Goldenseal

West Virginia Traditional Life

Volume 7, Number 3 Fall 1981

Mountain State Women

From the Editor: Voluntary Subscriptions

This magazine marks a slight change in the GOLDENSEAL publication schedule. On the cover and title page you'll notice that this issue is labeled for "Fall 1981," rather than for the usual July-September. The publication date is set back to August, with Winter, Spring, and Summer magazines to follow in November, February, and May. This issue covers the three Fall months, and the August publication date gives us a little jump on the season.

Since we have neither skipped nor added an issue the change may appear insignificant, but it seems the best way to keep GOLDENSEAL on a regular quarterly schedule. As long-time readers know, the July-September magazine has traditionally been published around the first of August, anyway. This tardiness was regrettable, but largely unavoidable. The state government fiscal year begins on July 1, at which time GOLDENSEAL gets a new printing contract for the next 12 months. Often this means a new printer as well, making it practically impossible to get the first issue out in July. Consequently, while GOLDENSEAL readers had waited from April to about August for a magazine, the following issue came in about two months, as we rushed to catch up. The new publication dates should ensure that your magazine arrives at regular three-month intervals.

Unfortunately, the GOLDENSEAL schedule has been particularly erratic in recent months. Like other agencies, we were affected by the emergency cutbacks ordered by the Governor during the coal strike. For us this meant that the April magazine—several tons of GOLDENSEALs, addressed, bagged, and ready to go—had to be put in storage when they arrived from the printer in late March, for lack of postage money. This final disappointment came on top of what had already been a rough fiscal year, with our mailing list frozen from time to time due to budget restrictions.

This new fiscal year looks much better. We are contracting to print enough copies to meet anticipated demand for GOLDENSEAL through June 1982. This means that all those on the waiting list have been added to our mailing list in time for this issue, and there should be no more "freezes."

Most promising to me is our new plan to allow GOLDENSEAL readers to contribute to the support of the magazine. Many of you have already suggested that we go to a regular paid subscription. We have avoided doing this, knowing that many of our readers are on limited incomes, and also wanting to keep GOLDENSEAL within the overall philosophy of the Department of Culture and History, which offers a wide variety of taxpaid cultural and historical services to the people of West Virginia. Instead, we are now beginning what we call a "voluntary subscription" plan.

Specifically, we are asking GOLDENSEAL readers to voluntarily contribute $10 yearly for their subscription. This is less than the cost of most magazines, and about equal to what other non-commercial quarterlies now charge. Participation is strictly on an honor system, and we will continue to send GOLDENSEAL to those unable or even unwilling to contribute. We do urge all who can to become voluntary subscribers, for the future growth of GOLDENSEAL—and maybe its future, period—will depend on the support of its readers. I am confident that this support will be substantial, for your letters and phone calls indicate strong approval of the magazine, and some of you have sent unsolicited contributions in the past.

As we've tried to make clear from the first issue back in 1975, GOLDENSEAL is your magazine, and we're now offering you a chance to back that up. We suggest the $10 fee, since that will cover the full cost of a year's subscription, but we will welcome whatever larger or smaller amount you can contribute.

You will find in this issue a special coupon to send in your voluntary subscription. We know that many readers save their copies of GOLDENSEAL, and we've kept this in mind in designing the coupon. It takes up both sides of the outside column of a page, and may be clipped with no damage to the magazine, other than creating one "skinny" page near the back. We will especially appreciate contributions when you send new names for our mailing list, and have provided the back of the coupon for that purpose.

With that said, we'll leave the matter in your hands and wait for your response. Meanwhile, I invite you to settle back for another year of GOLDENSEAL.

This first magazine is our special "Mountain State Women" issue, featuring women from many parts of West Virginia. As usual with GOLDENSEAL, we have focused on older people in more traditional roles. We have included several younger women among our writers, and altogether I think the magazine is representative of a wide spectrum of West Virginia women. We are also including a variety of other articles, among them an interview with Randolph County musician Blackie Cool and a piece on the Martinsburg Apple Harvest Festival.

Plans for future issues were shaping up as this GOLDENSEAL went to press. We have articles on the oil and gas boom of Pleasants and Wood counties in the works, and others on a Spencer movie house and a Huntington brewery, and the magnificent Leatherman barn in Hardy County. A fine Michael Kline interview with fiddler John Johnson is now being transcribed and edited.

Other plans are less definite, but ideas and manuscripts continue to flow in. There is no shortage of raw material, and with your support it promises to be a very good year for GOLDENSEAL.

—Ken Sullivan

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GOLDENSEAL is published four times a year, in February, May, August, and November. The magazine is distributed without charge, although a $10 yearly contribution is suggested. Manuscripts, photographs, and letters are welcome. All correspondence should be addressed to The Editor, GOLDENSEAL, Department of Culture and History, The Cultural Center, Capitol Complex, Charleston, WV 25305. Phone (304) 348-0220.

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Goldenseal

A Quarterly Forum for Documenting West Virginia's Traditional Life

Volume 7, Number 3 ✦ Fall 1981

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Cover: Myrtle Auvil of Grafton tinkers with her model of Locust Grove School. Diane Tennant's article about Miss Auvil begins on page 25. Photo by Dennis Tennant.

Current Programs • Festivals • Publications

John Henry Festival

The 1981 John Henry Festival, an annual presentation of the John Henry Memorial Foundation for the past nine years, will take place on September 18 and 19 at the Concord College Center in Athens. Co-sponsored by Concord College's Appalachian Heritage Week, as was the 1980 festival, this year's event is sub-titled "An Appalachian Intercultural Heritage Festival," and is dedicated to the late Carl Martin, of Martin, Bogan and Armstrong, the black Appalachian string band popular in the 1930's and still playing concerts today as Bogan and Armstrong.

Begun primarily as a music festival, the John Henry Festival will again feature performances by traditional musicians from southern West Virginia and the surrounding Appalachian area. Festival-goers may expect to be treated to a wide range of musical styles, including folk, blues, old-time, banjo, and gospel. As part of the Appalachian Heritage Week, the festival will also offer craft exhibits, a quilt show, an Appalachian film festival, and an Appalachian book exhibit.

The annual John Henry Awards will also be announced during the festival, honoring persons who have made "outstanding contributions to the collection, preservation, or continuation of the Appalachian heritage." Festival director Ed Cabbell emphasizes that the Awards are not limited to contributions to the black Appalachian heritage, and notes that singer Hazel Dickens was honored last year.

For further information, contact John Henry Festival, P. O. Box 135, Princeton 24740.

New Appalachian Women's Magazine

Appalachian Women's Consulting Services, Inc., recently announced the publication of a new magazine, the *Journal of Appalachian Women.* The periodical is put out by the Appalachian Publishing House, also a project of AWCS, and will explore the needs, concerns, and problems encountered by the women of Appalachia, a cultural as well as geographic phenomenon. The magazine includes scholarly works of an academic nature, in addition to literature, poetry, articles on health and family life, and children's pages.

Appalachian Women's Consulting Services was founded in 1979 by Dr. Lynn R. Hartz to provide counseling and related services to women, including education, training, housing, and referral services. Dr. Hartz also recognized the need of women in the area for tools to communicate with one another, to share information and ideas, and to be accorded recognition for what they are and what they are accomplishing. The *Journal of Appalachian Women* is an outgrowth of this need, as is the Appalachian Publishing House, and the planned *Directory of West Virginia Women*, a four-volume publication which will list women in varioius groups and occupations throughout the state.

AWCS also provides a variety of other services, such as the Women's Counseling Center, paraprofessional counselor training, forums on Appalachian women, and plans to institute several other projects in the future. For further information on the *Journal* or any other AWCS program, or to volunteer your services, contact Appalachian Women's Consulting Services, Inc., Medical Arts Building, Suite 214, 1021 Quarrier Street, Charleston 25301. Phone (304) 342-3724.

Appalachia: No Man's Land

Appalachia: No Man's Land is a new film, released earlier this year by Maryknoll Communications. The 28-minute movie was filmed mainly in southern West Virginia, especially Mingo County.

No Man's Land is a film of social commentary, focusing on strip mining and its impact on the Appalachian land and people. The film features testimony by local landowners and activists, including Beth Spence from Logan County. Mike Kline of Elkins appears in, and provides music for, the movie, singing his own "Clinchfield Railroad" at the end of the film.

The 16mm color film may be rented for $30 (or bought for $325) from Maryknoll Communications, Maryknoll, NY 10545. The film has been purchased by the Film Services Division of the West Virginia Library Commission, and may be borrowed free of charge at local public libraries in the state.

The Journal of Country Music

The Country Music Foundation Press of Nashville continues to publish the *Journal of Country Music.* The *Journal* aims for a more serious and reflective study of country music than is found in the fan magazines and trade papers, and presents the writing of leading scholars and critics.

The current issue (Volume 8, number 3) features an excerpt from *Your Cheatin' Heart,* the recent biography of Hank Williams, and articles on Patsy Cline, Grandpa Jones, and others. The next issue will include writing by Hank Williams, Jr., and articles on Jerry Lee Lewis, Ernest Tubb, and Charlie Poole. The 100-page journal has an extensive book review section.

The *Journal of Country Music* is published three times a year. Subscriptions are available from the Country Music Foundation Press, 4 Music Square East, Nashville, TN 37203, for $10 annually. Single issues cost $4.99.

New River Symposium

The New River Gorge National River of the National Park Service and the West Virginia Department of Culture and History are jointly sponsoring a New River Symposium, scheduled for May 1982. The three-day Symposium will be held at the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration Academy near Beckley.

The multi-disciplinary Symposium is open to all those with a professional or avocational interest in the New River, from its North Carolina headwaters down to its mouth in West Virginia. The Symposium organizers are seeking papers in natural history, folklore, geology, history, archaeology, geography, and other sciences, social sciences, and humanities. All papers should share the common theme of treating some aspect of the New River valley, past or present, includ-

ing its natural, physical, and/or human environments, or the interrelation of these. Proposals for sessions and panel discussions are also sought.

Proposals are due by December 1, 1981. They should be addressed to Ken Sullivan, West Virginia Department of Culture and History, The Cultural Center, Capitol Complex, Charleston, WV 25305; phone (304) 348-0220.

Augusta Festival and Mountain Heritage Dance Week

Each summer the Augusta Heritage Arts Workshops offer a week of instruction in traditional American dance, with an emphasis on the dances of Appalachia.

This year's Mountain Heritage Dance Week, August 9-14, will offer daily classes, featuring live music, in clog and flat-foot dancing, West Virginia "big circle" square dancing, New England squares and contras, and special workshops for leaders of community dances and music, plus dance and games for children. As an additional bonus, Augusta Workshop participants can try out their skills at the evening-long dance parties held after dinner every night during Dance Week.

Classes are held on the campus of Davis & Elkins College. The staff for Dance Week is made up of talented and experienced dance callers, cloggers, and musicians, including Bob Dalsemer, former Randolph County artist-in-residence; The Fiddle Puppets, a clogging team from Maryland; the Easy Street String Band, winners of the Tennessee Valley Old Time Fiddlers Contest; Bobby Dean, a fifth-generation caller from Pocahontas County; Ralph Gordon and Lorraine Duisit of Trapezoid; and fiddle champion Woody Simmons. Tuition for Dance Week is $80 per person.

The entire summer of workshops culminates in the Augusta Festival, August 14-16, a three-day homecoming celebration. Daytime festivities are centered in the streets of downtown Elkins, with dancing, craft demonstrations and sales, quilt exhibits, a fiddle contest, ethnic food, and constant entertainment on an outdoor stage all contributing to the old-fashioned street fair atmosphere.

In addition, concerts will be held each evening in Harper-McNeeley Auditorium on the D & E campus. Performers for these concerts will include Kevin Burke and Micheal O. Domhnaill, formerly of the Bothy Band, Utah Phillips, John McCutcheon, The Fiddle Puppets, Easy Street String Band, and others. Concert tickets are $4.50 per night ($2.50 for children and senior citizens), or $8.00 advance ticket sales for both nights.

For further information, or to order tickets, contact Augusta Heritage Arts Workshops, Davis & Elkins College, Elkins, WV 26241.

Preston County Buckwheat Festival

Each year thousands of people flock to Kingwood to sample the buckwheat and sausage dinners at the annual Preston County Buckwheat Festival. Sponsored by the Kingwood Volunteer Fire Department, the festival has been drawing buckwheat cake lovers for 40 years, since its beginning as a homecoming celebration in 1938. This year's event will take place September 24-27, with buckwheat dinners served daily in the Community Building on Brown Avenue.

The festival includes a variety of activities in addition to its culinary offerings. The third annual banjo and fiddlers' contest will be held on Saturday, September 26, at the Craig Civic Center. An arts and crafts fair will be open daily, with sales and demonstrations by craftspeople from around the state, and on Sunday car buffs from as many as five other states will gather for the antique car show, culminating with a parade that afternoon. There will also be a Music Spectacular Friday night at the Civic Center, with performances by country star T. G. Shepherd, Kevin Mabrey, and Hot Ice. Other events include the coronation of a festival king and queen, parades, square dancing, a pet show, carnival, FFA, FHA, 4-H, and Homemakers exhibits, and livestock judging and sales.

For further information on the festival contact Kingwood Volunteer Fire Department, Lucille Crogan, Festival Secretary, P. O. Box 336, Kingwood 26537.

For GOLDENSEAL readers unable to attend, Buckwheat Festival officials have provided the following recipe for genuine Preston County buckwheat cakes:

Combine one quart lukewarm water with ¼ large cake household yeast, thicken to stiff batter with buckwheat flour. Cover and let rise overnight.

Next morning set aside one cup of the batter for starter, then dissolve ½ tsp. soda, 1 tsp. brown sugar, 1 tsp. granulated sugar, ½ tsp. baking powder, 1 tsp. salt in 1 cup warm water, ¼ cup buttermilk, and 2 Tbsp. milk. Add to batter with more warm water to make batter thin enough to bake.

Place the cup of starter in refrigerator. To renew at night (or at least 3 or 4 hours before use), add one pint of warm water and enough buckwheat flour to thicken. When ready to serve, do as before.

One does not need to use more yeast for several mornings (then use about ¼ tsp.).

Burnside Stove Book

Barnett and Gum's Burnside Stove Book was recently published by Robert Barnett and Carroll Gum. The small book is a well-illustrated, descriptive guide to the various Burnside models, which will be of primary interest to collectors and nostalgia buffs.

Barnett and Gum are both serious Burnside collectors. Each has owned more than 20 of the potbelly stoves at one time or another, and in the "Great Braxton County Stove Purchase" of 1979 they bought more than nine tons of stoves and parts, in a single deal with the county school board. They are especially interested in Burnside manufacturers in West Virginia, and list old foundries in Charleston, Wheeling, Philippi, Parkersburg, Huntington, and Clarksburg.

The *Burnside Stove Book* (31 pp., with parts list and photographs) may be ordered from Robert Barnett, Route 1, Box 329, Weston 26452. Send $3, plus 45¢ postage.

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.

Witchcraft and the Naming of Needmore

Baker, WV
February 9, 1981
Editor:
I read your last book you put out with the article about how Needmore got its name. I would very much like to have that copy if you still have any.

I am very interested in all of West Virginia and its history and folklore, even witchcraft. I have lived here all my life and remember the lady well that supposedly was the witch. She spent many a night at our house and was treated the very best, for my mother was afraid she would witch my brother or me. But she still bewitched the cows. I mean that's what my mother and father thought, but I don't believe in witches.
Thank you,
Mildred E. Miller
P.S. Baker is what used to be Needmore.

To Marry a Soldier

Huntington, WV
March 10, 1981
Editor:
If I may, I would like to add a little follow-up to the story about Lena Kiser, "To Marry a Soldier," which was in the January-March 1981 GOLDENSEAL. Due to the many letters and phone calls to "Mom" Kiser wanting to know more about her recent life, she asked me to write. She wants everyone to know that she has seen her relatives again. In May 1973 her son Charles Kiser and family of Martinsburg took her back to Europe for a three-week visit. They visited her brother in Ludinghausen, West Germany, her nephew, Josef, and wife, Inge, in Dusseldorf, Germany, and many cousins and friends in her hometown of Tetange, Luxembourg. She also visited relatives in Strasburg, France.

In the summer of 1979 her nephew, Josef Fischer, and wife visited here in West Virginia and they loved the scenery with the beautiful mountains and the mighty Ohio River, which they said looked very much like the Rhine. In the summer of 1980 a cousin, Anne, from France, visited with Charles and family for six weeks. Mom continues to remain in close contact with all her relatives in Europe.

Mom is a very happy, outgoing lady who enjoys living in North Matewan in beautiful, wild, wonderful West Virginia. She loves her home, family, church, the Cincinnati Reds, and all her many friends. Her immediate family consists of Charles, an attorney in Martinsburg, Jerry and Blanche from Huntington, Polly, Joanne, and Joyce from the Matewan area. We are truly a West Virginia family.

Thank you for printing the interview with Mom. GOLDENSEAL is a very fine publication.
Sincerely,
Blanche K. Artis

Red Ribble

Columbus, Indiana
February 4, 1981
Editor:
I was made aware of your fine magazine last week when the January-March 1981 issue was sent to me by a person in Charleston. Of particular significance to me was the cover photograph and accompanying story on Red Ribble, Coalfield Photographer.

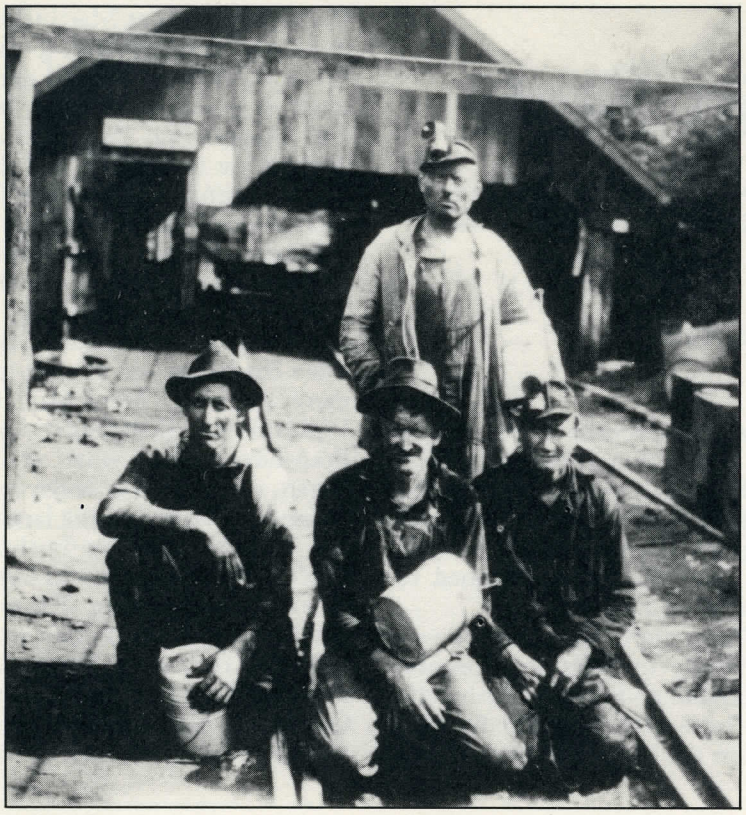
For the past 13 years, another friend and myself have been researching the Mann's Creek Railroad and the communities it served: Sewell, Landisburg, and Clifftop. We have made 17 trips into your state and the New River Gorge territory, with an 18th planned in April. We have in manuscript preparation a book we are naming "Narrow Gauge in the New River Gorge." Much of the territory being researched is now included in Babcock State Park (thus also making the CCC and Babcock State Park article on page 51 very meaningful, as we have interviewed Mr. Boley several times).

The cover is particularly important because it is an enlargement of one section of a Clifftop mine panorama picture. The men pictured on the cover are: (left to right, kneeling) Cecil Gilkerson, coal loader; Joseph Cooper, Sr., pumper; and John Smith, cutting machine operator; and (standing) Charles "Cab" Jones, coal loader. I am attaching a complete listing of the men shown in the complete panorama photograph on page 13 as well, showing which were still living in 1976.

Mr. Charles Jones, standing on the cover, was the father of miner Alverez "Bud" Jones (number 6 in the panorama). Bud and I became very close friends through our late-night extended discussions in his home in Clifftop over the past 13 years. Bud died last year, and Clifftop lost a tremendous "mountain philosopher" and I lost a fine friend. I still visit his widow, and would like to ask if you could send me two copies of this issue so I could take one to her, and take one to the Clifftop "Company Store" for the local residents.

I might add that my vocation is engineering management with Cummins Engine Company (heavy duty diesel engines). As Advanced Product Planning Director, my job is to plan products for the future. In contrast, my avocation is historical railroading. Therefore my time frame of total interest reaches from distant past to the future. I have extensively researched Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad folk music in West Virginia, having written a number of articles, and have a fairly well-developed tape-slide program. In addition, I am building a scale model railroad depicting West Virginia mountain railroading in the 1900-1920 period around Clifftop. We have collected about 1100 pictures of the railroad and area, plus have interviewed over 200 residents and ex-residents of the area.

I have rambled on long enough, but I hope I have established that, although not a native Mountain Stater, I have close and lasting ties to the



history and folklore and culture of your tremendous state, and really appreciate your magazine and effort in its production. Perhaps sometime in the future I could visit you with an eye to sharing some information for your magazine.
Best regards,
Ron Lane

Mr. Lane has since promised us a future article on railroad folk music or the Mann's Creek Railroad, or both.—ed.

Walker, WV
January 19, 1981
Editor:
I received my first copy of GOLDENSEAL in October of last year. My niece works for the Department of Natural Resources and told me about it.

When my copy came this month you can imagine my surprise to see the cover, and also the articles inside. I was raised in coal mining and lumber towns in West Virginia and that one in particular at Clifftop. My father, my grandfather, and uncles all worked in that mine in the '30's and we lived in Clifftop. Two of my brothers were born there. We were living there at the time the two CCC camps were located there, too.

My three brothers have since moved to other states but my sister and I are still loyal West Virginians. I'm proud to be a coal miner's daughter and proud of the West Virginia heritage we have.

I really enjoy all the stories in GOLDENSEAL and hope to continue to read it as long as it is available, even if I have to pay for a subscription.
Thank you,
Mrs. Ray R. Chandler

Danese, WV
January 19, 1981
Editor:
Just finished reading the January-March issue of GOLDENSEAL, and I really enjoyed it, especially the story of Red Ribble.

I have a picture of Layland Mines taken in 1949 and Royalty Mine at Clifftop taken in 1956. In the Ribble picture of 1956 the mine foreman is in the picture twice—on both ends.

I worked 25 years inside of mines at Layland, starting in 1929, and then five years at Royalty Mines at Clifftop. When I worked at Layland I cut into some old works that hadn't been worked since the explosion on March 2, 1915, that killed 114 men in the mine and one man on the outside.

I am enclosing a copy of a picture that was taken shortly after the explosion on March 2, 1915.
Sincerely,
John S. Finley

The Hawk's Nest Tragedy

Belle, WV
January 26, 1981
Editor:
Just a few days ago a close neighbor, who knows that I am a retiree of Union Carbide at Alloy, with 32 years of service, asked me if I would like to read a couple of stories related to the early adventures of Carbide in the upper Kanawha Valley, as related in GOLDENSEAL magazine. Well, I wanted to read the stories—but what was GOLDENSEAL?

Next day she brought me the magazine, and I was surprised that I did not know about such a fine magazine. I read the entire listing but the one about Hawk's Nest and the feature about Mr. B. H. Matheney were read with gusto, mainly because I was formerly a part of them. I did work in the tunnel on the penstocks for Babcock and Wilcox before the tunnel was filled and put into operation, and I do have hearsay knowledge of some very saddening stories, arising from the Hawk's Nest tunnel job.

I knew Mr. Matheney pretty well because I did work at the Alloy plant from June 1936 until retirement in December 1974, and had many experiences during that time doing maintenance, construction, and supervisory work.

Please put my name on your mailing list that I too may become a regular reader of GOLDENSEAL.
Very truly yours,
Sterling T. Moore

Stouts Mill, WV
March 10, 1981
Editor:
A neighbor brought me the January-March GOLDENSEAL to read while I was laid up with bronchitis. I think it is the best magazine on West Virginia that I have ever read.

I am 69 years old and was in the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1934. I was in Camp Glady, on Laurel Fork

(continued on page 72)

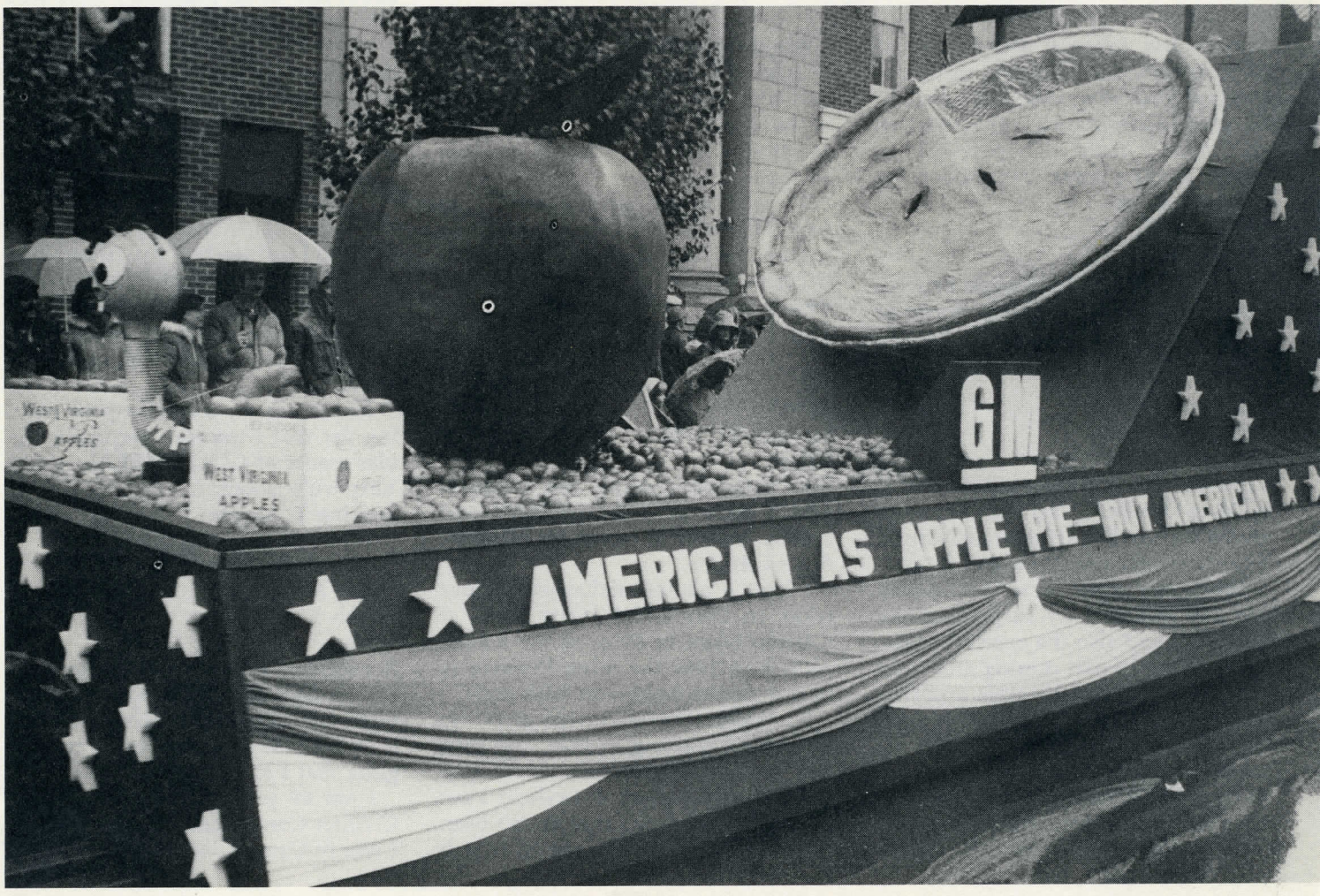
The Mountain State Apple Harvest Festival

By Shirley Young Campbell

Apples have been important in the history of the Martinsburg area for many years. A 1909 issue of the *Martinsburg Evening Journal* included an article urging Berkeley County residents to consider planting apple trees, and an Apple Carnival was held that year. By 1937, according to information recently furnished by Ethel Bovey of the *Journal* staff, the *New York Times* took note of local apples, stating that Berkeley County ranked first in the East and fourth in the nation in apple production at that time. The *Times* also published a picture of the Martinsburg Apple Harvest King, and a photograph showing 62,000 bushels of York Imperial apples destined to become applesauce.

The *Times* applesauce picture was actually made in Jefferson County, and Jefferson and other Panhandle counties have also traditionally participated in the Mountain State Apple Harvest Festival at Martinsburg. Announcements concerning candidacy for last October's festival queen were made in Berkeley, Morgan, Jefferson, and Hampshire. Approximately 70 contestants responded, and the October 24 coronation of Queen Teal Mathias was a festival highlight.

Records of early Apple Festivals indicate that no queens were chosen in 1935, 1936, or 1937. Kings reigned alone in those years, but in 1938 Lucy Ellen Bradshaw was chosen to accompany the king. Now Mrs. Kenneth Waldeck of Shepherdstown, Miss Bradshaw was 22 when she became queen, winning over seven other contestants by receiving the largest number of votes cast by festival ticket holders. As queen she was treated royally, accompanying King E. Lee Goldsborough in a golden chariot drawn by four white horses driven by costumed charioteers. Last year's Queen Mathias was also given royal treatment, granted such privileges as



acting as guest conductor for a selection played by the U.S. Air Force Band during their concert. She was carefully guarded in her royal role by Air Force patrol cadets.

The 1980 Apple Harvest Festival began Friday, October 24, with a pie baking contest at Martinsburg High School—apple pie baking, of course. Festival president Charles Thornton says that the contest was coordinated by home economics teachers of two area schools. A young man, 16-year-old Gary Canby, was winner in the junior division. He and Susan Stuckey, winner in the senior division, received their awards from Miss West Virginia.

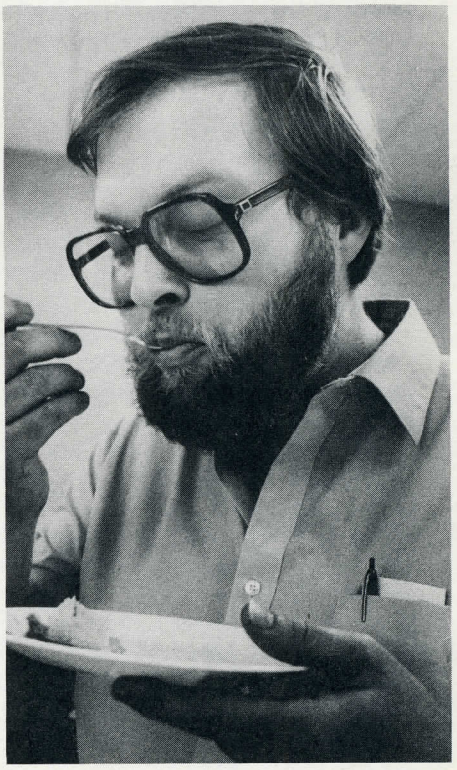
Miss West Virginia was also on hand to crown Queen Mathias later on Friday, at the royalty pageant at Hedgesville High School. Ida Beth Miller, one of several people who had worked on this part of the festival, explained that entry blanks had been sent to area business establishments and announcements made to the press. An entry fee of $20 was required. The list of sponsors included a variety of businesses who wished to support the festival in this way, and several parents and grandparents of contestants.

President Thornton, who is also manager of radio station WEPM-WESM, reports that the festival was partly financed by a gift from the city of Martinsburg, but the greater part of funding came from money raised locally by combined efforts. The festival also obviously utilized the time and talents of many people.

Efforts to revive the apple festival, which had been discontinued after 1940, began about three years ago, according to Thornton, with a few interested people meeting in a restaurant. They formed a steering committee and a board of directors. Memberships were sold, entitling members to vote in general meetings. The 1980 festival program listed approximately 24 working committees and about 150 voting members, with membership divisions formed according to the amount of money contributed. These divisions, called clubs, are named appropriately: Queen's, King's, Golden Delicious, Red Delicious, and York.

The 1980 Saturday morning events began at 9:30 with a sports breakfast sponsored by the Martinsburg Rotary Club, honoring the Senior Little League All-Star Team and featuring Tim Stoddard of the Baltimore Orioles. Mr. Stoddard made a speech at the breakfast, and served as grand marshal of the festival parade.

Activities continued throughout Saturday and Sunday, including the grand parade, contests, competitions, exhibits, concerts, and the festival ball. The dance and the Sunday events were held in the West Virginia Air National Guard hangar. The 40-page festival program, the responsibility of board member Thomas Aird, lists archery competition, horseshoe con-



Far left: GM's "American as Apple Pie" float was a winner in the grand feature parade.
Left: Junior division bakers Pam Canby and Michelle Cyanick prepare pastry.
Above: Richard Morrison was an apple pie judge. Photos by Tim Johnson, courtesy Martinsburg *Evening Journal.*

tests, 4-H demonstrations, Boy Scout and Girl Scout displays, jazz band concerts, a pop concert, an authentic re-enactment of a Civil War skirmish, and a parachute drop.

A nationally-sanctioned baton twirling contest began at 8 a.m. Sunday in the Army National Guard armory. Festival president Thornton informed us that gospel singing was also a part of the program and that Colonel Jack Koch of the West Virginia Air National Guard hosted a 10,000-meter run, with 75 people participating. Events were held as scheduled in spite of rain and wind, with only the parachute drop cancelled.

David Blyth, director of Sunday activities at the hangar, gave us information about the cookbook available for sale in connection with the festival. The book, which sold for $3, contains 40 or more recipes—apple recipes. The Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company community relations team gathered favorite recipes from the wives of orchardists in Berkeley, Jefferson, and Morgan counties. A second printing of the book was necessary.

President Thornton reports that most of the people working last year had little or no previous experience in planning events of this scope, but members formed "a super group, a joy to work with," according to him. They were very successful, and are no doubt hard at work on the 1981 Mountain State Apple Harvest Festival.

Early Kanawha County Orchards

Although the Eastern Panhandle counties are noted for the commercial production of apples, most West Virginia farms had orchards at one time. In this excerpt from a 1952 letter to Shirley Young Campbell, S. Jackson Stover recalls turn-of-the-century fruit growing in the Paint Creek-Cabin Creek section of Kanawha County.

"Now about the orchards: Nearly all the little farms up the creek used to have an orchard planted around the house. As I remember them, some would consist of but a few trees—a dozen or maybe a few more, while a few would have maybe 50. We used to think of them as home orchards, since the market for the fruit would have been hard to reach from up the creek.

"An orchard I knew 50 years ago situated on the mountains was the old McVey orchard, at my mother's old home and birthplace on top of the mountain between Cabin and Paint creeks; the paths leading to it were from Wake Forest and Burnwell. So far as I know, there is little evidence remaining to mark the site of the old homestead. Yet remaining in brush and thickets even to this day will be the gnarled trunk of an old apple tree and even here and there a seedling will be bearing fruit.

"On top of the mountain at Decota is another old mountain farm. I think this was called the old Perry farm. I'm not sure how much of an orchard there was but certinly there were several fruit trees—apples, peaches, and probably a pear tree or two. To get to the place you went up the point opposite the Y.M.C.A.

"You are able to remember what you called the Graley place. It was called the Lykins place when I was a boy. They had a good orchard—apples, peaches, pears, plums, cherries, and a quince tree or two. Back of Carbon was the old Roman Perry farm. Quite a place as a small boy would judge it. The usual fruit trees. Go on to the head of Buzzard Fork beyond Republic and you found another farm located on top of the mountain. As a boy I knew it as the Martin Buzzard place. This was located near the head of Fulton Creek which flows into the Clear Fork of Coal River some 15 miles above Whitesville.

"From Kayford go up Greenway hollow—you knew it as the tunnel hollow, and on to the top of the mountain and you come to the old John Stover place. The most of these old mountain farms have been abandoned. When the coal mines were opened in the head of the creeks the old settlers drifted down into the valleys and soon most of the clearings became thickets of underbrush. Sassafras, locusts, and briers covering them in a few years. The apple and peach trees were being choked out by the undergrowth yet frequently in the fall you chance upon a tree loaded with fruit.

"Several of these abandoned orchards in the early 1920's provided a choice find for the fellows who made use of the fruit to manufacture brandy along with "White Mule." There were two or three other old mountain farms in the head of Cabin Creek that I have not mentioned—the old Conner and John Lykins places and another—I believe it was called the Jarrell place.

"Each homestead would have its fruit trees because these provided cider, vinegar, and occasionally the makings for brandy—jelly, applesauce, apple butter, dried apples and apples picked and stored, sometimes holed in the ground like potatoes for use in the winter.

"The common varieties that I can remember were about the same at all the places. Bird egg or little early striped, June apples, Transparents, Red Milams, White Milams, Ben Davis and what we called the winter apple. Each place would have a sweet apple or two; sweet apple preserves was a common delicacy among the mountain folk. One variety—my favorite—was a red apple we called Paremim. I never saw the word spelled, so the spelling is original as far as I am concerned. This variety was grown in every orchard that I knew and the number of trees was greater than any other variety."

"As We Lived a Long Time Ago"

By Elizabeth Jane Deitz

Elizabeth Jane Deitz grew up on a 19th century West Virginia farm, in the western corner of Greenbrier County that follows the Meadow River down between Nicholas and Fayette. She observed many changes in over a hundred years of living, and shortly before her death in July 1980 "took a notion" to write of the early days: *This finds me approaching 100 years of age, so grateful for my eyesight and that I have never lost interest in a book or the events of the day. Often I pass away the time by writing a poem, such as it is, or scribbling a story for the grandchildren. Just now I took a notion to write a story of life as we lived it a long time ago.*

For several years our old log house had served as a schoolhouse and as the only church of our neighborhood. It was one large room, one huge fireplace, with logs called puncheons flattened and used for a floor. By the time I was old enough to remember, these puncheons, which had been split flat side up, had been scrubbed as white as paper. I recall that they were sometimes covered with sand and left to wear down, leaving them whiter than ever and shining. By the time my mother had become a bride, another schoolhouse had been built and my grandfather, who owned the land on which the school had been built, gave it to my mother and father, and that is where three of us children were born.

When the family began to grow, and a baby girl was born, father decided it was time for an addition to the one room. He, with the aid of neighbors, built an upper story which we called our loft. The stairway led up on the outside of the house, and ended on a little platform against the big chimney. Then there was a door right over the landing which led into the loft. It was cold up there, and we used the big schoolroom downstairs for living quarters and bedroom for the en-

Mountain State Women

Elizabeth Jane Deitz at a family gathering in her honor. Mrs. Deitz died in July 1980.

tire family all winter long, until we built our new house. Father also added a long shed to the big room, and it served for kitchen and dining room. Then he added a porch, built of flattened and split logs and connected with the outdoor stairway. He built a nice pair of board steps to this porch, and here is where I sat so often, especially during the evening twilight or early dawn, just wondering, I think.

I haven't mentioned our furniture in that house. First, and most, we had two immense-sized beds, one in each corner of that big room. I do not remember about our chairs but I know we must have had some kind, for I can recall cuddling against Mother's knees, scared about to death when some visitor was relating a ghost story. Underneath the big high beds we had what we called trundle beds, that could be pulled out for children to sleep in when we had visitors. By and by Mother got a sewing machine, then much later we afforded a bureau (now called a dresser). Of course, everyone had one of those big eight-day clocks with weights, with its loud tick-tock. There in that big dark room at night near the clock was where the ghosts stayed, that I feared so much.

We had a little flat-top stove, very small it seems, a homemade table to eat from, a bench along one side, shelves out of boards for our dishes, and cakes of maple sugar. Two barrels were in the corner for meal and flour.

I quite well recall when Mother went to our little country store a few miles away and brought back the most wonderful piece of furniture, carrying it on her lap on old Nell. It was a box, maybe eight inches in depth by 18-by-24 inches with two little drawers with these words written in gold color on each: "Clark, ONT. Spool Cotton." For sure we were rich. We had furniture.

By and by we had to move into our new house, which was more comfortable but no more lovable. That new house lived for about 25 or 30 years, then caught fire and burned down, leaving the stone chinmey to which another and bigger house was built and is still standing. It is located overlooking a wonderful western view, a spot made especially for a house, but the view to me is dimmed, for so many of the ones I loved have passed to the great beyond.

So many farms in the distance which looked like checkerboards dotting the woods that surrounded them are gone. Now most of these farms consist of briars and brambles. A small creek ran its winding way in a hollow below our new house and deep along its bed were the tallest spruce pines that you can imagine. As I started on my way to school each morning, I stopped on the little stile at our gate to look at the tops of these tall pines seeming like giants, that often glistened with sleet or snow. That little creek made straight for the west until it emptied into our old Meadow River. In late afternoons it pointed toward the most wonderful western sunset that could be imagined. But when logging companies came in, they sure played hobby with our hills and streams. Things were left tumbled in every direction, much worse than strip mining of today. Never again will our big pines show their plumes.

Perhaps it is only fancy, but it seems to me that everything was more intense in those far-away days. Storms were fiercer, cold more cold, so many butterflies and wild birds of every color and kind. Then we had wild ani-

"This was long before the days of the stork. My dad saved the day by telling us to look around old stumps and maybe we would find baby tracks. We thought for certain that we would get a new baby brother, for there were his tracks in the snow. . . ."

mals that sometimes gave us a fright and sometimes a thrill. I remember when some neighbors came in and told of hearing the old panther scream like a woman, and sometimes we were afraid to go to the woods for berries. We children, with our cousins, often went across the creek for wintergreen (or tea) berries, and one day we found a big brown bear quietly eating berries nearby! Needless to say, we hurried out of the woods and left him to enjoy his dinner!

Also, we had many pet animals. I was seldom without a pet lamb that followed me about and came at my call. Then it was quite an event when Old Nell, our mare, found us a little crooked-leg foal—almost as big an event as when our new little baby brother arrived! This was long before the days of the stork, so we children were much puzzled. My dad saved the day by telling us to look around old stumps as we walked through the snow to school and maybe we would find baby tracks. It was a long route to school that day, up and down hill, looking but in vain. All we found were small animal tracks, but later we thought for certain that we would get a new baby brother, for there were his tracks in the snow as clear as daylight. We later learned it was a coon track, so much like a baby's.

We could often hear the howl of a mountain cat, but I never saw one. Very often I saw foxes, for there were so very many of them. They would get among our lambs and chickens. I remember so well the night Dad called me out of my snug bed to carry the lantern. Something was among the sheep. We did all right until a frightening screech threw me into a panic. I sent the lantern as far as I could and grabbed Daddy's leg. How he did laugh. It was only a little screech owl nearby. Do birds play pranks, I am asking?

One bird I especially liked was a cardinal, a big red fellow that perched on a branch near my window and I thought he said, "You are sweet! You are sweet!" Then there was a little invisible bird that always frightened me. That was the whippoorwill.

We heard so many ghost stories and ill omens that I was in a state of worry when one of these little whippoorwills came around, for I had heard that if they called real nearby, it was a sure sign of death. So I sat on my old steps in the evening and wondered "Could my mother or dad die?" However, try as I could, I could not keep those little pests from sitting on the windowsill near me or in the hop vines at the end of the porch, calling, calling, "Whippoorwill! Whippoorwill!" It lasted through the entire spring, and now they are almost extinct it seems, and we seldom hear their call. I really miss them.

There were many interesting days for us children, hard work days for our parents, but we enjoyed the special big dinners. The neighbor women who came to help often brought playmates for us. These are a few of such days: logrolling day, goosepicking day, hogkilling day, the last day of school, and last but not least, a few weeks of revival meetings when school was dismissed.

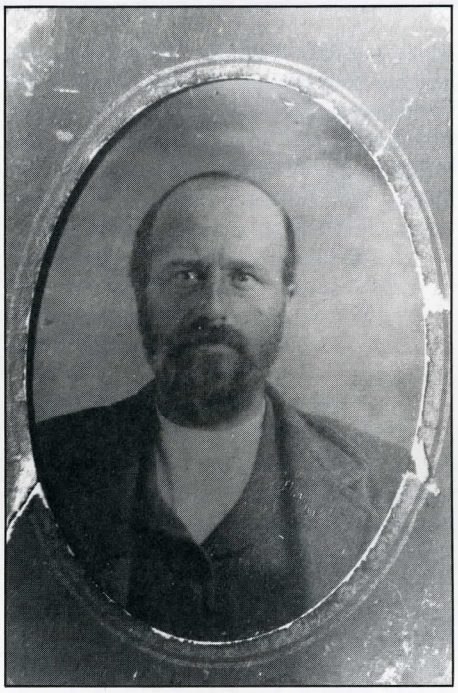
Logrolling day came after long preparation when the summer work was done. Father had already planned a new piece of woodland to be cleared for corn planting next spring. No matter how large the trees, they had to be ringed so they would die and fall out by root, or they must be cut down and all the limbs cut off and the brush picked up and burned. This was a task in which the entire family could take part, but not altogether an easy job. Then all the logs had to be sawed into long sections and readied for the big logrolling day! The neighbor men came, their wives came, and some of our cousins came, so we children looked forward to that one day in early spring. Every woman pitched in to help prepare the big feed. Later, when the weather was just right, the moon in its full, the neighbors gathered again to burn off our clearing. How our cousins and we all enjoyed watching the big bright fires and the million sparks of light that floated sky-high almost to meet the stars overhead.

Hogkilling day was rather interesting also, at least for us children. The

". . . the first coffee grinder that I can recall was nailed to a post on the wall. It seemed to me it could only swallow one grain at a time as I so often had the job of grinding the coffee while my eight-year-old sister got the breakfast."

hogs, fattened on the fallen chestnuts, were herded into a pen near the house. Early in the morning, father would start the day with an immense fire, logs piled high, and dozens of sand rocks placed on top. A large barrel was sunk part way into the ground and filled with water. Later, when all was ready, the big hot rocks were thrown into this water where the poor pig would be doused head-first as soon as his last squeal was heard. Then the scraping was started, for all the hair had to be scraped off as soon as the hot water loosened it, and soon there was a neatly-sheared animal. Then came the dressing, the cutting into pieces, rendering of lard, and the sweet taste of new pork. But we were usually ill by the end of the week, for the taste of fresh pork was too much to resist. There was no fresh meat on the market back in that day, so it was chicken always, or a lamb once in the summertime.

Goosepicking day came in the early summer, so the poor geese when naked wouldn't freeze. Of course, when goosepicking day came, we always called on my handy aunt who we said knew how to do everything—Aunt Catherine. We herded the geese into a shed, and my aunt, seated on a solid chair, would grab a goose, throw it across her lap, and my, how the feathers would fly! Along with every handful of feathers would come a shrill quack from the old bird she was treating so cruelly.



Father Isaac Nutter. Mrs. Deitz remembered him as a man who would take time off for a romp with the children, but he "thought we should be brought up to work." Date and photographer unknown.

Sugar-making time came in the early spring. My daddy spent many a winter hour making what we called spiles for the sap to seep through and drop into the troughs. The troughs were big and heavy and it took hard work to wash and clean them, carry and get them ready at the right time. Sometimes Dad would take me with him to sugar camp where I spent the night through when the big stir-off came. Then it was that we had to call on our Aunt Catherine who could make the cakes of sugar just right. Sometimes Mother would go along to help, and that was a treat for me.

I can almost see Dad yet as he hurried from task to task, lighting the big fires, putting spouts in place, and pouring, pouring troughs of sap into the ready barrels. He'd come whistling back to camp to fill the great iron kettles with the sweet sap. When it was boiling, the air all around was filled with the sweet fragrance. When twilight came, Daddy threw an armload of sheepskins under the lee of a great log near the camp and said, "Time for my girl to go to bed." He tucked me in and I lay there just listening and wondering. The bright sparks from the burning logs mingled with the stars in the tops of the trees, they were so near. The frogs and the crickets must have loved that night as well as I, for they sang and chirped until I fell asleep, to the sounds of animals as they prowled the woods.

Compared to the handy gadgets of today our way of life was hard. Often my sis or I went to milk Old Brindle in the mid-afternoon when the sun seemed so hot. This we did to have fresh cool milk for supper along with our hard-earned cornbread. Mother

"We were supposed to know the entire multiplication table by heart by the time we were eight years of age. How often did I review those lines in the early morning before I got out of my snug bed, and how proud I was when I could say them forward, backward, inward, and outward! Then we memorized every poem in *McGuffey's Reader.*"

would strain the milk, put it into a large pan, and place it to swim in the cold spring. We thought of nothing better.

About once a month two bushels of corn had to be taken to the old grist mill five miles away, or we would have no corn pones, perhaps no flour for biscuits. But to get that corn ready for the mill after it was raised, shucked, and dried was quite a task within itself. To make the job easier my dad and all farmers made themselves what they called pesslers [pestles], or some such name. They went to the hickory tree field and cut a large pole at least six inches through, then the whittling began, usually at night after a 12- or 15-hour work shift on the farm. When finished, this pole was a broomstick except for one end which was peeled and left entire but for the deep notches that were cut in it.

Then Mother cleaned the floors, and Dad brought into our living room his sacks of corn on cob and an empty barrel with bottom and top off. Into this barrel he poured a part of his corn. Then he heaved that huge pole up and down, up and down, each lick shelling off some of the grain, then more corn and more pounding. If too much, the barrel was lifted onto a new place, with all the partly-shelled corn left on the floor and so the party went. As soon as the first ears of corn were out of the barrel each and all of us children knew to pitch in and shell corn for all we were worth until the job was done

Mother Mary Walker Nutter was born on Christmas Day, 1855. Date and photographer unknown.

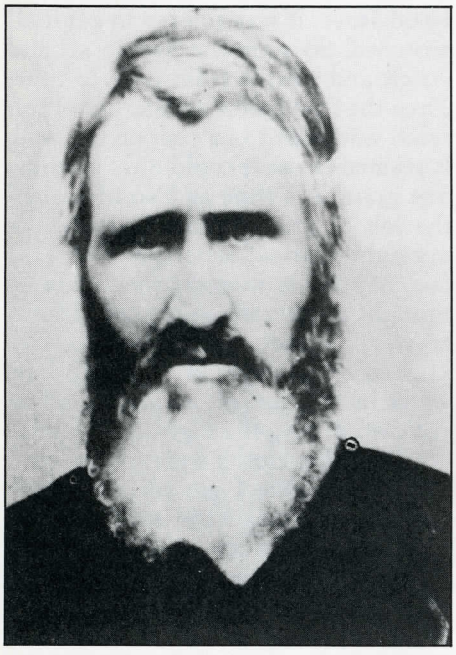
and someone was on the way to the old mill.

It was just about as hard to get coffee ready for breakfast as it was to get a pone of cornbread. We couldn't buy roasted coffee, so we got the green grains. We had to be careful as we roasted it in our little flat-topped wood stove. It was so easy to get it all scorched. So someone had to sit and watch and turn it from time to time. Then the first coffee grinder that I can recall was nailed to a post on the wall. It seemed to me it could only swallow one grain at a time as I so often had the job of grinding the coffee while my eight-year-old sister got the breakfast. My father thought we should be brought up to work so he made Mother start us into the job early. Our kitchen was cold—oh, so cold! The water in the buckets was always frozen over during the nighttime in winter. Our dish cloths were frozen stiff, and by the time I got coffee enough fed through that little mill my feet were almost like ice.

Twice a year we were so pleased to get a few new store-bought clothes. Especially the neat little button shoes that took the place on Sundays of the tanned cowhide ones we wore to school. How we did make them last until the next landslide when we sold our wool or picked chestnuts to sell. We would go in the summer in our bare feet until we were nearly in sight of the church, carrying our precious shoes, then when we got near, we would put them on.

Perhaps here I should say something about our new log schoolhouse. It served us well for my first 17 years. Many of the pupils went right on to school until they were 20 or more years of age, for there were no places of higher learning available at that

"We had Jewish peddlers that came occasionally and gave us something to look forward to. It was almost like having Santa Claus come, even if Mother couldn't afford to buy much. We loved to see the big bundle opened up, for we seldom saw new things."



Grandfather John B. Nutter. Mrs. Deitz recalled him as "someone special to me," and she often helped out on his farm. Date and photographer unknown.

time. It was before the days of coal, so we had a large stove that looked like a sawed-off log placed on its side, door at one end and a small hearth under it. Huge logs were sawed that kept the fire burning all day and we were sometimes more than comfortable if we sat near the roaring fire.

It was quite a treat for the bigger boys to bring in another load of wood. Also it was a treat to go a quarter of a mile to a spring on a farm for water. We all drank from the same dipper. The bucket sat on the shelf along with our little tin pails where our dinners were placed. Dinner for many consisted of pieces of corn pone and a tin or cup of sorghum with butter. Just the same, we grew in stature and strength, and some in knowledge.

We knew no such thing as paper and lead pencil, or they were too expensive, I don't know which. We had slates and slate pencils. They were a little hard to get. When one wore out or was used up, we'd crawl under the schoolhouse and search for a slate pencil that might have fallen through a crevice in the floor. That failing, there was a bank on the road some distance away where soapstones were to be found, so we could use those as makeshift pencils. We had big desks with shelves for our McGuffey books. We were allowed to sit two to a seat, which was quite a pleasure as, when the teacher's back was turned, we could get in a little visiting on the sly.

But we were going to school to study, which we did. We were supposed to know the entire multiplication table by heart by the time we were eight years of age. How often did I review those lines in the early morning before I got out of my snug bed, and how proud I was when I could say them forward, backward, inward, and outward! Then we memorized every poem in *McGuffey's Reader*. I still get a thrill out of "The Old Oaken Bucket," "The Blue and the Gray," "The Inchcape Rock," and many others.

The last day of school we had to prepare plays, poems, and really get up and make a stagger, at least, of saying them. I was a bashful pupil, so what an ordeal to get up in front of what seemed like a thousand faces and say my piece. Decorating the schoolhouse was, we thought, a masterpiece. We saved the newspapers through the winter so as to have enough for the older girls to cut out into lace curtains to cover part of the windows. Then we went to the creek for spring pine and every crack and crevice held a branch. There were contests all morning in spelling and arithmetic, in which some of our parents took part. How proud I was of my daddy's education! How he could win contests! He knew math so well that everyone else seemed dumb beside him.

I think I always liked school and all my teachers but I had to be the tomboy for both my daddy and my granddaddy, so I was sometimes kept home from school to do chores for both in the fall of the year. About the first that I recall of helping my granddad was when they killed hogs. They called for me to carry water from the nearby spring to wash and clean everything but the squeal. I wasn't fond of the job, but the hardest thing was when

". . . the best sign of all, when a real big storm was on the way, was our old Meadow River. For several days before a real storm broke it would seem to gather force and we could hear the loud roar. Mother would say, 'This is going to be a bad storm. I know by the way the river roars.'"

the sorghum mill came along in the fall of the year. I rode the old slow horse round and round, turning the mill. Then before the job was over at my house, Granddad had his field of cane ready and nothing would do him but for me to ride again. I begged for my brother Owen to take the job but all said he was too slow. I was older and spry enough to apply the switch to Old Nell, so I stayed from school.

My old granddad was someone special to me. I loved to go along to milk the half-dozen cows. I couldn't help milk, but we could talk. He had a special spring house, with a stone floor, and a deep spring in the back part. But before he set the buckets of milk in the spring house, he poured a half-dozen iron containers full of milk and called, "Kitty, kitty." The half-dozen cats of all colors came in a run. He said he kept them to feed on the many mice and save his grain. My good old granddad kept much money in gold hidden away, some in wheat bins. He also had orchards with every kind of fruit, apples of every flavor, and a big barn full of cattle.

My brother and I were left pretty much to ourselves after age ten, with a few jobs now and then like cutting the sandberries or the white daisies from a ten-acre field, or the bitterweeds out of a newly-cleared pasture. We had a good time roaming the woods and fields, hunting birds' nests, now and then burning out a hornets' nest.

The family's Nutterville home in 1939. This is the second house on the same site, the original having burned in 1913. Photographer unknown.

Our parents saw to it that we had time for play away from our daily tasks. Father always took time off if our cousins came in the late afternoon, to have a romp with us all. If we played hide-and-seek it was hard to tell where father would put us. And when we worked along with him in the fields, we had to watch out for some unusual prank from him. If we drank out of a stream or spring, we were sure to get a ducking, or our faces pushed into the water. But I don't think I ever had a switch or a paddle used on me.

Soon after our new house was built, when I was about 11, some engineers came to board with us and Daddy became a member of the gang—a full-fledged engineer. He stayed with the job for 45 years. We had come into a fortune. My father earned $45 a month! After ten years this was raised to $60, and after another ten years, to $80, and by and by to $100. Then, when there came the offer of another raise, he refused it, saying he wasn't worth that to the company.

Our winters set in early and hung on late. Sometimes we would not have a thaw for the entire winter. Our roads to school were drifted or clogged with snow almost throughout the school months. Sometimes Father could get

"Epidemics"

Diseases of epidemic forms often seemed to hit at intervals. Perhaps the one and only dipper used at school helped to spread some of the germs. They seemed to start in a small community about eight miles from where we lived, sometimes working their way nearer and nearer our home and leaving us much frightened. The first that I can clearly remember was a severe form of diphtheria. It took about all the children in that little valley, and four out of five in a home in our own neighborhood. I think my mother and daddy expected the worst. I would hear them talking that three out of four children in one home were buried in the same grave. I think the weather was so cold on our hills that even germs could not exist, so we caught no diphtheria.

When later on an epidemic of spinal meningitis struck in this same location, that really scared me, as I heard how one patient after another had died an awful death—or perhaps worse, some were left crippled for life.

When typhoid fever came, it was no respecter of persons; old and young took it the same, here, there, and yonder. It was a terrible thing which I have no difficulty recalling. The doctors thought a drink of water or any form of food would kill an ill patient for certain, so the ill suffered so many ways. Their temperature went high, nothing to be given to lessen it. How far medical science has gone since back then is a wonder to me.

through and take us to school in a sleigh, which was all fun. Sometimes we had to walk or go horseback over the hills, and abandon our road for months. Other times the sun would peep out, the snow would melt a little, then another snow would come, until a crust was formed over which we could walk. The snow drifts were almost mountains, but we children loved this way of travel, rather than over the tops of wind-blown hills. We also had Jewish peddlers that came occasionally and gave us something to look forward to. It was almost like having Santa Claus come, even if Mother couldn't afford to buy much. We loved to see the big bundle opened up, for we seldom saw new things. I remember the Jewish peddler by name of Cohen, who got caught in a storm at our place and had to stay several days. I understand he later was one of the founders of the Cohen Drug Stores. He certainly got his start the hard way.

Thinking of storms, a storm really had to be a fierce one for me not to enjoy it. I especially liked those sudden thunderstorms with their streaks of bright lightning that came on hot spring or summer days. If a deep snowstorm was in the process of making, our farm animals seemed to know ahead. You could see our old mother sow making her preparations by carrying hay, corn fodder, or whatever rubbish she could find, and piling it all around her bed. Then when the storm struck she almost hibernated until the weather quieted down again. Also the barnyard fowls seemed to sense the coming of a storm. The geese huddled close together, and the chickens would fly from place to place and into the air almost like they were drunk. But the best sign of all, when a real big storm was on the way, was our old Meadow River. For several days before a real storm broke it would seem to gather force and we could hear the loud roar. Mother would say, "This is going to be a bad storm. I know by the way the river roars."

The worst storm that I can recall lasted for more than a week. We knew all the signs and my dad began to make preparations. Plenty of big logs were piled in the porch, kindling wood of all sizes and kind stacked behind our little flat-topped kitchen stove. The windows were made secure, and hay was piled onto the floor of the old barn on the hill. Then about all we could do was just sit and watch the bright fire and wait. School was called off for fear of falling trees. All night long we could hear one big dead tree after another give up the ghost and topple with a crash to the ground. Glad we were to be snugly sheltered where we could watch the great logs in the fireplace send off their bright sparks and the little bright blazes. Sometimes we would climb to look out the high window and count the fallen trees as they looked much like a vandalized cemetery with all the stones toppled. We just waited out that storm almost holding our breath for fear our farm animals had suffered, but they at least lived through—although no doubt they were much in need of food and water.

When my daddy decided to take the job away from home (except on weekends), I thought the earth had fallen in on us. I had followed in his tracks over the hills and meadows, up hill, down hill, being his handyman, or tomboy, and now it would be mostly up to me and my younger brother to look after the farm stock and the small chores. My sister could do the housekeeping, my mother the garden and milking. All went well with Owen and me through the summer. We had all the time we needed to slip off and loaf, but when the cold dark days of winter came, so did the story change also. How I did dread facing the icy wind, and going to the old barn on the hill a quarter of a mile away to feed the farm animals. The shocks of corn fodder were frozen. The hay was frozen. Our toes and fingers were frozen. This was an early morning task before schooltime.

But when spring came I really liked to care for the ewes and new lambs. I think I grew to be the shepherd of the family. I never forgot to put the sheep into their fold (or shed) where no fox could get in to carry off a lamb, and I always found a lamb I could take to the house to pet before the season was over.

A full account of Mrs. Deitz' recollections may be found in Mountain Memories, *by Granville A. Deitz. The 124-page book may be ordered for $3.45 from J. Dennis Deitz, 216 Sutherland Drive, South Charleston 25303.*

The Tusings of South Branch Mountain

Lynn Tusing Recalls Family Life in Hardy County

Text and Photographs by Arthur C. Prichard

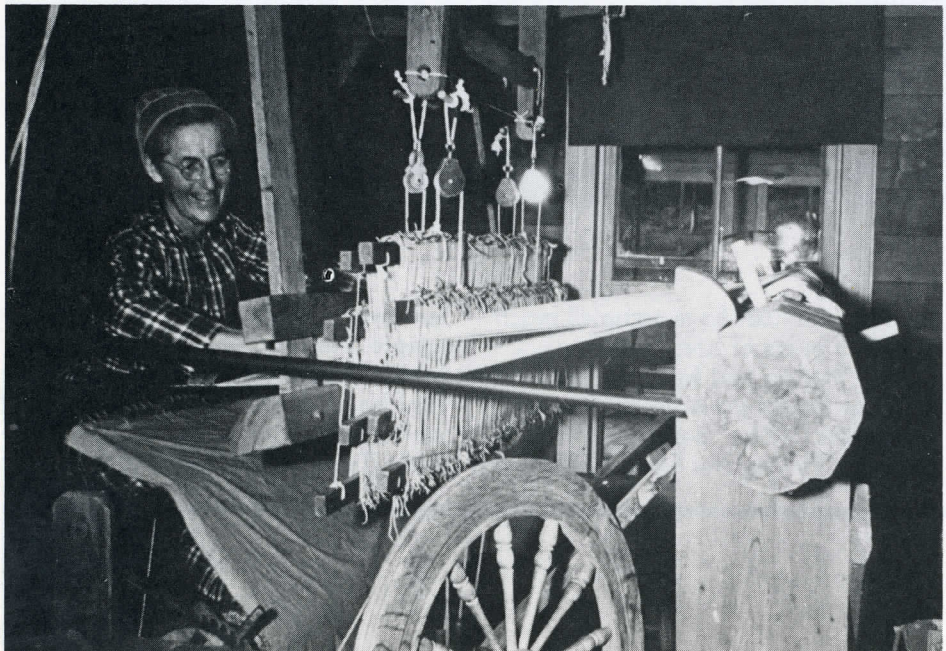
Lynn Tusing at home in her backyard in 1980.

Miss Lynn Tusing lives high on South Branch Mountain in Hardy County. She is a devoted Christian, and a housekeeper, gardener, farmer, and weaver. She practices her religion and her worldly occupations, and such activities have occupied much of her 75 years of life.

Miss Tusing and her four brothers and four sisters grew up on "Branch" Mountain. Their parents, William Harrison Tusing and Sarah Catherine Funkhouser Tusing, were mountain people. Mother "Kate," daughter of John Henry and Anna Catherine Funkhouser, was born on the farm where Lynn now lives. William Harrison Tusing first saw light not far

Mountain State Women

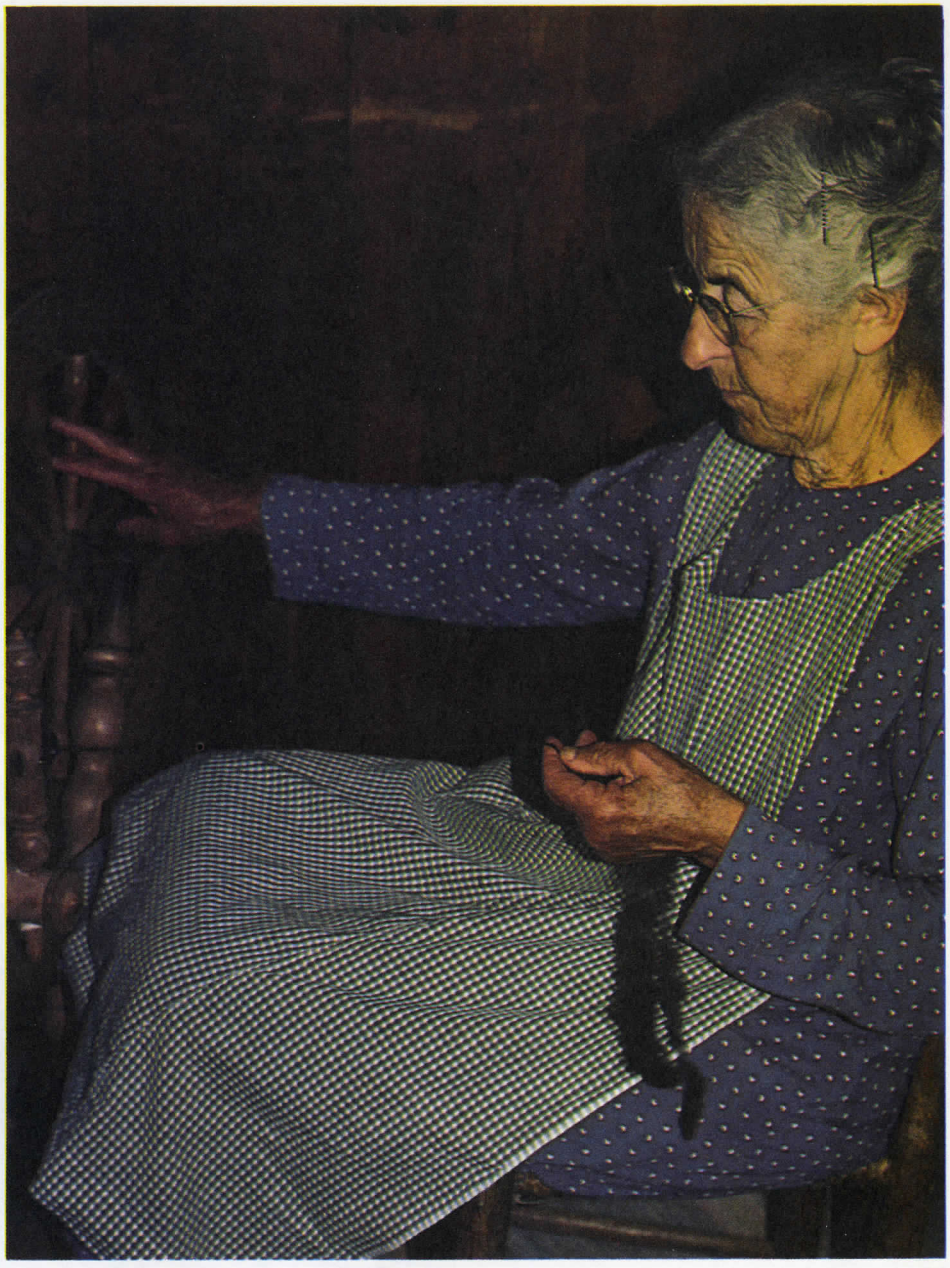
Until recently, Lynn Tusing took the coverlet-making process through all its steps, from raising the sheep, to carding and spinning, to weaving the fabric. Lynn quit keeping sheep last year, but has a good supply of wool in storage.



away, in a log cabin on Big Ridge Mountain, in what is now part of Lost River State Park. Later William's parents moved to nearby Dove Hollow.

Throughout a wide area Lynn Tusing is known as a weaver of beautiful coverlets. While she began making these bedspreads over 50 years ago, her weaving has been done largely in her spare time, as many tasks in keeping house, preparing and preserving food, and working the farm have taken the major portion of her time.

Although her mother knew how to weave rugs, older sister Leora taught Lynn the art of coverlet weaving. Leora, generally called 'Ora, learned the



rudiments of weaving bedspreads on a visit to Aunt Rachel Halderman. Returning home, Ora shared her newfound knowledge with her sister. The year was 1930, by Lynn's recollection.

For a while both sisters used the loom, but soon Lynn took over most of the weaving, while Ora continued to help with setting up the loom, and with washing, carding, and spinning the wool. This wool came from their own sheep. For many years their father kept sheep, and after his death in 1961 Lynn and Ora continued to care for the flock. They also looked after a number of cows, and gardened and farmed on a reduced scale.

An early incentive for making and selling coverlets was the educational needs of younger sisters Millie, Sallie, and Anna. Weaving money helped pay for all three girls' schooling, although the income was modest. Lynn recalls that her Aunt Rachel had sold coverlets for $15 apiece, and that in her own early years of weaving she received only $25 to $30 for each coverlet. Recently she has been selling them for $200 each, and weavers elsewhere charge twice that or more for comparable work.

Much labor goes into the making of a coverlet. Securing the wool, washing, carding, spinning, and dyeing, if colors other than black and white are used, preparing the loom, and then weaving take time and effort.

"After a coverlet is on the loom, and if I don't have anything else to do, I think I could weave one in a week," Lynn speculates. "It probably takes close to a week to get a loom threaded up and everything ready, and then a week to weave it.

"We used to send our wool away to get it dyed, but the last we sent they were afraid it would hurt their machinery, and they sent it back. I guess I'll have to color it myself, or maybe I can get someone else to do it." In the

Mountain State Women

Right: Earlier generations on South Branch Mountain: (left to right) Lynn's father William Harrison Tusing; mother Catherine Funkhouser Tusing; grandfather John Henry Funkhouser; cousin Mose Funkhouser; aunts Virginia and Mayetta Funkhouser; and cousin Millie Funkhouser. Photographer unknown, 1893 or 1894.

meantime, Lynn is making black and white coverlets.

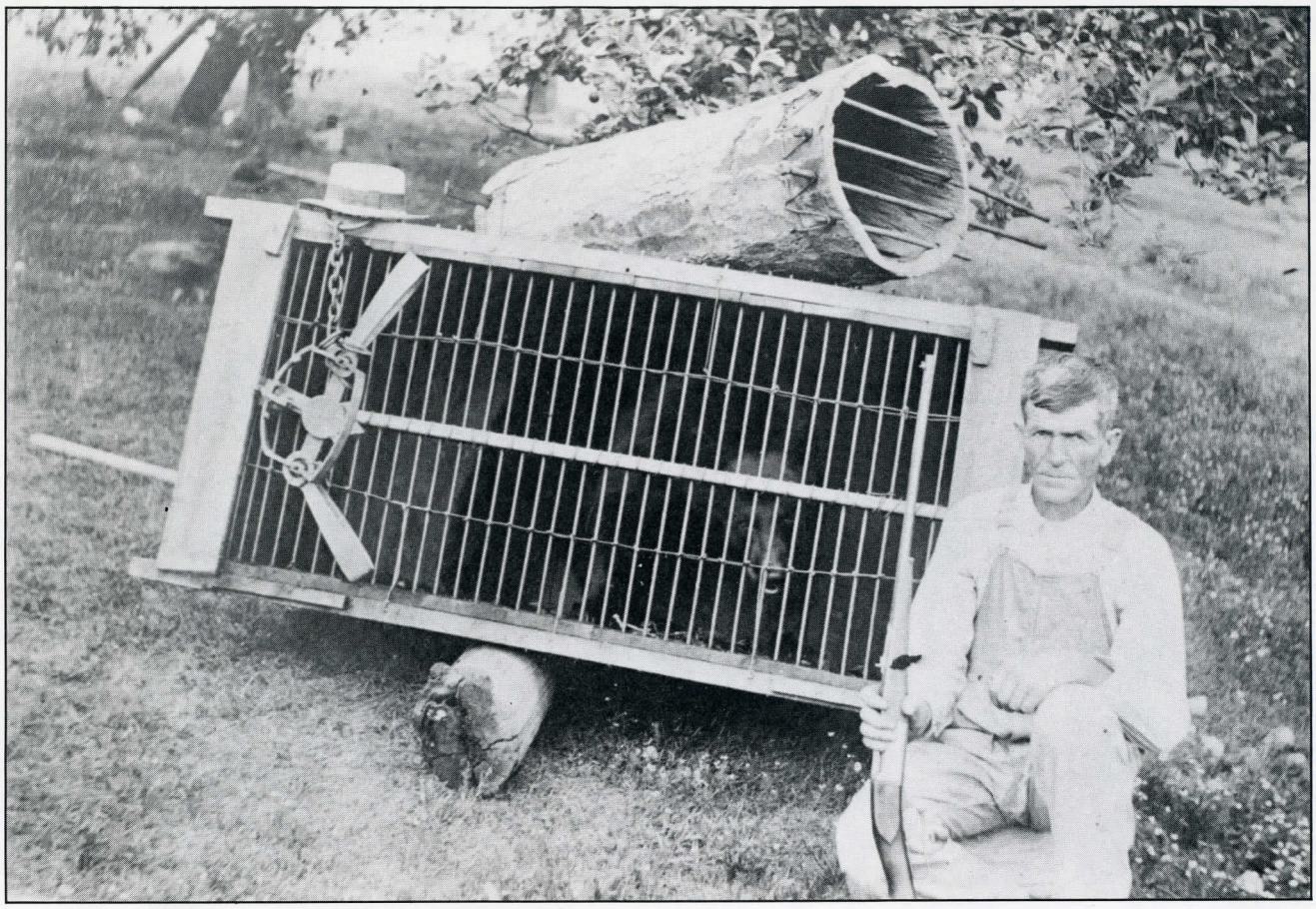
Among the favorite Tusing patterns have been "Chariot Wheel," "Pine Bloom" (and a variant, "Glaring Flower"), "Federal Knot," and "Jacob's Ladder." The demand for such coverlets never slackens. "I have many orders for coverlets ahead, but with my work in the house and on the farm, I don't have enough time to weave as much as I would like to," Lynn admits.

Annually, members of the local Homemakers Club select a woman with skill or craft ability to be the "Belle of Hardy County." In 1977 they chose Lynn Tusing. The proud Belle journeyed to Glenville College, to the Moorefield Poultry Festival, the craft show at the Moorefield Elementary School, and elsewhere. In addition, she has shown her bedspreads at the Vandalia Gathering (at the Cultural Center in Charleston), the Lost River State Park Craft Festival, Frankfort High School, and other places in West Virginia.

Mountain Winters

Lynn recounts that her parents sup-

Above: Sister Leora Tusing in 1967. 'Ora, who had lived on the mountain farm with Lynn, died in 1975. *Far right:* Father William H. Tusing with the famous caged bear in 1926. A conventional bear trap hangs from the cage, although this animal was captured in the hollow log trap, at top. Photographer unknown.



ported themselves largely by farming on "Branch" Mountain. "Papa did work a short time in Illinois before he married. It was a specialized farm job. Then he returned to Hardy County, and when he and mother were married, he farmed up here on the mountain."

Lynn tells that among the rugged conditions of living and laboring on top of the mountain is the severe winter weather of some years. Generally the temperature is not excessively low, yet the wind can whip the snow into deep drifts on the mountain roads. It did in the early years the Tusings lived there, and it still does.

"Once it was two weeks the road was closed by snow," Lynn says. "I took eggs up to the road to send them with the mailman, and it come up a south wind, and drifted the snow in the road. When he did come, he traveled down the lane to our house. And then he had to walk down the hollow and he got pneumonia and almost died.

"Even after the Easter storm" of a few years ago, "it was four or five days before the mail could get through."

Perhaps it was thinking of the severity of some winters that caused another mountain woman to answer us as she once did. It was a lovely summer day in the late 1950's. Leaving our youngsters to enjoy themselves in Lost River Park, where we were occupying a cabin, Mrs. Prichard and I drove up on South Branch Mountain, one of our first trips there. We were having a good time seeing and photographing mountain scenery, when we came upon the small woman picking blackberries along a fence bordering the road. Stopping, we chatted a few minutes with her.

"My, what beautiful scenery you have! It would be great to live here!"

Straightening up, she looked at us from under her cloth bonnet. "Yes, it is pretty. But to tell the truth, there are times when a body gets a mite tired of it."

Later on, becoming acquainted with the Tusings, we discovered that the woman by the roadside was the wife of Lester Tusing, one of Lynn's brothers. On learning of the isolation and difficulties of traveling some winters, we also understood why a person at times could "get a mite tired" of living there.

Snakes, Goats, and Bears

In wrestling a living from mountainous farm land, the Tusings had to contend with wildlife. Squirrels, rabbits, deer, and other game animals and birds furnished good meat, but family members had to be on the lookout for rattlesnakes and copperheads.

"We have had many rattlesnakes through the years, have run on to them in many places here," Lynn comments. "One day Ora and I were hulling peas in the kitchen and our cat was there, and a rattlesnake began making a noise outside. The cat and I went around the corner of the house, and there was a big rattlesnake coiled. He was about as big as my arm. I got him with a hoe."

Often the sisters carried a hoe, a fine tool with which to dispatch a poisonous snake. Generally Ora and Lynn wore workboots when making the rounds, by the house, in the gardens, or around the farm and barn.

In 1980 Lynn said, "There don't seem to be as many rattlers lately. I

Lynn Tusing picking apples. Like other West Virginia farms, the Tusing homeplace had its own orchard, and was at one time nearly self-sufficient.

think the DDT helped get rid of them. They say if you use DDT around your premises there won't be snakes. I think it has kept them away."

Often deer have been a nuisance, getting into the gardens and eating many of the Tusings' favorite vegetables. Higher fences have helped with the deer problem.

Then, for a period several years back, goats bothered Lynn and Ora. Some tame goats, escaping from farms, gathered in the rough, high Helmick Rocks area bordering the William Tusing farm. Multiplying in numbers, the goats turned wild and began visiting the gardens of the Tusings and other farmers in the area. Eventually the pests had to be shot.

Through the years the largest animals with which the Tusings and neighbors have had to contend have been black bears. While it is said that many bears don't kill livestock, some do.

"Bears have killed our sheep at different times," Miss Tusing declares. "Once eight sheep were killed at one time. The dead sheep were scattered around in the field, and the meat was left. It was an old bear and I reckon it wanted to see how many it could kill. Usually they don't do that, but will kill one, then eat it, and kill another. It was the year before Lester died, and he came over from his farm and he and some others killed the bear.

"My father killed or caught 22 bears. Papa was 44 years old when he went after a bear which had killed my uncle's sheep, and shot the bear in the woods. It was the first bear he ever killed. Once he wanted to get a bear which was hanging around; it was in 1926. Papa sawed down a hollow tree, which he had been saving for this purpose, and made a trap from part of it. Putting bars on one end of it, he put bait inside and arranged it so the bear would be trapped inside the log. He caught the bear."

Then William Tusing had the problem of getting the log and bear to a better place on the farm. Ward Wood, a leading Hardy County farmer and churchman, helped fill in the details, with this account: "My Uncle Arthur Wood was riding horseback on the Mathias-Moorefield road over the mountain when he came up to William Tusing, a bear in a hollow log trap, Tusing's wagon, and a badly scared horse. The horse didn't want to be anywhere near the bear. My uncle helped Tusing blindfold the horse and quiet it, and together, the two men got the heavy, awkward load of log and bear onto the wagon."

Lynn continued the story. "The word got around that we had a bear in a log and people came to see it. One man who came must have been drunk. He got up close and started to poke his fingers through the bars. Papa tried to keep him from doing it, but the fellow went ahead and stuck his fingers in. I reckon he wanted to see how the bear's nose felt. Guess he didn't find out, as the bear bit off two fingers. Afterwards the doctor said the bear did a better job taking off the fingers than he could have done. When the bear bit him the man sobered up right away."

William Tusing got the bear out of the log and into a homemade cage. Lynn tells of scared spectators climbing nearby trees. Laughingly she adds, "Being up a tree wouldn't have helped much if the bear had gotten loose and really had wanted to have gotten someone." Afterward Tusing took the caged bear to Moorefield, where it drew a crowd. Later he sold the animal, the only live bear he ever sold. Sometimes he sold the meat of bears he killed.

"Once my father caught a bear in a trap back of the road; it was a cub, and the mother bear pulled the cub's shoulder clear out, leaving the leg and a shoulder in the steel trap. Later on Lawrence Wilkins here said there was a man up on Allegheny who told of their killing a bear that looked like it never had had a shoulder; just had three legs. It probably was the same bear.

"The last bear my father caught in a trap was on the Knob. I helped him carry the trap out there, and helped him set it. They heard the bear hitting the trap on the rocks, trying to get free. They were after him with dogs. When the men got to the trap the bear had gotten free, but had left two toes in the trap. They didn't catch him."

William Tusing was a good hunter. He shot his last deer when he was 90 years old. It was a large deer, dressing out at 235 pounds. Miss Tusing also is good with a gun. "I taught myself to shoot," she says, "having seen my brothers use guns, I knew how they did it. Buying a gun, I got four squirrels the first time I went hunting." She helped to supplement the family meat supply by shooting small game. She is also handy with an axe as she has much experience in providing fuel for the wood-burning stoves.

Childhood and Later Life

Born in July 1905, Lynn was baptized by a bishop of the Mennonite Church in the Tusing home that month. She, Ora, and their parents were Mennonites, although mother Kate Funkhouser Tusing had earlier been a Methodist. "The Mennonites used to come out here to the schoolhouse and preach; now they come here to our house. I belong to the Mennonite Church near Mathias and go when I have a way. A minister came here the other Sunday, he and his

Lynn Tusing and Mildred Prichard admiring flowers outside the South Branch Mountain home.

wife." Through the years Lynn and Ora made articles for the church's missionary activities, bandages for lepers, and the like.

Lynn recalls a number of things about her childhood. "I went to school on top of the hill, other side of Funkhouser's. We had a path up to the school, and if there was snow on the ground, we took a horse and sled. I remember once at school I stood in a corner. I had been making faces, and had to stand in a corner for that. I think it was the only time I was punished in school. At times there were 20 or 30 in the school. Sometimes due to the weather or to epidemics the school was closed a good bit.

"There were many things to do at home and around the farm. We used to play hide and seek. There were good places to hide. We picked berries, huckleberries, dew berries, blackberries. We sold a lot of huckleberries; Papa would take them to town and sell them. We would get chestnuts to eat out under the trees. We had chores to do. Millie and I used to tie grain. I wasn't as fast at it as was Millie. I helped Father shear the sheep, and I began milking when I was 13 years old."

Lynn's and Ora's duties in the house and on the farm increased with the passing years. They took over the housekeeping tasks and the canning and preserving of food after their mother's death, and when their father died, at the age of 91, additional responsibilities in running the farm fell upon them. Lynn, who had started milking in 1918, continued doing that task until 1977, when she sold the last cows. Sister Ora's death in the summer of 1975 had left all the chores, house and farm, to her, and Lynn found it advisable to slacken up on her farm duties. The last of the sheep were sold in 1980 as the job of repairing fences, necessary to hold the sheep in the fields, became too much for her. Fortunately she has a large amount of wool sheared from her own sheep stockpiled for the making of coverlets.

For a while after Ora's death, sister Millie, living in the Washington, D.C. area, came to stay with Lynn. Now Millie has built a house not far from Lost River, and sister Anna is constructing a house near Millie. They and sister Sallie, who lives a few miles from Lynn, are near enough to visit often.

Asked if she gets lonely, Lynn replies, "My sisters and brothers come to see me. I have a good dog; I have a telephone. Also, I've got a TV and radio, although I don't use them much. When there are religious programs I listen. While I don't listen much to the news, I read newspapers. I'm too busy to get lonely."

"I've Enjoyed Every Minute of It"

Myrtle Auvil of Grafton

By Diane Casto Tennant

Photographs by Dennis Tennant

Myrtle Auvil lifts dumbbells, writes books, wades rivers in pursuit of photographs and runs a woodworking shop in her basement. Miss Auvil is 82. She's aiming for 104.

Already she has crammed three careers into her life as a schoolteacher, author, and woodworker.

She is a gracious lady, living in a house cluttered with the past, yet actively involved in the present. Surrounded by relics of long-gone schoolhouses and her special passion—covered bridges—she serves coffee in china teacups and reminisces.

Miss Auvil is a busy woman, and has so much to say she sometimes loses her place and has to back up. Her conversation is punctuated frequently by an infectious "Ha!"

She has been busy all her life, starting her first career as a woodworker at the age of eight. "I could say that my dad guided me all the way through my woodworking. Actually, his hand was guiding me, too," she recalled on a recent visit.

It was her father who brought her the little red wagon. It was eight-year-old Myrtle who hitched the dog to it and watched the animal run under the porch, wrecking the new wagon.

"I got the wheels from out of dad's shop and built me a little wagon. From that time on, I was in woodworking," she said.

Now she turns out basement doors for her neighbors, Christmas decorations for her front yard, and scale models of schoolhouses, churches, and covered bridges for herself.

The first model she made was of the Grafton United Brethren Church, made at the request of the minister in 1942. "They wanted to raise money to paint the church and she asked me if I'd make a little church for 'em," said Miss Auvil. "Well, of course, she thought I'd make one out of cardboard. Ha!"

Instead, she used lumber, imagi-

Miss Myrtle Auvil and Tiger have been companions for 16 years.

nation, and her father's tools, putting 200 hours of work into the model. Working in her garage, she cut each tiny shingle by hand out of roofing material. Wooden siding covers the walls and tiny wooden pews face the altar.

"I made the first one by lantern light with a coping saw. I'd been working on it out there at night when it was cold and I got the flu. I had some of my stuff in the bedroom and in the living room and I didn't want her to see it, and here unexpectedly she found out I was sick and she came to see me.

"When she came in the bedroom to see me, here was some of my stuff for that church sittin' back here on the side. She opened her eyes and just looked like that and said, 'Myrtle Auvil, what are you doing?' Well, the cat was out of the bag then."

During my visit to Miss Auvil's home, Tiger, the yellow cat that has been her companion for 16 years, strolled into the room after a long nap on the bed. Although her owner figures they are about the same age in human years, Miss Auvil is much more active than her pet.

She stroked her cat, and shooed her away from a visitor's camera. "She'll be 16 years old in March. Makes her about 85, doesn't it? She's as old as I am. Ha!"

Reaching under an armchair, she pulled out a small set of dumbbells

Below: Miss Auvil in her basement workshop. Many of the tools belonged to her father.
Right: Miss Auvil working at her band saw.

and hefted them. "That's gonna get me to 104," she bragged. Minutes later, she jumped up on a workbench to peer down into a wooden model of a one-room schoolhouse.

"In 1905, I started to school in Locust Grove, about a mile above my home. In 1918, I taught my first school there," said Miss Auvil. "Actually, I wanted to be a doctor or study architecture, but Dad had taught school and he said, 'No, you're going to be a teacher.'"

The model is an exact duplicate of the Locust Grove School as a young schoolteacher remembered it. Tiny shoes made of clay dry around a pot-bellied stove. Blue inkwells sit on the corners of wooden desks. A portrait of Theodore Roosevelt hangs over the blackboard and a doll teacher stands ready to ring the handbell on her desk to bring her class to order.

The real handbell that summoned students to Locust Grove School now stands on a shelf in Miss Auvil's living room, along with other bells gleaned from various locations and auctions. The handbell, a picture of her college teacher, and an album full of photographs of her students are reminders of 43 years of teaching.

Her teacher's picture, stiffly posed and brownish in color, hangs over Miss Auvil's basement workbench. She waved a hand at it.

"She was my inspiration. I'd say that anything I did right at school was due to Miss Jefferson, my college teacher. I tried to do just the way she taught me."

Miss Jefferson recommended her star pupil for a teaching job before she had even finished her training.

"I said, well, let me talk it over with Dad and Mom first. I never did anything unless I had their approval," said Miss Auvil. "I stuck to that as long as Dad lived and as long as Mom lived. I wouldn't go anyplace or do anything unless I had their approval."

Approval granted, Miss Auvil went to her first teaching job, and into the fledgling 4-H program. "After they started 4-H work here, if you organized a 4-H club in your school, you'd get a dollar extra a month," she said. "So I organized my first one up at Locust Grove in 1918. From then on, I had one in every school, everywhere I taught."

Miss Auvill attended the first volunteer leader's camp at Jackson's Mill in 1922. She taught classes at youth camps during the following years and now gives two scholarships a year to the state 4-H camp.

For her work with state youth, she was named Distinguished West Virginian in 1974 by a resolution of the West Virginia Legislature. She treasures a letter of congratulations from former Governor Arch Moore. "I like what he says," she pointed out.

"Actually, boys and girls have been my living," she said, leafing through album pages filled with photographs of boys in coveralls and girls in dresses and pinafores. "I have pictures here of all the schools I ever taught."

Teaching conditions were often poor, she noted, explaining that she had sometimes taught school in buildings where the students had to sit on

Interior of the model of the Grafton United Brethren Church, the first model built by Miss Auvil.

boxes. All of her early teaching positions were in one-room schools, combining elementary students of all ages and grade levels.

"You couldn't give very many minutes for each student, but still those little fellas listened while you were havin' class for the others. By the time they got ready for an upper grade, they were ready.

"I've enjoyed every minute of it. It makes you so proud, some of these youngsters walk up to you and say, 'Aren't you Miss Auvil?' and I say, 'Yes, I suppose I had you in school someplace once,' and I had. It just makes you sort of proud that they remember you. I like to be remembered."

Retirement gave Miss Auvil a chance to remember lots of things, and plenty of time to embark on a new career of helping others remember.

It started with a magazine article.

"I retired in '61, never thought about covered bridges or anything else," she said. "This magazine said that in 1962 we had 58 covered bridges. This magazine came out in '68. We had 23 covered bridges left. That's all.

"Well, you know that kind of bothered me and I talked to a good friend of mine and I said, 'Evelyn, one of these days boys and girls aren't gonna know what covered bridges looked like. I have a notion to—I've nothing else to do—just take a trip, visit all of 'em, get pictures of 'em and get their history, if I can.'"

Miss Auvil made several trips around the state, taking pictures of the remaining covered bridges and ferreting history out of newspaper files and people's memories.

The first edition of her book, *Covered Bridges of West Virginia*, was published in 1972 and has been updated twice since then. It contains photographs of every covered bridge that ever stood in the state, some of them loaned to her by out-of-state friends, and others taken by Miss Auvil.

The first book captured interest nationwide, and brought offers of help from many former West Virginians.

"A woman up in Battle Creek, Michigan, ordered one of my books and she wrote and said, 'I hope you have a picture of the old bridge in Putnam County.' Well, I didn't have, and I found out I was on the track of

a covered bridge and I said, 'Mrs. Casto, would you happen to have a picture of the covered bridge?' She said, 'Miss Auvil, I have two honeys'—that's her expression—'I have two honeys.'

"Well, here's what I got from her. Not only the pictures, but look what she sent besides. A 1952 article with the whole history of that bridge. Battle Creek, Michigan. She didn't know me from Adam."

Miss Auvil traveled around the state several times, taking pictures of the remaining covered bridges. Nothing stopped her in her pursuit of photographs. She has framed all of them, and they hang over her couch. She pointed to the picture of the Sandyville bridge.

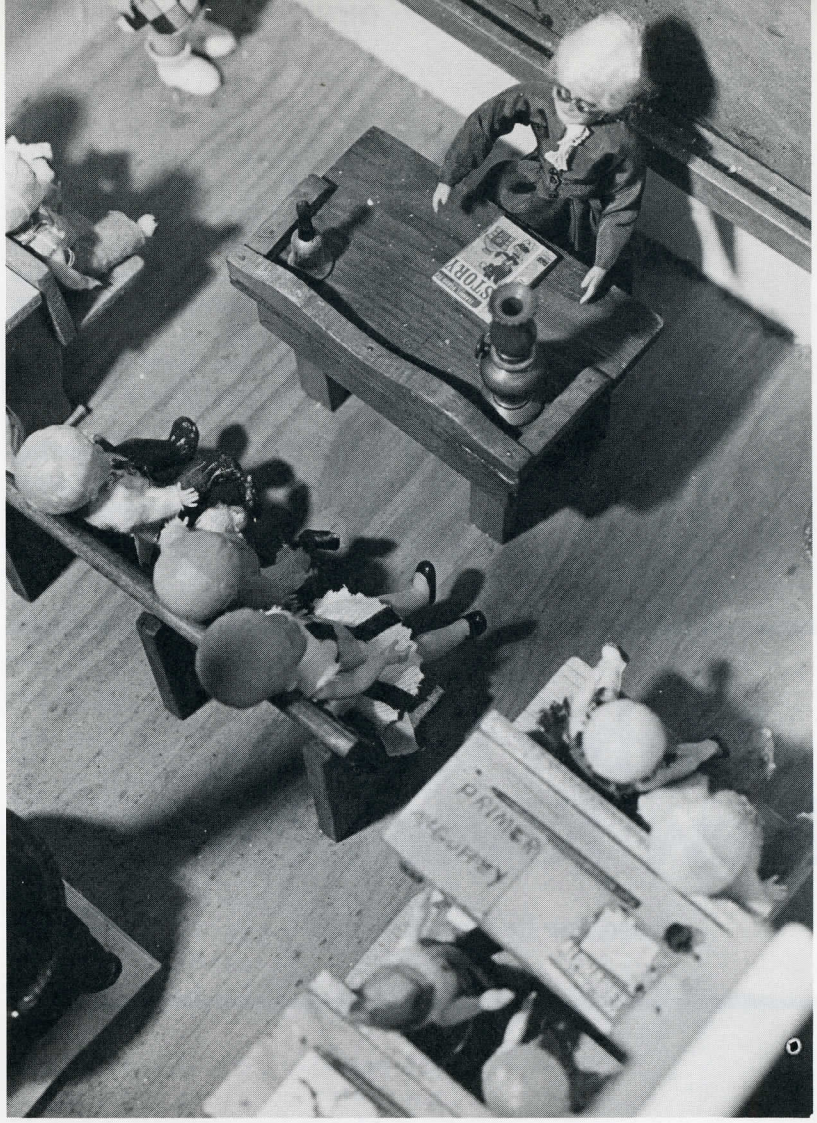
"I climbed over the fence and went up in the field there to get that view of it. A couple years ago I was at a retired teachers' meeting at Jackson's Mill and one of the men there said, 'Did you run into any snakes up there?' I said, 'Goodness, no. If there'd been any snakes around there I'd have taken off over the bridge like a flying saucer.'

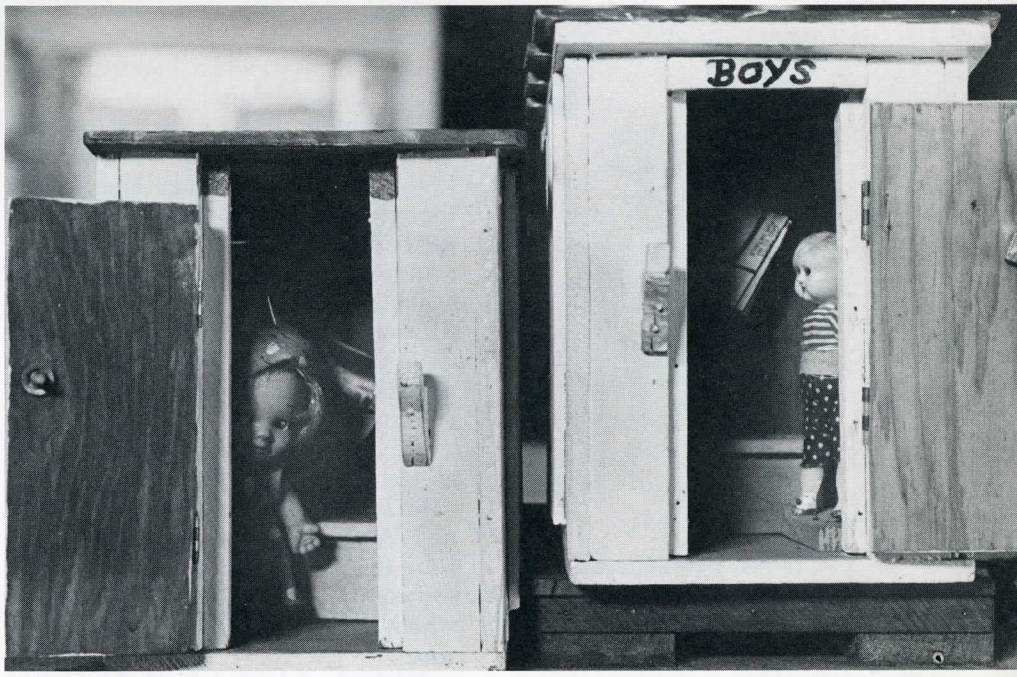
"He said, 'Well, last summer I had the biggest fight I'd ever had in my life there gettin' away from a couple copperheads.' I said, 'Well, I never even thought about snakes.' I wouldn't go back now in those weeds for . . .Ha!"

Miss Auvil has 12-inch-long nails from covered bridges and wooden trunnels that were once used in place of nails. Friends collected them for her from the remains of washed-out bridges. Beside her couch she keeps a treasured piece of wood from the Grant Town bridge, which was destroyed in a flood last August. She is saving it until she decides what to make out of it.

Water took many of the bridges, but water never stopped Miss Auvil. She sat down in her rocking chair and indicated the picture of the Hoke's Mill Bridge, and the creek that flows under it.

"I got in there, was way down there trying to get a good picture with the shadow. I was just sort of tippin' across on little stones to see how near I could get across there and one foot slipped off and went in the water and got wet. One foot's wet, may as well wet the other, so I waded over in the middle of the creek and got my picture! I got my picture all right. Ha!"





Top: Looking down into the interior of the Locust Grove School model. The dolls' reading books and the handbell on the desk are replicas of items Miss Auvil used when she herself studied and later taught at Locust Grove.
Above: The Locust Grove School is complete with model outhouses, each with a doll occupant and a tiny Sears catalog hanging on the wall.

Mabel Gwinn, New River Nurse

Interview by Paul J. Nyden

Mabel Gwinn. I was born May the 30th in 1904, Beury, West Virginia. And I lived there till I was about six years old. We moved to Pennbrooke, which is about four miles below Beury. We were just a mile from Sewell, up the river.

Paul Nyden. You lived in Pennbrooke till you were about 18 years old?

MG No. See, I went to Wheeling and went to school. And when I came back from Wheeling my parents had moved from Pennbrooke to Thayer. I was about 15 years old when I came back, probably pretty close to 16. And then I went in training at the age of 17, at McKendree Hospital. I was 17 in May, May 30th, and I went in the first day of June. The superintendent of this hospital, when I went in, was Dr. H. L. Goodman.

My mother didn't want me to go in, 'cause I was too young. But I wanted to go in. We went up, and Mama thought that Dr. Goodman would say no, because "she's too young." But he said yes. Now he said, "Remember, Mabel, you can't take the State Board till you're 21. You'll go a year there without your State Board." And I remembered that. But I just wanted to be a nurse.

PN Did you complete your nurses' training right there at McKendree?

MG No, not at McKendree. I married Wallace two years later in 1923, June the 13th in '23. And I stayed on for six months and then I just quit, which was really silly of me. It really was.

Three years later, I decided I wanted to finish—and my husband didn't want me to leave home to finish. But I wanted to go so bad, I went back to McKendree. Dr. Godby was superintendent then. Mrs. Cook was supervisor of nurses. And she got my record out, you know, looked it over, and decided that, "Well, sure, come back here and finish."

But I'd been living in Oak Hill, and that place looked really a little crummy to me then, you know. And Montgomery—Coal Valley Hospital." So I went down, and I first saw the instructor of nurses. I talked to her. She said, "Well, I want Dr. Laird to interview you." He owned the hospital. I said okay, and she made the appointment for me to see him at one o'clock that day. So I went up to his office. And he said, "Well, Mrs. Gwinn," he said, "you know, it's against the rules to take nurses that's married and living with their husbands." Well, I said, "I'm living with mine, and I'm going to continue on. But I just wanted to finish my training." And he looked at me just a little bit, and he said, "Well, when could you be here?" That was one Monday. I said, "I can be here next Monday." And he said, "All right, you're in." And I went down, and of course I had to take a year and a half training. But I finished, I finished right there. I finished April the 20th, in 1929. At Montgomery.

ished right there. I finished April the 20th, in 1929. At Montgomery.

PN Where did you work as a nurse after you completed your training?

MG Here at Oak Hill Hospital. I worked at the Oak Hill Hospital for 11 years. And the superintendent up here was Dr. Wood, when I was up here. And then he died, and they sent Dr. Prillaman from Beckley. See, Dr. Tieche and Dr. McCulloch owned both of these hospitals—the Beckley Hospital and the Oak Hill Hospital. And so they sent Dr. Prillaman over in charge. It was about 1933, and Dr. Prillaman was superintendent of that hospital until 1939. Dr. Price had this Scarbro practice down here. He died and Dr. Prillaman decided he was going to take that over, and asked me if I'd go down and work for him. So I did. All of my work, except ten years of it, has been right here. For ten years, they transferred my husband from the Minden Mine—he was superintendent of the Minden Mine, which was the New River Pocahontas Consolidated Coal Company—to Caples, which is two miles from Welch.

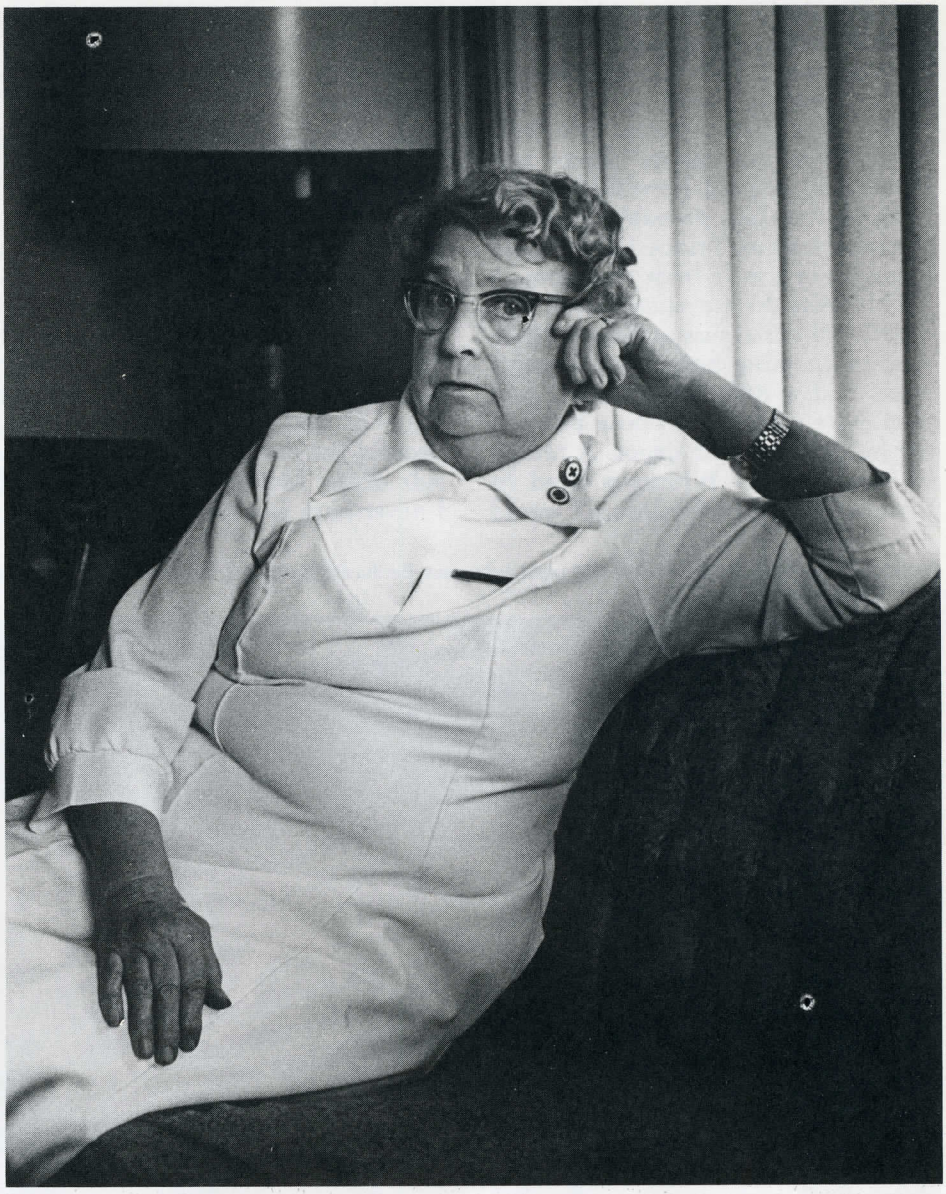
I worked at Stevens Clinic Hospital at Welch for ten years. I was in charge of the orthopedic department and the emergency room all this time. Then my husband retires in ten years, and we moved back here. We owned this house, and we just moved back to it. My mother and sister lived in it. Incidentally, I have one sister that's an R. N., and another one that's passed away. There was six of us in this family—three R. N.'s, two teachers, and one housewife.

PN I wanted to ask about your husband. You said that he began as a coal miner?

MG Began, yes. He started at Minden. He dug coal, and then he was a motor runner in the mines. And after so long of running the motor, and laying track, and all these things, he went to Lochgelly and took mine foreman classes. I said, "Wallace, why don't you go over there and take this class? They're offering it over there, and you like mining, you won't come out of it." And he say, "You know, I believe I'll do that."

I think he went about a year and took classes. And then he finally thought that he was ready for the examination. He went to Charleston, took his examination, and he came back the first day. And he said, "You know, Mabel, I flunked." And I said, "Oh, you didn't." And he said, "I did. I'm not going back tomorrow." See, they had two days of it. And I said, "Well, Wallace, I'd go back. Then you know the subjects you're weak in, and you can get on 'em." I said, "Oh, go on back, and take the second day of it." So he did, and then he went to the post office religiously when he came in from work to see, you know, about his grades. And one evening, I was cooking, and I heard all this hollering as he came up the steps: "Mabel! Mabel!" And I ran to the door right quick, and he had it in his hand, you know. "I passed! I passed! I passed!" That was about 1936, I would say.

He was working at Rock Lick when he took the examination. Rock Lick was sort of working out, and they offered him a job at Minden as section foreman. And right in there is where he began building up. He was mine foreman for a few years, and then they threw him in as superintendent. He was superintendent up until he retired in 1966.



Mrs. Gwinn, still nursing at 76, began nurse's training at McKendree Hospital in 1921. Photo by James Samsell.

PN Where was he born? In Beury?

MG No, no. He was born at McKendree. He was born and reared at McKendree, right across from the hospital. His father had a sawmill on this farm of his. And they grew vegetables and sold them, and just those things. Mr. Gwinn had a store, a little store down by the depot at McKendree. He had a little bit of everything in it.

PN How did they cross the river? In a ferry?

MG No, they had boats. They had two landings. There was one right down the riverbank from the store, which they called the Lower Landing. Now the Upper Landing was on up above the hospital there. I don't guess that they ever feared drowning or anything. I've seen them come across that river when the river was up and those shoals were beating. And you know, they just weren't afraid of it. The very sight of water frightens me to death, and I didn't understand how in the world that they could do that. Those girls were just like men on that boat.

PN How did McKendree look then? You said there was a depot in town?

MG Yes, and a store. And in 1921 they built a rooming house. Now the store, I don't know what [year] that was built. It was built when I went there. People that would have real sick

people at the hospital, would be afraid to leave them, they stayed there at the rooming house. They also served meals in this rooming house.

PN Was there a nurses' quarters?

MG No, our nurses' home was right at the hospital. Now the hospital is on up the road, probably a quarter of a mile, towards Prince. I'd say about a quarter of a mile from the depot.

PN Was there a saloon also?

MG No, that was at Beury. There was the rooming house and Gwinn's store, and a little depot there. And then there was a large house between the hospital and the depot. A family by the name of Withrows lived in there when I was in training. I would say that was about the only thing around there really—just what I've mentioned. I can't remember of anything else.

PN You were saying before that originally the Gwinns came there in the early part of the 1800's?

MG Yes. Now there's another set of Gwinns that lived a mile up, Lewis Gwinn, a brother to Wallace's father [Loomis Gwinn], up towards Terry. I really don't know where they got their mail, whether they got their mail at Terry or not. But I believe they did, because the post office was on the inside of the McKendree Hospital, and I never once saw them there for mail. So I imagine that would be in the Terry section.

PN What did your father-in-law sell in his store?

MG Well, it was things like groceries. He couldn't keep fresh meat. He had cosmetics, and little things like gloves—you know, working gloves—and just the general things that you would see in what we used to call a "jot-'em-down store." Anything you could mention, Mr. Gwinn had in that little store, I tell you. Just a "duke's mixture" of things.

PN Did he sell vegetables that were raised on the Gwinn farm?

MG Oh, certainly, yes. They really made a good living on that farm.

Director of nurses Eugenice Phillips and night supervisor Bertha Eags stand at left in this photograph of student nurses at McKendree Hospital. Photo by Red Ribble, about 1925.

They peddled vegetables by boat, from McKendree to Thayer.

PN How did he have time to raise the vegetables, run the store, and peddle the groceries?

MG Well, he didn't do all this. There was a string of boys—about seven, they lost one—and then there was five girls. And all the boys were older than the girls. They all worked together, and the girls did and Mrs. Gwinn did. They just all worked together over there.

PN Who patronized the store?

MG Well, I'll tell you. The hospital did, and people living way up there pretty close to Terry used to come down and buy things. And people that came to see patients. You know, the transportation was real good. For instance, in the mornings we had this train called Thirty-Five; it was what we called a local. And it ran about 7:00 in the morning—well, it was a down train. And then we had Number Thirteen, that was a local. That ran about 1:30. And then in the evenings, we had Number Seven. That came up the river, and people came up to the hospital to see their people. And they'd stop in that store and buy things. They sold sardines and vienna sausage and all of these things that weren't perishable.

PN Did you say the farm was originally settled in the early part of the 19th century, and then burned during the Civil War?

MG The place where Lewis Gwinn lived is the place that burned.

PN And that was because your husband's grandfather was sympathetic to the Union?

MG Yes.

PN And it was Captain W. D. Thurmond . . . ?

MG They called him "Old Captain Thurmond," a bushwacker, you know. They called 'em bushwhackers during the Civil War. And you see, the Gwinns got a-hold of this going to happen. Now see, this fellow Thurmond and them that helped and did these things certainly didn't mean for

The nurses' quarters at McKendree Hospital. Date and photographer unknown, courtesy Louise Cashion, Oak Hill.

the Gwinns to learn of it. But they did, and they got things together, and left in a wagon, a big wagon of some kind, drawn by horses. Filled it up with what they needed. They got on top of McKendree Mountain, and looked back—and just in time, because the house was in flames. When they came back they lived under a cliff until they could re-build again.

PN When the family moved back and reestablished the home in the late 1860's, was that Lewis Gwinn?

MG No, it was Laban Gwinn.

PN And Laban Gwinn was the father of Loomis Gwinn, who was your husband's father?

MG Yes, that's right.

PN Let me ask you a little bit more about the hospital. Could you describe when you were in nurses' training at McKendree, and a little about the responsibilities of a nurse at that time?

MG Well, we worked ten hours in the day. And if we did just a little something [wrong]—and we swore that the supervisor was looking to find something, to take our hours away from us—why, we'd have to work the whole 12 hours, you know. And of course every night nurse had to work 12 hours. I mean, that was it. You didn't get any time off when you worked at night. And we had to, well, do everything. Now, we had an orderly that did the floor-scrubbing and things. But very often we've had to scrub the bathroom and we had to scrub beds. I never had to clean any windows, but now there's been nurses that has had to. But I didn't have to, and I don't know of any nurse at McKendree did it. But we had to keep the sills and whitework clean.

Bedpans had to be soaked in the bathtub for hours, and then we had to clean those all up, and clean the utility rooms up, and keep those all clean. The doctor was very strict about the cleanliness of the hospital, very strict. Fact of the matter, I think Dr. Goodman was one of the finest men to train nurses that I ever ran into. He really was. He knew how to handle us, and he knew how to make us work. He wasn't hard on us, but we knew he expected it, and we did it. And if we didn't, we were called up on the floor about it.

PN Where did you live when you were in training there at McKendree?

MG We lived at Thayer.

PN That's where your parents were living?

MG That's right.

PN How did you get back and forth every day?

MG The train. I could go down on Thirteen, which ran about 1:30. And then Number Seven came up, about 7:00 or 7:30 that evening. And I'd come back on that. If I had a full day, I could go down on Thirty-Five and spend the whole day, and come back up on Number Seven. Transportation was real good.

PN When you were there, how many patients would usually be at McKendree, on the average, every day? You had beds for 64 people?

MG Oh, yes. And we averaged

Mabel Gwinn at home in Oak Hill. Photo by James Samsell.

about 45 or 50, I would say, daily.

PN How many new patients would come in every day?

MG I tell you, they came in pretty fast up there, night or day. They brought them in by train. Some of 'em we could clean up and let 'em go as soon as we fixed 'em up. Others, we had to keep 'em—I would say, possibly 20 or 25 a week.

PN Who were most of the patients? Were they miners and railroad workers?

MG Well, they were just a mixture of things. We got a lot of fights in. And miners, we got a lot of miners in. Of course, there weren't many cars then—very rare, we got a car wreck in. But I do remember one very bad car wreck that we got in. This girl, she was about 18 years old, and she was hurt in this car wreck in Hinton. They brought her in there and she was really badly injured. Her leg was torn up really bad. And Dr. Goodman said, "I don't know whether to try to save this leg or not." He had her under anesthetic, he said "I just don't know what to do here." And he said, "Well, I believe I will try to save it." And do you know, he saved that leg. She had a big cut on her head, was knocked out, and remained there, unconscious, for two or three days, too.

PN How many doctors did they have there at McKendree?

MG Two.

PN And how many nurses, would you say?

MG There was about eight or ten of us.

PN Nurses? And that includes the people being trained?

MG Yes, all of us were students. We only had one R. N., and that would be the supervisor.

PN How many orderlies did they have?

MG Well, they had one day orderly and one night orderly. And they had, let me see, how many cooks—John, Lucy, Ada, and then another one. They had four that worked in the kitchen.

PN Were the cooks black at that time?

MG Every one of them were black. And one orderly was, the day orderly.

The night orderly was white. He came in from up in Monroe County. Now he came in and he had this terrible skin disease. They said they thought you got it from cattle. You couldn't stay in the sun; if you did, you'd break out again. Mr. Engels is the only one that came through [survived the disease]. We lost all the others. We'd have to change these people real often. And we would beg 'em not to scratch, because when they scratched, it caused infections. We kept the bathtub half full of water, and we'd just have it ready, so they could just jump in this tub of water and ease that itching somewhat. We had Epsom salts in this water. And I think that this is the reason probably Mr. Engels came through. Because he just wouldn't scratch hisself after the doctors told him not to scratch and do what they told him, and he would

maybe come through it. Mr. Engels was the only one to survive, and he became night orderly.

PN Did they have both white patients and black patients?

MG Oh, yes, yes.

PN Mostly coming in from the towns along the New River gorge, right?

MG That's right. Well, you know, we also got patients from Hinton and different places that came there. Dr. Goodman had a good reputation there, and once in a while we'd get one in from Alderson, and different sections. But mostly it was around in close, where we got most of our patients.

PN So since you graduated from Montgomery in 1929, you've been a nurse pretty much continuously since that time?

MG I haven't stopped. And do you know what? I'm not saying this boastingly, and I don't want you to take it as such. But do you know, I have never asked for a job? I have never asked for a job. When I moved to Welch, not a soul over there knew me, and I decided I wasn't going to work for a while. I was going to take that summer off. And I moved over there the first of June, and so help me, the supervisor at Stevens Clinic called and said, "I hear you're an R. N." I said, "Yes, I am." And she said, "We need you. Will you come over for an interview?" And I said, "Well, I'll talk to my husband this evening when he comes in from work." 'Cause Wallace didn't want me to work that summer either.

You see, we had adopted children. The boy was in grade school yet, but Mary was in high school. She'd started the first year of high school. So I thought I'd just take a summer off with them. But I talked to Wallace. He said, "Well, I don't want you going to work." But he said, "I just feel like that you're going to want to. So I'm going to let you decide that." So I did go over. And the following Monday, I went to work over there. So I haven't stopped. Like I said, I've just continued right on through. ♣

A longer version of this interview was included in a New River oral history survey, contracted for by the National Park Service as part of the planning for the New River Gorge National River.

"McKendree No. 2"

The Story of West Virginia's Miners Hospitals

By William E. Cox

In southern Fayette County, the McKendree Road hugs the New River from Thurmond to the Stone Cliff bridge. Here it crosses to the east side, changes from pavement to dirt, and climbs and winds its way upward along the wall of the gorge. Scenic vistas abound as the road follows the contour of the land, in and out of drainages, past Thayer, to its destination at Prince. A short distance from Thayer an obscure road drops from its side deep into the gorge.

The casual traveler would perhaps never associate the name of the road and what was once a beautiful hospital. This abandoned road, known only to a few, and used occasionally by fishermen, once provided access to the McKendree hospital. In its heyday this side road was covered with cinders every few years and carefully maintained. At its end stood the hospital, an imposing brick structure with landscaped grounds.

Searching in the undergrowth of weeds, vines, and small locust trees the infrequent visitor of today can locate the single remaining concrete wall. Looking further there are a few small masonry rooms that were possibly a part of the basement. Perhaps this was the same wall and "small, dark and damp" laundry room that Dr. Thomas F. Downing, who was then superintendent, complained about as needing repairs in his 1904 biennial report to the governor.

The fishermen who go there today still see the scenic beauty that former patients observed while they recuperated. In a state report written over 70 years ago it was stated that the hospital site overlooks some of the most beautiful and charming scenery of the New River. The stillness almost overcomes the visitor as the peacefulness and serenity of the site settle over one like a cloak.

The questions tumble one after the other: What was here, why, what memories were carried away? Answers came as research progressed for West Virginia's newest unit of the National Park Service, New River Gorge National River. Working under contract, Dr. Paul J. Nyden of Beckley conducted an oral history interview with Mabel Leete Gwinn, who began nurses' training at McKendree more than 60 years ago. Other individuals shared information and historical photographs, including Mr. Wallace Bennett of Oak Hill. To obtain an understanding of how a hospital came to be in the seemingly inaccessible gorge, further research was undertaken in the Division of Archives and History in Charleston with Mr. Fred Armstrong's assistance.

There was a community called McKendree before any thought was given to a hospital. The 1880 census report listed 44 residents living there. This small village was nestled on the east side of the deep New River gorge. Apparently, from the occupations listed in the census report, many of the male adults were engaged in lumbering work. Lumbering was an on-going activity in the gorge prior to the coming of the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad. The completion of the railroad in 1873 had opened the gorge to the coal industry. It also facilitated the handling and transporting of lumber. The mines created a further demand for timber because of the need for

Mabel Gwinn reviews photographs from a long career as nurse, wife, and mother. Photo by James Samsell.

roofing timbers, used inside the mines, tipples, buildings, and a variety of other uses. Before the turn of the century boom times were creating numerous new mines in the new coalfield. With the recruitment of miners, towns sprang up near each mine, partially because transportation was so difficult and the men had to live close to their jobs.

Other West Virginia coalfields were bustling at this time, especially in the southern part of the state. Because of this growth in the industry and because of the hazards involved, West Virginia saw the necessity of providing improved medical care for its citizens. The state embarked on a farsighted project providing badly needed hospital care for those employees injured in hazardous occupations.

The legislative act that passed on February 24, 1899, provided for "the location, building, and maintaining of hospitals for the treatment of persons injured while engaged in employments dangerous to health, life, and limb."

There were to be three hospitals, and they were simply known as Miners Hospitals 1, 2, and 3. However, when the locations were determined people began to refer to them by the names of the towns where they were located. Thus, Miners Hospital No. 2 became McKendree No. 2. Although called Miners Hospitals, the new facilities were open to others as well. The name no doubt reflected the legislators' concern that the hospitals should be in the coal mining regions. They probably assumed, if they did not already know, that most industrial accidents were occurring in the coal

McKendree Hospital administrators and doctors pose with nurses and students, about 1925. Superintendent Dr. M. V. Godby is the man at left, and Dr. C. C. Jackson, Dr. Joe Bradley, and the hospital administrator, Mr. Spence (left to right), stand beside him. Photo by Red Ribble.

mines. This fact was well illustrated in the reports made by the hospitals when they became operational. At McKendree from January 1903 to September 1904 the number of patients admitted totaled 414. Of these, 269 were miners—or almost 65% of the patients. The next two highest groupings were laborers, who accounted for 16%, and railroad employees at almost 8%.

In fact, the law specified that the hospital administrators were to admit and treat free of charge those who worked in the railroad and mining industries. Another stipulation was that if any hospital could not accommodate all who applied for admission they were to give preference to coal miners, employees of the railroad, and other laborers hazardously employed.

The legislation further specifically indicated where the new hospitals should be located. One was to be in the Flat Top (Pocahontas) coal region, either in McDowell or Mercer County. This would be Miners Hospital No. 1. Miners Hospital No. 2 was to be in the New River coal region either in Fayette or Kanawha County. The third was to be in the Fairmont region of Marion County.

Governor George W. Atkinson, as provided in the law, appointed for each hospital a four-member board, representing specific occupations, to choose a building site. On the board were to be a physician, someone engaged in mining, another in shipping coal, and, in their terminology, a "practical miner." Each site was to be convenient to railroad transportation.

The site chosen for Miners Hospital No. 1 was in Welch, on four acres of land on the east bank of the Tug River at the mouth of Browns Creek. It was about three-quarters of a mile from the courthouse, and was opened to receive patients on January 28, 1902. The building was designed to accommodate 26 patients. At Welch No. 1 H. D. Hatfield was made president, Dr. Alexander Irwine superintendent, and Mrs. L. S. Magee, matron (head nurse). Dr. Hatfield, the son of a confederate soldier and nephew of feuding "Devil Anse" Hatfield, later served as the 14th Governor of West Virginia from 1913 to 1917. As governor he himself was to promote many important health and welfare legislative programs.

The staff at Welch was assisted by two trained nurses, one electrician, one night fireman, one ambulance driver, and two orderlies. In the first 11 months the hospital received 208 patients. The institution was also fortunate to have electricity as the others did not for several years. Fairmont did not get electricity until 1909 and McKendree was still using acetylene gas. Overcrowding at No. 1 was considerable, even to the extent of using aisles and corridors. This hospital, like the other two, served a large region, with the president's report noting, "The nearest hospital is at Huntington some 200 miles away." He further stated that the institution lacked adequate cold storage, having " . . . only one ordinary refrigerator

with a capacity of 200 pounds of ice."

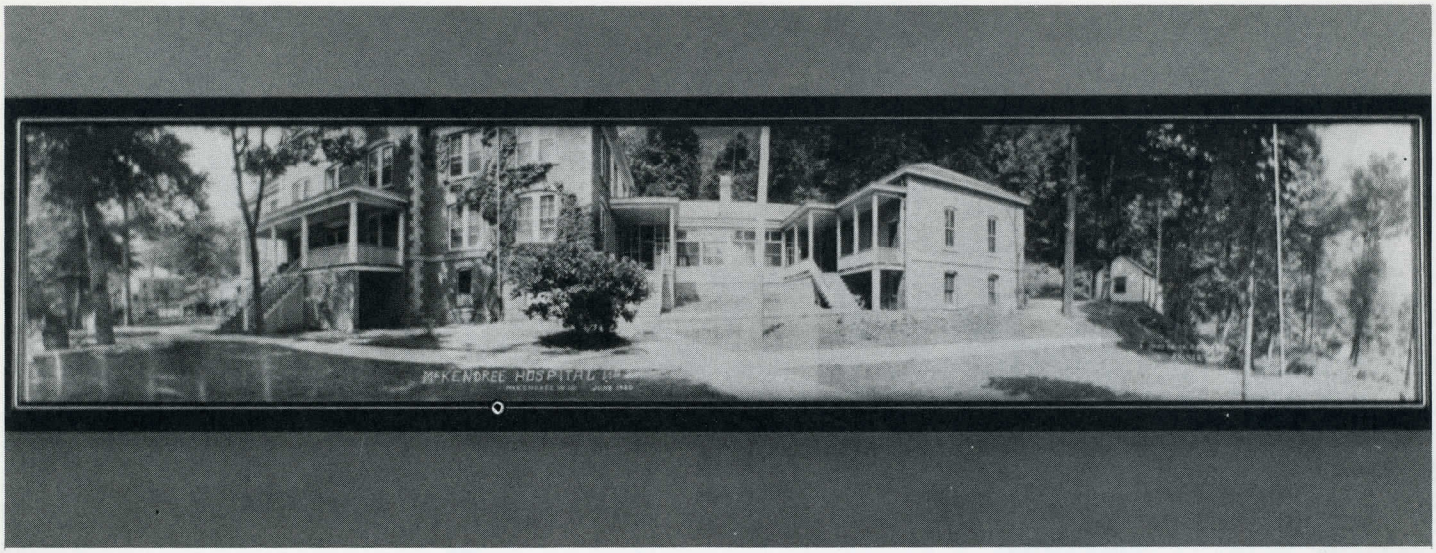
Miners Hospital No. 3, at Fairmont, opened for the reception of patients on October 1, 1901. Baptist Field, as it was locally known, had been chosen for the hospital site. It was donated by the citizens of Fairmont, who raised $2400 to purchase the acre lot. The site had a commanding view overlooking the Monongahela River. Superintendent Dr. J. W. McDonald, in his report for the first year, indicated that 194 patients had been treated. He supported the Welch superintendent's comment about the scarcity of hospitals in the region. "There is no general hospital in this section from Cumberland [Maryland] to Wheeling, from Clarksburg to Connellsville [Pennsylvania]."

McDonald went on to say the demand for general hospital accommodations was great. He suggested that if free patients were admitted, as required by law, and the usual hospital fee was charged to all other patients, the institution could become self-sustaining. Staff salaries were not high, by modern standards. The superintendent was paid $150 per month, the assistant superintendent $50, head nurse $25, two nurses $15 each, two assistant nurses $8 each, cook $25, housekeeper $20, house girl $10, janitor $45, and assistant janitor $10. The assistant superintendent's salary was later increased to $83.

It seemed Miners Hospital No. 2 at McKendree was threatened from the first. The new institution got off to a troubled start, and years later McKendree was the first to be abandoned. The hospital board, of whom coal baron Justus Collins of Glen Jean was president, was organized in November of 1901. For some reason the board of directors initially limited the number of patients to be admitted to three.

Water supply at McKendree was a serious problem. Supposedly fresh water was to be supplied from a reputedly perennial branch, which actually had dried up for several months. In order to correct the deficiency, the hospital was forced to install a pumping station on the nearby New River. Additionally, both McKendree and Welch had their share of laundry problems. McKendree did not have the means of boiling or sterilizing infected or contaminated linen. The institution had to send laundry to Charleston while Welch had to send it to Ironton, Ohio. There were also heating difficulties at McKendree. On the plus side, they were fortunate that coal operator Joe Beury, in donating property for the McKendree site, also gave a free five-year supply of coal to the institution. The directors lamented that McKendree " . . . is practically isolated, with no society, school or church facilities for its officials or help . . . ."

From December 1901 to December 1902 the hospital had 171 patients. The "nativity" of the patients, as the directors reported, included Americans, English, Germans, Irish, and Hungarians. Other statistics the directors listed included the occupations



This photograph of McKendree Hospital, probably by New River photographer Red Ribble, hangs on Mabel Gwinn's wall.

for the patients. Mining headed the list with 132 admitted, followed by laborers, railroaders, farmers, carpenters, mine guards, and one physician and one civil engineer. The largest number of injuries were burns, but nine people were crushed in what probably was a serious railroad accident. There were 30 gunshot wounds, from which eight people died. Care, by our present standards, was very inexpensive. The cost of maintaining one patient for one day in 1902 was $1.59. A small electric plant was requested in this report to improve the "imperfect lighting," but as noted previously was not forthcoming.

Justus Collins reported to Governor E. B. White that in January 1903 the hospital had to close because of a smallpox epidemic. Fortunately, there were no hospital staff fatalities in this epidemic. The disease originated from a miner who was admitted with serious injuries from a mine accident and had apparently been exposed to smallpox prior to his admission. There was a policy that no one with a contagious disease would be admitted.

In his 1904–06 report W. R. Reed, the new president, was alarmed because the coalfields of the New River were increasing tonnage very rapidly, thus necessitating more miners. He feared the capacity of the hospital would be inadequate. He wrote that coal production was up to one and a half million tons per year. He also admitted the term "miners hospital" was a misnomer and that persons of different occupations were admitted, thus further increasing the strain.

Reed, as with Justus Collins, detailed the constant problems with the inadequate water supply. All of the wooden pipes and impaired iron pipes had to be replaced. The institution had not dug a well. A 40,000-gallon water tank, of cypress wood with iron hoops, had been erected upon stone masonry pillars. This was in addition to the 25,000-gallon tank that had been erected earlier.

McKendree was located on the railroad but Reed also mentioned the access road. It had been recindered, he reported, making a very smooth roadway which he hoped could be macadamized. There was, with all the hospitals, a constant desire to improve sanitary conditions and to obtain the best equipment and supplies for serving the patients. McKendree was no exception, and Reed reported the original anesthesia gas machine had been replaced by a modern automatic gas machine. When Mabel Leete Gwinn was at McKendree in 1921 they were using ether. A cone-shaped mask was placed over the patient's nose and mouth, with several thicknesses of gauze placed over the cone. The supervisory nurse applied the proper amount of ether, drop by drop, on the gauze.

Following the example of Fairmont, McKendree opened a training school for nurses on March 1, 1910. They hoped to thus acquire more efficient help and to be independent of other training schools and graduate nurses.

Students were required to successfully complete a two-months' probationary period before being admitted to the training school proper. Upon entering the two-year school program they received $10 per month which was to be used for purchasing uniforms, textbooks, and so forth, their education being considered their primary compensation. The requirements, qualifications and course of study were to meet with the suggestions and recommendations made by the American Hospital Association. Prospective students had to be of the highest moral standard, intelligent, have a good basic education, and be healthy. The hours of duty for day nurses were 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., and night nurses, 8:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. There was to be one hour free time daily, two hours when possible, as well as one free afternoon each week and two weeks annual vacation.

Of the three Miners Hospitals, only No. 1 at Welch is active today, and it is to be replaced by a new hospital now under construction. Miners Hospital No. 2 at McKendree was converted to a home for elderly black patients in the early 1940's. It was abandoned a decade later, and then demolished. Miners Hospital No. 3 closed when a new Fairmont hospital was completed in the spring of 1980. When Welch No. 1 closes next year, this unique chapter in the medical history of West Virginia will also come to an end.

Mrs. Lowther's grocery store is in the front of her hotel, on Dodd Street in Middlebourne. Photo by James Doan.

"A Chance to Make a Dollar"

Grace Lowther, Tyler County Grocer and Innkeeper

By Wilma Doan

When you step into the Lowther Grocery Store on Dodd Street in Middlebourne, a bell rings from atop the door. By the time you have made your way to the counter a lovely gray-haired woman, wearing gold-rimmed glasses, has appeared to discuss your needs. A very friendly person, she allows her emotions to show as she beams when discussing her work.

"It's swell," she says.

An alert lady, Mrs. Grace Lowther does not miss anything going on around her. She says she has learned a lot about people in 76 years of living and in the hotel and grocery businesses. She's aware if someone is trying to shoplift and equally aware of people buying several small items with food stamps so they get small change back several times in cash. This is the way she sees them doing it.

"They send in each of their children with a food stamp to spend on a small item, maybe something for a quarter, then I give them back 75¢ and the next one comes in and does the same thing. They even park their car up the street a little way thinking they are fooling me."

Not fooled easily, this storekeeper knows just what she has on hand in the cash box, too.

"One evening a little court was conducted right in the back room. The suspect didn't admit to stealing money from me right then but his stories were different every time he told them and later his father brought him back and he repaid me the money. I say the

Grace Lowther at work in her kitchen. Home-cooked meals are a major attraction of the Lowther Hotel, both for the guests who board there and for townspeople. Photo by James Doan.

coals must have been piled pretty high." She was referring to the old Indian way of piling hot coals around the accused one's feet and legs higher and higher until he told the truth.

"I've even had to go outside and remind a few that they hadn't paid me for an item," she says.

Mrs. Lowther takes care of each situation as it arises and does it very well, from long experience. Her husband was away a good deal of the time when her family was young.

"Sometimes when money was scarce and times hard, just me and my granddaughter would be here. We'd sleep on the couch so we could rent out all the rooms. When you got a chance to make a dollar, you did. People don't spend their dollars wisely today."

Mr. Bernard Lowther, who died in April 1980 at the age of 85, had followed the oil well drilling business all of his years. He was known for his ability to fish tools out of the holes and he never had to go looking for work. He loved the oilfields and Mrs. Lowther says that one of the drillers who is staying at the hotel now came back, not because of the good food, but because he enjoyed talking so much with her husband.

"During the Depression years the oil business almost quit. We lived on a farm near Wick, about 10 miles from Middlebourne. Bernard got a job on a construction site at Morgantown and was transferred around several places. He boarded wherever he worked. I got the children in school and took care of things on the farm. I don't know how we made it, but we did."

She chuckled when she remembered an impractical sister-in-law who thought it would be just wonderful if Grace could have one of those new housecoats that were in style.

"'They come all the way down to your ankles,' she said. 'Grace, you would just love them.'

"'That's all I need,' I told her, 'with ten cows to milk.'"

The family had moved from Spencer where they had been used to city conveniences. Mrs. Lowther didn't seem to mind. On heating a seven-room house with wood, she said, "The children were big enough. They helped. The rule was that if anyone passed the woodpile without bringing some wood in, they had to go back. That way, carrying wood was no problem."

Without electricity, they burned oil lamps and there was no inside plumbing. Water came from a well on the back porch. When asked what kind of entertainment they had, she told me what they did not have.

"We didn't even have a radio. Every night after the children were cleaned up for bed, I would read a story to them, then they were ready to scamper off to bed. I never had to tell them to go to bed. They were all good students, too."

When television came out, Mrs. Lowther said that neither she nor her husband cared for it. She is still too busy to watch TV. There is one in the

Mrs. Lowther in her store room in the hotel. Photo by James Doan.

lobby of the hotel but no television set "takes up space" in her living room.

"We were well-off as far as necessities were concerned. The children were clean, they had enough food to eat and a warm place to sleep. We never had to ask for relief. But then it didn't take as much to live as it does now. We had everything on the farm. We had our own meat and eggs and dairy products. I canned lots of vegetables from the garden in the summer. I remember one summer there wasn't hardly any fruit. Bernard found a blackberry patch up a hollow. I got the cans ready while he took our niece, who was visiting, along with our children on a sled to pick berries. I had 100 quarts that year. That was dessert all winter."

Farming came natural to Grace. She was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Everett, farmers in Ritchie County. Grace Everett became Grace Lowther in 1921 at the age of 17. The young bride went with her husband to the Texas oilfields for the next year and a half.

"We put up a one-room shack. That's what everybody did. They were there to work and that's what they did. It didn't get as cold in Texas as it does here, but when the wind blew through the cracks we just stuffed them with newspapers and made do."

She could not recall exactly what she did with so much free time on her hands. Her husband was working 12-hour shifts and did not even take Sunday off.

"I 'spect I read a lot. Young people always find something to do. There was a lot of other people there too. I still have friends in Texas."

After that job was over, the Lowther couple followed the drilling business to an area near Wooster, Ohio. Mrs. Lowther has lost track of all the places they lived.

"We just went where the work was. Bernard had his own tools and someone was always looking for him to do a job."

She laughed when she said she had lived in 17 houses in 30 years, and her eyes shone when she recalled her husband staying home for two weeks awaiting the birth of their son.

"One day a man called and wanted him to come to work for $20 a day, and he would furnish transportation to the job and back when it was finished. Now in Ritchie County 50 years ago, $20 a day was good pay. He asked me whether I thought he should go and I told him he might have to stay home several more days before the baby was born. We had a car and our neighbor would go after the doctor in Cairo. When the time came, my oldest daughter walked to another neighbor's house, lantern swinging in her hand. She spent a few days with them. Robert was born and it was a couple of days before Bernard got home."

In the fall of 1949 the Lowthers bought the hotel on Dodd Street in Middlebourne and settled in for a long residency. Mr. Lowther was still away a lot of the time and it was Grace who

ran the business, although she credits him with being very orderly and it was he who counted the money for her from the grocery store.

"My granddaughter even thought Grandpa took my money just because he took care of things for me," she laughed.

The Lowthers' oldest daughter was killed in an automobile accident and left four children. Son Robert lives nearby and is the owner of a laundromat. Some of his family are in and out each day. Another daughter, Zela Patterson, lives in New Martinsville and works at Pittsburgh Plate Glass. Daughter Lavita Hamlin is a first grade teacher in St. Marys, in neighboring Pleasants County. Sarah Mason followed in her mother's footsteps. She has a general store in Little Hocking, Ohio.

Grace Lowther doesn't have much time to visit her children or go any place, for that matter, she says. "They're all too busy. We all agree and don't have family fusses 'cause we don't see each other that much."

She has a small, very comfortable living room just behind the storeroom, and she closes shop when she gets sleepy or when people quit coming in.

This rare woman says that her mother always kept the coffee pot on, but she herself has never drunk a cup of coffee in her life. Neither has she drunk pop or used tobacco in any form. She's in bed around ten each night and her day begins at seven, when she starts preparing breakfast for the night shift drillers who come in, get washed up, and sit down to a hefty meal of eggs, potatoes, and sausage, with the best coffee you ever tasted. She likes to get the meat browned for evening and the kitchen cleaned up early, then have supper around five.

Sunday dinners are served by reservation. Customers enjoy home cooking in a place that hasn't changed much over the years. She has some help on Sundays, and a young woman who also lives in the hotel helps with the cleaning.

Grace Lowther recalls that she opened her grocery store after earning the first $200 from early boarders. "I called the New Martinsville Grocery Company and they sent a salesman. We worked out together what I needed to get my store started. Of course, all my groceries were bought on a cash basis for a long time. Each week I could get something else. Now I can get what I need and pay once a month."

After three decades, Mrs. Lowther still enjoys her work as a grocer. On weekdays, her smile welcomes school children at the noon hour. They pop in and out two at a time for bubble gum, potato chips, candy bars, soft drinks, and small cakes, leaving the business quite a few dollars richer each day. She says she tries to price things so she won't get too many pennies.

"I get too many pennies. The last week of the month is penny week. The kids are down to rock bottom, and they spend their pennies.

"I don't sell as much toward the end of the month, either. January is a slow month. People spend so much for Christmas that there isn't any money left for groceries. At first, I wondered what I had done, nobody was coming in. I thought I was out of business. And sometimes it's just too cold for people to get out."

Grace Lowther can't control the Tyler County weather and consumer spending habits, but through good months and bad the pennies and dollars add up to a livelihood. She's obviously proud of her independence and works hard at it—cooking for the oil and gas workers, minding the store and hotel, and even squeezing some quilting into such spare moments as she has. Surely this busy woman will be in business for a long time to come.

The Hotel

There are no blinking neon signs to tell of the Lowther Hotel, but visitors to Middlebourne will have no trouble finding it. Convenient to Main Street, there is only one house between the hotel and the high school on Dodd Street. Known originally as the Swan Hotel, the building was erected in the early 1900's by J. E. Swan. Born in Middlebourne in 1868, Swan was the son of a seven-term mayor and himself the senior partner in the Swan and Jamison General Store.

Mr. Swan died in the 1920's, leaving his widow to run the hotel from that time until her own death. Serving meals and offering lodging, she also sold books to the school children until the Tyler County Board

The Lowther Hotel. Photo by James Doan.

of Education began furnishing them.

The Lowthers came into the hotel property at the death of Mrs. Swan. "When Mrs. Swan died in 1949, her heirs all lived away from here," Grace Lowther recalls.

"They were very anxious to sell and get back to their homes," she adds. "My husband talked to them before the funeral, and after the service was over arrangements were made and we closed the deal while the family was still here."

Grace Lowther opened her grocery store soon after taking over the hotel, but otherwise the building has been changed very little. Two bathrooms have been added on the second floor.

Each room in the Lowther Hotel contains the necessities—a bed, a dresser, and of course the towels and linens. A television is available in the lobby for the use of the guests. With a capacity of 20, the rooms are rented on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis, and arrangements can be made to board at Mrs. Lowther's table. A family-style meal still priced at $3 includes meat, vegetables, homemade bread, and pies fresh from the oven.

A stranger looking for a room may ring the bell on the hotel door, or he may locate the innkeeper through the next door on the right, in her grocery store. Mostly, however, the hotel depends on regulars. Oil well drillers have figured prominently in the registry over the years, and the apartment on the third floor has been home to many an out-of-town schoolteacher looking for a place to settle permanently.

The Lowther Hotel also serves as something of a community social center. Donald Quinif, president of the Middlebourne Lions Club, says that the Lions have met there regularly since receiving their charter in 1954, and adds that Mrs. Lowther is "as well known to this area as hot dogs and apple pie."

Each bimonthly meeting is opened with the ritual "Lion's roar," Mr. Quinif notes. "But after eating one of Grace's home-cooked meals, featuring at least ten different dishes and topped off by a generous portion of apple, cherry, or cream pie, every Lion leaves purring."

Plain Cooking

Barbara Meadows of Raleigh County

By Yvonne Snyder Farley
Photographs by James Samsell

Mountain State Women

Barbara Meadows of Glen Morgan is what she calls "an old-fashioned down-home cook." There are lots of such cooks in West Virginia—maybe fewer today than in earlier times—but she is one of the best. She didn't study at a prestigious cooking school and hasn't received any accolades from the gourmet establishment. Probably the greatest testament to this mountain cook is that both sides of the family like to come to her house to eat. They eat simply and well where food and family come together.

"I cook plain. I don't fix fancy stuff. During the week I don't even put food in bowls. I just set it here on the bar and we just spoon it out of the kettles," she explained as she patted her hand on the spotless bar-table in the center of her large and airy kitchen. "It's plain, everyday food. Whatever we've got, that's what we fix." Hers is a cuisine that demands creativity at all times. Her hallmark is that she uses ingredients at their seasonal best.

Barbara has an answer for those who would question the accomplishments of a West Virginia cook: "Have you ever been to a family reunion out-of-state? Well, I have. You'd starve to death if you were a very big eater. Their idea of a homecoming is a couple of cases of beer, a whole lot of potato chips, and hot dogs." What she envisions as a typical West Virginia reunion is picnic tables laden with food where everyone eats heartily.

What Barbara prepares in her kitchen is not that uncommon for those familiar with Appalachian cooking—chicken and dumplings, canned products of every description, homemade wines, candies, cakes, every kind of wild game imaginable, soups, casseroles, and so on. The enchilada casserole may not be a traditional mountain dish but she makes it, too.

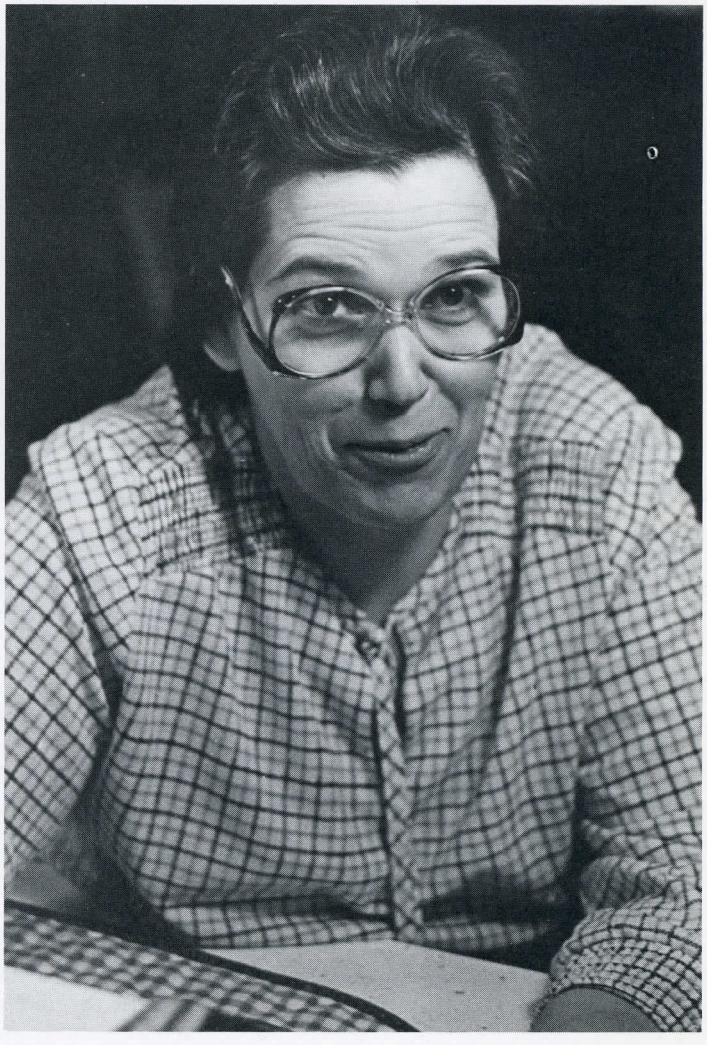
Cooking is central to Barbara Meadows' life and food preparation takes hours. She makes everything from

scratch and produces most of the ingredients at home. A recent trip to her cellar full of canned goods revealed: tomatoes, applesauce, pears, several kinds of pickles, nectarines, apple butter, green beans, chow chow ("the way *we* like it!"), pickled peaches, Italian hot peppers, peach jam, grape jam (from her grape arbor), crab apple jam, crab apple-grape jam, pickled corn, pickled beans, wine, and sauerkraut. She has canned lard rendered from pigs the family raised and said she used to make her own soap, but didn't this year. She keeps a potato bin loaded for winter in the cellar, along with a barrel of pickled corn.

The Meadows family raises rabbits for its freezer, and last year froze 45 of them. "You can do anything with rabbit that you do with chicken," said Barbara. Her favorite rabbit dish is rabbit with dumplings. Her husband James is a hunter and that keeps her supplied with all the wild meat she needs. "I'll cook anything he brings in—squirrel, groundhog, coon. The only thing I ever refused was a muskrat. Some people eat them. I'm not cooking one of those. We're not that fond of deer. I've cooked it a hundred different ways. I'll tell you what's fantastic—homemade pork sausage mixed with rabbit sausage."

Her husband James also raises a large garden which keeps her busy at canning vegetables. "If you don't start with good stuff," she states, "you don't get good results." Early last December she had a pot of "leather britches" simmering on the stove. These are green beans dried on a string and then cooked with ham hock. Barbara said that time of year—after the first snowfall in Raleigh County—was traditional for those beans. She warns those who would dip into their winter supplies early that, "You never open anything until it snows or you might end up having to

"Have you ever been to a family reunion out-of-state? Well, I have. Their idea of a homecoming is a couple of cases of beer, a whole lot of potato chips, and hot dogs."

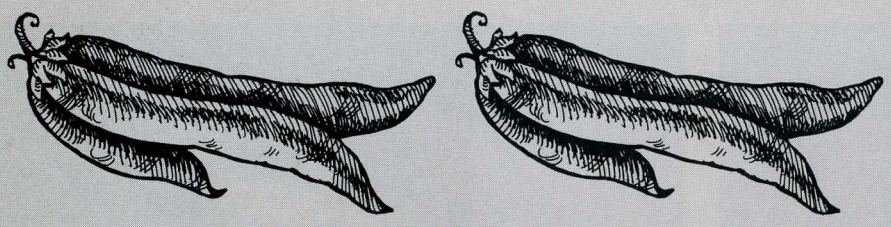


Recipes from the Meadows Kitchen

Fresh Apple Cake

2 cups flour
2 tsp. salt
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. cinnamon
½ cup shortening
2 cups sugar
2 eggs, beaten
4 cups apples, chopped
2 cups walnuts

Grease bottom of a small bundt pan. Sift first four ingredients together. Mix shortening and add sugar gradually, beating well. Add eggs slowly. Stir in apples, a small amount at a time. Beat only until mixed. Add dry ingredients in thirds, creaming them into mixture. Beat only until smooth. Blend in nuts. Pour into pan. Bake at 350° for one and a half hours, testing with toothpick for doneness.



Leather Britches

String beans and let dry for four weeks. Soak two strings (about four cups) of dried leather britches overnight in hot water. Next morning wash thoroughly. Put in a big pot with water to cover, adding one Tbsp. of salt. Bring to a boil and add a large ham hock. Let cook until tender. The longer they boil, the better, says Barbara. Serve them with anything, she adds, but always have onions.

Rabbit and Dumplings

Place a fryer rabbit in a pot and cover with water and ¼ tsp. salt. Let it boil for a couple of hours. Lift rabbit out and let it cool. Grease the bottom of a nine-inch skillet. Roll the rabbit pieces in flour, place in skillet, and salt and pepper lightly. Brown over low heat. After the first turn, sprinkle rabbit with thyme. Cover and slow-fry.

Meanwhile, put broth on stove to boil (there should be about three cups of liquid) and add ½ stick butter. Make dumplings with a cup of flour and enough buttermilk to hold the dough together. Roll it out. Drop by the teaspoon into boiling broth.

Mix four Tbsp. water with flour to make a paste. Add to this mixture one cup of canned milk. Mix well. Pour into the dumpling mixture. Bring back to a boil. Serve rabbit with applesauce and the dumplings.

eat snowballs," before the next growing season.

Barbara, the daughter of Ethel Mullens and the late Earl Browning, grew up in the Raleigh County coal camp of Tams, which was owned by coal operator W. P. Tams, or "the Major," as he was known to the inhabitants there. Operator Tams referred to Barbara, she recalls, as "that crazy Browning girl." She said it was her Uncle Howard "who pulled strings" and got her father a coal mining job at Tams. Her parents shared four rooms with her uncle and aunt at first. Barbara remembers Tams as "a clean little community. All the houses were built real well. And during a work stoppage or a slow time you didn't have to worry about it because you knew you could eat at the company store. We lived out of the company store from the time I was born up until about the past five years, before mother and daddy moved out of Tams. Mother would just go up to the grocery store and it took two dollars a day to feed us. There were four of us kids."

Like other coal town families, the Brownings supplemented company store fare by the products of their own small-scale farming. Barbara remembers that while growing up in Tams, "We raised a huge garden and we canned everything. We kept beef up on the mountain—you couldn't have it in the community. We didn't have a deep freeze. You had to hang beef up outside to let it dry. And when you wanted a beef roast, you just went outside on the back porch and cut a slab." The family had a pig in the backyard but Barbara said it had to be kept clean and there couldn't be any odor—a regulation of the Major's. "Can you imagine having pigs and there being no odor?" she asked. She said they canned everything, including sausage and chickens. At the company store they bought flour, cornmeal, and bread. On paydays only there was milk.

Her mother was a good cook, she said. Barbara's favorite delicacy from those days is the "egg bag." "That's the best thing in the whole world. You

Barbara Meadows in her well-stocked cellar. The Meadows family believes the best ingredients are home-grown, and raises a big garden each year.

know, you might accidentally kill a hen that was an egg layer. And when you'd boil it, you find little bitty eggs, some of them would be as big as a nickel on up to a fifty-cent piece, and you'd pull the whole thing out and eat it with broth. Was it delicious!"

But it was from a Tams neighbor, Mabel Blackburn, that she says she learned to cook. "She was a fantastic cook. She did all the baking in the community. The Major would come by and eat at her house. She made cabbage rolls that would drive you wild. And that's where I got my cabbage roll recipe, by the way." Barbara said she would sit and ask Mabel questions and then go home and write down what she learned. "I've always been fascinated with food and seeing how you could make it look and taste," she said.

Barbara, her husband, and college-age son live outside Beckley on a hill offering a panoramic view of the houses below. Until recently she had a Copperclad coal stove in her kitchen, but just sold it. She also has had a gas stove which she used for 19 years. She likes to talk about cooking and says it is her favorite thing. "I didn't go to school to learn how to cook. I look in books and see a picture and I make it. I see something in a restaurant and come home and make it. If I get depressed or worried, I head for the kitchen and it relieves the tension. I'm not the best cook in the world, but I hold my weight right in there with the best of them." Barbara and her family are nourished by the preparation as well as the enjoyment of food. Her working kitchen is a symbol of family unity as people wander in and out to sit, to talk, to eat and to work. It makes

Mrs. Meadows seldom makes this many desserts at one time, but never lacks an appreciative family audience for her cooking.

for a close and comfortable atmosphere.

Barbara's approach to food is much like her approach to life—basic, direct, and good-humored. She looks on preparing food as something natural, inventive, and spontaneous. This honest treatment of food is something that has been developed by people who have relied on "what was available"—nature's produce. Barbara will talk in generalities about cooking but she has become reticent with her specialties. She is making up a small cookbook for her family and friends which will have the cabbage rolls, fruit cake, wild game recipes, cake recipes handed down by her aunt, and a whole lot on canning. There is not, Barbara states flatly, one person in a hundred who would know how to can a chicken. And Barbara continues to can everything with the boiling water bath method. "They tell you now that you'll get poisoned if you do it that way and it's not true."

"I have a brother-in-law," she says, "who is a college-educated chef. He likes nothing more than to come here and not to cook and set and eat my cooking. He would surprise you to death with the things that he likes—and my God, he could fix anything. I'll be cooking and he'll slip downstairs to see. But I won't let him see how I do certain things. I don't give him any secrets and he doesn't give me any," Barbara said with a laugh.

"Whoop it up a Little Bit"

The Life and Music of Blackie Cool

Interview and Photographs by Sam Rizetta

Sam Rizetta. I've heard conflicting stories about how you got your nickname. I know your real name is William Cool.

Blackie Cool. Actually, it started way back when I was just a kid. See, my mother and father are mixed some with Indians, got a little Indian in them, you know. On my Dad's side is Cherokee and Blackfoot, and on my mother's, Seneca Indian. When we'd be playing cowboys and Indians way back in young days I was the chief Blackheart, and it just stuck. Someone was telling about me working on a tipple, lot of coal dust around there and I got black like that, started calling me Blackie there. But actually it happened when we was playing cowboys and Indians when we was just young kids and that name stuck. Even my mother called me Blackie. That's the only name I know. I get mail from my own relations that way.

SR Were there still Indians in the area when you grew up?

BC No, but my grandfather could remember them, my grandmother and grandfather. I had a cousin, Jesse Cool, up in Webster County, he traced

Blackie played music semi-professionally in his younger days. Then he quit to raise his family and "25 years slipped by real fast."

our ancestors back. And he went back way beyond the Civil War, way back when we had relations in covered wagons go west, you know. But he run out of money and didn't finish it so I don't how it happened. I guess they just got mixed up somewhere or other. You know, there isn't many Cools around, the law and disease thinned us out.

I had one of the wonderfulest grandfathers there ever was, he was a lawman back in them days. J. D. Cool, he was named after Jefferson Davis. Jefferson Davis Cool was his name. My mother's father, my other grandfather, he was a Clifton, he lived about eight mile below Diana and he was six or seven years old when the Civil War was going on. They was raided down there. I've heard him tell it many times. He was standing in the log cabin door looking down at the barn where his brother went down to save the calves and horses and things. They killed his brother. He stood right at his cabin door and watched it.

SR And your grandfather Cool was a lawman for a long time.

BC I never knew when he wasn't.

SR Was this around Diana?

BC Yeah, Webster County. He was constable there at Diana for many years. He died in 1926.

SR We're talking together up here on Ware's Ridge above Valley Head. This isn't too far from where you grew up. Is that right?

BC Not too far, 'course I grew up in two different states, Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

SR Well, I know you were born in Diana. How long did you spend there?

BC Well, when I was six years old my father moved out, he was a coal miner, moved down to Carolina, south from Fairmont. And he worked for Consolidation Coal Company there two or three years. Then he moved on down into Uniontown, Pennsylvania. Went to Collier, Pennsylvania, at first and I sort of grew up down there till teenage. Spent my first years down in there.

SR That's where you started working in the mines?

BC Yeah, 13 years old, I worked for Pittsburgh Coal Company. If you was big enough, you know, and dumb enough, why, you was all right to work. That was before child labor law. If you was big enough, you was old enough.

SR You decided not to go to school, but to work?

BC Yeah, I quit in the fifth grade and went to work the coal mines.

SR You were telling me about doing the kinds of things that men do even when you were 13.

BC Oh, yeah, when I was 13 years

old I drank, gambled, I was on my own.

SR Were there many young people working in the mines like that?

BC Not too many, not too many. I guess they had better sense. They went to school like my brother who was two years older than myself. Why, he kept going to school and he became a federal mine inspector in later life. So I guess it does help to go to school a little bit.

SR When did you start playing music, was it about that time?

BC Well, no, I loved music ever since I can remember. See, my father used to play the five-string banjo, that old thumping style like Uncle Dave Macon. And he was good, he didn't know what key he was playing in but he played it good, and I just loved it, loved music.

When I was about nine years old he got me an old guitar that I tuned up like a banjo. Tuned up what I call Spanish. Not natural, but Spanish. Open tuning, open G. And I learned to play with a bar, with the guitar down on my lap. And you bar the fifth fret you got C, you bar the seventh fret you got D, open is G. I was quite a while like that, playing like that, I got so I could make sevenths, ninths, or anything like that, slant the bar. You know there's quite a lot of people in the '30's come on the Grand Ole Opry playing that way. With the guitar strung over their neck and holding the guitar like a dobro now, and that's the way they played. You can play some beautiful pieces that way, you know. "Marching Through Georgia" is a beautiful piece to play on that.

SR Did you play with your father?

BC Sometimes. And I got to learning what key we was playing in and I'd try to teach him and show him, and he don't want to learn, didn't want to remember it. He could tune up whatever he'd play in A or G or whatever, and then all the pieces he'd play like that. But he was good, while he played it. He was good.

SR Did anyone else in your family play music besides your father?

BC I had an uncle was a pretty good fiddler and guitar player, he was my dad's brother. He played old-time stuff, you know. He played fiddle and guitar pretty good.

SR Did you ever all get together and play?

BC Not my uncle and my dad and me, but I played with my uncle in different times. Dad, he just played the banjo, but he had a style all of his own, too, you know. He used his thumb up here for that fifth string, and he had a way of going up and coming down on it. It was actually nice. And he learned hisself, he just learned to play hisself.

"Of course, I don't drink at all now," Blackie says, "but back in them days I liked to whoop it up a little."

Left: Blackie Cool lifting cousin Jimmy, date and photographer unknown.
Right: "Blackie and his Melody Girls," late 1930's. The Melody Girls were Louise and Dorothy Cool, Blackie's cousins. Photographer unknown.

SR Do you still play any of the pieces that your father played?

BC I can remember some that he played. There's old pieces like "Barbara Allen." Then there was another old song that my dad used to sing and play on his banjo, "Wake up, wake up, little Lulu, what makes you sleep so sound, the Indians are a-comin' to tear your building down." Did you ever hear of that one? That's an old song he used to play and thump on the banjo, and I always liked to hear it. And all them old songs that Uncle Dave Macon played—I just can't remember names of them now, I got away from them.

SR Did he play dance music too?

BC Yeah, you could square dance with it, now he played "Goin' Up Cripple Creek," he played pieces like that. He was a pretty good thumper. That's what you call thumpin' on the banjo.

SR What were guitars like then, where did you get a guitar?

BC I don't remember where my father got that guitar, but it was a red one and I forget the name. I don't know whether Stella made them guitars or not. You remember Stella? I know I had a Stella at one time but I can't remember if that was it or not. Later on I got a Kaycraft, a Kay guitar.

SR Did you play Spanish style when you started to play for dances?

BC I'd already learned chords. After we moved back into West Virginia then I really did get into playing.

SR How old were you then?

BC Well, let's see, I was about 17, I guess.

SR Did you come back to the Webster Springs area?

BC Well, there was a little town called Parcoal, it's about a mile, maybe a mile and a half, from Webster Springs. A new coal mine went in, their head office was in Pennsylvania, you see, and my father came up there in 1929 and we moved back into West Virginia. Lived in Parcoal till it worked out and then my father moved over here to Randolph County when Hickory Lick opened. See, this Hickory Lick mines is the same mines, same company, just another opening. When they worked that one out they opened this one up. Then my father moved over to Monterville, where I live now.

SR Did you work in the mines and then play dances at night?

BC Yeah, I worked on the tipple. I worked outside most of the time then. We had dances going everywhere. They was anywhere from Richwood, around Summersville—anywhere, you know. There was dances going on all the time, they was hollering for musicians. Me and Aretus Hamrick played for a lot of them. He was a good fiddler. And Dewey Hamrick was one of the best.

We played a lot of music there in Webster County. There was dances going on all the time. That was in the '30's. We played there at the Oakland Hotel, and Ella Gregory's Restaurant on Main Street in Webster Springs. She may still be living, she was an elderly-like lady then. That was when Aretus Hamrick and I played a lot. I played a lot with Dewey Hamrick, too. Dewey came over from Randolph County into Webster County because there was a lot of work there. He run the monitors at Curtin. So I got with him again at Parcoal and we got to playing a lot together. But Aretus was the one that done most of the fiddling for square dances around there then.

SR I remember Dewey telling me that he was the one who taught you how to play the guitar.

BC Well, Dewey showed me a lot on the guitar and I'd been playing

Left: Geneva Louden and Blackie Cool played on a Uniontown, Pennsylvania, radio station. Photographer unknown, about 1940.
Right: Family reunion, mid-1950's. Blackie Cool's mother Frances stands at center, and Aunt Lilly Carpenter and Uncle Adam Clayton are seated. Photographer unknown.

quite a little bit of his style. I learned a lot from Dewey. And he was one of the best fiddlers West Virginia had back in them days. I'd rank him up with Clark Kessinger and Natchez the Indian, and Brownie [Ross]. Brownie, from around Philippi, was a good fiddler.

SR When was it that they had that big contest in Charleston?

BC That was back in the early '30's. I can't remember the year, it may have been '32. I think it was.

SR You and Dewey went and played against Clark Kessinger?

BC Yeah, and Natchez the Indian. Dewey come up second, but he wasn't advertised or nothing. Cowboy Copas played the guitar for Natchez the Indian and I played for Dewey. Dewey was just as good back then. He had to be if ranked up with them, because they were hot fiddlers.

SR When did you get started playing the fiddle too? Was it about that time?

BC Well, back in the '30's I played quite a lot, just around, playing square dances.

SR Did you know Woody Simmons?

BC I met Woody in 1932.* I was playing with a band called the Sunset Ramblers. We broadcast at Fairmont, once a week, WMMN. In between, we had little shows for these towns. So we was doing a show way over here at Junior or one of them little towns over in there. I was still living in Webster County. And we went down through Mill Creek and we stopped and met Arnold VanPelt, good musician, great musician. We got to playing a little music and talking and the first thing I knew there's somebody come a-walking up, had a pullover white sweater with his sleeves rolled up. It was Woody Simmons and he played the banjo beautiful. That's the first recollection I have of seeing him after that. Then later on, I guess in the '40's, we played some together.

SR He had started out playing on the banjo and it wasn't till later that he worked on the fiddle?

BC Yeah, he was really a beautiful banjo player. I can even remember one of the pieces he played, "Home, Sweet Home." I'll never forget it, 1932. It was real beautiful the way he done it. And Arnold VanPelt was a good guitar player. He played Riley Puckett runs and that's what interested me. Because I had a lot of Riley's records and I was learning a lot of his stuff too. And them licks that he was getting like on the "A Rag," that's the way I was playing back in them days. That suited me, you know.

SR I've heard a lot about Arnold's playing. Did he play other instruments besides guitar?

BC Well, now his brother played the fiddle. And I imagine Arnold could play anything, he was just a good musician. But his brother played a good fiddle and Arnold was real good on the guitar.

Dewey Hamrick and I played a lot of music together back in them days. In 1937 Dewey Hamrick and I went down and played at the Forest Festival. We won first prize there, and old man Charlie Bell was one of the judges.

Another time I remember playing down there, me and Dewey played against Edden Hammons. Edden won first prize that time. When he goes to put his fiddle away, he opened his violin case. I was standing pretty close to him, and looked over and in there was a great big fifth of whiskey, red

*Fiddler Woody Simmons was interviewed in GOLDENSEAL, Volume 5, number 3 (July-September 1979).

whiskey, you know. They made moonshine back in them days a lot, but they'd color it. They'd take sugar and scorch it and color it, and that was the color that whiskey was, so I know that was moonshine. And old Edden looked up, and the lid of the case slapped down real quick. He put the violin case under his arm and took the fiddle in his hand and carried it without a case. He kept the whiskey in the case. I guess that was the last time I saw Edden.

SR Did you play fiddle for dances too, besides guitar?

BC Yeah, I used to fiddle quite a lot over at Webster County and have here in Randolph County. Back in the '40's I played some.

SR That's about the time that you met Woody Simmons, too, or started to play with him?

BC Yeah. At one time Woody and I had a program worked up. We put twin fiddles together and we had one of the beautifulest programs you ever heard. We just had it down perfect.

Now, when I'd go play somewhere, I wouldn't drink anything. Of course, I don't drink at all now, but back in them days I liked to whoop it up a little bit, you know. So, we was going to play at the Strawberry Festival in Buckhannon, and we left and Woody picked up a guy to play with us, bass fiddle player or guitar player. Well, when he got in the back seat with me, he had a fifth. I remember I never eat breakfast, so we started nipping that bottle. I don't know whether Woody knowed it, I don't guess he did. Well, when I got to Buckhannon, I didn't know where I was at, and I don't think the other guy did either. But it rained everything out, so I don't think it hurt anything. I can't even remember coming back. I got on a terrible tear that time.

SR You mentioned earlier about having some of the Riley Puckett and Clayton McMichen records. How did you learn your music, was it mostly from the other musicians around or did you also have a lot of records and learn things off the radio?

BC I had a lot of records, and radio too. Back in them days, I liked Riley Puckett's style. But then there was Nick Lucas, the plectrum-style player. He played with a plectrum pick all the time. He was more what I'd call a classical guitar player, and Riley Puckett was right down into a dyed-in-the-wool runner. He was always running on the guitar, always running them basses.

SR Your finger-picking style seems really distinctive and beautiful. Is that mainly what you played, or did you play with a flat pick too?

BC I played a lot with a flat pick. When somebody wanted to hear me play just the guitar I'd start finger style. I learned that from Kirk and Sam McGee. And then I was developing another style, just my own way. People ask me where I learned that style. It just come to me.

SR There weren't other people around that played that way?

BC No, no.

SR Well, when you played for dances did you mostly have to use a straight flat pick, or could you use a finger style or Spanish style too?

BC Yeah, now a lot of times I would, and I have used thumb picks. Hit the bass and then the others. But I used the straight pick for a long time.

SR But when people call for a guitar solo, then you do use the finger style?

BC Yeah, when it's just by itself, like on the "Wildwood Flower." "Wildwood Flower" was a great piece back in the '30's, and anybody that played a guitar played that. That's finger style, you know. Of course, you can play it with a flat pick real good, but it just comes out better if you play it finger style.

SR One of the other interesting things about your guitar playing is that you do do some Spanish-sounding things. You did say you'd been to Mexico. Was it the circus that got you out there?

BC It got me started that way.

SR Tell me about the circus.

BC Well, there was a show come into Webster Springs there. Me and my brother Jim, we both joined up, and they needed a driver for the lion cage and a driver for the bear cage. So Jim, he took the bear cage and I took the lion cage and we followed that old Seneca Trail. Now, this was a group from Barnum and Bailey, "The Greatest Show on Earth." It was, what do you call it, an offspring of the main thing, you know. We'd show these little towns, then we'd meet the main train. They had their own train and cars, flat cars and everything. My brother, he come back. He went as far as Quinwood, I think, and he was trying to get me to come back home. And I said, "No, I'm going on." So I went down through the Southwest, seen all that country for the first time. That got me started then.

SR How old were you then?

BC Oh, let's see, I was in my 'teens.

SR Was that after you'd worked in the mines in Pennsylvania?

BC Oh, yeah, yeah, I was 13 there. I went over from El Paso, Texas, I went over to Juarez. And there's where I found them real beautiful guitar players. Seemed like everybody had a guitar, and little kids just played beautiful tunes on the guitar, some real nice. I got crazy about it and one of them played the "Cielito Lindo." It was so beautiful, and I tried to learn that. And while I was down there I was learning to speak Spanish a little bit, too, but it's so many years I forgot it. But I always did love the sound of Spanish music, they got their own way of playing. And it's beautiful.

SR And it seems like some of that style comes through in some of your pieces.

BC Yeah, I like to play stuff like that. I just never followed it up and that's where the 25 years that I quit playing hurt me. 'Cause I was playing a little bit more on the Spanish side, you know, and I've forgotten that.

I went back into Pennsylvania later on, in 1939 or '40. I worked a while in a mine down there, and I got with a group and we got to playing over the radio. Charleroi, Pennsylvania, station WESA, and we played there regular. We played for round dances, square, polka, for anything. We got to playing a lot of music then. We had a wonderful band there. There was seven of us all the time, and nine when we needed it.

SR Did you have a name for the band?

BC Yeah, Smokey Jack and the Saddle Pals. Smokey Jack was John White. Now he loved music, but he didn't play. He done all of our business, him and his son-in-law, done all of our business and kept the group together, got jobs for us. He wasn't one of the performers, he was a figure caller, a good figure caller but he didn't play music. Smokey Jack, that was his nickname.

Blackie Cool stands in the center of this picture of "Smokey Jack and his Saddle Pals," about 1950. The Saddle Pals did radio and live performances in southwestern Pennsylvania. Photographer unknown.

SR How long did you play with them?

BC I guess about five years.

About everytime I moved there would be a different group or something, you know. I played around Morgantown for a while and we had a group there called Arizona Rangers. But I was just a while with them, that's when I left and went to Baltimore.

See, I've always held my job, I never tried to make a go of music, that was just a side line. After I left Morgantown I went to Baltimore. Well, first I went to Pittsburgh. See, this mine blew up at Osage and it just missed me, I was still in pit clothes when it went up and killed 56 miners there at Osage. That was in 1942. They sealed the mines off, had to leave one body in there, couldn't find it, you know. I helped go in and get all the bodies, all we could, you know, load them and bring them out. I stayed till it was sealed over and then I had to go look for another job. So I went to Pittsburgh and went to work for the Pennsylvania Railroad, as freight handler, because war was looming and everybody was wanting to work. I stayed there a while and that's when I left and went to Baltimore, and went to work as a welder in the shipyards.

SR How did you get away from music?

BC Well, I got married, you know, and the last I was playing was down at WESA, Charleroi, like I was telling you. We had a lot to play around there. After this mine quit up at Osage, why, I'd left and went to Pittsburgh. I was waiting for it to open up again. I was intending to stay around 'cause I had a lot of friends there. I thought maybe I'd wait till it opened up. It takes six months to smother a mine fire out—the Osage mines was on fire, you know. But then I met Helen my wife,

Left: Author Sam Rizetta joins Blackie in the music room at Blackie's house.
Above: Blackie Cool and Woody Simmons at the 1981 Vandalia Gathering in Charleston. Blackie and Woody began playing music together in 1932. Photo by Rick Lee.

and we left and went to Baltimore and I went to work for Bethlehem Steel Shipyard as a welder. After we got to raising a family, why, I got away from my musician friends and 25 years slipped by real fast.

SR Did you play any music at all when you were in Baltimore?

BC None at all, none at all.

SR How did you get back to West Virginia? I know a lot of people want to come back and don't make it.

BC I worked at that shipyard for quite a few years and they got to losing a lot of their contracts, the company did. Bethlehem Steel would get a contract to build a ship or repair one. But then if they lost a bid, they would bid real high on the next one, 'cause they had to make money. Now, a little company would underbid us. Well, we'd lose that job and there we'd be out of work for a while. So I just got disgusted with working a little bit like that and I come back to West Virginia and went to work back in the mines. And then like I said I met you fellows and got me started back. I guess I'd been a-strumming around on the guitar, maybe for six months or a year, and I met you fellows and got started back.

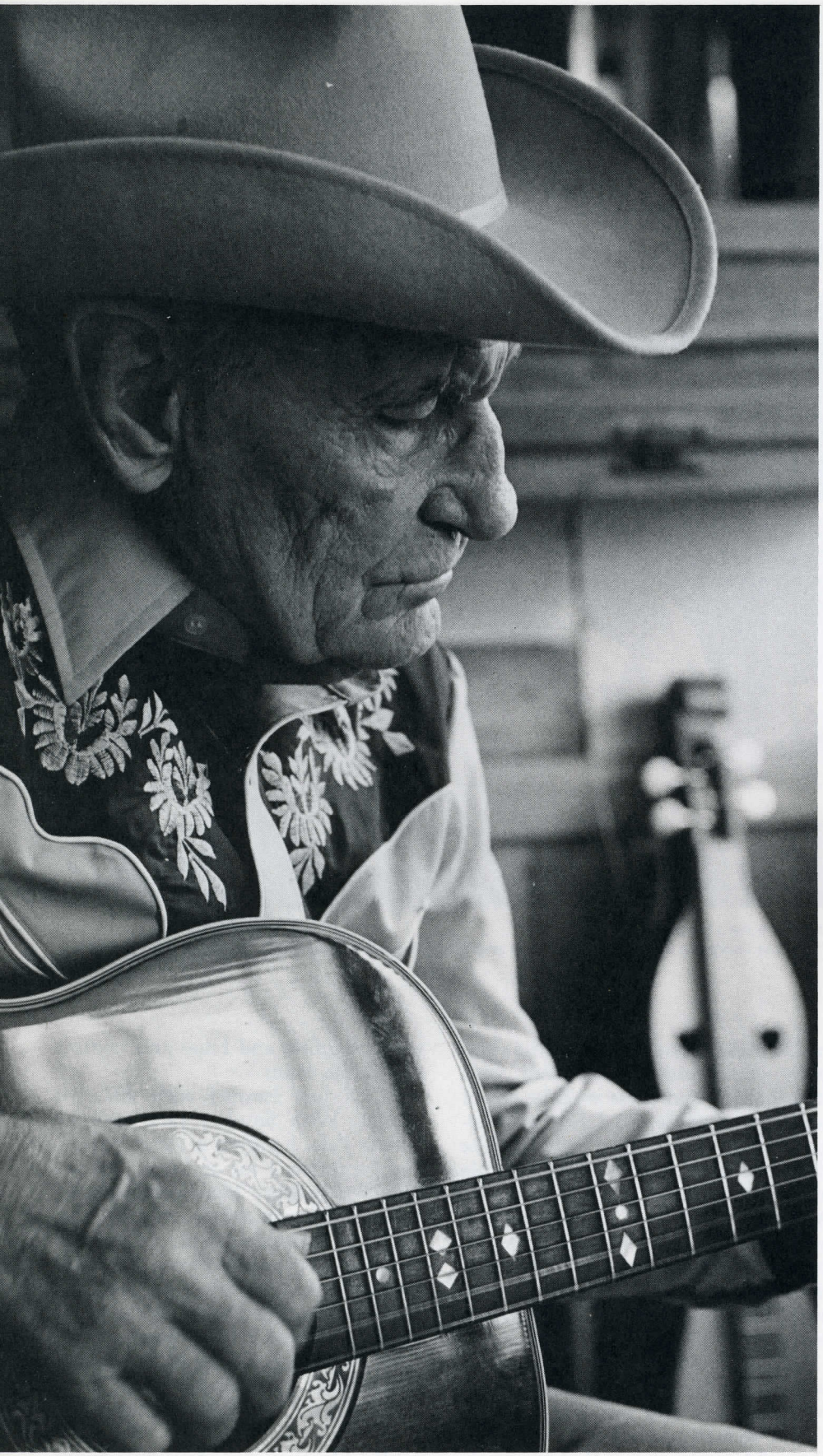
SR It seems unusual to hear someone who's played old-time music way back the way you did and yet who knows so many different guitar styles. How did you ever put that many together? I hear you play polkas finger style on guitar and blues and ragtime and fiddle tunes.

BC I just learned with different groups. With Smokey Jack and the Saddle Pals, I played a lot of polkas. I've forgotten a lot of them, but it's like Woody says. "How in the world," Wood Simmons asked me one time, "can you remember them old tunes?" But they just stuck with me, I've never forgot them. Like one time I started playing "Bye Bye Blues," Woody said he hadn't heard it in 40 years.

SR He likes some of those Hawaiian ones that you play, too.

BC Yeah, "Hawaiian Sunset," he likes that one.

SR Do you still play any tunes that you used to play, you know, with



"I learned a lot of blues from an old friend of mine in Pennsylvania, an old black guy," Blackie recalls. "I just went crazy over that kind of playing."

the bar in the Spanish style?

BC Well, I haven't fooled with that in a long time. Now "Jinks" Morris, I used to play music with him and he played a beautiful Hawaiian guitar. But he was a banjo player, he was a classical banjo player at that time.

SR He's from around Cowen?

BC Yeah. Him and I played quite a little bit. And we had one of the best dancers I think that ever been around here, Gandy Digman. Gandy Digman was our dancer, he just couldn't be beat. He started dancing down there in Elkins, one time we was all down there on the street. There was some good dancers around, standing watching him. So one of them got in there and started dancing, competing against him. And I remember he had an overcoat on, Gandy did, and was doing that Gandy dance, you know. So he seen that guy making it pretty hot for him, he just kept a-dancing and throwed his coat off. And I never seen such dancing in my life. Well, you know he had to be good, he was in Keith's Vaudeville. He was good.

SR Well, he seems to be a legend around here.

BC Yes, he was really good. Oh, Woody I guess has known him all his life. I met him back in the early '30's. A lot of times we had to go after him when we had a job to play, he may be down in Pennsylvania somewhere. He'd just take off and go.

SR West Virginia seems to be known for its fiddle players and banjo players. I think maybe that's partly because there have been so many contests, that we've gotten to know who the fiddle and banjo players are. But were there many guitar players back then who played a lot of different guitar music like you?

BC No, not too many of them. I spent a lot of time in the back room just by myself and things just come to me and I'd put them together. Like a lot of time I'll use all my fingers and call it the roll. Stuff like that just come to me, I never learned that from anybody. When I got first started I picked finger-picking like Sam and Kirk McGee. I heard that kind of playing and got interested in it and I just started playing like that then. Then the other just came to me, you know.

SR Another thing that impresses me is that you're still making up many of your own original pieces, both in

the old-time style and polkas and blues and rags and so on. Were there other musicians who were making up their own music in styles like that?

BC No, not too many of them, not that I know of. Might be a few made a song up or something. See, I made up two songs, I thought I'd get them registered or whatever. I sent the one to U. S. School of Music, where you send your poems and songs too, you know. So they wrote back and they liked it but they wanted me to let them change some things to it. But I never did write no more about it. It was personal, you know, it was about Irene Keaton. These two sisters sang, the Keaton sisters. And every Saturday we'd be there playing music, at their home, you know. They were lovely people, and Audie, the other sister, still lives over at Parcoal there yet. But Irene died. Well, I was in Pennsylvania and they'd sent me the clippings about it. And later on I wrote and asked the mother if I could compose a song about it. After I wrote the song, I sent it to the Keatons and they kept it. And I never did get it copyrighted or nothing like that.

SR I know that in some ways you're kind of a legend around Webster Springs and this end of Randolph County. Some of your early exploits are still remembered by people around here.

BC Well, I used to be sort of wild way back in them days and I was known for fighting, seemed like I couldn't keep out of a fight. People even came all the way from Richwood. Back in them days it just seemed like what you hear of a gun fighter out west—they'd hear in one town of a gun fighter and they'd go to that town to see if they could outdraw him—that's the way it was back then fighting. They'd hear of you fighting and whipping everybody, why, somebody had to go whip you.

And me and the town cop didn't get on very well in Webster Springs. Every time he'd want to come up to arrest me for drinking or fighting, why, him and I'd have a fight. Jake Ferrell was sheriff. He'd been lawman with my grandfather and he knew me and knew all of us. And he was one of the wonderfulest guys I ever saw in my life and I thought the world of him.

One time this town cop wanted to arrest me and I wouldn't let him do it. Lot of times he'd arrest me or try to arrest me and I hadn't even drank a beer or nothing. He told me later on, years later, he done that to keep me from getting in trouble. But it seemed to me like he was putting me in trouble and I'd fight him every step of the way. One time he got a handcuff on me there, you know, trying to get me up to the jail and I got the best of him, beating the dickens out of him, I guess. He hollered, "Hey, Jake!"—for Jake Ferrell, you know, the sheriff. We was right in where you walk up to the courthouse, and he hollered, "Hey, Jake!" And finally he got loose and started beating me over the head, you know, and I hollered, "Hey, Jake!" So we'd take turns about hollering for Jake. I knew if Jake came, everything would be all right, you know.

I regretted all that, naturally, after I grew up. But you know what, I had a lot of friends back in them days, too. Back in them days a fight or drinking a little bit didn't matter, wasn't looked down on like it would be today. You see someone drinking and fighting today, you shun them, but that wasn't the case back then. Webster Springs was wild and wooly just like the Wild West. In fact, it looked like it, it had them false fronts and boardwalks, and a mud street up the center. Just looked like Tombstone or something.

SR I heard some story about your first trip to Summersville. Someone told me you went into Summersville and told them you'd cleaned up everything in Webster Springs and asked if anyone wanted to start anything here in Summersville?

BC There's a lot of tales told on me that wasn't true. There's a lot of them, too, that I guess was. I never was large, but back home I had a great big sandbag, and I'd practice fighting and I used to love to put on gloves. And I guess I got pretty good at that, you know. I was quick and small, and I never did fight a little man. Seemed like my luck was to get a great big one. So I guess I couldn't hardly talk it down, you know.

SR Well, life around here was a little rougher in those days.

BC Yeah, it was. At that time, the coal mines just begin to open up all around, you know. And there were wood hicks, too—I mean the loggers, you know. So you take them two groups of people, miners and wood hicks, they're different, and when they meet in a little town like Webster Springs splinters are going to fly. The next day, after you sober up and everything, you shake hands, you know. Meet again next payday, and do the same thing.

There's a lot of people in Richwood who still remember Denver Mullens, he was an awful man, actually a strong man, just a young fellow, too. He sang

Welding crew at a Monongahela River boatyard near Brownsville, Pennsylvania, 1946. Blackie Cool stands second from left, front row. Photographer unknown.

and played guitar pretty good, that's how come me to get acquainted with him. We was good buddies, but he was an awful scrapper. I think he whipped about everything over in Richwood, and then he come over in Webster Springs and we got together and had a wonderful time. So we went over to Camden-on-Gauley and we was drinking in a little place there. There was a little town cop there that we called Little Boy Blue, I believe it was. This cop knew Dan real well, and he didn't want him to get drunk.

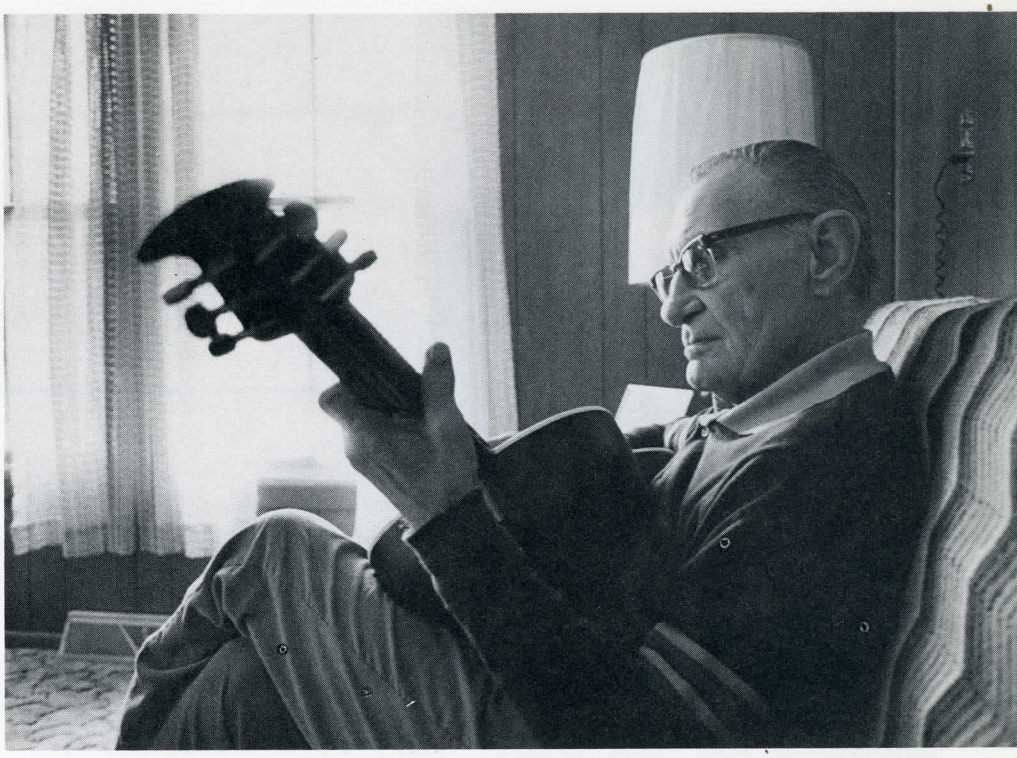
Well, we was just drinking, having a nice time, so he comes in was going to arrest Denver and Denver squared off for a fight. The cop grabbed for his blackjack, and I grabbed him and told Denver to run. Now here I got my arm full of cop and Denver he run, so when I turned him loose he arrests me. So Denver got word to me not to worry, he went down to Hokey Selmen, who run the wood camp down there. In fact, you know the banjo player over there at Cowen, Selmen, that's his uncle. Denver worked for him, he went down and got the money, come back and paid my fine and we went on.

He liked to show off his strength. He had a hundred pound sack of beans. He'd reach down and get it with his mouth, and he had a neck about that big, and he'd pull up that sack of beans with his teeth and throw them over his head. That's something, ain't it? He was a man, indeed he was.

SR One of the other stories that I've heard is that if you got arrested, you always managed to break out of jail in time for the square dance.

BC Oh, yeah, I didn't need them bars to keep me in. First time I was ever in jail in my life, I was in there for nothing. A girl friend of mine brought me a hacksaw blade. I sawed out that night and was gone. They all know it in Webster Springs. I guess I tore that old jail up and they had to build a new one there.

You take a small town like Webster Springs, you break out five times, why, it's just unusual, you know. So it wasn't nothing to see an inch-and-a-half headline: "In Again, Out Again Blackie." Poor ole Jake Ferrell, he beared it through with a smile. Every time he'd catch me I'd smile, and every time I'd leave he'd smile. It became a game with us. A lot of times he knew where I was and let it go, you know. Of course, it'd be different nowadays. But back in the '30's, things was different. You done things then that you thought was all right. Drinking and fighting was a way of life for every young man in them days, you know, raised up like I was—I mean on your own ever since 13 years old.



Left: Blackie Cool in his music room.
Above: Like other musicians Blackie relaxes by experimenting with his music. "I spent a lot of time in the back room just by myself," he says, "and things would just come to me."

SR I've heard some stories about you and some of the musicians that passed through the Webster Springs area.

BC There were groups traveling back in them days. One group had an old flatbed truck, the Tweedy Brothers. The redheaded Tweedy boys come up into Webster Springs and I got acquainted with them. Just as luck should have it we was having a square dance at Ella's that night. So Aretus and I liked them so well we asked them to play for the square dance as an honor for them. And they made a little extra money that way. We done that several times they was up.

Blind Alfred Reed*, now I got acquainted with him down in Morgantown, he traveled quite a lot. He married a young girl and she was a fiddler. Once they were up in Webster Springs, at what we call Morton's Store, playing on the outside there. I went up, told them come down, we had a dance that night. "How about you playing for the dance, so everybody could meet and hear you?" We do things like that, different musicians come in, why, we let them play in our place. Blind Alfred Reed, I guess he's dead by now, it's been years. He was a good singer, he played and sang and then his wife played the violin, she was really good.

SR Do you remember Clayton McMichen?

BC Oh, yeah, I played some with Clayton McMichen in Webster Springs. I must have been pretty fair back in them days. He was making up the Georgia Wild Cats, and I found out later Woody Simmons met him that same year. I didn't know that till Woody told me. But this year he was going around playing, because I remember he told me his next stop was Cincinnati, Ohio. He was making up the Georgia Wild Cats at that time. I played the guitar, what I guess you'd call trying out, and he give me the job right off. I was up to go. I wanted to

*Blind Alfred Reed was featured in GOLDENSEAL, Volume 2, Number 1 (January-March 1976).

go, but I had a girl friend, and she had other ideas, you know. And when he left, he left without me. If I'd went with him I could have been a good musician by now because his band became famous, the Georgia Wild Cats.

SR That might have changed your life.

BC It might have, it might have.

SR But you're still playing great music today.

BC Well, you know I quit for 25 years. That hurt me a lot. I could have been good, probably.

SR Well, you certainly are good now, it's good that you're back into it.

BC You know I sort of got to give you credit for that, you and Jerry Milnes and Paul Reisler.

SR Well, we just like to hear you play and to play music with you. One of the things that seems unusual around here is that you play the blues. I can't think of other guitar players that I've heard around here that play much blues.

BC Well, now, when we used to live in Pennsylvania, I learned a lot from an old friend of mine, an old black guy. I forget his name. He was one of the prettiest players ever I saw, he had long fingers. He'd be playing down here and tremolo it and add this finger right up there and maybe reach seven frets maybe. And I'd never seen anything like it, and then he reaches up there and gets it, and I just went crazy over that kind of playing. He'd sit with me and I'd play with him and I sort of learned to get started like that. And then you improvise, he told me. That's the way he learned his own blues. Of course, you take the black race, they are actually blues oriented. They really love to play the blues.

SR It seems like when you play the blues everyone wants to hear the blues, they really like that. Was it popular back then, too?

BC Yes, it was.

SR Did you get a lot of requests for blues?

BC Yeah, and way back I used to play the "Saint Louis Blues." You may have heard me run over it a little bit. I used to get it in the key of G minor, but I've never tried to get back into that yet. I may do it later. After all, I'm only 68 years old, got a long time yet.

Bringing Lincoln to West Virginia

Reminiscences by Louise Bing

Although the fine statue of Abraham Lincoln at the State Capitol in Charleston looks as if it's been there as long as the Statehouse itself, it actually is a recent addition to the grounds. The sculpture was unveiled on West Virginia Day in 1974, after a long fund-raising campaign, to which school children and others contributed money and time. Creation of the monument was a uniquely West Virginian undertaking, inspired by the 1963 Centennial celebration. The original model statue was sculpted by Fairmont native Frederick Martin Torrey, with Charleston artist Bernard Wiepper later translating Torrey's work into a full-size plaster "pattern." The final statue was cast in bronze by a Preston County foundry.

Louise Bing was treasurer of the group responsible for the erection of the Lincoln statue. Miss Bing, an occasional GOLDENSEAL writer, dropped by recently to share her recollections of the project. I set out to interview her, but once the tape recorder was going I found she needed no questioning or prompting by me. She later called to say that she feared she had not done justice to the story, and might have slighted some of the many people involved in the fund drive—mentioning, for example, Lysander Dudley and the state Chamber of Commerce. But I felt that what the verbal account might have lacked in the way of detail, it more than made up in freshness and spontaneity, and that the remarkably active Miss Bing—not a young woman, even at that time—was herself a central figure in the story. Here is her largely unedited memory of the 11-year campaign to properly honor Abraham Lincoln in the state created by his signature in 1863.

—Ken Sullivan

In 1963 West Virginia celebrated its 100th anniversary, and the state went crazy over celebrations of every description, Charleston especially. Since Abraham Lincoln had created this state of West Virginia by his proclamation and signature, I thought that at this time, when the state was 100 years old and celebrating its anniversary, that Lincoln should be honored, but he wasn't. There was no statue of Abraham Lincoln that had ever been erected in the state of West Virginia, and I thought there should be one.

About this time I read an article in a local paper about a man who had

Louise Bing in front of the Lincoln statue at the State Capitol. Photo by Rick Lee.

Miss Bing examines one of several scrapbooks from the Lincoln statue campaign. Photo by Rick Lee.

been born in 1884 in Fairmont. His name was Fred Martin Torrey, and he left the state when he was 25 years old and went to Chicago to enter the Chicago Art Institute to study sculpturing. While there he met a woman who was from Colorado who was also studying sculpturing. They had so much in common, and they fell in love and married. Her name was Mabel. So after they finished with the Art Institute, they set up their own studio in Chicago and did much art work and sculpture.

They were there for quite some time, and then they moved to Des Moines, Iowa, and set up a studio. While they were in Iowa, Mr. Torrey decided to place a statue on the statehouse grounds in Des Moines. A statue of Abe Lincoln and Tad, his little boy. No statue of Lincoln and Tad had ever been made at that time. Since Mrs. Torrey did child figures, she did the figure of Tad and he did the one of Lincoln.

They were in Des Moines several years. They had a daughter that married and lived in Ames, Iowa, so then they went to Ames and set up a studio. And they were there several years. While they were there in Ames I started corresponding with Mr. Torrey, in probably '64 or '65, asking him to produce an Abe Lincoln statue for the state of West Virginia. And he wrote back and said, "My health is failing, I'm not well. I'm through sculpturing." But he said, "There's a model for a statue sitting right here in my office, it's been sitting here in my studio"—or wherever he may have been—"for 30 years. If West Virginia would like to have the model, I'd be glad to sell it to them."

So I wrote back and told him that I would get someone to come to Ames to his studio, meet him, talk to him, and see the model. The little model was 42 inches high, he called it "Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight." He got the idea from a poem by Vachel Lindsay, by that name.

So the next thing I did was to call

Jim Comstock at the *West Virginia Hillbilly*. I had written many articles for *Hillbilly*, and Jim and I were great friends. I told Jim the story, and he said, "Oh, I'll get a man to send out there right away." He called me back and he said, "I've got a man who is Mr. Bryant, William S. Bryant, from Summersville, he's been the mayor of Summersville for 16 years. He flies his own plane. He will go to the studio and meet Mr. Torrey and see the model." So Bryant came back from there, and he was delighted, called me and he said that the model was beautiful and he would like very much to have it, he hoped West Virginia would buy it. And he said that Mr. Torrey's price for the model was $5,000. Well, I said, "That's where we start—to collect contributions. I've got to raise the $5,000." By then it was 1966, nothing had been done.

So I went to work then to gather the money, for the $5,000. And it took till 1969 to get the $5,000. But when we got it, Mr. Bryant got in his plane, went to the studio—in the meantime, Mr. Torrey had died. He died in 1967. Mr. Bryant gave a check for $5,000 to the widow, Mabel Torrey. And he brought the little model back with him in his plane. The little model of the statue is right down in the Governor's reception room, you may have seen it.

Mr. Torrey had told me he estimated it would cost, to complete the statue and have it erected on the Statehouse grounds, no less than $40,000. So when the $5,000 was paid for the model, I figured then it would take $35,000 more. I went to the West Virginia Arts and Humanities Council here, and they gave me $15,000. That was my godsend, and a great big help. Then I went to writing letters all over everywhere, asking for contributions, and articles in all the state papers asking for contributions, and asked that the money be sent to the National Bank of Commerce for the Abraham Lincoln statue fund.

Many people were in favor of this and got out and really worked for it. There was one woman in Fairmont who knew all about the Torreys and had known them—the Torrey homestead was still standing there. Her name was Helen Frankman, and she said, "Oh, I'll be so glad to help you with this money." Mrs. Franklin did

Artist Bernie Wiepper at work on the nine-foot plaster pattern in his Charleston studio in November 1973. Louise Bing and Bob Nuzum look on. Photographer unknown.

Below: Jim Comstock, Louise Bing, and Bill Bryant at the State Capitol in 1970. By this time the three had already been working on the statue project for several years. Photographer unknown.
Bottom: The Statue Committee - Helen Frankman, Bob Nuzum, Bill Bryant, Miss Bing, and Walter Spring - at a meeting in 1972. Photographer unknown.
Right: Louise Bing with portrait of Abraham Lincoln. Photo by Rick Lee.
Far right: Unveiling the statue on West Virginia Day, June 20, 1974. Betty Sun, sculptor Torrey's daughter, is assisted by former Governor Arch Moore. Photographer unknown.

everything over the years it took to raise the money. She tried all kinds of ideas and she raised much money. Probably over $1,000. Another lady, now still living in Grafton, I think she's 97 years old, fell for the idea. She sent me check after check after check, $75, $85, $95, $100, till I think she sent about $600 in all. Then there was a lady in Charleston that was in favor of the idea. And she said, "I'm going to help in this way. I'm going to Hurricane and talk to a man down there that makes paperweights. I'm going to get him to make us a thousand Lincoln paperweights, and we'll sell 'em. Sell 'em for $5 each, and of course out of that money I've got to pay him for making 'em." So we received over $1,000 in contributions from the paperweights. We sold 'em, every one of 'em.

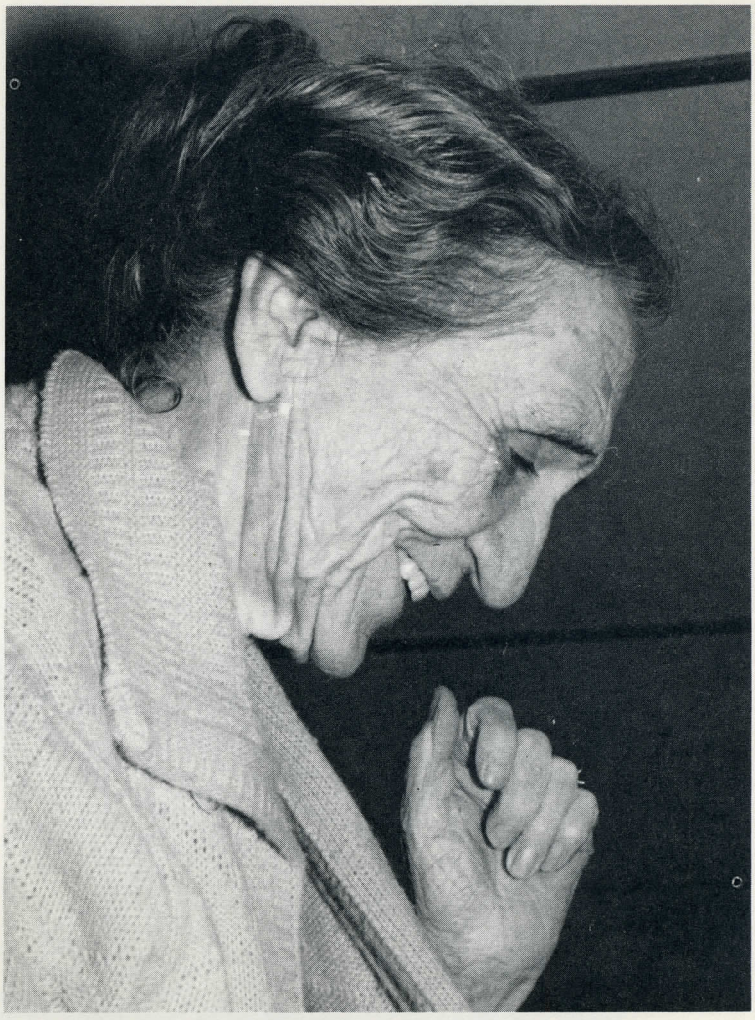
So it went on and on, and everybody contributed. I wrote thousands of letters to individuals and organizations, banks, throughout the state. The money rolled in.

Then, as Mr. Torrey had told me, the next thing we had to find was a man to do a nine-foot plaster statue. Plaster cast, they call it a plaster cast. He's got to take this little 42-inch model in his studio and, if he's a

sculptor and he knows how to do it, by measurement he can produce a nine-foot plaster cast. Then the plaster cast will have to be taken to Kingwood, West Virginia, where the Vaniderstine [Sheidow] Bronze Corporation is and they will set it in bronze. Cast it in bronze.

So I located Bernie Wiepper here in Charleston, who is an artist and a sculptor. Bernie was pleased to do the job. It would be the biggest job he ever did. It took Bernie from November 1972 until November 1973—took him one year—to build his nine-foot structure. Then he took it to Kingwood, and they had it up there until 1974, along in the first of June when it was brought to the Statehouse and erected on the 13th day of June 1974. Then the dedication came on West Virginia's birthday, which was June 20th, 1974. That was the day they had the dedication. And of course there was a huge crowd. We had the symphony orchestra, we had high school bands play. It was a marvelous, wonderful ceremony. The only child that Fred Martin Torrey had was Mrs. Betty Sun—she lives in Colorado—and she came and unveiled the statue. And it was really a big day, and a very grand day.

Mountain Trace, Book I



Grandma Jones is one of the West Virginians interviewed in *Mountain Trace, Book I.*

Mountain Trace magazine, a student quarterly at Parkersburg High School, began publication in the spring of 1975. It recently put out its final issue. Modeled after *Foxfire* magazine, *Mountain Trace* drew "heritage" stories from all parts of West Virginia, particularly its Ohio Valley home country.

In six years *Mountain Trace* covered a wide variety of topics, from riverboating to beekeeping, and its loss will be felt by all people interested in West Virginia folk culture. However, the loss is not total. In the last year or so of the magazine's existence, the *MT* people took another lesson from *Foxfire* and put together *Mountain Trace, Book I,* a hardback collection of the best of the magazine as well as some previously unpublished material. *Book I* is now printed and ready for sale, and *Book II* (the final volume) is in the works.

Mountain Trace I was edited by Parkersburg teacher Kenneth G. Gilbert. As the *MT* faculty adviser at Parkersburg High, Gilbert guided the magazine throughout its history, and is now supervising the book project. During a recent visit to the GOLDENSEAL office he made clear that the primary purpose of *Mountain Trace,* like *Foxfire,* was as a teaching device, while also offering a popular forum for documenting and presenting Appalachian history and folk ways.

Gilbert's students worked fairly close to home, concentrating on the culture and oral history of the Ohio Valley, particularly the Parkersburg area. The book's main strength is in the river stories, which together comprise about a third of the total volume. *Mountain Trace* reporters interviewed riverboat captains, including "Mr. River" himself, the famous Captain Frederick Way who worked the Ohio, Kanawha, and other rivers, beginning in 1919. There are other river captains, two showboat articles, and one interview with a survivor of the "houseboat people," whose shanty boats once lined the navigable rivers.

Still, the Parkersburg students sometimes ranged far afield, and story material is taken from many parts of West Virginia. One of the best articles is the account by Steve Parks and Craig Tanner of the North Fork Mutual Telephone Company in Pendleton County. The system, which has since been taken over and modernized by a larger phone company, was cooperatively owned and operated by its customers, and still featured some crank telephones. The switchboard was in the rural home of the telephone operator, who handled calls while attending to her regular household chores.

Like *Foxfire, Mountain Trace* en-

couraged its students to take a participatory approach to fieldwork. Photographs show student reporters helping make apple butter, tinkering with antique telephones, and sharing in other activities. This—and the fact that students sometimes interviewed close relatives, and often worked through relatives to establish contacts—lends a special intimacy and authenticity to the reporting.

The *Mountain Trace* book differs from *Foxfire* in a greater emphasis on oral history, which makes up probably two-thirds of this volume. The *MT* staff appears to agree with Don West's statement (in a 1979 GOLDENSEAL interview) that we must not restrict ourselves to "the quaint, the picturesque, and the romantic parts of our heritage," and consequently they explore such workaday matters as coal mining and commercial timbering. This puts them closer to the GOLDENSEAL philosophy of documenting mountain history and culture—and sometimes they beat us at the game. I would have been proud to have seen the North Fork telephone article in GOLDENSEAL, for example, or some of the fine riverboat stories.

Despite its general excellence, *Book I* is flawed in some minor but bothersome ways. The students worked with tape recorders, and there are a number of obvious transcribing mistakes. "Tipple" is rendered as "temple" and "chute" becomes "shoot" in the same sentence in an article on mining, for example. Such mistakes arise from confusing word sounds, while others apparently come from unfamiliarity with certain expressions—as when "woe betide" is transcribed as "woe be tied to" in a river interview. Such problems are apt to plague any oral history project, with the only remedy being a very careful editing and a final review of the manuscript by experts on the subject or by the actual person interviewed. Luck helps, too.

Otherwise, the book might have been improved by the individual crediting of the many photographs. Presumably these also are the work of Parkersburg High students, and some of the pictures represent fine work, indeed. As an editor myself I have a selfish interest in upcoming West Virginia photographers, and would certainly like to know who did the pictures of craftsman Robert Clark, for example, or some of the nice portraits.

Still, these are slight quibbles for what is overall a very good book. West Virginia readers will have no trouble reading around the relatively few mistakes, and may find some of them amusing: The tangling up of tipple and temple (which I've seen in other oral history transcripts) is likely to set any miner to cackling, for example.

I have compared *Mountain Trace, Book I* to the *Foxfire* books and magazines. The comparison comes naturally, and Gilbert himself makes it in his "Introduction." Personally, I think *Mountain Trace* is the better of the two, at least for West Virginia readers, and I recommend it to *Foxfire*'s many fans in the Mountain State.

—Ken Sullivan

Mountain Trace, Book I, *edited with an introduction by Kenneth Gilbert (hardback, 337 pp.), may be ordered for $10, plus $1 postage and handling, from Parkersburg High School, 2101 Dudley Avenue, Parkersburg 26101. The bookstore price is $12.*

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(continued from page 5)

of Cheat. I was only there about six weeks, and got promoted to sub-leader of a timber improvement crew. We moved to Thornwood to a sub-camp. We worked on Spruce Knob.

I was stunned to read of the Hawk's Nest tragedy. The only thing that kept me from working on that job was I didn't have any money to get there. Sure glad I missed it.

I have worked 16 years in coal, in the mines and on Compton coal augurs, in Ohio, Kentucky, and West Virginia. That was long enough to get me black lung and a severe heart condition and chronic bronchitis.

Keep up the good work, and if at all possible I would like to be on your mailing list.
Yours truly,
E. A. Groves

Heck Radio Society

Fairmont, WV
January 21, 1981
Editor:
I read with interest your article concerning Heck's radio station.

It was really something to go to Heck's, through the jampacked house, to the broadcast. I was the young girl you have listed as Meraldine Davis, who played the piano for many of the people listed.

I also was part of the band with the three Mackeys, Benton Boys, and Leo Cartwright, who played Hawaiian melodies. We played for schools and socials, with no remuneration, unless it was food, which was always great. We also went to different homes.

Life was much simpler then and more enjoyable.
Sincerely yours,
Muriel Davis Fluharty

Craigsville, WV
January 16, 1981
Editor:
I especially enjoyed the current issue of GOLDENSEAL since I knew the Heck family, especially Roy. I had the pleasure of working at WMMN in Fairmont when he was engineer there, and also at WPDX in Clarksburg that he put on the air in August of 1947. I also had two brothers in the CCC Camp at Camp Woodbine near Richwood. And of course there was the highly interesting story about the Hawk's Nest tragedy.

GOLDENSEAL is one of the best things that has happened to West Virginia and I hope it will never stop. I believe it's especially enjoyed by the older citizens since they remember much of the things depicted within the pages.
Thank you,
Buddy Starcher

Elkins, WV
January 17, 1981
Editor:
I have just looked at a copy of the January-March 1981 GOLDENSEAL and would like very much to be included on your mailing list. In fact, I would like to receive the above copy as it has an article in this issue on the Heck Radio Society. I knew the Hecks very well, being a radio amateur and having been born and raised at Fairmont. The article was very well researched and I can only assume that Roy Heck must have supplied a lot of the material.

I started to work at Radio Station WMMN in 1939 while Roy was chief engineer, and succeeded Roy in 1942 as chief engineer after he moved on to Westinghouse in Baltimore. We have many fond memories of visiting with the Hecks and quite frequently saw Roy's father in Clarksburg where I had moved in 1947 to install WPDX.
Very truly yours,
Robert D. Hough

Wheeling, WV
January 29, 1981
Editor:
I received the most recent copy of GOLDENSEAL and enjoyed reading it from cover to cover. It is a delightful, historical magazine.

I have known Dr. Arthur Prichard for many years. I became acquainted with the Prichard family as my grandparents lived in Mannington and I spent most of the summer vacations in this community.

I remember the Heck Radio Society, and what a thrill it was to have the programs on this station when visiting the Hopwoods. Most of the people mentioned in his article I knew or remembered hearing about and seeing them. His article brought back many pleasant memories.
Sincerely,
Mayre L. Stumpel

In This Issue

SHIRLEY YOUNG CAMPBELL grew up in small mining communities on Cabin Creek, but has lived in Charleston since 1947. A graduate of Marshall University, she taught at East Bank High School for several years, and is currently employed by the state Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. She has served on the executive board of W. Va. Writers, Inc., and as board member and manuscript chairperson for Mountain State Press. She currently edits and publishes *Hill and Valley*, and has written a book of general information about coal mining, *Coal and People*, to be released shortly.

WILLIAM E. "GENE" COX was born in Kentucky and grew up in Virginia. A graduate of Lincoln Memorial University in Harrogate, Tennessee, he now lives in Oak Hill, Fayette County, where he is employed by the National Park Service as first Chief of Interpretation and Visitor Services for the New River Gorge National River. His most recent publication on the Appalachian region was *Hensley Settlement*, an abandoned subsistence farm community in Kentucky. This is his first article for GOLDENSEAL.

WILMA DOAN, born in Marietta, Ohio, has lived in West Virginia for the past 15 years. In 1976 she and her family moved to a 100-year-old farmhouse with property adjoining "the Jug," site of the first Tyler County courthouse. Mrs. Doan writes primarily about nature and history; her article on the all-female government of Friendly appeared in the April-June 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. Yvonne worked most recently as a religion reporter for the Beckley *Post-Herald*, and now does general freelance writing. Her most recent work for GOLDENSEAL was the CCC articles in the January-March issue.

PAUL NYDEN has written widely on Appalachia, particularly on coal mines and miners, with articles appearing in the *Nation, Working Papers for a New Society, Mountain Life and Work, Mountain Eagle*, and other journals. Paul, who now lives in Beckley, earned his Ph.D. at Columbia University, and has taught at Bethany College, the University of Pittsburgh, Antioch College/Appalachia, and the University of Cincinnati. He recently completed a New River oral history pilot project for the National Park Service, from which the interview in this issue is drawn. His latest contribution to GOLDENSEAL, on coal town baseball, appeared in October-December 1980.

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 pastor of churches in Ohio and Pennsylvania, and in Wheeling and Mannington before retiring in 1970. He was a moderator of Wheeling Presbytery and the Synod of West Virginia for his denominations, and in 1969 received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Davis and Elkins College. His most recent GOLDENSEAL article was "The Heck Radio Society," for the January-March issue.

SAM RIZETTA was born in Oak Park, Illinois, and received his B.A. in art and biology from Ripon College and his M.A. in botany from Western Michigan University. He has worked as an artist, as a biologist for the Smithsonian Institution, as a musician, and as a designer/builder of musical instruments. His work has been exhibited by the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian and has appeared in *Fine Woodworking Magazine*. In 1974 he formed the group "Trapezoid," as the first hammered dulcimer quartet. In 1977 Sam and his wife Carrie moved to Ware's Ridge near Valley Head in Randolph County where they built their home and studio. This is his first appearance in GOLDENSEAL.

DENNIS TENNANT is a seventh generation Monongalia Countian. He served as a photo intern at the *Charleston Daily Mail* before his *cum laude* graduation in journalism from West Virginia University. He was a 1977 finalist in the Hearst national photojournalism competition, and has also placed in several photograph clip contests, sponsored by the West Virginia News Photographers' Association. He is currently employed as staff photographer for the Morgantown *Dominion-Post*. Most recently, Tennant contributed the photos which accompanied Helen Steele Ellison's article, "The Ellison's of Hans Creek Valley" in the October-December 1980 GOLDENSEAL.

DIANE CASTO TENNANT, a native of Ripley, Jackson County, and wife of photographer Dennis Tennant, graduated *cum laude* from West Virginia University in 1978 with a degree in journalism and a minor in wildlife management. She has been employed as a news reporter for the *Raleigh Register* in Beckley and at the *Parkersburg News*, and was the recipient of a state first place award for spot news reporting in 1979. A freelance writer, she is currently employed as a graduate assistant at WVU where she is working towards her master's degree in journalism. Mrs. Tennant's article on Blennerhassett Island appeared in the April-June 1980 GOLDENSEAL.

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