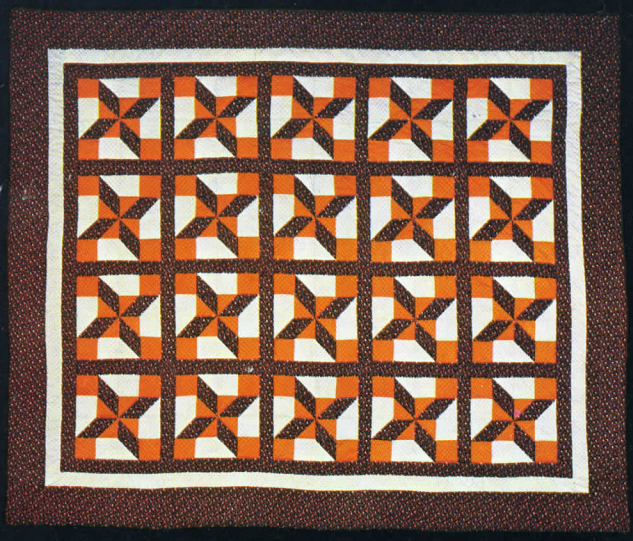
Goldenseal

West Virginia Traditional Life

Volume 7, No. 1 January-March 1981



Quilt Competition Announced

"Quilts '81" is the title for a summer-long exhibition and competition that will open in the Great Hall of the Cultural Center in Charleston during Vandalia Gathering, the West Virginia traditional life festival held every year over Memorial Day weekend.

Quiltmakers from all counties of the state are eligible for the ribbons to be awarded in the following categories: traditional applique, traditional pieced, best decorative quilting, and contemporary. The quilt which is selected "Best of Show" will be purchased and become part of the West Virginia Permanent Collection. Selections will be made by an out-of-state quilting juror. Quilts will be received during the month of April and will be returned to their owners the following October. Only quilts which are for sale will be eligible for the "Best of Show" purchase award; only quilts made in West Virginia and currently owned by West Virginia residents are eligible for entry.

Entry forms are available from the Department of Culture and History, Capitol Complex, Charleston 25305. Only quilts with the official entry form sewn to them may be submitted. Those interested may write for an entry form after February 1, 1981. For further information, contact Sharon Mullins or Sherri Hairston at the Department of Culture and History, phone (304) 348-0220.

Quilts shown on this page and on inside back cover are from past exhibitions. This page, top left: "Henry Clay" pattern by Marie Thompson of Alkol; top right: quilts on display in Great Hall; lower right: "Basket of Lillies," by Hettie Delb of Rocky. Inside back cover, top left: detail from the Delb "Basket of Lillies;" top right: "Bed of Peonies," by Essie Lawson of Hamlin; bottom: detail from "Grandmother's Flower Garden," by Eliza Casto (donated to the West Virginia Permanent Collection by son Coy Casto).

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Goldenseal

A Quarterly Forum for Documenting West Virginia's Traditional Life

Volume 7, Number 1 ✱ January-March 1981

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Cover: Enlarged detail from the 1929 panoramic photograph of Clifftop miners printed on page 13. Mark Crabtree's photoessay on coalfield photographer Red Ribble begins on page 9.

The "Boys of '17" paused for a portrait at the Franklin Courthouse on their way to war. Herman Trumbo is standing in the back row, second from right. Photographer unknown.

"The Boys of '17"

WWI Veterans Talk It Over Again in Pendleton County

By William D. Wintz

Back in 1977 my wife Ruth and I stopped by Oak Flat in Pendleton County to check on her Uncle Herman Trumbo who lives there by himself. Although past 80, he still took care of all the chores around the place and was then looking forward to turkey season.

That evening after supper, while we were sitting around the fire, we somehow got to swapping war stories. I soon discovered, however, that Herman's World War I tales could top any of my World War II specials. It was during this conversation that he casually mentioned that he was planning to attend the reunion of his old outfit in a few weeks.

My wife and I thought that was great; we wanted to hear all about it. Uncle Herman said it was no big thing that a bunch of the boys had been getting together every year since about 1958. Besides, it was usually held right down the road at Sugar Grove or Thorn Creek.

It turned out that most of his original outfit was recruited at Franklin at the same time in 1917. Most of them went on to become members of Battery A, 313th Field Artillery, of the famous 80th Blue Ridge Division.

The rank-and-file of the 313th Regiment were selected men of the northeastern counties of West Virginia. Their commanding officer later wrote that: "They were a law-abiding, self-respecting, and wholly tractable body of men. Their zeal to learn and to serve was always an inspiration to their officers."

After posing for a group picture on the courthouse steps in Franklin, the "Boys of '17" were loaded into cars and trucks belonging to friends and neighbors. They were then driven to Petersburg, in Grant County, where they were sworn in the next day.

From there they went to Camp Lee, Virginia, for basic training. Arriving in France in September 1918, they were outfitted with French 75mm guns and sent into the line south of Verdun. They took part in the Muse-Argone offensive and remained on the front un-

The veterans talk informally in the parking lot: (left to right) Herman Trumbo, Russel Peck, George Kline, Lewis Kuh, Ernest Slusher, and Perlie Puffenbarger. Kline, a gunner from Preston County, said cannoneers have hairy ears, and that's why the men sometimes had to yell at each other. Photo by William D. Wintz.

til the war ended on November 11, 1918.

After the war their regimental commander noted that: "Whatever had to be done was well done by these mountaineers and miners, and the officers of this regiment believe that no better soldiers can be found anywhere than in the mountains of West Virginia." Such was the war record of old Battery A.

Uncle Herman suggested that since their ranks were thinning as the years passed, we might show up and help with the festivities at the 1977 reunion. We took him up on the invitation and have been going back every year since. At the 1976 get-together, 19 old soldiers had answered the roll call. Since then attendance has gradually dwindled off until only 12 showed up this year. Although their ages varied from 84 to 88, their spirit and sense of humor were as sharp in 1980 as when they left Franklin 63 years ago.

Like Uncle Herman, many of the veterans were accompanied by younger relatives. Lewis L. Kuh, of New Creek, was driven down from Mineral County by his son and daughter-in-law. Kuh, now 88, is past commander of the Keyser American Legion Post, and followed his trade as carpenter until a few years ago. Kate Raynes, from Onego in Pendleton County, continues to attend the reunions in the place of her late father, veteran Ralph Raynes.

As much as they enjoyed talking among themselves, the men settled down respectfully to hear their former chaplain deliver the reunion's feature speech. The Reverend Chalmers Goshorn is now a retired Presbyterian minister, living in Lonaconing, Maryland. He called for support of the American hostages in Iran, through prayers and national unity. After his address, taps was sounded from outside the building by a member of the Franklin High School Band.

The veterans received help in their 1980 reunion. Joyce Dyer, president of the VFW District 7 ladies auxiliary, took care of registration and decorations, as she has in past years. Salina Simpson acted as master — or mistress — of ceremonies. She is the widow of veteran Walter Simpson, one of the organizers of the first reunion. Mrs. Simpson was a member of the reunion committee, as was Mrs. Sally Propst, widow of Arthur Propst of Sugar Grove. Captain J.H. Pappard, the former battery commander now living in Kansas City, was unable to attend in 1980, but sent a $50 donation.

The invitation to the 1980 reunion said, "Let's Talk It Over Again," and the old soldiers plan to get together to do that each year for as long as they're able. Charlie Frye, of Rio in Hampshire County, said they don't call him Spry Charlie Frye as much as they used to. Nonetheless, he gets around, and he enjoyed himself at the reunion. I expect he'll be back in Pendleton County this summer, talking it over again with the remaining "Boys of '17."

Above: George Kline and Chaplain Charles Goshorn. Photo by William D. Wintz.
Left: Lodge portrait of some of the volunteers, just before entering the army. Photographer unknown, 1917.

Above: Thirty-one veterans gathered for the 1968 reunion at Thorn Spring Park in Franklin. Photographer unknown.
Below left: Charlie E. Frye and Ernest Slusher talk of old times in the banquet hall. Photo by William D. Wintz.
Below right: Herman Trumbo and Walter G. Simpson at Camp Lee, 1917. Photographer unknown.

Left: A potluck banquet is a principle attraction at the reunion each year. Photo by William D. Wintz.
Below: The "Boys of '17," 63 years later: (left to right, back row) Cyrus Lipscomb, Clem Bennett, Goshorn, Slusher, Peck, Trumbo; (front row) John Ashenfelter, Kuh, Puffenbarger, J.L. Mitchell, Frye, and Kline. Photo by William D. Wintz.

current programs·festivals·publications

Covered Bridges of West Virginia
There are still a limited number of copies of *Covered Bridges of West Virginia, Past and Present* available, according to author Myrtle Auvil. The book, now in its third edition, is the most complete history and guidebook to our state's rapidly disappearing covered bridges that has yet been written.

Miss Auvil, who is a retired schoolteacher and still an active woodworker in her early 80's, says that the third edition of *Covered Bridges* builds upon the two earlier volumes, published in 1972 and 1973. She has added 66 new pictures to this edition, an index, and several pages of text.

The hardcover book, printed by McClain Printers of Parsons, may be ordered directly from Myrtle Auvil, Box 5, Grafton 26354. This price is $9.75, plus 50¢ postage and handling.

Peaceful Patriot
Mountain State Press has announced the publication of Bonni McKeown's *Peaceful Patriot: The Story of Tom Bennett.*

Tom Bennett, of Morgantown, went to Vietnam as a noncombatant Army medic. Bennett chose the noncombatant role as the one way to reconcile his patriotic feelings and his religious belief that the war was wrong. He served with distinction, and was the second conscientious objector in American history to be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for extreme heroism.

Mountain State Press, besides reprinting several other works by West Virginians, earlier this year published its first original book, *As I Remember It,* by Stanley Eskew. The Press is a nonprofit pubisher supported by writers, readers, and occasional grants. The softbound *Peaceful Patriot* may be purchased for $5.00 (plus 50¢ postage) from: Mountain State Press, c/o University of Charleston, 2300 MacCorkle Avenue, SE, Charleston 25304.

Mother Jones T-Shirts
Orders are still being taken for souvenir T-shirts from the November Mother Jones Festival in Charleston. The shirts feature artwork from the Festival logo, showing Mother Jones in full regalia, marching triumphantly from a West Virginia mine portal.

The shirts are being offered by the West Virginia Labor History Association, with proceeds to help cover expenses associated with the Festival and the placement of an MJ memorial plaque on the State Capitol grounds. Shirts may be ordered in all adult sizes and in white, blue, yellow, and beige, by sending $6.50 each to: Lawrence, 1627 McClung Street, Charleston 25311.

Oral History Meeting
Marshall University's Oral History of Appalachia Program will be the host for the spring meeting of the Oral History of the Mid-Atlantic Region, scheduled for April 24-26 at Canaan Valley State Park in Tucker County. The meeting will include a variety of scholarly papers, and offer a chance for professional and amateur oral historians to meet and compare notes.

Oral historians from the region are invited to submit program proposals for the meeting, according to Dr. Robert F. Maddox, director of the Marshall Oral History project. Those interested should send one-page summaries of their proposals and personal background information to Dr. Maddox, History Department, Marshall University, Huntington 25701.

The meeting will also allow participants to better acquaint themselves with the Marshall Oral History of Appalachia Program, which seeks to record oral recollections from throughout West Virginia and Appalachia. "At Marshall, our emphasis is on Appalachia and the central archive is the James E. Morrow Library," Maddox notes. "We are trying to interview a wide variety of people from the region, including farmers, physicians, miners, teachers, and other men and women whose recollections of the past may be valuable to future historians."

WVU Pictorial History
West Virginia University recently published *West Virginia University: A Pictorial History, 1867-1979,* a collection of photographs from the University's first 112 years. The book was edited by Harry Ernst, the WVU Director of Public Affairs.

The *Pictorial History* features hundreds of historic photographs, principally from a succession of University and Morgantown photographers. L. Victor Haines, currently WVU Chief Photographer, is represented in modern black-and-white and color photographs.

The printing of old and new photographs is of good quality throughout. Photographs are drawn primarily from the University's own extensive archives, and the book includes a plea for friends and alumni to loan or donate other WVU-related pictures for further photodocumentation of the institution's history.

The softbound book of 106 pages may be purchased for $9.50, postpaid, from: WVU Bookstore, West Virginia University, Morgantown 26506.

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.

Washington, DC
October 14, 1980
Editor:
I am a native West Virginian who is currently working at the Museum of African Art in Washington, DC, as a museum educator. I was delighted when Bob Teske of National Endowment for the Arts introduced me to your magazine recently. I am overjoyed with the quality of GOLDENSEAL, the fact that the subscription is free, and at this great opportunity to keep in touch with West Virginia.

On a different note, I would like to inform you of a project I am undertaking to do my part for the preservation of West Virginia's ethnic traditions. I have applied for a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts under the Folk Arts master artist/apprenticeship program. My proposal involves spending six months with my great-grandmother, Anna Peluso, learning the art of Italian drawnwork and cutwork, traditional types of needlework. Drawnwork and cutwork are two types of white on white embroidery done on linen. They are the precursors to lace and originated in Italy in the 1500's.

Anna Peluso, an old woman now at 90, is perhaps one of the last surviving women in the United States who is *currently* practicing this type of needlework. The artist learned cutwork as a child in Italy. She began teaching others the art at age 17 and continued to teach it when she immigrated to West Virginia in 1915. Due to other priorities, however, she was forced to discontinue her work. In 1975, after 60 years in West Virginia, she visited her hometown of San Giovanna del Fiore in the province of Calabria, Italy. There she met a former pupil who still practiced the art. Inspired by this reunion, she began doing cutwork again after a lapse of nearly 50 years. None of the surviving women she taught when she first immigrated to West Virginia are *currently* doing cutwork.

Italian immigrant culture is an integral part of West Virginia heritage. In Italy, cutwork was used as decorative embellishment in the sacred realm (religious vestments and altar linens) as well as in the secular (table and bed linens, clothing for women and children). When Italians came to the United States, and more specifically West Virginia, cutwork continued to decorate religious vestments and altar linens for the Church; curtains and table linens in the home. Because traditional costumes were not worn in the United States, it was no longer used to embellish clothing.

Overall, however, the use of cutwork began to decline for two reasons: lifestyle in the United States and the desire on the part of Italians to assimilate and lose their Italian cultural heritage. Despite this sentiment, cultural traditions persisted. Unfortunately, the art of cutwork is not one of the more well-preserved ones. Italian-Americans in West Virginia today have little awareness of cutwork, an art form that is so much a part of their ancestry. Anna Peluso and a few other women are the only ones who know much about the art.
Sincerely,
Joan Saverno
Sounds good — I hope we may count on you putting Grandmother Peluso in the pages of GOLDENSEAL soon. —ed.

Oceanside, California
August 25, 1980
Editor:
I am very interested in continuing to receive GOLDENSEAL. I give my copies immediately to our North San Diego Genealogical Library. You would be happy to see the copies of GOLDENSEAL I have received since the first issue — all bound in beautiful hard covers to last for years, on our shelves among our 3,000 genealogical books and periodicals donated by members and purchased by our dues. I have also donated *West Virginia History* for several years, which has also been hard-bound.

My paternal grandfather, William Perry Sharp, born in England, was the painter of steamboats on the Ohio River with a paint shop below his house at 11th & Water Streets, Wheeling. My paternal great-grandfather, James M. Cunningham, was in charge of servicing all the wagons and equipment used in building the State Penitentiary at Moundsville. Born in Scotland, he had learned to read and write, and coming to America in the early 1800's he built a very prosperous blacksmith shop on the National Road at Fulton, now part of Wheeling.

So you see, West Virginia is important to me, although time and marriage have brought me across the country.
Sincerely,
Mrs. Anna E. Crill

Buckhannon, WV
September 1, 1980
Editor:
A superb publication! For the life of me, I can't figure out why it took so long to discover GOLDENSEAL. Then it was by sheer accident that a neighbor, Dr. Arthur Holms of Wesleyan College, asked if I knew some folks from Randolph County featured in an article in GOLDENSEAL and showed me the current issue. Now I am reading back issues and am amazed at the number of persons, places, and things with which I am familiar; and I'm also learning much new information.

Being a native mountaineer from Randolph County and fiercely proud of it, I can appreciate GOLDENSEAL and the role it plays in documenting and preserving West Virginia's traditional life and rich heritage.

I have been a subscriber from the very beginning of the *West Virginia Hillbilly* and *Wonderful West Virginia*. Please add my name to the list of subscribers for GOLDENSEAL.

Congratulations to all who are responsible for GOLDENSEAL.
Sincerely,
Lucille S. Zinn

Continued on page 65

Red Ribble

Coalfield Photographer

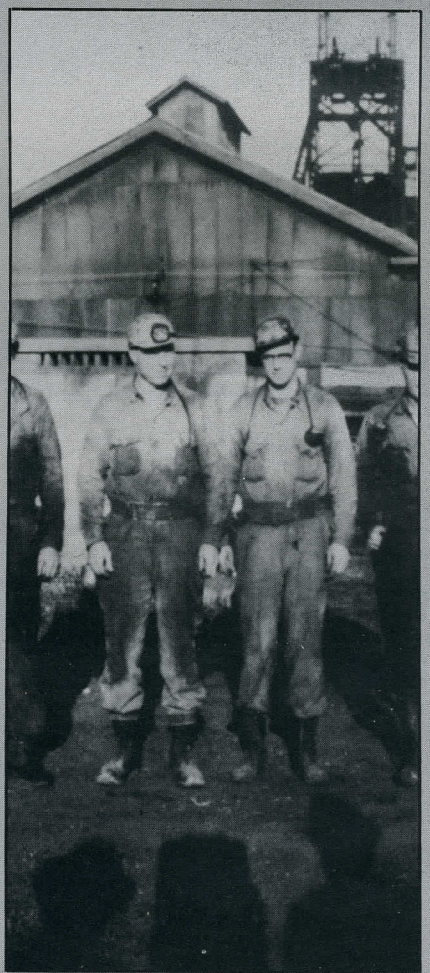
By Mark Crabtree

A small shed near Mount Hope holds an exceptional record of the southern West Virginia coalfields. In it are the stored negatives representing the life's work of Rufus E. "Red" Ribble, a remarkable photographer. Ribble was born May 14, 1878, near Blacksburg, Virginia, but by 1920 had moved to the Mount Hope area to begin his career as coalfield photographer.

After his death in 1967, Ribble's negatives were bought by another Fayette County photographer. That photographer has allowed me to make the prints produced here.

The uniqueness of Ribble's work is in the unusual format he chose to use, and the use he put it to. Most of his photographs are long (8" by 48") panoramic views, made with a novel rotating camera. This instrument, known as a Cirkut camera, became available shortly after the turn of the century. Because of its ability to portray large numbers of people with excellent clarity, the Cirkut camera was most commonly used for group photographs.

Indeed, the bulk of Ribble's work was group shots, and such bread-and-butter photography was his primary source of income. His subjects, however, are of more historic interest than the convention or school groups usually posed in front of such cameras. Ribble photographed the work forces of many mines throughout Fayette, Raleigh, and Wyoming counties over a period of nearly 40 years. The best of these photographs serve as powerful portraits of the men who worked southern West Virginia's mines.

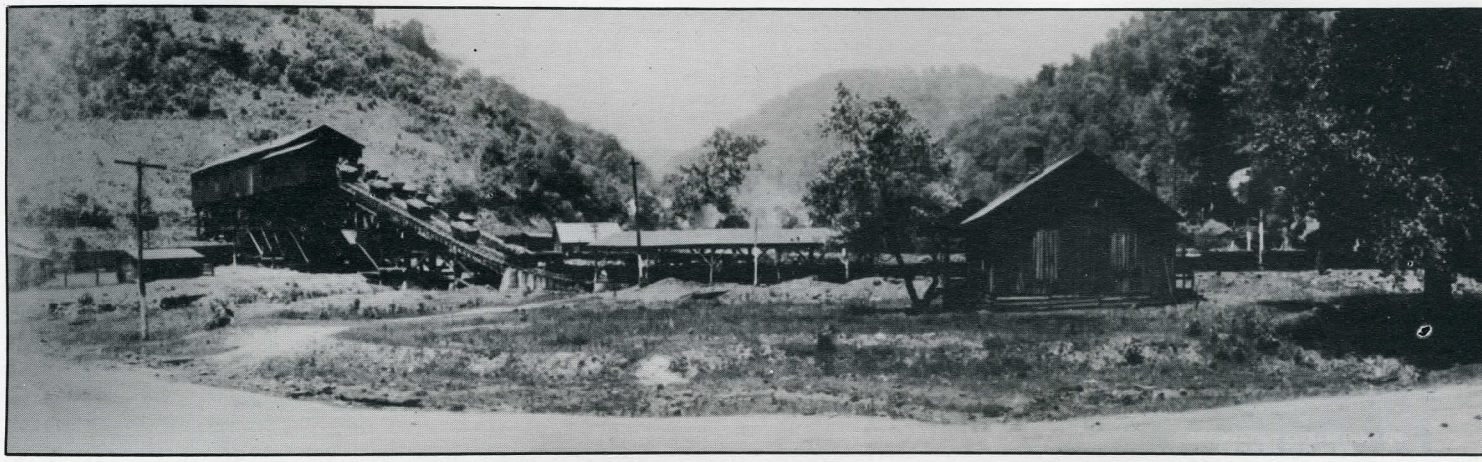


Detail from top photograph on pages 10-11. Ironically, there are no known photographs of Red Ribble, but he is believed to have cast the taller man's shadow here.

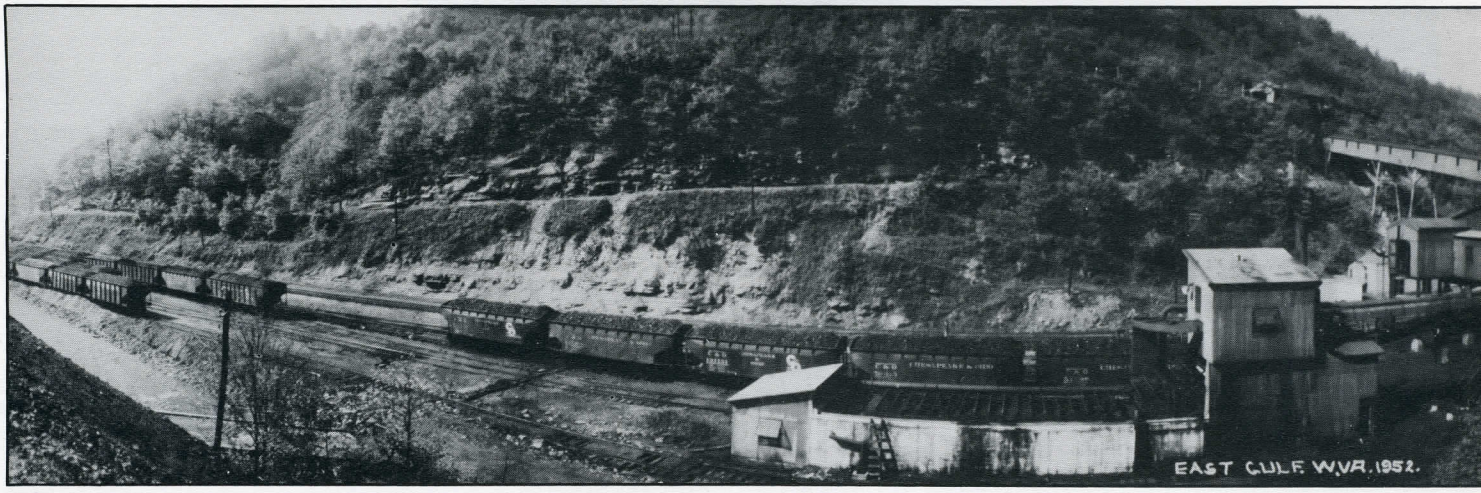
But Red Ribble left us another group of photographs, even more captivating than his shots of miners. These are panoramic scenes of the coal towns, mines, and landscapes of southern West Virginia. When he went to a mine to photograph the work force, he often made a view of the town, the tipple, and in a few instances even an interior of the company store. In some cases Ribble photographed the same place at several different times, effectively documenting the changes that occurred over the years.

Many of the places Ribble photographed have changed surprisingly little, while others are just memories now. The Raleigh County town of Lillybrook is one example. Ribble's photograph (not printed here, since no good negative is available) shows Lillybrook to have been a busy mining community in the 1920's. Now

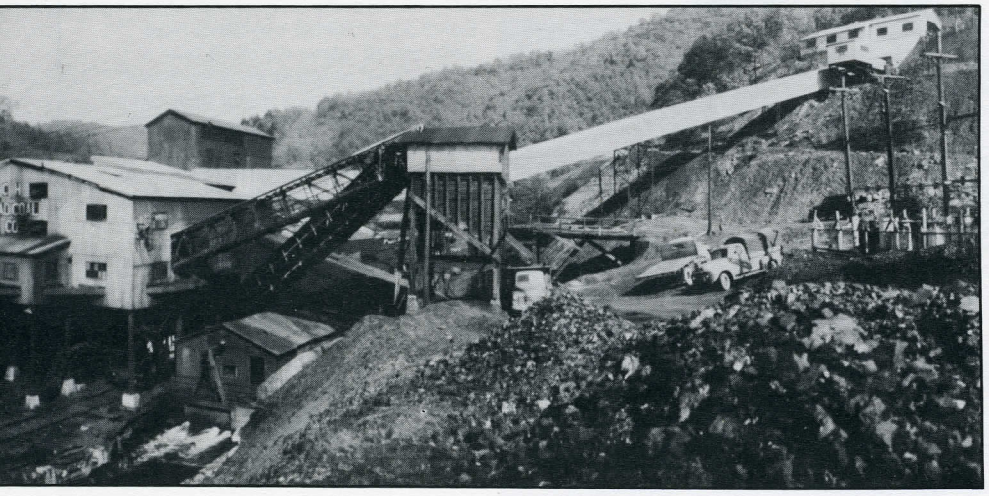
Miners at Eastern Gulf & Fuel at Eccles, Raleigh County, 1956.



Cannelton Coal & Coke Co. plant at Cannelton, Fayette County, 1925.



C.H. Mead Coal Co. tipple, at East Gulf, Raleigh County, 1952.



there is one house left standing, and the recent addition of a trailer.

Ribble's massive Cirkut camera rotated on a geared tripod while making an exposure. As the camera turned, the film — also moving, from one roller to another — passed by a slit, allowing light from the lens to reach it. The result was a continuous picture taking in a view up to 360°, or a full circle.

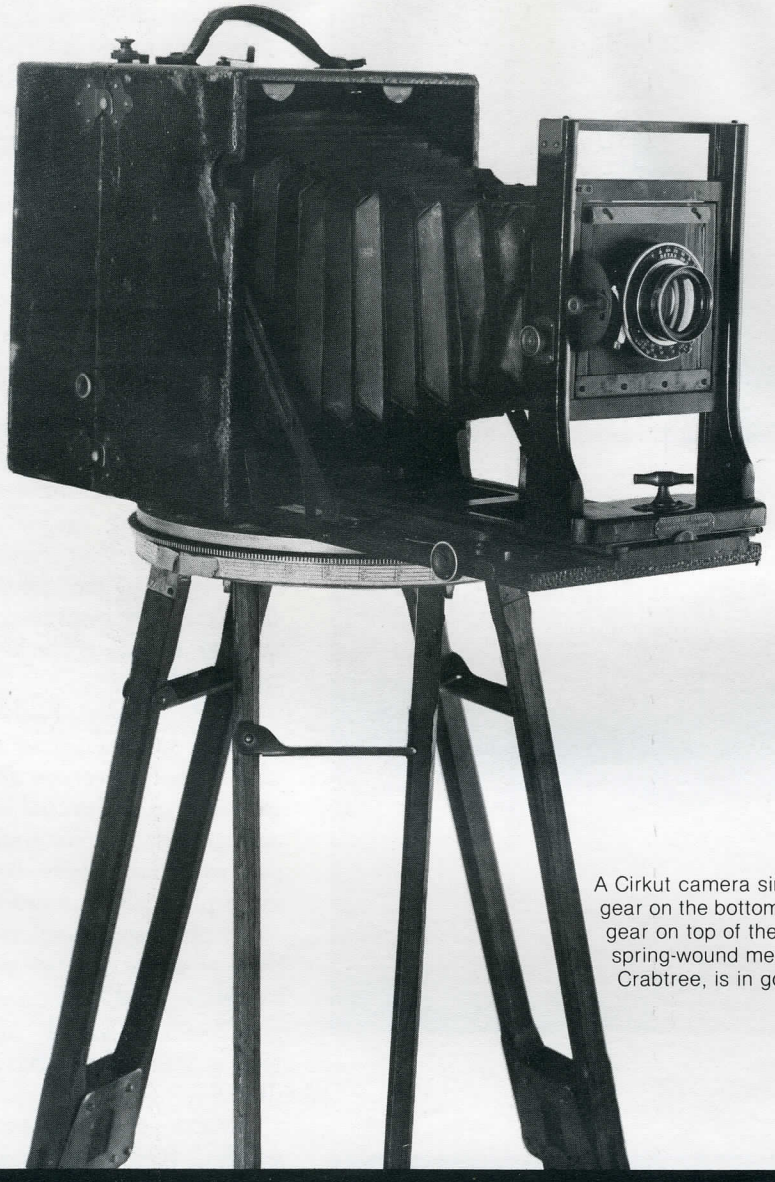
Although technically undistorted, a complete circular view from this camera is so disorienting to the human eye that it conveys little of the actual character of the subject. Since the camera made a full rotation, stopping and starting at the same point, that point appears at both ends of the photograph. The same tree, for example, might appear at both the extreme left and the extreme right.

For this reason, Ribble usually preferred a less sweeping view, and his photographs average about 220°. In his pictures of the coal camps, the image on paper is very similar to what a person would have seen from the same place the camera was.

No photograph offers a perfect record of the scene before the camera, but these highly detailed panoramas give both a wealth of information and a feeling of what an area was like.

During the 40 years that he worked, Red Ribble made thousands of prints. Photographs that large are tedious to process even with modern facilities, and he had only the most rudimentary darkroom set-up. Mount Hope photographer Fred Frisk remembers seeing Ribble at work. "He had the daggondest-looking darkroom you ever saw. Down in that basement he had a trough where he developed his pictures. I saw him working there once. He'd lean over that trough working on a picture with tobacco juice running out the corners of his mouth."

The technical flaws in a number of his photographs attest to the crudeness of Ribble's darkroom facilities. Yet he was able to produce a great many near-perfect negatives and



A Cirkut camera similar to that used by Red Ribble. A small gear on the bottom of the camera engages the large stationary gear on top of the tripod, and the camera rotates, driven by a spring-wound mechanism. This camera, owned by Mark Crabtree, is in good working order. Photo by Mark Crabtree.

Hundreds of Ribble negatives have been stored, some for more than a half-century, in boxes such as these. Each box contains a metal tube, with the four-foot negative rolled up inside. Many of the negatives have deteriorated over the years, but others are in excellent condition. Cirkut film is still sold, although at about ten times the price it was when Ribble entered the business. Photo by Mark Crabtree.

Above left: Miners with electric locomotive, from the 1929 Clifftop panorama below.
Above right: Miners' group, enlarged from Ribble's panorama of the 1929 Clifftop work force. Note the soft caps.
Below: Miners at Clifftop, near New River in Fayette County, 1929.

prints over the years. Ribble had several assistants during his long career, but seems to have done all his own printing.

The Reverend Mike Megimose of Beckley worked with Ribble about 30 years ago, keeping his books and helping to set up groups for his camera. Megimose recalls that Ribble sold prints of his group photographs to about 80% of the men in the pictures. Considering his hundreds of photographs, often with dozens of miners in each, Ribble must have spent many hours in his basement darkroom.

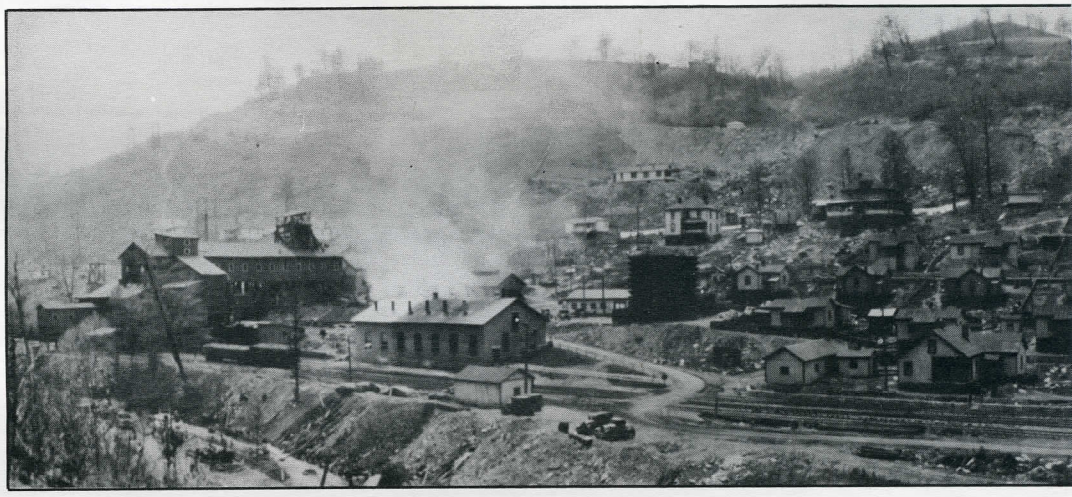
His photographs still hang on the walls of homes and businesses throughout the southern counties, but few people know anything about Ribble himself. He had a studio for a while above Ernie Mann's barber shop in Mount Hope. Mann and most others who remember the photographer describe Red as a beer drinker, though not a drunkard. In his later years, Ribble would "get together with some old boys and shoot some pool," according to Mann. But Ribble seems not to have made many close friends in Fayette County pool halls, or in other places he may have frequented.

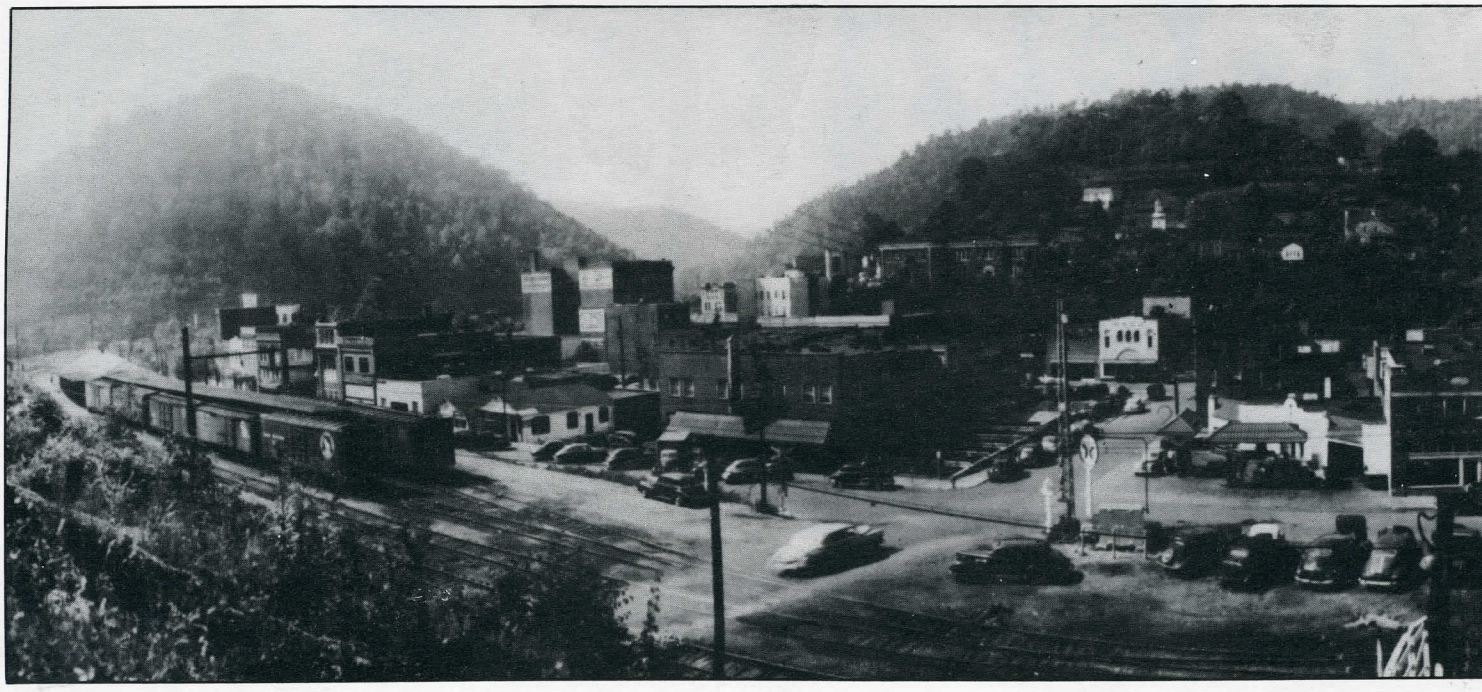
It is ironic that a man who spent his life documenting the world around him has left so little information about himself. Ribble made photographs of thousands of other West Virginians, but I have been unable to find even a single picture of him. The best we have is a suncast shadow, in a 1956 Eccles photograph, of Ribble, a shorter companion, and the trusty Cirkut camera.

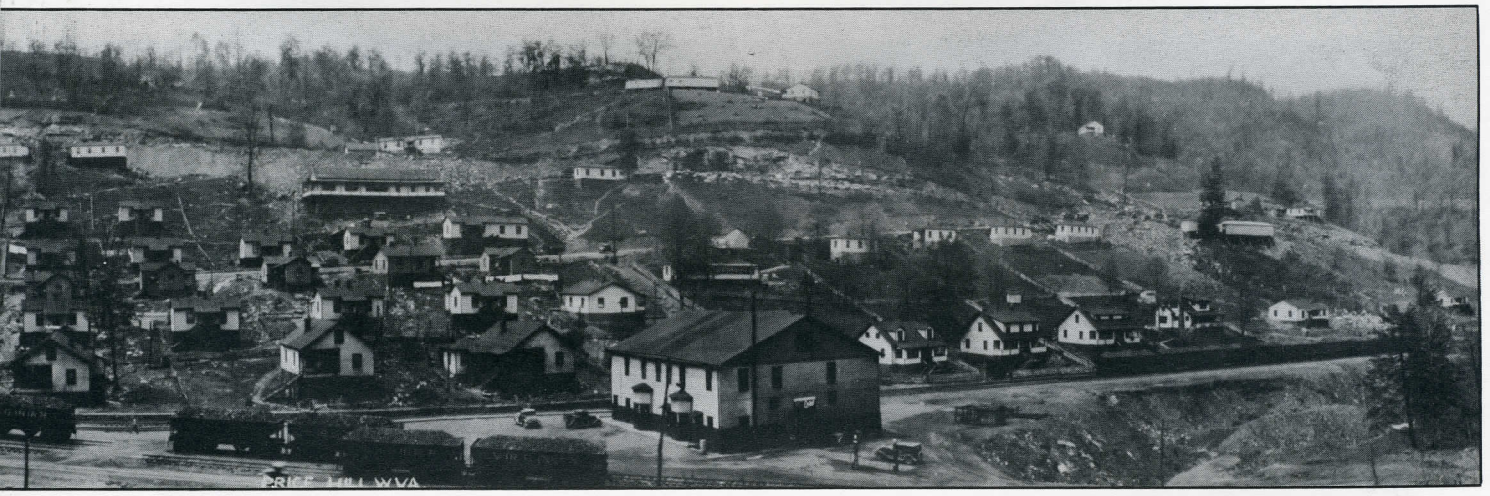
Miners at the Longacre Mine on New River, probably 1920's.

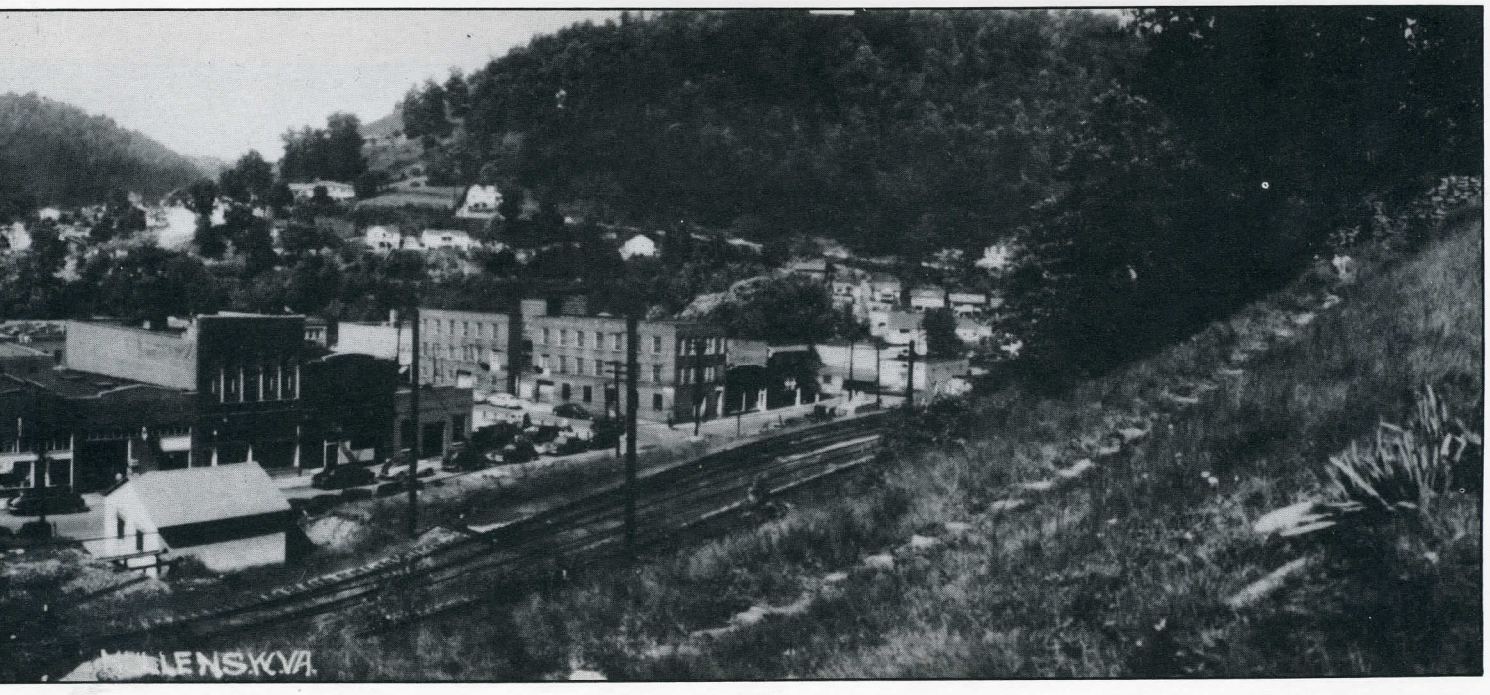
Although Red Ribble made his living photographing miners, he occasionally did more genteel groups. This is the Ladies' Auxiliary of the York Rite Masons, Mount Hope, 1921.

Top: The New River Company town of Cranberry, Raleigh County, with its white fences, neat houses, and playground, presented quite a contrast to Price Hill (below) and other company towns.
Middle: A 1931 view of Price Hill, near Mount Hope in Fayette County. Modern Route 19 now runs along ridge in background.
Bottom: A 1949 view of Mullens, from a hill above town.





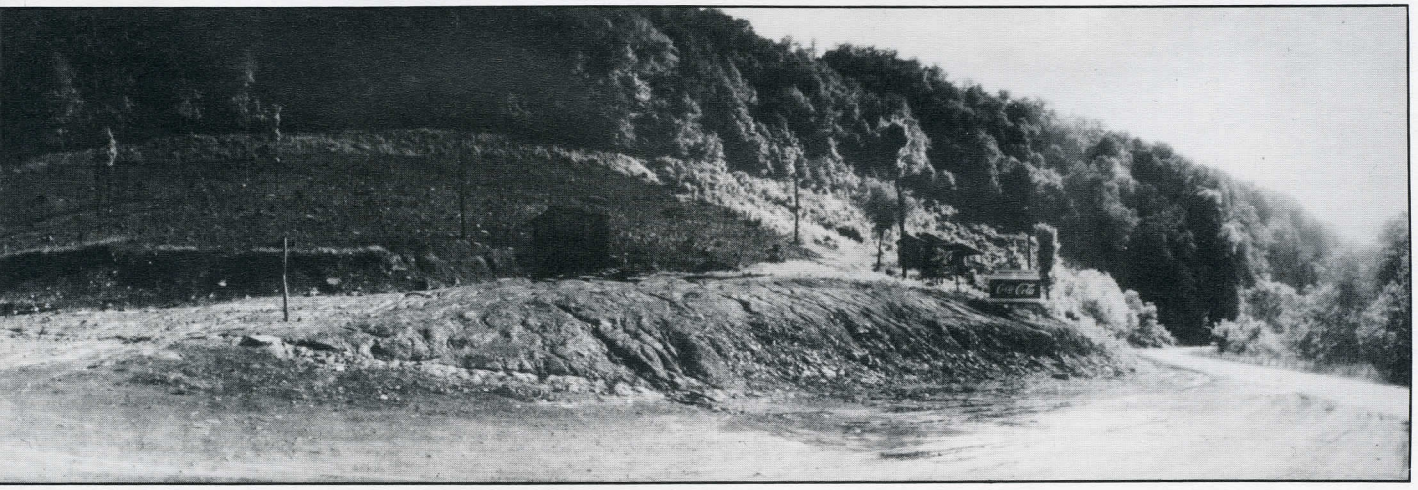





Coca-Cola
LILLYDALE GROCERY
EASY TERMS


MOUNTAIN STATE TAVERN
CURB SERVICE
STEAK
WINES
BEER

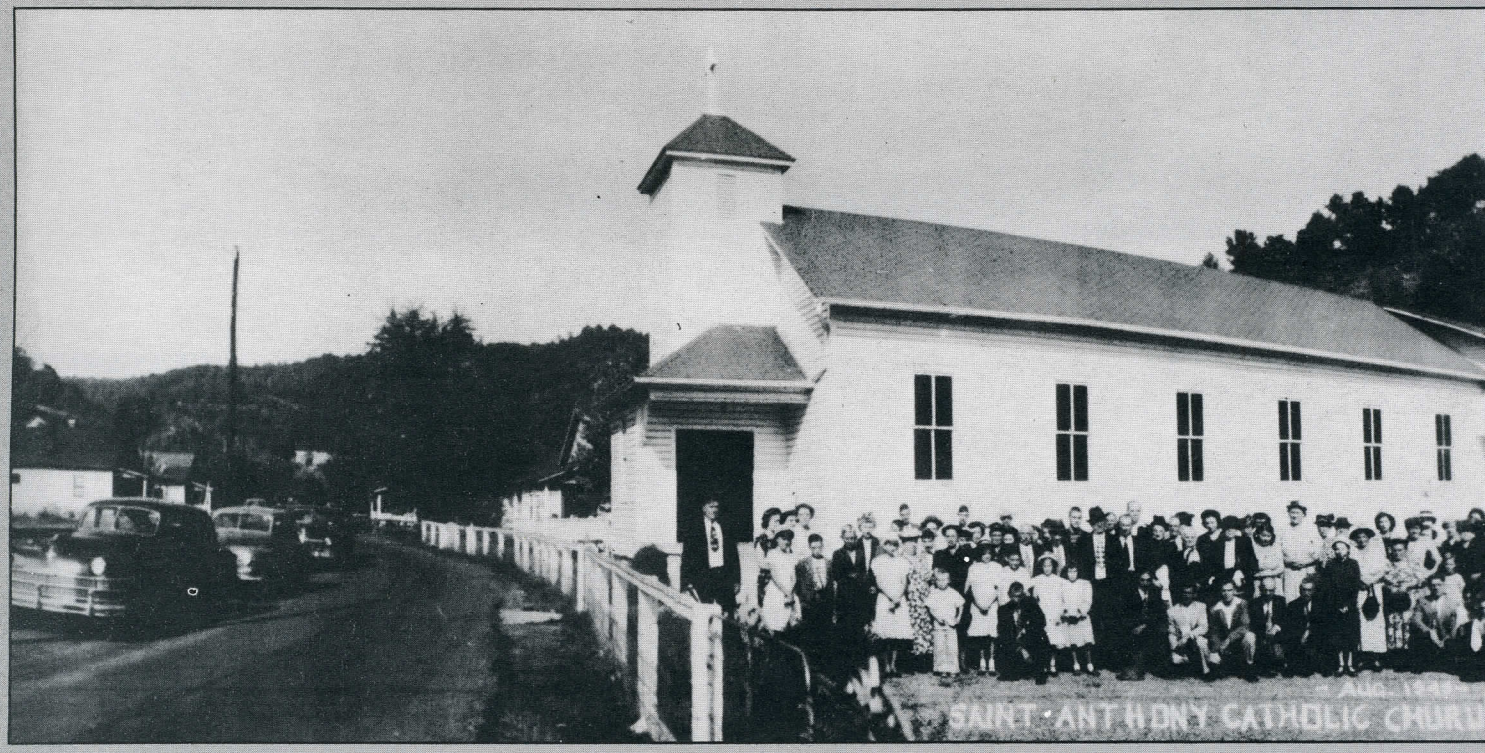
View of Lillydale community, probably late 1940's. The only Lillydale we could locate in present-day West Virginia is in Greenbrier County, but we believe the scene pictured here was in Raleigh or Wyoming County.



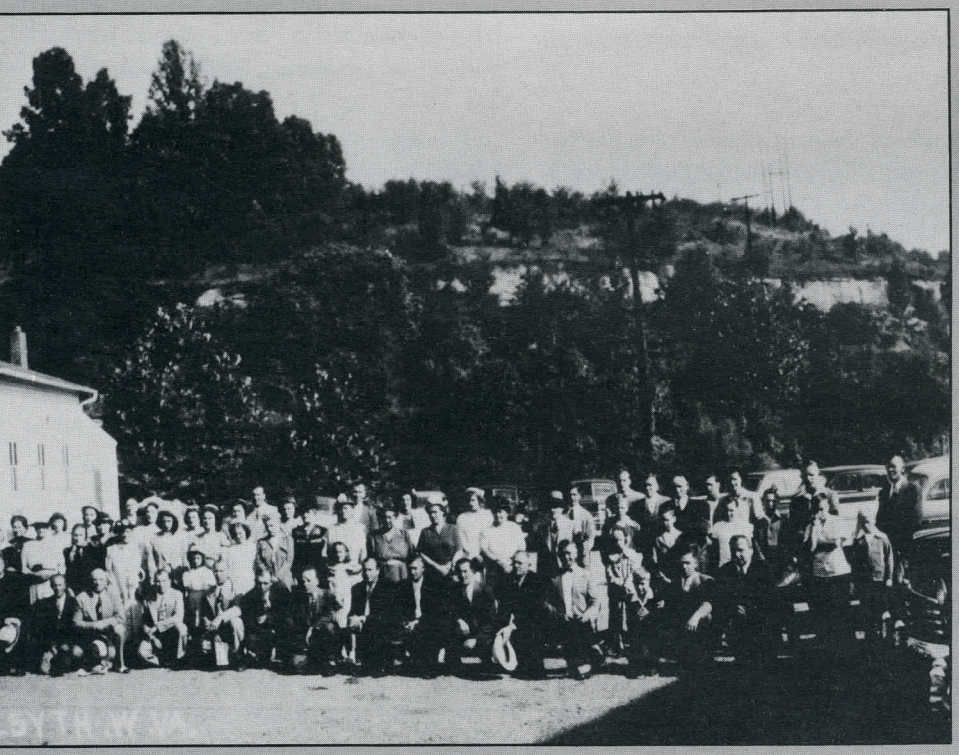
Mountain State Tavern on Route 3 outside Hinton, 1950.

One of Ribble's few known landscapes. The camera overlooks New River from the road to Fayette Station, near site of modern New River Bridge. Date unknown.

Whitlock's car lot, near Fayetteville, probably late 1940's. The Whitlock company has since moved, and now sells Fords in Beckley.



The congregation of Saint Anthony's Church at Kilsyth in Fayette County, August 1949.



Photographs to Tour State

The Red Ribble photographs in this issue are part of a larger collection of historic photographs assembled by Mark Crabtree for the West Virginia Coal Life Project. The collection also features the work of New River photographer William O. Trevey, many of whose pictures were published in GOLDENSEAL in 1976.

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The Ribble-Trevey collection will be loaned for public exhibition to responsible institutions anywhere in West Virginia. Inquiries should be addressed to Randy Lawrence, Director, Coal Life Project, Cultural Center, Capitol Complex, Charleston 25305; phone: 348-0230.

"To Marry A Soldier"

An Interview with Lena Kiser

By Bill Chambers

Lena Daming Kiser has lived most of her 80 years in southern West Virginia, but she was born and reared in the European principality of Luxembourg. She came of age there, during and after World War I. Luxembourg is tiny, somewhat smaller than Greenbrier County, and it was overrun by the Germans early in the war. Mrs. Kiser's early memories are of the German occupation of her country, and of the shorter American peacetime occupation that followed.

It was during the latter period that young Lena Daming met Sergeant Charlie Kiser, from Meador in Mingo County. They "sort of fell in love," as she remembers it, and soon were married. On July 4, 1918, she left home to travel with her new husband to America.

In this interview with her grandson Bill Chambers, Lena Kiser recalls her youthful years in Luxembourg and the following six decades in Mingo County. It has clearly been a hard life in some ways, as she tells of war and labor strife, of the loneliness of a war bride taken far from her own country, and finally of the 1941 divorce that was particularly distressing to her traditional Catholic morals. But her life has been fruitful, and has seen the successful rearing of a large family to maturity. "I've been pretty happy," Mrs. Kiser says, and on balance she figures she'd change little if she had it to do over again. —ed.

Bill Chambers. How did you meet Grandpa?

Lena Kiser. It was in 1918, I guess. World War I was over. The army of occupation, you know, the Americans, were in Luxembourg, and I met him there.

BC When was the first time you saw him?

LK Well, my brother was a photographer, and he came and got his picture made, your Grandpa did. We became friends. They had what they called a Fifth Division show, that the Americans put on. The troops put it on in our town, our hometown. Just the Americans were allowed, or you had to go with an American, the civilians weren't allowed. So I went with him, just to see the picture. And we sort of got acquainted.

In the meantime, I was engaged to a boy from home, and he didn't like it too much. I was going with an American, he said. I really wasn't, and that sort of bothered me, him false-accusing me. So I really went with your Grandpa, and we dated a few times.

We sort of fell in love. He wanted to marry me, but I didn't want to marry him, because I wanted him to come over here [to America] and then come back after me. I didn't want to marry a soldier, and I didn't want to leave home. And he promised he'd come back and get me. They got orders to leave then, and I told him that night that I wished I had married him, so I could go with him, you know.

Then they didn't leave. He didn't come back and ask me if I wanted to marry him, he just went ahead and went to his commanding officer and started the papers. It took three weeks to get married.

BC Did you know he was doing that?

LK No, he hadn't asked me, he already asked the commanding officer to check or whatever they had to do. And then he come back to me, and I was willing. It did take us three weeks, 'cause I was Catholic and he wasn't Catholic; and we was married

Lena Kiser. Photo by Doug Yarrow.

by a Catholic priest, but not in the church.

BC Didn't you say he cried or something? Didn't you tell me that one time?

LK Yes, because I wouldn't marry him, you know, when I first told him I would marry him only if he came back. But I give in and finally told him I would marry him.

BC What did your family think about that?

LK They didn't like it a bit. They liked him well enough. He was around our house a good bit, he was friends with my brother. They didn't want me to leave home.

BC Did they try hard to keep you from it?

LK No, they didn't. They didn't do much about it. That was about the first of May, and we got married — no, that was about the 17th of May and we got married the 17th of June.

BC How long after that before you came over here?

LK We left home the fourth of July.

BC So you married him and just a couple of weeks later you left?

LK Yes. We left on the fourth of July. Several girls had married Americans, and we were taken care of by the government. The YWCA took charge of us. We left home on the fourth of July, we left Luxembourg City at 8:00, and we got to Paris and stayed two days in Paris. We had to get some pictures made, and something about our passports. And then we went to Brest, we were there two weeks.

BC Were you with Grandpa all this time?

LK No, the YWCA and a couple of sergeants were in charge of us. We got to Brest on the sixth of July and we didn't see our husbands. I didn't see him for maybe four or five days. And we were in like a camp in Brest, just like soldiers, and our husbands were in another camp. See, 'cause we were all newlyweds, and they just couldn't have us all together. We could see each other every day in the park, but not of the night. Of the night they had shows there that they show, movies and things, we could go there. But you couldn't stay out in the park after dark. You had to get in.

BC Had you ever been that far away from home before?

LK Lord, no. During the four years of World War I we weren't allowed to go from one town to another one, hardly.

BC Was it scary, going all those new places and everything?

LK Lord, no, I was young and had other girls with me that were from my hometown. We were in a camp, just like soldiers, and we had to make our beds, and officers would come around and check your beds. We were in the barracks, you know. And they had some of the French girls, and they weren't very clean.

BC They weren't?

LK No, they were lazy, you know.

They check your bed, and all around it, and everything had to be so-so. You had to learn to make the beds, you know, how they make them in the hospitals.

We were there, I think, two weeks, and they took us women to the boats. And our husbands went to the boat and we didn't see each other until I happened to see Charlie on deck somewhere. I couldn't talk to him, but I saw him. We knew they were supposed to get on, you know.

Coming to West Virginia as a war bride was difficult, Mrs. Kiser remembers. "No one spoke German, and I had to learn English and it was pretty bad."

So we didn't see each other until the next morning, then we were on the boat 11 days. We could see our husbands of the daytime, out on deck, but they weren't allowed to come to our cabins. We eat with the officers in the dining room, and they eat in the mess hall.

BC Was it rough going across?

LK Yes, it was real rough. It was storms and rain. And one day I was sick and couldn't get out on deck and they went through the halls — and I couldn't talk English much — and they hollered everybody on deck, no excuse. I got out of bed and went up this sort of ladder you climbed up, and they said I was as white as a sheet when I went out on deck. I was scared, I thought the boat was sinking. All they wanted was to take us to a certain place to drill.

When we landed in New York, we went to a hostess house in New York, and our husbands went to Hoboken to be discharged. We were there a week, and didn't hear from our husbands hardly.

We eat cafeteria style. We didn't know too much about that either, and the food was different. We didn't like a lot of the food. And corn, it looked good on the cob, so we got it out on the plate, but then we didn't know how to eat it. You couldn't cut it, and we didn't want to take it up in our hands, so we didn't really eat it. We were there, I think a week, and your grandpa got his discharge.

BC During that week, did you have any second thoughts about coming over here?

LK Oh, I was homesick, and everything was new and all, but still I was pretty happy. Do you want me to tell the story about the uniform?

BC Yes.

LK He found this uniform, a nicer uniform than what he had, he was a sergeant. He found this uniform while he was in the building where we had been staying. He went down in the restroom and changed clothes, and we left there and went to the Pennsylvania Station where we were going to come on the train. He had left his bag in the restroom where he had changed clothes. So he left me at the station there, and he went back and got that. A lot of people used to ask me, weren't you afraid he'd leave you then?

BC Were you?

LK No, of course I wasn't. I never thought about it; it never entered my mind.

And then we left there and come on the train, we ate breakfast someplace, I don't know what station that was, we left from the Pennsylvania Station in New York. Seems to me like we come by Roanoke and then come to Matewan. They didn't have good roads, then, you know, the roads just went through the creeks. They had one hotel in Matewan, and we spent the night there.

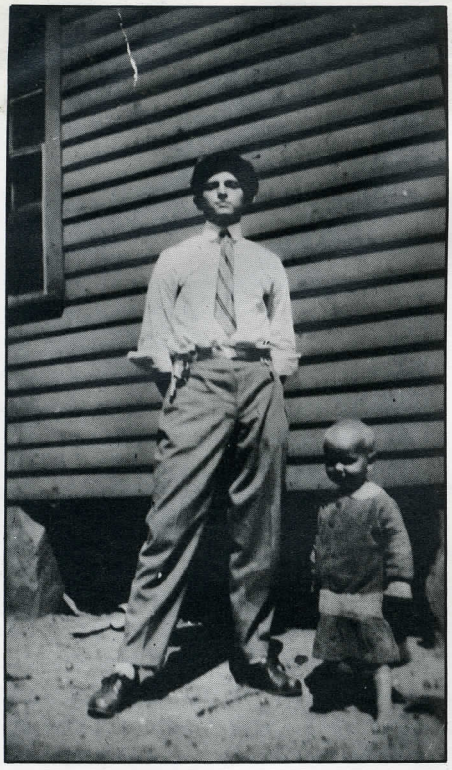
BC What did Matewan look like to you then?

LK Hills, all you can see is hills and railroad and a few houses. We stopped there and spent the night there, and I woke up the next morning early. At home we were Catholics, you know, and the church bells always rang, every morning, noon, and night. And I heard some bells ringing and I thought it was church bells. It was cow bells, beside the railroad there. Cow bells, they used to have bells on the cows.

So then the next morning we got a taxi. There was one taxi in Matewan, and the man took us through the creeks and all up to Meador to my in-laws, and they were all waiting for us.

BC Did it look like what he described to you?

LK I had seen some pictures of his family. They were all barefooted, and I didn't like the place too much, and I couldn't talk to the people. 'Course, a lot of people come to see me.



Above: Bachelor Charlie Kiser, age 20, as a schoolteacher before the war. Photographer unknown, 1916.
Top right: "Hills, all you could see was hills," Mrs. Kiser remembers of her first impression of Mingo County. Photo by Doug Yarrow.
Right: Lena and Charlie Kiser's wedding portrait, June 1919. Thorn-Dumont Studio, Luxembourg.

BC Just came to look?

LK Come and looked. Set and looked, and I couldn't talk to them. I could talk to your Grandpa, but I couldn't talk to the rest of them.

BC How did his family treat you then?

LK Oh, they liked me and they were real good to me. All of them, the children loved me and their parents did, too. I started cooking and doing things, you know, and we would be in the kitchen with the children. That's where I learned my English. They would bring me

things, and I would tell them what I called it, and they would tell me the name of it. So we argued one day about geography. I called it gee-o-*gra*-fee and they called it geography; and I said it wasn't right. It made me mad and I cried. I was young, and I think their dad kind of whipped them over it or something, Grandpa did. Grandpa was always very strict.

BC How did Meador and that area compare to the place you were used to living?

LK Well, where I was raised it was a little town, but there were more houses and it was more settled. We had hills, but not as rough. And the mountains over home, or the forests, were cultivated. They don't cut trees and leave them laying, they take care of it, and people buy it to burn it. And I thought that was such a waste, so much wood laying around. And there was just very few houses; see, that was in 1919.

BC When were you born?

LK I was really born the 19th of February, 1900, instead of the 24th. At the time when my father went to register, he was drinking and got the date mixed up and put it down the 24th. I didn't know it until I was grown-up, I guess. So I just left it like it was.

BC What was the name of your hometown?

LK Tetange. It was called a village; it wasn't very big. I don't know how many people lived there at the time.

BC Did you know almost everyone in your hometown?

LK Yes, I knew everyone in my hometown. And the next town was Kile and that was where the burgermeister lived — the two towns were together.

BC How did most poeple there make a living?

LK They worked in the mines.

BC Coal mines?

LK No, iron ore mines, and we had these smelters around there where they make the iron. My father was a carpenter in the mines. He did what you call construction, going in there, setting the timbers, and stuff like that.

By 1914 I was just in the eighth grade and on account of where we were, we couldn't go anywhere. We couldn't go from one town to the other and we didn't have schools, we didn't have anything. The German soldiers took over Luxembourg. They just put their troops there, and then we had to put up with them. They didn't bother us. They had their cannons and their machine guns at one point, and they had the lights that they would shine around. Then the planes would come over and bomb, during World War I.

BC The American planes?

LK No, they were French.

This picture of Lena's brother and father was sent to her from Luxembourg in 1925. By this time she was settled in West Virginia, and would never see her family again. Photographer unknown.

The reason the Germans were in Luxembourg, they were there to guard the railroads along to Germany, to protect them. That is why they came in and we had to let them come in, we couldn't fight them. Because Luxembourg at the time only had 500 volunteer soldiers. My brother was one of them.

The Germans were stationed around and they were hard on us, they took our food.

BC But they were friendly to you?

LK Yes, they were friendly. I even had a boyfriend.

BC A German boyfriend?

LK Yes, a German. One of the sergeants with the cannons.

They were there, I don't know how long, maybe one year or two, maybe even three years. Planes would go over, and everybody had places in their cellars. We had stone houses over there, no wooden houses. We had beds in the cellar. We would hear the sirens, and then we would go into the cellar and spend the night. A lot of places were bombed, some of the houses. We were always on edge. We sometimes could hear the roaring of the guns from the war that was going on between Germany and France. Sometimes, I guess according to how the wind blew, we could hear it more, and people would get afraid and grab their belongings and head for the mines sometimes. It was a bad time for us.

BC Did you actually see any fighting up close?

LK No, no, I didn't. But they brought the soldiers back to our town. They used our churches and schoolhouses. I worked for the Red Cross. Everybody did. Rolled bandages and read to the sick, wrote the letters and this and that. Then I worked in a canteen for about a year. That was right on the border of Luxembourg and Alsace-Lorraine, and I had to go on the train. You see, my home was about 10 miles from Alsace-Lorraine, which is France now.

The day that we heard of peace, that it was Armistice Day, I was working at this canteen at the time and the bells were ringing and everything. All of a sudden the Germans came through there. They had to go through Luxembourg to get back to Germany. They came back through there but they didn't stop anywhere, they didn't linger. They just went on back through.

And then the first Americans we saw came in these motorcycle sidecars, the first ones I ever saw. They

brought their soldiers back several days after that and they would stay around in towns. Anybody that had an empty bedroom or so on kept them. They paid you and they stayed there, I guess, a year. That is how I met your Grandpa. That was the army of occupation, the Americans.

BC I guess you got to know both sides pretty well then.

LK Yes. We liked the Germans, they didn't bother us. Just made it a little hard for us. They used some of our food and we were rationed. We had to do without a lot. You all never did know about rationing over here. I tell you the Americans have been lucky. You have never had a war over here.

BC When you came here, were there any problems because you had grown up as a Catholic?

LK Well, we didn't talk too much about it. The Kisers had different preachers that would come to their house, and they would have a lot of people coming in. And I didn't understand what they were doing. I had never seen anything but Catholics. Luxembourg is all Catholic, and we didn't hear anything about Protestants. We had a few Jewish people. But the people would come to his mother's, and they would have church. They would sort of shout and carry on, and it sort of scared me. I didn't understand it, you know, and we had never had church like that. We always had it in the church house. Nice churches, beautiful churches. And they would have church in the schoolhouse, and I didn't think that was right. I learned better. But I was pretty homesick and everything was different.

BC How long did it take you to get over that? Or do you ever get over that?

LK No, you finally get over it.

BC Did you ever try to go to a Catholic church here?

LK Well, we come to Meador and they didn't have a church up there, and we didn't have a way to get to the Catholic church in Williamson, which was a pretty good ways. And I never did go, I never did go to church there. I always read my Bible and lived my life. I went to other churches, but I never did like them. We always had nice churches, and I just didn't think you could worship in a school. I found out since then that you can, and I am a Methodist now. I have been for the last 20-some years, and I still like Catholics, but my children are all Protestants.

BC When you first came over here or even since then, did you ever try to get to know other people who had immigrated to this country?

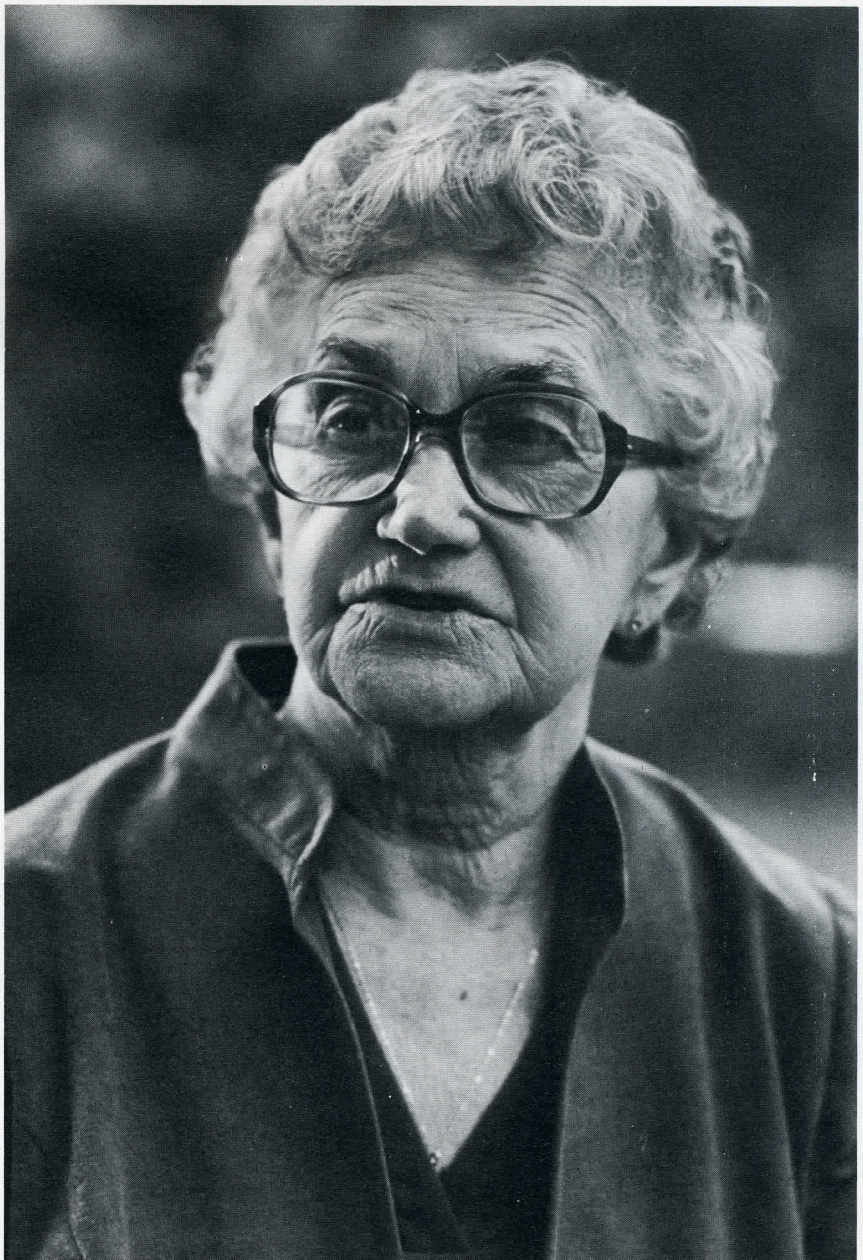
LK No, there wasn't anybody around here. I had a few people that came over from my hometown. A few girls that married — one married a sergeant, one of them married a corporal. I used to write to them, but I don't wite them anymore.

BC Around here there wasn't anyone?

LK No, there wasn't anyone I could talk to. No one spoke German, and I had to learn English and it was pretty hard. But I started reading anything I could get hold of and I could make out. If you know a foreign language, French, German, anything, you can kind of make out. A lot of English words were the same as a lot of German or French words.

BC Do you remember much about

Mrs. Kiser lived in fear during the mine wars, when her husband was one of the "Matewan Massacre" defendants. "But I was always for the working man," she says. "I was raised like that." Photo by Doug Yarrow.



Top: Postcard view of Matewan, 1924.
Above: Lena Kiser at her home in Meador.
Photo by Doug Yarrow.

when Grandpa was involved in the union, back when it was first formed?

LK Yes, it was a bad time for us. He was secretary of the union local, at the time he worked in the mines.

BC That was about when, what year?

LK In 1919, right after we were married. And they were on strike and he had a hard time, he was threatened a lot.

We had a car and we went to Matewan one day. That was after we had Blanche, so it must have been in 1920. We came through Red Jacket on a Sunday afternoon, and there was a colored camp. Those men were — scabs is what they called them. The company had hired them, and they had their laws up there, too, I don't know what they called them, but they carried guns. We come through there and there were men on both sides of the road as we came through Red Jacket, and I said that we'd better go on. He said, "No, I am not going on." And he stopped. When he stopped I wouldn't let him get out of the car, and I told him just to go on, and they kind of stepped aside. At first they were in the middle of the road and I believe they were going to do something, but they saw me in the car with him.

BC They knew who he was?

LK Oh, yes, they knew him well, because he was sort of a leader in the union. And then we went on and came to North Matewan and they had tents. See, some of the people here were ordered out of their company houses. That was how it started here and that was why they had the battle here in Matewan. Balwin-Felts detectives were brought in by the companies and they ordered the people out of their homes, took their furniture out. Well, anyway, the union put up tents for people to live in. So we stopped at the tents. There were several men there. Charlie got them all out and they all got guns and went back up to Red Jacket. I stayed at the tents. They went back up there and when they got up there they couldn't see a soul.

BC Everyone was gone?

LK Yes, everyone was gone. I think they were going to do something to him, but they didn't.

BC Because you and the baby were in the car?

LK Yes, I believe that saved us. From then on I was always afraid to get out.

BC What kind of things did he do? I know he used to say he could really make a speech.

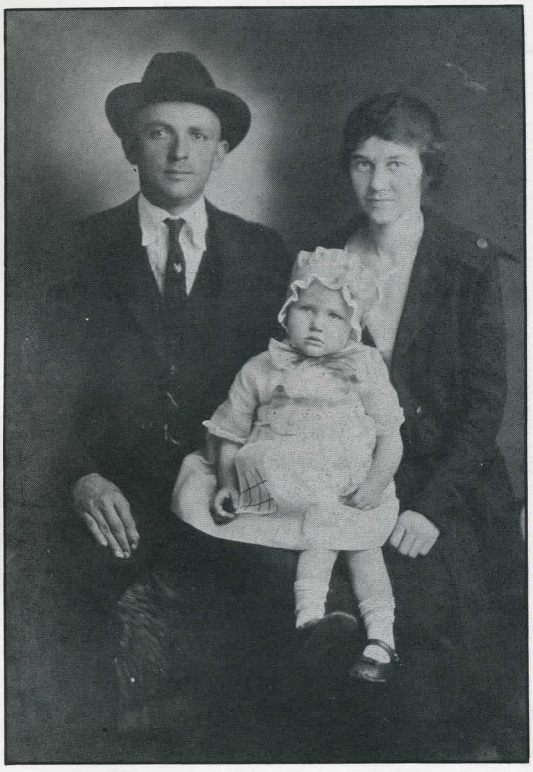
LK Oh, he was a good organizer. He helped organize this field. Then he was an organizer for years. He went to Michigan and worked for the CIO. And then he was back in Williamson as a field representative. He helped organize these fields around here, you know, these mines.

BC What about whatever it was that happened in Matewan during that time?

LK Well, it was during the strike. They moved the people out of their company houses — they wanted the people out, so they brought in Baldwin-Felts detectives and they moved them out. They went to Matewan that morning, those Baldwin men, and there was a drugstore down there. The detectives went into this drugstore, and somehow or other, I don't know how it happened, but one of them shot the mayor of the

town. That's how it started. And then the town police was Sid Hatfield and I guess he shot one of them. That just started a free-for-all, and six Baldwin-Felts men were killed.*

*Accounts of the "Matewan Massacre" vary widely, but most others place the death toll somewhat higher. Howard B. Lee, who writes unfavorably of the miners' action in his popular *Bloodletting in Appalachia* (published by West Virginia University in 1969), lists a total of ten killed and four seriously wounded. The dead were Mayor Testerman of Matewan, two miners, and six Baldwin-Felts agents, including two Felts brothers. Police Chief Hatfield and Deputy Ed Chambers were later openly assassinated by Baldwin-Felts men on the steps of the Welch Courthouse, where they had gone unarmed to stand trial on an unrelated charge. —ed.



Top: The Kiser children, with young friends, about 1934. Photographer unknown.
Left: "I raised my family by myself, really," Mrs. Kiser says. But she remembers that Charlie "provided good for us," and that he educated the children after the divorce. Photo by Doug Yarrow.
Above: Charlie and Lena Kiser with baby Blanche, their first child. Date and photographer unknown.

BC Were any of the union men killed?

LK No, they weren't killed.

BC Did Grandpa ever talk about it?

LK No, he never did talk about it. He always said he didn't shoot anybody, but he was right there. They had 21 men on trial for I don't know how many months. He was one of the defendants.

BC What was that like?

LK Well, that was pretty bad for me. You know, I couldn't even talk to people, but of course I lived with my in-laws, and they always took care of me.

BC I guess you were pretty scared that he might go to jail?

LK Yes, for a long time, for several years.

BC What was the final outcome?

LK Well, the final outcome was they organized, but at the trial they were all acquitted. Judge Bailey was the judge at the time, I forget his first name.

BC Do you remember much else about those times, early union times? Did you have to do without a lot?

LK Oh, yes, we didn't have much income except what the union paid. You know everybody got a check every month. It wasn't much.

BC What did you think about all that, the unions?

LK Well, I didn't know too much about it. But I was always for the working man, because I was raised like that.

BC So you were behind him, when he was not making much money?

LK Yes. We didn't need too much. We had a garden, we had hogs and cows. We didn't suffer. We always canned food, and had plenty of meat.

BC What happened then that ended in you finally getting a divorce?

LK Well, different things. He run a garage in Matewan for a long time. But he got to drinking and he finally went over to Logan and worked for a while and I lived in Meador.

BC Did you considered yourselves separated then?

LK No, he just went over there, he couldn't get work over here. Then he got back with the union. He got a job as an organizer over there, and then from there he went to Michigan. We were getting along fine and building a new house, there for two or three years.

BC What was it like getting divorced back then? Now people get divorced all the time, but then it didn't happen that often.

LK It was pretty bad.

BC Did it bother you a lot to get the divorce, especially since you were a Catholic?

LK Oh, it did, yes. I don't believe in divorce. He wanted a divorce, so I gave it to him. He wanted to get married again.

BC What about the people around here, did they look down on you?

LK No, they didn't. They all looked down on him, 'cause they all said he brought me here from overseas and we had six children, and you know. But I got along all right. He provided good for us. Even when sometimes he didn't have it.

BC Did you ever think about marrying again?

LK No, Catholics don't believe in it. I just never did care about it or even think about it. I was busy with my children and my family.

BC You had to raise your children pretty much by yourself, didn't you? He just wasn't around much.

LK I raised them by myself, really. Of course, when we were divorced in 1941, Blanche, my oldest, was teaching school at the time. Polly was gone to business school and Jerry was gone to business school. One thing he did, he sent the children to college. You know a lot of men wouldn't do that, you have to give him credit for that.

BC Looking back on it, is there anything you would do differently now, if you could go back?

LK Oh, I don't know. I guess I'd do the same thing. I've been pretty happy, with my children, friends, and neighbors, and relatives. I always liked all of them and they always liked me.

BC Did anything ever happen that made you wish you hadn't come here?

LK Oh, yes, many times, especially after we had been married a year and I had my first child. At one time, I was wanting him to give me money to go back home, he wouldn't let me go. He wasn't going to let me take Blanche.

One of the worst times was when some of my family died. After I had been over here almost two years, my sister died. It was in March, and then in May my mother died. I wanted to go back then, but I was pregnant and couldn't go. I felt awful lonely then. It was hard because I couldn't even talk to anyone here about them, since nobody here knew them. Every time I go to a funeral even now, I hear people grieving about their dead, I think about not being able to grieve for mine. That was probably the worst time.

Surprisingly youthful as she approaches 81, Mrs. Kiser says the first eight decades have been good. "I've been pretty happy, with my children, friends, neighbors, and relatives." Photo by Doug Yarrow.

The Hawk's Nest Tragedy: Fifty Years Later

By Mark Rowh

The record presents a story of a condition that is hardly conceivable in a democratic government in the present century. It would be more representative of the Middle Ages. It is the story of a tragedy worthy of the pen of Victor Hugo — the story of men in the darkest days of the depression, with work hard to secure, driven by despair and the stark fear of hunger to work for a mere existence wage under almost intolerable conditions.

— Congressional Record,
April 1, 1936

Like a Romantic tragedy indeed, except that this was real. And it happened not in some faraway land but in West Virginia, not that long ago but yet with enough of time's normal dilution of the importance of events that there is little awareness today of the tragedy that was Hawk's Nest. The report of the official Congressional inquiry is now dusty and largely forgotten, and no other complete investigation was ever undertaken.

Hawk's Nest. The name evokes images of peace and beauty, a pleasant lodge and exciting tramway, spendid views of mountains and river. Well-dressed people break from their travels along Route 60 to take in the view, perhaps spend a little money in a gift shop, then go on their way, impressed.

In 1930 it was different. Average folks didn't spend dollars for trinkets; they were busy trying to survive. In many families children were hungry, wives shrill or sullen or just made hollow and old by the strain of economic hardship. Men would do almost anything for a job. And then came the project. A tunnel was needed in conjunction with construction of a dam near Gauley Bridge. Piercing a mountain, it would

Construction of the Hawk's Nest Dam. The tunnel (for which we were unable to locate construction photographs) began here, carrying water to a hydroelectric station near Gauley Bridge. Photographer unknown, courtesy West Virginia Collection.

provide a channel for water from the New River to feed the turbines of a hydroelectric plant. Construction of the tunnel would mean hundreds of jobs, and many saw it as a godsend. Unfortunately, it would prove to be just the opposite. By the time the disastrous project was completed, perhaps as many as 500 men had lost their lives.

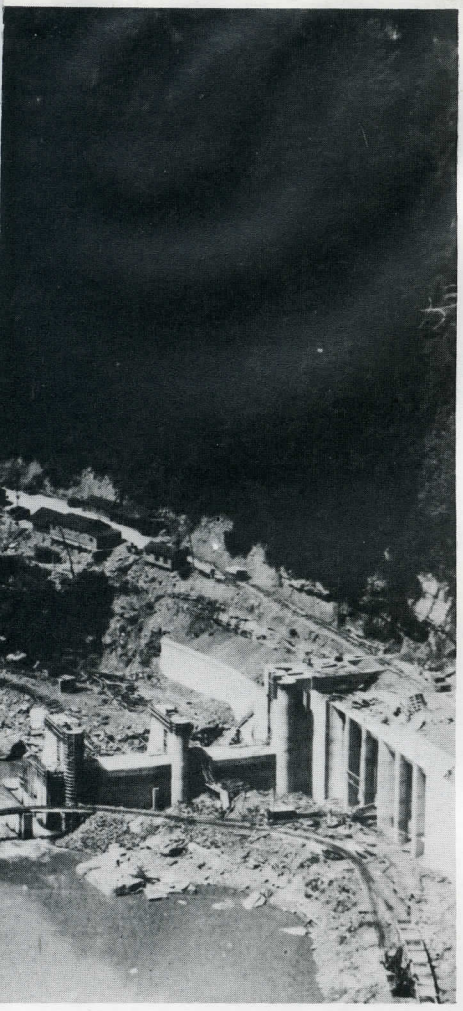
What the workers didn't realize was that they were not cutting through any ordinary rock. Instead, most of it was silica. In some areas the purity approached 100 percent. Today people know that silica presents a lethal health hazard, causing those who breathe its dust to contract silicosis. People 50 years ago knew it too, as the *Congressional Record* points out:

The subcommittee finds...That the effect of breathing silica dust is well known to the medical profession and to all properly qualified mining engineers. The disease is always incurable. It always results in physical incapacity and in a majority of cases is fatal. That for more than 20 years the United States Bureau of Mines has been issuing warnings and information...That the principle means of prevention are wet drilling, adequate and proper ventilation, and circulation of air, the use of respirators by the workmen, and drills equipped with a suction or vacuum-cup appliance.

But the knowledge was not common; certainly most of the workers were unaware of the enormity of the risk they were taking. And so they went ahead, eager to punch a 3.75 mile hole through the rock and collect what was all too rare, a steady paycheck.

The digging of the Hawk's Nest tunnel was part of a larger project of the Union Carbide Corporation. Union Carbide was constructing an electrometallurgical plant at Alloy, on the Kanawha River, for the production of steel alloys. Waters rushing through the new tunnel would provide hydroelectric power for the steel plant, and silica taken from the great hole would be used in the production process.

Work on the tunnel began in the spring of 1930. The contracting firm for the project, Dennis and Rinehart of Charlottesville, Virginia, set up an ambitious work schedule with completion projected in 24 months. To achieve their goals, they would require shifts of men working from several different points, with a con-



stant pressure to make time, to shortcut any possible delays.

Men poured in to grab the new positions. While a large contingent was from Fayette County, workers also came from all over West Virginia and beyond, many leaving families behind, others bringing them along and then facing the added problem of substandard housing. Out-of-work coal miners comprised a large proportion. Some were highly trained, but most were not. Many were blacks, whose other job opportunities were particularly limited. They went to work in conditions which were bad enough to start, made worse by scheduling demands. Large numbers found the conditions intolerable, and moved on. But many stayed. And for those who left, there were always more than enough others eager to take their place.

Before long a work pattern was established which was to exact the heavy toll of health and lives. Steadily, inexorably, the men pushed the tunnel forward, filling the air of the narrow shaft with the dangerous rock dust. It was so dense that visibility was often limited to a few feet. Workers leaving the tunnel at shift's end were covered, ghost-like, in a coating of dense white silica dust. To compound matters, the ventilation system was next to valueless, and no respirators were furnished to the employees. In addition to the dust, workers faced high carbon monoxide levels resulting from use of gasoline locomotives within the confines of the tunnel.

The method of drilling was a key factor. The technology of the time included a wet drilling process, developed decades earlier, in which dust levels were kept down by a spray of water at the drilling point. It had proven to be effective, but also was slower and less efficient than the simpler dry drilling process. Despite the high silica content, wet drilling at the Hawk's Nest tunnel was not employed. Workers charged that they were allowed to use water only when state inspectors were expected at the scene. Other times, they breathed dust.

Survivors of the project have presented historians with haunting narratives of life and work in the tunnel: of men regularly overcome by carbon monoxide; of others dropping dead before their eyes, some to be hurriedly buried in makeshift graves; of others plugging away and surviving the cruel conditions only to be ravaged by the disease over a period of years; and of families decimated by the loss of their men. Protest was next to impossible, for there was always someone else who would take their jobs, and the workers knew it.

By 1935 the project was completed, and several thousand men had worked for various periods of time and with various levels of exposure to the silica dust. Construction had been successful, and electricity was being produced as planned. By this time also, hundreds of men had died, and several court cases had brought the matter to public attention. In subsequent years Congressional hearings were held, and for a time the debacle received substantial national as well as state-wide publicity. The controversy finally subsided by the end of the decade.

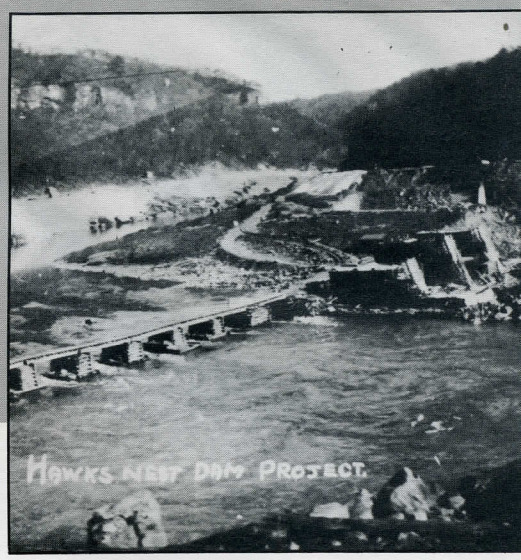
While many questions regarding culpability have never been answered, there can be no doubt that the company knew it was dealing with silica; in fact, the discovery was seen as something of a bonanza, and tons of the rock would be used in the smelting of ferrosilicon alloy in the new electrometallurgical plant. Whether conscious decisions were made to ignore worker safety and, if so, by whom, has not been clearly established. Certainly the contracting firm was negligent in many ways (and eventaully had to pay some claims), and it is hard to believe that none of the project's management knew what was happening. Some have called it mass murder; others have regarded it as the result of an unfortunate combination of ignorance and carelessness. At any rate, these events of 50 years ago stand out as one of the state's great calamities. The enormity of the tragedy has seldom been fathomed even to this day. Unlike the suddenness of a Buffalo Creek or Point Pleasant or Farmington, this was a slow, painful event with the effects spread out over years. In fact, because of the long-term path that silicosis can take, it is certain that many directly related fatalities were never recorded.

Enough of the story is known, however, that it has become a sad, indelible part of the history of West Virginia. The only positive note is that there have been no other such tragedies. As a result of the incident and its attendant publicity, the dangers of silicosis were brought to public attention, eventually, if slowly, leading to tighter restrictions and better enforcement. Of the many who died at Hawk's Nest, though, it seems fitting that their suffering be remembered now, after half a century, and into future generations.

"A Dirty, Messy Place to Work"

B.H. Metheney Remembers Hawk's Nest Tunnel

Interview by David Orr and Jon Dragan



While Mark Rowh was preparing the preceding account of the Hawk's Nest Tragedy, we at GOLDENSEAL were surprised to discover a Fayette County survivor of the tunnel, very much alive and in reasonably good health a half-century later. This article is edited from a longer interview with Mr. Metheney, taped at his home in Deep Water last spring.

David Orr. How did you come to work on the Hawk's Nest Tunnel project?

B.H. Metheney. I was working on a lumber job up at Swiss, on Gauley River. It worked out so the tunnel job was just starting and I went down and started on it, in March, I reckon it was. I worked on it up until late fall, and quit, and went up to Beckley and worked on the road a little while, maybe six weeks or so, and come down here to Alloy and went to work. They were starting to build this powerhouse at Alloy at that time, had a big mud hole there. I went up to work there with it and just stayed there.

When I came to Hawk's Nest looking for a job, I guess it was 1930-31, as well as I remember, and they were starting to grade the railroad around the portal there at Gauley Junction. I fired steam shovels while we graded around there, and then after they opened the tunnel I went to run the drill inside, run a drill for a while.

That tunnel was a rough job. They run the grade around there, till they could get the railroad around, bring their equipment around, then shot out the portal. They shot that out with black powder. The churn drill there used about six colored men. They drilled holes about 40 feet deep, just pick it up and drop it, six of them lift it up and drop it. They started springing them holes, put just a little powder in and shoot that. Then they'd put in a little bigger charge, and shoot it again. They kept on doing that, I don't know, maybe one whole shift. And then they just started carrying them cans of black powder, pouring 'em in, I guess it was 50-pound cans. I don't know how many they poured in, but lots of it. And when they set that off it took that whole block out. Some of it went clear across the river to the C&O track.

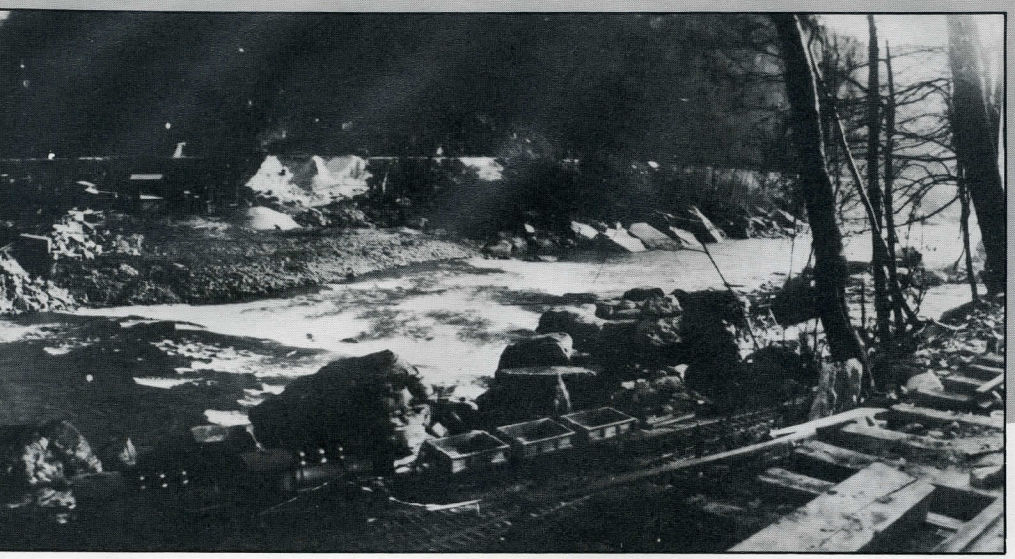
Funny part of it was, had a little old colored boy — called him "little Tom." He kept the coal carried to this steam shovel, you know. He'd carry it in a nail keg and hand it up to me, and I'd pour it in the hopper up there. And whenever we wasn't running he'd hide, he'd get in the bucket on the shovel, just curl up in there. Well, when we shut down to put off this big shot, why, I guess he didn't know what they was going to do, so he got in the bucket there. When that shot went off, it hit the swing lever on the shovel, and bent it; that shovel was going 'round and around with him in it. He was yelling bloody murder. Operator got up in there and got a-hold of it and got him out. Let him down. That's the last time he ever hid in the bucket!

They started that hole 32 feet in diameter, and then after they got under a little ways, they widened it to 56 feet because that rock was silica. They wanted that rock for the furnaces down here. They crushed it and hauled it down here and stored it at Alloy. When they started operating down there they used it. But now the upper end was a sort of shale, and they just hauled it out and dumped it. It was no good for anything. They had to crib up up there to hold the top. But this lower end, when they got started under there, they'd just put off a shot. A couple guys would go in there with bars. Any rock a-hanging, they'd pry 'em down. That's all they had to do. She was solid as could be.

They had four headings there to work from. They worked the lower end called Number One, up at the surge basin they turned both ways, Two and Three was there. Then up at Hawk's Nest, at the dam, they were driving back down. And that way they were drilling four ways on it.

They worked day and night. I worked in the lower end, down here, and worked on the night shift. We'd get there about 6:00. The other crew had done come out, had their shot put off. Then we'd go in and start drilling on ours, and we'd drill and load, and shoot, and we'd finish about 6:00 the next morning.

They'd run about eight heading



Hawk's Nest Dam construction, near Heading Number 4 at the upper end of the tunnel. Photographer unknown, courtesy West Virginia Collection.

drills, that drilled horizontal. And they'd run eight jackhammers, drilled down. The horizontal shot was carried ahead of the rest of them. They drilled some short holes, and then they'd keep getting longer steel and bringing 'em out a little bit, see. And they'd shoot that with delayed explosives. They'd set their holes so far apart, and of course it's just a split second, oh, just a small part of a second between explosions, but it was enough so that it would spring 'em out of the way.

Then after that was shot, they worked on the bench. We had beds, and then the lower part of it we called a toe, and we would just keep it on grade, you know, maybe some places drill holes two foot deep, maybe four foot deep, but never more than six foot. But then when you got up on the next level, towards where the heading was, you drilled about 14-foot holes. And you used about 90 percent dynamite to load with. You'd have to load the hole with 90 percent, and then, instead of using sand or something to tamp with, they'd take 40 percent dynamite and tamp it. The whole thing was just full of explosives. Getting ready to put it off, you shot it with 110-volt current — they didn't use a battery, you know. Just connect it to the light wire and shoot it.

DO Did you start as a foreman?

BHM No, I didn't work as a foreman. Oh, I did maybe for a couple of weeks; I was muck foreman. I ran a drill for the most part.

DO What kind of drill was that?

BHM Jackhammers, like they use outside, except they was big — they weighed 120 pounds. They had connections on 'em to put water on 'em, so that you could keep the dust down. But they would cut a lot faster running them dry, so they run 'em dry except when they knew the inspector was coming. Then you'd put water on them until he looked 'em over and had gone back outside, and then you throwed the water off again. You'd come out of there of a morning and catch your nose and squeeze it and it's just like squeezing toothpaste. Clear white stuff.

Jon Dragan. Who told you to cut the water off on the drills? Was that just so you could make time, or once the inspecstor left did they tell you to cut it off?

BHM The foreman would tell you, "Get the water off of 'em, get to drilling." But now, the heading drills, they run them wet all the time. The ones that drilled horizontal, because they'd get that dust out of the holes better that way. But the others — when they'd shoot, you know, it would make some cracks in that rock, and if you got water in there, in that dust, you'd hang a steel, have to maybe discard that hole, when you were already down six or eight feet, move over and start another hole. They didn't like it.

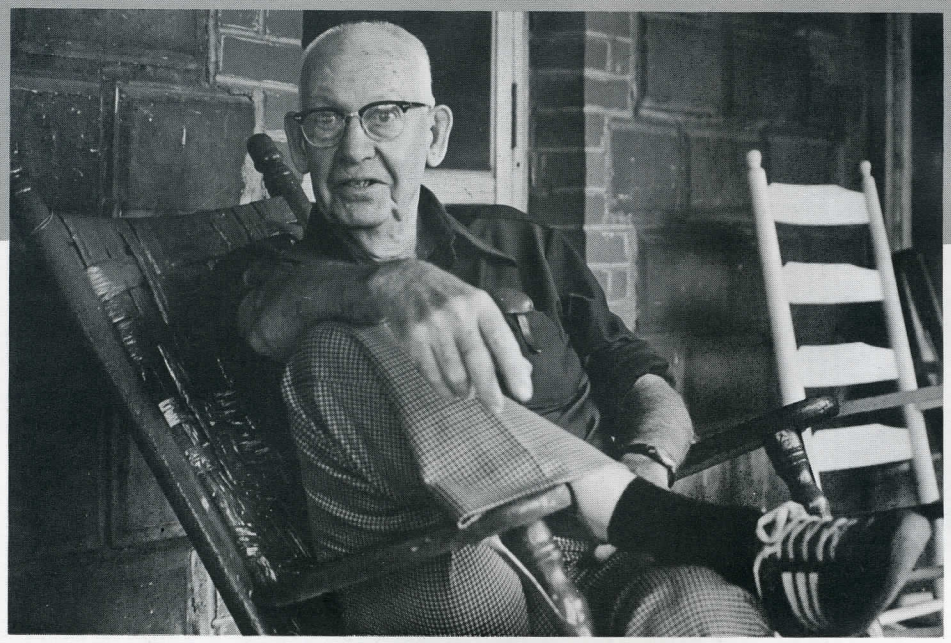
Had a big air compressor that set outside that supplied the air. I think it was five-inch line coming in there, and they had a section down the tunnel that they kept a fire built on, to heat that air. And *then* sometimes, I've had ice to come out of them exhausts from them drills that'd cut the blood out of you. Used 120 pounds of air pressure.

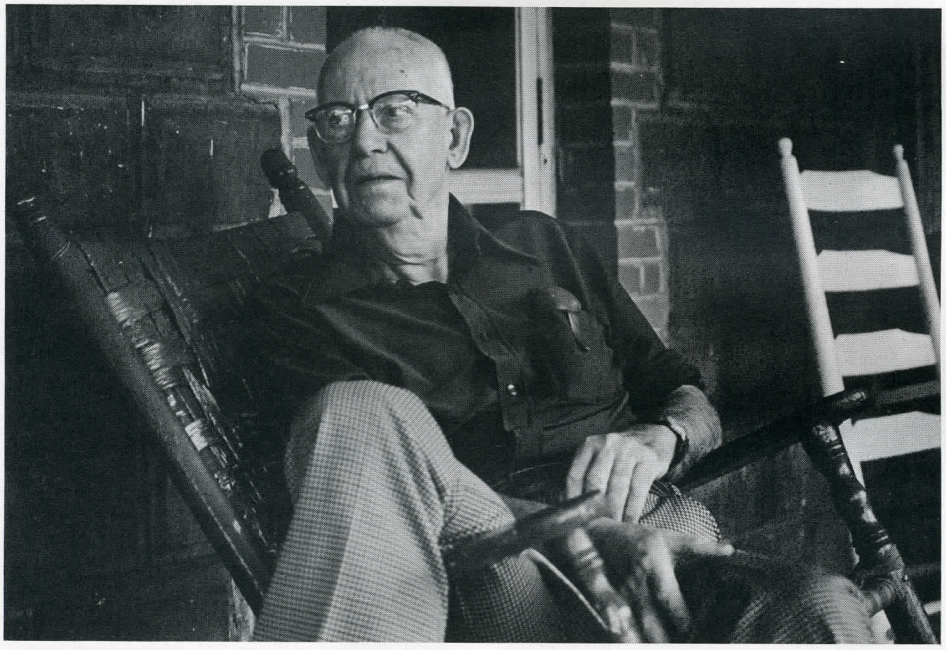
JD Did the drill have a brace on it for you to set it up, or did you actually have to hold it on the base till you'd start the hole?

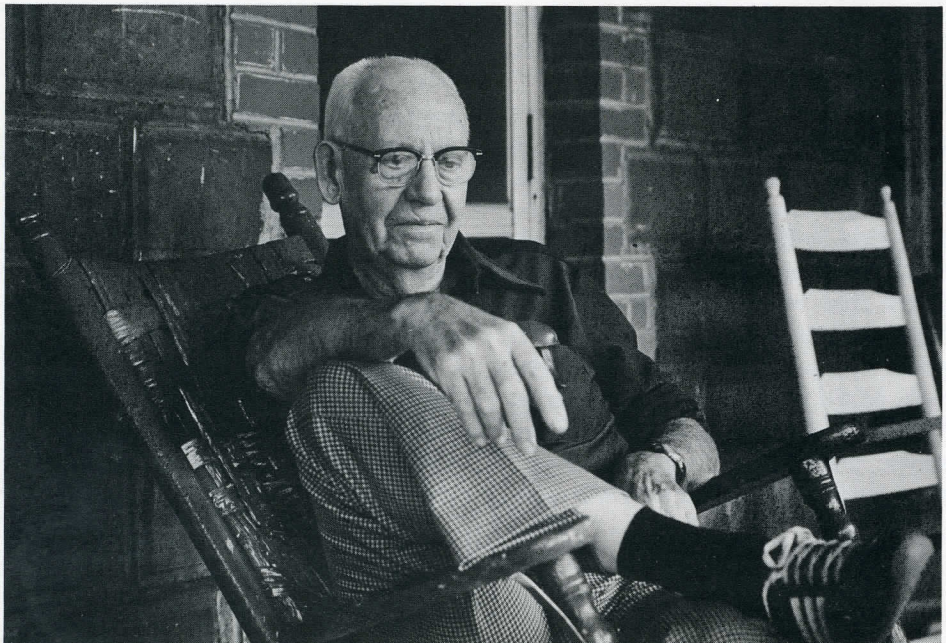
BHM On the heading ones, you had a column, that went up. You'd set one column and you had an arm come out this way, that was fastened on there with U-bolts. And on the other side there was another arm went out. There was a drill over here and one over here. Well, you'd swing them arms around and you run the drill in and out on the arm. You used a two-foot length of steel to start the hole with, and when you run that in, why you just swung the drill around and jerked that steel out and put in a four-foot length, set the drill back on it and kept on till you went on in deep, change about every two feet. Till you get the depth of hole you wanted.

DO Did you have to sharpen your own bits?

BHM No, no, they had a regular bit sharpener. They got the steel in in long pieces, come in a railroad car like a gondola, except it didn't have the bottom dump on it. I guess the







"The shack rouster had one shack he let them play poker in. If they done any drinking there, as long as they were drinking out of a Coca-Cola bottle, it was all right. That was his rake-off — bootlegging in Coca-Cola bottles." Photos by Rick Lee.

steel would be 30, maybe 40 feet long. They'd cut it up into the length they wanted, and turn the lugs on it, so the hammer would catch it, you know. And on the other end, they would make the bit.

DO They maintained the machinery right there?

BHM Yeah, they worked it thataway. And they tempered 'em in fish oil. Man, you talk about something that would make you sick of a night, drop them red-hot steels down in that fish oil! Strong odor! 'Course, we didn't see much of that. That was all done outside. Then they'd bring the steel inside on them little old muck cars. Get it up fairly close, and then every so many drills had what we called a "nipper," a man who carried the steel up to you and took the old steel away. Then you had a helper on the drill.

JD There were two of you on the drill?

BHM Yeah, on the heading drill. On the bench drill there was one, I believe, helper to every two drills. Just so you could change steel.

JD Did you drill so many hours a day and then shoot once a day?

BHM Yeah. Each crew made a cut. You would take the tunnel ahead about six foot. Every time you shot, you'd move ahead about six foot. That meant 12 feet every 24 hours, with the two crews.

The heading drills, the ones that drilled horizontal, they used water on them all the time, but the bench drills they run dry. It was 32 foot wide — I'm talking about Number One heading down here, now. They used 100-watt bulbs, and they was about ten foot apart, strung on a wire. At midnight or two in the morning you couldn't tell whether a man was a white man or a colored

man to look at him across that 32 feet. You'd probably be looking 20 feet or something because he wouldn't be against the rib on that side and you wouldn't either, on the other. The dust couldn't have been no worse, or you couldn't have breathed it. You would have just had to chew it, ate it.

For a good while they used little gasoline motors to haul muck cars out with. They would get carbon monoxide fumes off of that, and I've seen men fall out there. I've helped load as many as 15 on them muck cars at a time, and haul 'em out in the fresh air. Pour a little ammonia into them and they come up out of there vomiting — go back and go to work again.

DO Did you take a break during the shift?

BHM No, wasn't no breaks. Thirty-minute lunch.

DO Where did you live while this project was going on?

BHM I lived in Glen Ferris. I rented a small house, four rooms. I would walk from Hawk's Nest, from the tunnel down to Glen Ferris. When my third child was a baby, she slept in the crib in the room that I slept in and I would come in and go to bed and get up and go back to work. I would never see her awake from Sunday to Sunday.

DO Did the workers come into town on weekends?

BHM No. You never saw much of 'em down around Glen Ferris. You'd see 'em up around Gauley Bridge.

DO Where did the laborers come from?

BHM Most of 'em was colored. You see, Rinehart and Dennis had the contract, and they were from over in North Carolina.* They had tunnel jobs other places. A lot of these colored people had worked for them other places, and they hoboed in on the train. It wasn't nothing to see 15 or 20 people roll off the freight train there and come over and try to get work. They had more help than they could do anything with. Couldn't handle them all.

DO Where did they live?

BHM They had a bunch of shacks up where the golf course is now. Rinehart and Dennis set up the shacks — they charged them rent, you know. They lived up there. Some of them had women with them; some was just five or six men in one shack. Some of them in summertime — and of course it was summer about all the time I worked there — would just lay up there in the brush. They'd do their night shift and go up to the commissary and get 'em a bottle of pop and a five-cent cake or something, and eat that and then crawl back in the brush and sleep until time to go back on shift again.

Up there at the shacks they had a shack rouster they called McCloud — was a white man — who came in there with Rinehart and Dennis. He had one shack he let them play poker in, and he'd cut the pot on them, you know, get a rake-off there. Well, if they done any drinking there, as long as they was drinking out of a Coca-Cola bottle, it was all right. It was $2.00 a bottle, Coca-Cola bottle of moonshine. But if they caught them with anything else, why, he'd take 'em and turn 'em over to the deputy sheriff. They'd take 'em up to Fayetteville. So that was his rake-off. He was bootlegging in Coca-Cola bottles, and if they was drinking his liquor, why, it was all right to drink.

JD Were any of the people who came to work on the tunnel immigrants that the company had picked up in New York and brought here on the train?

BHM No, they didn't bring in no one. 'Course, a lot of them knew Rinehart and Dennis company, you know, 'cause they'd worked other places for them. But they just hoboed from job to job, you know, and go to work. If they could.

DO Mostly black workers?

BHM Oh, yeah, about all black. They had a bunch of black riggers there, that set all the guy derricks and all that stuff. I've seen 'em tighten up the guys on them derricks, be about 40 riggers strung up there. You know how they do on the railroads when they're lining track? Have one singer, you know, and all of them jerk together. Now they could tighten up a rope!

DO They did songs? Cadence songs?

BHM Oh, yeah. Yeah.

DO Was there a store there? Where did they get all their provisions?

BHM They had a little store they called the commissary. They paid in cash every Friday. They got whatever they'd spent in the commissary deducted from their wages, and what was left they got in a little brown envelope. There was a big flat rock right out from the pay office. I've seen 'em walk out there and throw the envelope on the rock and someone else would throw his down, and they'd roll the dice and one of 'em pick up both envelopes. Never

*Actually, the Rinehart and Dennis company was from Charlottesville, Virginia, although many of their black workers did come from North Carolina and other southern states.

looked to see what was in 'em.

There was a concrete inspector, tester. He tested to see if it was up to strength. Name was Patterson, Andy Patterson. And he got all this moonshine. It must have been pretty rotten, because he couldn't drink it. He gave it to this old nipper, and I guess he got pretty high on it, 'cause he missed a shift of work. Patterson asked him, "How was that liquor I give you?" He said, "Just right." "What do you mean, 'just right'?" He said, "If it had been any worse, I couldn't have drunk it. If it had been any better, you wouldn't have give it to me!"

DO How many workers were there, do you know?

BHM I wouldn't have the least idea. More than a hundred. But I don't know how many. They came and went all the time. You couldn't tell who was going where, you know. On the crew I worked on, down at the lower end there, I'd say there was the drillers, the muckers, all told, maybe 60 men to the shift. That's just a guess, I never did count 'em.

After they got under there a-ways, they got electric shovels. Had about a yard and a half bucket on, but they had just a short boom, you know, so they could work inside there. It would pick that rock up, as we shot it down, put in these little cars. They had to get shut of them gasoline motors, and they put an electric-powered, electromotor in there, like a coal mine motor. When they'd clean up all they could get with that big shovel, they had a crew of about 20, maybe 25, with hand shovels, to clean up everything behind.

JD Was the whole tunnel concreted or did you carve it right out of the rock?

BHM We carved this lower end right out of the rock. How far up I don't know. The upper end had to be shored up all the time, 'cause it was shale. They had some cave-ins up there. But this lower end was solid. I think they said it was 96-point-something silica. And that's almost glass.

DO Did they work two shifts?

BHM Oh, yeah, they worked two shifts. Well, the way it was, each crew was supposed to take out a cut. If you got done in nine or ten hours you still got that shift for it, 12 hours. But if it took you 13 hours you still done it. And that held the other crew up, and they had to work like the devil to get back on schedule if you were behind. It took about all of your 12 hours, usually, to get it done.

JD How long did the tunnel take altogether?

BHM Roughly two years. I just worked from in March till up about October the first year. When they was starting. And then I quit.

JD Why did you quit working?

BHM Well, I have a right smart temper, and me and the head foreman had a falling out. How it all come about, we put off a shot — I was running a heading drill — and we wired up and shot and the benchman was supposed to go back and wire theirs up, see. Connect the leads all up and shoot that. Well, one of them heading holes had failed to go off. But while he was wiring up, the blame thing went off. And it just shot like a rifle, straight out. I don't know whether it got him in the back, or it was just the compression of it knocked him down, but he rolled down over them rocks, you know, and got pretty well scratched and banged up. Had to go to the hospital.

There wasn't anyone there was familiar with the territory around there but me, and the foreman asked me if I'd take him down to the hospital. I said, "Yeah." Well, he said, "Take my car. Take him down." So I took him down. To Montgomery. I guess maybe the whole thing took me an hour, an hour and a half, to take him down there and get him in, and I come on back, give the foreman the keys back to the car, and went on back to work, finished the shift. Well, when payday come, that was on Friday, he docked me that hour and a half. That's when it happened. That was it!

I went up to a man at Beckley — I don't remember the contractor, building that road out through there by Bradley — and I went to work on that road there, running the roller. I only worked there about six weeks, and I got a job down here at Alloy when they started building the plant down here. They'd just started digging a hole out for the powerhouse. I went to work there, worked as night mechanic, and worked there until they finished the place.

They finished it up and I had a job lined up at Corpus Christi, Texas; I was going there. The super called me in — they'd laid off 385 men that evening. Called me in the office, I don't know what he wanted with me, and he said, "Do you want to stay here?" And I said, "I've got a job in Texas, I'm going to it." And he said, "Well, I'd like for you to stay on. There'd just be the two of you." Well, I said, "I'm not gonna stay for the money I'm making." He said, "Well, how much do you want?" I said, "I want 75¢." (I was making 50¢ an hour then.) He said, "All right, we'll give you 75¢." So I stayed there about two years, 84 hours a week, 75¢ an hour — in wintertime firing boilers for a little heat in the building, so the stuff wouldn't freeze. In the summertime cut a little grass around outside, what-have-you.

DO How much did you get at the tunnel project?

BHM I think they were paying them about a quarter, but I got 35¢ up there.

DO Do you remember any bad accidents?

BHM I never saw any bad ones on the lower end. On the upper end they had some people got killed with rocks falling. 'Course, it was shaley, they had to keep it cribbed up all the time. Once in a while someone would get killed up there. On the

lower end down here, there wasn't no one ever got killed inside. That one time that shot blew out, cut that boy up, was the worst accident I saw down there.

DO Weren't any people coming in distributing stuff, or asking about things? How working conditions were?

BHM No. I never saw any of them around. One guy came in there with respirators one time and tried to sell them and the company wouldn't buy them. If we had had them they would have helped, but we never got to try them. Anything thick enough, even a handkerchief over your face, would have helped.

DO Did the workers try that?

BHM No. No, I don't know. I guess all the rest were like me, it was just a dirty, messy place to work. I never thought about the health angle of it. I was always used to being outside. Up to that time most of my work was either in the oil fields or the woods. You know you get plenty of good fresh air out there.

DO Did you consider it a good job or bad? How do you remember it?

BHM I remember it as a bad job. But at the time, a job was a job. That was the only thing there was in this whole country. When you got some babies looking at you for something to eat you're going to work.

DO Were people passing out?

BHM I saw 'em pass out on that carbon monoxide gas off them little dinkies. I've saw as many as 15 at a time laying stretched out. They would take them out in the fresh air and pour a little ammonia into 'em. They would up-chuck and stagger off and go back in, go to work.

JD Have you read Skidmore's book?*

BHM Yeah. I think I've got it here now.

JD How would you characterize it?

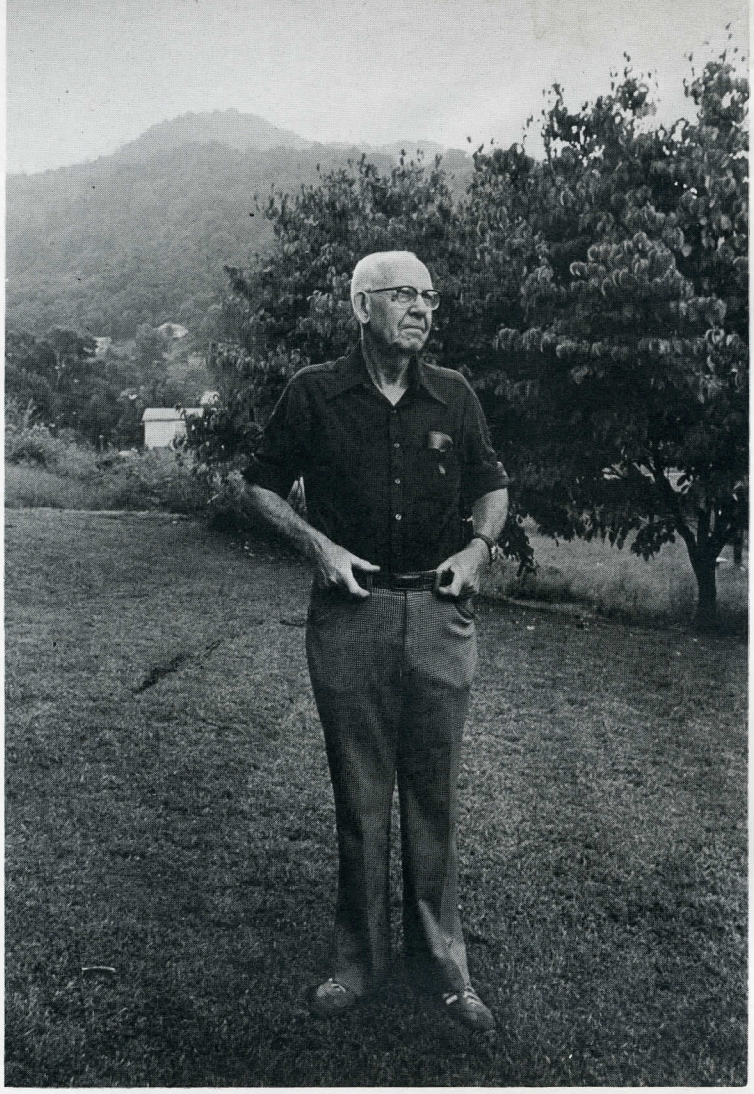
BHM It's about like any other book, it's based on fact, but it's dressed up a little bit. But it is a fact, a lot of it is.

DO There was no union?

BHM No. No union workers at all. Foremen had it just as rough as the men had it. Only difference was, they got a little more money for it. Even the superintendent — I can't think of his name now — died of silicosis. Just lived a little while after the tunnel was finished.

*Hubert Skidmore's novel *Hawk's Nest* (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Co., 1941) is a slightly fictionalized version of the tunnel tragedy.

B.H. Metheney on his front porch at Deep Water. Mrs. Metheney sits in background. Photo by Rick Lee.



Like others, Mr. Metheney contracted silicosis from dust in the tunnel. "The drills would cut a lot faster running dry," he recalls, "so they ran them dry except when they knew the inspector was coming." Photo by Rick Lee.

DO Did the workers stay or move on?

BHM Oh, most of them moved on. A few local people from around here, that had jobs, stayed. But there wasn't very many of 'em lived very long.

DO How did the local people eye the project?

BHM They didn't seem to pay too much attention to it. It'd bring a little money into the community, and everybody was looking at that, more than they was looking at what was going on.

DO Was there anything written on it in the newspapers?

BHM No. I never saw no newspaper articles wrote on it. I didn't pay much attention to a paper anyway.

JD Are there many people around who worked on the tunnel?

BHM No, no. I don't know of any that's living that actually worked in the tunnel except myself, now.

JD Do you think the reason you didn't contract silicosis is due to the small amount of time you spent there in the tunnel?

BHM I've *got* silicosis. Here about 12 or 15 years ago I went to this family doctor up here, I had pleurisy. He wanted me to go down to Charleston, have some X-rays made down there. I had had some here at Montgomery, but he wanted me to go down there and have some made. Schaefer and O'Dell, they're supposed to be the best chest men in Charleston. He wanted them to have a look at me.

I went down there and they made some pictures. O'Dell come in and asked me how long I'd been a bed patient. I told him I never was a bed patient. Still haven't been. Old Doc Stallard told me that if ever I got pneumonia fever I just as well hand in my card, 'cause I was gone.

But it's peculiar, you know. I take a cold, it's always a head cold. I haven't had a chest cold for years. But the top of both of my lungs is completely closed off. Now, as long as I can stand up straight, keep my body pretty well straight, I can do very well, I can do a lot of work. But if I've got to stoop over like I'm shoveling off the floor there, you know, just two or three minutes and I'm out of wind. I'll black out if I stay down there too long. She all cuts off.

DO Then that point of the Skidmore book is true? That almost everyone got silicosis?

BHM Oh, yeah. There's no question about it. There was a fellow worked in there, he was a steel nipper, carried steel to us. His name was Street, Walter Street. And I saw his lungs up here at old Doc Harless' office, and they was so solid, you couldn't stick a penknife in 'em.

DO Did they have a big opening ceremony when the tunnel was finished?

BHM I don't think so. When they got the tunnel drove through, they come down to the lower end and put the penstocks in. They had to put the tubes in there and seal it, so that the water wouldn't come out around it. It comes out, sort of on an angle, and there's four tubes running off of it and they're about 14 feet in diameter, each one of 'em are. Each one of them goes down to a turbine wheel. Them wheels down in there, they're big enough that you can walk around in them. That's all underground, you can't see it. But there's manholes, you can go down in there, and it's just like a great big cavity down in there, you know. All around them tubes.

Well, after they got them tubes in, they filled 'em with water and then they hammer-tested them. And a panel jumped out of one about as big as a door. Of course, all that water

come out and a fellow by the name of Hall, he was an engineer, he drowned in there. One fellow, somehow or other, it shot him right up through that manhole. He come out, whoosh!

JD We've heard people say that they send people down inside the tunnel to inspect the concrete. Do you know if that's true?

BHM There haven't been nobody in there since they put the water in it. 'Course, there was men all through it before they put the water through it. But since then, no.

I heard a conversation one time, after it had been going for a while. They said if they took the water pressure all off, they'd have a lot of rock fall. And I believe they would. I think so. See, there's a lot of pressure in there with that water. You've got a 56-foot hole through there, and I think it's about a 171-foot drop from the dam to the surge. That's a lot of pressure. That big chunk that jumped out of the penstock was about three-quarters thick, welded in there, you know. After that happened, they put two-inch diameter, I think, bands around it. Locked around each of them penstocks.

DO Do you have any pictures of the work you did?

BHM No, I don't have any around there at all.

DO Or anything of the project?

BHM No, no.

DO You've never seen anybody have pictures of the project, people, crew workers?

BHM No, I don't think they let you take a picture if they knowed. I don't think they would. I never seen anybody try it. That would just be my opinion, that they wouldn't have let you done it noways.

DO Did the plant have security people around?

BHM Yeah, they had security up there. They didn't have it around the tunnel so much as they did around where they had their shacks, like the shack rouster, he was the security, you know. He was deputized sheriff, deputy sheriff, you know. But he was paid by the contractor. He was their man. See, they had three camps. Each place had about the same kind of a set-up.

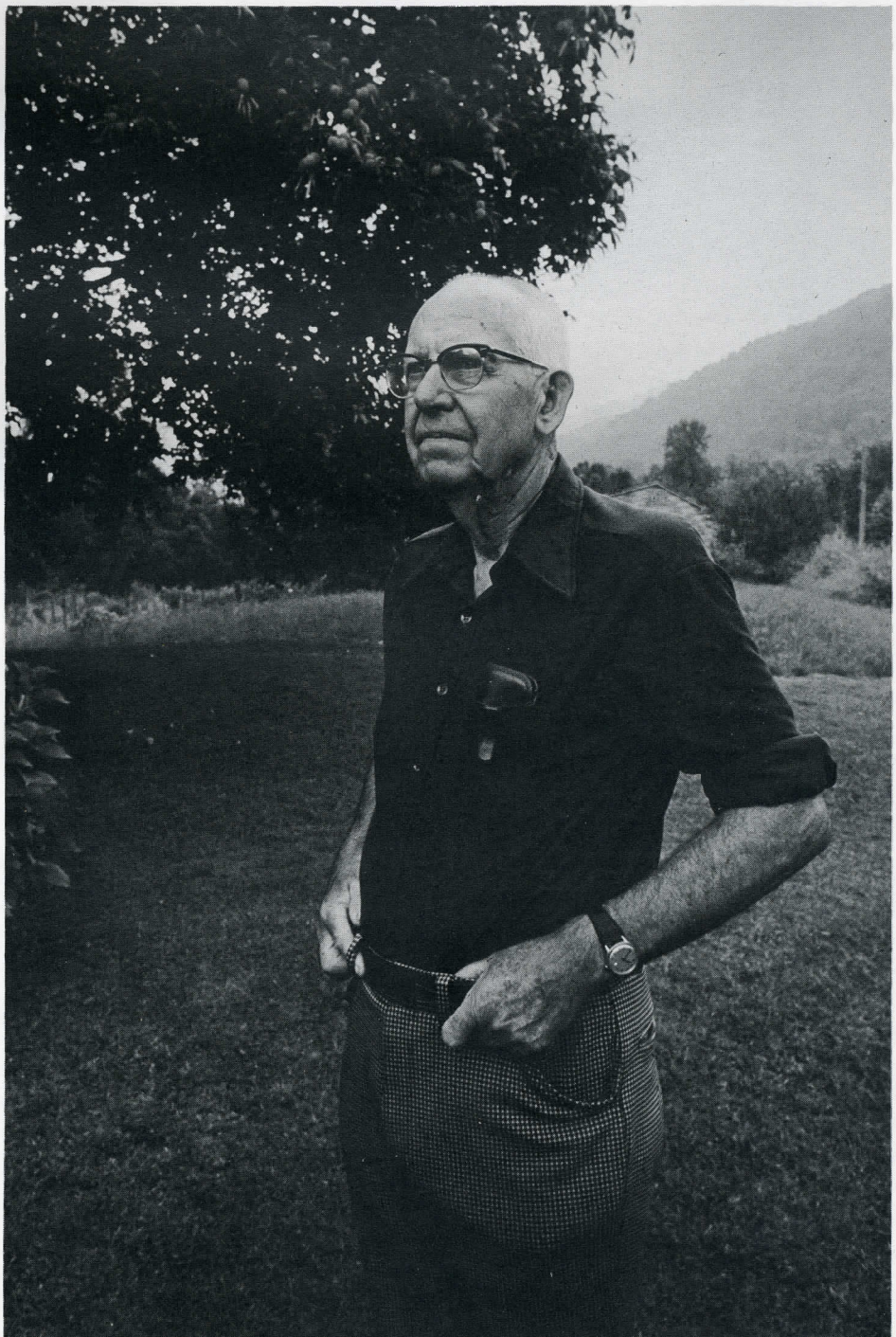
JD Where were the other two camps? You said one was up by where the golf club is.

BHM Yeah, well, one was down in there where the surge basin is and then the other was up where the water goes in, up at the dam. They kept 'em pretty close. They kept the work force pretty close to the tunnel, because the only way they had of getting there was to walk.

DO Is that contractor still around, do you know?

BHM No, no, they went bankrupt. They had a lot of lawsuits over that tunnel and all, and they wound up bankrupt. I never did see where Rinehart and Dennis ever had a contract anywhere else after they was up here.

Local people "didn't seem to pay too much attention," Mr. Metheney remembers. The tunnel brought "a little money into the community, and everybody was looking at that, more than they was looking at what was going on." Photo by Rick Lee.



"A Good Part of Life"

Remembering the Civilian Conservation Corps

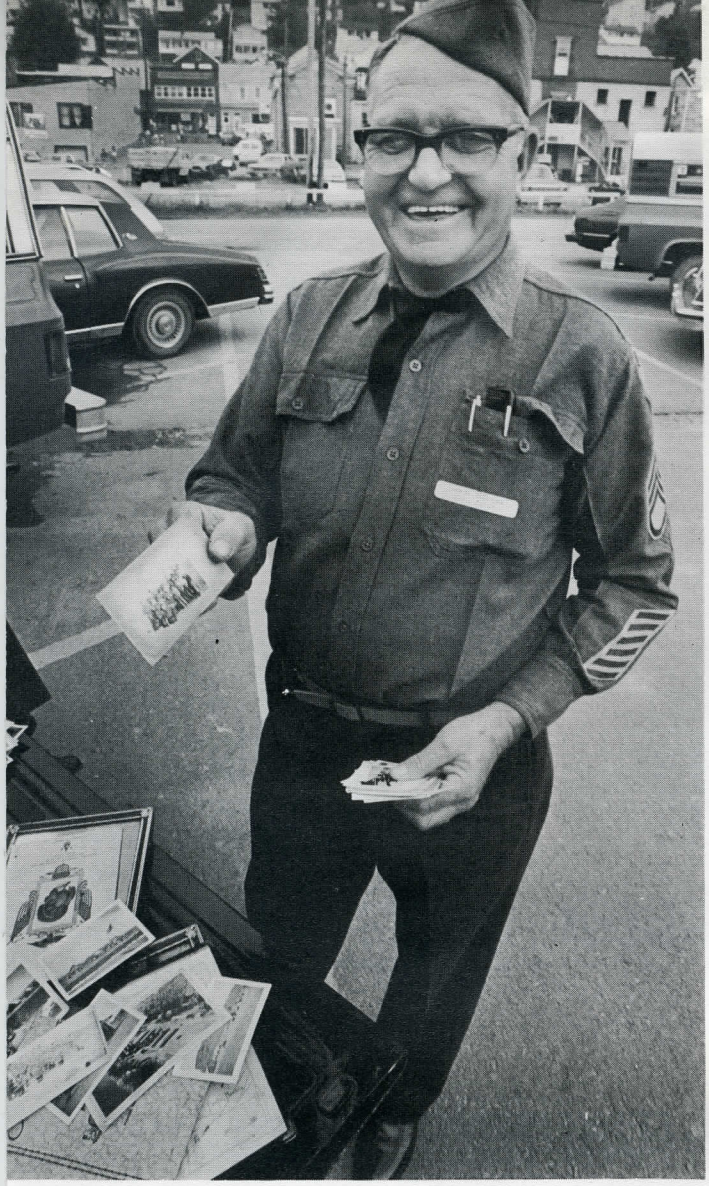
By Yvonne Snyder Farley

Photographs by James Samsell

"They were the three best years of my life," said John W. Brogan, Sr., speaking of his time in the Civilian Conservation Corps. Brogan was talking with friends at an August reunion in Richwood of West Virginia veterans of the Depression-era Corps. This was the third year for their reunion, which coincides with Richwood's annual Cherry River Festival.

Over 55,000 West Virginia men participated in the popular New Deal program (1933-42), established to relieve unemployment by providing national conservation work for young unmarried men between 18 and 25. Although the CCC accomplished much, it is probably best remembered for the work it did in our national forests and state parks. And those who have the best memories of that work are the "CCC boys" themselves, who are near or in their 60's today. They are members of the generation which suffered the Great Depression and the Second World War. In fact, many went directly from the CCC into the armed services. Now returned with wives, children, and a few grandchildren, the men were talking about a time in their lives which most of them felt had been good. No matter whom you talked to, there was recognition that the CCC experience was something in life a man could point to with pride.

Brogan, who said he was "kicked



Below: Earl Dillon (left) and Ray Grounds (right) with unidentified friend, at Hubbard Ranch motor pool. Photographer unknown, courtesy Charlie Page.
Bottom: CCC boys lived in tents while constructing camp Thornwood in Pocahontas County. Photographer unknown, 1933.

Opposite: Richwood welcomes the CCC boys.
Above left: Charleston native John W. Brogan still fits his CCC uniform after more than 40 years.

out of the first grade for not shaving," entered the CCC on July 1, 1934. The Charleston native was sent to Fort Knox, Kentucky, for a physical examination, and then moved on to Idaho, California, and Nevada. Perhaps his proudest memory was that his outfit moved two mountains of crystallized salt at Lake Mead, Nevada. Today it's Lake Mead Recreational Area, and Lake Mead is the reservoir for the giant Hoover Dam.

Brogan was outfitted in a 46-year-old CCC shirt complete with stripes and wore an olive green hat to match. On his sleeve was an "Espirit de Corps" emblem, which he said was pronounced "Spirit de Corpse." He brought with him to Richwood a collection of CCC memorabilia, including an old camp menu, and he's been back west to visit the sites of some of the camps where he was stationed. Brogan is not alone in his nostalgia for the CCC. There is a revival of interest in the program and its accomplishments. In fact, there is a National Association of Civilian Conservation Corps Alumni (NACCCA) which is serious about establishing a CCC museum in a national park or forest — particularly one where the CCC was involved in its building or development.

The day's activities, which were sponsored by the Richwood *News Leader*, began with an early morning registration and social time at the Richwood City Hall. Typical of those attending was Wayne F. Blake of Weston, who spent 1938-40 at nearby Camp Cranberry. There were two CCC camps in the Monongahela National Forest surrounding Richwood — Camp Cranberry and Camp Woodbine. In the CCC Blake became a mechanic at age 17. He's been back to Camp Cranberry's site but said that all that remains is a sign to commemorate the spot. "It was a good part of life," said Blake. "A lot of young people need that now." Blake, like many of those who were at the reunion, especially liked the semi-military organization of the CCC. He thought something similar

John Arnold of Charleston was the Camp Hubbard Ranch bugler. His buddies at the 1980 reunion remembered him with affection, but one recalled he "could hit those sour notes." Photograph by Charlie Page, courtesy Earl Dillon.

to the CCC would be a good idea today.

Another man who spoke of the personal benefits of the CCC was Elmer Adkins of Beckley. He was sent to Camp Wickup in LaPinne, Oregon, working there from 1937 to 1939. In the CCC he said that he gained the ability to look after himself. "The CCC gave you a lot of responsibility and self-reliance," he said. "And it helped me later in the army." Adkins added that the CCC allowed him to see the country free of charge.

During most the the morning at City Hall, the CCC men and their families spent time exchanging stories, looking at old photos, and catching up on the news. One man grabbed the microphone and asked for those who had been at Camp Greenbrier to meet him by the stage. In another corner several men were swapping stories. "When were you there? Was old Captain so-and-so still there? He was a mean one!" They'd laugh and chuckle. Sometimes it was sad. There was news of a spouse's death, or some other reminder that it has been almost 50 years since these men were CCC boys.

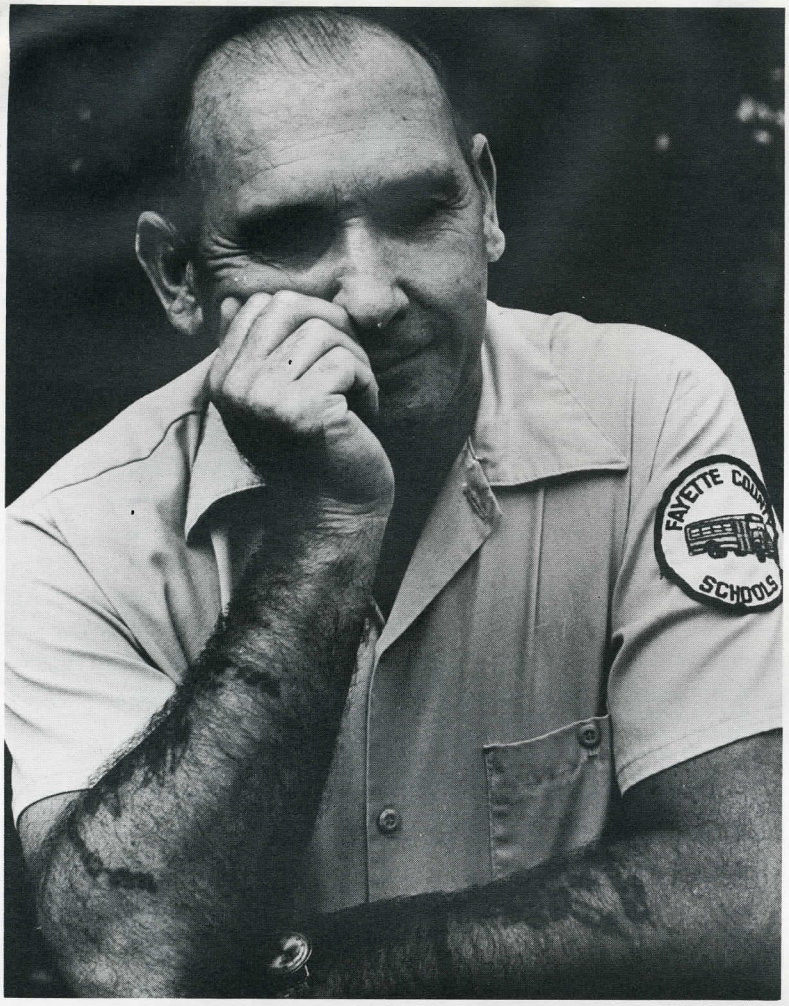
It was late in the morning by the time Senator Jennings Randolph arrived to speak to them. Randolph had a special significance at the reunion because he is the only current member of the U.S. Congress who served during the special session called by Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1933, when the CCC was authorized through the Emergency Conservation Act. Perhaps the most amazing fact in the origins of the CCC is the speed with which it was done: President Roosevelt urged such legislation on March 21, 1933; Congress passed the act ten days later, and by April 17, 1933, the first camp, Camp Roosevelt, was established in the George Washington National Forest, at Edinburgh, Virginia. Within the first year as many as 300,000 young men were enrolled in the Corps. Randolph said that the first CCC enrollee was Henry Rich of nearby Virginia. "Would you believe it? I knew him — I met him."

Labeling the CCC "a peacetime army to combat the destruction and erosion of our natural resources," Randolph told them that under the direction of Robert Fechner the CCC made a lasting contribution to life in America. He gave them the statistics: 3,470 fire towers were erected; over 84 million acres of agricultural land were made available through construction of drainage systems; 972 million fish were stocked in lakes, rivers, and ponds; 2.6 million acres were planted or seeded — reclaimed from the ravages of erosion; 38,550 bridges were constructed; 9,805 reservoirs were created. There were 26 CCC camps in West Virginia and Randolph said he had visited 14 of them. "Fifty-five thousand men lent their abilities to the efforts in the Mountain State," he noted. Before the program ended, nearly three million men participated in what was "the most significant manpower program in our nation's history," he said.

The Senator might have expanded his list, for the Corps also built ranger cabins, campgrounds, fire trails, dams, telephone lines, lakes, and roads. They fought tree and plant diseases as well as forest fires. Their works seem to have been endless in number and variety.

Generally, the CCC is regarded as a success, and one source says that Roosevelt, a conservationist, had envisioned it as a permanent agency. But by 1942 the program yielded to the demands of a wartime economy and was abandoned. An important by-product of the CCC was the acquisition of more than seven million acres of public forest lands for the boys to work on. Over $44 million was spent for additional forest lands.

But primarily the CCC program was aimed at conservation of America's unemployed young men. It provided healthy and productive work in a hopeless time. As Randolph described it: "The greatest contribution of the CCC was, however, to the spirit of our great nation. At a time when our country's fortunes were, perhaps, at their lowest ebb, the



Left: Earl Dillon of Oak Hill reflects on his days in the CCC. *Below:* Sharing scrapbook memories together are Francis Austin of Grafton who served at Camp Copperhead, Claude B. Smith of Oak Hill who was a mess sergeant at Camp Cranberry, and Howard Gabbert of Parkersburg who spent time at a California camp.

Civilian Conservation Corps, and its members, gave new-found hope and optimism to those suffering through the Depression."

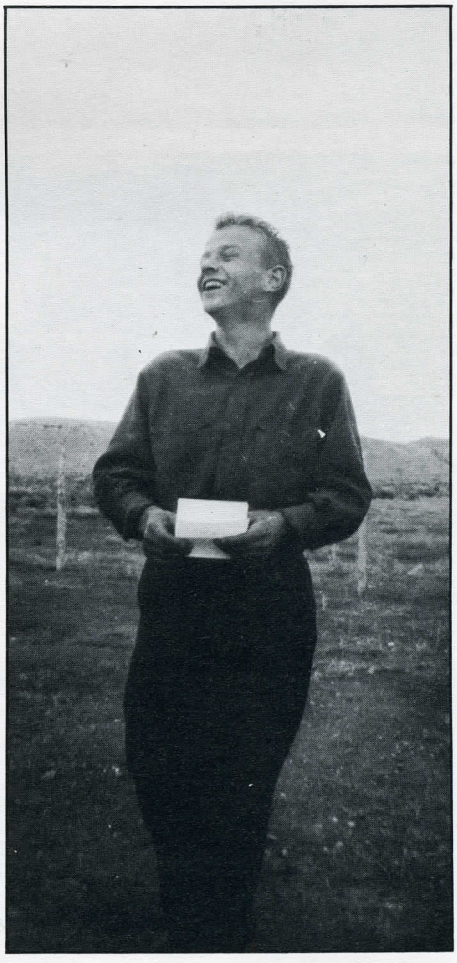
After the Senator's speech, people began leaving for the Cherry River parade through downtown Richwood. Some of the CCC men would ride on the local fire truck while others would walk the parade route. Frances Austin of Grafton had a special Camp Copperhead banner made up for the occasion.

Outside the city building four men who had served with Company G-108 at Camp Hubbard Ranch, Nevada, were reunited. Earl Dillon of Oak Hill, Ray Grounds of Ohley, and Charles Page of Ripley had met together just two years ago, Dillon said. But this year in Richwood the three found comrade Jim Hall of Bolt, whom they hadn't seen in 38 years. The men helped build a road to Angel Lake in the Ruby Mountains, said Dillon.

The Festival parade was a good one. There were bagpipers in yellow and black kilts trading the usual stories about a Scotsman's underwear with the CCC boys. The former enrollees made some use of the politicians working the crowd by asking them to autograph an old CCC vehicle license plate. Not all of the men who marched in the parade had spent their CCC years around Richwood, but the crowds didn't seem to care. Bystanders were cheering and applauding the Corps vets as they passed by.

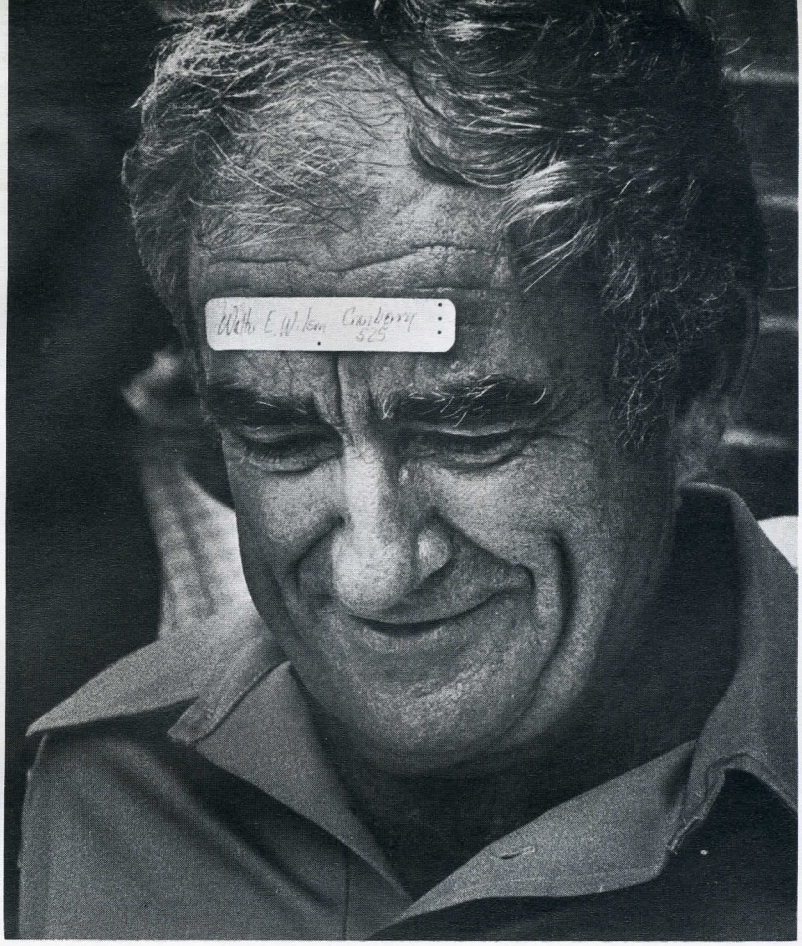
After the parade those who had not already departed for home paid a visit to the former site of Camp Woodbine in Monongahela National Forest outside Richwood. There's nothing there now but a public picnic shelter, a grassy meadow where the barracks once stood, and a wooden sign. It's a beautiful spot and one can't help thinking what a rugged but healthy environment it was for a camp. The place evoked conversation and memories among the CCC veterans about the years they spent at such camps all over America. It was the Depression, and a time "when you couldn't buy a job," said one man. The recruits lived in work camps operated by the Army. They started off with $30 a month — $25 of which was sent home to their families. If a boy earned a raise he could keep it, but the folks back home still got the $25. The salaries were supplemented by room, board, medical

Left: Ray Grounds and Earl Dillon at Camp Hubbard Ranch. Both men came to the 1980 reunion. Photograph by Charlie Page, courtesy Earl Dillon.
Center: Red Argenbright of Oak Hill, with unidentified buddy. Photograph by Charlie Page, courtesy Earl Dillon.
Right: Oakie Harlow of Parkersburg enjoys mail call. Photograph by Charlie Page, courtesy Earl Dillon.



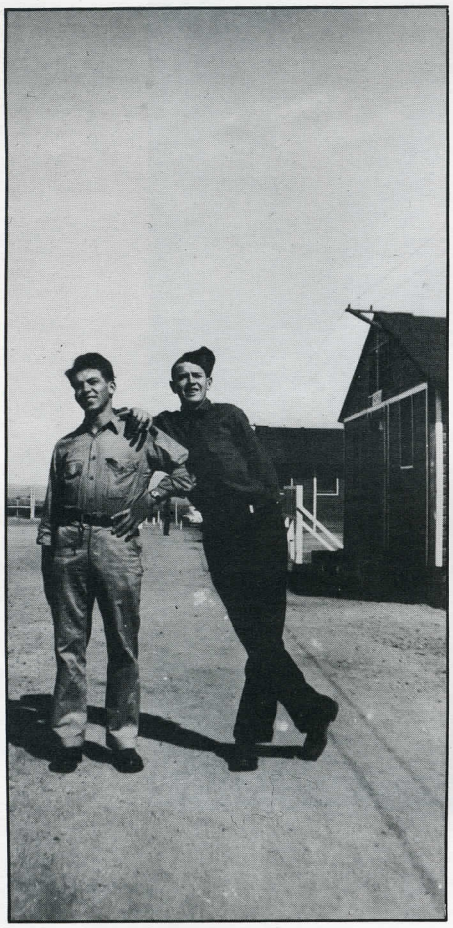
care, and other necessities. And there was vocational training. It was good work and a chance to earn money when there were no other opportunities.

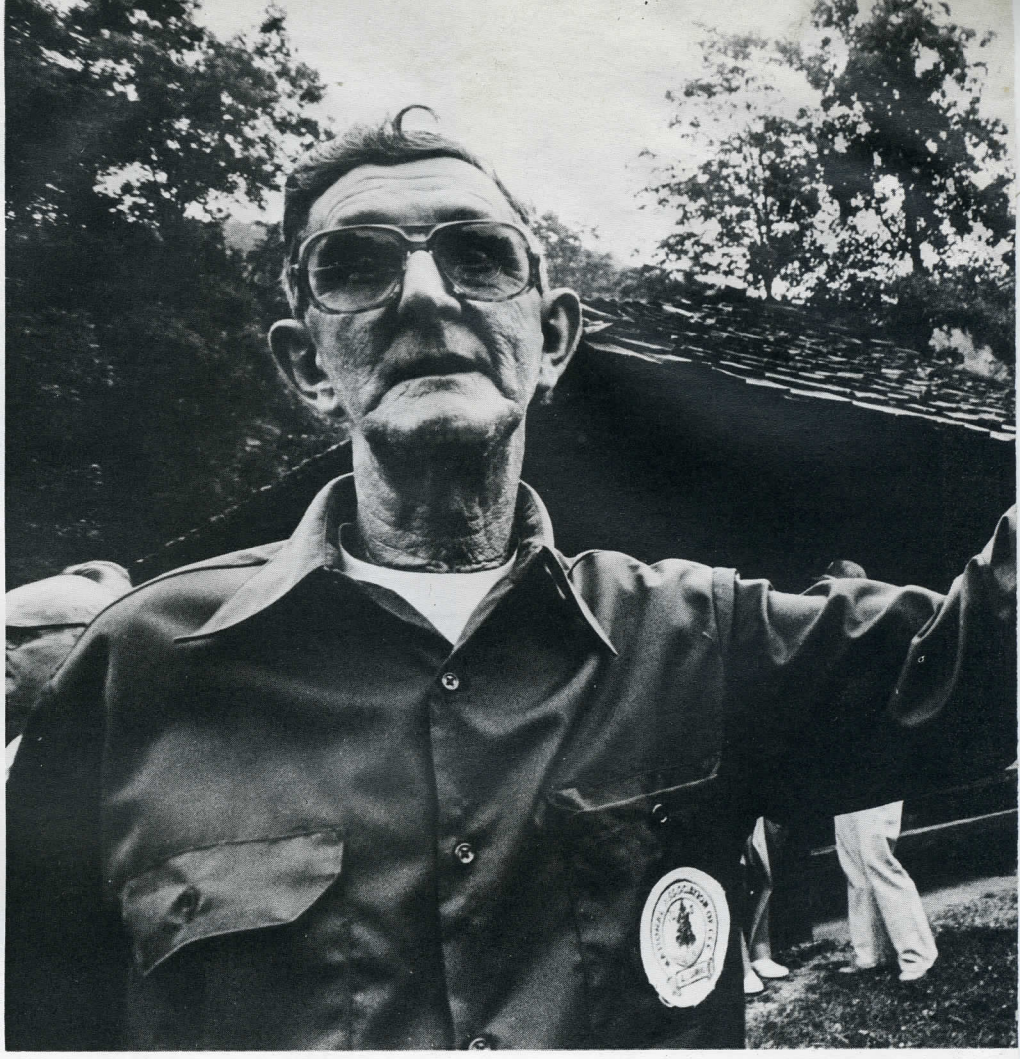
Sanford Duff, Frank Vance, Bernard Counts, and Herbert Lane stood next to the picnic shelter talking about those days. Duff said that he was stationed not far away at Camp Cranberry and remembers that the boys there helped build a fire tower and a road. As he stood at the former Woodbine site, he said that he helped dismantle the camp in 1939-40. According to the men, there were five barracks in each camp (which were similarly constructed and arranged), as well as a mess hall, recreation hall, administration building, educational building, officers' quarters, and Forest Service head-



Right: Walter W. Wilson was stationed at Camp Cranberry.

Below: Reunited again are four CCC buddies who spent time together at Camp Hubbard Ranch, Wells, Nevada. They are Ray Grounds of Ohley, Charlie Page, Jr., of Ripley, Earl Dillon of Oak Hill, and Jim Hall of Bolt. It was the first time Grounds, Page, and Dillon had seen Hall in 38 years.





Left: Duane Poling and Chester M. Lee. Photograph by Charlie Page, courtesy Earl Dillon.
Center: Harold Courtney of Fairmont recalls his CCC days in front of the picnic shelter at site of Camp Woodbine outside of Richwood. He was head transit man on a road survey team, operating out of nearby Camp Cranberry.
Right: Francis Austin of Grafton collects money in old CCC hat.

quarters. A full company was 260 strong, they said.

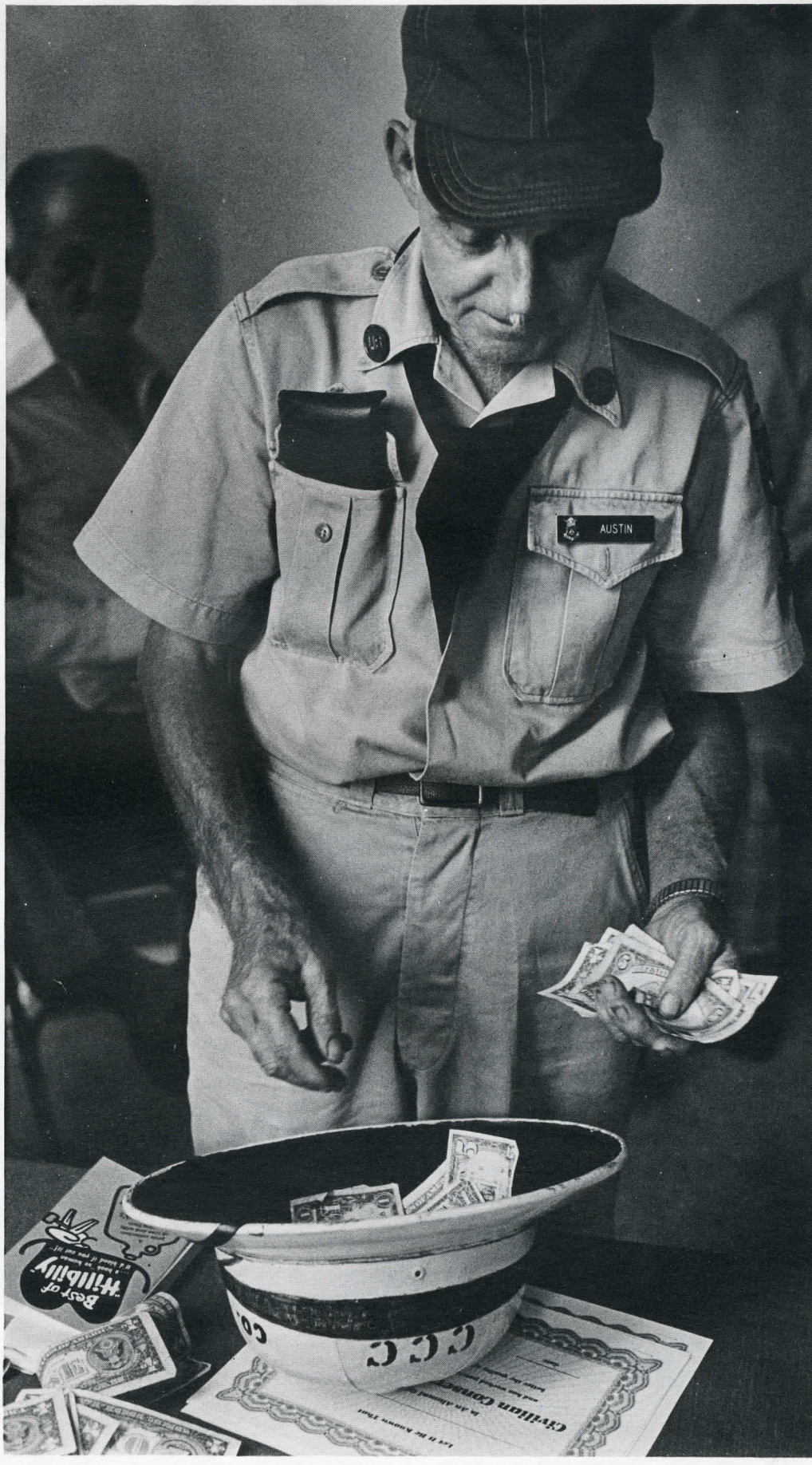
They remembered "KP" duty and the leaves to go home. People enlisted for six months at a time. You couldn't own a car, and if you got married they threw you out. There were some black enrollees in the mostly white camps, but the men said that there was an all-black camp in McDowell County.

One of the duties they recalled was gathering firewood for the pot-bellied stoves which stood at each end of the barracks. "The guy who slept close to the stove slept good," said Claude Smith of Oak Hill, "but the rest were cold. Sometimes your shoes would be frozen to the floor." With distaste they talked about "police call" every morning, when they would be called upon to pick up all the trash. There was reveille in the morning and guard duty at night.

For recreation they said that they played baseball and had Ping-Pong and pool tables in the recreation hall. There was a canteen where they bought cigarettes. There were no televisions or transistor radios, and the Corps vets figured today's young people would find that hard to accept. And, when they began talking about the life of the camp, it was inevitable they would also remember the pranks — short-sheeting the unfortunate, putting salt and pepper in the beds, and even hanging a comrade's bed from the ceiling. They were taught arts and crafts, and there was usually a teacher who "encouraged people to better themselves."

Not all West Virginia boys stayed in the state. Marvin "Red" White, Jr., of Moatsville, enlisted when he was 14, by stretching his age a bit. A farm boy, he thought he would be sent to nearby Laurel Creek. Instead, he found himself in Camp Pass Creek at MacKay, Idaho. Bernard Counts was among 1,600,000 CCC enrollees who went by train to California. He said they had a lot of cheese sandwiches to eat along the way, and he got several knowing nods of recollection at the mention of those sandwiches. Near San Bernardino, California, Counts said he remembers fighting a fire for 30 hours along with other CCC boys. Afterwards, they were rewarded "by the old captain" with steaks.

Asked what they thought about the possibility of such a program as the CCC today, there was a unani-



mous feeling that it would be a good thing, but that it wouldn't work. They mentioned grandchildren and other young people they knew and shook their heads. They felt it was a shame, because they had learned valuable things in the CCC. They liked the military discipline and the work. "The only time you sat down," said Earl Dillon in a later visit to his Oak Hill home, "was when you ate."

Finally the gnats and the fading light brought the day to a quiet conclusion. If the reunion had a message, it was that not only had the Civilian Conservation Corps made a tremendous contribution to our country's natural resources, but also to the lives of the thousands of men who participated in the work-relief program.

The administration building and former swimming pool at Babcock State Park, built by the CCC in the 1930's. The stonework was done by the CCC boys under the supervision of an Italian foreman.

The Civilian Conservation Corps and Babcock State Park

Yvonne Snyder Farley Interviews Jennings Boley

Photographs by James Samsell

When Jennings Boley of Charleston first came to Fayette County's Babcock State Park in 1935 as a young CCC enrollee, it was nothing but a burned-over and desolate canyon. Today Babcock's Boley Lake is named for the former assistant State Park Chief, and Boley himself has retired after 42 years with the state Department of Natural Resources. Babcock is one of the loveliest state parks in West Virginia and much more has been done there since the 1930's, but Babcock's special beauty remains in the solid and distinctive work done by the men of the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Great Depression.

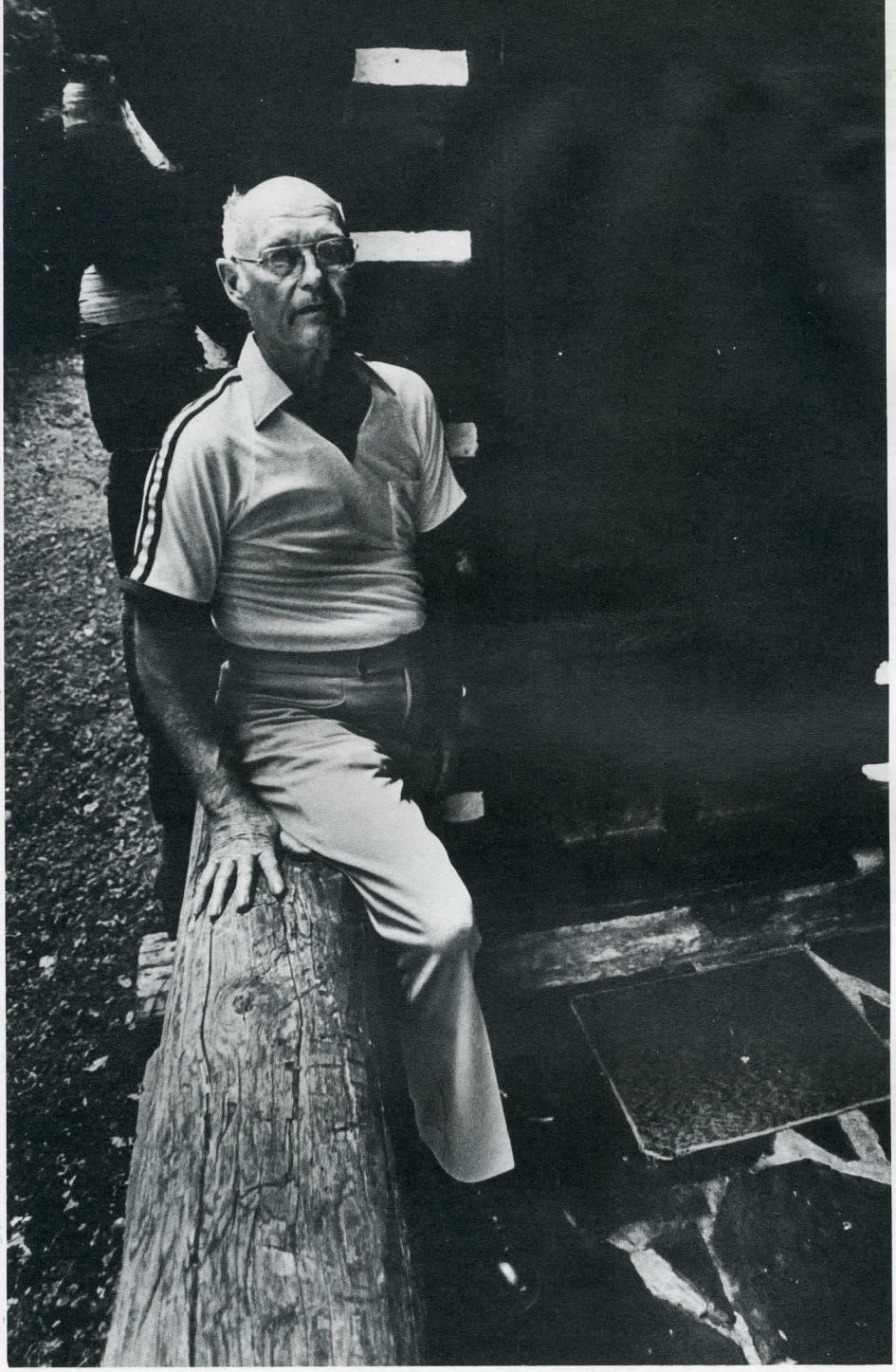
Jennings Boley entered the Corps in September 1935 as a Local Experience Man (LEM). When he got out of Bluefield Business College there wasn't any work to be had, so he had returned to the family farm at Russelville. Boley said he was so "green" when he read in the newspaper that the government was planning a state park at nearby Clifftop, he had no idea what that meant. He said he imagined it might be something like a zoo. He could type 60 words a minute and knew shorthand, accounting, and bookkeeping. He got the job.

"I had to do all of the typing and record keeping — all those trucks, gasoline, and oil — and requisitioning all the materials for those camps. Plumbing, commodes — everything you can think of that goes in there. It fell to me to check all the trucks with the equipment coming in," he said. It was all brand new for Boley, and he finally found a big hardware book to help him identify the different materials coming into the camps. "It was some experience for me!"

For this work Boley started out at $30 a month (the standard CCC rate), went to $36 and finally $45. Forty-five dollars was the top wage for a CCC "boy," he said. In 1937 Boley became park ranger at Babcock. He then left the CCC and received his discharge papers.

"Babcock State Park was burned-over land belonging to the Babcock Coal and Coke Company," Boley stated. "They practically gave it to the state for a dollar an acre." He explained that the coal company was actually ready to rid itself of the land because of taxes and the Depression. One part of the original purchase — where the old Cooper's Grist Mill was located — was bought separately from a family in Lewisburg. Emphasizing the worthlessness of the area which would someday be Babcock State Park, he said, "There wasn't anything to buy — only a patch of rocks. There wasn't anything but sheer cliffs on each side down through there."

At one time the Babcock canyon was full of beautiful hemlock trees. "We had an area in there above the park they called the 'Shades of Death,' where the sun never shined through the hemlock and they could find ice in there in July. That's the kind of timber they had in there when they went in and started cutting." The timber had been removed from the Babcock canyon by a local lumber company. Later the sawmill was deserted and the need for coal brought a branch railroad through the area. The railroad ran down along Glade Creek from Landisburg (a mile upstream), right behind the present Glade Creek Grist Mill, past the stone swimming pool built by the CCC, behind the cabins and on to Sewell where there were coke ovens, a tipple, and the C&O main line



Jennings Boley sits on log railing outside a CCC-built cabin at Babcock State Park. Boley was there when it was built, later became the Babcock superintendent.

through the New River Gorge. When Landisburg was abandoned, so was the branch line.

An old railroad man once told Boley how the canyon came to be burned out. There was a lot of dry timber left in the area from lumbering times. "Why, that feller told me that a spark [from a train] got out somewhere down around Sewell, and he told me it was just like lighting kerosene. It went up there so fast it just cleaned out everything in one hour. He said you couldn't have run fast enough to get out of there," Boley stated.

In 1935 the state decided to do something with the land at Clifftop. Two CCC camps were located there: Camp Beaver (1522 SP-3), and Camp Lee (532 SP-6). The old mining town of Clifftop bordered the park and the two camps were set up on both sides of old Route 60. The park entrance was just two miles down the road from Clifftop and work crews traveled back and forth to the park in trucks. The original camp buildings are gone today, but one of Babcock's current campgrounds is located at the former site of Camp Lee. Each camp had its own infirmary, kitchen, barracks, ambulances, trucks, and so forth. Camp Lee and Camp Beaver each had four or five barracks with about 50 boys in each.

The army had charge of housing, feeding, and clothing. "Those CCC kitchens were something terrific. They were big," said Boley. He said that the kitchen had a CCC boy as head cook. That job paid $45 a month. The head cook then trained others as dishwashers and assistant cooks.

After work call in the morning, said Boley, the boys were turned over to the Technical Service under the direction of Jim Baldwin, Sr. "It was run just exactly like an army camp. You got up in the morning and you had reveille. Went over and stood while they raised the flag. Then everybody marched to the mess hall where they had their breakfast. Then came over [to the park] and were turned over to the Technical Service," stated Boley. "When you returned in the evening you had retreat, lowering of the flag, and everybody was turned back over to the army."

The former CCC boy has high praise for the army's discipline. "One of the first captains we had at Beaver when I was in there was Captain Enslow. I'm telling you, he was a real captain. He was *army*. And you know you can't appreciate real army until you get another captain that's weaker than he is — because the boys had a tendency to take advantage of them. But they couldn't take advantage of Captain Enslow because if we had an argument or a fight between boys, which happened very often, he was big enough. He would take them in the boxing ring and whip them, too. That's the way he worked."

There was also an unforgettable first sergeant named Ruggles. "He

was a little fiery rascal. I'm telling you he was tougher than any pine knot you ever saw." Boley thinks the leadership of the CCC camps was the greatest thing about them. "It worked out fine," he said of army supervision. "Some of those army boys knew how to have discipline; I tell you, those boys would march the line."

Boley went on to say, "You take a lot of times in the winter, the army wouldn't even turn them over to us for work, because the temperatures would get down to 10 or 15 degrees below zero and they would freeze to death. But they did take them out and march them on the highway, that old Route 60 that ran through there — there wasn't much traffic — just to make them boys have some exercise." Asked if the boys had to work, Boley replied that "those who wanted to — did." There was a list for those who didn't.

There was an educational advisor and the boys were given various kinds of education and training — most of it vocational. "A lot of the boys came out of there as good stonemasons, good carpenters, and some as draftsmen or engineers," Boley said. The boys came from "every walk of life," and some had had college training.

There was recreation, too. Boley said every Friday night there would be a square or round dance for the boys in the recreation halls on both sides of the road. The camps even had their own CCC orchestras. "We took trucks and went into Rainelle, Winona, Lookout, and Ansted and picked up girls and brought them in." That reminded Boley of a funny incident. "I never forget one time they had a boy down in Clifftop.... He didn't have much hair on his face — and girls was kind of a scarce thing — so he dressed up like a girl and went up that night and had a big time, he just danced with all the boys." Boley said things went well until one CCC boy decided to escort the masquerader home from the dance and discovered that "she" was a "he." "It took the rest of the camp to keep the imposter from getting killed." That memory had Boley hooting with laughter.

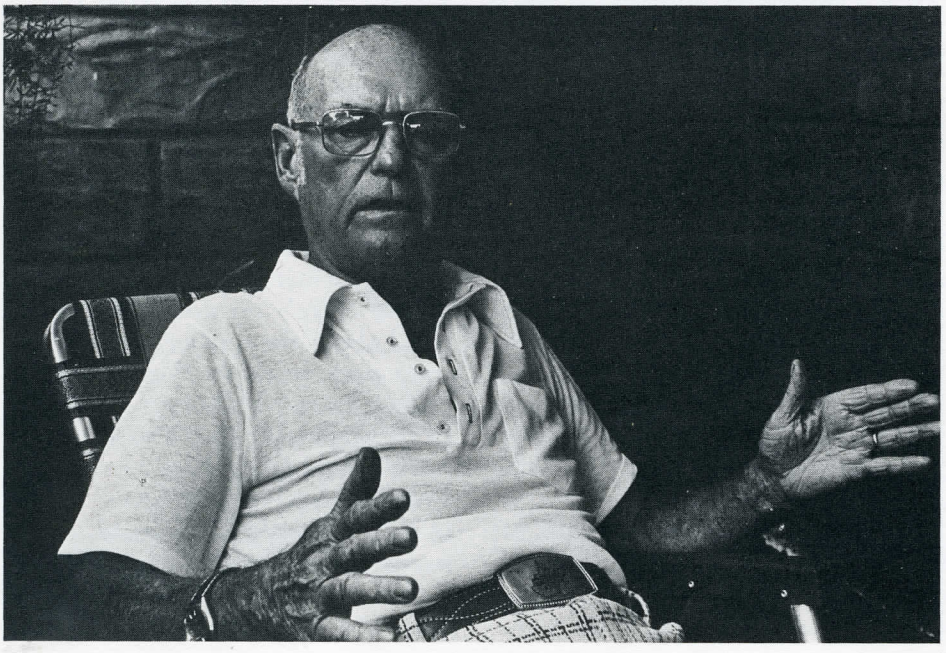
Once a week the boys would be loaded up in two or three of the camp trucks and taken to the movies. In those days the show cost 25¢. The trucks would wait and bring them back to camp. The boys could sign out over the weekends, but since most of those at Camps Lee and Beaver were from Ohio, few did. Boley theorized that may have been one reason why Ohio boys were sent to West Virginia and West Virginia boys were shipped to other states. It was more effective, because otherwise the camps would have been empty on weekends.

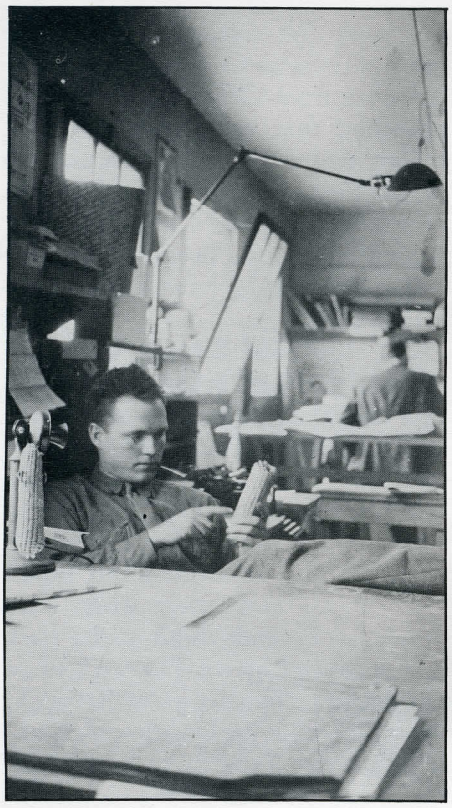
The Technical Service, which supervised the work at Babcock, had its own office with engineers, draftsmen, and architects. The architects were paid $188 per month and received free housing. They did have to pay about $30 a month for meals. All plans for the administration building, cabins, and other work were drawn up by staff there at the park and approved by the Department of the Interior. The camps at Babcock, like other state park camps at Watoga, Cacapon, Lost River, and Ogleby, were operated by the Conservation Commission of West Virginia in cooperation with the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior. West Virginia also had federal forest camps in the Monongahela National Forest and Soil Conservation Camps under the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The organization and work done by the Civilian Conservation Corps naturally depended on the federal supervisory agency.

Other "outside" help included a skilled stonemason foreman who supervised the park's stone quarry and work on the administration building. He, like four or five other stonemasons hired at that time, was an Italian from Fayetteville. Boley said some of the boys learned to do stonework from these men.

The CCC also built a dam in front of the administration building, which created a public swimming pool. Modern health requirements later demanded a new park pool, but the CCC stonework is still in place. "You know," Boley said, "there's a beautiful piece of work in that stonework on that dam. You look at that wall from the administration building over there and the curvature on

Jennings Boley of Charleston is a former CCC enrollee who continued in conservation work with the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources. He came to Babcock State Park when there was "nothing there."





Left: Jennings Boley at the Camp Beaver office in 1935. Photographer unknown, courtesy Jennings Boley.
Above: Postcard view of Babcock State Park cabin no. 311, built in 1936 by the CCC. Photograph by George Hubbs, 1940.

it, that wall is about three or four feet thick at the bottom. But it winds up to about 30 inches on top. There's no way that wall will ever come out of there."

The CCC built 13 log cabins and 13 "board-and-batt" cabins. Ten of the log cabins were built from old chestnut trees that died during the chestnut blight. The solid craftsmanship reflected in the thick log beams and the stone fireplaces has withstood over 40 years of vacationers and rugged mountain weather. The park was opened in 1937 and the original rental fee for a cabin was $14 a week. The CCC camps were abandoned in 1942, as America's young men were drawn from civilian work into the war effort.

Fighting forest fires was part of the CCC job. "Our camp fought fires all over the country," said Boley. Times were so hard, he stated, people were setting fires in order to get 25¢ an hour putting them out. The boys also built trails through the park, planted trees, and did the landscaping. Boley added, "Of course, anytime a forest is burned over, it will reseed itself with something. When you cut a hemlock forest, it's usually followed by hardwood and vice versa. That's the usual way it goes."

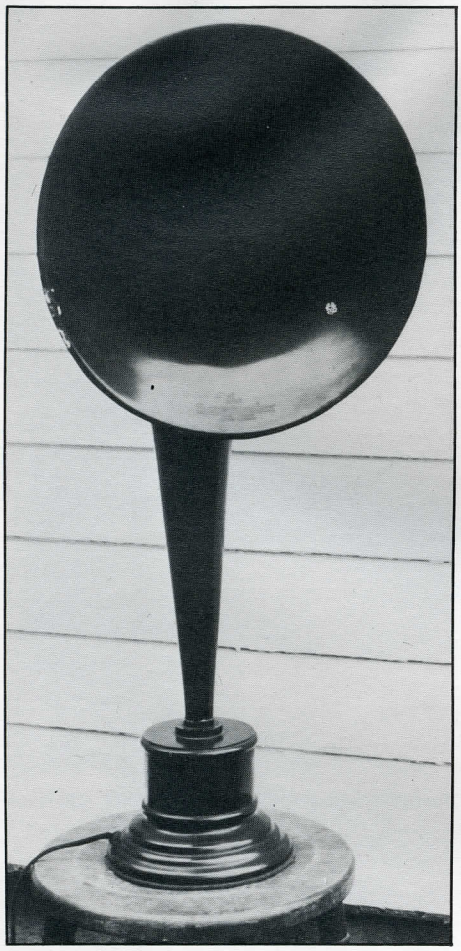
The CCC boys at Clifftop also did quite a bit of work at nearby Hawk's Nest State Park, which was a zoo before the state took it over. They traveled from the CCC camp to Hawk's Nest in big covered trucks. When lunchtime rolled around another truck arrived with the meals. The boys put the rock wall inside the main overlook and built the museum. The big picnic shelter and the round stone building which houses park restrooms were both done by the CCC. Fayette County chestnut logs were used in much of the construction. Camps Lee and Beaver also did some work at Carnifax Ferry, but not much.

Babcock was just one example of the CCC's role in development of our state parks. One source reports that in January 1939 the total number of state parks using work relief funds and men (nationally) was 1,397, covering 4,342,863 acres and serving 75 million visitors. West Virginia's state park system would again receive a big boost in 1953 under Governor William C. Marland, from $4,400,000 in revenue bonds which made possible the Blackwater Falls park, and cabins at Tygart Lake, Bluestone, and Watoga. But Boley concluded, "There probably wouldn't be state parks in the capacity that we have them today if it hadn't have been for this type of labor, the CCC labor, and the need for employment of these kids."

And there's no doubt in Boley's mind about the quality of the CCC state park work in West Virginia. "You know McKeever (another DNR employee) and I took a five-week camping trip from here out to California and back. We tried to stay in all the state parks we could. And I swear there weren't any of them that'll ever compare with the state of West Virginia."

The Heck Radio Society

By Arthur C. Prichard



This loudspeaker was one of the early Radio Line installations, in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Willie Byrd. Photo by Arthur Prichard.

Acts of neighborly kindness led to the establishment of a community radio system in Mannington, perhaps the first such cable system in the country. Desiring to help an elderly couple, one of whom was ill, Albert Guy Heck ran a wire from his homemade radio to a neighbor's house, and attached a headphone to the wire. This enabled Mr. and Mrs. Basil Cunningham to hear whatever was being received on the radio in the Heck home. A little later Mr. Heck, a professional telegraph operator, took a horn from a phonograph and waxed it to the earpiece to make a loudspeaker for the Cunninghams. The following year when George Michael, on an adjoining street, became ill, he asked if he could have the same kind of hookup. Mr. Heck and his sons stretched a wire to the second house and shared their radio programs with the Michaels.

Roy, the middle son of the Heck family, says the first connection was made in 1923, and the second in February, 1924. Roy relates that other people, on learning of his father's providing radio programs, wanted to be included on the circuit. As a result, there were at least nine more Mannington families added to the radio line by the end of 1924.

Then the system really began to grow. By 1931 some 400 were connected to the line. They included not only folks within the city limits, but people of the surrounding country — on Brush Run, Flaggy Meadow, and Salt Lick.

The enlargement of service created a dilemma. Money was needed for speakers, wire, radio parts, equipment, and the building of a new radio, powerful enough to serve the expanded system. Yet Guy Heck didn't want to charge for radio programs which came over the airways free to those who could receive them. A group of people who had become linked to his line held a meeting and organized the Heck Radio Society, with one of the listeners, school principal Harry Green, chosen as president. They insisted that listeners should pay membership fees, buy their own loudspeakers and equipment, and pay the Hecks to operate and maintain the equipment.

Those decisions made, the radio line expanded rapidly, keeping the Heck family busy installing speakers in homes and operating the master radio whenever suitable radio programs could be found. Mr. Heck pressed into service sons Clyde and Roy, then later the youngest boy, Richard, and another young man, Jesse Wilson.

In the early 1920's not many radio programs were being broadcast in America, especially during the day. In fact, there were times when no

A wire stretched between these two Mannington houses (above and right) in 1923 was the beginning of the Heck Radio Line. Old Heck home (above) is now occupied by the Thorne family. Photos by Arthur Prichard.

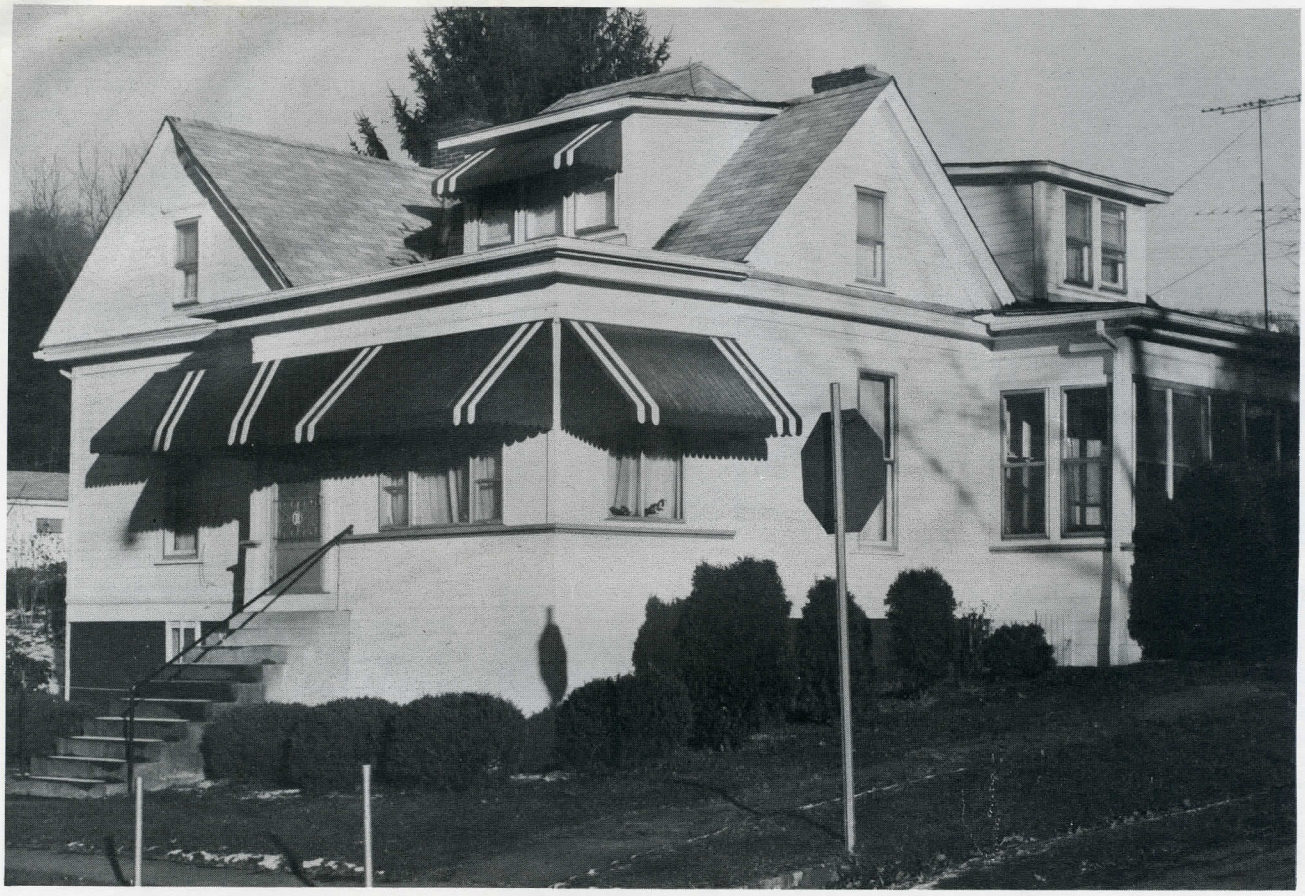
daytime broadcasts were available. Even later, when the number of programs began to increase, the strength of the signals would vary, occasionally fading so much the Hecks were forced to switch to another station. The operators of the Heck radio system had a formidable job in finding programs for the Society's members.

Early in 1926 a severe snowstorm accompanied by static discharges blocked the reception of programs from all broadcasting stations. The Hecks had to improvise, and their doing so opened a new channel — that of presenting local programs over the system. That day they played records until the static subsided. In both January and September, 1927, programs originating in the Heck home or elsewhere in Mannington were presented over the system. Starting in February, 1928, broadcasting local programs became part of the regular procedure. There were talks on good health by Dr. Phoebia G. Moore and Miss Louise Kockert, a school nurse, music by school children and local singers, and talks by Mannington leaders and officials.

A newspaper story of April 21, 1928, gave the following account of one program:

"The program was announced by Roy Arnett. It was opened by Congelton's Californians, a peppy orchestra composed of Paul Sybert, Howard Furbee, Jack K. Beatty, Tom Hite, Joe Congleton, Harold Beatty and Miss Alice Coffman. Paul Sybert gave saxophone and clarinet solos, and Jack Beatty played a group of trumpet solos. Miss Alice Coffman broadcast several piano numbers. Glenn Norman of Chicago, formerly of this city, sang a group of Irish songs, and the Rev. S.R. Raborn also sang several songs. Mr. Norman and the Rev. Mr. Raborn also sang several request duets. Mrs. B.D. Ward of this city, an accomplished pianist and reader, gave a group of readings followed by several piano selections. Harry H. Green, president of the Heck System, gave a short talk, explaining the project the company is working on to obtain funds for a new and modern broadcasting apparatus, which may be taken into churches, halls, and homes for broadcasting news and programs. He gave a financial statement of the company and announced the plan through which the needed amount may be raised by popular subscription.

"The Palm Beach Royal Serenaders, a musical organization which has gained a reputation in this community for its splendid programs, were the next entertainers. This organization is composed of Miss Roberta Smith, Miss Ruth Hawkins, Miss Ruby Hawkins, Glenn Mackey, Leo Cartright, Ralph Benton, and



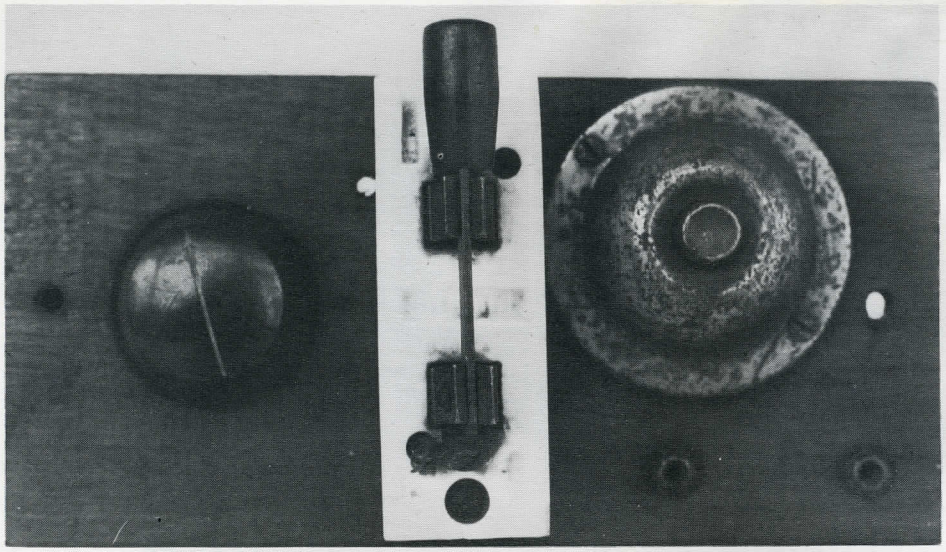
Joe Hamilton. They play stringed instruments and the Misses Hawkins are vocal soloists. This orchestra rendered a splendid program, and the soloists gave several request numbers."

In May the broadcasting of Mannington church services on Sunday evenings began. Perhaps the financial drive to raise money, mentioned by Harry Green the previous month, had resulted in the purchase of the necessary mobile equipment.

Through the months and years which followed, a variety of programs originating in Mannington were carried to the system's members. A six o'clock newscast became a regular feature. Rufus Sam Raborn, Evelyn Hayes (Antel) and her sister, Georgia (Wright), Betty Lou Glover (Roberty), Russell Fluharty, Stella Glover Efaw, Curtis and William Fletcher, Meraldine Davis, Woodrow Brand, Wood Hayes, Lloyd and Clarence Covey, and "Fiddlin'" Fritz were among the musicians who performed. Miss Beryl Stewart's pupils played piano numbers; a grade school harmonica band, directed by Thelma Huey (Phillips), rendered music. The "Prairie Dreamers," a group composed of Naomi and Rena Glover (Stiles) and Edward and David Hayes, broadcast numerous times. Five Hayeses — David, Lester, Homer, Renzo, and Emory — played and sang gospel music. Another musician heard many times was Clarence "Kim" Glover. Often he and his brother, Lloyd "Poke" Glover, using guitars, a mandolin or violin, would play and sing, or Clarence would play a harmonica. For a period they performed weekly, part of which time they advertised Ira Ice's grocery store and meat market. Many other persons played or sang or talked, entertaining or instructing the Radio Line listeners.

On a few occasions the listener received a play-by-play description of athletic events directly from the school gymnasium or playing field. Roy Arnett, Clyde Heck, and Cassy Ryan broadcast one or more games. High school coach Farley Bell regularly had students publicize football games the evening before a game. At times it was suspected that Coach Bell employed psychology in an effort to gain an advantage, as the radio message would give a gloomy outlook for the local team. Reporters would name injured players and dispense other discouraging information about the team. There wasn't much chance of Mannington athletes entering the contest over-confidently.

In the 1920's and the opening years of the 1930's, radio sets required an array of various kinds of batteries



Top: This control board accompanied deluxe Radio Line installations. Screw at left is a rheostat volume control, and buzzer button signaled radio operator in Heck home. Switch at center turned speaker on and off. Photo by Arthur Prichard.
Above: Guy Heck, standing second from right, back row, made this 1924 Heck family portrait by remote control. Guy's wife, Bertha, sits in front of him, holding daughter Lorena. Sons Roy and Clyde are beside Bertha and Guy, respectively. Patriarch Adam Heck and wife Sedonia are center, holding grandsons. Photo courtesy Roy Heck.

and were cumbersome and fairly expensive. In homes without commercial electricity, using a radio included frequently lugging the large, dirty battery to an automobile or garage to be recharged. Even those living in houses having electricity found ownership of a radio to be inconvenient, since the owners needed to possess a battery charger, have distilled water, and a hydrometer to test the battery. Besides, the radio couldn't be used while the battery was being recharged. Radios operating directly from the power lines were not readily available until the 1930's.

The inconveniences and cost of radios influenced many people to subscribe to the Heck Society in order to receive programs from the outside world and the local community. Of course, being on the cable had the disadvantage that all members received whatever program was being carried over the line at any given time. A member could telephone the Hecks to express his choice, even though the stations and programs which could be received were very limited.

A dissatisfied listener could also signal the Hecks by pressing a buzzer, which was fastened on a panel alongside the speaker in his home. This panel held an on-off switch, the buzzer, and (on deluxe speakers) a rheostat to control volume. When pushed, the buzzer registered electrical resistance, which could be read on an instrument in the Heck home. In this manner, listeners could reply to questions which the Heck family operator sometimes asked. On occasion the announcer might ask if the listeners would like a particular program, and those desiring that program could signal approval by pressing their buzzers. This "feedback" feature was far ahead of its time, and is in some ways similar to the "QUBE" cable TV system now being tested in Columbus, Ohio. QUBE, the nation's first two-way television experiment, allows viewers to instantly rate programs and respond to questions through a hand-held gadget similar to a conventional TV remote control.

Doubtlessly, at times the conflicting desires of listeners must have been disconcerting to Mr. Heck, a patient man sensitive to the wishes of his listeners, or to whoever was at the control board. Probably it was on such an occasion that a listener telephoned Mr. Heck to tell of beautiful music over another station and asked him to turn off the horrible prizefight, then on the line, and to tune in the music.

It was said that Mr. Heck asked, "Madam, don't you like the program you are getting?"

"I certainly do not!"

"You have a switch with your speaker, don't you?"

"Why, yes I have."

"Then just pull the switch."

Russell Fluharty Remembers the Radio Line

From an Interview by Arthur Prichard

Russell Fluharty. I'd just got married on March 29, 1927, and moved just about a block away from the Heck home. And of course from an early age I've played music quite a bit in my family and in my life. I got acquainted with the Heck family, you know, and was much interested in their system, because practically every neighbor that I went to visit had one of their speakers in their house. We could sit down and talk and listen to the different programs and so on like that.

And then they got to using some live talent other than from the stations that were broadcast from. At that time, I had a hillbilly band; we called ourselves the Marion County Ridgerunners. Some of the boys were from over around Joetown — Herb Humphrey and Earl Shaffer and Ralph Martin, and myself — and we had a nice little hillbilly band. We got to playing occasionally on their system, you know, kind of sandwiched in amongst some other groups of people. After the thing got to going, they didn't want for talent, because everybody wanted to be part of the show.

Fact is, I would think that maybe their system, not only being one of the first cable-type systems in the nation, would also be maybe one of the first ones to have a phone-in talk show, like the modern shows they have now.

Because I know a lot of times they would ask the people out there to phone in their reactions to the program or maybe some requests or so on like that. Several of the calls were real good, you know, said to tell how much they was enjoying it, but I remember so well one caller that called in and said, "Why don't you give the boys their two cents and send them home and put something good on your system." I saw the fellows' faces get long, you know, and some of them after we left there said, "We'll never go back." I said, "Well, remember all them good calls we got." We couldn't please everybody.

The whole house was just full of wires. Of course, the Heck family was a good-size family, and it was also full of people, with the family, and the group maybe had four or five people in it. And their instruments, and so on like that. The house was pretty well crowded, and sometimes you just had to kind of pull in your stomach in order to have room to be in the house. It was amazing how well they did operate in a home that was that much confusion to me.

But they were very efficient people, and they seemed to make the thing operate very efficiently. I remember one time we was out there during a prizefight, seems to me it was Max Maley, maybe, and Jack Dempsey, or somebody. Roy Heck was sitting there with his feet on the table, playing checkers with somebody out in the West by Morse code over the ham radio, and looking at a catalog that had some suits in it and showing us which one he'd like to purchase. And also listening to the prizefight. He'd say, "Boy, he got a good punch in there!" you know. And so on like that. And then he'd tell the man out in the West where to move his checker to, you know, and looking at this suit. I couldn't even tell what was going on at the prizefight. It's amazing how much that man could have in his mind at one time and still it worked out pretty sensible.

Russel Fluharty. Photograph by Arthur Prichard.

Jesse Wilson worked with Guy Heck for years, and himself ran the Radio Line from 1934 to 1939. Photo by Arthur Prichard.

In addition to the costliness and inconvenience of the early radios, another factor aiding the rapid growth of the Heck Society was the large number of usable telegraph wires already stretched across Mannington when the Heck Line began to be popular. With America's entrance into the First World War, the government and commercial users of wireless telegraphy, worried about possible interference from amateur operators, had ordered the amateurs to cease using their equipment for the duration.

The response of some citizens was to string their own telegraph lines. The railroad telegraph tower where Guy Heck worked had telephone and telegraph communications with other telegraph towers along the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, but no telephone connection to his home. Heck himself ran a telegraph wire to his residence, enabling him to exchange messages with his family by use of the telegrapher's key. Son Roy Heck recalls a similar system inside the house, and that he and his brothers learned the Morse code before entering grade school. "Pop built little 'radio stations' for his boys before we went to school," he remembers. "There were buzzers and telegraph keys mounted on wooden store boxes. We learned to read, write, and telegraph by sending messages to each other from opposite corners of the house."

Some neighbors had less elaborate systems. Mr. and Mrs. Donley Jones, former telegraph operators themselves, stretched a wire between their home and athletic goods store in downtown Mannington. With the government order to lock up the wireless equipment, additional telegraph wires were run around town, linking the Jones family, the Hecks, and others together. Numerous people telegraphed messages back and forth from house to house.

The ending of the war and the lifting of the ban on wireless transmitting, along with an increased number of telephones, resulted in the telegraph system being neglected and finally abandoned. When the Heck system started to grow, the telegraph wires already in place were utilized by the Hecks, thereby aiding the rapid expansion of the Radio Line.

To transmit programs received over a single, powerful radio set over 28 or 30 miles of wire lines to several hundred loudspeakers required the solving of many engineering problems. Guy Heck solved these. However, a difficulty which troubled the operators through the years came from people pirating the signals from the Line, still a common problem for cable TV systems. Some folks would hook on to the wire passing their house and get the programs without paying for the service. While this denied Mr. Heck income due him, a greater annoyance came from the grounding of the system when the connections were made improperly. When this happened, service to many customers was affected adversely. On detecting the offense, the Hecks would announce that someone in the area where the offense was occurring was interfering with the service.

Natural elements also had to be contended with. Wind storms, falling trees and ice damaged the wires. Once lightning took out some 300 feet of line.

Albert Guy Heck is remembered as a man with a scientific mind. Born in 1886 on a Marion County farm, a descendant of a long line of farmers, his interest was in mechanics, electricity, and other scientific subjects, rather than in farming. Securing some telegraph equipment when he

Mrs. Chester Hayes with speaker and control installed in her home when she belonged to the Radio Society. Photo by Arthur Prichard.

was a youngster, Guy insulated one of the fence wires running between the Heck farm and that of a relative and communicated with a cousin by using the Morse code.

"When Pop was in his teens," son Roy says, "he became interested in photography. Spending $4.50 on equipment from a mail order house, Pop bought a camera and started taking photographs, using glass plates and developing the pictures himself. He detailed data about the photographs: the time of day the picture was taken, the kind of day — cloudy, bright, rainy — the brand of film, the exposure, and the like. Working scientifically at photography, he became very proficient."

A little later Guy Heck purchased parts for a telephone system and connected several nearby farms by telephone wires. These phones were used a long time after a public telephone company ran lines there. Heck's initial efforts with telephones introduced him to a business which required attention for many years. Roy tells that as late as the 1930's his father would be called to correct troubles in telephone exchanges in Metz, Glover Gap, Seven Pines, Whetstone, and other nearby places.

Early in the 1900's Guy Heck became interested in wireless telegraphy, a subject which held his attention for the remainder of his life. Learning the International code, in addition to the Morse code which he already knew, he became a ham radio operator. This afforded him much pleasure through the years.

Going to work for the B&O as a telegraph operator, Mr. Heck was stationed at Glover Gap, Barrackville, and Farmington, before being transferred to the telegraph tower at the junction of the railroad and Water Street, Mannington, in 1917. While he was in Mannington his study of and activity in the field of radio matured.

There are interesting incidents and memories related to the Heck Line and its operation. Roy tells of people telephoning the Heck home when they had news to be broadcast over the circuit. Once he received a call, asking that he announce there would be a "moose in the dance hall" the next evening. When he reported it that way, much attention was paid the announcement, and the Moose Club continued having "mooses in the dance hall" for years.

A former Manningtonian, Charles Chambers, when visiting town recently, confided he had vivid memories of the Heck Line. "I remember Lowell Thomas' newscast and the popular soap opera, 'Dangerous Paradise,' coming over the Line. Also I heard the account of the Hindenberg crashing. When we were youngsters some of us boys would go camping outside of town. The Heck Line ran near where we used to stay overnight. We would throw a wire over the line; fasten the wire to one of the barbed wires in a fence and at the other end of the fence, where we were camping, hook up a pair of headphones, and hear what was being broadcast."

David "Nitsy" Thomas recalls listening to the Heck Line programs. "I especially remember hearing Kate Smith singing 'When the Moon Comes Over the Mountain,' and listening to 'Amos and Andy.' "

The daily "Amos and Andy" radio program was so popular with local people in the late 1920's that Arch Burt stopped whatever film was being shown in his motion picture theater when "Amos and Andy" came on the air, and turned on the Heck Line to give the audience those comedians. When the 15-minute episode was completed, the movie came back

on the screen, to continue from the point where it had been interrupted.

Arch Burt had other reasons to be grateful to Guy Heck. According to Jesse Wilson, Mr. Burt announced that, starting on a certain evening, there would be "Talking Pictures" at his movie house. A workman, sent by the Pittsburgh firm which was to install the sound system, began working in the theater. After several days of labor, he succeeded in getting the sound to be heard in the projection booth, but try as he would, he couldn't get the sound working throughout the theater.

"I'll go back to Pittsburgh and one of our men who knows exactly how to make it work will come here," the mechanic told Burt.

Arch, afraid the sound system wouldn't be ready for the announced date, said, "Don't bother getting the man. We have a man in town who will make it work." Heck was sent for and, after three or four hours of study and work, he had the newfangled sound system operating. The theater opened as a "Talking Movie House" on time.

In his December 2, 1928, "Good Morning" column in the *Fairmont Times* newspaper, Ned Smith took notice of the Heck System:

"In other ways life in Mannington is farther advanced than in Fairmont. For instance, there they have a community radio. A railroad towerman whose... name is Heck has a central receiving station for all radio concerts and all one needs to do in one's own home up here is to install a loudspeaker and Heck does the rest for a dollar fifty per month. The only drawback to the system that we noticed was that Heck is the sole judge of what you get. In other words, you either take what Heck gives you or turn off the switch.

"This man Heck has what one might call a variable taste in music. Last night he ran to the sentimental. 'Silver Threads Among the Gold' and 'When You and I Were Young, Maggie,' were carefully snatched from the ether and delivered with much eclat to his customers. Night before last, we are told, he ran to jazz. Later in the winter when the revival season hits Mannington with its usual intensity, Heck, we are told, becomes pious and combs the ether with a fine tooth comb for hymns and spirituals, and there have been times of a Sunday when he has furnished no fewer than three sermons by the air route regardless of the fact that his customers have already sat through a morning and an evening service."

Guy Heck was generous. Wilson recalls that in 1932, when the Mannington Fair began back of the Bartlett Hotel, in an area known as "Horse Traders' Alley," Heck did the wiring for the Fair. He also ran his radio line there, putting up speakers to provide entertainment for the Fair visitors.

"He wouldn't take any money for his work," says Jesse Wilson, "or for the radio service he furnished, yet he paid me for helping him. Also, when the swimming pool was being built in Hough Park by local citizens, he said he couldn't work on it, but he paid me to work in his place. I believe Mr. Heck could have become immensely wealthy, if he had patented some of the things he contrived to operate his system. His radio line was the fore-

Opposite: Bertha and Guy Heck in 1939. Photo by Roy Heck.
Left: Guy Heck at amateur station W8EG, after his retirement. From here Mr. Heck could communicate with other "ham" operators around the world, including his own sons in other cities. Photographer unknown, courtesy Roy Heck.

runner of the cable systems and modern public address systems. A number of other things have been developed from Mr. Heck's idea. I heard that Westinghouse engineers in Pittsburgh in the early 1920's said that kind of a set-up wouldn't work. But he worked out the problems and made it function.

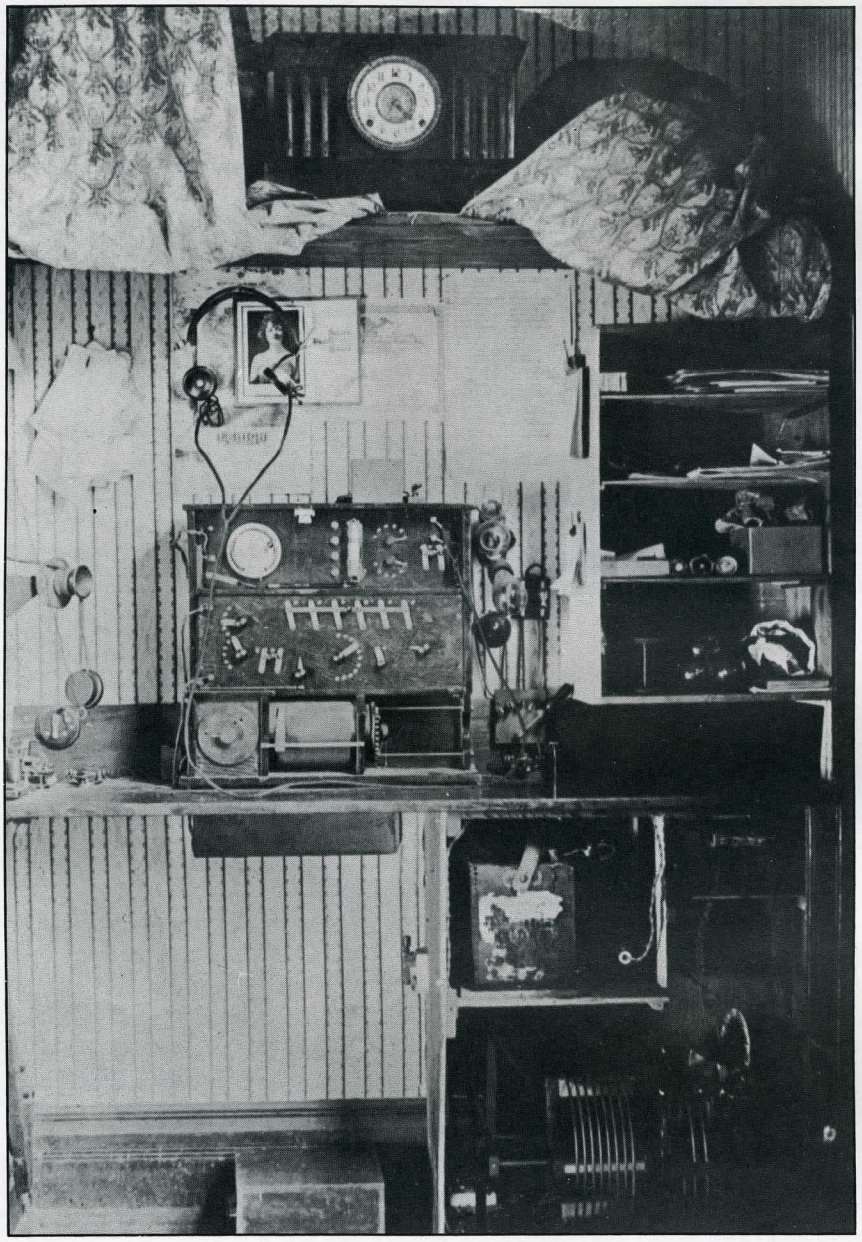
"You know, he wasn't interested in money; he was interested in finding out about electricity, in any form, and how it worked, and why, whether it was radio, telegraphy, or whatever, or even in wiring houses. He was very scientific. He examined things. I remember his looking carefully at various kinds of installations, and his thinking about them. He never talked very much, but he sure thought things out."

Roy Heck reports that his father never became a businessman. "He had reduced the membership fee to the Society and had lowered the monthly service charge from $1.50 to $2.00 per quarter. He was always investing in improvements and experiments, rebuilding and adding to the system. He was always a soft touch, furnishing many free installations which included equipment costing sometimes more than $30. Those who got behind in their payments were not disconnected, if they had any kind of excuse. Later, as the Depression of the 1930's came along, excuses got more numerous. Some of the bills were paid by barter, not uncommon during the Depression. The Hamilton Dairy Farm paid for their radio with milk; Frank Dunn and S.O. Eddy traded chickens and ducks; T.E. Eastman exchanged beans and cabbage; Andy Robison's Barber Shop traded a razor strop and haircuts. O.H. Murphy, jeweler, traded clock repairs; Arthur Anderson sharpened saws. C. Howard Long [men's clothing] exchanged a suit; and gasoline, selling for 20¢ a gallon, was traded by the Black and White Service Station and Snyder and Shuman Filling Station."

Doubtlessly, Guy Heck's generosity was one factor in his giving up the business in 1934. Other causes were the great changes taking place in the manufacturing of radios and in broadcasting. The personal radio was beginning to be available for both the rich and the poor. Broadcasting stations were becoming powerful and numerous. Many people could have their own radios and a wider choice of programs.

At last, Guy Heck's family insisted he give up the business, which he was subsidizing with his own money. He gave the whole thing, equipment and all, to Jesse Wilson. "He didn't charge me anything," says Wilson. "He just turned it all over to me. I ran it until 1939; by then finances caused me to close it for good."

As far as we know, the Heck Radio System preceded other community radio cables in the country. Wired Music, Inc., a predecessor of Musak, began operation in New York City by renting wires from the telephone company in 1931. As a young man, I read in *Time* magazine of Robert Miller, an engineer formerly with Bell Telephone Laboratories, having a new idea, transmitting musical programs over wires. I went to Wired



A 1920 view of Guy Heck's amateur radio station, licensed as 8EF. Photo by Guy Heck, courtesy Roy Heck.

Music's office and studio at 351 West 42nd Street, New York, and was hired as a salesman. I was working for the company when its first customer signed for its services in the fall of 1931. Later in the year all of us in the sales force quit, after a new sales manager reduced our commissions.

Jesse Wilson declares that the six Heck children — Clyde, Roy, Richard, Anna, Ruth, and Lorena — "must have learned to walk at home by picking their way through wires and equipment of their father. I worked with Mr. Heck and the boys, and they taught me much about electricity. Mr. Heck and his sons knew the subject. Also, I learned other things from them," Jesse added with a grin. "The boys cured me of using an exclamation I had used since boyhood. Whenever I said, 'Ah, heck!' Roy or Clyde answered, 'Ah, Wilson!' I soon quit saying it."

The Heck boys fashioned careers for themselves in the electrical and electronics fields. Clyde became chief engineer of Radio Station WMMN (Fairmont) in 1933, and Roy joined that engineering staff the next year. In 1938 Clyde went to Sharon, Pennsylvania, to direct the installation of a new station, WPIC, and to organize its engineering staff. Richard was employed at the Westinghouse plant in Sharon, maintaining electrical and electronic test equipment until retiring in 1979. Leaving his job as chief engineer of WMMN in 1942, Roy became a manufacturing engineer for Westinghouse in Fairmont, working with power radar tubes. Two years later he was transferred to Westinghouse's electronic division in Baltimore, to work on electronic control equipment as design and supervising engineer. He retired in 1977.

After the radio circuit in Mannington was discontinued, Jesse Wilson moved to the Washington, D.C., area, where he still used his knowledge of electricity and radio. During the Second World War he worked for the Federal government as a radio and radar inspector.

Transferred to Farmington in 1940, Guy Heck continued working as a railroad telegrapher until his retirement. In Farmington he renewed his interest in amateur radio and was licensed to operate amateur station W8EG at his home.

Roy says, "Pop's primary activity after retiring was having telegraph conversations with his sons at their own stations: Clyde in Sharon — W3GEG, Richard in Sharpsville — W3NCD, and me — W3KNR, Baltimore. Pop was living in Farmington when he died in 1969."

Albert Guy Heck earned a special place in the history of Mannington. His unique contributions to the people and the community deserve to be remembered. Mr. Heck's principal brainchild, affectionately referred to by local people as the "Heck Line," brought entertainment and information to many who otherwise wouldn't have been able to have received radio programs. He honored our town by providing it one of the first, or maybe the first, community radio cable systems in America.

Continued from page 8

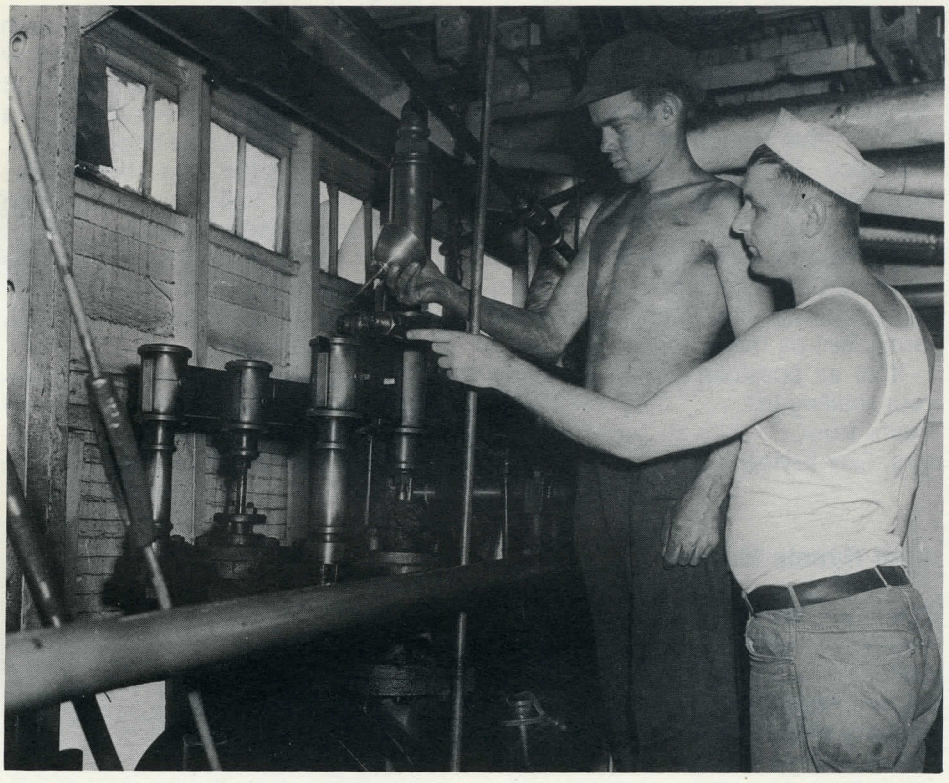
Towing Coal

New Haven, WV
September 5, 1980
Editor:
I was loaned the July-September issue of GOLDENSEAL, and reading the article on Captain Francis E. Wright was surprised to see on page 38 a picture of myself being shown the duties of an oiler by the second engineer of the *Taric.* The picture at the top of page 36 of Captain Wright and the picture on page 38 were taken from an article in the July 3, 1944, issue of the Cincinnati *Enquirer* entitled "Youth on the Ohio." For myself and some of the other crew members this was our first job, some working our summer vacation or waiting to go into the Army. The article on Captain Wright brought back fond memories of long-gone days of steamboating. I didn't know Mr. John Davis, but he summed it up very well: Captain Wright was a good pilot and captain.

The *Taric* has been out of service for some time and the company I work for now uses it for offices, one of which I occupy. I would like very much to obtain this issue if at all possible, and would also like to be put on the mailing list.
Sincerely,
Harold O'Dell

Pomeroy, Ohio
August 20, 1980
Editor:
Just finished reading my first copy of GOLDENSEAL. It was brought to me by a friend that works in the same office as I do. I was really interested in the article on Captain Wright, as I now work for Indiana & Michigan Electric Co. and the *Taric* is our home port office at Lakin, West Virginia.

I am a displaced West Virginian now living in Pomeroy, Ohio. My husband and I are former residents of Gilmer and Greenbrier counties in West Virginia. It really is true that you can take the girl out of West Virginia but never take West Virginia out of the girl!
Sincerely,
Mrs. Russell W. Moore



Thomas and Its Opera House

Saint George, WV
October 14, 1980
Editor:
My great-grandparents, Jacob C. and Catherine Jane Hubler Pase were the first settlers in Thomas. They came from Clearfield, Pennsylvania, in the year 1880 and lived in a log cabin until they built their house. My dad was the first boy born in Thomas; Dad's cousin Maude Pase was the first girl child born in Thomas; and Amos M. Pase was the first person to die in Thomas. He died of lockjaw from a cut from a broadaxe he was using to build their new home. John Pase was the second person to die. He was killed in the mines.

I was born in Thomas in 1925. It was such a nice place to live. We had people of all nationalities, and black families. The people were happy, warm, and friendly. There was no prejudice.

Every weekend there was a square dance at the city hall. The Pase Polka Dots played, and of course there was a lot of polka dancing too.

There was the Roma, owned and operated by the Dilatose family. Mary made the best spaghetti and they made homemade ice cream — four dips a dime — and they had a nice dance floor. There were three other restaurants, bowling alley, skating rink, bakery; Nick Di Maia had a confectionary with a fountain and he roasted peanuts — what a nice smell! And what a kind man. No children ever left his store empty-handed even if they had no money. The drugstore also had a soda fountain. There were three churches. Streets so crowded on Saturday night you could hardly walk.

So I was quite surprised and pleased when I opened my copy of October-December GOLDENSEAL and found your article on Uncle Hiram Cottrill's opera house and Thomas. By the way, the windows when I attended the theater weren't stained glass but mirror with maroon velvet drapes.
Sincerely,
Joyce Pase Ashby

"The Spark to Play Music"

Green Bank, WV
August 20, 1980
Editor:
With the greatest of interest I read my first issue of GOLDENSEAL this

month — and a borrowed issue at that!

The article that was so meaningful to me was "The Spark to Play Music," the wonderful story of the Currence Brothers. I've heard the boys play and sing, and give great testimonies.

In the area of my home when we hear the Currence Brothers are going to be at such and such a place my family will be there, too.

If at all possible I'd like to be on your mailing list.

Yours truly,
Mrs. Guy Ervine

Aunt Nannie Meador

Pipestem, WV
August 18, 1980
Editor:

My neighbor gave me a copy of the January-March 1980 GOLDENSEAL. "Aunt Nannie Meador and the Bluestone Dam," by Michael Meador, was especially interesting to me as my husband was born and lived in the same section on Bluestone River and Summers County.

He knew Aunt Nannie and her family and he, also, had to leave because the land he owned was taken for Bluestone State Park. It was a very emotional time, when all these families had to move and leave the homes they had built and in which their children were born. It's been said this flat level bottomland was the richest in Summers County, and is now covered with water.

To preserve something of the past my husband took a leave from the C&O Railroad, tore down the house, salvaged the lumber and used as much as he could in building another home, two miles south of the Bluestone Bridge or "Lilly" Bridge.

This bridge is another story in itself. The plans called for this bridge to be built from one mountain to another and to be completed in the middle, over the Bluestone River. A huge crane proved to be too much weight on the south end span. The bridge fell in the spring of 1949, taking with it five courageous men. The crane pinned one body down, and it was never recovered. Several months later two more men lost their lives.

I was a bride of two weeks when all these events took place and each weekend would drive, in the yellow mud, to look out over the mountain cliff and see the progress made in a week's time. The small bridge below, still used by traffic, and flooded over after a big rain, looked like a toy when seen from the mountaintop.

What a joy it is to ride over this big Lilly Bridge today and have no fear of rains or floods coming and blocking Route 20 to Hinton.

The program of the first Lilly Reunion was right up my alley and since my maiden name was Lilly I knew or had heard of most of them in this story of Leafie Lilly Harvey, Cousin Abe, and the rest. In fact, I read the entire magazine and loved it!

Sincerely,
Arletta Lilly Meador
and Luther L. Meador

Flour Sack Art

Wellsburg, WV
August 22, 1980
Editor:

I have just read the "Flour Sack Art" article in the July-September GOLDENSEAL. I started working for the S. George Company in 1924 and worked there for 48 years.

I started on the tubers and then went onto the printing presses. I worked on all of the presses — flatbed, rotary, and web presses. I was the first one to run the six-color web press shown in your magazine. It first used curved metal plates but later on we changed it over so we could use rubber plates. Some of the old wood cuts shown in your magazine are very familiar as I ran many of them when I was running a flatbed press. I've seen the old engraver cut many of them. His name was George Defawcett.

Sincerely,
John D. Thompson

Wellsburg, WV
August 15, 1980
Editor:

Congratulations on the July-September 1980 issue! This is a publication to be proud of. All your issues are composed of fine work, but this one is particularly exciting for us here in Brooke County because of the beautiful article concerning the S. George Company, "Flour Sack Art."

I would like to obtain two more copies for our permanent record here in the library if that is possible. We are in the process of organizing our historical collection, and this would be a valuable item to add. The second of the two copies I will simply hold back against the day that our regular issue is spirited away by some person who has not learned the virtues of the photocopying machine.

Thank you for such good graphics and good writing. Keep it up.

Sincerely yours,
Camille J. Leslie
Director, Brooke County
Public Library

Rochester, Indiana
October 20, 1980
Editor:

Today I received my third issue of GOLDENSEAL, and I would like to take this opportunity to tell your staff what a wonderful job they are doing. If it weren't for such a publication a lot of early West Virginia history would probably be lost.

I enjoyed the article, "Flour Sack Art," which appeared in Volume 6, number 3, very much. My grandmother, Mrs. Walter Brooker (Nellie Edith Carithers, 1876-1967), used to use Iona Brand Family Flour that was sold by the A&P Company. I have one of the old sacks with calico remnants stuffed in it (she used to quilt). This sack was printed by the S. George Company of Wellsburg.

Possibly some of your readers might be able to help me. I have not been able to receive any information concerning the Wade ancestors from Putnam County. These are my husband's people. His great-grandmother was Arminda H. Wade, born approximately 1818 there in Putnam County. She married Reuban J. Taylor around 1835. He came out of Orange County, Virginia, and was born around 1815. They moved to Cass County, Indiana, in the late 1830's and remained there the rest of their lives. If anyone can tell me anything concerning her forefathers it would be very much appreciated.

Thank you for your consideration, and keep up the good work on GOLDENSEAL.

Very truly yours,
Marcia K. Taylor

Witchcraft, Freed Slaves, and the Naming of Needmore

A Visit to Hardy County

By Jeanette Brown

Last summer, while coasting down Highway 55 between Hardy County's gentle green mountains, I suddenly braked the car and came to a stop. "Needmore," the sign said. The little cluster of store, gas stations, and two or three houses wasn't just a crossroads, it was a town. Needmore! Need more what? And who of our enterprising and salty-tongued ancestors called it that?

Mr. Bowman, proprietor of the town's little store, said, "The name Needmore? Sure, there's a story about it, but I just can't recall...." Mrs. Bowman, too, shook her head. Finally, after much head scratching, he said, "Well, just look around you. Not much here. Maybe we do need more." He grinned. "You just keep asking. I'm sure you can trace the name down. Now, if you was to ask me about witchcraft, I can remember some of them stories. Or bootlegging."

"Good!" A town with a name like Needmore surely would have some curious and out-of-the ordinary stories. I settled myself to listen.

"Tell about Nettie," said Mrs. Bowman.

A twinkle came into Mr. Bowman's eye as he told about a woman who had once lived in the community. "Nettie Brandt.* Nice plain name, you might say — nice plain woman, only she was a witch!"

"A witch!" I said incredulously, and laughed. The Bowmans enjoyed my surprise, but said seriously, "Oh, yes, she was. Several in our family can tell you. Many's the time she bewitched a cow."

"Did your folks experience her witching themselves?"

"Yes, indeed, she's supposed to have bewitched me!" said Mr. Bowman. "Seems she came to call when I was a babe, and made excuses to lean over my crib and touch me. 'Nice baby, pretty boy,' she said.

"The neighbors knew about her and were scared. After she left, they told my mother, 'Something bad will come, your boy will be sick.'

"Sure enough, next two, three days, I got real sick, started choking and all. My mother said, 'What can I do?' The neighbors said, 'It's like this. If she really witched your baby, she'll be back soon, to borrow something. Then you'll know it's her as done it. But don't give it to her. Refuse, and that'll break the spell.'

"Next day, sure enough, here came Nettie to borrow a couple of eggs. You can imagine, my mother was really scared. She said, 'No, no eggs.' She felt pretty mean not giving them. We always do, you know, we help each other.

"But it worked. Next day, I was better — no more sickness." Mr. Bowman's face was perfectly sober. "From then on...." He paused as a customer came in. I reluctantly prepared to go.

"Tell you what, my daughter's home from college — she's a Needmore fan. Why don't you go and check with her, she's out back sunning herself."

Two pretty girls in bikini bathing suits were stretched on the grass in back of the store. When I explained my mission, the younger Bowman sat up with a smile.

"Yes, I do have a favorite story," she said. "About John Willis. See that mountain back there?" She pointed to a rounded peak to the left of the highway. "Grandfather told us that Uncle John walked in here right after the Civil War, saying he was going up there to the very top." She pointed to the rounded summit, all covered with thick green growth. "He was going to

*This name has been changed. —ed.

have himself a grassy place, a cleared-out grassy place, and a house. He wasn't going to be helpless, like most of the slaves turned loose. He was going to take care of himself. And he did. He grew crops, he and his brother, and they lived up there for years. The grassy place is still there, I go up once in a while."

Mrs. Bowman had come out of the store and was listening. "He'd come down to Needmore and do odd jobs. G.W. Reed, Beulah Hetzel's grandfather — she's still living yonder in Wardensville — had the mill above town. Uncle John would bring a sack of wheat down for Reed to grind flour for him. Then he'd trade some wheat and eggs for sugar, coffee, and tobacco — chewing tobacco. Brown's Mule, I still remember the name."

"And you all got along fine with him? There were no bad feelings at that time?"

"We got along fine," Mrs. Bowman said emphatically. "My grandmother said many's the time she or some of their neighbors sat at table up there. They had a great affection for the Willises. Uncle John had fixed a pump way up there. Guess the well's dried up. And I heard that most of their house has been bulldozed down."

"Could I walk up there? Where do you start?"

"By the cemetery." She pointed down the road, as she took my arm. "Come on back in. Mr. Bowman's thought of another witchcraft story for you."

"I thought of some little things Nettie could do," Mr. Bowman greeted me. "Like milking towels."

"She could milk a cow?"

"No, a towel. Make milk come from a white towel." He said it soberly, as a fact.

"And there was that time Nettie needed a ride, and hired your father to bring her home in his sleigh," Mrs. Bowman said.

"That's right," he answered. "When they reached her front door, Nettie said, 'Now, what do I owe you?'

"Grandfather said, 'Not a cottontail bunny.' That's the way he talked, you know. He was always for fun. 'Not a cottontail bunny.' "

"But Nettie was always for paying her bills," Mrs. Bowman explained. "She wiggled her mouth sideways, and up and down." Mr. Bowman demonstrated. "Then round and round. Out came 50¢, which she handed over, matter-of-fact like." Mr. Bowman's face still remained solemn, except for his eyes. Was there a twinkle?

"Do you know if Uncle John Willis had a family?"

Mrs. Bowman hesitated. "There were wives, of course, but I don't know how many children."

"You could check in the cemetery," Mr. Bowman suggested. "It's right down the road, in back of the church. Look at the stones. And it's there the trail goes up the mountain. You'd like it, it's lovely and peaceful."

Just around the next curve of the road was the pretty church, with its heaven-pointing tower. There was a glimpse of the headstones in the rear, with their mountain backdrop. I regretfully measured the sun's rays against the height of the mountain. Too late to go up today. I'd have to come back tomorrow.

But they had mentioned Beulah Hetzel in the next town of Wardensville, and the postmaster there.

Mrs. Hetzel, a retired schoolteacher, living alone in a large, white frame house, remembered John Willis and Nettie Brandt. "She was supposed to have witched our family, too. No, I can't say how Needmore got its name. The witching, with us, was mostly to do with animals. She witched one of our calves. His bowels were completely blocked.

"There were two witches, you know, Nettie was one, and the other was Mr. Sam Wilkie* — he was the male witch. So when Nettie had made our calf sick, the thing to do was to go to Sam for help. Sam said, yes, he'd help, he'd give the calf something that would cure its bowel trouble. The only thing was, as long as it was a witching, his cure would affect witch Nettie at exactly the same time as it did the calf, and in exactly the same way.

"My folks said, 'Go ahead and give it.'

"Sure enough, the calf got cured. The neighbors said it did affect Nettie the same way, the same moment."

"How did they...?" I decided not to ask for more details.

"Well, they saw her streaking for the woods, so they were pretty sure." We both laughed as I got up to go.

*This name has been changed. —ed.

Next stop, the post office. Ben Frye, the postmaster, was too busy to talk much, but was interested and obliging. Between passing out stamps and greetings to his customers, he gave several hints for future investigation. "The Needmore name? You'd better talk to my sister. She married a Warden, and their land and manor house was in that area in the first place. She's probably know."

Next day I was back at the little church early, breathing in the crisp, clean mountain air, and enjoying the sight of that high green cone of a mountain, with its foreground of pleasant white headstones of all sizes and shapes. To the right, a little distance away, was a section of plain small stones, exactly alike, similar to a military cemetery.

I left the car and went closer. Each stone had the name "Willis" handcarved on one side, with no other identification. I counted. There were seven. So that answered my question. There must have been four adults, with three children among them. Unless some of the children had migrated, and were buried elsewhere. Here was peace and silence, a satisfactory place for one's loved ones. A single black and yellow butterfly was fluttering against the white stones.

The trail started straight up the mountain in back of the resting Willises. Two narrow ruts, with thick growth in between, were suitable only for a jeep. I began to hike happily. The road curved, and soon I was completely cut off from civilization, surrounded by tall pines. The trail rose steeply; it shouldn't take too long, I thought. The higher I got, the more sparse the growth around the trees, both wild flowers and weeds. Great black ants were abundant, and I moved my feet quickly. There were clouds of gnats, a few yellow butterflies. A great deal of dead wood lay among the pines.

Rounding a curve, I saw movement ahead. Something long and gray-black was lying across the road, round and thick as an elephant's trunk. It must be a black snake! Huge, what a length! Its tail disappeared in the bushes on one side, and I could see the small flat head rising across the trail in the weeds on the

Photo by Jeanette Brown.

other side. I knew they were harmless, but I stood stock still, scared. The snake obliged, by silently gliding off.

Good! I wasn't going to give up now. I climbed swiftly, panting and perspiring, expecting to see the top of the mountain around each curve. But on and on the trail went, an unbelievably long mile. Finally, around a last curve, there it was, the grassy place. I dropped to the ground exhausted.

It was like a pleasant green meadow anywhere in the world, like a village green except for the circling peaks. Uncle John had found a gently sloping spot of at least two acres. The brush and bushes from its clearing still formed a thick wall around it. Peach and apple trees, well cared for, criss-crossed the green, and there were patches of wild roses.

In the middle were the remains of the log cabin. The huge stone fireplace and chimney were still there, some of the stones tumbled into a pile, the base intact. Wood and coal ashes in tiny heaps made it seem that it was just yesterday the Willises had been living there.

How they all must have toiled at the clearing! Their brush fence was piled thicker than a hedge. How beautiful in summer! But how rugged in winter to get down that steep, overgrown mile.

I sat and drank in the peace, dreaming, the sun warm on my back. Where were the descendants now, and were they wishing to be back in this peaceful place? Finally I took a few pictures and regretfully started back.

Again there was a surprise. A young deer leaped out of the forest, and trotted down the trail, followed by its brother. Their little white rears bounced perkily ahead of me, and then they dashed off to the left in alarm. The way down seemed only a fraction of that long climb up.

There was one more stop to make. I still wanted to know why the name Needmore, and postmaster Ben Frye had said I should talk to his sister.

Mrs. Warden took time to talk to me in the pleasant livingroom of her house just off the highway. "The name Needmore? Well, it's rather obvious. Grandfather Hetzel ran the mill and started the store. It was a new, small store, in a new small community. People would come in, buy sugar and flour, and maybe ask for molasses.

" 'No, don't have any,' he'd say.

" 'Godfrey,' they'd say, 'you need more stock.'

" 'No, not yet,' he'd tell them.

" 'You need more stuff,' they'd say.

"Till finally they came to calling the whole place Needmore."

"Very logical," I said.

"I like that story better than the one about whiskey," she said. "Some say the name came about because of people calling for the liquor he didn't carry."

Remembering Davis Grubb

By Michael J. Pauley

When, in the early summer of 1978, I was approached by several individuals to take over the administration of a writer-in-residence grant for famed author Davis Grubb, my initial reaction was, "Oh no! You mean I'll have to be fooling with that crackpot old man who thinks he's West Virginia's answer to William Faulkner!" But, being newly elected as president of West Virginia Writers and because no one else seemed willing to undertake the task, I reluctantly agreed.

I was already acquainted with Davis Grubb to a limited degree. I had met him at several writers meetings and a few social events and we were already on a first-name basis. Yet we were really not "friends," merely "acquaintances." I had the impression that Mr. Grubb was an old man who had certainly made valuable contributions to literature in the past, but who now was living off his past glories while giving the appearance of being "with it." His long hair, beard, and necklace looked, at first, out of place on him, as if he were trying to appear 30 years younger.

As we worked together in the coming months on a nearly daily basis, I was quick to discover that I was dealing with one of the most sensitive, kind, and profound people I had ever come in contact with. Davis deplored small talk (unless, of course, it was on some fine point of literary technique) and would, with his deep baritone voice, often cut through a maze of chatter to utter a one-liner, invariably pregnant with either his keen wit or biting satire, that would go straight to the heart of the matter. Yet, despite this gift for wit and satire, Davis was incapable of maliciousness; to deliberately wound the feelings of another human being was not in his nature.

As his residency progressed, I began to see that I had been partly correct in my earlier assessment. Davis had indeed not written anything to speak of in six or seven years. But, as he traveled around the state speaking to literary groups, civic and social organizations, and especially becoming intimately involved with a circle of young poets and authors of the emerging Appalachian literary renaissance movement, a new spark seemed to glow and burn in Davis.

After moving into a rather small, quaintly-decorated room (about which he had soon woven remarkably absurd tales) on the second floor of my parents' South Charleston home in the fall of 1978, Davis sat down seriously to work on a new novel (his first since 1971) and worked on it furiously for over a year. In that time he gained what he often referred to as "my second chance." With the circle of young poets and writers gathered attentively around him, and his numerous speaking engagements, Davis had a real audience again.

Davis soon emerged as the "patriarch" of West Virginia's writing community. He would come to meetings of the Appalachian Literary League and spin hours worth of tales and stories to the eager young writers, then turn to give expert advice on fine points of artistic layout on our magazine. He chaired symposiums and served on panels at gatherings of West Virginia Writers and Mountain State Press, and invariably became the focal point of the discussions. He wrote an article of "advice" and did the cover for the first issue of a new literary magazine. During this period, a new collection of previously unpublished short stories, *The Seige of 318,* appeared, published by Back Fork Books of Webster Springs, and was eagerly gobbled up by us, his new disciples. New stories appeared from his rented electric typewriter and were published in national magazines. Davis had truly, as he said, been "reborn."

Davis moved to Clarksburg, his home during adolescence and early manhood, in the late summer of 1979. His reputation had been reestablished, his pride renewed, new wells of creativity tapped. We still kept in close touch and when, in the late fall of '79, Terrance Hill and I had a new book ready for

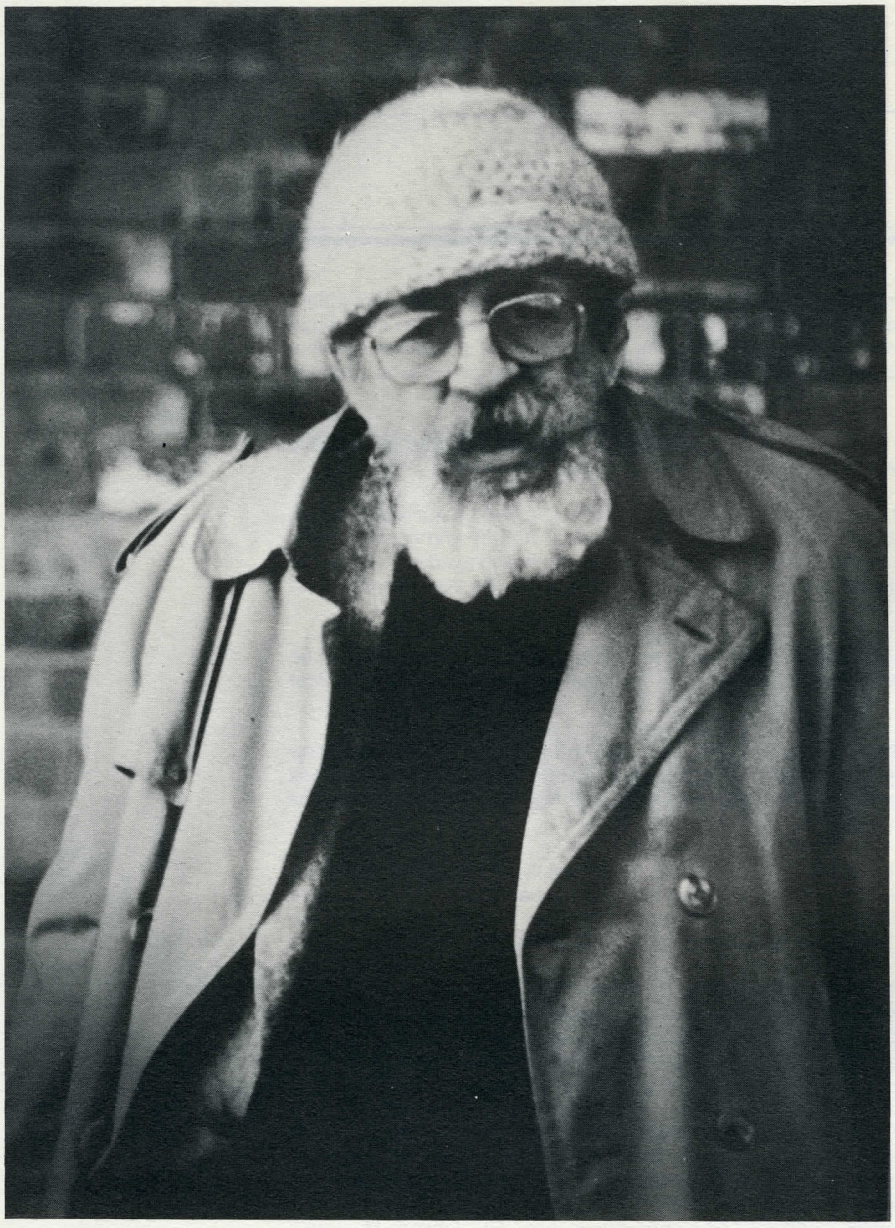


Photo by Ric MacDowell.

publication, it seemed that only one person could possibly write its introduction. After reading the manuscript, Davis sent us such a glowing introduction that we still tremble with pride on reading it.

In early March of 1980 I received a telephone call from Davis at 1:30 in the morning (only Davis would dare call at such an hour, knowing that only Davis would not get a chewing out for doing so). He excitedly told me that his book was nearing completion and that a major New York publishing firm had agreed to buy it. He was ecstatic and said, "I had to share this with someone, Mike, and I knew you'd want to know." A finer compliment I have never received.

When, several weeks later, I spent an afternoon with Davis in Clarksburg, he seemed his normal, cheerful self. He made light of my questions about his health and, instead, we discussed friends, literature, the upcoming issue of our magazine, and, of course, his new book. At dinner (with Appalachian photographer Ric MacDowell), as usual, he insisted on picking up the check. When we parted in front of Clarksburg's historic Gore Hotel, he seemed loath to say good-bye. After a time..."Take care of yourself, Dave." "Oh, don't worry about me." This was a typical parting between us, and our last.

We received news on July 25, 1980, that Davis had died the previous evening in a New York hospital. He had not wanted any of us to worry over him and so had slipped away to New York as death approached. The word spread quickly among his many friends and admirers throughout the state and world, and one sentiment seemed common to all: we shall not see his like again.

Davis Grubb was born in Moundsville in 1919, and spent his early years in Moundsville and Clarksburg. He was the author of 11 best-selling novels, including Barefoot Man, Tree Full of Stars, Dream of Kings, *and* Voices of Glory, *and several anthologies of short stories. Two of his novels,* Night of the Hunter *(1955) and* Fools' Parade *(1969), were made into major motion pictures. He returned to West Virginia in 1977 where he wrote* Ancient Lights, *soon to be published. Davis Grubb died of cancer on July 24, 1980.*

in this issue

JEANETTE BROWN is currently living in suburban Washington, and makes frequent trips to West Virginia. She has taught school, directed dramatic productions, and worked as a Vista volunteer with Indo-Chinese refugees. Since she began free-lancing, her articles and stories have appeared in various publications, including the Denver Post's *Empire* magazine, and *Catholic Fireside* in England. She is presently working on a fictional biography of the young Charles Dickens, portions of which have already been published.

BILL CHAMBERS was born in Matewan and grew up in Huntington. After graduating summa cum laude from The Ohio State University, he and his wife, Mary, moved to Charleston where he is a Certified Public Accountant.

MARK CRABTREE was born in Wellsburg, Brooke County, and received a B.S. in journalism from West Virginia University. He has worked as a photographer for the Morgantown *Dominion-Post* and the Beckley *Post Herald,* and served on the staff of the Maine Photographic Workshop in the summer of 1979. In addition, his work has been displayed in a number of photography exhibitions in West Virginia and Pennsylvania. He is currently project coordinator for the West Virginia Coal Life Project's photography exhibition.

JON DRAGAN runs Wildwater Unlimited, New River's oldest whitewater rafting outfit. Originally from Pennsylvania, he has been in the rafting business for 18 years, and has worked the New River from Thurmond since 1968. This is his first appearance in GOLDENSEAL.

YVONNE SNYDER FARLEY is a native of St. Marys, Pleasants County. She graduated from Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio, and worked for several years as a staff member for Antioch's Appalachian Center in Beckley. She now lives in Beckley with her husband Sam, a coal miner, and son Luke. Her most recent GOLDENSEAL contribution was the "Ramps" article which appeared in the July-September issue.

DAVID ORR studied classical archaeology at the American Academy in Rome and the University of Pennsylvania, where he received his Ph.D. He later taught at Penn, and now works in Philadelphia as Regional Archaeologist for the National Park Service. Among other duties, he is Park Service cultural resources supervisor for the New River National River. He has published in various professional journals, and now makes his first appearance in GOLDENSEAL.

MICHAEL J. PAULEY, a sixth generation West Virginian, grew up in Kanawha and Lincoln counties, and is an alumnus of Morris Harvey College/University of Charleston. He is the editor of the *Illustrated Appalachian Intelligencer,* treasurer of Mountain State Press, and past president of West Virginia Writers. He is the author, with Terrance Hill, of *This Ain't...Sex & Violence,* the introduction of which was written by Davis Grubb. Pauley is now historian with the Historic Preservation Unit of the Department of Culture and History.

ARTHUR C. PRICHARD, born and reared in Mannington, was graduated from Mannington public schools, West Virginia University, and McCormick Theological Seminary (Presbyterian) of Chicago. Mr. Prichard served as the pastor of churches in Ohio and Pennsylvania and in Wheeling and Mannington before retiring in 1970. He was a moderator of Wheeling Prebytery and the Synod of West Virginia for his denomination. In 1969 Mr. Prichard received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Davis and Elkins College. His most recent GOLDENSEAL article was "The Jackson Mystery," about Mannington's first oil well, in the April-June 1980 issue.

MARK ROWH of Bluefield is a Putnam County native and a graduate of West Virginia State College and Marshall University. He is a member of the administrative staff of Bluefield State College, where he also teaches English. His stories, poems, and articles have appeared in a number of publications, including *Community and Junior College Journal, Creative Computing, Encore, NRTA Journal, The Illustrated Appalachian Intelligencer, Backcountry, Hill and Valley, WV Arts News,* and others.

WILIAM D. WINTZ was born in Charleston and grew up in Nitro, Kanawha County. He served as an infantry sergeant during World War II and is now retired from Union Carbide Corporation. He is a past member of the Board of Directors of the West Virginia Historical Society and is now president of the Putnam County Historical Society. He has also edited the historical journal for the society for the past 15 years. In 1979 he was awarded a Certificate of Commendation from the American Association for State and Local History.

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 October-December 1980 issue, to which he contributed photographs and the introduction for "Words and Pictures from McDowell County," oral histories and photographs by his high school students.

CORRECTION: The photograph at the top of page 43 in the July-September GOLDENSEAL, mistakenly attributed to Rick Lee, was actually taken by Bill Wintz of St. Albans.

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