Goldenseal

West Virginia Traditional Life

Volume 6, No. 4 October-December 1980

In the Spirit of Mother Jones

Remembering Mother Jones

Mary Harris "Mother" Jones died 50 years ago this November. By her own count she was 100 years old at the time of her death in 1930, although recent biographers figure she may have stretched her age a little. At any rate, she was a remarkable woman, and remarkably active over a very long life.

After suffering personal tragedy in her younger years — her husband and four children were taken in a yellow fever epidemic in 1867 — Mother Jones gave herself to radical social and labor causes. For half a century she crisscrossed the country. Morther organized "her boys" in the mines of Appalachia and the West and textile workers in the South, among others, taking time out along the way to dabble in the politics of the Mexican Revolution. She had no patience for the more genteel reforms of the day, once telling a group of female suffragists "you don't need a vote to raise hell," but instead plunged herself into the most desperate struggles she could find.

Mother Jones worked with early socialists and several labor unions, but was most closely associated with the United Mine Workers of America. At times she was officially employed by the UMW as a "walking delegate," or traveling organizer, but she made it a point to unionize miners whether on the payroll or not. She fought the mine operators ferociously, and was no less critical of president John Mitchell and other UMW officials when she found them to be in the wrong.

At the turn of the century the UMWA faced the critical task of organizing the Appalachian coalfields, whose rapid growth threatened the union's gains in the older northern and midwestern industry. Mother Jones came to West Virginia to help in that effort, first entering the state in 1900. Thereafter, she was in and out of West Virginia for most of the rest of her life. Early on, she tackled the Fairmont Field, and Kelley's Creek in Kanawha County. In 1902 she was in the New River sections of Fayette County, and in 1904 she evidently helped establish a UMW foothold on Paint Creek. Later, hearing that the union there was endangered, she dashed across the continent from the West to participate in the Paint and Cabin creeks mine wars of 1912-13. In 1921 she attempted to keep Kanawha County miners from making their famous March on Logan, which she apparently believed would be a hopeless undertaking.

In writing her autobiography, published in Chicago in 1925, Mother Jones noted that "I have been in West Virginia more or less for the past twenty-three years." She continued to be appalled by the working and living conditions of "Medieval West Virginia," as she called it. "When I get to the other side," she vowed, "I shall tell God Almighty about West Virginia!"

Mother did cross to the "other side" a few years later, although it is not known whether she remembered West Virginia to the Almighty. For 50 years the working people of West Viginia have remembered her, however, as perhaps they remember no other labor figure except John L. Lewis. Mary Harris Jones has become a legend in West Virginia, her feats taking on larger-than-life, mythical proportions. The mythification process gains momentum each year, as we lose the older citizens who actually witnessed her role in our history.

Late this fall, West Virginians will have a chance to get in touch with the real Mother Jones, and to sample the legend and do honor to her memory at the same time. The West Virginia Labor History Association, with the cooperation of the state Department of Culture and History, is sponsoring a Mother Jones and Miners Festival at the Cultural Center in Charleston. The event will take place on November 29-30, and will feature exhibits, music, and a panel discussion by Mother Jones experts. During the Festival a Mother Jones commemorative plaque will be unveiled on the State Capitol grounds.

Highlights of the Mother Jones Festival will include a concert by the Monongah Miners' Band, and a performance of the Mother Jones play, "Brimstone and Lace." The Miners' Band has made music continuously since 1915, and is now drawing fourth-generation members from some of the same Marion County mining families. "Brimstone and Lace," written by Bob and Carole Damron and first produced in 1976, is being revived especially for this year's Festival.

At GOLDENSEAL, we have worked closely with MJ Festival planners. We have taken the Mother Jones theme for this issue, and most of our articles pertain to West Virginia's labor and industrial history. In particular, we are printing an excerpt from "Brimstone and Lace," and Lois McLean's article on the Monongah Miners' Band. Ruth Belanger writes of a Tucker County coal town, and the Reverend Lawton Posey, a newcomer to the pages of GOLDENSEAL, tells us of a coalfields doctor. Paul Nyden writes of coalfields baseball, returning to the sports history theme he first explored a year ago in GOLDENSEAL.

We hope you will join us for the Festival in November, and we offer this GOLDENSEAL in the spirit of Mother Jones.

—Ken Sullivan

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Goldenseal

A Quarterly Forum for Documenting West Virginia's Traditional Life

Volume 6, Number 4 ✤ October-December 1980

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Cover: Mary Harris "Mother" Jones, in an uncharacteristically refined pose from a portrait by an unknown coal miner. This previously unpublished picture is from the West Virginia Collection at WVU.

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.

United States Senate
Washington, DC
July 21, 1980
Editor:
Congratulations to you and the staff on the April-June issue of GOLDENSEAL.

I was especially interested in several articles and the captivating photographs of old-time Helvetia. Birdie Kyle wrote with nostalgic realism of her "growing up" days. I am having my copy delivered personally to Swiss Ambassador Robert Probst. Last year it was my privilege to join Ambassador Probst at the annual Helvetia Festival. I know he will treasure this memento of his visit as he returns to his homeland.

Other contents, such as the paintings of Patrick J. Sullivan and the Appalachian Baptistry paintings, provide a fascinating cultural-historical record for future scholars. Overall, the editorial and design format were excellent.

The quarterly GOLDENSEAL is a well-conceived representation of our State of West Virginia and its people. It fills a literary void left by the passing of Phil Conley's old *West Virginia Review,* for which I served as writer-editor.

Please convey to all responsible for the concept and execution of GOLDENSEAL my commendation. I hope we shall receive the magazine on a regular basis.
Truly,
Jennings Randolph

Pembine, Wisconsin
May 26, 1980
Editor:
I have received two copies of GOLDENSEAL. I love to read all the beautiful articles about different people, how they lived and worked. I too lived much the same way when I was young. We killed and cured our own meat by just salting and putting it down in brine, and smoking the hams and shoulders. We also picked and canned wild berries, and dried apples, corn, and beans enough for a winter's supply to feed six children and our parents.

You see, I grew up, went to school in the one-room schools in Tygart's Valley of Randolph County, and later taught school in that location before my marriage to an Express Agent and coming to Wisconsin to live.

I thank you for GOLDENSEAL.
Sincerely,
Mrs. Gladys Chenowith Willis

Royersford, Pennsylvania
July 1, 1980
Editor:
Please add my name to your mailing list to receive GOLDENSEAL magazine. My brother, Mark Armentrout, sent me several back issues to read this summer, and I found the information contained therein both fascinating and of great interest to a "displaced West Virginian" like myself.

Although I've been away from West Virginia for more than thirteen years, I still miss the hills and long to return someday. Though I've made my home in Pennsylvania (eight years in Harrisburg and almost five years in the Philadelphia area), when people ask me where I'm from I invariably and proudly answer, "West Virginia!" I'm proud to be a hillbilly!
Sincerely,
Karen (Armentrout) Kona

Jim Comstock

Graham Memorial Presbyterian Church
Whitesburg, Kentucky
March 3, 1980

Editor:
I have just finished reading your interview with Jim Comstock in the January-March issue of GOLDENSEAL. That article alone is enough to move me to seek to be placed on your mailing list! I am also looking forward to reading the sections on the Lilly Reunion. I have fond memories of summers spent in Mason County, where our beloved doctor was Dr. Lilly. Perhaps I can find out if he was of the same clan.

I have a dear friend who was born in West Virginia and is now serving the Presbyterian Church in Hazard, Kentucky. Would you please include his name, too?

Thank you for your fine magazine. I look forward to receiving it.
Most sincerely,
R. Rhodes Stipp, pastor

GOLDENSEAL's Fifth Anniversary

Morgantown, WV
January 21, 1980
Editor:
May I offer congratulations to the editor and staff of GOLDENSEAL on your fifth anniversary. As a life-long resident of this state and a Lady of the Golden Horseshoe, I have always been particularly interested in the folklore and the history of West Virginia. Imagine my delight when I discovered that a periodical of such excellent quality was being published right here in my native state. I was also pleased to see that you recognize the important role that women have played in the history of our state and of Appalachia.

Unfortunately, I have only seen scattered issues at the homes of friends and would like very much to obtain a subscription for myself and one for my grandmother who will doubtless enjoy GOLDENSEAL as much as I do.

Thanks very much. Keep up the good work.
Sincerely,
Penny L. Pugh

The First Century is the Hardest

Clarksburg, WV
July 11, 1980
Editor:
I've just read my first GOLDENSEAL, the January-March issue. In it was an article, "The First Century is the Hardest." My father (deceased) was

Jacob Schlicker, Sr., a glassblower at the Adamston Flat Glass Company, who knew all the men pictured in the article. As a boy I was in the plant many times, as it was allowed then. The article brought back many memories. My father came to Pittsburgh when he was 20 years old, and lived to age 68. If he had lived, he would be 111 years old now.
Yours truly,
Jacob Schlicker, Jr.

Lilly Reunion

Beaver, WV
March 3, 1980

Editor:
I was so glad to receive my copy of the GOLDENSEAL magazine. Thank you so much for putting my name on your mailing list. I'm also thankful for Mamie Lilly and her daughter, Willa Maddy, who introduced me to the magazine.

When I received my copy I was so thrilled I just couldn't put it down and to think it was all *for free.* I called several of my "Lilly cousins" and told them about it and they too have received copies by now and they are really impressed with it.

I have lived in West Virginia all my seventy years and GOLDENSEAL surely brought many memories. I enjoyed every bit of it, especially about the Lilly reunion. I think Yvonne Snyder Farley should be commended by all the Lilly clan for the fine job she did on that article.

I also enjoyed the article about Aunt Nannie Meador. When I lived in Hinton as a small girl I can remember the bakery of her son Cleveland. My brother, Wayne Ellison, worked for him. At that time bread was only 5¢ per loaf. My oldest sister, Myrtle Harvey, also worked for Cleve (as they called him).
Sincerely,
Mrs. Cora Mays

current programs·festivals·publications

GOLDENSEAL a Winner

GOLDENSEAL is pleased to announce that its graphic designers, Colleen Anderson and Pat Cahape, have been awarded a first place in the magazine category in the West Virginia Press Women's Competition for their design work on GOLDENSEAL. Pat and Colleen were also the recipients this past summer of a first place in the West Virginia Communicators Laureate Awards, and a merit award in the Addy competition sponsored by the Charleston Advertising Club. The latter two awards were also for their design of GOLDENSEAL.

Colleen Anderson and Pat Cahape. Photograph by Steve Payne.

Pat and Colleen are the founding partners of Oh Susannah Graphics, located in the Arcade Building in downtown Charleston. Both are Michigan natives and former college roommates at Western Michigan University. Colleen came to West Virginia as a Vista volunteer in 1970, working with Cabin Creek Quilts Cooperative. Pat first came to the state on a visit to Colleen, and then came back as a designer and staff worker for Cabin Creek Quilts in 1973. They started Oh Susannah Graphics in 1975, "on a shoestring." Colleen was the designer for the very first issue of GOLDENSEAL, published in April '75, and one or the other of them has been involved with nearly every issue since then.

Their work at Oh Susannah encompasses most areas of graphic design: logo design; layout design for letterheads and brochures; billboards; and, of course, magazines. According to Colleen, "GOLDENSEAL is one of our favorite things to do." Working with Cabin Creek Quilts from its infancy was an influential factor for Colleen, and she says, "West Virginia traditional life and crafts have been and remain a heavy influence on both of us, visually and otherwise."

When they first started Oh Susannah, the designers worked out of their home. Both had had design art courses in college, and Colleen had already done some free-lance work. "We both enjoyed it; we felt we had potential," she explains. "At the urging of friends we decided to go ahead and try it, to see if we could support ourselves." Obviously they could, since the business celebrated its fifth anniversary this September.

In addition to her work with Oh Susannah, Colleen is currently teaching a design class at Garnet Career Center. Both Pat and Colleen have settled here and intend to stay. They have both married since coming to the state, and Pat has a baby daughter. As Colleen says, "We consider ourselves naturalized West Virginians."

Prickets Fort Fall and Winter Schedule

Pricketts Fort State Park near Fairmont is currently in its fifth season. Located east of the city off I-79 at Exit 139, the park is situated on 188 acres of West Virginia field and forest, with the reconstructed Revolutionary War fort overlooking the juncture of Pricketts Creek and the Monongahela River. Following plans contained in a traditional description of the original fort built in 1774, the stockade is constructed of peeled native hardwood logs salvaged from early structures in the area and donated to the project.

Regular demonstrations of such frontier skills as gunsmithing, spinning, weaving, candlemaking, and blacksmithing will be offered every fall weekend from Labor Day through October 26, when the Fort closes for the winter season. Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays, and noon to 6 p.m. Sundays. In addition, the Pricketts Fort Memorial Foundation will sponsor a series of special events on selected weekends throughout the late fall and early winter. These include:

Oct. 11-12

Annual Apple Butter Festival. Demonstrations in traditional methods of making and canning apple butter.

Oct. 25-26

Christmas Workshops. Instruction in methods of making traditional Christmas decorations, using natural materials from area woodlands. Reservations required.

Nov. 29-30,
Dec. 6-7, 13-14, 20-21

Christmas Market. Festive occasion featuring the customs, decorations, and good cheer of a colonial Christmas. Free fort admission. The 18th Century shop will be open featuring handcrafted colonial goods, refreshments. Contemporary items for sale at the Visitor Center.

For more information on upcoming events, or to make reservations, call the Visitor Center at (304) 363-3030.

Rexrode Slide Program

The Shenandoah Valley Folklore Society has recently completed "Mountain Folk Life: As Portrayed Through the Folk Art of James T. Rexrode." This slide presentation consists of 50 color transparencies of Rexrode's major paintings, accompanied by a detailed written commentary on his life and art.

James T. Rexrode, born in Sugar Grove in 1887, spent all of his long life in Pendleton County. Before his death in 1976 he was one of West Virginia's most prolific folk artists, and he is now perhaps the state's best-known primitive painter. His style and choice of subjects are somewhat reminiscent of those of Grandma Moses, and the creators of this slide program have referred to him as the "Grandpa Moses of the Mountains." Elmer L. Smith and Paul C. Cline discussed Rexrode's work in GOLDENSEAL, Volume 3, number 3 (July-September 1977), and his paintings are held by the West Virginia Department of Culture and History and other public and private collections.

"Mountain Folk Life" is part of a larger documentation of Rexrode's art by the Shenandoah Valley Folklore Society. The project, directed by Smith, Cline, and other Virginia folklorists, was partly funded by the Humanities Foundation of West Virginia. Copies of the slide program may be purchased for $22.50 (plus $3.50 shipping and handling) from Shenandoah Valley Folklore Society, P.O. Box 47, Middleton, VA 22645.

WVU's Mountaineer Week

Begun in 1947 to promote school spirit, West Virginia University's Mountaineer Week has since grown beyond that original concept to encompass the most popular facets of West Virginia traditional culture. The 1980 Mountaineer Week will run from Sunday, October 19, through Saturday, October 25, and will include arts and crafts exhibits and sales, a quilt show, a student music festival and a state music festival, a long-distance run, and old-time games and competitions — sack races, egg tosses, woodchopping and tobacco-spitting contests, hay-bale toss, horseshoe throwing, and an "outhouse cram" are among the competitions planned.

A special feature of Mountaineer Week is the annual fiddle contest, which will be held on October 25, the evening of the WVU-Penn State game. The contest is open to all state residents. Randolph County's champion fiddler, Woody Simmons, plans to return again this year to defend his first-place title.

This year's Mountaineer Week will reinstate the street fair, which was discontinued several years ago. Morgantown's High Street will be closed off, and musicians from around the state will perform informally for the crowds. The old-time popcorn wagons will be back, offering traditional funnel cakes in addition to their regular fare.

Each year a traditional quilt pattern is chosen to represent Mountaineer Week, and a quilt is made in that pattern to be exhibited during the festival. Mugs featuring this same quilt pattern will be offered for sale throughout the Week.

"Recollections"

West Virginia Public Radio began a new series in September, appropriately entitled "Recollections," a collage of memories, songs, stories, and superstitions of numerous older West Virginians. With the help of a grant from the Humanities Foundation of West Virginia, producer Susan Leffler traveled to farms, senior centers, and nursing homes throughout the state and recorded her conversations with our older citizens. "Recollections" includes those of a Monroe County musician who rode in boxcars from West Virginia to Texas to play for rodeos; the story of a young man who fled revolutionary Russia with his violin and a tuxedo hidden under the train seat; and the memories of one of West Virginia's first ordained female ministers.

Highlights of these conversations and many others, along with commentary on their historical significance, are being broadcast through June 1981 on Monday mornings at 8:20, Wednesday afternoons at 12:30, and Friday afternoons at 3:15 . In addition to these 10-minute segments, listeners have a chance to talk to some of the participants and share their own "recollections" once a month when Susan and her guests meet for a live discussion in Public Radio's studios and invite listeners to call in.

"Recollections" can be heard on West Virginia Public Radio's four stations: WVPN 88.5 FM Charleston; WVPW 88.9 FM Buckhannon; WHPW 89.9 FM Huntington; WVPB 91.7 FM Beckley; and soon on WVPM 90.9 FM Morgantown.

Camp Washington-Carver Opens

Photos by Rick Lee

On June 21, Camp Washington-Carver in Fayette County was reopened and rededicated to the use of the people of West Virginia. Originally built as the state's black 4-H camp during the days of racial segregation, Washington-Carver had more recently served as a part of the extension program of West Virginia State College. In 1979 the Legislature transferred ownership to the West Virginia Department of Culture and History, which will administer the camp as a multi-cultural facility.

Governor Rockefeller, on hand for the dedication, noted that the camp was named for two black American leaders, Booker T. Washington and George Washington Carver. Washington, born a slave in Franklin County, Virginia, had relatives in West Virginia and spent several years in Malden after the Civil War. After leaving the state he founded Tuskegee Institute in Alabama in 1881. Carver, a famous plant scientist and a younger man, later joined Washington at Tuskegee.

In welcoming the governor, master of ceremonies Ahmed Williams recalled the significance of the old camp to the state's black history. Both men noted the accomplishments of the two black leaders, speaking with particular pride of Washington. Rockefeller pledged that the camp would stand as a monument to the state's commitment to "preserving and protecting the black cultural heritage" of West Virginia.

Camp Washington-Carver is located near Lookout, on the plateau north of New River Gorge. The camp was established by legislation in 1937, but buildings on the 30-acre property date mostly from the early 1940's. The Great Chestnut Lodge, the camp's centerpiece, was built in 1941-42, and is the largest chestnut log structure in the eastern United States. Placement of the Lodge on the National Register of Historic

Places was announced by the governor at the opening ceremony.

The dedication on Saturday was followed by Washington-Carver's first full weekend of programming. Craftspeople demonstrated their skills indoors and out, with the main hall of the Lodge reserved for musical performances by the Putnam County Pickers, Ethel Caffie's gospel singers, and others. Visitors, including many who had attended 4-H camp there, picnicked and wandered about the grounds.

Poet Laureate Louise McNeill Pease wrote the following poem to commemorate the occasion, and to celebrate the significance of Camp Washington-Carver to the past and future of West Virginia:

Chestnut Lodge — Camp Washington-Carver

June 21, 1980

The tainted winds that blew the spores
Across the forest moaned and cried;
The chestnuts withered in the blight
And cankered slowly till they died.

The naked skeletons of trees
Stood on the hilltops, ghostly white,
Till men of courage, hope, and pride
Raised up this building's rustic height.

So children of that other day,
Black children who were set apart,
Could join here in work and play
For hand and health, for head and heart,
Singing that song of long ago,
"I know where the 4-leaf clovers grow."

Neglect and loss, the graying years,
The silent gnawing of decay —
But now these pillars lift again
To life, to hope this summer day.

For youth, the children of these hills,
These rough-hewn pillars lift above,
For black and white as time fulfills
Our hope of brotherhood and love.

So out of death, the dying trees,
So out of loss, as out of pain,
These giant chestnuts singing rise
To life, to life, to life again.

—Louise McNeill

Left: Blues singer Nat Reese, of Princeton.
Below left: The Sunset Promenaders of Meadow Bridge inside the Great Lodge.
Bottom left: Dr. Ahmed Williams of Institute served as master of ceremonies.

Woodcarver Bill Reed's giant rocking horse was a major attraction at the Washington-Carver opening.

December 24, 1908

A Monroe County Christmas Story

By Kenneth D. Swope

A look at a West Virginia map will show you that Monroe County is down in the southeast along the state line. Peterstown is one of Monroe's rural communities adjoining Giles County, Virginia. My parents and I, their only child and a baby at the time, lived there in 1908.

My father was a rarity — a rural dentist. My mother was going to college when she married, and this qualified her for teaching, about the only profession a woman could follow. Father had his dental office in the room of our large house usually called the parlor. Mother started a small class of neighboring children in a nearby room. She comfortably located me in a crib alongside her desk, but as I was not yet six months old, I slept through most of the lessons.

My mother's family lived in Alderson on the Greenbrier River, the length of Monroe away. In the winter of 1908 my grandmother had been ill for a long time, but she was not considered to be in imminent danger.

But on December 23, the telephone rang with a message from Alderson. My grandmother was near death, and if we wished to see her we would have to get there as quickly as possible. Then and there Mother decided we were going to see her mother before she died. Certainly wisdom had little part in her decision.

Father got up early the next day, and built a fire in the kitchen and in two fireplaces. He looked out on a cold, white world. The snow was deep. He immediately went to the barn and attended to his horse. It was not a very good horse, surely not fit for a journey of any length — and it was 35 miles across Monroe County. As he fed the horse and harnessed it to the buggy, Father contemplated the long, cold trip we were undertaking.

Father decided that the best way to go would be from Peterstown to Lowell, a flag stop on the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway, 18 miles from Peterstown. He knew a family on that road where we could stop to warm ourselves, get some hot food, and exchange horses. At Lowell Mother and I could get a local train for Alderson, nine miles upriver from Lowell.

After a quick breakfast mother bundled me warmly and off we started. It was a cheerless, cold, cloudy day and more snow threatened. The snow was unbroken, and it quickly became evident that the horse was no match for the load and the road. Father would get out and walk, and in rougher places help pull. Mother kept me nestled comfortable and warm against her body.

Several hours later we arrived at the home of the family friends. Two dogs greeted us. Father knocked at the farmhouse, and the door was opened. But something was wrong. There was no welcome, no offer of food or warmth, and no exchange of horses. Such a lack of hospitality was an unexpected blow.

On the weak horse plodded. Father knew we would have little time to spare to meet the train, so he tried to hasten the animal. Mother could not get out of the buggy. She was not dressed for wading in the snow, and I could not be left alone in the buggy. They met no one, and in this sparsely-populated section the farms were far from the road. Fortunately, there were no mountains to cross.

Finally we neared Lowell. A mile from the flag stop my parents heard the train's whistle far down the river. Father dragged the horse into a near trot, but when we arrived at the railroad the train was just disappearing up the Greenbrier. There was no one at the flag stop, and no help nearby.

Father thoroughly rested the horse, and got water from the river. He had plenty of feed in the buggy, and an old horse blanket. It would be dark soon on that sunless midwinter day, but my parents knew what they had to do. Father would have to walk the remaining nine miles to Alderson and help pull the buggy, which would have been much lighter if mother and I had been on the train. It was very doubtful if the horse could stay on its feet. Off they started again — a slow, plodding step-by-step.

My father was exhausted, but he was in better condition than the staggering horse when they finally saw the lights of the small town of Alderson that Christmas Eve. Mother saw the decorations and an occasional person on the streets. Now that she knew we could get to her parents,' she prayed her mother was alive.

Grandmother was alive. In fact, she lived nearly a year longer. My father was in a state of total fatigue. Mother was very tired, but her joy in finding her mother alive cheered and brightened her. I was in spendid condition.

My uncle and grandfather did all they could for the horse. The animal was barely alive. He was fed, watered, curried, and rubbed down. His stall was made as warm as possible. We slept soundly that night, and Grandfather went out early Christmas morning to care for the horse. He found the poor beast dead in the stall.

The Monongah Miners' Band was only a year old when this photograph was made in 1916. Eddy Vingle is third from right, first row, and brother Anthony "Jake" Vingle stands fourth right, at rear. Conductor Virgil Bork is fourth from left in the second row. Photographer unknown, courtesy Anthony Vingle.

The Monongah Miners' Band

By Lois C. McLean

For a small town, Monongah has played a large role in West Virginia mining history. With a current population of 2,000, Monongah is located on West Fork River in Marion County, about five miles southwest of Fairmont. Built in 1889 on a site formerly called Briertown, the new community was the service center for the Upper Monongahela Coal and Coke Company, which changed its name to Monongah Coal and Coke the following year. The company's two mines, Nos. 6 and 8, were on the west bank of West Fork, with No. 6 opposite the town and No. 8 about a mile upstream. The mines began producing coal in 1890, were electrically equipped, used cutting machines, and reportedly were the first mechanized mines in the Fairmont coalfield.

While the Monongah mines were gearing up for production in 1890, two national miners' unions met in Columbus, Ohio, to launch the United Mine Workers of America. Monongah mine owners did not share the coal miners' enthusiasm for this new organization, and they let it be known that their mines were non-union. Any of their men who joined or even spoke with the UMWA organizers were dismissed and blacklisted. In 1897, the UMWA issued a national strike call for July 4. The union's position in the northern coalfields was threatened by the rapid growth of the non-union West Virginia industry, and labor leaders from around the country were called in to help organize miners in the state. Socialist Eugene V. Debs, at a meeting near the Willow Tree schoolhouse, appealed to the Monongah miners to join their union brothers. His appearance triggered a new technique for excluding the union, the federal court injunction.

In the 1902 West Virginia coal strike, Mother Jones appeared at the Willow Tree schoolhouse and again appealed to the miners to join the union. The Marion County sheriff appeared too, and handed her notice of injunction. Although not arrested there, Jones was arrested for injunc-

In the Spirit of Mother Jones

tion violation when she moved across the line into Harrison County. The Monongah mines, then owned by the Fairmont Coal Co., were absorbed two years later by the new Consolidation Coal Co.

On December 6, 1907, an explosion racked the local mines, giving Monongah the dubious fame of being the site of the worst mine disaster in American history. The exact number of those killed is unknown. Officially, the count, based on the number of bodies recovered, was 361, but those familiar with mining practices and the number of miners employed in the Monongah mines figured that the number killed must have been between 400 and 500. The lone survivor was Peter Urban, a Polish-born miner who began working in the mine in June, 1907. Peter and his brother, Stanislaus, were both found alive in a "toad hole" located under the site of St. Joseph Catholic Church. Stan died as he was being taken from the mine. Peter, nearly dead, recovered his health a few months later. He continued working in No. 8 mine, but eventually No. 8 claimed him too. Peter Urban was killed by a slate fall 19 years later, in the vicinity of the old toad hole.

Nearly every family in Monongah, then with a population of 3,000, lost someone in the tragedy that left behind an estimated 250 widows and 1,000 orphans. Many remained in Monongah, and eventually sons, nephews, and cousins filled the empty places left by the victims. An aftermath of the tragedy was an increased community closeness which led the 1912 Coal Commission to call Monongah the model coal town in West Virginia.

To offset the stresses of their work, the Monongah miners turned to baseball and music in their free time. Interest in bands was high in those days, and in 1915 several miner-musicians decided to organize their own group. Monongah was an ethnic community — 80% of the miners were foreign born at the time of the explosion — and the town's composition was reflected in its band. Italian, Hungarian, Slovak, Irish, and native miners joined, but the dominant group was Polish. The band became known as the Monongah Miners' Band, for all of its members were miners or relatives of miners.

Miner Anthony "Jake" Vingle, whose miner father, John, had come to Monongah in the 1890's, was one of the active organizers and recruiters for the new band. Recruiting was easy for trombonist Jake, who simply went home and started with his younger brothers. First, there was Eddy, who played clarinet and saxophone, next, Frank and his trumpet, and then Stanley with a clarinet. Mother Vingle and sisters Anna and Mary were not invited to join. Father John Vingle and John, Jr., supported but did not join the band.

The first year of the band's organization was somewhat chaotic. Rehearsals were held wherever indoor or outdoor space was offered by tolerant and hospitable families. Three

The Band poses in its first uniforms in 1925 in Monongah's Traction Park. Frank Vingle is seated third from right, in front row. The Band had grown to 39 members, and now included saxophones for the first time. Photographer unknown, courtesy Anthony Vingle.

different conductors, a Mr. Snyder, a Mr. Pinichi, and eventually Mr. Virgil Bork, took up the baton. Bork served from 1916 until the early 1930's. By 1916 the band had 26 members with six different instruments and two types of drums. There were no uniforms yet, and knickers distinguished younger members from the older ones.

In 1918, under wartime pressure, the United Mine Workers were permitted to organize the Fairmont Field. Mother Jones returned in triumph, this time riding at the head of the 4th of July parade in Clarksburg, with the mayor sharing her carriage. Monongah Local 1634 received its UMW charter on June 11, 1918, and Fairmont Sub-district 4 was chartered in December of the next year. Enthusiasm for bands and the union marched apace in West Virginia, and in January 1919 the following ad appeared in the *United Mine Workers Journal*:

Wanted: In Livingston, W.Va., a band teacher for a miners' band. Must be willing to work in or around a mine, as we can pay only a small salary. J.D. Moore.

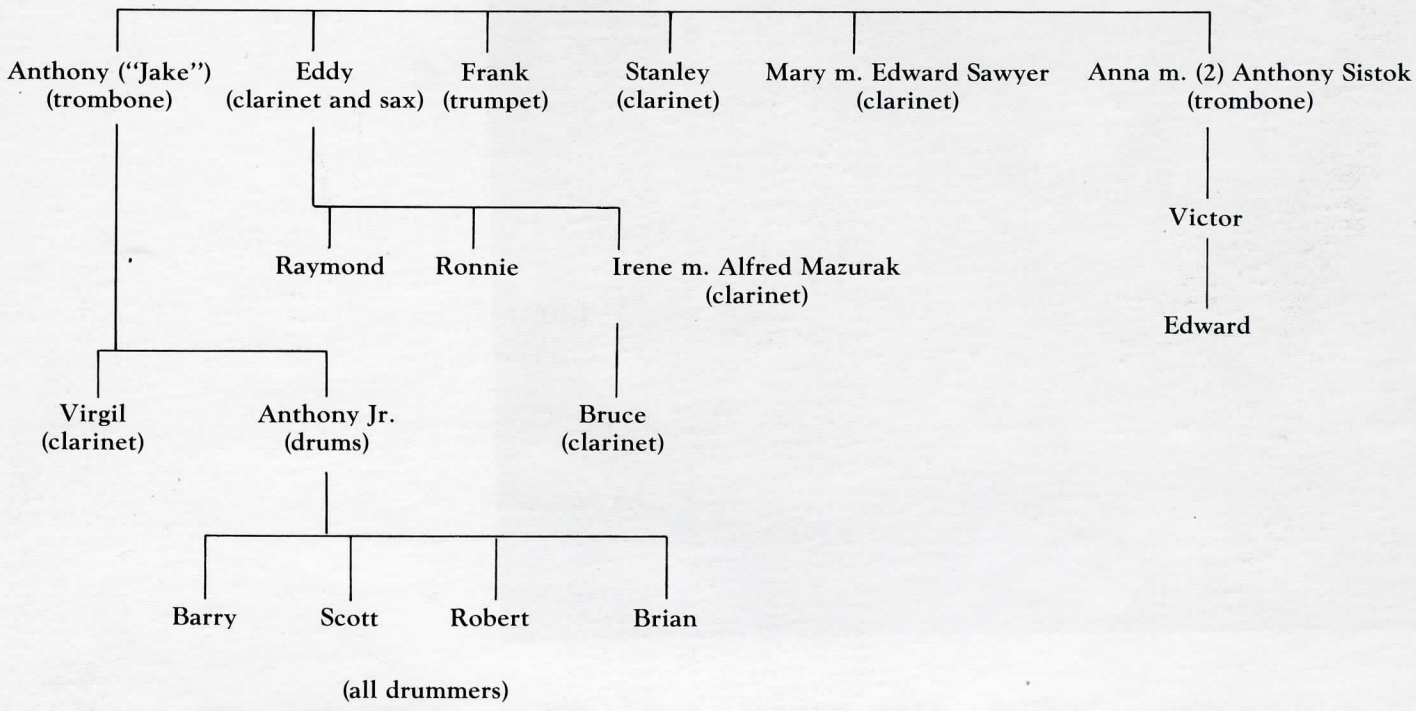
During the wartime boom, many of the band members married and began raising future musicians. By 1922, however, wage reductions were the company orders for the day. Walter Kloc, present manager of the band, remembered his first job offer at the age of five during the resulting strike. Fred Stubbs, a black miner who survived the 1907 disaster because he was home with a sick wife, offered Walter 50¢ if he would carry a sign on the picket line. Walter did, but says he is still waiting for his pay.

The Monongah miners won the strike and went ahead with plans to build their own union hall. In 1925 the band acquired its first uniforms. In 1927, a long strike began, with the miners fighting for their jobs and for the union. When the strikers were evicted from the company houses, poorly constructed barracks provided by the union became their homes and the new union hall their rallying point. Men, women, and children marched on the picket lines and the Miners' Band accompanied them. One of the songs played was "So Long, Scabs." The company brought in armed and mounted guards whom the strikers called "yellow legs." Virgil Vingle remembers the night his father and his mother (Anna Urban Vingle, a daughter of Peter Urban) came home from a strikers' meeting a bit shaken. They had almost been ridden down by one of the yellow legs, but had jumped into a ditch. Walter Kloc's memory of the yellow legs was the sight of a mounted guard beating an unarmed striker over the head as he walked through Traction Park.

In recognition of its loyalty and ability, the Monongah Miners' Band was invited to play at the 1927 national convention of the United Mine Workers. It was a proud moment for the Monongah miners and their band, and it marked the first of many appearances at UMW conventions.

Four Generations in the Miners' Band

The Descendants of John Vingle



The prestige and popularity of the Miners' Band was so impressive that the ambition of every boy in Monongah was to grow up and become a member. There were plenty of such boys, especially among the Polish families, and the saying in Monongah was that "As soon as the Polish kids were taken off their moms' breasts, they stuck a horn in their mouth." The Vingle family was a good example. Two of Jake's sons joined the band: Virgil on the clarinet and Anthony, Jr. ("Buggsy") on the drums. Frank Vingle had a daughter who was an excellent trumpeter, but girls couldn't join the band. Eddy Vingle's two sons, Raymond and Ronnie, joined him in the band. Eddy's daughter married a band member, so she indirectly belonged to the band. The Vingle sister, Mary, married and two of her sons joined.

During the hard times of the late 1920's and early '30's many of the miner musicians had to seek work elsewhere. Conductor Virgil Bork left the area and Gus Smith took his place. An excellent arranger, Smith wrote many of the arrangements used by the band. These included European and American marches and popular songs. "The Old Gray Mare" became one of the band's mainstays, and at conventions it was "How Do You Do, Mr. _____," (with names of the officers filled in), "My Sweetheart's a Mule in the Mines," plus many others.

Eddy Vingle went to work for the C&O Railroad. Only on the job for a short time, Eddy had an accident that almost ruined his musical career. He lost portions of fingers on both hands. The dedicated musician, however, with the help of a carpenter friend, devised a method of building up the keys on his clarinet. The Horn Instrument Co., with these instructions, was able to provide Eddy with an instrument which he played as well as, if not better than, the standard one. Eddy Vingle also taught music and one of his recruits at age eight was Walter Kloc. When Walter was 17, he went into the mines with his older brother, Stanley. Both became members of the band, with Walter on the alto sax and Stanley on the tenor sax. When Walter joined the band in 1936, Eddy Vingle was co-conductor with Gus Smith. Shortly after that, Smith retired and Eddy Vingle was the sole conductor until he turned his baton over to his son, Raymond, around 1950.

World War II, of course, affected the band. Among members who went into service were Virgil Vingle and Walter Kloc, Virgil to the Ma-

The Band with an unidentified young woman, in 1930. Members had played for their first national convention by this time, and their new uniforms proudly displayed "UMW of A" as well as the Band's own initials. Photograph by R. DeAngelis, courtesy Anthony Vingle.

rines and Walter into the Army. Following their military stint, both looked for new jobs. Walter became a tractor trailer driver and a member of the Teamsters Local 789 for the next 20 years and then returned to the mines, while Virgil became a salesman. Both continued with the band. In addition, Walter organized a seven-piece Polish band and Virgil, with other Vingles, played in the Polish National Alliance Band, which was featured on a local radio station.

Both men played for Polish-American dances and weddings. The Polish wedding celebrations often lasted for several days. The first act by the band was to make sure the floors of the homes where the celebrations took place were propped up so they wouldn't collapse from the pressure of the polka dancers. On the morning of the wedding, the band came to serenade the bride and escort the bridal party to the church. After the ceremony, the band and guests went to the bride's home where food, drink, and music were provided. To help launch the newlyweds, the father sold dances with the bride. When a man bought a dance, he placed his money in a designated container, received a shot of whiskey from the father, and danced one dance with the bride. According to Virgil Vingle, "A man could get pretty high if he had enough money."

The Miners' Band was also in demand for concerts and traveled widely from Harrison County to the Pennsylvania line. Their big concert every year was on Labor Day in Monongah's Traction Park, which in earlier years had a pavilion. Fourth of July celebrations also called for band concerts. They continued to appear at UMWA conventions every four years.

In the 1950's, the second generation band members began marrying and raising their replacements. Conductor Raymond Vingle moved to Florida and the baton was taken up by Carroll Carr, a clarinetist who had played with John Phillip Sousa and George Gershwin. Carr also became the seventh man in Walter Kloc's Polish Band. At one of Carr's first engagements with the band, a particularly difficult Polish song was requested. Uncertain if Carr could play with that certain Polish "oomph," Walter wondered whether to ask Carr to sit that one out. He decided to say nothing, and the Irishman played with as much "oomph" as the Poles. Today Walter still shakes his head at the recollection.

During the 1960's new uniforms and new faces reflected the changing times and generations. There were now three generations of Vingles in

Above: At the 1934 convention in Indianapolis, Band members dressed like miners in very clean work clothes. UMW president John L. Lewis stands at center, with daughter Helen. Kirkpatrick Photographers, Indianapolis, courtesy Anthony Vingle.
Right: Outside the Local 1641 union hall in April, 1940. Photographer unknown, courtesy Walter Kloc.
Far right: The Monongah Band was on hand to celebrate the UMW's 50th anniversary at the 1940 convention in Columbus, Ohio. Photograph by American Photograph Co., Columbus.

the band: Jake, his sons Virgil and Anthony, Jr., and Anthony, Jr.'s, four sons; Eddy Vingle's daughter, Irene V. Mazurak, was represented by her husband and son, while Eddy's sister Mary's interest in the band was through her son and grandson. A crippling mine accident forced Stanley Kloc's retirement from the band but his involvement continued through his son, Stanley, Jr. Walter Kloc married Mildred Tekiel, whom he met while playing for a Polish-American dance at the Paw Paw Inn. Their contribution to the band was their son, Stephen, an alto sax player like his father.

There were other changes in the 1950's and 1960's that affected the Miners' Band, which now listed over 50 members. There was a tremendous shift in popular music, as rock and roll swept the scene. Stars like Elvis Presley and, later, the Beatles replaced the big bands and their vocalists. Stringed instruments with electronic amplification overpowered the wind and brass instruments.

The passing of the big bands was followed by the passing of the biggest name in UMW history, John L. Lewis. The decade of the '60's began with Lewis' retirement and ended with his death in June, 1969. Thomas Kennedy succeeded Lewis briefly, then W.A. "Tony" Boyle took over as president.

A new and activist generation of miners moved into the union, but their stormy arrival was in marked contrast to the way new generations were taken into the Miners' Band.

By 1964, the UMW had abandoned cities in and around the coalfields to hold its conventions in sunny Florida. The Miners' Band poses in tuxedoes in front of the Americana Hotel in Bal Harbor. Photographer unknown, courtesy Walter Kloc.

With the closing of the Monongah mines in the '60's, many miner-musician families moved away, but they remained associated with the band. The distrust and dissensions within the miners' union were not evidenced in the Miners' Band, as the mature Walter Kloc took over as band manager and youngster Ronnie Woods became Ron Woods, conductor. The tradition and excitement of playing at the UMWA conventions continued with trips to Cincinnati in 1960, Miami Beach in 1964, and Denver in 1968.

Following the Denver convention, Anthony "Jake" Vingle retired from the band, packing away his music after 54 years. Jake and his trombone had helped organize the Monongah miners, had marched on picket lines to keep up their morale, had been arrested and jailed for this impudence, had blown deep and joyous notes when the miners gained their union, and had proudly represented the Monongah local at national conventions for over 40 years.

While Jake Vingle could put his trombone away with satisfaction and pride, other members of the band had to put their instruments and uniforms on the shelf with regret. The problems within the UMWA had drained the union of its vitality and finances. There was no money to take the band to the conventions in the 1970's. The lively, loud, and boisterous sounds of the Monongah band were replaced by the more trendy tunes of country music stars. The names of two of the entertainers, Johnny Paycheck and Johnny Cash, ironically reflected a major concern of a discontented and financially distressed union.

The ambition of every boy in Monongah to grow up and join the Miners' Band changed. There were still plenty of boys, and now even girls, who studied and played instruments in their junior and senior high school bands, but their hopes of playing in a band like the Monongah Miners' faded. Their interest declined with the exciting and proud prospect of going to the national conventions.

But the old saying, "tradition dies slowly," held true for the Miners' Band. The old musicians didn't fade away, nor did all the young ones. There are still people who appreciate and enjoy a good band concert, and the Miners' Band keeps itself in readiness for these occasions. There's also the hope that in the 1980's an invitation to play at a national UMWA convention will come again. As Walter Kloc says, "The world was built with music." Perhaps when the UMWA launches another membership drive, its leaders will again recognize the importance of music in building a union.

Dr. Florien Vaughn, about the time he came to Welch to resume the practice of medicine. Date and photographer unknown. (All photographs courtesy of the Rev. V.E. Hartsell.)

Florien Vaughn, M.D.

Mystery Doctor of the Coalfields

By Lawton W. Posey with Bryson R. Posey

The span of Dr. Florien Vaughn's life was almost 89 years. During that time, which began in the little town of Santa Fe, Missouri, in 1891, and ended with his death in 1979 in Beckley, he was a man of mystery. He was known as a churchman, a soldier, and there are many people still living who remember his devoted service as a doctor to the people of the coal camps. But after all is said and done, there are still many years of his life about which we know nothing.

Dr. Vaughn's early life was spent, not in Santa Fe, but in another Missouri town, Shelbina, where his father, Dr. Henry Clay Vaughn, practiced medicine for many years. The young Florien was surrounded by the comforts which were provided by the senior Vaughn's medical practice, and it was either during this time or after he went to the University of Missouri that he decided to study medicine.

After a four-year course at Missouri, the aspiring doctor went off to the University of Minnesota for the additional two years which would give him the coveted degree of Doctor of Medicine. His grade card shows that he was a good student in pediatrics,

surgery, and other surgically-related courses. He was a poor student in obstetrics and pathology. His medical school papers, many of which are still available, show him to have been a detailed note taker and a meticulous medical artist.

By 1917, Florien Vaughn knew enough to graduate, got his degree, and went to the Long Island Hospital for a year of internship. Then it was the Army for young doctors coming out of medical school in those days. America was at war, and Florien Vaughn was shipped off to France to face the horrors of wounded men and to spend the waning year of World War I tending their needs in various field hospitals.

When the shooting stopped in November of 1918, Vaughn, along with many other physicians, spent several more months in France with the wounded. It was not until well into 1919 that he was sent home. Letters from his father indicate that he was greatly missed, and that his parents feared that he might either be robbed or run out of money before he returned. Already the old doctor was yearning for an assistant and hoped that his son would soon be home.

Florien Vaughn did come home. He tried to practice medicine with his father, and he tried to be a part of the old home community. But he was never a success. While he continued to think of Shelbina as his home for the whole of his life, he soon began his years of wandering. His attempt to practice medicine with Henry Clay Vaughn ended in failure, and he was not to again take up the tools of his profession until almost 30 years later. The mystery years began upon his return home from the war.

Florien Vaughn, age 4. Photographer unknown, about 1895.

A domestic tragedy also struck Dr. Florien Vaughn. About the time he returned from the war his beautiful sister Judith died after a difficult illness. Judith had once been his constant companion, and she had remained his closest friend. She was like a mother to the young student physician, and letters from Judith to "Buddy" abound. When she died, what light was left after Florien's war experience quickly faded, and he was marked for the rest of his life with the signs of personal sorrow.

He began moving around. For a time he lived in the YMCA in San Antonio, hoping to practice medicine but never putting his shingle out. For a while he received mail in Payson, Arizona, then in Paris, Missouri. It seems that every letter he received, every scrap of mail, was carefully put away. What he lived on is unknown, except that he must have received a very small pension from the government for a war-related disability. This disability appears from some old letters to have been of a "nervous" or psychiatric

nature. A modern diagnosis might have been simple depression, brought about by the young doctor's inability to deal with the trauma of the sight of wounded boys.

It was another war that put Florien Vaughn back to work. After the Second World War broke out there was a shortage of physicians. Young doctors again went to the battlefields, and only the older ones were left on the homefront. Dr. Vaughn, then in his 50's, applied for work through the *Journal* of the American Medical Association. He was quickly hired by Dr. J. Howard Anderson of Hemphill, near Welch in McDowell County, as an associate in his practice in that coal mining community.

This was in 1943. The wartime coal industry was booming, and together Vaughn and Anderson worked to meet the medical needs of the busy miners. Dr. Vaughn established himself in the communities surrounding Welch as a person who went about his business very quietly, said little, and bothered no one. Dr. Anderson's widow remembers Vaughn as a conscientious and religious gentleman. "He was one of the finest Christians I have ever known," she says. "In the years he was associated with Dr. Anderson at Hemphill he quietly measured up in every respect, and always responded without question when I called him to take a call." But Vaughn remained a mystery man even though he became involved in the Presbyterian Church in Welch, contributed to its causes, and had a reputation as a selfless person.

Florien Vaughn also had to establish himself as a duly certified member of the state's medical community. Dr. Anderson had hired his assistant sight-unseen, and after he arrived in Hemphill it became apparent that he had no license to practice medicine in West Virginia. It proved a very difficult task to get him the necessary papers, and the correspondence dealing with the problem is extensive. Finally, after almost a year of practice with a limited license, Dr. Vaughn agreed to pay back dues to the state of Minnesota, beginning in 1928, to have his long-defunct license reinstated. Evidently he was never licensed in Missouri and never knew it. The best theory is that Dr. Vaughn never really knew whether he was licensed or not, and it took the nudging of his friend Dr. Anderson to get him to attend to this business.

After Dr. Vaughn came to Hemphill, he began to prosper. Almost any month he was able to deposit about a thousand dollars in the McDowell County National Bank — very good

Dr. Henry Clay Vaughn, Florien's father, at home in Shelbina, Missouri. Photographer unknown, about 1920.

In the Spirit of Mother Jones

Below left: This photograph was probably taken during Vaughn's early college years. Photographer unknown, about 1910.
Below right: Vaughn as a young military surgeon in France, 1918. Photographer unknown.

money for the times. A small sum went for board, a regular check was written to the church, his room was paid for, and he purchased a thousand-dollar bond.

With the purchase of the first bonds he began his legacy. During all the years he was in Hemphill, and then in the years following in Tralee, Wyoming County, Dr. Vaughn bought government Series E bonds for $750. One bond was placed in a plain, battered leather satchel each month. The fund grew as the doctor aged and continued his coal camp practice. Soon there were many bonds, but no one else knew of their existence. Even though, in later years, Dr. Vaughn was robbed many times, the cache of bonds was never touched.

In 1948 Dr. Anderson retired and moved to Welch, where he lived to the age of 92. Dr. Vaughn moved also, at Dr. Anderson's urging, to the little town of Tralee, near Mullens.

In Tralee, Vaughn's practice was about the same. The salary may have been a little less, but even so, month after month, his small fortune grew. He continued his religious association, this time with the Presbyterian Church in Mullens, and only if his church needed a loan was he willing to cash a bond. He did the simple work of the camp doctor. By the early 1950's there were more adequate hospitals in the area and much of the medical work formerly done in the coal towns was being taken care of in the newer facilities. An examination of day books for some of his time in Wyoming County shows that Vaughn saw people with colds, with minor infections, and with "nerves."

His style of life was as reclusive as ever. He kept long hours and was always willing to see patients. He had no posted hours at all, and his friend, the Reverend Vaughn Earl Hartsell of Mullens, testifies to the fact that Florien Vaughn, M.D., waited for patients in a straight chair, sleeping there in snatches and then returning to doze after the patients left. He dispensed his own drugs — some of them very potent ones. His only aim was that of helping people, even if the help was minimal, or even unwise. As he grew older, up into his 80's, he would take his patient's temperature, look him in the eye, and ask what the problem was. Upon getting an answer, he would give out pills, write work slips, or hand out tonics. He kept no medical records as they are known today, but he did keep enough information to indicate who he saw (and for what), and to record his profit for the day.

At one time the medical licensing board of the state was anxious to get the old physician to quit, fearing that he was too deaf and dim of vision to continue his practice. Dr. Vaughn's only known oath was heard when he was informed of a possible removal of his papers. He intended to stay a doctor, and the only thing the West Virginia officials could do was to limit his dispensing privileges to simple, relatively harmless drugs.

The Reverend Hartsell, Vaughn's pastor and closest friend of this per-

Left: Judith Vaughn, Florien's sister, near the time of her death. Photographer unknown, about 1917.
Below: Dr. Vaughn after leaving military service. Photographer unknown, about 1920.

iod, affectionately remembers the doctor as a man of eccentric personal habits. "He was fearful of the cold, and of catching cold," the Reverend Hartsell recalls. "Dr. Vaughn kept drugs and vaccines in a refrigerator in his apartment. When he needed to get something out of the refrigerator, he would put his hat on, pull his coat firmly around him and clutch his hand to his throat — all by way of protection.

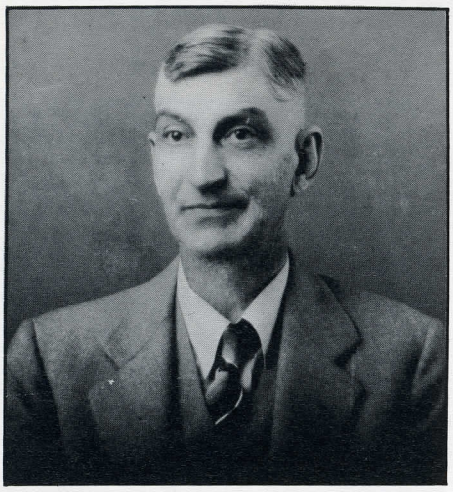
"Usually his apartment was very hot. Rather than trusting the thermometer, he was inclined to use the back of his hand — and, touching it to the cool plaster, would pronounce the 80-degree room cold. 'Vaughn Earl,' he would say, 'you know that the heat sensors are in the back of the hand.' "

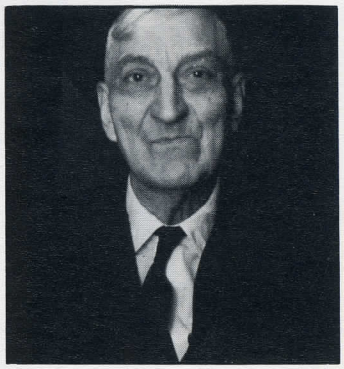
Hartsell says that Vaughn had few pleasures, but that he "loved to eat more than anything." Hartsell recalls introducing him to new foods. "One day, I asked him if he would like a banana split for a treat. I had some new banana split dishes I had bought for the children, so I began to get things ready. First I took the banana, split it, and placed in on the special dish. Then the three kinds of ice cream — vanilla, chocolate, strawberry. Then the chocolate syrup. Dr. Vaughn watched every movement that I made, taking it in. Finally, I put the cherry on top and bade him enjoy. He ate away steadily. All of a sudden, I noticed that he was eyeing a loaf of white bread on the table. Continuing to eat, he asked my wife if he might have some bread. 'Of course,' she said. And he proceeded to eat bread with his banana split, rolled up, in his customary fashion."

The Presbyterian minister looked after Vaughn in his later years. "The last year or so of his life, I would tuck Dr. Vaughn into bed each night," Hartsell recalls. "He always wore long thermal underwear the whole year 'round. He slept in this as well as flannel pajamas. At one time, he started wearing a blue knit stocking hat to bed. He said that his head got cold. With his long nose and bony cheeks and jutting chin, he looked like Jacques Cousteau, the French underwater fellow."

Finally Vaughn retired from the Tralee practice, moved to Mullens, opened a practice there, and then died in January of 1979. Twelve persons attended his funeral in the stately little church in Mullens.

Less than a year after his poorly-attended funeral, another group of people gathered to honor Dr. Florien Vaughn's memory. This time the church was comfortably full on December 9, 1979, as the people of Mullens participated in a service in which the estate of the mystery doctor of the southern coalfields was distributed to the causes he loved. Upon the encouragement of the Reverend Hartsell, Dr. Vaughn had finally drawn up his will. He hated the task, but he was aided by the pastor, who was his devoted friend. The contents of the battered leather satchel were dumped on a desk, inspected, and tabulated. Mr. Hartsell was able to determine that Dr.





Above left: By the spring of 1942, Vaughn was near the end of his "mysterious" period. He moved to McDowell County the following year. Photographer unknown.
Center: Vaughn in a Mullens diner in 1951. He had moved to nearby Tralee a few years earlier. Photographer unknown.
Right: Vaughn was still doctoring as he approached 80, and would live for more than another decade. Date and photographer unknown.

Vaughn had almost a quarter-million dollars worth of bonds, which had doubled in value to make up a potential legacy of over $400,000.

Receiving large monetary gifts from Dr. Vaughn's estate were his own church, the Greenbrier Presbytery, the American Bible Society, the Davis Stuart Home in Lewisburg, Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, Davidson College, and the Division of International Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. An impressive group of dignitaries accepted the gifts and were able to testify to the practical use to which this money would be put. Until almost the year that he died, Dr. Vaughn had not known that he was worth that much money, and he had been quite surprised that his bonds had grown. Now it was the turn of the people in Mullens and the surrounding countryside to learn of his generosity in death.

Dr. Vaughn never married, and he never had a lady friend. His family consisted of assorted aunts and uncles, and his brothers to whom he wrote from time to time, and who often wrote him in scolding terms for "not taking care of himself." Later, as his family died off, his letters consisted of official mail, tax notices, and an occasional piece of mail indicating that he had contributed to this or that cause. In all his life he never charged over $3 for a visit, and he only made a small profit on the pills. While he never practiced modern medicine, he read the journals and kept up with modern trends.

Sometimes he would talk over the things he'd learned in the journals with his friend Mr. Hartsell. Hartsell remembers that Dr. Vaughn was opposed to jogging, believing that it was bad for the heart. He was a great believer in penicillin for almost any ailment — a belief held by many older physicians, who had had few actually curative drugs in their early days of practice. He would read himself to sleep at night, often calling Mr. Hartsell for reassurance as the years passed on.

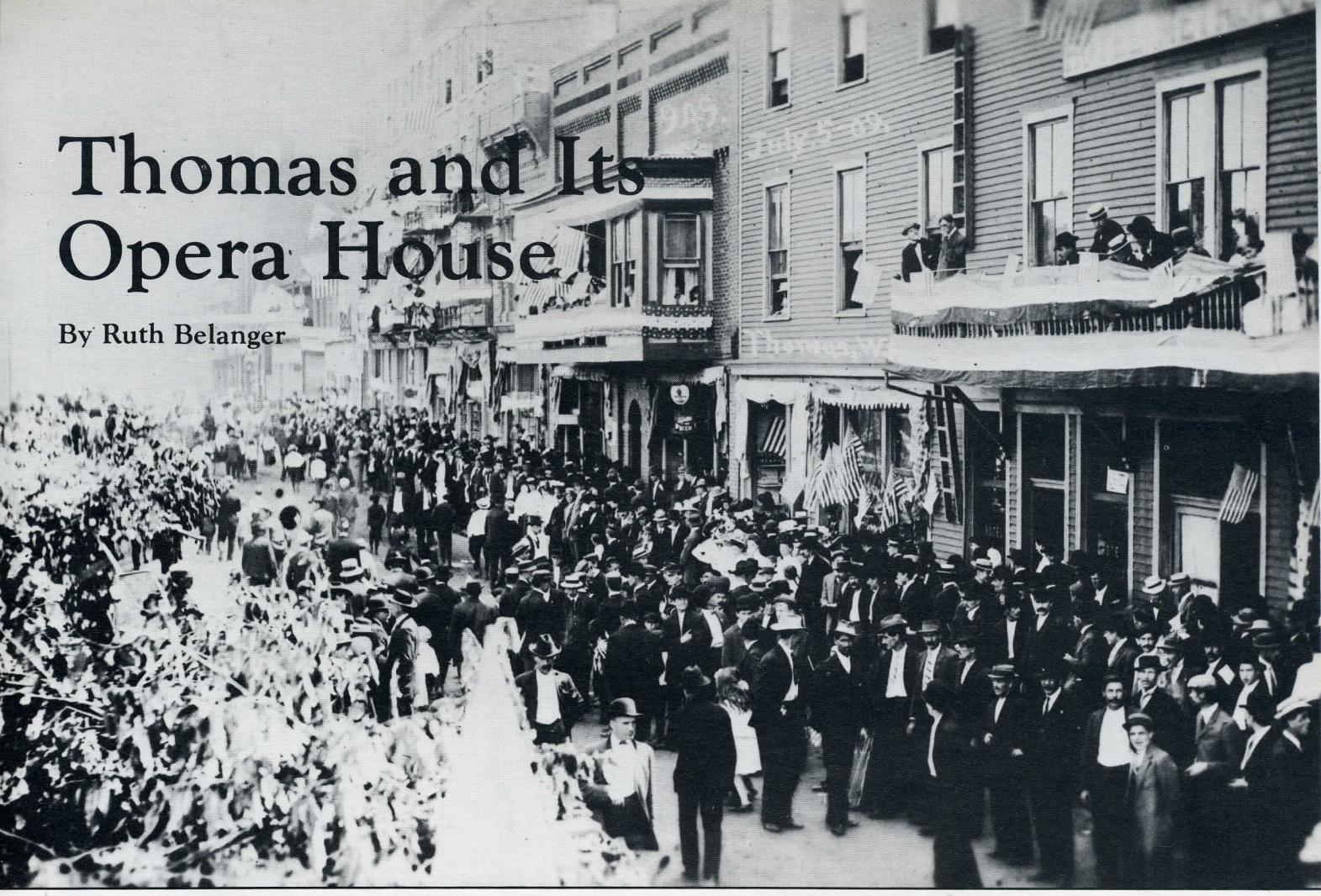
After the funeral Vaughn's body was accompanied back to Shelbina, where he was buried in the Odd Fellows Cemetery. Mr. Hartsell recalls that while he was in Dr. Vaughn's home town he dropped into a clothing store where an elderly man was waiting on the few customers on a dreary January day. He asked the old man if he had known Florien Vaughn. "Yes, I remember Florien," said the haberdasher. "His father worked over yon drugstore. Florien was around town as a boy and for a while as a young man. Strange boy, that Florien."

Perhaps it is best that the mystery of his lost years dies with Dr. Vaughn. He served in his own way. Sundays found him dozing away during sermons he could hardly hear. Weeknights often found him back at the church, eating at the church suppers which he loved. Later he might be dozing in his chair, waiting for the patients who thought nothing of seeing him in the wee hours of the morning. He observed the primary dictum of "physician, do no harm," and he may have helped people a great deal. One associate noted that his liberal dispensing of birth control pills helped to reduce the size of many families already too large for small incomes.

Today, in the little Mullens Church, there is a glowing window in Florien Vaughn's memory. Made of West Virginia Blenko glass, it shines with a number of other such windows, casting jeweled light all through his beloved sanctuary. It is, quite appropriately, dedicated to God the Father, in memory of a man who was never a father at all, but who, in a fatherly way, tended the sick of McDowell and Wyoming counties for 30 years. ✤

Thomas and Its Opera House

By Ruth Belanger



This photograph is dated July 5, 1909, but is probably the Fourth of July celebration for that year. Photographer unknown, courtesy West Virginia Collection.

Thomas was an industrial town from the start. Founded in 1883 and named for Thomas B. Davis, brother of Senator Henry Gassaway Davis and uncle-by-marriage to Senator Stephen B. Elkins, the new town served as a Tucker County outpost to the Davis and Elkins business empire, whose main headquarters was the city of Elkins. Local employment was found primarily with the railroad and mining industries. At the peak of the Davis Coal & Coke Company's operations, in 1912-1920, there were nine producing mines and nearly a thousand coke ovens within a mile of Thomas. Mrs. Opal Judy, who lived in nearby Coketon in the 1920's, remembers it as being very pretty at night with all the coke ovens burning. But, she recalls, "It was *smoky*, 'cause I lived on Railroad Hill and I know."

Two railroads, the West Virginia Central & Pittsburgh and the Western Maryland, served Thomas. Four passenger trains a day ran into town, and many more freight and coal cars also stopped there. Europeans from 18 different countries were brought in to help work the mines, and an interpreter was employed to communicate with non-English speaking miners. Most of the immigrants came from Italy, and an Italian newspaper, *La Sentinella del West Virginia*, was published in Thomas by R.D Benedetto from 1905 to about 1940. The Italian weekly had a circulation of 3,500. Thomas could boast the first paved road in the county when in 1909 its main street was surfaced with brick. Electricity was available as early as 1904. Prior to that, the streets were lighted with kerosene lamps.

Street naming in Thomas was never too precise. The major thoroughfare was officially called "East Avenue," although it ran north and south, and there was no corresponding "West Avenue." The people who live there, however, know it as "Front Street." For everyday use, the streets parallel to the Blackwater River were called First, Second, Third, etc., in order of their distance from the river. To this day, however, the street signs proclaim roads *perpendicular* to the river as being Second, Third, etc. The road from Thomas to Coketon is popularly known as "Tony Row," probably

because the original mining company housing there was primarily occupied by Italians. It was officially named "Calico Row," though, and the houses were all painted red. Why one section of town is known as "Bunker Hill" no one seems to know.

Despite its relatively small size, Thomas offered much to its residents during the early 20th century. There were two bakeries, three tennis courts, a photography studio, two bowling alleys, four barber shops, four taxis, a confectionery store, seven saloons, and several restaurants. Two hotels, the Metropolitan and the Mountain View, advertised rooms at $2.00 a night in 1906. The men of Thomas joined the Woodmen of the World, Improved Order of Red Men, the Masons, Knights of Pythias, Knights of the Modern Maccabees, and the Eagles. The Sons of Lithuania, Croatian Society, Sons of Italy, Saint John's Society, and Saint Stephen's Society attested to the presence of a large ethnic community, and there were black lodges of Masons and Knights of Pythias. There were the usual public schools, several churches, and in 1900 a town band was formed.

While respectable citizens joined the proud fraternal orders, older residents recall a shadowy brotherhood which terrorized the Thomas immigrant community. John DePollo, who operates the same retail business that his father started in 1903, has several letters written to his father in Italian by the legendary "Black Hand." One of these letters featured a picture of his father in a coffin, crudely drawn in crayon. The letter threatened that if the elder Mr. DePollo didn't come up with $1,000 for the Black Hand the picture would become a reality. The Black Hand operated both in Thomas and Davis. John DiBacco also remembers the group, and says, "They were mean people. Sicilian." John DePollo says that his father sometimes had to pay the money demanded because there was no effective police protection against extortion at the time.

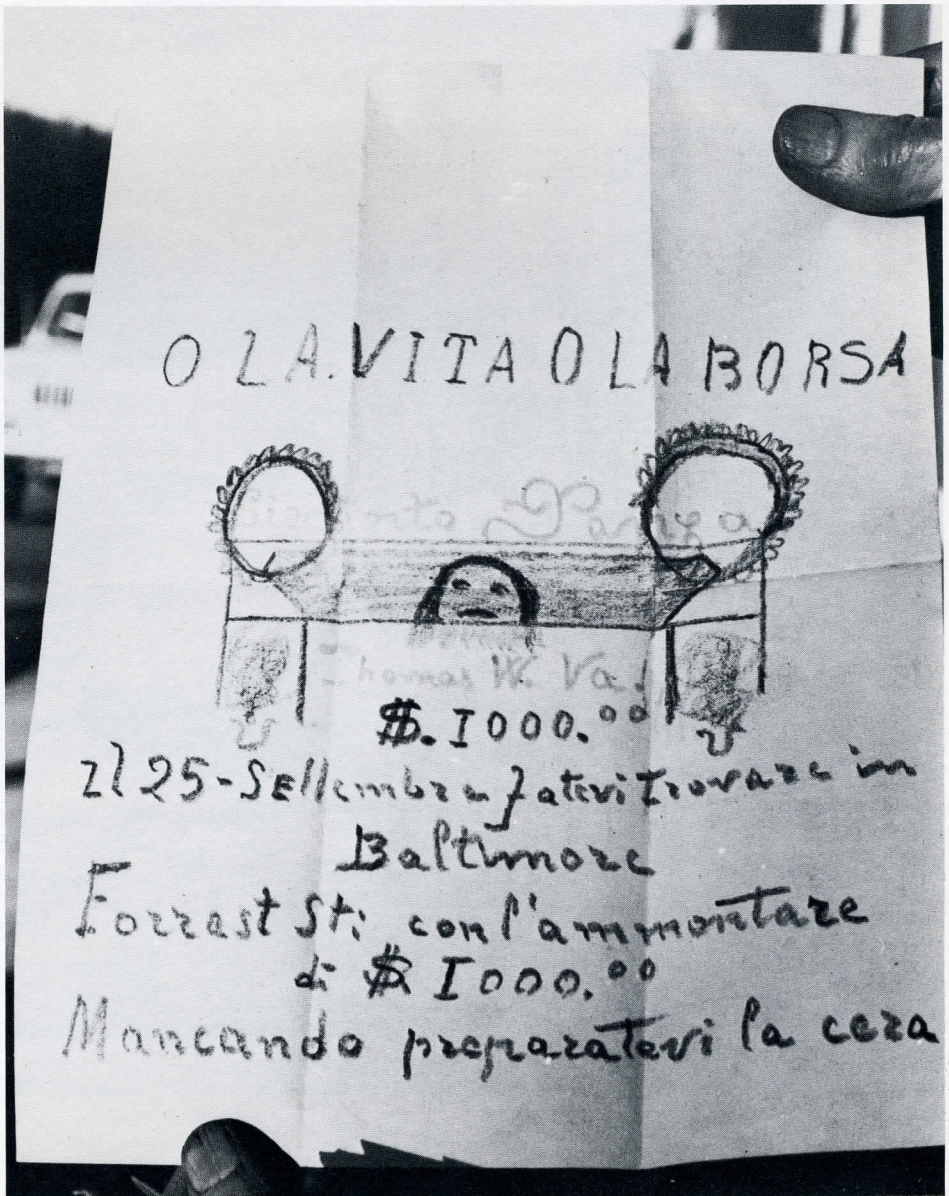
In addition to "organized crime," there was also an intense rivalry between the people of Thomas and the nearby town of Davis. Mr. DePollo says that when he was a teenager, "When you would go to Davis you took four or five fellows with you." The rivalry was kept going by fierce competition between the high schools in the two towns until they were consolidated in 1955. So keen was their competitive spirit that they refused to call off a football game in 1929, even though snow was "up to their waists." They just marked off the gridiron lines with coal dust and played away.

Cottrill Opera House

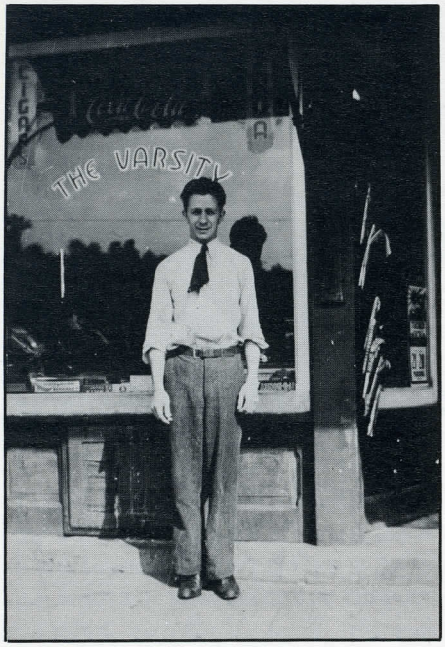
The big attraction in Thomas was the Cottrill Opera House, built in 1902 by Hiram Cottrill. DePollo, now 75, says of the theater, "That's an old standby. I went there when I was a kid." John DiBacco remembers that, "That theater was the livelihood of Thomas at one time. We brought people in from all over. We had a drawing population of 5,000 or 6,000. They used to run buses in from Kempton, Pierce, and Benbush in the late 1930's."

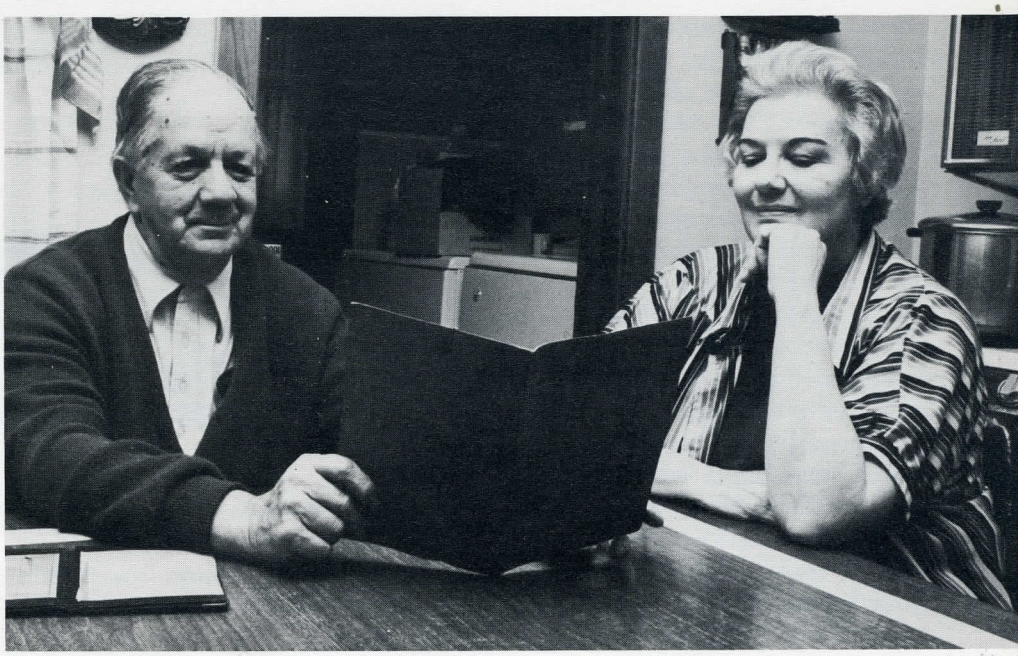
Both DePollo and DiBacco are sons of Italian immigrants to Thom-

Top left: Thomas in winter. Date and photographer unknown. Courtesy West Virginia Collection.
Bottom left: Back porches in early Thomas. Date and photographer unknown. Courtesy West Virginia Collection.
Below: "O La Vita O La Borsa" — "your life or your money." John DePollo holds extortion letter his father received from the Black Hand terrorist group. The letter depicts the elder Mr. DePollo in a coffin, and demands $1,000. Photograph by Ruth Belanger.




U. DiBACCO & SONS.
HARDWARE & FURNITURE
THOMAS, W. VA.





Opposite page, top: Interior of DiBacco & Sons Hardware and Furniture Store. Date and photographer unknown.
Bottom: DiBacco Saloon, 1906. S. DiBacco leans on bar, while Joe and Venanzio DiBacco stand behind it. Photographer unknown.
Above left: John DiBacco outside his Varsity Restaurant. Date and photographer unknown.
Above right: John and Mary DiBacco today, with menu from the Varsity Restaurant. Photograph by Ruth Belanger.

as. They were both well-respected businessmen in Thomas for several decades. Mr. DiBacco recently retired from running the Varsity Restaurant, but Mr. DePollo still runs his hardware store and serves as president of the Miners and Merchants Bank in Thomas. Both have vivid memories of the Cottrill Opera House.

Despite its name, no one can recall a single opera being performed in the theater. It was built for vaudeville acts, which were popular at the time, and later it was used for showing motion pictures. According to John DiBacco, there used to be some "big time vaudeville acts" there, and dancing girls with pretty dresses. Women and children were barred from attending the racier performances.

Tickets to the vaudeville shows cost 25¢ and 50¢ according to John DePollo, but DiBacco seems to think that they cost closer to $2.00. Two dollars in the first decade of the 20th century was a lot of money. But Mr. DiBacco says, "Those miners and woodsmen had so much money to blow before they went back to camp it didn't matter. That town Thomas had more money than any town on the Western Maryland Railroad."

Whatever the price of admission, the entertainment provided was enjoyed in pleasant surroundings. Mrs. Mary DiBacco remembers that in the foyer there were wine-colored velvet curtains and plush carpet. The ceilings were decorated with pressed tin. Her husband describes the chandelier: "That light up in the ceiling, you don't see that many places. I think it had 100 bulbs." There was a large fan for circulation, and the natural coolness of the area precluded any need for air conditioning.

The stage was designed and equipped for drop scenery. Each travelling act brought its own scenery. There was a large pipe organ for a while, later replaced by a piano. The organ, piano, and small pit orchestra all benefitted from the perfect acoustics of the auditorium. To accommodate the needs of the vaudeville performers, there were six dressing rooms in the back. Also in the back was a saloon, which was open only to men.

Six hundred people could be seated in the three-level auditorium. The third tier was referred to as "peanut heaven," and was the least expensive. All the seats were wooden and were permanently fastened to the floor. There was no popcorn machine in the lobby, but enterprising townspeople would make and sell popcorn to theatergoers. Local talent got a chance to perform on stage at frequent intervals, with prizes given for best clown, musician, comedian, and so forth.

Alpine Heritage

A group of people have formed Alpine Heritage Preservation, Inc., to save the building that once housed the Cottrill Opera House. The last owner, Mrs. Stewart, donated the building to the group for restoration purposes. Jeff Cronin serves as general manager of the preservation effort. Judi Hall is president, Bruce Gunther is vice president, treasurer is Renee DiBacco, and Cathy Berry serves as secretary of the non-profit organization.

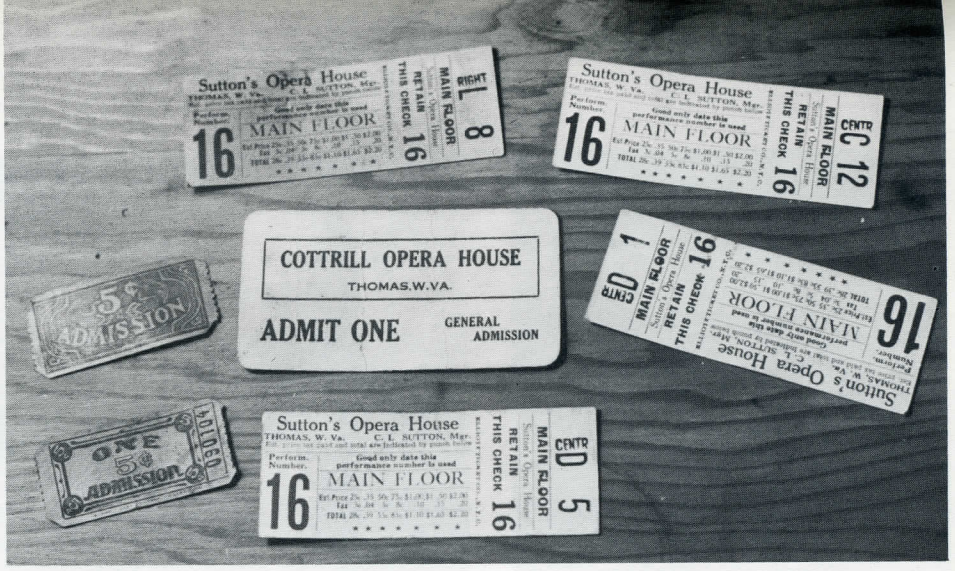
Jeff Cronin's enthusiasm for the restoration project is obvious. "I fell in love with the building," is the way he describes his interest in the work. He is a graduate of Davis and Elkins

College, with a combined degree in political science and theater. His plans for the future of the building are ambitious. "My ultimate goal is to turn it into a major regional theater facility. If it's theater, we're going to do it here. I don't see any limit to what we can do here theaterwise. We have a lot of talented people here." Other plans for the building include housing an old-fashioned ice cream parlor, museum, and art gallery. Mr. Cronin feels that the tourists who come to nearby Blackwater Falls and Canaan state parks will provide a market for these future endeavors.

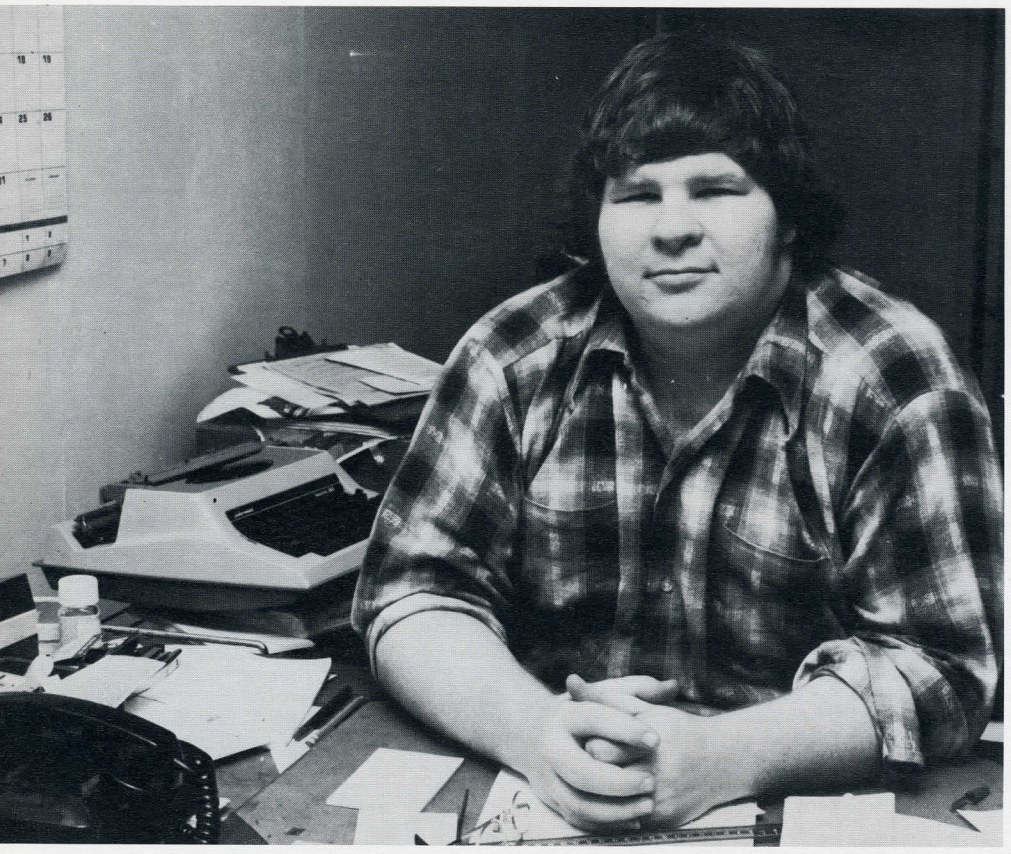
The Alpine Heritage Preservation group has reason to believe that such vaudeville greats as George Burns, Gracie Allen, and Jack Benny may have performed in Thomas at the Cottrill Opera House. This belief is as yet unsubstantiated by any playbills or newspaper advertisements from the period. Mr. Cronin explained why the theater was called an Opera House instead of a vaudeville theater. "Opera House is really a misnomer. In those days, to get a vaudeville house opened, you had to call it an opera house. Vaudeville was considered rather risque. I doubt very much if there were ever any operas performed there."

Since the formation of the Alpine Heritage Preservation corporation in July 1979, members have been successful in getting the Opera House on the National Register of Historic Places and have qualified for a West Virginia Arts and Humanities grant for architectural services. The preservation group has engaged Tracey Stephens, a well-known historical architect who provided architectural services for West Virginia's Independence Hall in Wheeling.

According to Mr. Stephens, only a portion of the structural capacity of the building has been affected so far by neglect and weathering. The Opera House was built with triple-thick brick walls and a stone foundation. These have survived the snows,



Above: Tickets from the Cottrill Opera House, known as Sutton's Opera House after the 1920's.
Below: Another winter scene. The Cottrill Opera House at the right, and the City Hall at left. Date and photographer unknown. Courtesy West Virginia Collection.
Right: Cottrill Opera House, in its present dilapidated condition.



Jeff Cronin, coordinator of the restoration effort, wants to revive the Cottrill Opera House as a working theater. Photograph by Ruth Belanger.

freezings, and tornadoes of the building's 78 years. His estimate of the building is that, "It can be repaired [with sufficient funds] and brought back to a place of satisfactory use. I can say with some assurance that the structure was put together in a more adequate way than today's engineering standards would require. This has been a benefit."

His intention is to hold with the original form and shape of the building in all renovations. The architectural style of the building is hard to define, but Mr. Stephens feels that the obvious precedent is the Classical style with some Renaissance forms. He thinks that some of its features may have a connection to Georgian architecture as well.

Tracey Stephens is not only interested in the building because of its architectural challenge. He takes a personal interest in the project because of "an interest in the theater in general. I developed an interest in that kind of thing in early life. When I saw it I could recognize the possibilities that were there, although they weren't very conspicuous. I could see it in my mind's eye in its more finished state. I could see not only the interior, but the exterior facade [although marred and boarded over at present] as the finished form where brick and stone would be in their natural forms and the center arch windows replaced with stained glass. The likelihood of something theatrical occurring there someday appeals to me."

The primary thrust of the restoration work now is to get a new roof on the building. The old roof has been leaking for several years, ruining carpeting and the flooring beneath it. John DiBacco remembers the roof as leaking frequently throughout its history. "It's the wrong kind of roof in the first place. They always did have trouble with that roof. Them valleys in the roof hold the water." Architect Stephens says that the valleys do pose some problems for the roof, but he feels that, if it is repaired with the roofing materials available today, thatthey should be able to keep the same roof shape and stop the leaking.

The last commercial use of the Opera House was as a motion picture theater. Opal Judy, now of Parsons, grew up in Tucker County and remembers that the first movies she ever attended were in 1921 at the Cottrill. She recollects, "They had real good movies. That was all the entertainment we had. We'd break our necks to get there if it was Bank Night." Bank Night was very popular for many years. A cash prize was given to the person whose seat number was selected at the drawing.

John DiBacco got one of his first jobs rewinding the film for those movies during the '20's. He was paid $4.00 a week to rewind film for the three nightly shows. He recalls, "Tom Mix was the big thing, then the Lone Ranger. We used to have serials. People waited on lines outside, lined up 500 feet down the street to get in on Bank Night." Sometimes "roller" music from a player piano would accompany the silent films, and sometimes John Thompson would play the piano.

In the late 1920's the Cottrill was sold to the Sutton family. It was remodeled in the 1940's and was operated as the Sutton Theater until 1973.

The old rivalries, like the hotels, bakeries, and passenger trains of earlier times, are gone now. But if Jeff Cronin and the rest of the Alpine Preservation group are successful in their efforts, the old Cottrill Opera House, home of many happy memories for those who lived in Thomas, may once again bring entertainment and prosperity to the people of Tucker County. ✤

Anyone interested in working on the restoration of the Cottrill Opera House should write: Alpine Heritage Preservation, Inc., P.O. Box 143, Thomas, WV 26292, or call (304) 463-4112 in the afternoon.

Coal Town Baseball

By Paul J. Nyden

Photographs by William C. Blizzard

John McGraw, a retired trackman who worked 34 years in the coal mines, walked along the red-dog road from his house to the railroad in Fireco. After stepping along the wooden ties of the C&O branch line, he climbed up onto the old Lillybrook ball diamond where he played second base between 1934 and 1942 — his prime years as a player. As John began telling his favorite stories about old ball games, you could almost feel the presence of the hundreds of fans who climbed into the stands and onto the hillsides to cheer on the Lillybrook Reds on spring and summer Sunday afternoons 40 years ago, even though the wooden grandstands and outfield fences have long since disappeared.

John and his brothers Willard and Gene all played for the Lillybrook Reds. "In '36, we won the championship in the B League," he proudly remembers. "In '37, we lost some of our regular ball players; we was in the playoff, but we didn't win. In '39, we came back and won; 1940 we won. And I believe we won it in 1941. That was the last full year. Then the team broke up."

Standing behind the place home plate used to be, McGraw reminisced about one especially memorable game. "We got behind two to nothing in the top of the first. Yeah, we was playing Stanaford; they had a good ball team. We was playing over here on our home field. They scored two runs and had the bases loaded when we got them out. And I thought right there, 'We're gonna have a tough day today.' Well, now, I was leading off, and my younger brother he was following me.

"Stanaford's pitcher, he made two pitches, and the game was tied. First pitch he threw me, I doubled off the right centerfield fence. The first pitch they made to my brother, he hit it so long over the fence, it ended up way up in that big maple tree up there in that yard. Looks to me like it's 500 feet up there. That made the score tied. We went on to score 11 runs in that inning. We didn't score 'em anymore, but we didn't let them have any either. That was just about it; that first inning was just about all of the ball game. I know I got a double and a single in the first inning; my brother got a home run and a double."

Baseball in the South

Between the 1920's and the early 1950's, nearly every industrial town throughout Appalachia and the Deep South had a baseball team — from the chemical cities lining the Kanawha River Valley to the coal towns scattered throughout West Virginia's mountains to the tobacco and textile mill towns in the Piedmont region of the Carolinas.

In southern West Virginia, nearly every coal town had a baseball team. Some teams were in county leagues, some in a United Mine Workers league, some in black leagues, and some in no organized leagues at all. Larger towns like Williamson, Bluefield, Beckley, and Charleston had Class D professional teams, playing

in the Mid-Atlantic League. Players could go from Class D ball into higher-class minor league teams and eventually into the majors.

Stan Musial, the 3,000-hit Hall of Famer with the St. Louis Cardinals, started his career playing for Williamson in Mingo County. Some coal miners became Class D players and later moved up to the majors, such as Pete Rice from Amigo, Herb Crossky from Eccles, Walter Craddock from Prosperity, and Orville Barr from Welch. But the pay in Class D was so low that many excellent prospects remained on coal town teams, making more money in the mines than they could by traveling from city to city with minor-league professional teams.

Buford Tudor, a retired miner who lives in Sophia today and who pitched in the Raleigh County Baseball League between 1936 and 1956, was offered contracts by Class D clubs in both Beckley and Bluefield. "I was married, and they just didn't pay enough for me to do it. I knew that I could stick with it a few years, and I'd make it all right. But rather than to sacrifice those few years for what little bit I could make, I couldn't see it. I just stayed with my work in the mines. The first time they offered me a contract, if I remember correctly, it was $50 a month; and the next time, it was $75. I was making a lot more in the mines then."

These Class D teams all disappeared long ago. Only the Charlies are left — the Triple-A club in Charleston now owned by the Houston Astros. They died out partly, according to Tudor, because "they stress baseball in college more than they did then." College teams have replaced the old Class B, C, and D clubs which once provided entertainment and a social outlet for people in the rural towns across the South where they played.

Coal Town Teams

After the turn of the century, ball teams sprang up across the mountains of southern West Virginia and leagues were eventually formed. By the early 1930's, Raleigh County had a County A League, a County B League, a United Mine Workers League, and a more loosely-organized league of all-black teams. Among the coal towns in Raleigh and southern Fayette counties which had teams were: Lillybrook, Glen White, Hotcoal, Big Stick, Woodbay, Stotesbury, Tams, McAlpin, Helen, Amigo, Raleigh, Coal City, Beaver, Sprague, Eccles, Scarbro, Quinnimont, Stanaford, and many others. The overwhelming majority of ballplayers were coal miners.

Within the double Raleigh County League, which was formed in 1933, the A League and B League had eight teams each. Seasons were divided into two halves of 14 games; every team played each of the other seven twice in each half — once at home and once away. Then the winners of each half-season would meet in a playoff for the championship. Finally, the A and B League champions would play each other at the end of the season, about the same time as the World Series. The A League team usually won. During the season itself, an All-Star team was also chosen by the managers. Needy McQuade, a longtime sports writer for the *Raleigh Register*, was president of the Raleigh County Baseball League.

Black Teams

Since these teams were all-white, a separate network of black teams grew up. Often less formally organized, Raleigh County black teams also played over a wider geographic area, meeting both black and white teams in Raleigh, Fayette, Wyoming, and McDowell counties. Local black teams included: the Raleigh Clippers,

Lillybrook Baseball field, about 1938 or 1939. Photographer unknown, courtesy John McGraw, Fireco.

The 1938 Lillybrook Reds. Second baseman John McGraw is second from right, front row; pitcher John "Lefty" Buford Tudor, center rear; and manager Virgil "Snooks" Keaton, right rear. Courtesy John McGraw.

Slab Fork Indians, Lillybrook Red Sox, East Gulf Stonecoal Giants, Tams Black Sox, Glen Rogers Red Sox, New River Giants (Sprague), and other teams in Amigo, Winding Gulf, Price Hill, Scarbro, Eccles, Mullens, Gary, Bishop, Hemphill, and White Sulphur Springs.

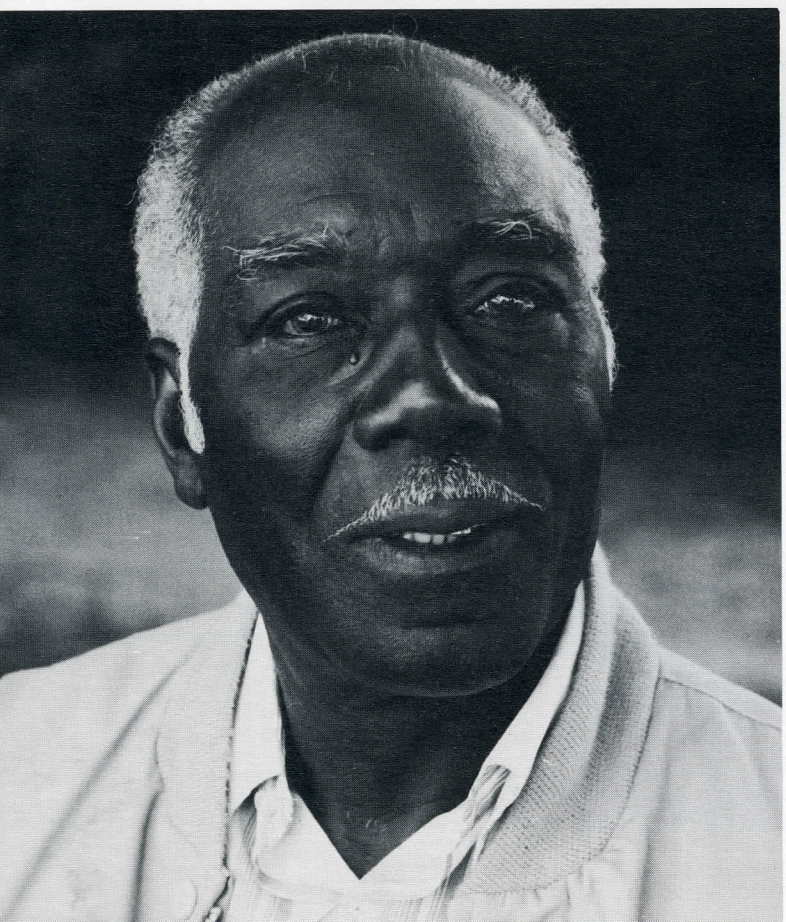
Some local black players also went on to play professional ball, such as Grover Lewis, who played for the Homestead Grays in the late 1920's, and S.G. "Garson" Totten, who pitched for the New York Cubans briefly in the early 1940's. Totten returned to Raleigh County to work in the mines; he lost a hand on a coal-cutting machine, but continued working in the mines until 1979. Nathan Payne of Rhodell, who managed local black teams and himself played occasionally, became a scout in southern West Virginia for the Brooklyn Dodgers and Pittsburgh Pirates after the major leagues were integrated in 1947. Payne, who began working in the coal mines in 1923, retired 53 years later in 1976.

Nathaniel Smith of Beckley worked in the mines for 30 years between 1931 and 1961, and played shortstop for both the Raleigh Clippers and the New River Giants for 25 years. In 1945, he tried out for the Kansas City Monarchs, but now recalls: "You just can't keep up with the youngsters at 31, especially after you've been crawling around in low coal." Smith decided to keep his job in the mines. That same year, a tobacco plant offered him the opportunity to play in an all-black county league in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. He would have played three nights a week and some Sundays. "They only wanted you to work between 7:30 in the morning and noon, then practice during the afternoon to get ready for the games at night." But Nathaniel decided to stay in Raleigh County.

The Sunday Afternoon Games

Coal companies liked to hire good ballplayers, regularly giving them the lighter jobs on the surface and letting them off early to practice. When the Raleigh County League was formed, the companies supported it strongly, according to Okey Mills, once a coal

Above: The Raleigh Clippers, in an early 1940's picture taken at Eccles. Grover Lewis is standing at right and Nat Smith reclines at lower left. Lucille Tweety, beside Lewis, was the club's secretary-treasurer. Photograph by Cunningham Photo, Beckley, courtesy Grover Lewis.
Below left: Nathan Payne managed local black teams, and scouted the coalfields for the Dodgers and Pirates after integration of the major leagues.
Below right: Nat Smith mined coal for 30 years, and played shortstop for the Raleigh Clippers and the New River Giants for 25. Smith may be seen in the 1940's photograph of the Clippers.



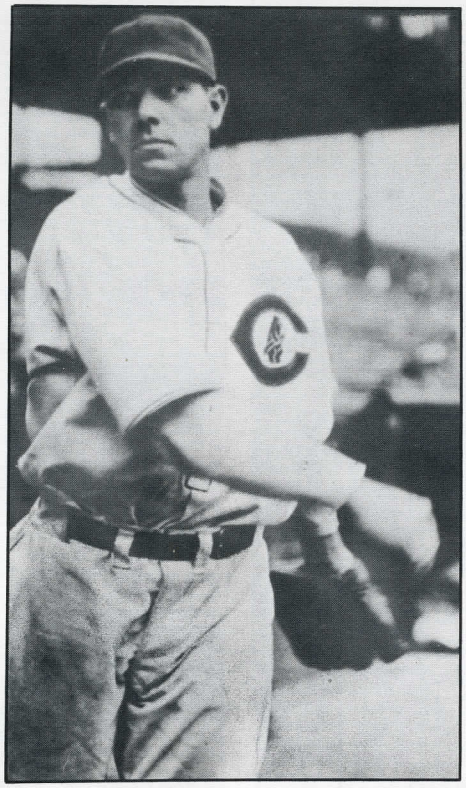
In the Spirit of Mother Jones

miner and ballplayer and now county sheriff. "If a man could play ball, he could get a job right quick. If you went from one camp to another, the mine superintendent wanted to know if they was treating you right: 'I've got a good job waiting for you.' If you could play ball, you had a job." Before hiring and promotion was done according to seniority — rights established by union contracts negotiated later in the 1930's and 1940's — mine superintendents were free to hire anyone, and to give that man any job they wanted to give him.

The games on Sunday afternoons were major social events. "Everyone supported the ball games," comments John McGraw. "Just about everybody that worked at that mine supported that team and lived in that coal camp." Joe Culicerto, who worked as a mainline motorman for 47 years and played centerfield for Glen White between 1933 and 1945, adds: "Especially here in Glen White, they didn't have anyplace else to go on Sundays. That was a big thing — people from everywhere would come to watch 'em play baseball. And we had a pretty good team."

Mrs. Kathleen Tudor remembers how whole families went to the games: "We was all there unless I was at home frying chicken for the ballplayers. After the games, the people that lived in the camp, they would go home. But the ones that would have to leave and drive so far to get home, they would come to our house and eat dinner. We'd have big platters of chicken, potato salad, hot rolls. They'd have a ball."

"There wasn't too many cars" back then, notes Okey. "It was recreation, somewhere for people to go, and they really took an interest in that ball club. It meant a lot to the community. It was the center of entertain-



Above: Former ballplayers gather for a 1979 photograph at the Raleigh County Courthouse. Left to right: Grover Lewis; Nathan Payne; Angus Bernard Evans; S.G. "Garson" Totten; Nathaniel Smith. Lewis managed the Clippers team in the 1940's photograph.
Left: Fred "Sheriff" Blake, as a Cincinnati player in the late 1920's. Photographer unknown, courtesy Fred Blake.
Top right: The 1937 Lillybrook Reds. Willard McGraw is at left, front row, and brother John is second from right, front row. Virgil "Snooks" Keaton is third from left, second row, and Buford Tudor is second from right. Raleigh County League president Needy McQuade sits at center. Photographer unknown, courtesy Tudor family.
Bottom right: Okey Mills rounded up former teammates and opponents for a group portrait in the sheriff's office. Left to right: Fred "Sheriff" Blake; Dave Humphrey; Willard McGraw; John Hancock; Joe Culicerto; Gene McGraw; Charles "Nap" Luther; Faunce Campbell; Harry Milam; Virgil "Snooks" Keaton; Gene Turner; John McGraw. Mills is seated.


OKEY A. MILLS
SHERIFF

The 1938-42 Lillybrook Reds infield in a recent photograph. Virgil "Snooks" Keaton played first base; John McGraw, second base; Gene McGraw, shortstop; and Willard McGraw, third base.

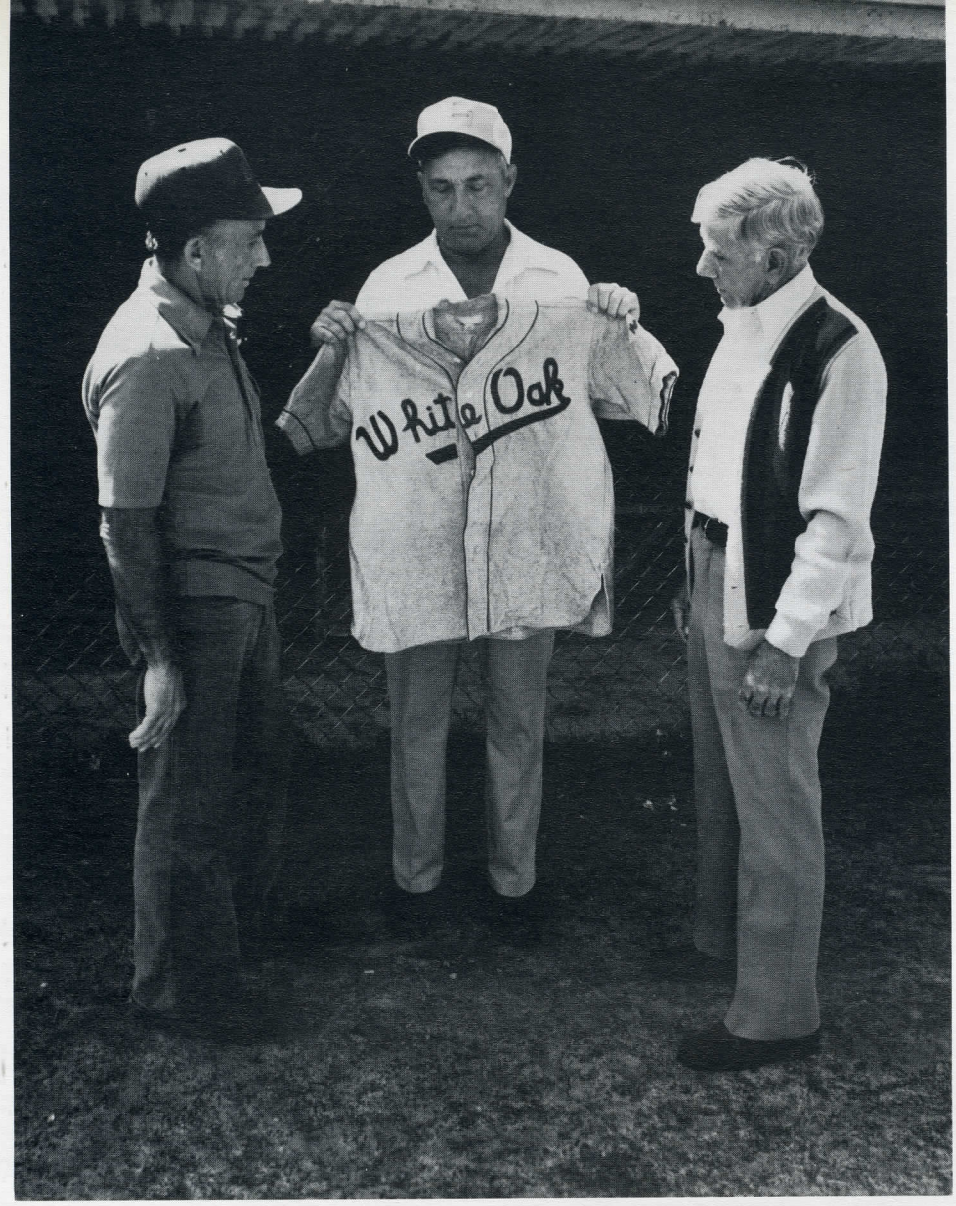
ment at that time. As we got along a little later on, there were so many other things to do. Everybody had a car, and there were just so many more avenues of entertainment than there were back then. There's swimming, skating, picnicking, golfing, riding on a boat, water skiing, there's just hundreds of things to do now that there wasn't back then. And television — people can watch football games, baseball games on Sunday, or track competition, golf competitions. I'm sure that they might want to see some of these professional events, rather than come out and watch us play ball on Sunday."

Hundreds of people used to turn out for the games. "When we used to play at Stotesbury and Lillybrook, the whole grandstand would be overflowing," Okey Mills remembers. "It would be full all the way down to first base, and there were always people standing; you could see them all the way down the rightfield line and the leftfield line. You used to have quite a mob of people. You don't have the size crowds now you had when I was a pitcher. Even with a good baseball team in the industrial league now, you just have a very small crowd that comes to see them. If you get a hundred, you got a big crowd now."

Teams often traveled to games by train in the early days and, in later years, by car. John McGraw mentions that when he played ball in high school, "I walked all the way from Fireco to Killarney and Winding Gulf through the mountains. Played baseball and walked back."

The Decline of Coal Town Baseball

"When the union came in," according to Grover Lewis, "the coal companies didn't back the teams then. When the men got to making money, the coal companies quit backing them. They wanted to keep the players home on Sunday, so they'd get to work on Monday." But, Grover explained, "We kept our team going after the union came in. But we didn't have so many teams then. See, the coal companies used to buy the uniforms and everything." The UMW re-established itself



The McGraw brothers, Gene, Willard, and John, with an old White Oak uniform.

throughout southern West Virginia between 1933 and 1935. The Raleigh County League was founded at the same time, and remained in existence for another 20 years.

John McGraw feels that the onset of war really started the process of decline. "During World War II, it seemed like there wasn't no ballplayers around. All the young folks had gone. When they came back, it seemed like they didn't have the interest in baseball that they once did. Even the majors weren't what they usually are, during the war. Of course, the Raleigh County League was reorganized after that. But I don't think they played the calibre of ball they did before. It just kept going downhill all the time, baseball did. You know, fellers have a whole lot more today than they did then, in a sense of the word; and, in another way, I think they're missing a whole lot. But of course they don't know what they're missing, 'cause they never experienced it."

"Sheriff" Blake sees the automobile and television as the destroyers of coal town leagues like the Raleigh County League, which finally passed out of existence in the mid-1950's. "I thought television was the best thing that ever was, which it was when it started out. But now I think that television has ruint the world." With cars and TV, the 81-year-old former major league ballplayer says, "Nobody ain't got time for nothing anymore."

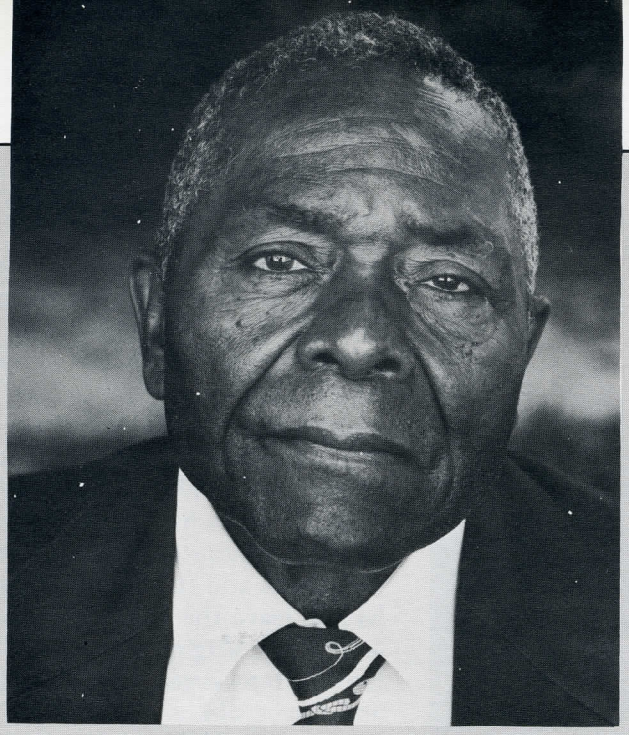
Joe Culicerto, who still lives with his wife in a nicely-remodeled company house in Glen White, adds that it is not only cars and television, but "the coal camps, too. The coal camp's dying out." Most companies began selling off their houses right after World War II. When the continuous mining machines came along in the late 1940's and 1950's, they took jobs away from two out of every three coal miners, which meant that thousands and thousands of families had to leave the coalfields of southern West Virginia. Most of their homes were eventually torn down, and towns where 3,000 people lived in the early 1940's had only 400 or 500 left by the early 1960's.

John McGraw, who also still lives with his wife in a nice former company house in Lillybrook, agrees. "We don't have the coal camps like they did have, you know. Like Fireco Hill, it was a booming town; a lot of people lived there. These coalfields are gone, these coal camps. Nobody lives here much now. The old people, that's about all you see in these coal camps. I wish they still had it around. I always liked baseball, crazy about it.

"You know, a coal miner ain't like just anybody, I don't reckon. Whenever they played, they played hard. Whenever they worked, they worked hard. A funny breed of people, that coal miner. I mean, we're people, but there's just something about us that makes us different.

"West Virginians is real workers. Work and play. They worked hard and they played hard. That's white and black, now — that wasn't just one. And other nationalities, too, Italians and other nationalities. I reckon that's what makes America great, different people from different countries — and different ideas."

The author would like to thank Okey A. Mills for his help with this article. Sheriff Mills both related his own experiences as a ballplayer and put the author in touch with more than 20 other players in Raleigh County.



Grover Lewis played for the legendary Homestead Grays, as well as in the coalfields.

Three Coalfields Ball Players

Grover Lewis

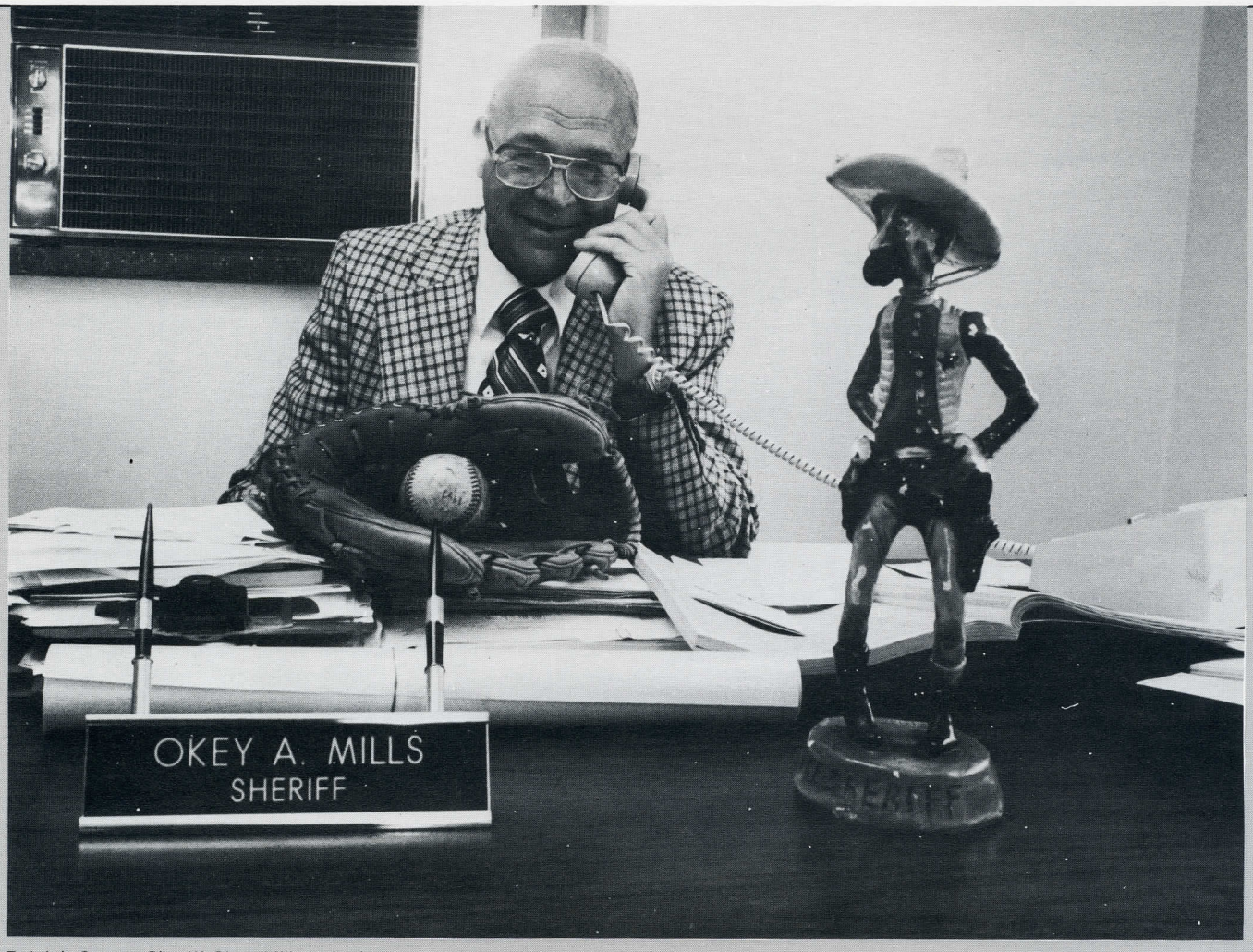
Grover Lewis was born in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1903; his father was a coal miner in Wylam, a company town outside the city. Grover himself began working as a trapper boy when he was nine years old, opening and shutting doors for the mine mules. Three years later, he started playing outfield for a team of miners in Edgewater, working for Tennessee Coal and Iron (owned by U.S. Steel). In 1917, his family moved to Gary in McDowell County. "If you was a colored man in Alabama," Grover explains, "you didn't make much money. We come up here because we could make more money."

When the Lewis family moved from Gary to Fairmont a couple of years later, Grover began playing for the Fairmont Giants, an all-black team. He often went up to Pittsburgh to see the Homestead Grays play. "Then they heard about me playing and hitting. See, I could hit so well. Compozi, the manager of the Grays, he came down to Fairmont and got me." In 1925, Grover became third baseman for the Grays, the legendary team most agree was the best of all the teams in the Negro Leagues over the years.

"I played for the Grays for about four or five years, and traveled all around the United States, to Cuba, and everywhere." Although black players were barred from playing in the major leagues until 1947, the Grays often played at Forbes Field in Pittsburgh. "I'll tell you what the manager of the Pittsburgh Pirates once said. He told me: 'If I had seven of you all, I'd beat anything in baseball.' " Grover's career was cut short in 1930, when he broke his ankle. Then Grover came back to Beckley where his family was living, and went to work in the coal mines again.

He began playing both first and third bases for the Raleigh Clippers. "All the coal companies had ball teams then." Like the major leagues, coalfield baseball teams were segregated, too — all-white teams and all-black teams. "We could beat anyone among the colored teams. The white boys had a league. We beat them, too. Their league, they'd get their All-Stars to play us in an All-Star game. They'd pick the best white players and put them up against the Clippers; Okey was pitching for them."

After he stopped playing in the mid-1930's, Grover managed the Raleigh Clippers. He also arranged to bring in professional black teams to play each other, including the Homestead Grays, Memphis Black Sox, Kansas City Monarchs, and Birmingham Black Barons. Jim Thorpe, the Native American Olympic gold medalist, once brought a baseball team to play at the Clippers field in Raleigh. "When I brought these teams in here, Lord, the people came out. Everybody, white and colored, too." Some of the most famous players from the old Negro Leagues played games in Raleigh County, including Homestead Grays catcher Josh Gibson, who many say could have challenged Babe Ruth's home-run record if he could have played in the majors, and Satchel Paige, the brilliant pitcher who played for the Grays and a variety of other teams and who finally did make it to the majors at the end of his career, when the Cleveland Indians called him up in 1948.



Raleigh County Sheriff Okey Mills quit playing baseball in 1975.

Okey Mills

Okey A. Mills, who was born in 1915, has been a lifelong baseball fan and player; he stopped playing only five years ago in 1975 at the age of 60. An old injury to his knee during World War II was aggravated when he stepped over second base on his way to third during a game. Okey has also been County Sheriff longer than any other person in the history of West Virginia. He first ran in 1948, won, and took office in 1949; ever since, he has won every time he has been eligible to run — in 1956, 1964, 1972, and 1976.

Even when he enlisted in the Army, Okey explains, "I pitched for the regimental team — in the 508 Parachute Infantry in World War II." After returning from Europe, "We went right back in to playing again. I played the first year after the war was over at Helen." Then he played with teams in Eccles and Coal City, later with the Kanawha Valley industrial league, and with an industrial league in Raleigh County. Mills also managed various local teams over the years.

Okey Mills' grandfather, father, and seven uncles all worked in the mines. Okey himself was born in Stotesbury; when he was eight, his family moved to Pemberton where they lived until he was 12. Then they moved to Hollywood (now called MacArthur), and he has lived in MacArthur and Crab Orchard ever since. He also worked in the mines himself as a young man, first at Mead, then at Stotesbury — mostly on the outside. "Then I went down to Helen. I hadn't worked there but a short while till I had a pretty bad accident. My nose was split open and pushed way back up in my face. A roof fall pushed me into a piece of machinery. I was off 18 months, then I went back to work about three months, and then I went into the service. I never did go back to the mines after I came out of the service."

Fred "Sheriff" Blake, at the Babe Ruth League park in Beckley.

Fred "Sheriff" Blake

Fred Blake, who was born in Ansted in 1899, came from a family of farmers in the Kanawha Valley. His family moved to Raleigh County when he was 10, where his father worked as general mine superintendent at Stotesbury, and later at Glen White. Fred himself began working at Stotesbury when he was 12 for a dollar a day. He began playing baseball when he attended Greenbrier Military Academy in 1916 and West Virginia Wesleyan in 1918.

In 1920, Blake began playing in various minor league clubs owned by the Pittsburgh Pirates, from Nitro in the Kanawha Valley to Rochester and Seattle. In 1923, the Chicago Cubs bought his contract; between 1925 and 1931 he pitched for them in the major leagues. He also pitched for the Philadelphia Phillies at the end of 1931 and was brought up again in 1937, when he played for the St. Louis Browns and the St. Louis Cardinals. Appearing in a total of 304 games, he won 87 and lost 102. His best year was 1928, when he was 17-11 (with four shutouts) for the Cubs, with a 2.47 ERA and 101 strikeouts in 240 innings.

Fred got his nickname just after he went up into Pittsburgh's minor league clubs. "This fellow George Stollings worked with young pitchers. I done something that didn't suit him and he called me a 'West Virginia moonshining sheriff.' Back then, the moonshine was so damn thick in southern West Virginia, and there was officers that had stills around here. George called me that, and the boys thought it was funny, so they called me the 'old sheriff.' And, by God, when I was in the big league, that's what the newspapermen called me. They didn't even know what the hell my real name was."

In the official record books, Fred is still listed simply as "Sheriff Blake." "Sometimes funny things would happen. We'd be places, you know, like bootleg joints — pretty good places. I'd be talking to some other guys, and someone'd call me 'Sheriff.' Everybody'd look around and get worried. Every damn body that you'd meet new, they'd want to know about the old sheriffs back down here in West Virginia."

The owner of the Cubs, "Old man Wrigley," Fred remembers, "was the one who originated women coming to the ball park. They paid ten cents, and they got to be fans. You never heard such screaming and hollering in your life."

After he left the majors in 1931, Fred managed a Class D ball club in Huntington for a few years, then returned to the mines, working as a machine operator, motorman, and an engineer. He worked at various mines — including Glen White, Stotesbury, New River, and Gauley Mountain — until he retired in the late 1960's. Sheriff Blake also continued playing ball for the team at Glen White. Today, even though he played major league ball for ten years, Fred doesn't get a cent in pension from baseball. He lived in two rooms in the Beckley Hotel for many years, before he became ill and moved to a local nursing home.

Mother Jones in Court

Act I, Scene 3, from "Brimstone and Lace"

By Bob and Carole Damron

Photographs by Tom Evans, from a 1976 Performance

Carolyn Perry as Mother Jones.

In June 1902, Mother Jones was arrested while addressing a miners' rally in Clarksburg. With five others she was taken to Parkersburg, where they were brought before the Federal Court. As on other occasions, Mother quickly took control, turning the courtroom into a podium for her own views and poking sly fun at the proceedings. But this time she found a judge she could admire — a "human judge," she called him — and left the court with an unusual respect for the administration of justice.

This excerpt from the play "Brimstone and Lace" is based on Chapter 7 of *The Autobiography of Mother Jones*, third edition, published by Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company and the Illinois Labor History Society in 1976. "Brimstone and Lace," first produced in 1976, will be presented at the Mother Jones Festival at the Cultural Center in Charleston in November.

Act 1, Scene 3

Prosecuting Attorney: *Your Honor, officials of the Court, citizens of the State of West Virginia (nods to each respectively)...it is my duty as an officer of these proceedings to initiate contempt charges against the co-defendants for violations of injunctions issued and served by this Federal Court. Let it be known that the defendants, self-proclaimed union agitators and non-residents of said state, have willfully disrupted the harmonious operations of coal mining businesses in the Fairmont and Clarksburg districts. Let the records of these proceedings also show that upon receipt of this court's orders forbidding such activities at or near the private property, the defendants flagrantly ignored the request to cease and desist and were arrested in open violation of the court's injunction. The prosecution contends that since their arrival in our state, it has been the sole purpose of the defendants to create industrial turmoil in our state by any number of subversive methods. And the prosecution intends to prove that the defendants have publicly advocated the use of violence for the purpose of work stoppage in said areas. (Crowd hub-bub) With Your Honor's permission....*

Judge: *Certainly, Mr. Prosecutor, proceed.*

Pros. Att: *The prosecution calls to the witness stand Mrs. Imogene Franklin. (Woman enters, appearing gaunt and self-conscious. Judge administers the oath in a monotone; the witness barely audibly says "I do") Mrs. Franklin, I shall inform the Court that you are the wife of a coal miner and a resident of Monongah, West Virginia. Is it true that you have been present during so-called labor rallies in your community?*

Witness: *(meekly) Oh, yes, sir, several times, sir.*

Pros. Att: *And while in attendance did you see any of the defendants here today at any of the rallies?*

Witness: *I seen ever' one of 'em. If'n they wasn't a-yellin' from the back of a wagon, they was handin' out that hate litter-chure to ever' man, woman, and child in sight.*

Pros. Att: *Yes, I see. And Mrs. Franklin, during the course of one of these gatherings, did you ever hear any of the speakers make remarks that shocked you or made you fear for the lives of your husband and family?*

Witness: *Oh, my, yes. At one meetin' that terrible, cursing old woman told all the strikers to take their guns and go down in the mines and shoot every miner who wouldn't quit work and join them.*

Pros. Att: *What was your reaction to this, Mrs. Franklin?*

Witness: *Well, you see, sir, I was on my way to the store with two of my children when I heard the ruckus. I became very fearful 'cause my husband Jim was workin' his shift in the mine at the time. I knew Jim wouldn't quit work 'cause he's never missed a day so long as he's been workin', an' sir, he's got too many mouths to feed to join up with them roustabouts even if he'd a-had the notion.*

Pros. Att: *Thank you, Mrs. Franklin, you have been extremely helpful. You may step down. (She exits with bowed head. Crowd stirs)*

Judge: *These are serious allegations, Mr. Prosecutor. The obvious reference to the defendant, Mrs. Mary Jones, is an extraneous issue in these present proceedings. However, the Court chooses to question Mrs. Jones at this time for points of clarification. The Court calls Mrs. Mary Jones! (She struts in unaided, head held high, smiling to the audience. The oath is administered in the same monotone — Mother replies for all to hear, "I most certainly shall.") We have heard testimony that you have advised miners to use violence to stop work in the Clarksburg coalfields. What have you to say to these accusations?*

Mother Jones: *You know, sir, that it would be suicidal for me to make such a statement in public. I am more careful than that. You've been on the bench 40 years, have you not, Judge?*

Judge: *Yes, I have that.*

Mother: *And in 40 years you learn to discern between a lie and the truth, Judge?*

Pros. Att: *(jumping up and shaking his finger) Your Honor, there is the most dangerous woman in the country today. She called Your Honor a scab! But I will recommend mercy of the Court if she will consent to leave the state and never return.*

Mother: *I didn't come into the court askin' mercy, but I came here lookin' for justice. And I will not leave the state so long as there is a single little child that asks me to stay and fight his battle for bread! (Crowd whispers audibly)*

Judge: *Let me assure you, Mrs. Jones, that this Court will never ask you to compromise your search for justice (here he scowls at the Pros. Att.). And I personally share your concern over matters of grave social importance. I am slightly interested in why you referred to me as a*

scab....Did you actually make such a statement?

Mother: *I certainly did, Judge.*

Judge: *(slightly taken aback) Would you care to elaborate?*

Mother: *When you had me arrested, I was only talkin' about the Constitution, speakin' to a lot of men about life and liberty; to men who had been robbed for years by their masters, and who had been made industrial slaves. I was thinkin' of the immortal Lincoln, and it occurred to me that I had read in the papers that when Lincoln made the appointment of Federal Judge to this bench he did not designate senior nor junior. You and your father bore the same initials. Your father was away when the appointment came and you took the appointment. Wasn't that scabbin' on your father, Judge? (Crowd hub-bub quite loud until Judge pounds for order)*

Judge: *I figured it would be that old story. Nevertheless, the Bench is not on trial here! Please proceed, Mr. Prosecutor.*

Pros. Att: *Madam, don't say "Judge" or "Sir" to the Court. Say "Your Honor!"*

Mother: *(in pantomime distress) My goodness, who is the Court?*

Pros. Att: *Why, His Honor, on the bench!*

Mother: *You mean this old gentleman behind the justice counter? Well, I can't call him Your Honor until I know how honorable he is. You know I took an oath to tell the truth when I took the witness stand. (Pros. Att. retreats, completely flabbergasted, with crowd in uproar)*

Judge: *We'll accomplish nothing at this rate this morning....The Court calls for a recess until 1 p.m. If you can pull yourself together, would you kindly clear the courtroom, Mr. Prosecutor? Would you remain, Mrs. Jones? I believe you owe me the time you've taken up with these theatrics. (Courtroom clears and exits. Several moments of silence as Judge and Mother remain in same positions, not looking at each other. Judge breaks the silence.) Mary Harris Jones...you really have quite a reputation, and I have a feeling that you have hardly stopped building it....You are obviously a woman of strong convictions, and even though you've totally disrupted the morning proceedings, I find myself only mildly irritated but curious about you. While rooms were reserved for you at the hotel, you insisted on accompanying your cohorts to jail. Why?*

Opposite page: Mother Jones confronts the Judge (Buddy Shaver).
Above: Judge and Prosecuting Attorney (playwright Bob Damron) examine timid witness (playwright Carole Damron).

Mother: *They were no more or less guilty than I. We deserved the same treatment. I do believe you are an honorable man, by looking at you; is it so hard to understand why I would refuse preferential treatment?*

Judge: *Perhaps I underestimated your self-sufficiency. We expected you would need more suitable accommodations. I still cannot fathom why a woman of your obvious intelligence would involve herself with the dangerous occupation of labor organizing. Would not your talent of persuasion be better utilized in a more womanly fashion...the temperance movement, for instance, or....*

Mother: *Judge Jackson, I am neither a torch-bearing temperance howler nor a lady of refined tastes. I have lived and worked with the exploited masses upon whose backs the industries of this country have been built. They ask only the chance to better their lives. My calling is not misguided.*

Judge: *Mother Jones, would you accompany me to my chanbers? I wish to give you proof that I am not a scab, that I did not scab on my father. The reports you heard were circulated by my political enemies years ago. (Rises and reaches for Mother's hand)*

Mother: *Judge, I apologize. And I am glad to be tried by so human a judge who resents being called a scab and who would not want to be called one. I can now rest assured that you know how we working people feel about it.*

(Both exit)

"To Keep the Peace"

Captain Charles W. Ray, State Policeman

By Ken Sullivan

Charles W. Ray entered the West Virginia State Police in 1924. He worked steadily for 25 years, retiring in 1949. He then became Charleston's Police Chief, and later taught law enforcement under a statewide program. In 1970 he was called from a second retirement to teach part-time at the State Police Academy at Institute. Today, at 78, he is the oldest member of the State Police still actively involved with the force.

In 1924 the young Department of Public Safety was a fledgling organization, less than five years old and still in the process of organizing itself. Ray was to play an important role in the evolution of the Department, particularly in the areas of criminal identification and officer education. After four years he reluctantly taught his first training course and, to his surprise, "kind of liked it." In 1933 his early work with fingerprinting and other means of identification was recognized when he was put in charge of the new Criminal Identification Bureau.

In a July interview at his home in Spencer, Captain Ray recalled his long career, from early strike duty — "for the first year or two I didn't think there was any other kind of police work," he says — to his current part-time service. The following article is edited from that interview.

The Department was about four and a half years old when I got in back in 1924. Actually, just about four years old. They started the Department in 1919, June the 29th was when the bill took effect. The governor appointed Colonel Jack Arnold, and he took in one man, Sam Taylor, on the 24th of July, I think it was, and then it was about August the fourth before they took anybody else in. By the time the end of the year came around, they had, roughly, 40 or 50 people. I came in in 1924, in January, so really the Department hadn't been functioning hardly four and a half years. So I was among the early ones, when you come right down to it.

I just kind of had a leaning towards being an officer, you know, from the time I was a youngster. I'd gone to New Mexico in 1923. My mother had bronchial asthma, and she wanted to go there. I was single, and my dad said how about you going out with her, and I said okay. So I went out there with her, and she got homesick and come back after about two months. I thought, well, I'd stay out there and try to find a decent job, you know. I had my application in to be a forest ranger. I'd had the application in about a month and a half to two months, and they kept telling me, "Well, you'll get a call." I never did, so finally I just left.

I had a Buick car, Buick touring car, and I decided to drive home from there in the winter months, in January. Got along fine till I got out to Arkansas. Through Texas, why it was just sandy soil, sandy roads, although they were not paved, you know, just sand, gravel, and so on. I got into Arkansas, right out near Des Arc, Arkansas, and boy, I hit that old black gumbo mud. It seemed it was about six feet deep, where the river had flooded there. I was stuck about two days at one place, and tore up my chains and I had to walk into Des Arc, which was six miles, and buy chains. I stayed with a farmer there.

Finally came a cold spell, and the ground froze over and I made it to Brinkley, Arkansas, which is 70 miles west of Memphis. I got in there and I gave up. So I stored my car and got on a train and rode to Memphis, Tennessee, and then up to Charleston. I had to go back to Arkansas and get my car when spring came, I think it was the latter part of April. And boy, I ran into a lot of mud then. It took me six days to come from Brinkley, Arkansas, to Charleston, West Virginia.

Left: Charles W. Ray soon after entering the State Police, with trooper Davidson in a sidecar. The two young men were sent to open the St. Mary's station in 1925, after Ray's strike duty in northern West Virginia. Photographer unknown.
Below: Captain Charles W. Ray. Photograph by Rick Lee.

So I came back home in January, about the latter part of January. I'd worked at the automobile license bureau before I went out there. So I went to see a fellow that I had worked with, Londy Gates, to see if they still had an opening around there.

Turned out an ex-state trooper was working in the job I had, a fellow by the name of Wilson. We called him Tub, I don't know if I can remember his correct name. I was talking to Londy Gates, who later was justice of the peace in Kanawha County. Said he didn't know really of any place where I might get back. So this Tub Wilson looked me up one side and down the other, and he said, "Why don't you get in the State Police?" And I said, "Well, I doubt if I can get in the State Police." "Yeah, you could get in. You go down and see Colonel Jack Arnold." They had the headquarters on Summers Street. "See Colonel Jack Arnold, and he'll take you in." Said, "You're the right size and everything." He'd been fired, Tub had. He said, "Now, I know they haven't replaced me." So he said, "You go down there."

Ray recalls that he applied for entry into the State Police one afternoon, and that they "shoved a badge over to me" at nine the next morning. "The sergeant said, 'You wanted in, didn't you? Well,' he said 'you're in!' "

Well, I went down, about 4:00 in the afternoon. I talked with Sergeant Neil who was at the desk, the assistant to the superintendent. And he wanted to know what he could do for me, and I said, "Well, I'd like to make application for the State Police." So he had me to fill out the forms there, and I got through about 4:30, I suppose. And he said just wait there a little while. He went into a back room, I'm sure he went in to see the superintendent, I never did ask him after that. He was in there for quite a little while, and came out, and said, "Could you be back here at 9:00 in the morning?" And I said, "Yes, sir." He said, "Well, we'll be looking for you at 9:00."

So I went back at nine, but in the meanwhile I met Major Cornwell, of the National Guard, on the street there in Charleston — a cousin that moved to Charleston a long time ago. And he said, "I heard you're going in the State Police." So I said, "I made an application this afternoon late. I don't know whether I'll be able to make it or not." He said, "I think you'll make it." And he just went on, you know.

The next morning I went back at 9:00. Sergeant Neil started filling out some papers, and he said, "Sign your name here." I didn't know what I was signing, really. And next he goes to his typewriter, and typed out a little card, that was an identification card, and shoved a badge over to me. And, well, he had me to swear an oath, uphold the constitution, and all that, and I wasn't just sure what all that meant, you know. 'Cause he didn't explain it. I said, "Just what does this mean?" He said, "It means that you're a member of the Department of Public Safety, as of *now*!" And I said, "Oh." He said, "You wanted in, didn't you?" And I said, "Oh, yeah!" "Well," he said, "you're in."

The morning I enlisted Colonel Jack Arnold came out and looked at me. He said, "You understand that you can be sent any place in the state, do you?" I said, "Yes, sir." "And that you're subject to duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week?" And I said, "Yes, sir. That's been told to me." Neil had told me the ins and outs, you know. And he just turned around and went back in his office.

I went in in January, and February I worked two nights on a straight. Watching a stolen hog back on a mountain near Fairmont, you know. Fellow'd stole the hog from somebody, and put it in an old hollow stump, great big old stump. We had to guard that thing all night long. In February, and I mean it wasn't warm! Whoever would come to it, to get the hog, we was going to get him. He never did show up.

There was kind of a mix-up there, and they didn't know I'd been out there the night before. And I didn't say, I just followed orders. I went to sleep on the trolley car coming from Fairmont down to Shinnston, and the fellow that was with me, fellow by the name of Reed, he had to slap my face to get me woke up and off of the streetcar.

After I went to sleep on the trolley car, it was kind of embarrassing. Joe Reed probably thought I was drunk or something. Well, actually, Joe asked me, "When did you go to bed last?" And I said, "Well, you'll have to let me think." I said, "Let's see. I guarded the hog last night, and the night before, and then I was up late the night before that. On a raid or something for moonshine whiskey."

Well, he'd been there for a couple of months, and he took me to the lieutenant and told him about it. Joe was a very nice fellow, you know. And so Lieutenant Brown, he said, "All right, Ray, you go down to the barracks" — I was single, you know, then — "and you sleep until you get ready to wake up." So I went down there that morning, and I think I got up about seven or eight o'clock that night. Missed my meals.

We had horseback patrol at first, then motorcycles that worked what pavement we had. And we did a lot of walking. Actually a horse wasn't too effective, as far as I was concerned. It was all right in your local area, but if you had to go on a call at

Left: Ray exhibits pike caught in Little Kanawha River, late 1920's. Photographer unknown.
Right: Photographer unknown, about 1925.

quite some distance it took you too long. I know I went to Glenville to get a couple of horses, that was 1926. We got a call over here at West Fork, Calhoun County, about 25 miles. Some fellow had set off some dynamite there — it turned out it was an affair about a woman, this fellow wanted to scare the other guy away, you know. So we rode over there and stayed a day and made the investigation. It took the whole day to ride 25 miles, and then it took another day to get back to Glenville. That was the way it was, you know.

I was one of the early ones that was took in the Department that hadn't been actually in World War I. Truth of the matter is, the company that was formed down there was formed of World War I veterans, that I went into. So I got quite a lot of experience, you know, with some of these people. Some of them took jobs like sergeant that had been a captain or a major in World War I. One captain had been a captain in a machine gun company and the lieutenant, I believe, had been a first lieutenant, and the second lieutenant had been a first lieutenant in World War I. The first sergeant had been a major. It was quite a crew, you know.

I was under Captain Brockus about three and a half years. When he left the army, he was a lieutenant-colonel; came in the State Police and they immediately appointed him captain. Now, he was the toughest one I ever served under. He was real hard to get along with, you know. Everything had to shine about you, your belt buckle and all that. You'd have to go out and wade through the mud, maybe, all night long or all day, but he expected when you got back in to get shined up. I don't care how tired you were. If you didn't shine up right away, get your shoes shined and so on, he was on you. And talking about being on time! That's one thing he taught me there, to be on time. 'Cause if he said to be there at 9:00, he didn't mean 9:01. He was a real stickler for discipline.

I'd had a little military experience before I joined the State Police. I was in the National Guard, a sergeant in the National Guard, before I went to New Mexico. I was in a Browning machine gun company, Company D of the 150th Infantry. Every third or fourth company was a machine gun

company at that time. This was a tripod-type gun, and I became instructor on the machine gun. I also got to be a buck sergeant, or a drill sergeant. I was too young for World War I and too old for World War II, so the military experience I had was in the National Guard.

They used the Guard in any kind of an emergency, like a strike or a disaster, or things of that kind, about like they use them now. My company was called up on strike duty one time, but I was gone somewhere and I didn't get to go on the call. It was up there about Cabin Creek, Dry Branch I believe was the name of the place. They were called out, but it didn't amount to anything, so they were back home by the end of the day.

peace, and of course the miners broke the peace a lot. They claimed we favored the companies, which of course I don't think we did. I didn't particularly favor any company. A matter of trying to keep down trouble. They would jump on people, beat them up — people who'd gone back to work.

They put two of us to handle 500 strikers. They'd line up, up and down the road — we'd be up there, they'd beat somebody up down the road. We'd get back down the road, well, they'd beat somebody up up the road. Where we'd just left. So that's the way it was. Just kept you busy, you know, working almost day and night. Blowed up tipples, and they did everything. They blowed down power lines — I remember one power

Lieutenant Ray relaxes with pipe and newspaper at his desk in the Criminal Identification Bureau. Photographer unknown, 1940's.

Then for the first year or two I was in the State Police, I didn't think there was any other kind of police work except strike duty. I was on strike duty in '24 and '25. That was in the northern part of the state, Morgantown, Clarksburg, and Fairmont, through that area. You was in the middle, you stayed in the middle, you know. The idea was to keep the line they blowed down at Kilarm. That line was whipping around just like a snake. I think it was 22,000 volts. It was a mess. But they finally got the electric shut off. I didn't know a line would do that. It just swarped around, this-away. So much power there, I guess, it'd hit the ground and bounce back again. I never saw anything like it.

They had a picket line, and then they ranged around and went to people's houses, even. Threaten 'em, and all of that. Some people's houses were burned down, you know. There was a lot of difficulty at times. Sometimes you had to hit somebody on the head with a riot stick. I don't remember us asking the miners to surrender their guns. They might have asked them, I don't know. I was just a trooper, you know, and I wasn't in on the planning or anything like that. I was just told what to do and went out and did it. Tried to.

I started off, of course, as a trooper, and started off at Shinnston. Haywood Junction, it was then, but that's about a mile, or closer, to the present headquarters. And I was there from January 24 till about October, then they sent me to Morgantown. Had to ride a motorcycle there, you know. I was the only one that was on a motorcycle that patrolled highways between Fairmont and Morgantown and the Pennsylvania line. Well, then, when the weather got bad they brought me back to Shinnston.

I think it was about December or January that Colonel Jack Arnold left the Department and O'Connor came in. You couldn't get from northern West Virginia to southern West Virginia in the wintertime. Dirt roads, you know. Well, Brown sent me around by, oh, up to Uniontown, Pennsylvania, over to Columbus, Ohio, then back down to Huntington, to bring the superintendent's car down. He had a Chrysler roadster.

When I got down there, why the superintendent put me to driving him, you know. I had driven Colonel Jack Arnold some, more or less against my will. I'd taken O'Connor driving on several little trips, so one day he said to me, "Do you like to drive the Superintendent?" I said, "No, sir. To be honest with you, I'd rather be doing police work." Well, he said, "You mean you'd rather go back up to Shinnston?" And I said, "Yes, sir." I thought I'd be honest with him.

He said, "Do we have anybody around here that can drive?" And I said, "Why, you've got two or three people around department headquarters would just *love* to drive you!" And he said, "Who?" And I said, "Well, Shirley Clinton and Paul Vassar, to name a couple of them." Well, the next thing I knew, he said, "I'll try out this Shirley Clinton."

So he tried Clinton out, and finally, after two weeks down there, I got sent back to Shinnston and they sent me over to Weston. I was there about three months, then they got into a strike. I was called back for strike duty in the Morgantown area. I stayed there in Morgantown, then I was at Reedsville, then I was in Fairmont, then Kilarm, and then finally the strike ended about June. In the meantime I tore up my right knee on a motorcycle, riding solo motorcycle. Tore all the ligaments loose, and so on.

I was walking around there with a cane, crutches and cane, so Captain Brown said, "We're gonna open up a station at St. Mary's, West Virginia." And he said, "While you're recuperating I thought we'd send you down there. We'll put a sidecar on your motorcycle." I couldn't crank it, you know, with my right leg. Said, "You could crank it with your left leg, couldn't you?" And I said, "Yes, sir." So they put the sidecar on.

They gave me another young fellow, so we opened up the station at St. Mary's. That was gravel road up from St. Mary's to New Martinsville, so we had three counties. Two of us had three counties, had Pleasants County, Tyler County, and Wetzel. Well, I was there about a year — that's where I met the better half, here. At St. Mary's.

Well, then they moved the Company B Headquarters from Williamson, I believe it was, to Parkersburg. So they had 14 counties up and down the river and over into Ritchie County, you know, and so on, that Company. In that way B Company took over this A Company's territory that I was in, so they transferred me then, to Parkersburg. 'Cause they have a barracks down there, and I was single — I was having to pay room rent up at St. Mary's, you know, so they transferred me down there.

I stayed there about six months and they fired two men over here in Braxton County, at Bower. So they sent me over there, in charge of that. I was still a trooper, you see. And they sent an older man to work under me, fellow by the name of Pomeroy. So we went to Bower, and since we had Braxton, Gilmer, and Calhoun counties, they decided to move the station to Glenville, in be-

Overseeing the establishment of the Academy in the late 1940's was Ray's last major project as a regular member of the State Police, and the main building is dedicated to him. On this plaque he is surrounded by symbols of his work as police investigator and educator.

Ray entered the field of officer training reluctantly, at the order of his superiors, but says he came to like it by the end of the first 60-day session in 1928. Photograph by Rick Lee.

tween the other two counties, you know. So that's what we did, moved down there.

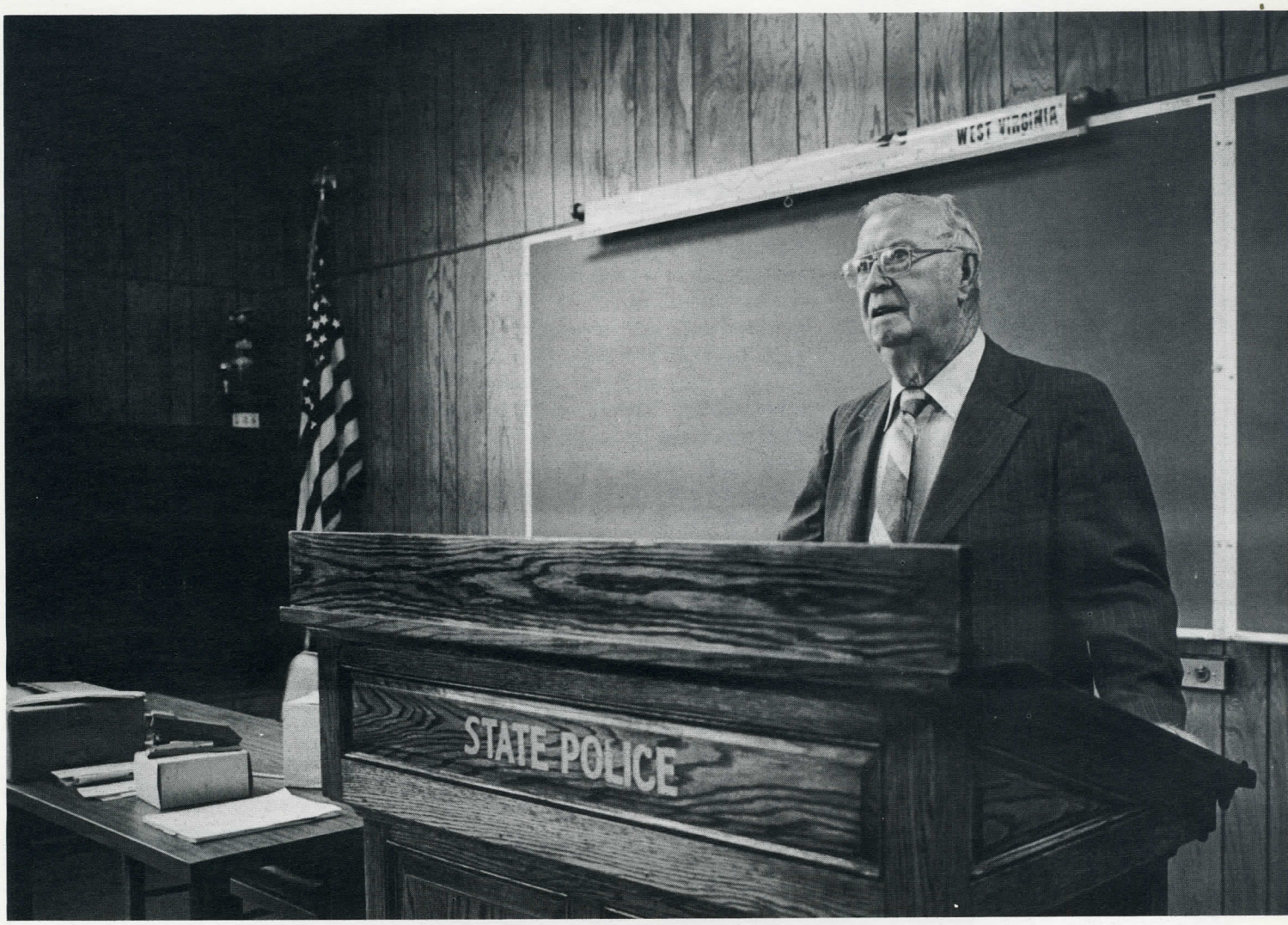
Glenville didn't have paved streets at that time. It was a mudhole. I took my wife over there. (I got married in September, just shortly after I was transferred there.) And we got stuck twice right in the town of Glenville, so I had to carry her in to the sidewalks, 'cause she didn't have boots on and I had boots. Waded through mud that deep, you know. And we was pulled out by a team of mules, and another time a fellow came along with a yoke of oxen — that's the first time she ever saw oxen.

It took us three days to get from Parkersburg after the marriage to our station in Bower. After I got through Glenville, we had to go around some back roads because they was grading a road up toward Gilmer Station. I hit a rock, tore the oil pan on the car, and all the oil ran out there on the road, so I had to go hire a team to pull me into Burnsville. I was about four miles from Burnsville then. So we rode in the car with this team pulling. That was my honeymoon.

Anyhow, we got to Burnsville. By that time it was almost dark, so we put up at a little hotel there. The Bower station was back on the B&O Railroad line towards Sutton. So we had to wait till the next day to get the train down, so after the third day I finally got to our station.

I was asked to instruct a class in 1928, June 1928. I had had teacher training, way back. In fact, my father was a teacher, and I didn't go to school, he *sent* me, you know. I had no idea, really, of being a teacher. Well, when somebody was sick I taught a little bit in grade school, but I didn't think too much of it. So after I was in the State Police four years, O'Connor came in as superintendent — R.E. O'Connor — and he had the idea, instead of a week's training, to have 60 days for everybody coming into the department. I was stationed at Glenville at that time, June, 1928.

Well, one of the men came through from Charleston and stopped to see me and said, "The superintendent



Ray in the classroom. Oak lectern was part of the original furnishing of the State Police Academy. Photograph by Rick Lee.

wants to see you." The new superintendent, you know. Usually when the superintendent wanted to see you, you was in some kind of jam. You'd arrested somebody and maybe mistreated him, or things of that kind. I tried to figure out in my mind, well, what in the world have I done wrong now?

Well, I finally went down and when I walked in his office he had my service record out on the desk, and I thought, "Oh, God." He said, "I notice here that you had teacher training." And I said, "Yes, sir." And I still didn't know what he was trying to get at, you know. He said, "Now, we're starting a training program for new members. It's going to be of 60-days' duration. For the first time in the history of the State Police, we're going to give them a real course of training."

He said, "Now, Lloyd Layman is going to be in charge of it, Captain Lloyd Layman." Says, "He's recommended you to be one of the instructors." And I says, why, I didn't want to be an instructor. I said, "I never been a police instructor or anything like that." He said, "Well, you've got to start sometime." He said, "We'd like you to be an instructor." And I said, "Well, I'd appreciate it if you'd just leave me out of it. I'm getting along okay the way I am, I think." And I said, "Just leave me out of it." Well, he said, "We'll see about that."

And by gosh, in about 15 days I got notice to report to Point Pleasant as an instructor in this school they started. So of course I went down. After I got started and worked that round, about 60 days, why, I kind of liked it. And whether I liked it or not, they kept me at it. Any time they had a school, I was in it.

Of course, now back at that time we didn't have continuous school like they have down at the State Police Academy now. We had schools when we needed new members, you know, usually had it about once a year. Then in 1933 the superintendent came in from Clarksburg — P.D. Shingleton — and he got the idea that we ought to have in-service

training. So we started having that, plus maybe a recruit school. But at that time, about 60 days was all we trained the recruits, you know. And prior to 1928 about one week was all the training anybody ever had. I was in three and a half years before I ever got in a training school. By then I'd been promoted to corporal. And the only thing I learned in that training school was that I didn't know anything, you know. That's when I started trying to learn.

I was one of the first people in the Department to ever think about studying fingerprints. I had started that in 1925.* So they wanted me to talk about fingerprints there, plus crime investigation. I'd been investigating about as much as anybody in the department, serious crimes, like murder and robbery and things of that kind. They had me to talk about criminal investigation, and also identification, fingerprint identification.

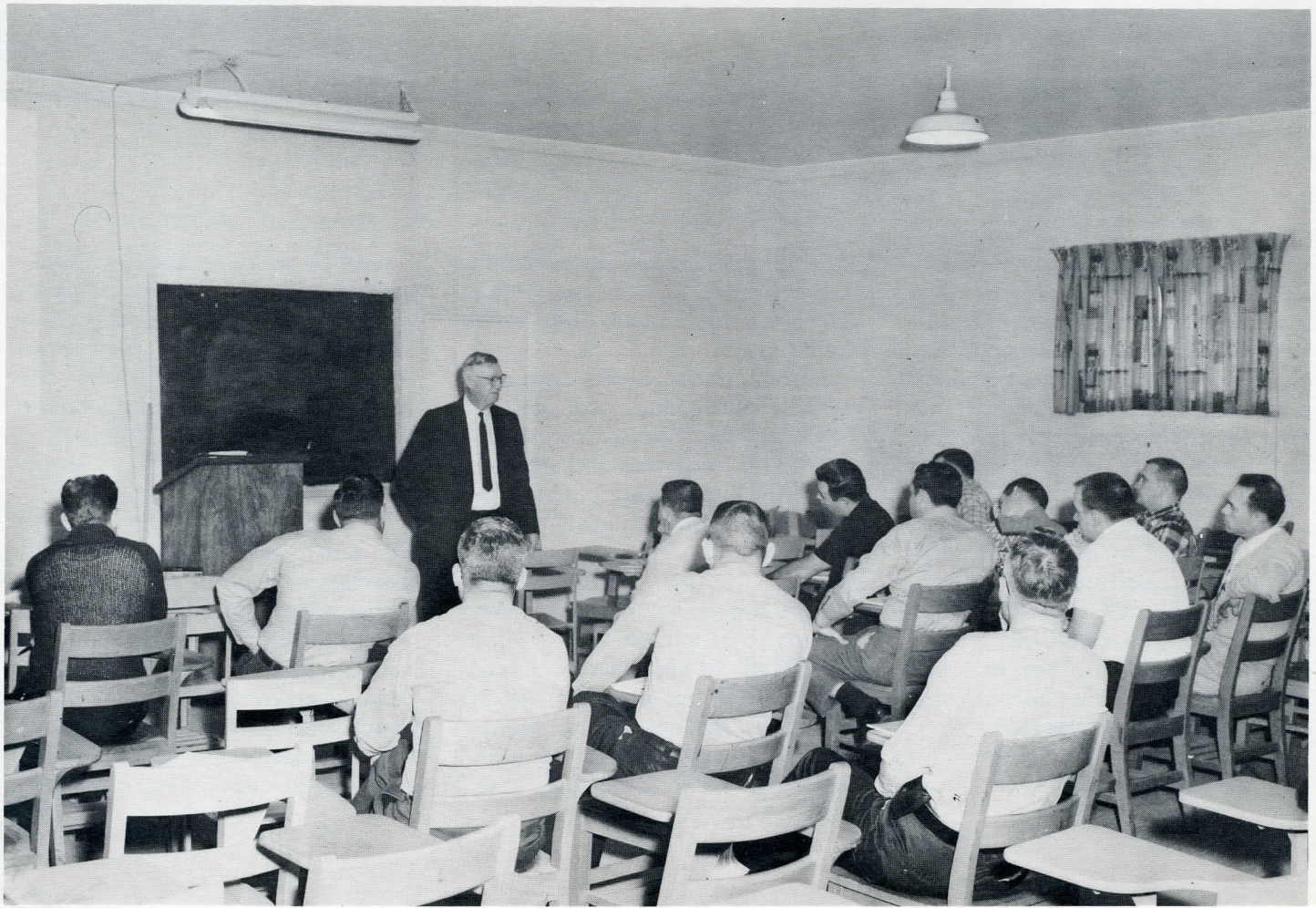
That's how I got started. Then I branched off into first one thing and then another, whatever they wanted me to tackle, why I'd try to get prepared for, you know. So I got to teaching criminal law, that is, the law the Department enforces, in other words. Murder and kidnapping, rape, and whatever — I did that for a long time. I'd teach whenever they were having school, then I was back on regular work, whatever it happened to be.

Well, I was at Glenville five years. They had convict labor building the roads over in Gilmer County, and Calhoun, and Clay County up the river into Braxton. So because of this convict labor they decided to establish a station at Gassaway, to look after all that up at Glenville — remember, two men had three counties. They were trying to work Spencer here in Roane County out of Parkersburg, and they weren't doing much good at it. Captain Brockus decided to establish a headquarters here at Spencer, and give us Gilmer, Calhoun, and Roane counties. So I got back in my home county, then. I was here about 18 months, and then they transferred me to Charleston when they opened up that training school. That was in 1933, in June 1933.

Then I retired in 1949 from the State Police, on June the 30th, and took a job as Chief of Police of Charleston. I was down there a couple of years, and then I got back into teaching after that, in 1955. Holding regional programs for county and city officers — at that time they had no programs whatsoever, you know. They'd pin a badge on you, and

Captain Ray recalls that he learned fingerprinting from a textbook. He established himself as an expert on identification and in 1933 was made director of the new Criminal Identification Bureau. The CIB, which maintained comprehensive state arrest and conviction records, was an important organizational step for the State Police. — ed.

Ray teaches a class of Parkersburg officers, probably early 1960's. Photographer unknown.



Left: Enjoying his "first" retirement, Ray fishes with wife Ella in Arkansas, 1951 or 1952. Photographer unknown.
Right: Charles and Ella Ray. Date and photographer unknown.

you'd work with somebody who was supposed to break you in. As an upshot of that, hardly anybody in county and city departments had had any trining. So this was a new field, and I was employed through Marshall University and the Division of Vocational Education. They went in together on the project. I worked 12 years at that. Then my wife got sick, and so in '67 I retired from that. I retired twice, you know.

Well, then after my wife begin to get straightened out, Major Jack Buckalew told me they had started this program for county and city officers at the State Police Academy. That was around 1970, I think it was. So he asked me, said, "You have so much experience with town and city officers, how about coming down and helping us in that program?" So, I started first helping in that, and then later they got me over to helping with the cadets. That's how I got back into it again, on a part-time basis. When they have the county and cities program I teach 40 hours, and when they have cadet training, I teach 30 hours. That's what I'm doing now.

There's been a lot of changes. I'd say that now most everyone feels that you work five days a week, that's enough, and then you work eight hours a day and that's enough. Of course, when a crime's committed, a criminal doesn't follow those rules. So sometimes if you're successful you're going to have to work at night and continue on, unless somebody is able to take over the investigation. Crooks, they don't pay attention to the county line or the state line, they just go ahead and operate, you know.

Of course, crime is increasing now most every year. I think we had a year or two back that it went down to about the lowest, I think it was maybe '76 or '77. We had a low period there. Then it's beginning to climb back up. I think it's increasing about 13% on the average a year, but it didn't increase that much back in the early days. 'Course, at that time officers had more leeway in the investigation of crime. For instance, now, if a person doesn't want to be questioned or anything, why, of course, you have to warn him of his rights. And all that. Entitled to have a lawyer present. They didn't have that tradition prior to the Miranda decision in 1966, I think it was. So that has hindered the investigation of crimes to a great extent, as far as I'm concerned.

We worked awful long hours. I'd say we averaged 12 hours a day, and I didn't have a day off until I was in nine and a half years. I mean, we didn't have that day-off rule until then. Nine and a half years of seven days a week. On duty seven days a week, except that you could maybe take off, by seeing the commanding officer, three or four hours to go courting, go see your girl. That's all.

I tried to have some home life, after I had children. I was stationed at Glenville. I tried to get to the picture show, maybe, go with them. We didn't have radio at that time, remember, and so I'd leave word of where I was going with the telephone operator. Many times I'd be at a picture show and get a call. The operator would call the theater, and they'd come tap me on the shoulders, tell me that I had a call. I'd get hold of the operator, and she'd tell me what it was and where it was. So I'd leave the family, and they'd have to get home the best way they could.

It's been my life, you know. Actually, it's been 56 years since I started. I've been an instructor off and on for about 52 years of that time. You have a pretty good feeling when you get through the class and feel that you've helped them, that you've aided law enforcement. Even though I'm not an active officer. I was telling some of the officers the other day, I had a real good feeling to get through with a class and to feel that you'd made another step forward in law enforcement. That's the way I actually feel. So I enjoy the teaching. I didn't think I would to start with, but I do, I really do.

The Ellisons of Hans Creek Valley

Two Centuries of Monroe County Family History

By Helen Steele Ellison with the assistance of George Parkinson

Photographs from the West Virginia Collection

A recently discovered collection of photographs and papers provides a remarkable example of family history in West Virginia, revealing a noteworthy attachment to place and tradition. The story begins in the 18th century, when the James Ellison family came to the New River Valley of Augusta County, Virginia, and continues through the 19th and into the 20th century. It shows a family emerging from a period of frontier subsistence farming to a state of prosperous self-sufficiency. The narrative is found not only in family correspondence and ledger books but also in visual relics, like photographs, coverlets, and stone foundations.

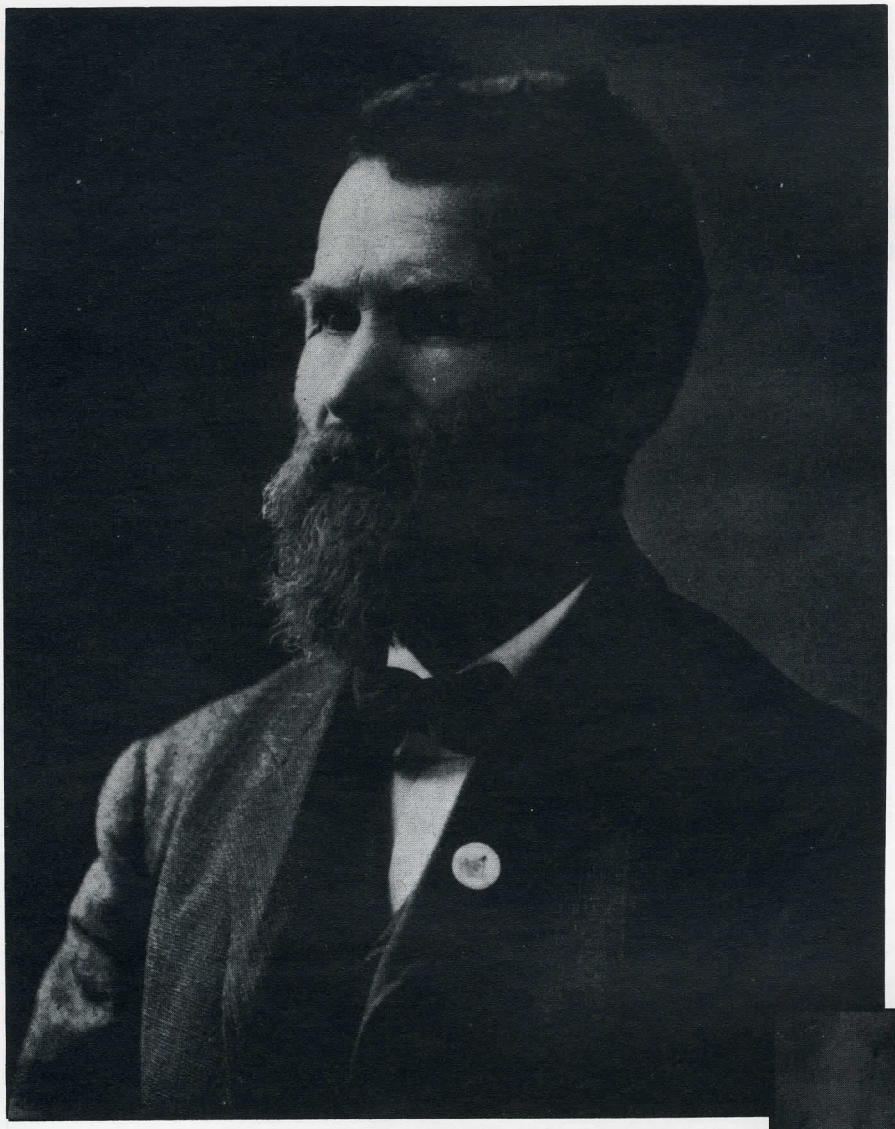
James Ellison was born in Sussex County, New Jersey, in 1735. In 1771 he and his wife, the former Anne English, brought their seven children, four sons and three daughters, to Hans Creek Valley, cleared land for farming, and in 1774 received a land patent for 82 acres. His log house stood on the southwest side of Hans Creek below the mouth of Blue Lick, in what is now Monroe County, and into the 20th century its location was marked by half-buried foundation stones, a log barn, a nearby spring, and a scraggly apple orchard.

In 1791 James died and left the farm to John, a son who had married and stayed with him on the farm, building a log house at the forks of the Hans Creek and Dry Pond roads. In turn, John left the farm, in 1845, to his son Jesse, who had remained at home. Other male heirs, however, were not disinherited, for the acreage of the farm had increased so that portions were allotted to John's three sons who had gone out on their own.

Jesse married Alpha Broyles and built a log house on a site overlooking the first two houses. A room on the first floor of the house contained cards*, racks of spindles, spinning wheels, and two looms, one with the 22 treadles necessary for Double Weave coverlets, the other a smaller one for weaving the fabrics necessary for daily life. Alpha wove the wool and linen used by the Ellisons, and she was particularly skillful at weaving the Double Weave coverlets, several of which remain in use today. They were woven of two adjoining "webs," each with the same design but with colors reversed. The design separated, like a pocket from a shirt, and the colors were usually the traditional red, white, and blue of the snowball and pine tree patterns. Linen provided the white and wool was dyed with indigo and madder root** for the blue and red.The earliest record of the coverlets appears in

* Cards are stiff wire brushes used to comb or "card" fibers (in this case, wool) preparatory to spinning.

** Madder is an herb (genus *Rubia*) whose roots produce a red dye.



Left: John Zachariah Ellison in 1905. Friend Studio, Morgantown.
Below left: Addison Dunlap Ellison, son of John Zachariah and Harriet, inherited his father's Monroe County farm. Friend Studio, Morgantown, about 1900.
Below right: Harriet Dunlap Ellison, wife of John Zachariah. Harriet's correspondence makes up a large part of the Ellison family papers, now in the West Virginia Collection at WVU. Date and photographer unknown.

a family ledger as "William Thompson due to Jesse Ellison for weaving two coverlids $4.00 received in April the 23, 1840."

In addition to farming, Jesse operated a grist and sawmill. The mill was run by a water-powered turbine, rather than the much-romanticized overshot wheel often seen in paintings of the period. Of the mill itself one can still see pink granite millstones, a dam, and overgrown stonework. More intact than the mill itself and informative as to its history are the mill ledgers, which have been deposited in the West Virginia and Regional History Collection at the University Library in Morgantown. These volumes tell us who used the mill. One customer, for example, was the manager of the Red Sulphur Springs Hotel, then a flourishing resort, located about four miles away.

The ledgers were often overwritten with sermons, scripture, and personal messages, such as the following poem on a then-familiar theme:

One day while in the lonesome grove
sat over my head a little dove
for its lost mate begin to coo.
which makes me think of my mate too
o little dove you are not alone
for with you I am constrain to mourn.
for once like you I had a mate
and now like you I mourn my fate

Consumption seized her lungs severe
and prayed upon them one hole year
but death it came at the close of day
and my dear Mary it did slay
Her blooming cheeks and sparkling eyes
that withered like the rose that dies
her arms that O embrace me round
lyes mouldering in the cold clay ground

I have one hope that cheer my heart
that my dear Mary has gone to rest
for while her dying tung could move
she prayed the Lord for pardning love
She said to me my dearest friend
you be faithful to the end
and soon met on yon bright shore
and never never part no more

It seems strange to see such a melancholy piece scribbled among notes on the sale of butter, bacon, wheat and oats, but the nearby Red Sulphur Springs Hotel brought in sickness as well as trade. Many people with tuberculosis came to The Springs hoping the water and mountain air would cure them.

Jesse's only son, John Zachariah, was born in 1840, and the talk of the hard times of "Zack's" childhood is remembered by descendants. They heard of Alpha saving the farm with the income from her weaving. The Civil War took Zack from the farm. He enlisted in the Confederate army, served in Lowery's Battery, and fought in the battles of Lynchburg, Cedar Creek, and Lewisburg. Twice wounded, he lived to surrender with Robert E. Lee at Appomatox Court House. Later, he spoke of his feelings when he laid down his arms and walked home alone, saying that he had been fighting for a wrong cause. After returning home, he registered Republican and remained a loyal member of that party. To improve the fortunes of the family during the post-war depression, Zack went to Pittsburgh, enrolled in the Iron City Commercial College, and completed a course in accounting.

While Zack was away, Jesse sawed timber for a new house for his son. Begun in 1873, it was a large two-story clapboard, of considerable grace, with walnut trim. The walnut logs had been cured in the mill dam — a practice which caused the lighter sap wood to darken to the uniform rich brown color characteristic of walnut. The core of the house was a large stone chimney with four fireplaces, the only sources of heat. The kitchen, behind the house, had its own fireplace for cooking. Near its door was a spring house for cooling milk and churning butter, one of the important items of exchange at the mill.

In addition to building his house, Zack took over the operation of the mill. He purchased a half acre of land from his neighbor, John M. Larew, so that he could relocate the mill across the creek. The price of the land was $25, with the stipulation that Mr. Larew "be allowed at all reasonable times to haul sediment out of the mill dam in any quantity...but... to do nothing to interfere with the operation of the mill." The fertile silt trapped in the mill pond would be used to enrich Larew's farm lands.

Alpha died soon after completion of the house and Jesse died two years later, only two months before Zack's marriage in 1879 to Harriet Petrie Dunlap. Harriet had grown up on a neighboring farm and had attended Hollins Institute for Women, at Lynchburg, Virginia. Her grandfather Dunlap had been a delegate from Greenbrier County to the Virginia Assembly, her father had owned the Red Sulphur Springs Hotel, and the family had invested its considerable resources in the Confederate cause. Two of Harriet's brothers had been held in Union prison camps. One admirer of Harriet's, D.L. Ruffner of Charleston, who had been quartered in the Dunlap home during the war, said of her:

"With Miss Harriet I am really charmed she is so sensible (I hate the word 'smart'), so modest, so lady like in her manners, and every way so agreeable, that much pleasure as I anticipated in making her acquaintance, my expectations were much more than realized."

She also had literary interests. Not only did she earn a reputation as a fine letter writer, but she gathered and preserved her mother's correspondence.

Zack and Harriet had four children, three sons and a daughter. The oldest son graduated from Bethany College and the other three from West Virginia University. In 1905 their son Addison received a B.S. degree in Agriculture from WVU. He

Young Warren Ellison with his sled, as tenant farmer Letch Dillon harvests ice in the background. Warren now lives on the Ellison farm in Monroe County. Photographer unknown, about 1925.

returned to the farm, and two years later married Emma Kyle of Falling Spring, Virginia, then brought her to his parents' home. Mother Harriet, however, lived only two years afterward. In 1913, to accommodate his growing family, Addison enlarged the house with a wood-burning range and water piped in from a spring. A new basement contained a laundry, fruit storage rooms, and a furnace built to hold the large copper and iron kettles used to heat water, cook food for preserving, and to make soap and lard. A dumb waiter carried supplies to and from the main floor. The number of bedrooms was increased to seven, a double 60-foot back porch was added, and the front porch was changed. Wood-burning stoves heated each of the rooms, except for the fireplaces for the two downstairs bedrooms.

Zack died in 1934, at the age of 93, leaving the farm to Addison, except for the mill, which went to his grandson, John Zachariah. When Addison died in 1975, at the age of 94, he followed family tradition and left the farm to the son who remained with him, though six other children survive.

After Addison's death, a search was begun for old documents known to have been in the house but which were then missing. It was during this search that a treasure of letters, which Zack's wife Harriet had saved, was discovered in an open box, like the ones canning jars came in, high on a shelf, in a room used mainly for storage. The dust-covered letters, 400 in all, were in small packets, tied together with corset laces, worn suspender straps, shoestrings, and strips of torn cloth. Some avid collector had cut some of the stamps from the envelopes. The collection had ended with Harriet's death. Later letters, found elsewhere, saved by the family, were added to those in the box and deposited with the West Virginia Collection in Morgantown along with the ledgers and other records. The Library has returned photocopies of these materials for preservation in Zack's house.

The Ellison mill was part of a general farm operation. John Zachariah the Second recalls it well, as he was often in it with his grandfather from early childhood until adulthood. He remembers that as a small child he escaped his parents' oversight whenever possible and ran to the mill, less than a quarter-mile away, where he observed and then helped in its operation.

The grist mill required only one man to operate it, and it was opened when needed by the family or neighbors. Saturday morning was the main time when people came with their turns of grain, though in winter they trickled in all week long with grain to be ground for cattle feed. The sawmill was a different matter, requiring advance planning. A crew of four men and a much larger supply of water were needed. The two mills were never operated simultaneously, although they were separate systems, sharing only the water supply and the forebay — a large chamber which held water for release through the turbines.

The mill was constructed on a bank below the dam, providing wagon access at ground level to both the upper and lower floors for convenience in handling the grain as it was first unloaded, then reloaded after milling. On the lower floor, where the millings were bagged or barreled, was a loafing room for the men as they waited their turn for grain to be milled. The room had benches along the walls, and a cast-iron, wood-burning stove with a hearth full of ashes to catch the tobacco juice from the customers. Slabs from the sawmill fueled the stove.

The mill was run by water-powered turbines, a six-horsepower turbine for the grist mill, and a 15-horsepower turbine for the sawmill. Diagrams from the Fitz Water Wheel Co., Hanover, Pa., found among Zack's papers, show the gate riggings, gears, and Burnham turbines such as were used in the mill.

Although simple in operation, the grist mill took much skillful maintenance and attention. Periodically the stones were dismantled for cleaning, balancing, and sharpening. In order to sharpen the stones, Zack and his helper would sit on stools facing each other across the stones and work with chipping hammers (made similar to a sheet metal hammer) for about three days.

The stones had to be perfectly flat,

Helen Steele Ellison with one of the original Double Weave coverlets, woven by Alpha Broyles Ellison, about 1840. Photograph by Dennis Tennant.

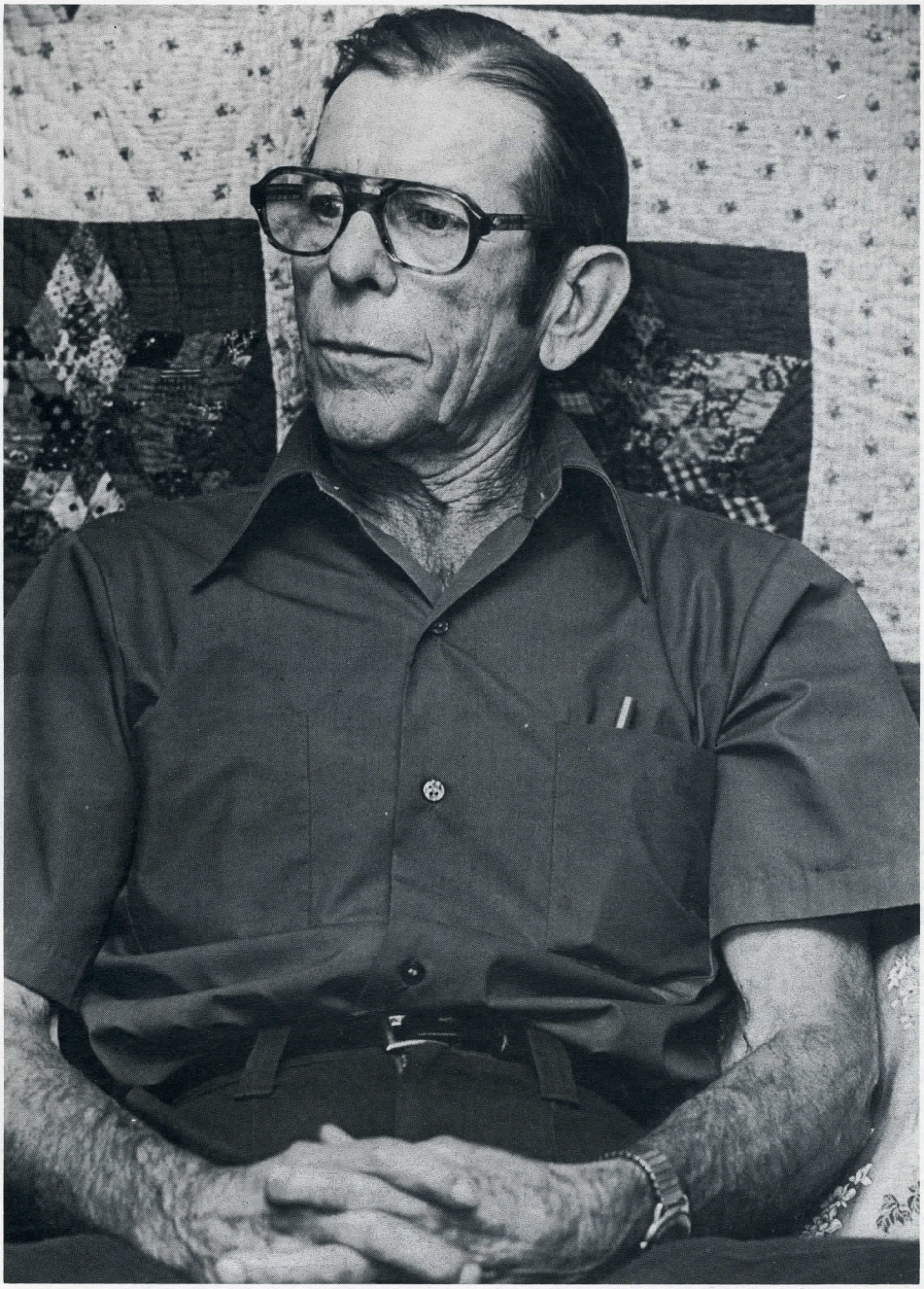
sharp, and evenly balanced, otherwise the grinding was uneven, grain was mashed rather than cut, and hot spots would develop during grinding, which burned the meal. The leveling was accomplished by means of rubbing a smooth, straight stick with fine red clay or ground charcoal and drawing it across the face of the stone. Unevenness of the color on the stones revealed high and low places. The high places would then be chipped away. The stone wore away during the grinding process so that the furrows on the face had to be deepened from time to time and the edges kept sharp. The quality of his meal was of particular pride to Zack, and even now a neighbor, Mrs. Robert Larew, recalls from her youth that "nobody could make as fine meal as Mr. Zack."

From time to time the turbine fins had to be cleared of debris brought in by the creek. While still a very young boy, Zack the Second was given this task. It required climbing down into the forebay, a large, stone-lined, subterranean chamber which held the water for release through the turbines. He recalls, "It was like descending into Hell," going down into that dripping dark place, the water of the dam held above by the sluice gate, to clear the fins of decaying weeds, sticks, and slithering water animals.

The routine for starting the grist mill began with filling the grease cups on the gears with mutton tallow, preferred over other kinds of grease because of its melting point. The wheels would heat as they turned, melting the tallow and lubricating themselves. Next, the top stone was raised from the lower one by means of a screw and wheel, and the surface checked for problems. The grain was then measured, a gallon taken from each bushel for toll, and the remainder dumped into the hopper ready to trickle through the air shaft (where chaff would be blown away) onto the stone.

When all in the mill was ready, outside the sluice gate was opened. As the water poured into the forebay, the turbine fins were opened and the stones would begin turning. Then the hopper was opened to let the grain trickle onto the stone. As the grain hit the bottom stone, the upper stone was lowered enough to achieve the desired fineness. The grindings would work across the surface of the stone, going into a chute leading to the meal box on the lower floor, where it was bagged. The meal box had a scrapper board with a scissors-like handle designed to keep the meal box "whistle clean," a requirement in the continuous effort to control weavil.

The toll, taken from each bushel of grain in a walnut, one-gallon box, would then be dumped into wooden barrels according to color; white corn going into a barrel to be used for meal for the mill helper's family,



John Zachariah Ellison at home in Morgantown. "Zack the Second" is the grandson of the original John Zachariah Ellison. Photograph by Dennis Tennant.

yellow corn to be sold or used for feed by Zack, and the mixed grain going into a barrel for the mill helper's hogs. Poor quality grain was common, since fungicides and insecticides were not then in general use. Moldy corn could be fed to hogs, but it would cause sheep, cows, and horses to sicken and die. Thus it was important to separate the good from the bad, though none was thrown away. The bad corn went into the mixed grain barrel. Only white corn was used for meal, yellow corn being looked down upon as animal feed. The Ellisons, like many other families, shelled corn for meal by hand so that only good, fully developed grains would be used.

Zack the Second remembers the colorful language his grandfather used when things went wrong. Sometimes small stones hidden in the grain would go undetected into the hopper and on to damage the face of the stones. On such occasions, "Granddaddy would preach a sermon," though one not admissible in church. Other times old Zack would be more sad than angry, as when he watched his oldest son, Clarence, head for the mill with a turn of grain. Clarence, a minister in the Christian Church, had neither the mechanical ability nor judgment to see to the proper running of the mill. To Clarence, unbalanced stones, over-heating stones, empty grease cups, choking chutes, all went unnoticed. Zack would shake his head sadly at the prospect of damage to the mill, but he was unwilling to halt a member of the family from using it.

However, it was from Clarence that Zack the Second learned something of the early history of the mill: once upon a time wheat flour was ground there, a fact which explained the wooden bolt frames with their tattered fabric collecting dust on the lower floor. Though flour was no longer ground, Clarence would sometimes bring wheat to grind through the corn burrs. The whole-grain flour, not then in vogue, was sneered at by others as "hog feed." The burrs for grinding wheat were quite small in comparison to the corn burrs, and had been removed from the mill and used in a building foundation.

Below: Early view of the sawmill shed at the Ellison gristmill-sawmill complex. Date and photographer unknown.
Right: John Zachariah Ellison house after the 1913 remodeling and enlarging. Photographer unknown, 1940.

Hans Creek is small and, unless high due to flood, stopped flowing over the dam when the sluice gate was opened. The creek below then stopped flowing as the water disappeared under the forebay into a sink when it left the turbines, emerging far down the creek. Families along the creek "kept an ear cocked" for the whine of the sawmill starting up. The children would then take garden hoes to the pools in the creek and flip out the entrapped fish, a welcome variation to their predominantly salt pork diet.

During droughts when there was not enough water to run the mill, Zack the Second would take corn by horseback to the mill at Greenville, six miles away. A work horse which would not shy, rather than skittish "Betsey," the riding horse, was used. Before loading the sack of grain, a blanket was placed on the horse to protect the grain from the sweat of the horse. Zack the Second, then not 12 years old, mounted the sack of grain on the horse. His father would fill the grain sack, which held about two and a half bushels, so full it would not break down much across the horse's back. The grain weighed considerably more than the rider and, as the horse jogged along, the grain would shift more to one side than the other.

Little Zack struggled to keep the grain balanced as they climbed up steep Ellison's Ridge, opening and closing five gates, and down the other side to Indian Creek. He followed the same path his great-great-grandfather used when fleeing from the Indians to seek refuge in Cook's Fort, a story young Zack had heard often but was too busy to think of at times like this. Crossing Indian Creek was worse than the

Ridge. If the grain fell off in the creek it would be ruined for meal even if he could get help to pick it up.

When Zack arrived at the mill, his troubles were not over. The miller delighted in teasing him, but a properly brought up child could not respond in kind to an adult. The miller, knowing full well why the grain was brought to him, would inquire as to why it was. When he heard the serious reply that the water was low, he would say, "Why don't you get water like we do — take some willow switches up the creek and whip the piss out of the frogs." Frequent trips to the mill were necessary in warm weather due to the problem of weavil, and corn bread was baked every day in the Ellison home.

The sawmill, like the grist mill, was operated around the demands of crops and livestock. It could produce 2,500 board feet of lumber per day, between milking and other chores, with time out for lunch — about a six-hour day. Unless there had been a "freshet," providing flood water, the sawmill would have to stop sometimes for water to accumulate in the dam. During these times saws were sharpened and machinery was cared for.

The powerful 15-horsepower turbine required special attention to the mill before starting up. It had to be out of gear or the log carriage would jump off the end of the track. Or, if it was blocked by some means, the log carriage gears would grind out — either event was a major disaster.

The sawmill crew consisted of a saw-yer, an off-bearer (one who carried out the lumber and slabs), and two men to operate the screws. Two independently operated screws, gauged to the quarter inch, controlled the width of the lumber sawed. Each time the log went past the saw and back, the screws had to be turned five times to get a one-inch board. The log, held in place by "dog irons," was pushed toward the saw with each turn of the screws.

Originally, the mill had a straight, one-piece, up-and-down saw, but it later had a circular saw with removable teeth, a great convenience when replacement was necessary. The circular saw was 42 inches in diameter, but it could only cut a 20-inch board. Many logs were larger than 30 inches in diameter. In order to handle these large logs, they were first slabbed, then turned to a flat side. A 20-inch cut was made into the center of the log, which was then rolled a half turn so the saw could go through to meet the first cut. The log was then placed cut down, and one-inch boards were sawed until the half log was squared. The center squared portion could then be cut into the desired sized timbers, some of them quite large.

The sawmill had no dust carrier; it was built over a bank so that sawdust fell away. It was taken off in wheelbarrows by workmen when the

Above: The view of Hans Creek Valley from the Ellison cemetery, about 1916. The Ellison house is at center left, near "ice pond." Mill and mill pond were near the neighbor's house, at right. Photographer unknown.

mill was stopped to sharpen saws or to wait for water. The plentiful sawdust had many uses. The most valued use was for the storage of ice cut from the mill dam in the winter. The ice was used primarily for making ice cream in the summer, though the ice pack would be opened for other uses, as when needed in case of sickness. Also, sawdust was used to cushion eggs in wooden boxes for safe transport to market, for making freeze-proof fruit and vegetable storage places and, when well-rotted, for enriching flower beds.

During the mill's last years, little commercial work was done because it could not compete with the newer steam-powered mills. One exception was the clear white oak sawed by Zack for the pews and pulpit of the Hans Creek Community Church, built in 1912. Though obsolete commercially, the mill was operated by the family until the 1930's.

One great need for lumber was in drainage systems for low-lying crop fields, and much clear white oak was sawed for this purpose. The earliest drainage systems consisted of trenches cut into the sub-soil, with the walls narrowed where they reached the sub-soil so that flat stones could be laid across at this depth, thus preventing the filling and falling in of the lower, narrow trench. When the main trench was filled in, the bottom trench was below the frost line and undisturbed by surface conditions, although crawfish could sometimes cause damage. As more land was cleared for cultivation, lumber was a quicker and easier way to cover the drains. In the 1940's the Soil Conservation Service, when assisting in installing a major tile drainage system, found some of those first drains still working.

The mill itself, both the grist mill and sawmill, finally gave way, even for family use, before the convenience of gasoline engines. The hard times of the 1930's prevented any attempt to keep up the mill; it was dismantled and the materials in it went for other uses, with the exception of some keepsakes saved by family members. Much of the iron was sold during World War II scrap drives.

Words and Pictures from McDowell County

By Doug Yarrow and Students at Big Creek High School

During my two years of teaching photography classes at Big Creek High School in War, McDowell County, we'd made tons of pictures, a number of them providing powerful insights into the lives and faces of the students' families. We'd exhibited these wonderful pictures around McDowell County, in Charleston, and in New York City.

We'd tried to do some projects involving several related pictures — Dede Moore took a series of pictures at the Bristol "500" stock car race, including drivers Cale Yarborough and Dale Earnhart, the cars, the race, and the fans.

But we hadn't done much with pictures and words. So the closer we got to the end of school and the more I read of Eliot Wigginton (the editor of the *Foxfire* books), the more anxious I got.

Finally I said, "People, we're going to do an oral history project before the end of the year. You sign out this tape recorder and interview a relative or someone in your community and find out about some skill they have or about how it was when they went to school, or what it was like getting married — find out what life was like back then."

"But Mr. Yarrow, we've only got three weeks left. There's no way...," said Dede Moore.

"What would I ever ask about?" said Judy Baker Lambert.

"Nope, he just won't talk to me. Why no, I just can't do it," said Doris Brewster.

I don't remember anyone saying, "Gee, that's dumb," but the reaction was certainly on the chilly side of lukewarm.

And then they started coming in with typed-up beautiful transcripts of fascinating interviews with dads, granddads, and grandmoms. And then they worked after school was out for the summer to add more stories and complete pictures to go with the words.

Tressia Pruitt's father was reluctant to be photographed a second time after the first pictures didn't come out. "What's all this about, anyway?" he asked her.

"It's because I love you, Daddy, and I want to put you in that magazine," she replied.

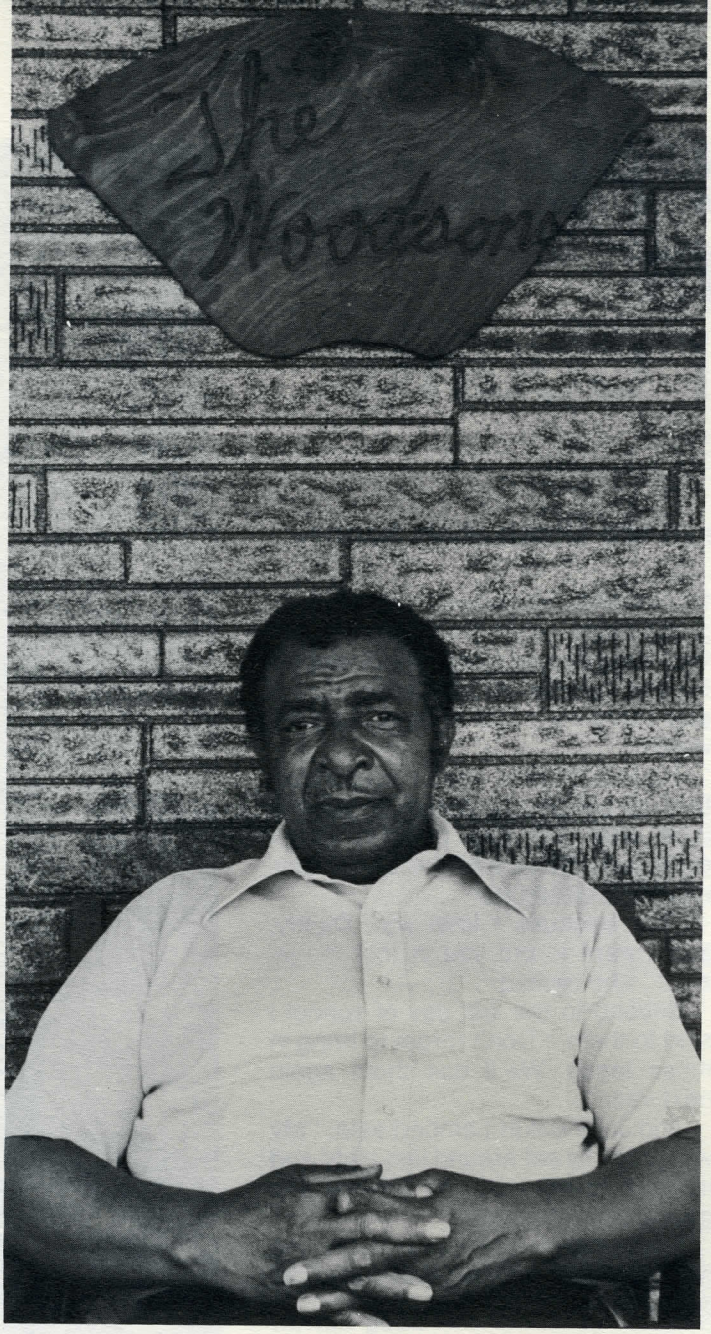
Second to the last day of school I said to them, "Don't forget to bring in those tapes. We'll use them again next year."

And Judy Baker Lambert said, "My whole family sat around last night and listened to my talk with Granny. I'm gonna keep that tape!"

There never was any use arguing with Judy and, anyway, that suited me just fine.

—Doug Yarrow

Above: Thural Ray Pruitt by daughter Tressia Pruitt. "When I first started out mining, I didn't think I would like it," Mr. Pruitt says, "but the longer I stayed the more I liked it." Still he says, "If I knew then what I know now, I would never have stuck my head in a mine."
Below left: Photograph by Tressia Pruitt.
Below right: Tressia Pruitt plans to attend Concord College this fall. Photograph by Doug Yarrow.



Left: Solomon Woodson by granddaughter Cheryl Padgett.
Above: Cheryl Padgett plans to study computer programming in college. Photograph by Doug Yarrow.

Cheryl Padgett interviews her grandfather, Solomon Woodson:

My grandfather is Solomon Woodson. He's 65 and lives in Yukon. He's kind of tall, brown skin. He has good hair and has a little bald spot on the top of his head.

He's retired. He worked in the mines practically all his life. I believe that was the only job he ever held. It was hard work, and of course they didn't get paid as much money as coal miners get now, and they didn't have all this modern equipment. He told me that he had to crawl on his stomach and shovel coal out.

I guess every coal miner has black lung. My grandfather has black lung, but otherwise he's in good health. He said working in the mines was all right, but kind of dangerous. He liked it.

"My name is Solomon Woodson, born in the state of Alabama. I lived there for 17 years. I had nine sisters and five brothers. But that wasn't a big family compared to my uncle who had 22 kids. He had eight by his first wife, and she died, so he married again and had 14 by his other wife. I lived in Alabama 17 years. The nearest school was just, you know, what you call grammar schools. There did come a high school after I left, but it was 15 miles away.

"Most of the people farmed and worked in the mills, worked in sawmills, or oil mills, cottonseed mills, that's what I really should say. The people raised cotton, corn, beans, and watermelon.

"When I lived in Alabama it was easy for me, 'cause my daddy owned his own farm. We wasn't sharecroppers. Sharecroppers are people sharing what they make with other people, you know, like [with] Jimmy Carter and those kind of people. But only a few people had their own farm, the rest of them had to sharecrop.

"Wages were really low in Alabama. My brother Dave came back from West Virginia and told me about working in the coal mines. It was the Million Dollar Coal Field and I came to get some. I finally came to Yukon and lived here since 1948; it was May 30th, 1948. When my wife Jean and I first moved to Yukon we were renting this house. As the years rolled on, we bought the house we are living in now.

"We are the parents of nine children, six boys and three girls. Some of them attended Excelsior High School, we had some to attend Caretta grade school, and some to attend Big Creek High School. We had a happy marriage then and we're still having one now.

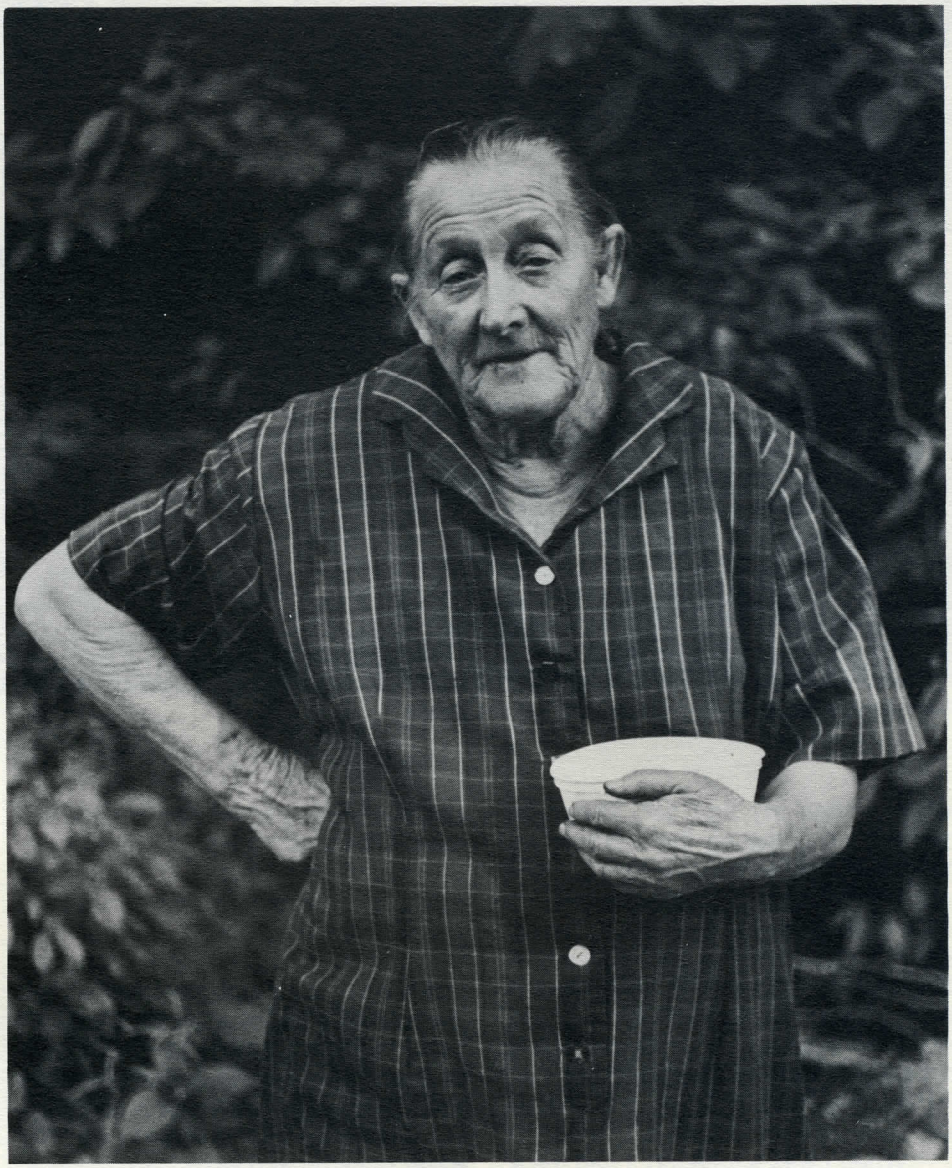
"There were good days and bad days in the mines. Some of the bad days were when the rocks caved in and we had to wait until they cleared the rocks up to get out. And when the mines were wet — just like it rains outside, it would rain through some parts of the mine. I worked an eight hour shift, but sometimes we would work 12.

"The good days was when I went to work and nothing bad happened."

Judy Baker Lambert interviews her grandmother, Mary Cenith Baker:

My granny lives in West Virginia, but her post office is Horsepen, Virginia. There's a creek down below the house, and you go across the creek and that's Virginia. Her name is Mary Cenith Baker. She lives in a wood house, kind of under a hill, just off the main road. In summertime she's got all sorts of flowers in the yard. They keep the grass mowed nice and it's pretty. They've got a big garden and a small one, and then on down the road sometimes they plant more gardens.

She's kind to everybody. When she was younger, she raised everybody that came through the country. They just moved in and stayed, with her and my grandpa.



Mary Cenith Baker by granddaughter Judy Baker Lambert.

"I met your grandpa when I was 10 years old, living in Grayson County, Virginia. I was 17 when I got married, would have been 18 in three months. It was groves of them at the wedding — my sisters, my brother, and a lot of friends.

"It was certainly a lot different than it is now. There wasn't no such thing as a honeymoon then. It was, well, just plain old country people lived there, where we come from at that time."

What all did you and grandpa have in your house when you first started housekeeping?

"Well, we had a cookstove and a table and a shelf to set our dishes and things in and a bed and two chairs and that's just about what we had when we started out.

"I had one cookpot and I'd put my food in that little cookpot to cook. I went off and forgot it and burnt the whole pot — cooked everything in it up and it was all gone. That was all the pot I had, too. I don't remember getting nary other one. I might have cooked out of skillets. I guess I did.

"We've been married 57 years. Jim is 76 and I'm 75. I've raised nine children to be plumb grown. We lived in Grayson County, Virginia, for several years, and then we lived over at Goodlow, West Virginia, for a while, and we've lived at Bishop, Virginia, and Brewsterdale and now we're at Horsepen, just on the West Virginia side. We've been here 20 years.

"Carol and Larry wasn't near grown when we came here, nor Don, but Earl, your dad, was about grown or pert near. We raised three after we come here. Partly Earl, he wasn't plumb grown. I guess he thought he was.

"I never did work at nothing but just the housework and the garden and the canning and raising young'ns. That was a full-time job, with all the family I raised. I had me a wash place at the creek and every Thursday was my wash day. I'd rub them on a board. I'd wash the white ones out and then I'd put them over into another big old kettle and put my soap and stuff in there and boil my clothes. Now whether it did any good, I don't know about that, but we did it. Then we'd take them out and rub them again and rinse them through clean water and hang them up in the sun to dry. Every Thursday I did that.

"We got an early evening meal about four o'clock and then we'd visit a little or somebody would visit us and we'd talk till time to go to bed. That was our entertainment. But we enjoyed that, or I did, I guess they did.

"We picked berries and we canned a lot, them days. I have canned as high as 600 cans in the fall of the year and had them to eat during the winter. We didn't go to the store and get food like we do now. You know there wasn't nowhere to go get it.

"I'd say I was about 10 years old

Mary Baker's house. Photograph by Judy Baker Lambert.

when I seen my first car. They was some men come up there where we lived and they come up in one of them old timey cars, a-juggling along up that little road and you could barely get a wagon over it. I don't know how they got over it. The first time I rode in a car, I was 16 years old and a friend bought a car and he just let me ride a little so I could say I had rode in a car. I tried to drive a little bit, but I never did learn enough to drive.

"When I was a little girl, I had me a playhouse and made dolls out of rags. A lot of times, I filled them up with dirt and beat that dirt — beat, beat, beat — so I could get the clothes on them, me and my cousin. I have laughed about that a many a time — beating our dirt babies.

"We walked about a mile to school. I have walked when the snow has been to my knees. I loved to go out in the snow. We played in the snow, too, but we never had heard tell of a school bus at that time, so that's the only way we had of getting there is walking.

"I went to about the eighth grade. That was as far as we went. I was five years old when I started and about 13 when I quit. We just had a one-room schoolhouse and it was a big old room. The heat they had was a big old heating stove and they took turns getting the heating wood. Sometimes the men in the country would come in and get wood, but mostly the big old schoolboys would get out and they'd cut that wood up and build us a fire.

"They had big old long benches and when it was real cold, they'd turn them around by the stove and we'd all gather right around the stove. We had to keep from freezing. And we took, well, they call it lunches nowadays, but we'd take our dinner in big old water buckets and we'd take all kinds of apples, cooked apples, and sometimes it would be molasses and bread and eggs and stuff in that big old bucket, you know. And anybody got hungry went back to them buckets and eat just anytime they wanted to. It was for just anybody who wanted it.

Judy with her grandmother. Photograph by Doug Yarrow.

"Every Friday evening we had a spelling match. They lined up two sides, you know, and two people would choose who they wanted on each side, you know. And they generally gave head marks to the one that beat. There was one or two good spellers and whoever chose them generally won.

"And then sometimes, when Friday evening come, we said poetry. We called it speeches then, but it was poetry. We'd learn something by heart and get up and say it. That was what we done every Friday evening during school days.

"I only got one whopping, but I have had to stay in and stand up and all kinds of other things. I got my whopping for missing a word in spelling. I was fairly small — I couldn't or thought I couldn't learn it. Anyway, I didn't and she gave me three licks. I guess I deserved it.

"We left Grayson County because they was better work in West Virginia. They wasn't much work at all back then in them days and we come here so we could live better.

"I wouldn't like to go back there and live. I've lived in West Virginia 50-some years and this is my home. I plan to finish my life out right here and I want to be buried right here in these West Virginia mountains."

Doris Brewster interviews her father, Patton Brewster:

My father retired from the coal mines a long time ago. I can't remember him working in the mines, and I'm 18. We live on Whittaker Ridge near Vallscreek, in McDowell County, not far from the Virginia line.

He likes to hunt and garden and work around the house. He's good at raising garden food — he's good at all of that. He keeps bees. He doesn't put any veils on, or special clothing. He just goes up and gets a swarm and hives them, with bees all over him.

He taught me how to garden.

Below: Doris Brewster plans to live in North Carolina after graduation, and work there. Photograph by Doug Yarrow. *Right:* Patton Brewster by daughter Doris Brewster.

"I remember the first school I went to. They built a schoolhouse out of logs. It was a one-room school. They hadn't none of the children gone to school before, so they all started at the same time. I was seven years old. They was from seven years to 15, some of them were grown and some were little, but we had a one-room school and all the grades were in one school.

"Well, I had to quit when I was 15 to work to help out with the home, 'cause it wasn't much money to be made and times were hard then, so a lot of them quit at that age. Some quit younger than I did to go to work, but I guess I was the youngest to go into the mines at that time. I was 15 in April and I went the first of June in the coal mines. A lot of them hard times I don't want to remember.

"I went to work in the mines in '32. I started out loading coal at 18¢ a ton and then finally got on working by shifts. I got $2.36 a shift. We worked about eight to ten hours a day. There wasn't no union. There wasn't anything other than just the company. They were out to make what they could."

Do you think the mines have changed?

"Yes, the mines are about as safe as school, now."

Would you like to go back to the old days?

"Well, there's some things would be a lot better than now, except the work situation. We didn't get very much money, but back then, why, you could buy a loaf of bread for a nickel. You could buy 25 pounds of flour for $1.49 and buy a pound of bacon for three or four cents. 'Course, you didn't make much money, but you didn't have to pay out so much to live. Most people in that community, they raised mostly what they lived on. We didn't have no electric bills to pay. We didn't have no water bills. We had kerosene lights and there wasn't no radio or television or anything like that. They just worked through the week, worked six days a week, go to church on Sunday. We'd go to school and when we got home from school, just have to go to work in the field, hoeing corn, potatoes."

At what age did you start preaching?

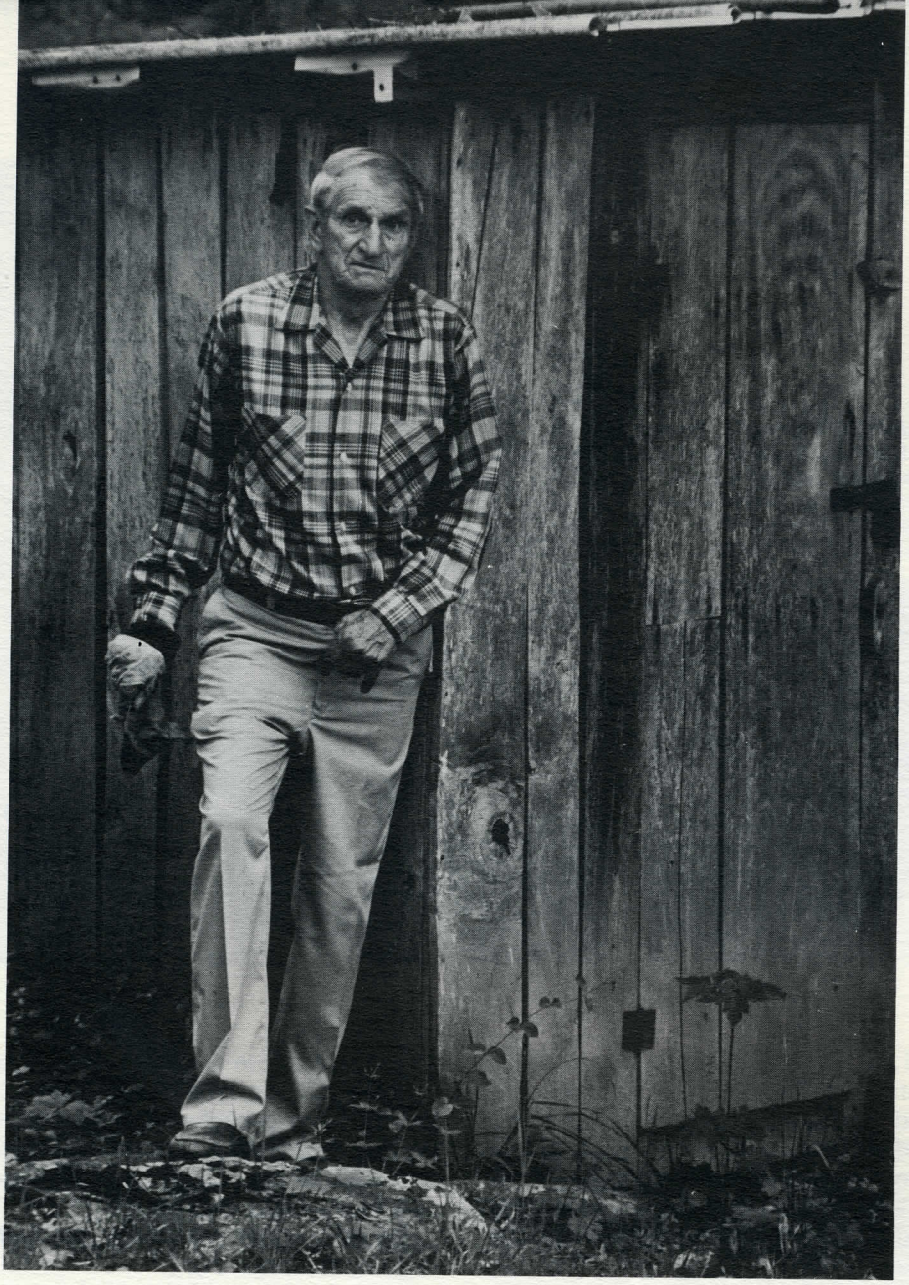
"Oh, about 25 years ago. I've never owned a church. I've owned some buildings and we had church in a couple of them. Back when I was growing up there wasn't but the one church up there. It was an old-time Baptist Church. We'd go to church on Sunday morning and it would last all day. Some of them preachers would preach about three hours. I remember one preacher, he said when he got up to preach, he said, 'Well, I ain't goin' to hold you but about an hour and 65 minutes.' So he would just about preach the two hours and five minutes. By the time about three or four of them preached it took about the day — and we just had to sit there and listen all day, made no difference how many there was preach."

Could you tell me about the first radio in Mountain Fork?

"Yes, I remember the first radio we had in Mountain Fork. I bought a battery set radio. There wasn't nobody else around that had one and on Saturday night there was a lot of people would gather in to listen, maybe 25 or 30. There wasn't nobody else around had radios and they was something new to most of the people and so they gathered round to listen to the Grand Ole Opry every Saturday night."

Are there any houses in Mountain Fork now?

"No, there ain't no houses in Mountain Fork now. The company had them to move out, so they ain't no houses in Mountain Fork now. I believe the last family that lived in Mountain Fork was Uncle Sam Hicks. He was the last to move out from up there. He was born and raised up there, and he was the last one to live up there."



Left: Jack Holcomb by granddaughter Dede Moore. "Pappaw's always serious," Dede says. "He'll smile every now and then, but when there's nothing exceptional going on he looks like he does in all his pictures. He doesn't laugh when he tells his funny stories either, unless somebody makes a remark to him about the story, then he'll smile. His everyday expression is serious."
Below: Jack Holcomb was also serious at age 19. Photographer unknown.
Bottom: Jack Holcomb with his dog, Pepper. Photograph by Dede Moore.

Photographer Dede Moore plans to attend Concord College this fall. Photograph by Doug Yarrow.

goldenseal index

Volume 6, 1980

Articles which appeared in Volume 6 are listed in this index. The index for the first three volumes appeared in the April-September 1978 GOLDENSEAL, and the index for Volumes 4 and 5 in the January-March 1980 issue. In the subject index section each article is listed under its major subject areas. When more than one article appears under a heading, the order is alphabetical by first word of title. Each entry is followed by the month and year, volume and number, and the page number. Page numbers shown throughout are the first pages of the articles. The short notices which appear in the regular department called "Current: Programs-Festivals-Publications" have not been indexed.

subject

author

illustration

location

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 lived for several years in Elkins, where she worked first for the *Intermountain* and later as a free-lance photographer and writer. Ruth now lives in New York City. Her most recent GOLDENSEAL contribution was the article on mountain midwifery which appeared in the October-December 1979 issue.

WILLIAM C. BLIZZARD was born at Eskdale, on Cabin Creek in Kanawha County, in 1916. The descendant of miners and union activists, Mr. Blizzard graduated from West Virginia University, and also studied at Columbia University, the U.S. Air Corps school of photography, and other institutions. He has contributed to many national magazines, as well as to earleir issues of GOLDENSEAL.

BOB and CAROLE DAMRON, native West Virginians, graduated from West Virginia State and Morris Harvey College, respectively. They wrote and produced "Brimstone and Lace" in 1976 for a program funded by the Committee for Humanities and Public Policy. Currently, they are running a photo-documentation business from their home on Charleston's west side and remain active in the West Virginia Labor History Association.

HELEN STEELE ELLISON was born at Pickaway, Monroe County, and grew up in Alderson. She is a graduate of Marshall University and earned an M.S. in Social Work from Columbia University. She is now retired from the faculty of the School of Social Work at West Virginia University. She is married to John Zachariah Ellison (the second), and became interested in writing the family experience while sorting through letters and records which were opened following the death of her father-in-law.

LOIS McLEAN is a Hoosier born in Indianapolis. A graduate of Purdue University, she married a West Virginian, William D. McLean, in Germany and came to his home state for the first time in 1959. Beckley has been Mrs. McLean's home since 1962 and Mother Jones and labor history her avocation since 1963. She is presently working on a definitive biography of Mother Jones. Mrs. McLean is also current president of the West Virginia Labor History Association, and has contributed a number of articles to GOLDENSEAL dealing with some aspect of labor history.

PAUL NYDEN has written widely on Appalachia, particularly on coal mines and miners, with articles appearing in the *Nation, Working Papers for a New Society, Mountain Life and Work, Mountain Eagle,* and other journals. Paul, who now lives in Beckley, has taught at Bethany College, the University of Pittsburgh, Antioch College/Appalachia, and the University of Cincinnati. He is currently working on a New River oral history pilot project for the National Park Service. His last contribution to GOLDENSEAL, on black baseball star Clint Thomas, appeared in October-December 1979.

GEORGE PARKINSON was born in Columbus, Georgia, but his family hails from Ohio. He is a graduate of Ohio State University and the University of Wisconsin where he received his Ph.D. in history. Dr. Parkinson is curator of the West Virginia Collection at West Virginia University Library, which includes sound recordings, books, documents, and manuscripts relating to West Virginia and Appalachia.

BRYSON R. POSEY is the son as well as the collaborator of Lawton W. Posey. Bryson is a student at Lincoln Junior High School in Charleston.

LAWTON W. POSEY was born in Charleston, South Carolina. He graduated from Davidson College and Union Theological Seminary in Virginia. He has served churches in West Virginia and Virginia for the past 20 years, including ones in Welch, McDowell County, and Norfolk, Virginia. Mr. Posey is currently pastor of Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church in Charleston.

KENNETH DABNEY SWOPE, born in Alderson, Greenbrier County, is a graduate of Berea College Academy and Berea College. He was a lieutenant in the Navy during World War II with the Pacific Amphibious Forces, and is now retired from the Internal Revenue Service. Mr. Swope is a member of the Board of Directors of the West Virginia Historical Society, and was for ten years a member of the board of directors of the Pearl S. Buck Birthplace Foundation. Former editor of the Greenbrier Historical Society *Journal,* he is also the author of *History of Alderson* and *The Battle of Point Pleasant of Lord Dunmore's War,* and various other Greenbrier Valley historical materials.

DENNIS TENNANT is a seventh generation Monongalia Countian. He served as a photo intern at the *Charleston Daily Mail* before his *cum laude* graduation in journalism from West Virginia University. He was a 1977 finalist in the Hearst national photojournalism competition, and has also placed in several photography clip contests, sponsored by the West Virginia News Photographers' Association. He is currently employed as staff photographer for the Morgantown *Dominion-Post.* Dennis contributed the photos for the article on Blennerhassett Island, written by his wife, which appeared in the April-June 1980 GOLDENSEAL.

DOUG YARROW has lived in West Virginia since 1969, and has taught photography at Big Creek High School in McDowell County since 1978. His work has appeared in many publications, including a *Newsweek* cover in 1978. His last work for GOLDENSEAL appeared in the July-September 1979 issue, to which he contributed the cover and other photographs of fiddler Woody Simmons.

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