — whether
rescued or not,
They were on the bridge and
that was their lot.
When you look on the rubble and
twisted steel,
What sadness and trouble the
sight does reveal;
The Great Silver Bridge that
crumbled away
Plunged forty-six people in the
Ohio that day.

As you stand on the bank of the
Ohio so deep
You view the great scene of disaster and weep,
And you stop to ask why on this
December day,
So many people were hurried
away;
Journey on, dear people, this
world cannot stop,
Our lives are so ordained, our
fate we know not;
Like those on the Silver Bridge
that disastrous night,
God has for his people each a
candle to light.
If we build a new bridge that is
safer by far,
Let us remember to trust God
when we cross in our car;
Like the tower of Babylon built
centuries ago
Any bridge can collapse with disaster, you know.
Never rush down the broad highway all alone,
Take God with you, he is your
best friend, you know;
For he built for us that Great
Bridge of time,
The bridge from this earth to the
heavens sublime.

An examination of the lyrics of the various Silver Bridge songs reveals some of the similarities. All of them attempt to describe the collapse of the structure, usually in moving terms, and to convey the feeling of human tragedy and the helplessness of the victims. More than half of the songs contain a religious message and a moral ending. The Pigott composition, "Fate of the Silver Bridge," seems to be the one that best fits what one might call "the classic pattern." However, some of the songs with their allusion to the presumably happy and gay Christmas shoppers convey the impression of serenity before the disaster struck, even though they begin with a description of the bridge's collapse. Despite varying degrees of originality it is also evident that all of the writers owe some debt to earlier writers of such songs whose tradition they utilized.

None of the Silver Bridge songs became hits in any sense of the term. One of them was reported to have sold more than 10,000 copies. Probably none of the others, except possibly Jim Stout's recording, sold more than a thousand copies, and likely less. Recently a local expert on old-time and fiddle music who lived only a few miles from the scene was unaware that any songs on the event existed. Nonetheless, the large number of songs about the Silver Bridge disaster demonstrates that the creative desire and talent for writing such songs has not diminished, and perhaps even increased. The appearance of songs concerning such events as the Hyden, Kentucky, and Farmington, West Virginia, mine accidents also support this conclusion. At the same time, the failure of such songs to receive widespread record sales suggests that the audience for such material is at best limited.

Notes

[1] *Athens* (Ohio) *Messenger*, December 17, 1967, and related information in subsequent issues, is my principal source for data on the collapse of the Silver Bridge.

[2] Interview, Billy Hill, Jr., Racine, Ohio, September 6, 1973. As a former high school teacher I had known Hill since 1968, but it was only through a mutual friend in 1971 that I learned that Hill had written a song on the Silver Bridge.

[3] Interview, Ray Anderson, Richmond Dale, Ohio, January 2, 1970. A copy of this interview containing biographical data and an account of the song is on deposit at the John Edwards Memorial Foundation, University of California at Los Angeles.

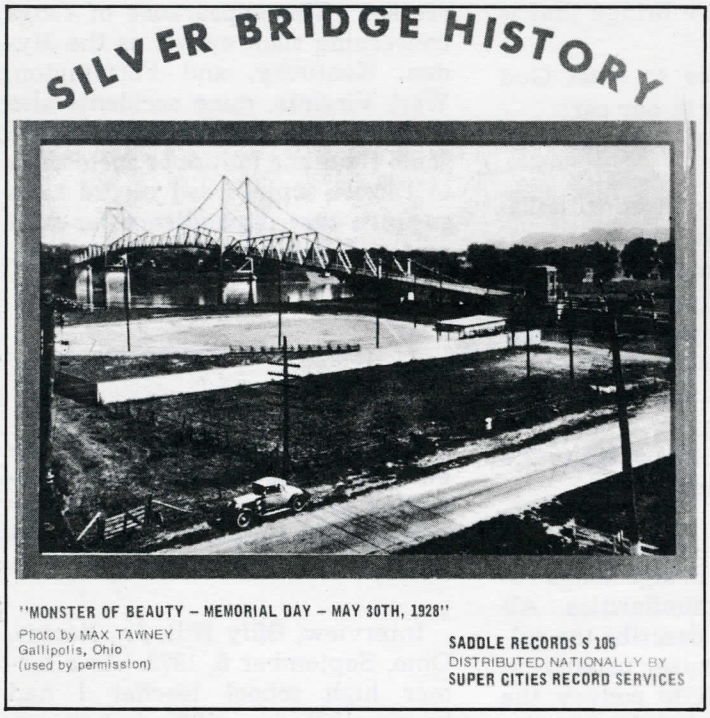
[4] Interview, Station Manager, WJEH, Gallipolis, Ohio, September 19, 1973.

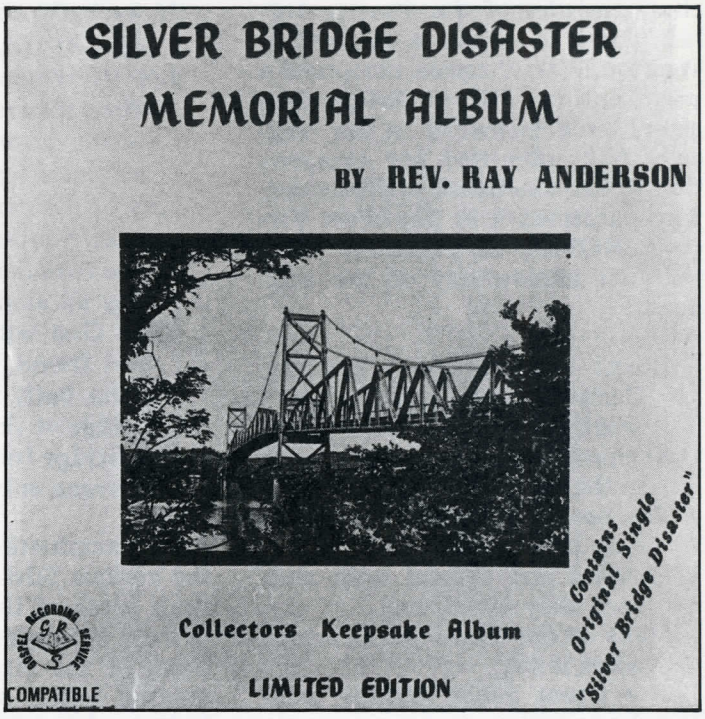
[5] A copy of this song taped in April, 1969, at Albany, Ohio, by Sunday Creek Band is on deposit at the JEMF.

[6] Telephone interview, Lou Ukelson, Vetco Records and Jimmie Skinner Music Center, Cincinnati, Ohio, November 20, 1973.

[7] *The Songwriters Annual Directory* (Songwriters Review: n.p., 1969), 33-35; Interview, Opal Skaggs, Logan, Ohio, December 27, 1973.

[8] Howard M. Stacksdale to Ivan M. Tribe, January 7, 1974.





Above Left: In 1968, Jim Stuart recorded *Silver Bridge History,* written by Stan Lane.
Above Right: The Reverend Ray Anderson recorded the first Silver Bridge song, and later included it in this memorial album.

Silver Bridge Discography

The Collapse of Silver Bridge (by Billy Hill, Jr.) Written December 15, 1967, and unrecorded

The Silver Bridge Disaster (by Ray Anderson, Ra Mac Music). Written and recorded December 17, 1967 with the assistance of the Roar Family, GRS 71266 (Subsequently reissued on GRS LP80314)

Why Did it Happen? (Silver Bridge Disaster) (by Ray Anderson) Written and recorded ca. 1968 by Ray Anderson, GRS LP80314

The Great Silver Bridge (by M. D. Ralph) Recorded ca. 1968 by Charles Alexander and the Carolina Five, Mohawk 004

The Fate of the Silver Bridge (by Cecil Pigott) Recorded ca. 1968-69 by Cecil Pigott, Silver Star 368

The Day the Silver Bridge Went Down (by Mike Watson) Written by Mike Watson ca. fall, 1968, and unrecorded (tape copy by the Sunday Creek String Band, April 1969)

Silver Bridge History (by Stan Lane, Tan-Lan Music, BMI) Recorded ca. 1968 by Jim Stout, Go-T 203, Saddle 105

Tragedy of the Silver Bridge (by Wayne and Bobby Barnett, Jimmie Skinner Music, BMI) Recorded ca. 1968 by Barnett Brothers, Vetco 502

When the Silver Bridge Went Down (by Opal Skaggs, Jacci L. Music, BMI) Recorded ca. 1969 by Jim Wayne, Pacer 3184

Silver Bridge Disaster (unknown) Recorded ca. 1968 by The Three J's, Crist 80119

Silver Bridge Disaster (by Oleta Singleton) Poem printed in *The West Virginia Hillbilly,* December 7, 1968

The Silver Bridge (by Howard M. Stocksdale, ASCAP, copyright by the author, 1974) Unrecorded except for demo records by Howard M. Stocksdale and Kris Arden

The Silver Bridge (by Buddy Starcher) Recorded on Bear Family (formerly CMH) Records and curently unreleased (tape copy provided through the courtesy of Richard Weize)

The Silver Bridge (by Varney, Horn and Marcum, Fayette Music, BMI) Recorded ca. 1968 by Lowell Varney and Jim Horn, Rem 45-423

Tragedy of the Silver Bridge (by John W. and Eva White, Cedarwood Publishing Co., BMI) Recorded ca. 1968 by the Sunshine Twins, Sunshine 0675

(Continued from page 2)

July 3, 1979
Bloomington, Indiana

Editor:
Having made a recent trip to West Virginia to visit relatives and friends, I had the great pleasure of being introduced to your wonderful GOLDENSEAL magazine. I found it most informative and interesting and would like to be put on your mailing list. I am originally from West Virginia, born in Tyler County.
Sincerely,
Mrs. Elizabeth Audley

July 4, 1979
Ansted, WV

Editor:
I have recently come into receipt of a copy of your magazine. As a teacher of eighth grade West Virginia studies classes at Ansted Middle School, I was quick to recognize the prospective value of the publication as a teaching tool.

I truly love West Virginia and I try to instill that love for our state (both past and present) in my students. I feel sure that a copy of GOLDENSEAL placed in our school library would be very helpful in that undertaking.

An additional copy delivered to me personally would also be greatly appreciated. I wish you continued success in your publishing endeavors.
Sincerely,
Barry F. Skaggs

June 14, 1979
Alkol, WV

Editor:
I am writing concerning your magazine GOLDENSEAL that my neighbor loaned me. As I would love to receive them myself, would you please put my name on your mailing list? I read on the inside cover that GOLDENSEAL is distributed without charge, but I want you to know it's a magazine that would definitely sell.

I am eagerly awaiting the next edition of your wonderful GOLDENSEAL. It is a tribute to this great state of ours.

Would it be possible for you to send me the back Volume 5, number 2 (April-June 1979), as I would like to keep the article on Robert Byrd, Mountain Fiddler? In fact, I plan on keeping every issue of GOLDENSEAL.
Sincerely,
Mrs. Larry Charles Adkins

June 14, 1979
Glemington, WV

Editor:
Please put my name on the GOLDENSEAL mailing list—I have been interested in the culture, both past and present, of our state for years. I feel that your excellent magazine shows every side of history and culture that has helped to make our state the great state that it is.

Thanks for showing the public what West Virginia really is. I am looking forward to a copy of GOLDENSEAL.
Sincerely,
Edwin E. Fike

June 28, 1979
Bidwell, Ohio

Editor:
I was born on Trace Creek and grew up in Wayne County. When visiting in Wayne and Lincoln Counties I heard of your wonderful magazine GOLDENSEAL. Recently some kind person sent me a copy, and it brought back memories of the Wayne County Poor Farm.

It brought back memories of traveling from Kenova when I was a little girl with our large family to visit Grandpa Henry Ferguson, uncles, and aunts on Trace Creek in Wayne County. I loved the place and still do. The main event on the trip for us was to watch for the poor house, as we called it.

Our mother would always tell us children that if we didn't work hard and save our money we may end up there someday. That really must have made an impression on all of us for we have all done reasonably well over the years.

I am an artist and have painted two of the pictures in your article in oils, the black woman's cabin and also the poor farm with the dirt road leading up to the house. Both look so sad and beautiful. I would also like to paint two of the other pictures where the jonquils are blooming and also the close-up view of the front of the house as it is now.

Thanks so much for your magazine.
Sincerely yours,
Myrtle Fischer

May 14, 1979
Philadephia, Pennsylvania

Editor:
Please enter me for a subscription to GOLDENSEAL.

As Regional Archeologist for the National Park Service, I am involved in planning for the consideration of Cultural Resources located in our new park, New River Gorge National River. Your magazine is helpful in these areas. Could you send me also as many back issues as you can, commencing with Volume 4, number 2, 1978? My old subscription when I was at the University of Pennsylvania lapsed from that date.

Your magazine is easily one of the best such state publications in the country and I have used it often in my work.
Sincerely,
David G. Orr

May 21, 1979
Jumping Branch, WV

Editor:
I borrowed one of your books from my grandsons to read. I read where it's free for asking, and I'm sure here asking for you to put my name down in your records. I want to receive these books.

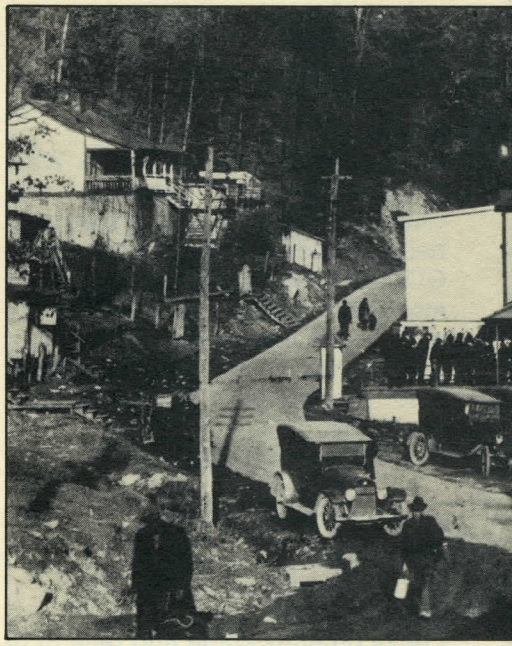
I don't know anyone in the January-March issue, but since I've read and re-read it I feel I almost know them. I am 72 years old, have always lived in the country, and I know what life is on a farm.

I hope you will accept me as a subscriber to GOLDENSEAL, and I'm looking forward to the magazines as they come due for mailing.
Sincerely yours,
Mrs. Ruby V. Pack

West Virginia Coal Company Scrip

By Robert W. Craigo

Photographs by Rick Lee



The Stonega Coal & Coke company store at Sun, Fayette County. Date and photographer unknown.

The company store in West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, and Ohio in its early days met a need for attracting and keeping labor. Miners or other laborers would not remain long working for a company if there was no place to get everyday needs such as food and clothing. This need brought the building of company towns and stores between the mountains and the creeks in the hollows of Appalachia, as well as roads and railroads.

Profits from the stores kept the mines going in such periods as the Depression. Many operators were able to keep their mines open three or four days a week because of the company store.

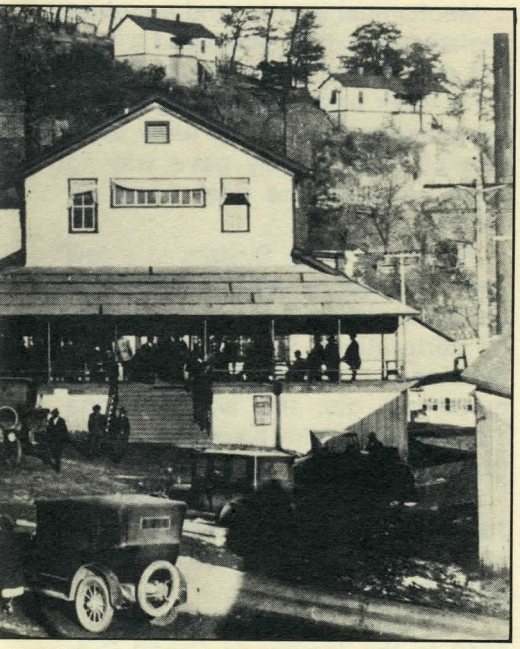
Company scrip made its first appearance in Virginia, the first producer of coal in the United States, probably just before the turn of the 19th century. The Old Dominion had begun the digging of "stone cole" in the Richmond vicinity, around 1701. Commercial mining on a larger scale began in the 1750's.

Pittsburgh began mining coal around 1759, and around 1810 mining in what is now West Virginia started, in the Wheeling area. Mining began somewhat later in the Kanawha Valley. In 1817, John P. Turner opened a "coal bank" near the mouth of Burning Springs Branch, just a few miles above Charleston. The abundance of timber for the furnaces of Valley salt works probably contributed to the later start.

In the early 1820's James McFarland combined with Turner to operate a large mercantile establishment as well as coal mines. McFarland was known for his banking background, and may have fathered the first local coal company scrip in the 1819-1827 period. At that time, he reportedly issued and circulated his own paper money at the insistence of Charleston area customers. The Valley had no banking facility. This paper money could have been used by McFarland & Turner mine workers as the earliest West Virginia coal scrip.

In the mid-1820's, almost all of the salt furnace operators developed coal mines. These salt men used their own form of money in transacting some of their everyday

Below Left: Clockwise from upper left, these tokens are from Sutton Chemical Co. at Sutton (Braxton County), Buxton and Landstreet Company at West Virginia Junction (Mineral County), Hill Coal Co. at Swiss (Nicholas County), and Lincoln Coal & Coke at Mabco (Lincoln County). The Buxton and Landstreet token is of hard rubber.
Below Right: Dies used in the manufacture of metal scrip. At lower right is an unstamped blank, or planchet, from which tokens were made.



business. Little of the early paper scrip and money of the Kanawha Valley has survived to the present day because of a fire which destroyed the first Charleston bank several years later. McFarland's diary and memorabilia were destroyed by the fire, and I have not seen any of the reported McFarland notes.

The next known coal and salt scrip appeared in 1836, when the Kanawha Salt Company issued its own money. These notes, in denominations of $1, $2, $5, and $10, were widely used in and around the "Salines." Employees of the operating salt and coal companies used the paper money in the commissary operated by Ruffner & Company, which managed the Kanawha Salt Company. This circulating medium was said to be worth more of its face value than notes of state and local banks, in that it was discounted less.

The year 1845 was important to the early Kanawha Valley coal industry, for in this year the Pioneer mine of the Tompkins operations was opened at Cedar Grove, not far from the impressive brick home of founder William Tompkins. Slaves were employed to do the digging and loading onto flatboats which took the coal to the furnaces of the Tompkins salt works, 14 miles down the Kanawha River. Because of its location away from the main body of the salt operations, Tompkins' commissary probably used some form of scrip.

The late 1840's and the 1850's were good years for the young Kanawha District coal industry as a great dash was made by Eastern and English capitalists to acquire area coal lands. William H. Edwards, of New York, spearheaded efforts to develop coal lands, when during the years 1848-49 he came to the Valley to look after his deceased brother's property.

This, coupled with early developments on Coal River, and at Raymond City, Campbell's Creek, Winifrede, and Paint Creek, assured the Kanawha Valley coal mining industry of prominence for many years. After the salt business declined in the Valley, many investors focused on coal development.

The earliest metal coal scrip was probably that of John P. Hale's Snow Hill salt furnace and coal mines. Hale also issued Splint Coal Company tokens, which had Lorena Furnace on the obverse. Here, however, there is some disagreement as to the date the tokens were put into use. Some collectors argue that they were used either in the 1850's or in the late 1860's. Other authorities state that the Snow Hill tokens were put into use around 1875, after Hale's business affairs had suffered financial reverses. They maintain that Hale used the scrip after he leased his old Snow Hill property back from the court-appointed receivers.

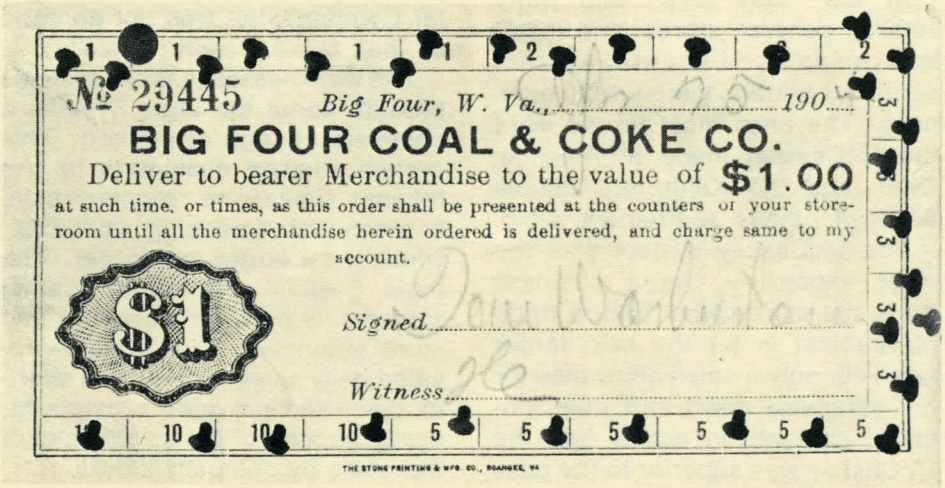
Tokens of the Pioneer Coal Company of Malden were probably placed into use around this same period. For it was in 1872 that the owners had acquired a large acreage which included a mining camp and some equipment and operating facilities, including a store.

Keep in mind that most of the coal scrip in use in the early years was paper and not metal. This scrip was easily destroyed by burning, and few specimens have survived the ravages of time.

One type of paper scrip is the "punch card," which could be printed in the print shop of any large town near the coal company. Often regular bond paper was used, with some coal operators preferring to use a heavier cardboard. This "punch scrip" was usually in values of $1, $2, $3, $4, and $5. Some companies used higher values, even up to $20. Punch scrip had little squares around the four sides, each with numbers inside showing denominations of 1¢, 5¢, 10¢, 25¢, and so on. These numbers would be punched out until all of the face value of the scrip was used by the employee or a family member.

The other popular kind of paper scrip was similar to the early frac-

Paper punch scrip from Big Four Coal & Coke store at Big Four, McDowell County. The entire value of this $1 coupon has been punched out.



Above Left: The New River Company, with headquarters at MacDonald, was the largest user of coal scrip in West Virginia. This $5 token is from the Lochgelly (Fayette County) store. *Above Right:* This octagonal token of the Milburn By-Products Coal Co. is made of aluminum. The company operated mines at Milburn, Fayette County.

tional currency of the U. S. Government. Also, notes of $1 to $10 denominations similar to regular U. S. currency were used by many coal companies, but the pictures and scenes on the notes were usually coal-related.

Metal scrip came into wider usage in the 1880's and 1890's, with "system scrip" coming into use in the late 1890's. Aluminum, and earlier hard rubber, tokens were in wide use in the 1890's because of their low cost.

System scrip was produced and usually patented by an outside firm, and used by several coal companies. S. D. Childs & Company of Chicago, an early system scrip producer, had been making tokens for many years when, in the late 1890's, it applied for a patent to protect its manufacture of bimetal coins. They were mostly of brass with aluminum centers, with some of copper and aluminum. The patent was granted in 1899. Childs made scrip for several early West Virginia coal companies.

In the "Gay 90's" and early 1900's, general stores and commissaries used several system scrips to handle their credit business. The ones most in use were the McCaskey, made at Alliance, Ohio, and the Keith, or "Simple Account," made at Fremont, Ohio.

The McCaskey system was the most expensive. As a business grew, the store owner had to trade his cabinet in for the next larger size with only a small allowance for his otherwise good, but now too-small, cabinet. In actual use, the McCaskey was superior to the pass book, but a big complaint was that it didn't prevent mistakes in charging goods to the wrong party. The system promoted many disputes between customer and shopkeeper. Then too, anyone could see the state of your account by glancing at the slips at a convenient time. Because of its size, it took more time at the end of a day's business to settle accounts.

The Keith or Simple Account was used by many West Virginia store owners and coal commissaries. This system gave the customer an itemized account and total amount owed at one writing by the store clerk, but was much more cumbersome in size and operation. With the Keith System, each customer had a separate book, which was kept in a box-like rack. The case was stamped as "fireproof," but really wasn't in an intense fire.

Other systems included the American Case and Register, Commercial, Recapitulator, Bennett, Kirkwood, Shriner, and the National. The latter system was produced by the National Cash Register Company, but was not as good as their famous cash register.

The weaknesses in these systems brought about the Ingle System, a complete change of method. This system allowed customers to use tokens similar to regular coin. It prevented "creeping accounts" which grew larger and larger. The Ingle System resulted in prompt settlements between customer and store managers. The system provided daily sales records in a shorter time, and provided receipts for the issuances of dollar amounts of the coins by company stores.

Mechanical issuing and counting registers, small in size, were a central part of the Ingle System. The scrip clerk had his own register to issue dollar tokens. The early scrip receipt form quickly gave way to scrip cards in the coal company stores.

When the Ingle System in a few years turned its attention to coal industrial stores, the use of punches or perforations in the coins was developed. By using a different punch-out die, the scrip of one store could quickly be distinguished from another.

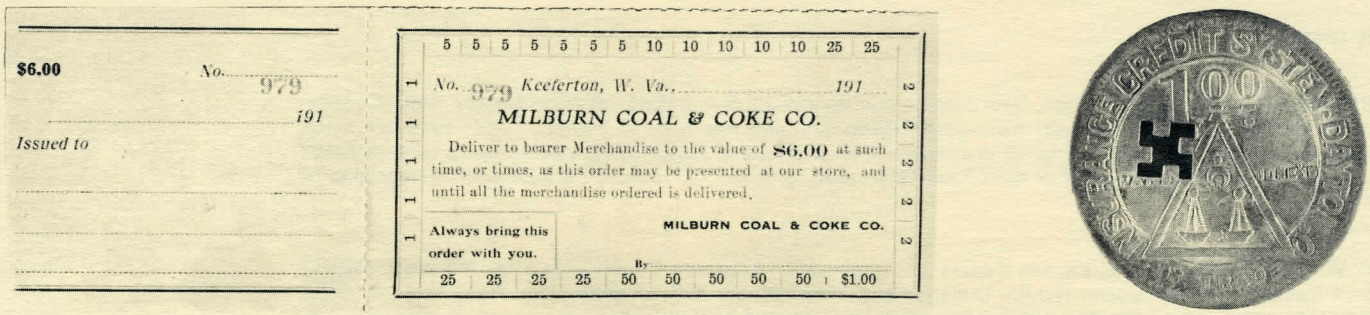
The Ingle System, from 1909 to 1919, used only two different types of scrip—patented June, 1909, and April 7, 1914.

The Ingle System gave way in 1919 to the Insurance Credit System. This company was also owned by the Ingle brothers, with Jerry H. Schierloh as its fiscal officer. ICS tokens from 1919 to 1925 used a triangle logo on the reverse side of the coin.

In 1921, the Insurance Credit System bought 100 issuing registers from Wiley W. Osborne, owner of the Osborne Register Company of Cincinnati. Scrip dollars used in this issuing machine were of thick, 16-gauge metal. Smaller denominations were mostly of thinner gauge, unless specifically requested to be thicker. On the reverse of the dollar, the triangle logo was smaller, with its three points not penetrating the circle near the outside of the coins. This reverse design was used from 1921 to 1925.

In December, 1924, the Osborne Register Company purchased the Insurance Credit System, and began making tokens in addition to its various registers. For a few months they continued use of the ICS reverse design, but changed the design by April of 1925. From this time until 1958, the familiar Orco logo was in use on patented metal scrip.

After several months, Wiley Osborne changed the manufacturer's side of the coin from the reverse die to the obverse. Now the Osborne Register design was the obverse. Thus, most cut-outs appear



Above Left: Unused $6 paper punch scrip from the Milburn Coal & Coke store at Keeferton. The attached receipt was normally held by the company payroll office, and charged against the miner's wages.
Above Right: The Insurance Credit System Company of Dayton, Ohio, was one of the chief suppliers of patented "system" scrip to coal companies. This Iroquois Coal Co. token is from Wyoming County. The swastika had not yet been made infamous as the symbol of Nazi Germany.

to be "in reverse." Almost all scrip made by other companies show opposite design and piercing.

Edwin H. Ingle, the leading official of the predecessor Ingle and Insurance Credit Systems, worked for the Osborne Register Company until he left in late 1925 to be a part of the newly-formed Ingle-Schierloh Company. This was the fourth and final Ohio scrip manufacturer. Jerry H. Schierloh was the president of Ingle-Schierloh, with Ingle functioning mostly as a supporting officer and salesman.

Osborne Register used four different logo dies—Pat. Pend., Reg. U. S. Pat. Off., Patented, and Patented with bars—both with and without dates on the so-called obverse. The new Ingle-Schierloh had only two different logos—Pat. Pend. and Design Patent 75656. Master Metal Scrip, and the Ingle-Schierloh slogan read, was used from 1925 to 1971. The year 1928 saw the granting of the design patent.

System metal scrip was in use for about 75 years, but disappeared from the scene rapidly as the coal towns ceased being isolated.

Scrip is collected in many different ways, with complete sets for a company being the favorite method. However, it is virtually impossible to fill out complete sets for such companies in the Kanawha Valley as Quincy Coal Company (Quincy), Chesapeake Mining Company (Handley), Black Band Coal & Coke (Donwood), Midvale Colliery (Gamoca), and Boomer Coal Company (Boomer).

Some people just collect pennies or dollars, hoping to get just one for each coal company. Other collectors strive to get a representative piece of any denomination. Still others try to get pieces with pictures or designs on the coin. Many collect only tokens for a given state. I specialize in West Virginia coal scrip.

Value for a particular piece can be approximated by a rating system of Rarity, ranging from 1 to 10. The R-1 token is very common and sells for only 50¢, while an R-10 item would bring from $10 to $20, based upon the known number of pieces in existence. In these days of inflation, some pieces will bring even higher prices. In my own collection are single pieces for which I paid $30 and even higher prices. Supposedly, the token will bring what the market will bear.

The biggest user of coal company scrip in West Virginia was the New River Company (Mount Hope) which still uses it in a limited manner today. To have a complete collection of New River Company Stores scrip, one has to possess 22 different sets. The Company had 16 different stores, with scrip punched 1 to 16, and two letter sets, K and M. A different number 11 was used at Stanaford, a counter-stamped Prudence set at Glen Jean, and an underlined 6 set for Summerlee. There is also a counterfeit set of denominations from 5¢ to $5 for the Number 2 store at Scarbro. Only one complete New River collection is known, and that is in my possession.

Billions of pieces of scrip have been used in Appalachia and other regions, but scrip was systematically destroyed by the issuing coal companies when they ceased using the system. Companies used many means of destruction, some of them amusing.

The Maryland New River Company of Winona simply threw its obsolete scrip off a bridge into New River. The Boone County Coal Corporation of Sharples dumped most of its coins down a 400-foot borehole. Boomer Coal & Coke, which has its main office in Cleveland, Ohio, utilized Lake Erie for this purpose. Other companies burned scrip, cut it up, beat it into submission, sent it back to the manufacturer for shredding, buried it in the ground, placed it into a concrete foundation, or just put it back into a worked-out section of the mine and pulled the roof down on top of it.

Legally, all companies had to do was to advertise the fact that they were calling scrip in by a given date, and it would no longer be valid. Fortunately for the collector, this is what many coal scrip users did. Recalled scrip was simply put into a safe place or stored elsewhere. Large quantities of scrip are still stored today in forgotten places.

The National Scrip Collectors Association has its headquarters in Fayetteville, with Walter Caldwell functioning as editor of *Scrip Talk* and Association treasurer. The organization has about 400 members nationwide and charges $5 per year for dues. A sample issue of *Scrip Talk* can be secured free from Caldwell by writing to him at P. O. Box 29, Fayetteville, WV 25840.

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. Ruth makes her living doing free-lance public relations and photojournalism. Her previous GOLDENSEAL contributions include black and white and color photography to the April-June 1979 issue, and the "Graceland" article and photographs in the last issue.

ROBERT W. CRAIGO was born in Fayette County and grew up in Kanawha County. He attended West Virginia Institute of Technology and Morris Harvey College, and received his B.S. degree from West Virginia State College in 1959. He earned his M.A. in school administration and guidance and counseling at West Virginia University in 1963, and did further graduate work at Marshall and other schools. Mr. Craigo formerly worked as Director of Career Planning and Development, as well as Sports Information Services Director, at West Virginia State. Since 1975 he has served as a public and industrial relations consultant to a number of West Virginia coal companies. He is the author of a history of the New River Company, and has worked as a sports reporter for many West Virginia and Ohio daily and weekly newspapers.

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. She contributed the "Holiness People" article which appeared in the April-June 1979 GOLDENSEAL.

SKIP JOHNSON, a native of Herold in Braxton County, moved to Charleston with his family when he was 12. He graduated from Stonewall Jackson High School and soon went to work for the *Charleston Gazette* where he has worked for 30 years. For 24 of them he was a writer in the sports department, and in 1972 he became environmental and general feature writer. His hunting and fishing column, "Woods and Waters," has been a regular *Gazette* fixture most of his career. Mr. Johnson is a Korean War veteran who saw combat there. He and his family moved back to Herold in 1972. His last GOLDENSEAL contribution was a feature on the history of the proposed Stonewall Jackson Dam.

RANDY LAWRENCE was born in Welch, West Virginia. He graduated from Welch High School and attended Berea College, Berea, Kentucky. He completed an M.A. in history and public policy studies at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, and is now a Ph.D. candidate in history at Duke.

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. His review of *Guide to Coal Mining Collections in the United States* appeared in the April-June 1979 GOLDENSEAL.

ARTHUR C. PRICHARD, born and reared in Mannington, was graduated from Mannington public schools, West Virginia University, and McCormick Theological Seminary (Presbyterian), Chicago, Illinois. He has been employed as boy's director and coach at a Presbyterian mission school on the Navajo Reservation at Ganado, Arizona. Mr. Prichard also served as the pastor of churches in Ohio and Pennsylvania and in Wheeling and Mannington before retiring in 1970. He was a moderator of Wheeling Presbytery and the Synod of West Virginia for his denomination. In 1969 Mr. Prichard received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Davis and Elkins College. He has contributed articles to *Wonderful West Virginia, West Virginia University Magazine, Monday Morning* (a United Presbyterian Church publication), *The West Virginia Hillbilly,* and the Fairmont *Times-West Virginian* newspaper. His most recent GOLDENSEAL contribution was the article "A Circus is Coming" in the October-December 1978 issue.

BOB SPENCE was born and raised in Logan, and his people have lived there since 1790. He graduated from Marshall University in 1974, with a B.A. in journalism. He worked for the *Logan News* for 11 years, then as assistant to the president of Southern West Virginia Community College, and now makes his living as a free-lance writer. In 1976 Bob wrote *The Land of the Guyandotte,* a 600-page history of Logan County which is still available from the author. His article on Dr. Thomas Dunn English appeared in the July-September 1979 GOLDENSEAL.

IVAN M. TRIBE, a native of Albany, Ohio, earned his B.S. and M.A. degrees at Ohio University and his Ph.D. at the University of Toledo. A professor at Rio Grande College in Ohio, his interests center around the history of rural and industrial communities and particularly old-time, traditional country, and bluegrass music. Mr. Tribe has published in such periodicals as *Ohio History, Old Time Music, The Devil's Box, Bluegrass Unlimited,* and *JEMF Quarterly,* and co-authored a biography of West Virginia musician Molly O'Day. Mr. Tribe's "West Virginia Country Music During the Golden Age of Radio," from the July-September 1977 GOLDENSEAL, is now in its third printing and furnished the theme for this year's Vandalia Gathering.

Representative West Virginia coal company scrip from the collection of Robert W. Craigo, Charleston. The Elk River Coal & Lumber token (*upper right*) is a one-of-a-kind piece, while the Nelson Fuel dollar (*left*) was perhaps the most beautiful West Virginia coin. "System" scrip (*above*) by Ingle-Schierloh, Insurance Credit System, Osborne Register ("Orco"), and Ingle System, was patented by its manufacturers and used by many West Virginia mining companies. Other scrip from Mr. Craigo's collection on pages 68-71.

Department of Culture and History
The Cultural Center
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