Goldenseal

West Virginia Traditional Life

Volume 8, Number 4 Winter 1982

From the Editor: Year-end Odds & Ends

First of all, thanks.

Press time for the Winter GOLDENSEAL finds us still in the midst of processing your "voluntary subscription" contributions, but so far we seem to be running a little ahead of 1981. Considering the sorrier condition of the economy this year, that generous response is particularly gratifying to us.

We were forcibly reminded of the state of the economy, however, in the many letters from readers unable to contribute this fall. This makes it a good time to reiterate that our subscription plan *is* voluntary. Like any government publication which cannot accept advertisements, GOLDENSEAL is subsidized by tax dollars, as a service to the people. Our job is to document West Virginia's traditional way of life, and to try to get GOLDENSEAL to all those genuinely interested in that subject.

We seek the help of all those readers who can afford to support us, and indeed we must have it, to make up the difference in what we need to operate and what the West Virginia Department of Culture and History can provide. We realize that many of our older readers are on limited incomes, and that many others are hurting this year. The important thing is that all those who can contribute, do so. If you can help but have not yet sent in the suggested $10 donation, we'd like to hear from you. Either way, we want to keep dedicated GOLDENSEAL readers with us.

As grateful as we are for your support we unfortunately cannot acknowledge contributions individually, by sending out receipts for every donation. Postage alone would run to many hundred dollars, not counting the cost of stationery and expensive staff time. We think that that money is better spent directly on the production of GOLDENSEAL, and we ask that you consider your cancelled check (or money order copy) as your receipt.

Another important way you can help us is by keeping us up-to-date on your mailing address. When moving, notify us directly, well ahead of time. The Postal Service will not forward bulk mail such as GOLDENSEAL, and you should not rely on them to correct your address with us. At the very best you'll miss one issue, which will generally be destroyed at your old post office and only rarely returned to us, and you risk being altogether dropped from our mailing list.

However, we do not recommend minor corrections—of, say, an incorrect initial or other slight misspelling of your name or address. Our mailing list is maintained at the state government central computer center, and all corrections must go through at least two sets of hands—ours and theirs—and through the two distinct operations of deleting the old listing and adding the new. In our experience the computer itself is very rarely at fault, but you can see the possibilities for human error in this complicated system—including the possibility of completely losing your name. This seems to be a case where it's definitely better to leave well enough alone—if you're getting GOLDENSEAL regularly you can assume that the listed address is good enough for the post office.

But if for any reason you're not getting each issue, do please let us know at once. GOLDENSEAL has been on schedule since shortly after the current staff took over, and you can expect your magazines at about three-month intervals. If an issue seems much later than that, tell us.

Usually we can straighten out the problem right away. Some cases are baffling—a few people received the recent voluntary subscription letter but not the Fall magazine or vice versa, for example, even though both were mailed from exactly the same list—but you can be sure that we'll tackle the problem the same day we hear from you. We have no way of knowing anything's wrong unless you tell us, however.

Also, please let us know if you're receiving more than one copy, or if you no longer want the magazine. We've worked especially hard over the last couple of years to manage the mailing list, but ultimately we have to rely on our readers to help us prune away the dead wood. Elimination of that waste will help assure that we can continue sending GOLDENSEAL to all interested readers.

If you do miss an issue for whatever reason—through our fault, yours, or that of the post office—we'll replace it if we can. Our supply of back copies remains quite limited, however, and we've inserted a notice to that effect elsewhere in this GOLDENSEAL. Always, your best protection is to keep us fully posted on your address, so that we may get each issue to you through the regular quarterly mailing.

As with any publication, please include your address label number on all correspondence regarding the mailing list. And, since you're writing anyway, take the opportunity to tell us what you think of GOLDENSEAL.

Finally, we continue to welcome Christmas or other gift voluntary subscriptions you may care to make. We have another batch of our little green holiday gift cards this year, and we'll send those out right through year's end. At present we cannot send cards for other gift occasions, but we hope to be able to do that in the future.

Our own Christmas card to you is this issue of GOLDENSEAL. We don't have a Christmas story this year, but as usual we've included some seasonal articles—including a nice turkey hunting story and a warm recollection of a cold Marion County winter of a half-century ago. Here at the office Margo Stafford and I wish you the best for the holidays, and we're confident we can extend to you the good wishes of the larger GOLDENSEAL family of designers, writers, and photographers. We wish you the best for the new year as well, and by the time you read this we'll be working on those four issues of GOLDENSEAL.

Ken Sullivan

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Norman L. Fagan *Commissioner*

Ken Sullivan
Editor

Margo Stafford
Editorial Assistant

Colleen Anderson *and*
Pat Cahape
Graphic Design

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 8, Number 4 Winter 1982

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Cover: A young visitor to Fola Hollow's 1981 Easter egg hunt took time out for bigger game. The Clay County stories, "Talking Turkey" and "The Legg Egg Hunt," begin on page 9 and page 19. Photo by James Samsell.

Letters from Readers

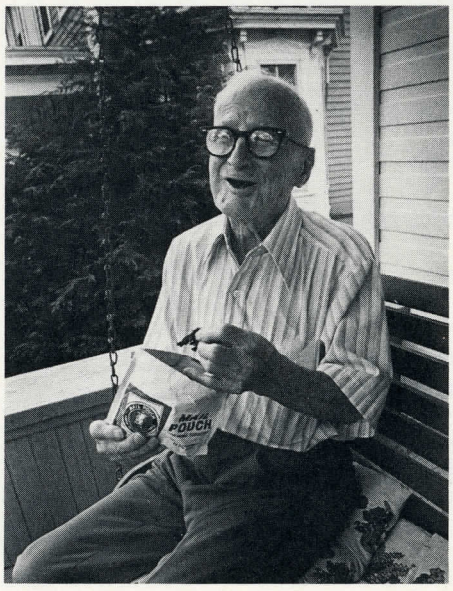
GOLDENSEAL welcomes letters of general interest from readers. Our address is Department of Culture and History, The Cultural Center, State Capitol, Charleston, WV 25305.

Doc Elliott

Bradenton, Florida
September 30, 1982
Editor:
Enclosed please find our check for the coming year to GOLDENSEAL. We have enjoyed this magazine for two years now and are glad to send our contribution for another year.

This magazine for Fall of 1982 that we just received is of special interest to us because we lived on the street where Mr. Elliott lives. Arthur Prichard does a beautiful job of telling the story of all the men and women he has written about. We enjoyed his story in the Spring edition of Dick Rittenhouse, as we knew him also. And we must give credit to Ron Rittenhouse for his beautiful pictures.

Going back to our roots is what it is all about and these folks who write for your GOLDENSEAL truly do the job well.
Sincerely,
Bernard and Thelma Steiner



Riverside California
October 2, 1982
Editor:
We received our copy of GOLDENSEAL, Fall 1982, with the picture of Dad ("Doc") Elliott on the cover.

We were very pleased with the article written by Dr. Arthur Prichard, who himself has had a very colorful and interesting life.

Ron Rittenhouse's pictures were so realistic, and we could virtually visualize the story Dad was telling. He is a remarkable person and has been richly blessed.
Sincerely,
Mr. and Mrs. Samuel N. Elliott, Jr.

Clarksburg Greeks

Mannington, WV
September 29, 1982
Editor:
I received my first GOLDENSEAL magazine a few weeks ago, and I thoroughly enjoyed reading it from cover to cover.

Living in Mannington, I really enjoyed reading about Doc Elliott. I know him, his wonderful wife Florence, his children, and some of the grandchildren. A great family.

I relived some of my childhood in reading all about the Greeks in Clarksburg, in the community of Tinplate, in Despard. I spent most of my childhood in Despard, and went to Despard Grade School and Summit Park Junior High School with a lot of the Greek children. Some of the families I remember are the Topekas, Xenakis, Lambrow, Panteloukis, Georgeadis, and Karaziokis families, as well as some others.

I also worked at the Candyland for a while, after I graduated from Victory High School in 1945. I left Clarksburg when I got married in 1950.

Thank you very much for such a wonderful magazine, and I am looking forward to the next one.
Yours truly,
Mrs. Martha (Thomas) Daniel

Clarksburg, WV
September 23, 1982
Editor:
I am enclosing my small contribution to GOLDENSEAL and think surely readers will do whatever necessary to keep this great magazine alive and well. I have lived all my 83 years in wonderful West Virginia and although I have seen most of the good old U.S.A. and parts of other countries, I have never been even slightly tempted to move out.

Having grown up in Clarksburg I really got a lift from the article in the latest issue regarding the industrious Greeks and how they adapted to things in their new world and went to work in earnest and really raised their living standards and prospered. I became acquainted with some of them and always remembered them with their faces parched by the heat at the old tin plate mill. I well remember when they built their church, and it was a work of art. I also remember that a Greek (whose name I never knew) introduced the hot dog in Clarksburg in 1916.

Also, as most youngsters do, I had a hero. I never did know his occupation but his name was Nick Mitoff and he was a wrestler and quite a man. Greek, of course.

Keep GOLDENSEAL coming. It's great.
Sincerely,
C. C. Hammond

Kanawha River

Tuppers Plains, Ohio
September 20, 1983
Editor:
Thank you for another good magazine! I think each one gets a little better, if that is possible. On page 49 of the Fall issue are two pictures of the Marmet dam and locks. I thought maybe you might be interested in a very sad story of the accident that happened there.

I have in my possession part of an original copy of the *Charleston Daily Mail* printed April 25, 1932, telling of the tragic death of six men at that dam. It has been an experience that left each family full of bitterness for a long time.

Our home was in Levi, West Virginia, then. Our school closed for the summer on April 23, and my father went along with my mother and my younger brother to the school picnic.

He ran in the "sack" races; jumped rope with the children; he was "one of the kids." And by midnight he was dead, gone forever from his family. For that Saturday night he was buried alive with the five other men, under 5,000 tons of mud at the Marmet Locks construction site.

My father had lost his mother who died when he was not yet four years old. They lived in Putnam County where all my people were born. Dad grew up living with any of the family that needed an extra hand. All of the older generations were very good to help each other. Dad's father was married four times; the future wives did not accept Dad. He stayed with the different families of his mother's people.
Sincerely,
Agnes C. Hill

Phoenix, Arizona
October 4, 1982
Editor:
Enclosed is a check for $20. Please renew our GOLDENSEAL subscription and send to a new subscriber—my sister-in-law. Both my husband and I grew up in West Virginia, and we thoroughly enjoy GOLDENSEAL.

I have particularly enjoyed this last issue for I grew up along the Kanawha River, having lived at Henderson and Winfield. So I read with great interest the articles "Coal on the Kanawha" and "Locks and Dams." Two of my brothers worked on the boats, and one—Ed Deardorff—went to work on the locks—Lock 9 and Lock 8, and London where he became lockmaster. He is now retired and lives in Torrance, Ohio.

We have many transplanted West Virginians in Phoenix and all whom we have met here are proud of their heritage and have many wonderful memories of "The West Virginia Hills."
Sincerely,
Frances Deardorff Rushford

Imlay City, Michigan
October 6, 1982
Editor:
I am 91 years old and cannot read long at a time, but I was delighted to read the articles on the Kanawha River boats and locks. I spent my earlier days near Lock 9. I lived at Midway, and my mother sold milk and butter to the workers there.

I have been watching for an article on Putnam County in general as my great-great-grandfather Johnnathan Hill and his wife Annaliza settled on Upper Eighteen Mile Creek in about 1808. They had a large family, and lived and died there. In the family there were schoolteachers and doctors—but no politicians, just good citizens.
Sincerely yours,
Flora Arledge

Belle, WV
September 21, 1982
Editor:
With gusto I read most of the last issue of GOLDENSEAL. The article on locks and dams was most interesting and informative, especially to me.

I was born and raised just about midway between Lock 2 and Lock 3 on the Kanawha River. When the new dam was built at London, I did work during the entire project for all the contractors involved. They were Northport Sand and Gravel, the Dravo Corporation, and Boso & Ritchie on the powerhouse at Hundley. Some six years all told, and I feel like I had a hand in building history.

As for GOLDENSEAL, I do want to support the fine cause, so here is my check for $10. And believe you me, many of our friends and relatives living out of state just love to get their hands on GOLDENSEAL and read the fine stories.

God speed and many thanks to you and your staff in making this fine magazine possible.
Sincerely,
Sterling T. Moore

Luna Park

Charleston, WV
September 21, 1982
Editor:
We were delighted with the story about Luna Park, written by Louise Bing—only it wasn't long enough.

There was a little mistake about my sister's name—it was Alicia Cornwall (instead of Cornwell) and also she was on the right in the picture, hanging by her teeth. That was her specialty. She only weighed 98 pounds and could do all sorts of acrobatic stunts. I never could understand how she could hold a person heavier than herself while hanging by her teeth—never could figure out how she managed it. She was beautiful and healthy. She fell (to her death in 1935 in St. Louis) because someone faltered in putting up the rigging.

She worked for the Tribune Printing Company here in Charleston but she loved the circus life.
Sincerely,
Mrs. Richard O. Gresham

Parkersburg, WV
October 14, 1982
Editor:
Your Fall copy of GOLDENSEAL arrived and I especially enjoyed the article "Remembering Luna Park." I never visited the park as it burned before I was born, but that is where my parents (Mr. and Mrs. David Ray Stone) met. She was teaching school at Cabin Creek and brought her class to Luna Park on a field trip by street car, and my father was riding the same car to the park. They were married in 1919 and later moved to Grant Street with my two older sisters. They lived in that house for over 50 years and three more daughters were born during that time.

We lived just around the corner from David Latlip, and I remember as children how excited we were in the spring when he started preparing his carnival rides for summer (not to mention the free rides we got to "try out the rides").

Thanks again for a wonderful magazine. Enclosed is my check for $10 to renew my subscription for the coming year.
Sincerely,
Ruth S. Rollins

(Letters continued on next page)

Stained Glass

Milton, WV
July 9, 1982
Editor:
Finally, the magazine with the article on stained glass came home to me. I thoroughly enjoyed reading about Miss Vollmar, an old friend who used to come to the conventions.

Martha Manning is to be congratulated on a well-researched article, which should receive national coverage.

I am always learning some story about our grandfather. His life alone should make good copy. I remember grandmother Sally Blenko, who lived to be 97. She and I were two short squat Englishwomen who were swamped with four generations of Williams and Richards, not even stopping to count more Williams and Richards in the churchyards in England.

It's like going to visit relatives when we all get together at the conventions.
Sincerely,
Jeanne W. Blenko
Blenko Glass, Inc.

Norman's Store

Westover, WV
October 18, 1982
Editor:
My sister and I enjoyed the story about Norman's Store very much. There was much more that we could have said.

We remember there was a soda fountain in the front of the store, with a marble-top counter and high back stools. There were many kinds of ice cream and wonderful tasting toppings. There was a shoe department where either Mr. Jim or one of the clerks fitted you. The delivery wagon was later replaced by a Ford truck.

Our family lived outside of Elk Garden, an area known as Number 6. There were ten children in the family. All are gone now with the exception of my sister, Josephene Yaeger, and myself.

Thank you for your promptness in sending the magazine.
Sincerely,
Nell Yaeger Coleman

Current Programs • Festivals • Publications

Appalachian Studies Conference

The Appalachian Studies Conference returns to West Virginia next spring, with the ASC annual meeting scheduled for Pipestem State Park for March 18-20. The yearly meeting rotates among the Appalachian states, and was last held in West Virginia in 1979, at Jackson's Mill.

The Appalachian Studies Conference is currently the most important association of regional scholars, with members drawn from throughout the mountains. During the first several years of its existence, the Conference has been a major component in the growing Appalachian Studies movement at regional colleges and universities.

Plans are still underway for the 1983 meeting, but the coordinators expect the same sort of diversity as in previous years. There will be presentations in the general areas of history, the arts and humanities, and regional analysis, and on such specific topics as regional ethnic and black culture, Appalachian women, and folklife and folklore, among many others.

The deadline for proposals for presentations has passed, but conference coordinators are seeking the input of West Virginians as final program plans are made. Those wishing to help, or desiring more information, may contact Sally Maggard at the University of Kentucky's Appalachian Center, 641 South Limestone, Lexington, KY 40506.

In A Land of Plenty

Don West, activist Summers County poet and preacher, has recently published *In a Land of Plenty: A Don West Reader.* The new book consists mainly of poetry collected from West's earlier published works, dating as far back as the 1930's, with a few recent prose selections included in the last 25 pages.

The selections are drawn primarily from *Clods of Southern Earth* (1946), *The Road is Rocky* (1951), and *O! Mountaineers* (1974), West's three major poetry books. Most of the poems are political, almost all of them angrily so, as West writes of economic exploitation and death in the mines and mills.

However, some of the earlier poems are frankly sentimental, with many of these in dialect. A few have supernatural themes, including one describing the ghost of West's grandfather calling his hogs home in the mountain twilight. Such material may surprise the younger generation of West fans, but it serves to root his political writing in what he once referred to as "the subsoil of folk living." In the best of the poems, such as "Song of the Saw," West manages to tie all of his great themes—especially anger, sorrow, love of the mountains, and the love between a man and woman—together, and to show that they are not contradictory.

Don West, who was interviewed in GOLDENSEAL in 1979, now directs the Appalachian South Folklife Center at Pipestem. He operates a children's camp and other programs there, and stages a major music festival late each summer. In recent years the 78-year-old West has become something of a celebrity, featured in religious journals and such national magazines as *National Geographic.*

In a Land of Plenty is a 205-page paperback, with illustrations by Constance Adams West. The book may be ordered for $5.35, postpaid, from West End Press, P. O. Box 7232, Minneapolis, MN 55407.

Jackson's Mill Tour

Michael Meador has recently written and illustrated *A Walking Tour of Historic Jackson's Mill.* The new book is the first comprehensive walking guide to the popular Lewis County 4-H facility and Stonewall Jackson birthplace, with a two-page map at the back.

Meador presents an extensive text on historic and present-day Jackson's Mill, illustrated with his own fine pen-

(Continued on page 66)

Bessie Gray on the air. Her "Senior Power Hour" is broadcast twice a week.

Bringing Back Memories

On The Air With Bessie Gray

By Johanna Eurich
Photographs by Doug Chadwick

"I like to get old people telling these old, old stories. I like to hear these ghost stories and these old camping stories—when they had their bedbugs, and how they waded the snow, and all that. That's what I like to hear about, this old stuff. I used to sit and listen to Dad for hours, tell that."

Bessie Gray is 60 years old, a storekeeper in Frost, Pocahontas County, and a radio interviewer. She grew up on Droop Mountain in the southern part of Pocahontas. In the 37 years since she moved and opened up her store in Frost, she has become the small community's unofficial mayor and one of its better informal historians.

"You get up in the morning and do practically the same thing, and you know tonight when you go to bed, you'll get up and do practically the same thing in the morning. You don't add those days together till you see these little ole kids and see that they're grandchildren of the kids that were kids when you came here. So then you know you're getting old. I can see where history is going."

Most of the people in Frost make a visit to Gray's Store a part of their day. The sofa and chairs and benches are well worn. The stove in the middle of the floor has witnessed the tales of many a storyteller, and Bessie has listened to them all, storing most of them in her memory. Recently she began sharing some of these stories and friends on "The Senior Power Hour," a regular program on WVMR, Pocahontas County's new public radio station.

"The Senior Power Hour" is the result of efforts by three VISTA workers to involve older people in the local radio station. But neither Bessie nor many of her guests consider themselves "senior citizens."

Bessie does feel that "The Senior Power Hour" and her twice-weekly extended interviews exploring the lives and memories of some of the county's older residents have helped to pull her community closer together—that it's good company for many who cannot get out of their homes. WVMR is the first local station, and Bessie thinks, "The radio has brought Pocahontas County closer together. They were drifting apart. It's made more of a family out of people.

"There's something I don't understand. Today we've got every convenience—electric appliances, washing machines, and most of the clothes you don't have to iron. Back when I was a child, Mom washed on a washboard, and she ironed with old irons off the stove, and she did her housework. She took care of the kids, yet in the after-

West Virginia Mountain Radio

Radio station WVMR is located in a modern earth-sheltered building near Pocahontas County High School at Dunmore. Photo by Doug Chadwick.

Most listeners find WVMR, Pocahontas County's only radio station, unique among stations they have heard. First, there's the music: primarily country and bluegrass, with a sampling of rock, big band, folk, gospel, and classical, and including two live performances by local groups in the average week.

Next, there's the sound: not broadcast school raucous, FM smooth, or NPR elegant, but a mixture of the accents and ages that make up the community. WVMR's 25 volunteer disc jockeys include high school students, housewives, teachers, carpenters, ministers, and one young man who has made remarkable progress in improving a speech impediment while hosting a weekly half-hour show.

Third, there's the type of information presented. WVMR provides the county's only daily news service, presents weekly reports from eight local communities, airs Bessie Gray's "Senior Power Hour" twice a week, and runs special programs aimed at farmers four times a day. Any resident of the area can petition the station to present his own program; a conservative call-in host presides on Thursday afternoon and his liberal counterpart on Friday. Friday night high school football games are rebroadcast Saturday morning, since the dawn-to-dusk station is off the air at game time. Each Sunday, taped services from a different church are broadcast for shut-ins.

There are no advertisements. WVMR is a non-commercial station, owned by a private non-profit group, and runs brief acknowledgements of support from local businesses about twice an hour. Some 20 businesses now contribute to the station regularly.

Behind the scenes WVMR is equally unique. It is a public station operating on an AM frequency. Although it received start-up grants, it receives no federal or state money for operations. The whole cost is made up by donations from local individuals and businesses. The budget is limited, allowing WVMR only two regular employees. The bulk of the work is done by volunteers, and half of the record collection is made up of gifts or loans from listeners. The Pocahontas Communications Cooperative, licensee of WVMR, is governed by a board made up largely of persons elected by those who donate money to the station and those who donate their labor.

WVMR's call letters stand for "West Virginia Mountain Radio," and the station aims to sink its roots deep into the mountain community. The corporate charter requires WVMR to serve as a community communications medium, and it does this by opening the airwaves to the community. To people such as Bessie Gray it provides a new creative outlet to exercise the old talent of talking to neighbors; to others, newcomers and old-timers alike, it serves to revalidate pride in their community and way of life. And to many more it provides friendly companionship through the long daylight hours of summer and the cold Pocahontas County winters.

—Gibbs Kinderman

Gibbs Kinderman was one of the organizers of West Virginia Mountain Radio. GOLDENSEAL readers living or traveling in Pocahontas County may tune in WVMR at 1370 AM.

Above: Gray's Grocery & Beer is the community gathering place at Frost. Here Bessie Gray consults with a young customer.
Left: Bessie thinks that people don't visit enough anymore, but figures "the radio station has brought Pocahontas County closer together. It's made more of a family out of people."

noon she had time to go visit a neighbor and come home and get supper and have it ready when Daddy came home. Today they don't even have time to go nowhere. People don't visit. They don't have time to go, and they have all these appliances to help them a lot. I just can't figure it out, I really can't."

Bessie's program aims partly to fill that gap, to get people visiting again, at least over the radio. Her "Senior Power Hour" guests have talked about the logging days, coal mining, and the early days of the United Mine Workers of America. She's explored the lives of teachers who taught in one-room schoolhouses, and talked of how it was to go courting in a buggy. She has talked with those who remember the Civilian Conservation Corps camps,

Bessie and friend Genevieve Moore leave WVMR after broadcasting a show.

and how the CCC uniform transformed formerly unattractive neighbors into marriageable young men.

She is insistent about getting the facts right—the wheres and whens. But her greatest skill is knowing who has what she calls a "happy face," and will want to share with her listeners the jolly as well as the sad parts of their lives. Mostly Bessie, like her listeners, enjoys a good story.

"We've got some good ones around here that can really tell 'em," she says. "They used to be here in the store of a night. There'd be 17 or 18. They'd start telling deer stories and bear stories, and murder capers, and then they'd talk about witches and things. Of course, the old people have died off now, and you don't get so many of those stories anymore. They get in here now and might talk about deer hunting or something like that.

"I've heard so many hunting stories that I think I know every one of these little knolls and these little ridges. Whenever they got together, one would tell one and then another would tell, trying to top that one—to see who could beat the other. I guess some of them was real tall stories, too—wasn't really true. But they were really good at it. They'd sit there for hours and talk."

Bessie is a talker herself, but it's listening that she does best. She's glad to find that others like to listen in with her, to the tales of the people she puts on the radio. She manages to turn the radio studio into something like a county-wide general store for a couple of hours a week. Stories flow almost as easily into the microphone as they do around the coal stove at Gray's Store. The recollections help tie the people of Pocahontas County more closely to their collective memory of the past, and remind Bessie Gray of her own younger days.

"My dad used to tell them stories. And there used to be an old man who would come and tell stories. Back then, a kid was seen and not heard. That was the way of life. I'd sit and listen to them for hours, tell their stories. Then when I get these elderly people up there and they start going back and reminiscing, why, it sort of brings me closer to Dad. Although he's gone, it brings back those memories."

J. C. Legg at daughter Grace's grocery store. Legg operated the store himself for 43 years.

Talking Turkey

J. C. Legg of Clay County

By Yvonne Snyder Farley
Photographs by James Samsell

If you turn right going up Clay County's Fola Hollow, you'll eventually dead-end at the home of a truly interesting man—J. C. "Curt" Legg. A lifelong resident of Clay County, Legg is a man who has cultivated many interests in his 81 years. He's a fisherman, and a hunter of deer, elk, and especially turkey. He ran the general store in Fola for 43 years until he finally handed it over to daughter Grace. The father of 11 children, Legg was a scoutmaster for 17 years and is holder of the Silver Beaver, the highest leadership award given in scouting. With the help of his scout troop, Legg cleared the land and created Sunset Cemetery in Leatherwood.

But that's not all. Legg has taught a Sunday school class at the Fola Missionary Baptist Church for 60 years. His religious faith has led him to write over 40 gospel music songs, 24 of them published. His column about hunting, genealogy, local history, fishing, and the like is a popular feature in the Clay County Free Press. *His two books,* Fins, Feathers and Horns, *volumes one and two, are collections of his best stories. To top it off, Legg is an alumnus of "Ripley's Believe It or Not" in 1947 because of his association with the number 11.*

An interview with Legg can't do justice to all the subjects he enjoys talk-

J. C. Legg at 16, and a year later with cousin Corrie Legg and squirrel dog Brownie. Photographers unknown, about 1917 and 1918. *Opposite:* Legg and Hattie Holcomb in their courting days. The couple (far right) celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary last August. Recent photo by Michael Keller, earlier photographer unknown.

ing about in his quiet and humorous way, but we tried. Last spring photographer James Samsell and I visited Legg and spent the afternoon in his warm and comfortable living room.

J. C. Legg was born August 11, 1901 (only one of many times the number 11 appears in his life) to John and Maggie Legg in Fola Hollow just about a mile and a half from the brown and yellow house where he now lives. His father was born just five miles away at Lizemores, and J. C. Legg is the fourth generation of his family to live in Clay County. In one of his books, Legg writes about his earliest memories:

"I was born in a log house, but I have no memory of living in it. I can, however, remember men dressing stones for the foundation and chimney of my father's new house which was built of one-inch thick rough lumber. The roof was made of shingles rived from a large oak tree. In this community this type of house was considered a modern house.

I was about three years old at this time. I remember the day they laid the foundation I climbed over the sills until I was tired and sleepy. My mother heard me crying and came to my rescue. She found me covered with black ants. When a kid sleeps in a nest of ants, he can remember it for a mighty long time."

—Fins, Feathers and Horns, II

Yvonne Snyder Farley. What did your father do?

J. C. Legg. He was a farmer and a carpenter. We had a little hillside farm. My dad had a store for just a few years beginning when I was four years old. That's where I smoked my first and last cigar—I swiped it out of his store. Got sick and got paddled. That one was enough!

YSF Do you remember going to the town of Clay much when you were young?

JCL Not very often, it was a day's trip. We'd go by horseback. It's 10 miles over there and 10 miles back. We'd have some business. I was nine years old when I made my first trip over there. I remember how much I weighed. My dad weighed me. I weighed 63 pounds. I remember he took me in the hotel and bought my dinner for 50¢.

YSF When you were young what did people in Fola do for a living?

JCL They went out to other places and worked in the log woods—timbering. There wasn't any mining close. They timbered for miles around beginning in the early 1900's. People would go and stay in log camps all week. And of course everybody farmed and raised about all they ate.

YSF Was the church here then?

JCL We used the old schoolhouse for a church—a one-room school—until 1922. Then we built the church house. I helped organize it in 1922 or 1923. I'm one of the deacons, one of the charter members. I was a Sunday school teacher in our little church for a little more than 60 years, with the same class. I dropped it the first of this year. The boys and young girls, junior size, got so scarce in our neighborhood we don't have enough for two classes and we put two classes together. I began teaching Sunday school there when I was 17. Except for two years when I moved up on Birch River during the Depression, I taught the Junior class.

YSF Have you known your wife all of your life?

JCL From five years old. I got struck on her the first time I ever saw her and she was five years old. I remember it well.

YSF Did you go to school together?

JCL Yes. I just went through the

free school to the eighth grade. I didn't go to high school. At that time, as you know, there wasn't any automobiles and we were too far away from Clay and I didn't get to go to high school at all.

In "School Days as They Were in 1907," Legg recalls the way it was:

"My first school teacher was Miss Ora Woods. The schoolhouse we had then stood on the lot where the Fola Church now stands. The address then was Sarena . . . . The building was erected in 1896. It was torn down after the Fola Church was established in 1922.

We had one potbelly stove near the center of the room. About the only time we really felt the heat from it was when the teacher gave us permission to warm our feet. It wasn't unusual to have the same ice on your pants legs at noon that froze there on your way to school that morning. We walked a half mile to school, which was a short distance compared to what some had to walk. It was common for our lunch to be frozen in ice when we ate it.

I remember the supplies I had the first year—a primer book, a slate, and a slate pencil. We were supposed to use an eraser on the slate, but boys had long shirt sleeves, so erasers and handkerchiefs were two items we didn't need."

—Fins, Feathers and Horns, II

YSF When did you start working?

JCL I started work when I was 16, on the public works. At that time—that was the beginning of the First World War—down this creek, oh, for four miles of it, there were seven little coal mines opened up. In about 1916 they put a railroad from the B&O road down there up to what they call Bickmore where you turned below the store. I helped build that railroad—part of it—and then I started to work in these mines. Hartland Colliery Railroad they called it. Came four miles up this creek and hauled coal down to the B&O. It's been taken out now.

YSF The coal business didn't last long here at Fola, did it?

JCL No. But there were two mines that stayed on and then the LeMayne Coal Company at Bickmore stayed on until 1945 or 1946. LeMayne was owned by two Ward brothers from Pennsylvania, but they moved here and lived the rest of their lives. Just about everybody around worked in the mines. And there were a lot of houses built down the creek at this time. Well, a lot of the coal company houses are still down there.

I worked in a mine of my own 13 years, and then in other mines eight years. In fact, I had a little house coal mine of my own up the hollow back of the store. I had it for those 13 years up to 1971. I worked at Widen twice about 1924 and 1926. When I started out all of it was done by handloading.

In 1933 Curtis Legg gave up earning his living by coal mining. Although he would later take house coal from the little punch mine near his store, he became for the next 43 years a country grocer. Here's what he says about that in his book:

"My brother, Cody Legg, had been engaged in the grocery business and at this time he sold out to go in the timber business with an uncle. He told me that I could have his building and that he would help me get started in a little business of my own. I had been working in the LeMayne Coal Company at Bickmore. Just prior to this time I remember drawing 13 two-weeks' statements at one time and didn't draw any money. The coal company had a little store and our daily needs

were demanding our earnings, so we lifted it up as fast as we worked it out.

On October 8, 1933, I went to their office and the audit showed that I had $12.50 due me. I took that amount in sugar to put in my store. My brother Cody loaned me the $75.00 and I went with Satch Burnshide to Charleston in a stake bed truck and we brought the groceries back with us. Money didn't grow on bushes then so the only way one could have a business in this area was by credit.

Right at that time the government began a new type of relief work. They put a rock base on the road from Bickmore to Fola and they paid the men $13.00 a week. Business was booming around here at that time.

We didn't have any electricity at that time—so we didn't have any refrigeration. I bought a little ice box somewhere and a Mr. Vineyard delivered ice from Clendenin, W. Va. I think a block of ice about a foot square cost 50 cents. I could keep my bologna, cheese and butter all cool in this box. Also the 50-cent cake would fit. I hesitate to mention the prices of the stuff at that time for some may not believe it.

One could buy a 100-pound sack of navy beans for $3.50 but the better beans such as pinto and cranberry cost 7 to 9 cents per pound. Salt bacon was about 9 cents and lard 8 cents per pound. The best grade of coffee was 15 cents. I sold loose ground coffee for 12 cents a pound and grain coffee was 10 cents.

One thing I remember was the good flavor of the bologna that was put up in what looked like an old sock leg and waxed to keep it fresh. Also, the Daisey Cheese that came in a flat cake about the size of a wash pan—and we cut off a chunk the size the customer asked for."

—Fins, Feathers and Horns, II

YSF Now your daughter Grace Brown runs the store?

JCL Yes, I gave it to her. Got so tired of it and couldn't take it any longer. I don't know. I was too good-hearted to have the store. Everybody wants stuff on credit. What I made during those 43 years, except what I raised my family on, I credited out. Then the store burned down one night and that was it. Lost all my bills and everything else.

YSF Your store burned?

JCL It was a wooden structure that burned. The cinder block building there now I built back. Supposedly a guy broke in and then burned it. At least he said he did, but we have no proof. That was it. Well, it was a-burning when neighbors that lived right around it first seen it. Fire coming out

Below: Easter service is a time to be with the children.
Right: J. C. and Hattie Legg with ten of their 11 children. Photographer unknown.

of all the windows on all sides. And it is supposed that he saturated it with gas and set it on fire. I had an awful lot of hobbies in there, deer heads and fish and stuff. What I got now I've gathered back since.

YSF How did you and your wife Hattie manage, rearing 11 children?

JCL These days that'd be hard. I can't imagine. But I tell you the way about everybody raised them back when I raised mine: They had a little farm and they put these kids to work there, everyone that was big enough to work. They took them right out there and they raised—oh, it was a sight how much stuff they raised and put up. Corn enough to make your own bread and to fatten your hogs and feed the cow and so on. Everyone had cows, chickens, and hogs. And they would raise big gardens and it wasn't anything unusual for a big family to put up as much as a thousand jars of canned stuff. Half-gallon cans, too. People fixed 30 and 60 gallons of pickles, pickled beans, kraut, and corn. My parents always raised cane and made a lot of sorghum molasses for sweetening.

YSF You built the house you live in?

JCL Yes, in 1931. From 1928–30 I moved to Birch River. I had an uncle who had a log job up there and I went there and worked in the log woods. And I'm telling you, you could just barely breathe at that time. As far as a living, you just didn't make nothing. For those two or three years there just wasn't anything. Then in the fall of 1932 I commenced in the store and I made enough by farming here. I raised hogs and a beef or two to kill and sell in the store.

We managed. We never was without food. There are some people around here that raised larger families than we did. I have a brother-in-law whose dad had 20. I have two neighbors who are living up on the creek now—one had 12 and one had 16.

YSF How'd you get started on your hunting and fishing?

JCL About everybody around in here hunted from the time they was big enough to hunt. I killed my first turkey in 1920 and another in 1923. And our turkeys were fading out in this area even at that time. There wasn't any left hardly. In 1934 I went to the head of Gauley River on my first deer hunting trip. I had an uncle and brother who had a log camp up there and they just went and lived through the winter and logged in virgin timber. And I went up there with some other fellows and we deer hunted and that was the first time I ever saw a deer track. I've hunted every year since then but three. Some years I didn't have a chance to get away from my work or something.

Curt Legg is wild about turkey hunting. He remembers in detail the first turkey he ever got:

"My mind drifts back to 1921 when we didn't have box callers for turkey hunting like we have today. We only had a turkey wing bone

for a caller. I believe I could do better with a bone then than with a box now. Since I now wear 'store teeth' the bone doesn't work too well.

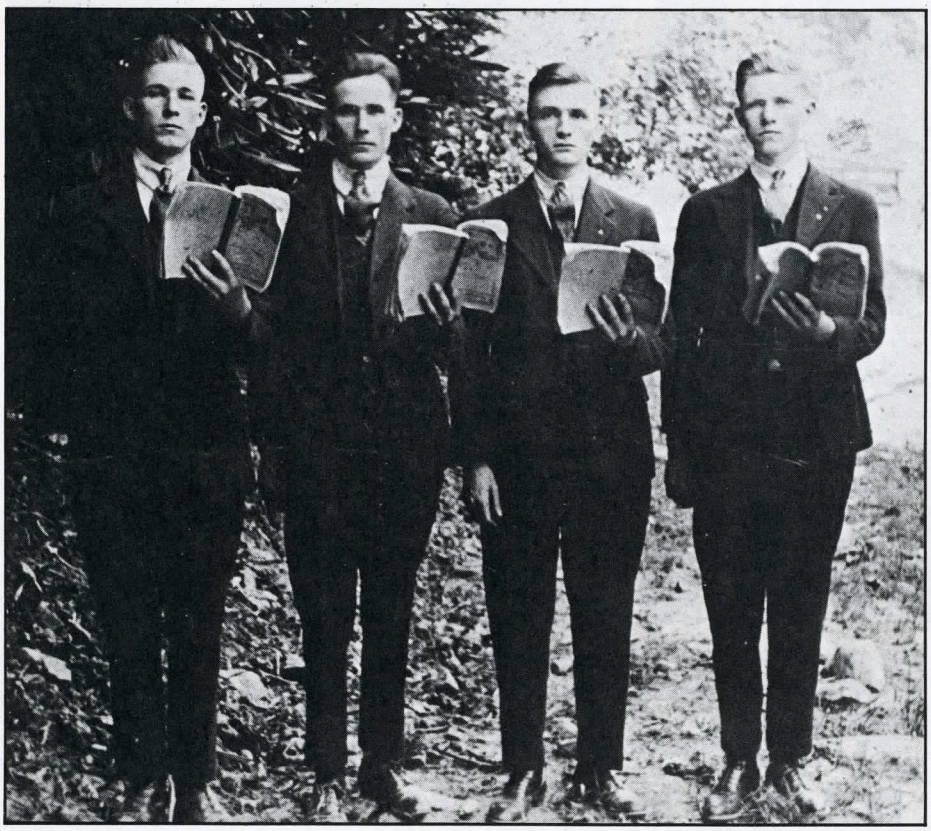
Virgil Taylor gave me my first instructions on turkey hunting. I expect he has killed more toms than any other man in Clay County. I believe he told me his count was more than sixty. His theory was to keep out of sight, call very little, and wait a lot.

I can take my box away from the house a little, where my wife can't hear, and do a very good job. But on a frosty morning about break of day, with that uncertain feeling that I might goof, the sound may be more like one gets by choking a squirrel than anything else.

The first time I went turkey hunting alone I made three calls and old tom came running. One shot and I had a 24-pound tom to carry about five miles. He didn't feel heavy at all then. I have never seen one that heavy since. That was in the day when there were chestnuts in the woods. That made a difference in a lot of ways."

—Fins, Feathers and Horns, I

Legg has been singing quartet music for more than 60 years. In the photograph from about 1920 he stands at the left, with (*left to right*) brother Cody, Earl Keith, and brother Elmer. The group was known as the Fola Male Quartet. Photographer unknown.



YSF So turkeys were rare when you first began hunting them?

JCL Oh, yes, more so than now. We've got more turkeys now than Clay County ever had by far. They stocked them in Clay County and right down on the Clay-Kanawha line. And we didn't have any open season here for a long time. We've got quite a few turkeys in Clay County now and they're building up just awful fast.

YSF I see that you have a copy of *Turkey Call* magazine on the table.

JCL I really like hunting turkeys in the spring when they are gobbling. They call it spring gobbler season. I think I like that better than anything I've ever done. It's the hardest—it's the most technical thing you ever tried. Now those feathers, if he's a-coming towards you and you shoot him in the breast, it don't do nothing much to him. They need to get shot in the head. They should be up there within 30 to 35 steps of you if you can get them that close.

If one is inclined to catch "Wild Turkey Fever"—a common disease in many parts of West Virginia—Legg has some tips for the sport:

"When a hunter is trying to persuade a lovesick gobbler to come to him, he must remember that he is supposed to be a lovesick hen. He should get into the game right, and play hard to get. When you hear the old tom you know he is asking if there are any lovesick hens around. You give him a call and tell him yes. He will then ask for a date, so you can tell him to come on over. If he asks again, answer as faint and low as you can and then put your caller away. The bargain has been made, why repeat it!

Some toms won't answer you at all, but will come if you don't keep calling. Others will stand there and try to get you to make a bad call. Usually they will come within about 100 yards, stop, and try to get you to call again. Don't do it. Play hard to get. You have his number and he is interested. Don't overdo it. One thing is for sure, you can't move without scaring him. A little bird can shake a limb and tom will run.

If he comes within range of your gun, remember that you have done all of this just for this little chance. It would be needless for me to advise you to hold your gun steady when you shoot. I would, however, advise you to have it pointed right at the old boy's head when you pull the trigger."

—Fins, Feathers and Horns, I

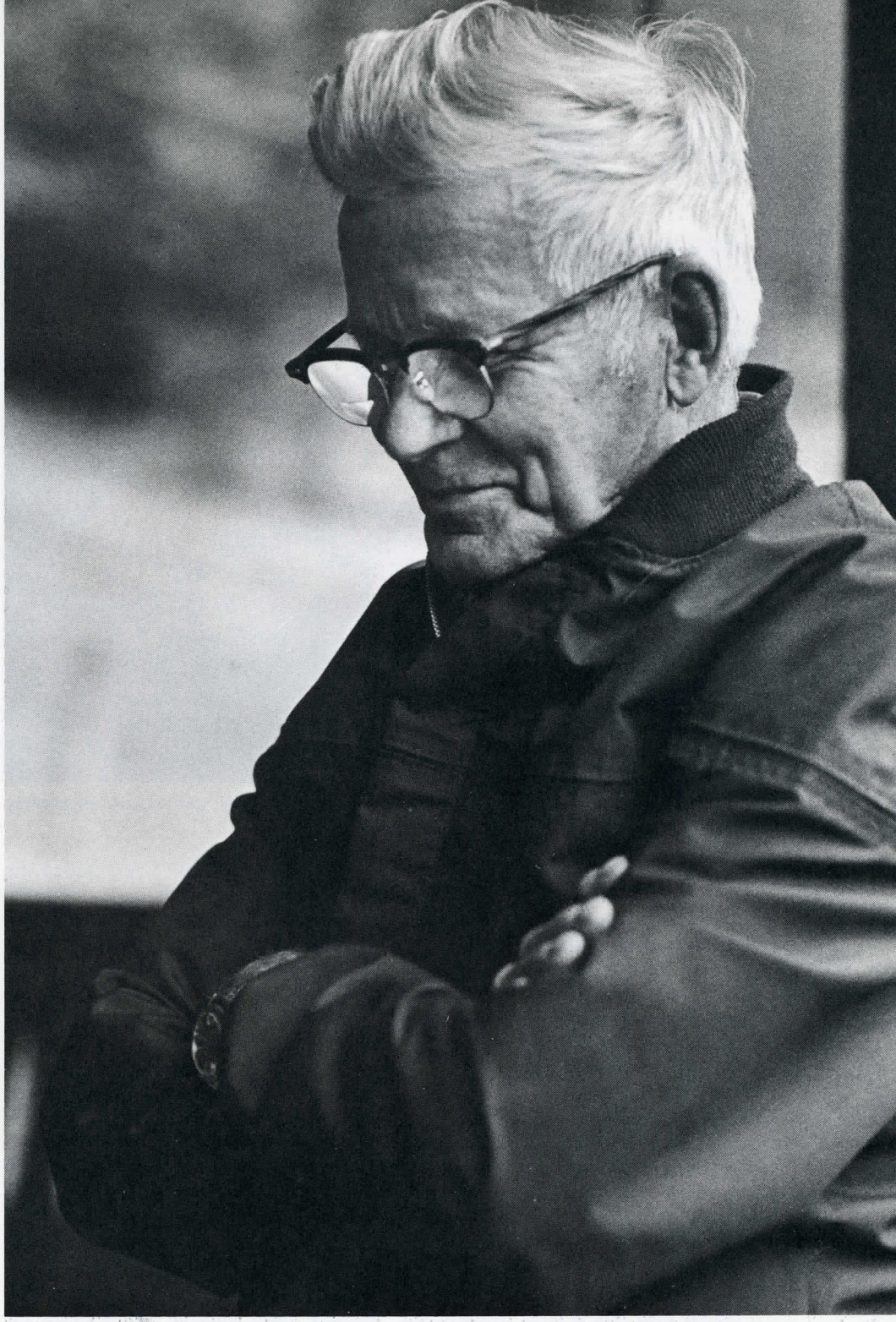
YSF Where are the wild turkeys to be found around here?

JCL About all of Leatherwood Creek has got some turkeys on it. Then up on the Elk River, I'd say on beyond Ivydale clear to the Braxton County line. And then there's turkey in Braxton County too. And up in the Widen area—Widen up Buffalo Creek. They stocked them in there about 1950. And then you go on to the right and you get into Nicholas County and there's a big creek there they call Twenty Mile Creek. It's 20 miles long and about all of it has turkeys on it. All of that territory has deer on it too. We have deer everywhere in the county.

YSF Didn't you hatch turkey eggs?

JCL Yes. In one year, that was in 1976, I found three turkey nests. Those are the only nests I ever found in my life and I found all them in one year. And one of those nests was right by a truck road, oh, within 40 feet of it. It had 13 eggs.

I went back there after the season had closed. I thought I'd go back and keep watching—maybe get a picture. I have a grandson who wanted to get some pictures of a wild turkey, so we thought we would go back and sneak up and maybe get a picture of this turkey. But there was no hen there. Her eggs were cold and she hadn't been on the nest since I'd been there last. But another turkey had come along and laid two fresh eggs on top of these 13. In the meantime, a few leaves had blowed over the top of the nest and these two fresh eggs were laid on top.



"I really like hunting turkeys in the spring when they are gobbling," Legg says. "I think I like that better than anything I've ever done. It's the hardest, most technical thing you ever tried."

I told my grandson that evidently there was another turkey going to take the nest and that I would come back in a few days and if she was still laying, I'd take those old eggs out of there and give her room so she could hatch. I came back another week after that and those two eggs were all that were there on top of the others. She hadn't ever come back. Well, I knew then that she had abandoned the nest. I got those two fresh ones and brought them home and candled* them and they were good. A neighbor had a little hen. We set them under it and hatched them out.

*An egg may be checked for fertility by examining it against a light, originally a candle.

Legg and the troublesome wild turkey Sue, from a family snapshot. "That was the most treacherous pet I ever had," he remembers.

YSF Then what happened?

JCL I hatched out two beautiful turkeys. One of them died when it was two and a half months old. The other one I kept until it was over a year old. I took it down there to where I'd killed my last one and turned him loose wild in the woods. Put a band on his leg but never did hear of him.

That was the most treacherous pet I think I ever had. He wanted to whip every woman that came along. Or little kid. A man—well, once in a while he'd jump on a man, but he wanted to jump on women and children for some cause. And he'd flop at them but he couldn't hurt them. He'd just beat with his wings a little.

I called him Sue. I first thought he was a hen until he was a year old. Then I looked one day and here come a beard out of the feathers on his chest. I have some stories about him in my book. I've got one in there about when I brought him into the house and had my wife to get something to tie his legs together. She got a big old red handkerchief I had and we tied his legs perfectly tight with that. Well, I'd forgotten about him having wings too. She was setting there in the chair and I said, "Now you hold him right there good and tight while I run out to the garage and get a feed sack. Now I'll put him in that feed sack, stick his head out of it, and tie him up in there and then I'll take him to the woods." I went out to the garage and about the time I was getting up to the steps there, I heared a commotion.

He decided to get loose. And he was just too much for her, flopping her to death, and she turned him loose. He run in the kitchen. She chased him in there and she was making it so hot on him that he got excited and he messed that kitchen all over. I'm telling you, everywhere! He saw the light of that there door there, and he became airborne into the living room. He hit that winder right behind Sam's head. He took curtain, lamp, winder, and all! By that time, I was up on the porch and he came flying out right at my face. He never even hit the bannister on the front porch. He was a-flyin' and a-flyin' over the top of that bannister on into the hill. And there was no catching him. I was scared to death that he'd go out and get hung up and a fox would get him or something.

Two days after that I looked out on the lawn and here came Sue. He'd picked that handkerchief off his legs and was back ready to eat. He didn't seem scared or nothing.

Legg had many adventures with the turkey Sue, but he said that Sue began to run away and he knew by that he wanted to go and live in the woods. So Legg and a local game warden turned Sue loose by the Kanawha-Clay County line.

YSF If a wild turkey is born in captivity, can it become domesticated?

JCL Well, it's in their nature to want to go wild, I think. Born in them. But Sue would have stayed if he'd got in with any other turkeys. But he wouldn't roost here with this tame turkey I had and I could see that he wanted to go.

YSF What about hunting black bear?

JCL I've shot one bear. I only wounded him and another man got him. We have black bear in Clay County. I have a story in my book about it. One of my grandsons and I were turkey shooting and we saw six bears together at one time—six adult black bears. That was up near Widen. And I saw two others in my life besides that six. I saw one there on the hill in front of this house. It was a baby one. I had a Norwegian squirrel dog and he went to barking vicious and I looked up the hill a little ways and there was that little black bear. The dog ran up and jumped on him. The little black bear just bawled like a calf and it hit that dog and must have knocked him ten feet down the hill. And that dog would never go a step back after the bear after that. He was done right then!

YSF You also like to fish, don't you?

JCL Yes, I've fished some on the Elk River. Elk River before they put the dam in at Sutton was one of the best streams in the country. But they say it's not nothing like as good now. I've done deep sea fishing. I went to the state of Washington near Seattle and we went over to Alaska. We trout fished the Chena River in Alaska. I have stories about that in my book.

YSF I've heard stories about "panthers" in the West Virginia mountains. Have you?

JCL I've heard of it.

YSF Do you think that those stories are silly?

JCL I think so. The only thing that we have in these mountains anywhere around are bobcats.

YSF Bobcats?

JCL Oh, yes, people have trapped them. They will scream, a bobcat will. Oh, a vicious scream—like a tomcat when you step on his tail. That would be about the way they squall. We've had bobcats heard right around our house here. We've heard two or three. I've heard three from within this house. But they're not thick. They're doing a lot of trapping of foxes and bobcats of late years.

YSF What about foxes? Will they come around a house?

JCL No. Unless you got chickens. Now, I killed one out there one night. There was about two inches of snow on and I had a little building out there and I heared a chicken squawking. Well, a fox had it so you know how it would squawk. I jumped up with a flashlight and I ran out there barefooted in my night clothes. My wife jumped up too and she came out. I gave her a flashlight and told her I'd go back in the house and get the gun. She flashed the light out and the fox had the old hen, but he turned her loose and run. When I got out, I said, "Which way did he go?" And she said, "Right that way."

Well, I took the light and flashed it and it just happened that I flashed it right on him and his eyes shined. I said to my wife, "Now you hold that light right on them eyes." And I just throwed my gun up without ever taking aim, pulled the trigger and killed him dead. And he hadn't hurt the old hen very much. Just took a lot of feathers. Oh, we've got foxes, not lots of them, but then all woods have got some foxes.

Youngsters have been trapping an awful lot of foxes in the last three or

Legg has spent much of his 81 years working with children, in his own family and in Sunday school and the Boy Scouts. Here Luke Farley and Molly Samsell get a hand in sorting creek rocks.

four years in Clay County. And that's helping our turkey business too, because they are very destructive of turkey. They destroy their nests and they catch the little babies when they hatch out. Turkeys have to be two or three weeks old before they can fly up on anything and roost.

One of the turkey nests I found, a bobcat had eaten all of the eggs or carried them off to his young. When I got there, there wasn't anything but an empty nest. And there was feathers all over the place. I saw his tracks in the mud. There was a real big track and a baby track. He picked that turkey—took all the wing feathers and all the tail feathers out to keep them from dragging on the brush so he could carry it, and he took her away.

YSF You think a bobcat is that smart?

JCL Oh, yes. The feathers he couldn't pull, he bit them right off at the hide. Yes, they were all there—the tail feathers and all the wing feathers. Them big old wing feathers stretch out about as wide as you can reach.

YSF You were in "Ripley's Believe It or Not" in 1947?

JCL Yes, on the amount of times that 11 appeared in my family. My father was from a family of 11 children. And I came from a family of 11 children. My wife Hattie is from a family of 11 children. We were married on August 11, 1922, and we had 11 children. You see, I just couldn't hardly get around it.

YSF Is that your lucky number?

JCL Well, I don't know, it's appeared in a lot of different things in my life. I was born on the 11th and my wife was born on the 11th. One of our daughters was born on the 11th. Every time I see something with 11 on it, I think of it.

YSF How long have you been writing for the *Clay County Free Press*?

JCL For five years. It's called "From the Pen of J. C. Legg."

YSF What do you like to write about?

JCL I write hunting stories and on turkeys, deer, and fishing. Also memories of things that happened back in my childhood. Oh, just all sorts of stories. Here lately I've been running some family stories about some of the larger families that used to be in our community. Genealogy on them.

YSF You're really an historian of Clay County life. How did you start writing?

JCL It's just like my egg hunt. It just slipped up on me. Now, believe it or not, I've never had any understanding with the editor of this paper on how much I'd write or what I'd write or anything else. And I decided I'd like to write a few of my turkey hunting stories, those are the first ones I wrote. After I wrote a story or two on turkey hunting, he asked me why I didn't write some more and I did. I would miss for a few weeks, a month or two, and then I'd start again. I told him, "I don't have anything else to write about." And he said, "You write a good story on just about anything you want to think about." Well, of course I didn't pay no attention to that. But I did think of something else I wanted to write about, and I'd write again. Just got started on it and couldn't stop. And then people, friends and a lot of people I didn't know who live in other states, started writing letters to the paper. They'd mention my column.

In 1980 the Clay County Free Press *captured the first place award from the West Virginia Press Association for the best column among weekly newspapers in West Virginia. The winning column was "From the Pen of J. C. Legg." Legg's column was praised by the judges for having "real style" and for making the readers feel as if they were "right there" with the writer. After spending time with J. C. Legg, I'm inclined to disagree with the judges. Nothing's quite like actually being there, and hearing the man firsthand. Reading Legg's stories is second best—and that's apt to be good enough for first place in anybody's contest.*

Fins, Feathers and Horns

GOLDENSEAL readers wanting a closer look at J. C. Legg can find it in *Fins, Feathers and Horns*, a two-volume compilation of his writing. The collection includes more than a hundred of his short newspaper articles, and many hymns and poems.

Legg figures "hunting is good medicine," a chance to tramp the woods with sons and grandsons, and he writes best about his recollected adventures as an outdoorsman. As a hunter and fisherman, he has traveled across the country, seeking—and finding—salmon in Alaska, elk in Colorado, dolphin off the coast of Florida, and companionship wherever he goes.

Rambling expeditions always brought Legg home to Clay County, however, and his heart appears really to be in West Virginia wild turkey hunting. He picks up the subject in his first essay, right after the hymns, and probably two dozen more articles deal with the wily bird he generally refers to as "Old Tom." Tom gets away as often as not, but Legg remains philosophical. "If you're going to turkey hunt, you had better learn to smile through your troubles," he advises.

J. C. Legg writes of many other subjects, including scouting, golfing, farming, travel, and of course the old days. His hymns and poems take up more than a third of the first volume. Many of the hymns, published here with music, were originally published by the prestigious Stamps-Baxter Music and Printing Company. Stamps-Baxter hymnbooks are a fixture in country churches throughout America, and have undoubtedly brought Legg's songwriting to a very wide audience.

The paperbound *Fins, Feathers and Horns* may be ordered for $6 per volume, postpaid, from Greta Brown, Fola 25080. Profits from sales go to the Clay County Junior High School Band.

The annual egg hunt is a mob scene, as scores of friends and relatives gather at the Legg homeplace.

The Legg Egg Hunt

J. C. Legg is known as an outdoorsman, and we wanted to get his story into the Winter GOLDENSEAL, while hunting season is still fresh in mind. Maybe some of you can put his tips to work in the second turkey season in mid-December, and any hunter is likely to identify with the spirit of his tales.

However, Mr. Legg is known in southern Clay County for another seasonal event, this one his big egg hunt at Easter. Yvonne Farley and James Samsell enjoyed the family's hospitality last Easter, and they brought back the following story and pictures. With winter settling over West Virginia it may do all of us good to look forward to early spring, which in Fola will begin with another egg hunt such as this one.

One way to figure out a place in West Virginia is by the families who live there. In Fola if you know Curt and Hattie Legg and their relatives, you've made a good start toward understanding the community. The first time you drive down the creek into Clay County's Fola Hollow, the houses and trailers seem unconnected, but with each trip the place begins to take on the vibrant personalities of the people who live there.

After a right turn at Bickmore off Route 16, you are in Fola. It's not that far until you see J. C. "Curt" Legg's youngest daughter Nancy's trailer, over to the left behind Grace's Grocery. Grace herself is the Legg daughter who took over the general store when her father retired. After passing the store there'll be the Keith Family Cemetery on the hill to the right above the dirt road leading to Legg's house. The Keiths were among the first settlers here. But continuing on up the hollow there's more to see: The tiny post office where Legg's daughter Greta is postmistress; the site of Hattie Holcomb Legg's girlhood home; the Fola Missionary Baptist Church where all the Legg children were baptised; and finally daughter Greta's house.

On Easter morning 1982 most of these places were empty. Of course, the church was packed, with extra wooden folding chairs in the aisles to accommodate the crowd. I sat in the back beside Mr. Bryce Legg, who told me that he is doubly related to J. C. Legg. We watched the children in Easter finery ruffle about self-consciously in their seats. There were many frilly bonnets, crocheted shawls, and shiny black shoes. One of the tiniest churchgoers drooled on his new sailor suit. Many of the women in their spring dresses wore flower corsages.

The music was good. I could hear Mary Legg Hess's unfaltering alto steadying me from the pew behind as the entire congregation sang "He Lives" and "Are You Washed in the Blood of the Lamb?" From the sound of it, Mary and all the others in the church that morning had had lots of practice on the old hymns and they could sing. Then the Ladies' Missionary Society came to the front of the church to sing "Tell Me the Story of Jesus" and "I Come to the Garden Alone." Later we were able to hear our friend J. C. Legg sing with a men's quartet, "Time Has Made a Change in Me." And of course no Easter service would be complete without a rousing sermon.

After church people didn't linger too long outside the little white building with a green roof. The temperature was in the upper 40's and a chill was in the air. The small stream which ran by was full of water and the surrounding mountainsides were covered with green rhododendron bushes. One family asked James Samsell to take their photograph together in front of the hedge beside the church.

From the church we went to Legg's daughter Nancy's trailer to change into clothes for the egg hunt. That's where Nancy's sister, Mary Hess of St. Louis, and her two children were staying. Mary told us that six of the 11 Legg children were in Fola for the egg hunt this year. It's traditional for them to come in at that time. Mary had figured out that her father and mother also have 35 grandchildren and 27 great-grandchildren, with two more then on the way. She added that there were 45 relatives at her father's house for dinner the night before and many more expected today. Mary didn't think the weather would deter the faithful egg and candy hunters. Three years ago, she recalled, they had hunted in the snow.

After everyone got ready, we drove over to the Legg homeplace. It's a big yellow and brown house set on the hill above the road. The children were already rolling all over the front yard and running up and down the steps. Tulips and daffodils under the front porch were in bloom. I noticed that the Leggs have a welcome mat with a picture of a fisherman catching fish on it. That seemed to fit in with Mr. Legg's stories, as did the mounted fish on the walls of Grace's Grocery.

After some mingling with the large crowd of relatives who were visiting inside and outside the house, a big Sunday dinner hit the table in the dining room. There was lots of fried chicken, ham, sweet potatoes, chicken and dumplings, green beans, macaroni salad, three bean salad, corn, biscuits, lemon meringue pies, cream pies, cupcakes, and a gigantic bowl of enough mashed potatoes to feed no less than 50 people. In the kitchen were large plastic jugs of Kool-aid. People ate wherever they could. Some were seated at a folding table in the bedroom while others perched on furniture or ate off bureau tops.

Outside the children who had finished eating were nervous, biding their time until the big event. All through the midday dinner kids had been pestering Mr. Legg to let them help hide the candy and eggs. Hiding the stuff is as much fun for the children as finding it, Legg says, and finally he led a group of larger boys out to the side yard. "I want you to hide them, boys, not throw them," he instructed, handing over bags of candy and plastic prize eggs. Of course, in spite of his instructions the boys began throwing candy all through the pine trees. Legg just smiled and shook his head. He goes through this every year.

For 1982 he said he'd purchased 3200 pieces of candy and 100 special prizes. There were also 200 plastic eggs with prizes inside. Legg said he doesn't remember exactly when the egg hunt began, but it was sometime around 35 years ago as a project for his Sunday school class. Later he decided to invite everyone in the community. The egg hunt is financed by Legg, his two daughters Nancy and Grace, and Grace's husband, Buddy Brown. In 1982 they had about $200 invested in the candy and prizes.

Legg divides his large yard into four sections: A little place with simple candy-filled lanes for the toddlers; a slightly tougher terrain for the two- to five-year-olds; a big section at the side of the house for the children up to ten years old; and finally, the rough and steep mountain behind the house for the older children and adults. The last group has to work, because the hill is steep and partly covered with brush and pine trees. "That hill looks a whole lot steeper than it used to," reflected Mary Hess, looking up from her place near the well.

After everything was hidden, Legg gave the signal to begin. The children, armed with Easter baskets, started scrambling all over. Parents helped the little ones who could barely stay on the path, stepping on more candy than they found. Meanwhile, the hillside of pine trees was full of teenagers looking for silver eggs. Some would run back and ask, "Curt, did you put any *in* the trees?" And Legg replied, "Not *in* the trees." Then he offered advice to eager ears that they try beating the brush with a big stick. After most of the smaller children had gathered up all they could, Legg called everyone. "Everyone come and listen a minute. Up in the big pine trees there's 29 big silver eggs. Each one is worth a silver dollar when you bring it back." Those who hadn't already headed for the hill did so then. Legg kept a running total of the silver eggs found. He and Grace had set up a kind of winner's circle for prizes and silver dollars.

The younger kids were pleased. They had baskets full of candy bars, cinnamon pieces, bubblegum, caramel cream eggs, and chocolate bunnies. Some had inflatable plastic rabbits, squeeze toys, and other Easter trinkets. At last a cold spring shower began to fall, and many in the crowd of almost 200 men, women, and children headed down the road.

Later the sun came back out, and those who had waited out the rain began scouring the hillside for the remaining silver eggs. One boy ran up to Legg and asked breathlessly, "How many eggs is still up there, Granddaddy?" Legg would give clues to help them. Silver-egg madness began to spread, even to the non-participants. One middle-aged man finally couldn't stand the thought of the silver eggs any longer. "I've never done this before but I think I'll go up there." Eventually Legg himself gathered up two children to go hunt the silver eggs. Following his own earlier advice to the hunters, he took a long stick with him and began to swish it back and forth across the ground. His white hair could be seen bobbing in and out of the pine trees.

Finally Legg came in the house. Even he couldn't find all the eggs, but he had a big smile across his face. He loves every minute of the egg hunt, from the children pestering him to let them hide the candy to the die-hard hunters who search for the silver dollar eggs. "There were five eggs out yet and Bernard's going back," he said. He said he hides the silver eggs in unexpected places and it's not unusual for several to elude the hunters each year.

We talked some more with Curt Legg, but it was getting dark and the family was drifting out the door to their cars. As we were leaving I heard him remark, "It's all over. Just like a spring rain." He was looking out from his high porch over the front lawn, perhaps thinking of next year.

—Yvonne Snyder Farley

"The First Time I Ever Rode a Lear Jet"

Boone County Coal Sculptor James Stewart

By Johanna Eurich
Photographs by Doug Chadwick

"He kept it secret for a long time," says Richard Pritchard of his friend. "That's the truth."

"I just didn't think it was anything to get excited over," explains James Stewart of Boone County. "I still don't."

But Mr. Pritchard thought he was good, a lot of people agreed, and now the secret is out. James Stewart, 65-year-old retired coal miner and self-taught sculptor, has caught the eye of the national press. His busts of executives sculpted in coal are the latest fad in corporate boardrooms. Stonie Barker, president of Island Creek Coal Company, received one from his wife and liked it so much that Island Creek commissioned Stewart to sculpt the likeness of the chairman of its parent Occidental Petroleum Corporation, Armand Hammer. Soon after that, word of Stewart's work reached the ears of reporters at the *Wall Street Journal*, and in March 1982 an article entitled "These Days Lots of Magnates Have Coal Lumps That Look Like Them" appeared in the paper.

"It made more of it than I can handle," says Stewart. "I didn't expect it and I don't really want it, exactly. What I'm doing is for fun, anyway. I don't take it too serious. I'm booked up through 1983 now. I'm not accepting any more orders till I get some of them caught up."

"That's an awful serious hobby," I told him.

"Too serious—more than what I want."

"Are a lot of these commissions portraits?"

"All of them are. At first, they were all coal executives, coal people. But I'm getting calls from all walks of life now."

James Stewart lives with his wife,

Stewart works in a shed studio near his house.

Virlie, outside Danville. Afflicted with black lung, Stewart nevertheless manages to climb the steep drive from his house to the outdoor studio and blacksmith shop where he sculpts. "I try not to work more than a couple of hours a day, but when it's nice out I work longer."

Though he says he is taken aback by all the attention, Stewart still enjoys telling the story of how he met millionaire industrialist Armand Hammer. "That was in November that Island Creek Coal officials called and wanted this made. And I first thought I didn't have enough time, but they insisted that it was very important that they get it. So I agreed to make it."

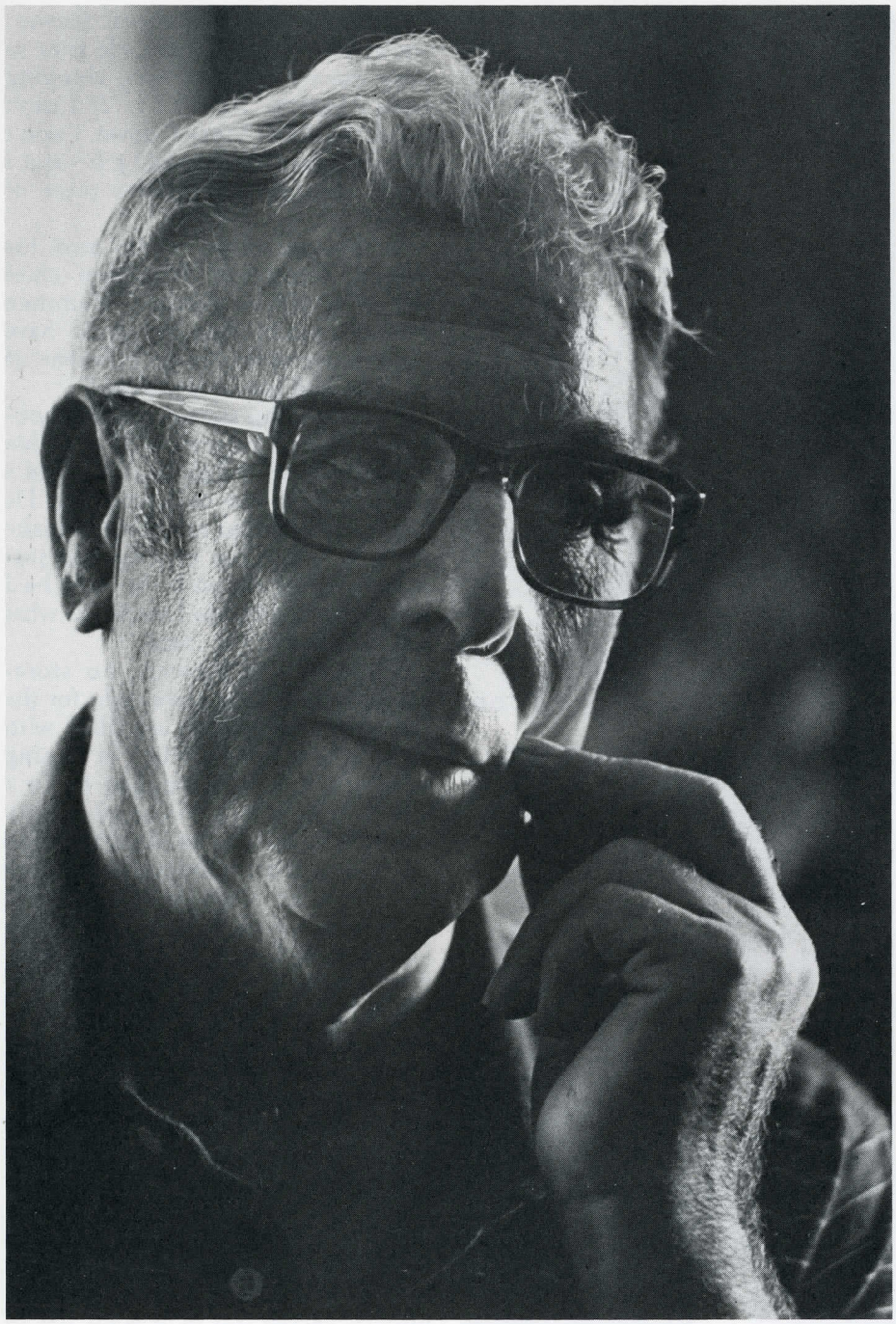
"Then they wanted me to come with it to the University of Kentucky to present it," Stewart continues. "Then they called my wife and daughter and told them to put pressure on me to come. They finally told me that 'You tell us when you'll be at Kanawha Airport, and we'll have a Lear jet waiting on you.' So that's what I did."

The Lear jet—an incredibly expensive private aircraft—is the current favorite corporate status symbol, and that one was dispatched to West Virginia for James Stewart indicated something of the prestige of his work. I asked him if he had ever been on such a plane before.

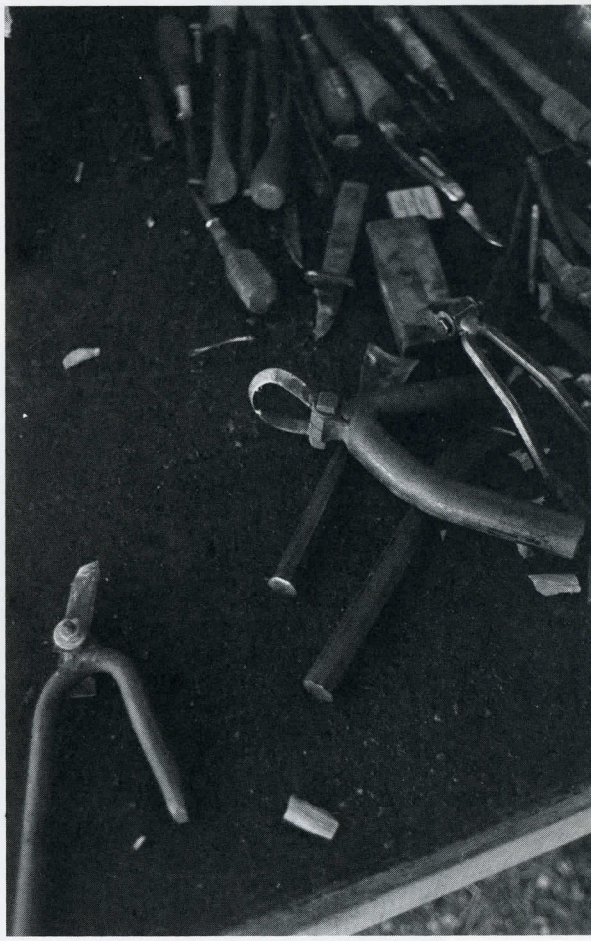
"It wasn't the first time I ever rode in a plane, but the first time I ever rode a Lear jet," he told me.

"Didn't it feel strange, being a coal miner and getting all this special attention?"

"Yeah. You don't expect that sort of thing—or I didn't. We have some people in the coal industry that lands a helicopter right here several times and picks up things that we made. We call them and tell them when it's ready, and they tell us when they're coming. First thing we know, we hear this chopper and they set it down here and pick up their sculpture." Stewart is amused when companies spend more to transport his work in private aircraft than the $600 they paid for his sculpture.



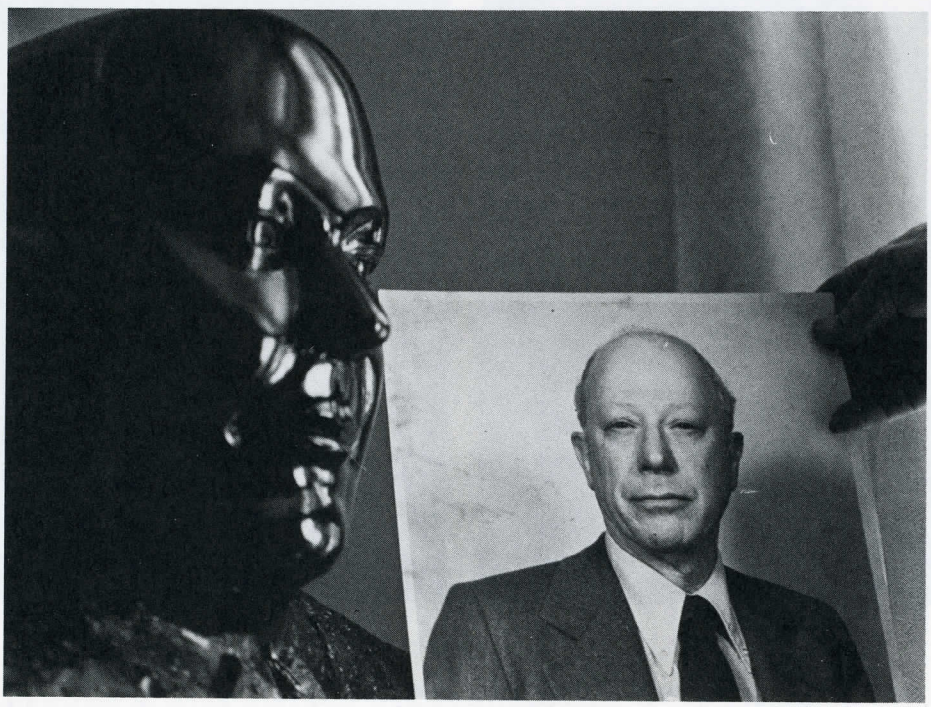
Opposite page left: James Stewart works in wood and metal as well as coal. Here he stands in his yard with two wooden figurines.
Opposite page right: Stewart sculpts ordinary miners as well as corporate executives. "If anyone knows how a coal miner looks, I do, because I've been looking at them every morning for 30 years," he says.
Near left: Coal is a difficult medium which few sculptors tackle, and Stewart figures it takes a veteran miner to carve it. "Being around coal that long, you learn what it'll do," he says.
Below: There are no names for many of the tools on James Stewart's workbench, for he makes new ones as the need arises. "I have an idea what I want the tool to do, but I don't always know what it'll look like. That comes out in the process of making it."



Unlike the common "coal art," which is cast in a mold from powdered coal mixed with a bonding agent, all of Stewart's pieces are actually sculpted from the harder grades of coal. He doesn't buy the coal, since it is given to him by eager coal operators. "All the coal companies know about me. I tell them I want some coal, and get covered up with it." He prefers to work with cannel coal from the Capitol Fuels mine not far from his home. "It's real hard, and usually it's all from the same seam. You've got to learn to work that coal. If I change seams, I've got to learn the character of that new coal.

"I don't think that anyone who's not a miner could do this—what I'm doing. I worked 30 years in the mines. Being around the coal that long you learn what it'll do. You learn the grain of coal, and you learn to select the pieces of coal that won't fall apart after you work on it a while. I think that it's essential to doing this that you have to be a miner, to do this on the level that I'm doing."

He roughs out his sculptures with a homemade tool that looks something like an axe. "It's made out of a piece of scrap mining machinery. The difference between this and an axe is the temper of it—it's a lot harder than an axe. It came out of a loading machine. It was called a flexible side. It's a big spring that bends when the boom of the loading machine bends." Prior to his retirement from the Westmoreland Coal Company, Stewart operated



Top: Stewart swapped a life-sized wood bust of his friend, painter Richard Pritchard, for a painting of himself. Stewart calls Pritchard the real artist, and himself "just a coal miner."
Bottom: Stewart would prefer to sculpt from life, but usually has to make do with photographs.

such a machine; now he uses a piece of it to create his sculptures. "I only use that for the first 30 minutes, just knock the big chunks off. I go to a chisel and mallet from there on.

"You start chipping off smaller chunks. The closer you get to the finish, the smaller your tool gets, and the smaller the amount you take off.

"Part of the shaping is done by sandpaper. That way, you take a little off at a time, because you can't put back what you took off. You can't afford to make any mistakes."

To make the coal busts, Stewart works from photographs. He tries to copy exactly what he sees, chipping away whatever doesn't fit. "If I can't see all the detail, I turn it down. I won't do it, because I'll do a bad job—and I won't turn out an inferior piece of work."

In the case where he did meet his subject, Occidental Petroleum chief executive officer Armand Hammer, Stewart admits that he would have "done some of the things different" if he "had had him a-modeling."

The sculpting started out as a hobby—a natural outgrowth of both his blacksmithing and toolmaking, and a doctor's orders to quit smoking. He originally intended to retire and make tools for sale. The carving was just something he did with the tools he'd made. But "the things I made was what sold, instead of the metal."

According to Stewart, no store-bought tool is ever quite right for the job, so his worksheds are filled with tools shaped from old bits of mining equipment—each designed to do a specific job. Even the vise he uses to hold his sculptures in place while he chips away is made from part of a roof jack from the mines. In his toolmaking, Stewart is an original. "I have an idea of what I want the tool to do. Before I make it, I don't always know what it looks like—that comes out in the process of making it. Sometimes when I make one over I improve it, and occasionally the first one is always better. I can't make another one as good as that one. Some of them work better than others, and I don't exactly know why."

His fascination with tools shows up in his artwork, which he does in wood as well as in coal. One of his huge miners, carved out of a solid log of black walnut, sports miniature tools shaped from separate pieces of walnut and old mining equipment.

In his large wood sculptures of miners, Stewart moves away from working just from photographs, drawing upon his memory of 30 years in the mines. Perhaps as a result, these pieces have a vitality which is lacking in some of his coal busts of corporate executives. The huge miners carved out of solid logs are highly detailed. Caught on lunch breaks, holding coffee mugs and sandwiches, they are surrounded by the tools of their trade. "How he was

settin', and how he was holding the sandwich—all these things are things I saw so many times that it wasn't hard to know just how the shape should be. If anyone knows how a coal miner looks, I do, because I've been looking at them every morning for 30 years."

He also has pictures of his former co-workers, and their faces often show up on his figures.

At first, Stewart wouldn't sell any of his work. "I would just give it to my wife and daughter, whatever I made. Visitors would want to buy it. They'd tell them it wasn't for sale. Eventually I had the house full of it, so they had to start selling some of it."

His house is still full of examples of his work. "We won't sell the pieces we have in the house now, because I'm working in coal more than anything else, and we want to keep some pieces ahead. The only thing we'll do is, if somebody insists, we'll make one like what they see at the house—call them when we get it ready, if we ever do."

Stewart feels it's important for his family to continue to keep some of his better works. As his wife, who runs the business end of their enterprise, explains, they don't do it for the money. The large wood sculptures take 30 full days of work, and sell for only $1500. "Even the sanding," Virlie says, "is worth more than that."

Virlie also does most of the finishing work on the sculptures. The Stewarts found an old recipe for beeswax finish which they use on the wood sculptures, preferring to preserve the natural colors. Here again James Stewart is compulsive, rambling around his property to pick out trees for future use.

He takes advantage of many different tree species in his realistic fruit bowl sculptures. Each fruit is individually carved out of an appropriately colored wood—apples of red cedar, grapes of black walnut, bananas of yellow poplar, and so on. Arranging the fruit to full advantage is Virlie's job.

No tree goes unused. When the Highway Department condemned part of Stewart's land for Corridor G, he had to tear down his old workshop. He's now working in temporary facilities while he starts building a new shop. Along with the workshop, he lost some fruit trees. One, a large apple tree, he made into four sculptures—a bull, an Indian, an elephant, and an owl—all now sitting in his home. But Virlie still misses the fruit. "You just can't get new fruit trees," she says.

In spite of all the media attention, many of James Stewart's neighbors have never seen his work. Many are puzzled by his coal sculpture. "They feel that a coal miner ought to have better things to do," he says. "They think a miner should be doing something else with his spare time. Somebody who's worked with it all their life and retired, they don't think he should be working with it.

"Most of them like the wood work. A lot have never seen it. I don't try to talk to them about it, because they're not interested in it."

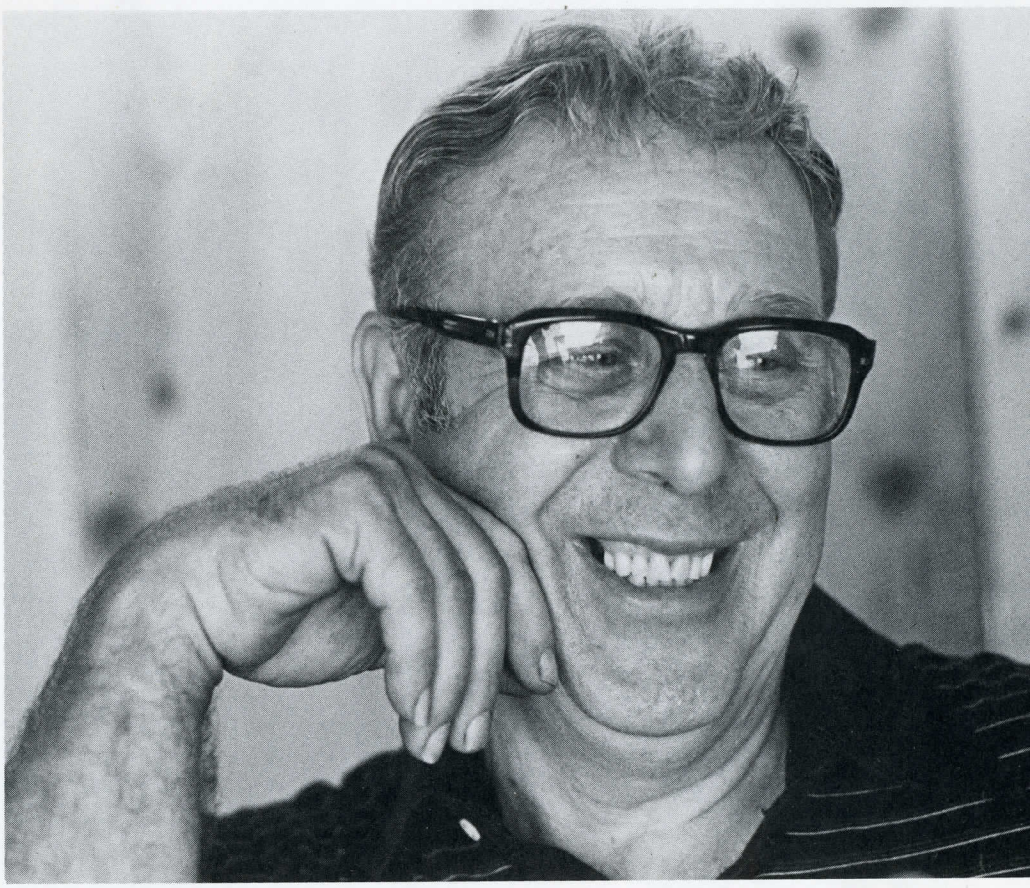
Stewart does have one friend who's very much interested in his work. Richard Pritchard is himself a retired commercial artist who used to do layout work for Heck's, and the two men have traded portraits. Stewart swapped his wood bust of Pritchard for Pritchard's portrait of Stewart at work on that bust. They worked on the portraits as a fundraising event for the local Lion's Club.

All the media attention has embarrassed Stewart because he feels that his friend, Richard, the painter, is the real artist. He calls himself "just a coal miner." But James Stewart understands that the strength of his own work comes from both his experience and his lack of formal training. As he says, "I'm not acquainted with another sculptor. I think that's what makes my work unique—it's not patterned after anybody else's work. I didn't learn anything from anyone else."

Once he gets caught up with his coal bust orders, Stewart plans to start work on a series of large figures of athletes. "Don't know if I'll get them done, but that's what I want to do."

Stewart has a very simple explanation for why he started working in coal and wood. "I like to carve," he says, "and coal was the handiest thing I could get to. There's more coal and wood around here than anything else."

Stewart works mainly for pleasure and sells nothing from his household sculpture collection. "If somebody insists, we'll make one like what they see in the house," he says. "Call them when we get it ready—if we ever do."



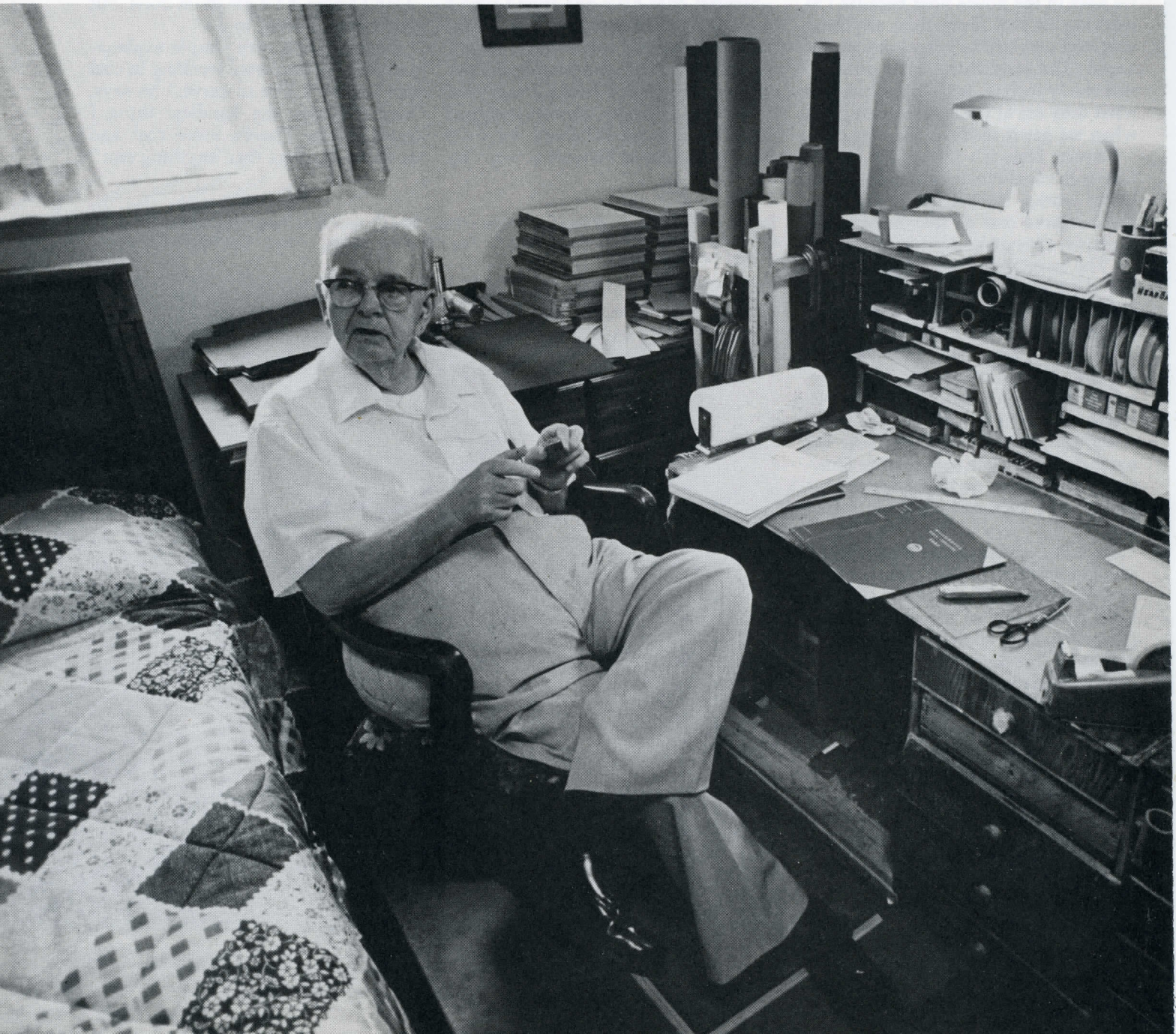
Charlton M. Troxell of Wayne County doesn't travel the arts and crafts circuit to exhibit his handiwork, and his initials or signature aren't collector's items. But most people familiar with Troxell's work would call him an artist with a rare talent. He is West Virginia's best known old time bookbinder, lovingly enclosing other people's stories between the covers of his own careful work.

In these days when most books are bound by machines in some big commercial bindery, Troxell puts them together the old-fashioned way, by hand. Using cloth, glue, paper cutter, stapling guns, electric imprint machines, and hand presses, the Lewis County native has devoted the latest chapter of his life to making old books as good as new and new publications better than they otherwise would be.

Bookbinding is time consuming, tedious work, even more so for a perfectionist like Troxell. He takes great pride in restoring old books to their original quality, especially family Bibles. Sometimes that means taking a book apart page by page, replacing some, repairing others, and glueing them to new sheets of paper. Often it means replacing the cover, binding material, spine cloths, and printing new title pages.

"The greatest asset for a bookbinder is patience," Troxell advises. It also helps to have pride in the finished product. C. M. Troxell has both those qualities, plus a talent for fixing things. He also tinkers with clocks and was once an automobile mechanic. While he doesn't bind books free of charge, Troxell says his "hobby" hasn't made him rich. But he gets a special reward when his work pleases people. One of his treasures is a gold and blue bound book in which he keeps letters of gratitude from satisfied customers, including two from former Governor Arch A. Moore.

"The type of work I do would have to be done by somebody who had plenty of money, or who was retired and had a fair income. I would say that



during my best year, 1980, I grossed between $700 and $800 a month. And man, I worked long hours, 12 and 14 hours a day. That doesn't account for my expenses, which have gone up tremendously, especially for gold leaf for printing. Commercial binders wouldn't touch the work I do with a 10-foot pole. It's just not profitable enough.

"But I have made enough money from my sideline to buy a small 22-acre farm in Lewis County and save a little nest egg for retirement."

C. M. Troxell and his wife, Ruby, spent most of their married life in the Buckhannon area, but they moved to Wayne County in 1981 to be near their two daughters, Mrs. Ferrell (Anita) Mills of Wayne, and Mrs. James (Sylvia) Boggs of Kenova. Now 76, Troxell's health has been failing in the last five years. Hobbled by a blood clot in one leg, he has trouble speaking because one of his vocal chords is paralyzed and his hearing is impaired. Still, he brought his bookbinding equipment with him to Wayne County and he has a backlog of orders.

"I don't advertise, but the word just gets around," said Troxell, sitting in his easy chair and taking time occasionally to spit tobacco juice into a handy spittoon. "During my last year in Buckhannon, I had more work than I could do. I have gotten orders from people in Florida, Virginia, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, and Port Orchard, Washington, which is about as far West as you can go without getting your feet wet. I have found there are people nearly everywhere who have special books they want preserved, especially old family Bibles. I like to work with big Bibles, the ones with the special type and fancy work on the covers."

Now semi-retired, Troxell has moved his shop into his house. Here he's prepared to bind a volume of *Wonderful West Virginia*, with the set of trimmed magazines on the left of his desk and the hard covers lying flat in the center.

C. M. Troxell, Bookbinder

By Tim Massey
Photographs by Rick Lee

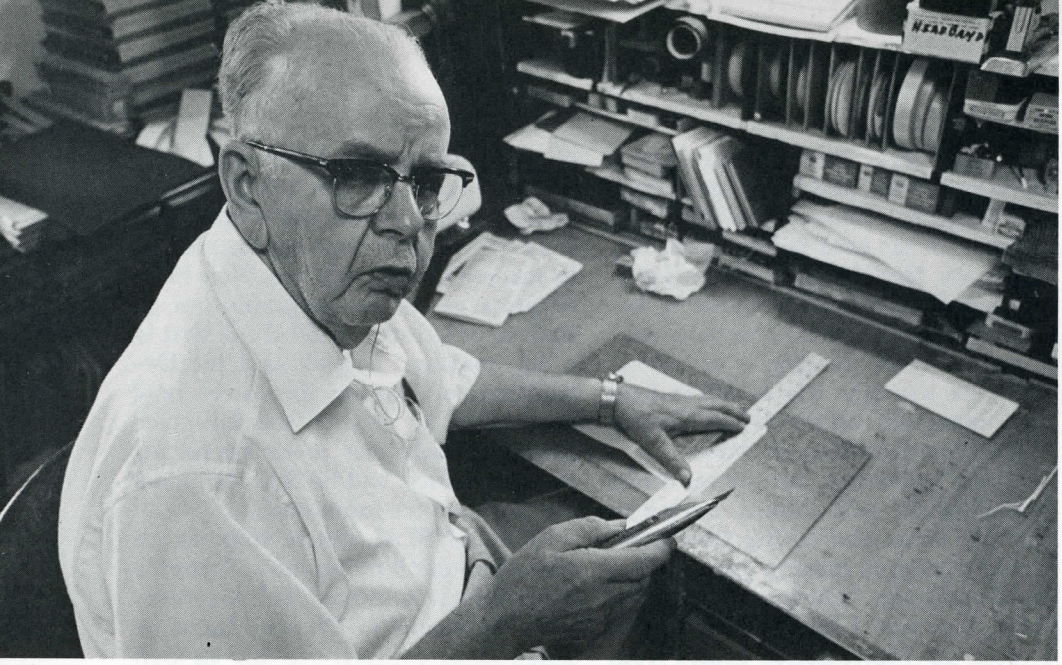
Troxell's pet project is binding annual volumes of *Wonderful West Virginia* magazine published by the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources. He will bind a year's volume in blue hard cover with gold type for $12.50, or bind all 12 copies from his own large collection for $18.95.

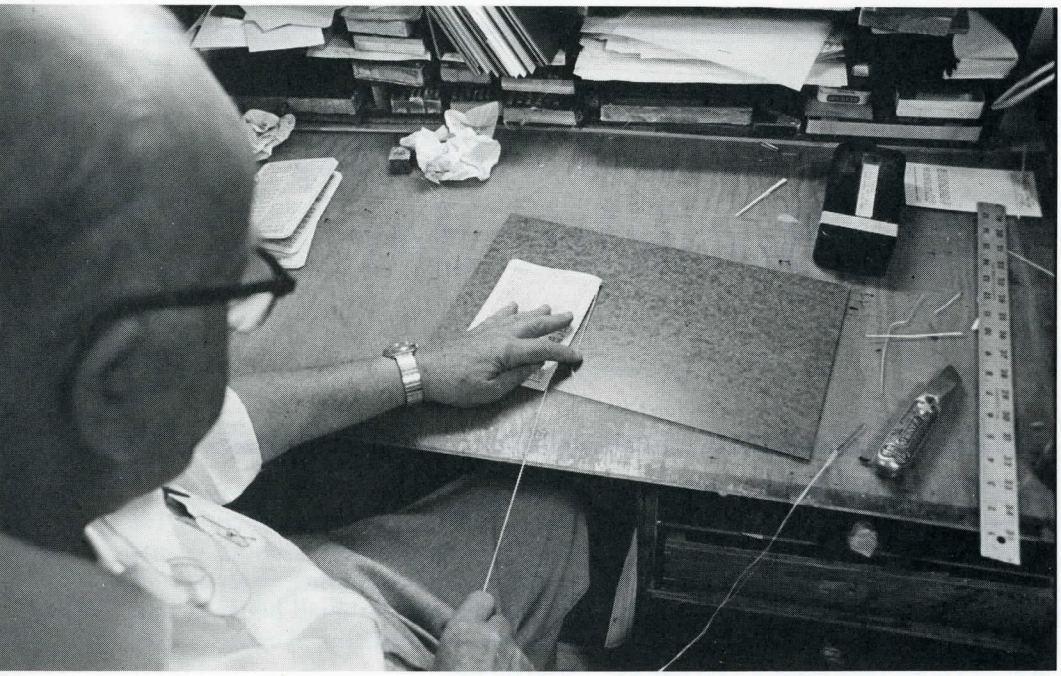
"I started binding "Wild Wonderful" when Fairmont Printing Company published them for the state. The owner would send me 149 sets to be bound, and he would sell them at his shop. It was good business for me and he realized a nice profit, too. Now West Virginia sends the magazine out of state to be printed, and I think that is a big mistake." Troxell said the Department of Natural Resources now sends him 25 sets of the full-color magazine each year to be bound for the state office, and he fills about 200 other orders for individuals.

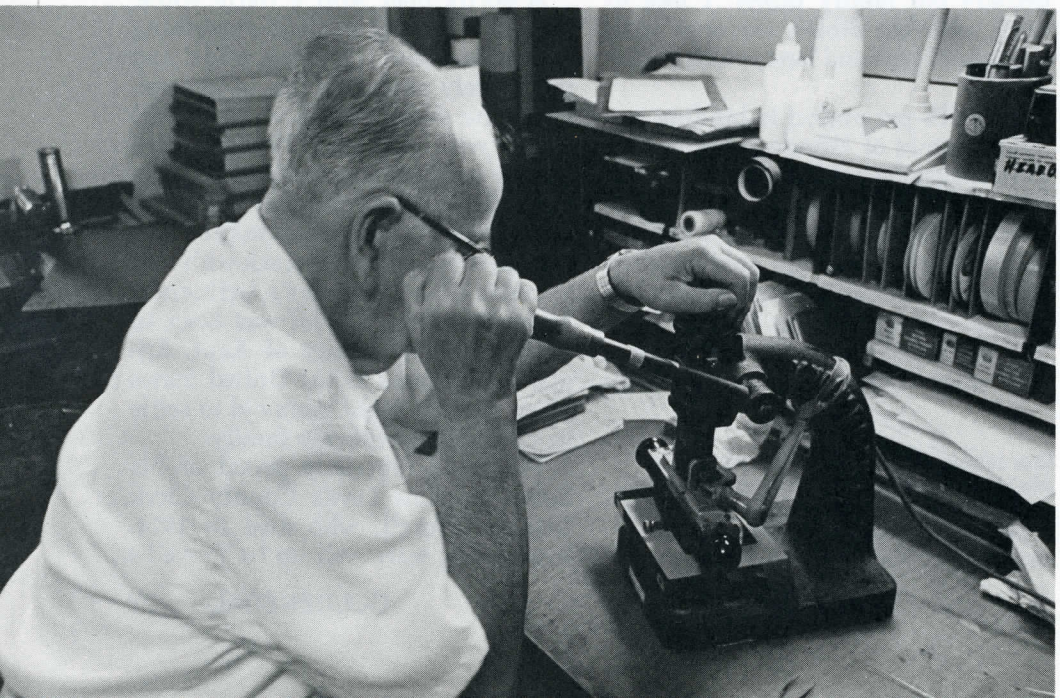
GOLDENSEAL annual volumes are also a popular binding job at Troxell's shop, which is located in his son-in-law's basement in Wayne. There he keeps three presses, one for 12-inch pages and two for 16-inch publications, and a hydraulic paper cutter. He keeps an imprinting machine, printing type, paper, and other materials and implements in the small house he and his wife rent near the Wayne County courthouse.

A portly man with a warm smile, Troxell is willing to share everything he knows about his dying trade, and talks freely about his life in general. While he doesn't claim to be particularly well read, the Weston High School graduate can still quote "The Canterbury Tales" prologue in old English. He figures that maybe the tongue-twisting dialect stuck with him because of his mother's influence. Mary Wheately Troxell was born in Bexley Heath, County of Kent, England, and came to the United States when she was eight years old to settle in Clarksburg with her family.

Troxell is especially proud of his father, onetime Lewis County Clerk Leander Troxell, who died in 1924. Even today, tears well up in Troxell's







eyes and his voice breaks when he recalls, "One judge in particular made a remark that if there had been more Lee Troxells in Lewis County, it would have been a wonderful place to live. I'm still proud to be his son." Another fond memory from youth is the time he finished second in a sectional oratorical contest during his senior year in high school.

"The boy who finished first had been in oratory for four years, and I didn't start until my senior year. The judges more or less intimated to me that the boy's previous experience had something to do with their final decision. This boy went on to win the regional contest in Clarksburg, and he was a runner-up in the state contest in Morgantown," Troxell related. "If I had started earlier, I could have won a scholarship to college."

Despite his father's background as a record keeper and his own affinity for classical learning, young Troxell spent most of his post-high school years under the hood of an automobile. He was in the service station business until the mid-1950's, when a serious encephalitis attack nearly took his life and forced him to take up a less strenuous line of work.

"I was unconscious for five days and when I came to, doctors recommended that I be taken to Charleston for testing. After nine days, they discovered that I had encephalitis and recommended that I find something else to do for a living," Troxell said.

His new livelihood put him behind the wheel of a bookmobile for Stonewall Jackson Library in Buckhannon, driving through Upshur, Harrison, and Lewis counties. When he wasn't on the road, he was working in the library where he became more acquainted with the anatomy of books than what was printed inside.

"I noticed we had a lot of books that were damaged, so I started doing minor repairs. Then I noticed some books that were more badly damaged were sent to the Library Commission in Charleston to be rebound. That took the books out of circulation for about a year, and those books were usually the most popular ones in the library," Troxell said. "So I told the librarian that if she would get me some binding paper I would do the repairs."

His work saved the library both time

and money, and caught the eye of the library board chairman, Troxell remembers. "He said, 'Mr. Troxell, I have a couple of Bibles that are falling apart. It would be wonderful if you could patch them up.' I took those Bibles home and made a workbench and got a cutting tool and some cloth. After looking at them, I got a brainstorm and decided I was going to rebind them. I had a book that was of no importance, so I tore it apart piece by piece to see how it was put together. I went to the store and found a piece of material that looked a lot like leather, and bound those two Bibles. When he and his wife picked up the Bibles, they were delighted and suggested that I go into the bookbinding business."

Encouraged by the results and the pleasure he got from helping his first two customers, Troxell opened C. M. Troxell Book Bindery at his home outside Buckhannon. He bought the tools of his new trade—scissors, glue, paper cutters, printing type, and an imprinting machine—from a Philadelphia supply house. He advertised his new venture in the Buckhannon newspaper and put up a sign over his mailbox. From that point, his work was a better advertisement than any that money could buy, and his hobby turned into a money-producing second job until he retired from the library in 1969. The magazine volumes would have been a steady source of work, and Bibles are probably the most popular bookbinding order. But Troxell remembers his most difficult assignment was binding a volume of weekly newspapers for Ralston Press of Buckhannon.

"The problem with newspapers was that the margins on the left side are all different widths. That made it difficult for people to read the left column of the paper when they were bound. The company was more interested in preserving the papers than anything else, so it worked out."

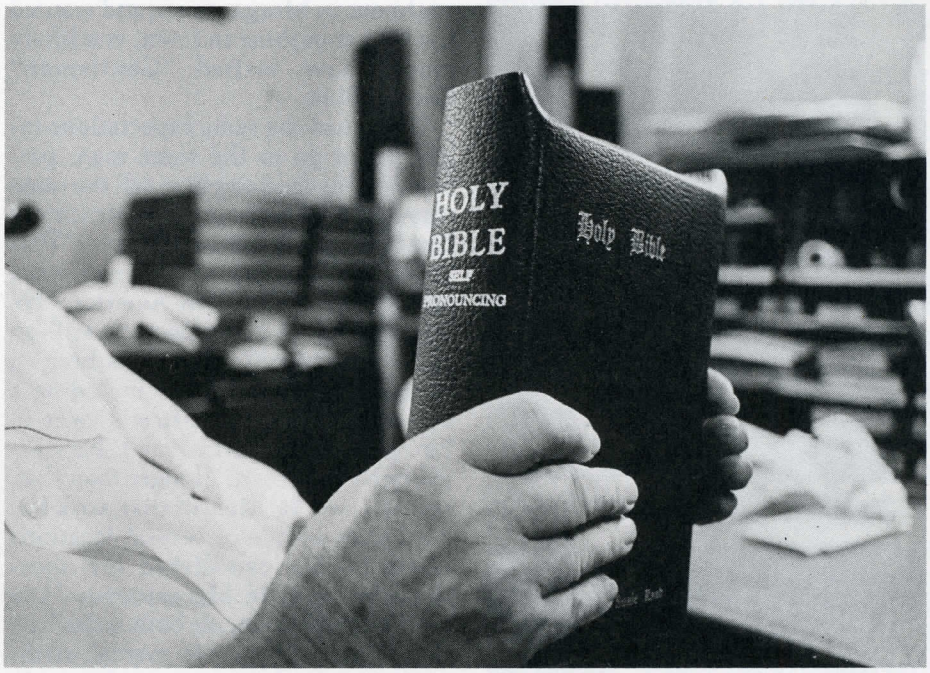
Another difficult assignment was binding several thousand copies of the forgotten West Virginia novel, *The Story of the Elm*, published in the late 1800's. James and Law Book Company of Clarksburg discovered the books in a group of boxes stored in their attic. Some of the volumes had never been bound; all the binding had yellowed. Many of the covers had been stored separately. The company came to Troxell with the problem after a large commercial bindery in Baltimore rejected the job.

"Commercial binders glue individual sheets together," Troxell explained. "That's the reason a lot of new books fall apart so easily. These old books were put together differently. Large sheets were folded to make up two pages, and they were glued together in sections of six or eight segments called signatures. Although that is a more effective way of putting books together, it makes them too thick to fit through big binding machines. So *The Story of the Elm* had to be rebound the old way, by someone like me. Another problem with these books was that the covers were uneven, so I had to make new ones. That job was a real challenge. I finished it in a couple of months, between some other work."

The Baltimore bindery has referred several other difficult jobs to Troxell. One he likes to talk about is the Chevy Chase, Maryland, couple who drove to Buckhannon to have an old family Bible repaired. "The man at the bindery told them, 'The only place you can get the Bible rebound is by a fellow by the name of Troxell who lives in Buckhannon, West Virginia,' " Troxell related with a chuckle. "The Bible had a lot of sentimental value, so the man and his wife drove all the way to my home during their vacation to see if I could repair it. I finished the job while they went on a fishing trip in Randolph County. They were really pleased when they picked it up on their way back. I have their letter in my collection."

Troxell keeps one big Bible published in 1894 that he brought back to life a couple of years ago. "It's just something I did for my own use," he says. "A man brought it with another Bible, and it looked like it had been in a garbage pile for a long time. The leather was crumbling and the pages were yellowed. I repaired the leather and cut away the old part. I bought some imitation leather and inserted the original to it."

"It's not a sample of my best work," Troxell says of this old Bible, and perhaps he keeps it in his own possession for that reason. Still, it looks like a sturdy piece of work that will hold up for generations. That Troxell himself is not fully satisfied with it is characteristic of his perfectionist tendencies. For this bookbinder tries with each job to disprove the old adage that you shouldn't judge a book by its cover, and he's proud to have his work judged that way.



An early operation is trimming frayed or uneven pages (*opposite page, top*). New paper may be glued in to make repairs. Pages are carefully restitched by hand (*center*). Until a few years ago books were always bound by sewing the pages together, although nowadays book manufacturers commonly glue the pages in. The finished volume is embossed in gold foil by a special stamping machine (*bottom*). A rebound Troxell Bible (*above*) should be good for a few more generations of family use.

"Today Everybody Wears Tennis Shoes"

George Blue and the Shoeshine Business

By Norman Julian
Photographs by Ron Rittenhouse

If you were alive around World War I, were about to embark on a big night out in Morgantown, and wanted the best shoeshine in town, you likely would have visited "Gentleman" George Blue.

If you had the same expectations today, you'd go to the same man, performing his specialty in much the same way and in a setting that's strikingly like it used to be. Blue, 92, says, "This is 70 years for me. I've shined more shoes than anybody in America." He figures that at more than 11 million pairs. For those 70 years, he's been in business for himself, not including a one-year stint as an officer's valet in Europe during World War I. He's actually been "shinin' " longer than that, since he was 14. Most of that work has been done at one of several locations where he has established his shoeshine business in Morgantown. "I've been all over town, on both sides," he says. Then, doing his mental arithmetic out loud, he counts them off: "One . . . two . . . three . . . four . . . five."

The first place was on Willey Street, where he had three or four assistants working for him at a time. His business was a fixture there for 36 years. Other locations in the downtown followed. His present shop, the only shoeshine shop remaining in Morgantown and the work place he has occupied for 15 years, is on Fayette Street.

"Everybody was fighting against me, trying to put me out of business," Blue recalls. "A big guy came in town, set up a parlor. He told me, 'We come in to put you out of business.' I said, 'Well, I don't know, you might get a little bit.' He stayed for a while, but couldn't make it. Another time, some guys came out of Pittsburgh. Couldn't make it. There's been two or three of 'em come in to put me out of business."

Blue usually can be found sitting on a low window chair alongside a row of high-backed chairs, none of which match, that are blackened by age and shoe polish. In front of the chairs are shoe stands. Wells for liquid polish and containers for others kinds of polish (including a special one Blue makes up himself) and a few of the pipes Blue smokes are scattered about, as are assorted brushes.

The furniture is from Blue's first shop, generations ago. An old, thinly padded baseball mitt he used in the old Negro League hangs on a hook in one corner. Yellowed newspaper clippings of the teams he played on are framed in glass along one wall. There is also a more recently framed certificate, courtesy of Secretary of State A. James Manchin, declaring Blue "an ambassador of good will for the State of West Virginia." A newspaper clipping of the occasion when it was presented to him is also encased in cellophane, with an American flag draped at a tilt over the picture.

In the middle of his shop, displayed on low racks, are scores of magazines, most of them of the "girlie" variety. Blue uses magazine sales to supplement his income now, in the twilight of the "great shoeshine era" when getting your shoes done professionally was as natural as riding a streetcar.

In summer, bright sunshine slants into his shop on Fayette Street. To counter its heat, Blue keeps the door ajar and corrects customers who shut it when they come in. An old black fan near the door whirrs the heat back out the partly open door. In the winter, he entrenches himself behind frosty

windows with an old hot water radiator beside him.

Contrasting the old times with the present, Blue laments "Today everybody wears tennis shoes." He remembers when Morgantown "was a country town. People rode horses or in carriages. They wore real shoes, which I guess you'd call boots." Then, he says, the enrollment at West Virginia University was no more than 500 people, "but we thought it was a big school."

Blue still walks several blocks every morning to get to his shop, where in addition to shining shoes and selling magazines, he also offers candy and "pop" to make up for the business that, he says, the tennis shoes took away.

George Blue was first married to Mable Beasley. Their one son, George, Jr., 57, is a public transit worker in Morgantown. In 1941, Blue married his present wife, Eltrude Henderson Blue, 68, a health aide for the Monongalia County Health Department. On her way home from work each night, she drives by to pick up Blue.

"I'm known all across the country," Blue says, a spry, crackling voice speaking from a face whose lines provide a more accurate indication of his age than anything else about him. "Everyone knows I do good work." He says "there ain't no secret" to shining a pair of shoes. "Just know what to do." But Blue is said to use an exclu-

sive ingredient in his special polish. You won't get him to tell what it is. As for the mechanics of a good shine, he says "it takes years to learn it."

Blue passed over an opportunity when he was young to move to Los Angeles and take over a shop because his parents were still in Morgantown and he didn't want to leave the family. But when he traveled to Pittsburgh or other big towns, he says, "I'd always go to shops and see how they worked. You're never too old to learn. I'd ask them how they cleaned suede or whatever. Everyone cleans shoes different and I've always looked for the best methods."

His customers have included the famous and the not-so-famous. Anyone who wants a shine is treated alike—with a knowing slap of shoe polish and buffer rag to shoes. At times he employed as many as five shoeshine boys. He says the best workers were "a couple of Italian boys, but I can't remember their names. Don't make no difference—they're all dead now."

At one time, at Blue's shop you could get "seven shines for a quarter, but now I charge a dollar per shine."

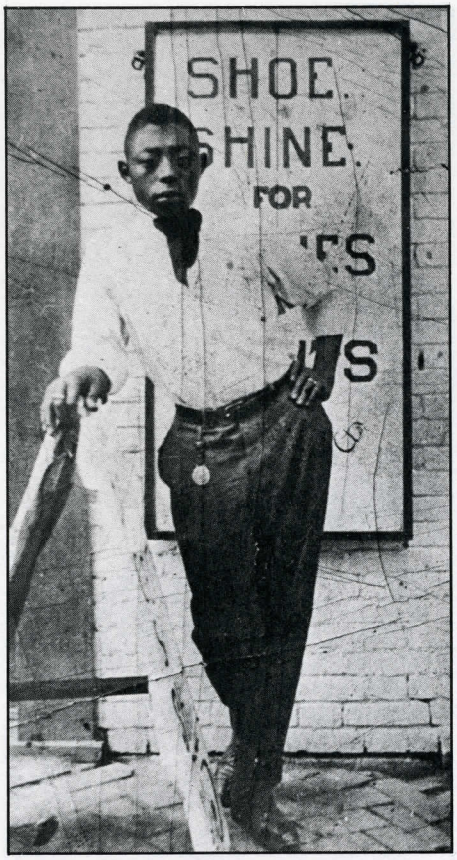
Blue's old shop on Willey Street was the site of one of his practical jokes. In an effort to beautify nearby High Street, the Downtown Action Council (DAC) of Morgantown in the 1960's installed large concrete containers which held small trees and flowers.

Below: Like other young men, George Blue went off to war in 1918. Here he stands (*at left*) with other Morgantown inductees in June of that year. Photographer unknown.
Right: Blue as an elegant young man of about 25. Photographer unknown.
Far right: George Blue outside an earlier shop in Morgantown. Date and photographer unknown.

One morning, outside Blue's shop, early risers were surprised by another kind of flower holder: a flush toilet painted blue and gold, filled with soil and flowers, and the letters UAC (Uptown Action Council) stenciled on its side.

Blue has suffered a series of heart attacks, but each time has recovered. He also has had eye problems and is reported to be hard of hearing by those who know him well, like photographer Ron Rittenhouse; some days, though, he talks more than others.

Finding it hard to make a living shining shoes, Blue also sells magazines.



Other times, visitors can't get a word out of him. Usually he takes in the scene with a deadpan expression, perhaps reflecting the acquired wisdom of a black man who has learned how to survive in a predominantly white culture when others in his business went under.

Once when Rittenhouse and I visited him, he went on for hours—about shoes, of course. "Everything today is just imitation leather," he told us. "A pair of good shoes will cost you $125 or $150." He recalled the shoe prices of his youth. "Back in those days, if you bought a pair for $10 you had the best. Most of 'em four and five dollars. Now $18, $24, $36, the same make of shoes. You see what it is, you have to pay these fellows so much for making shoes. That's where the trouble's at. Women used to work for $3 and $4 a week. You can't get one to work for that. Why, no. My wife, before I married her, was making $3 a week—$3 a week! She makes that on the hour now."

Asked how the shoeshine business today compares to that of his youth, he elaborates on the curse of the tennis shoe: "Everything was going fine until tennis shoes came out. When they came out business slowed down because everybody wears them. The shoe business anymore is bad. People are getting out of it. Lots of towns, you can't get a shine. Take Fairmont. They don't have no place. Most towns just have one. Lots of towns don't have none.

"You can't get nobody to work. They're all too proud. They make too much money doing nothing. Our government is spoiling them. Giving people money for nothing. The average shoe fella couldn't pay nobody to work. People won't work for a dollar an hour. You can't get a kid to go to the Post Office for a dollar. One kid was up there cutting grass. He says, 'I'm not going back.' He said the woman only gave him $5!

"That's what's wrong. People making too much money. Plus people don't know how to take care of it. They buy anything. Anything! Don't make no difference what it is, they'll buy it. Half the people don't know the value of money. If the bottom ever falls out, it will be bad. I've seen that Depression. I've been through it. People were making a dollar a day. They were lucky. We seen lots of days when we'd take in 50¢. Fifty cents!"

Blue has some definitive ideas about more than shoes in contemporary America. "Everybody is living too high," he says. "Everything is too high in the stores and things. Everybody gets paid too much."

Asked if he receives Social Security, Blue admits he does, but he says "in three or four years the system will be broke. They didn't set it up right. Rich people don't need it but they take it, thousands and thousands of dollars. They're paying people Social Security that are dead. Paying out thousands and thousands of dollars to people that's dead."

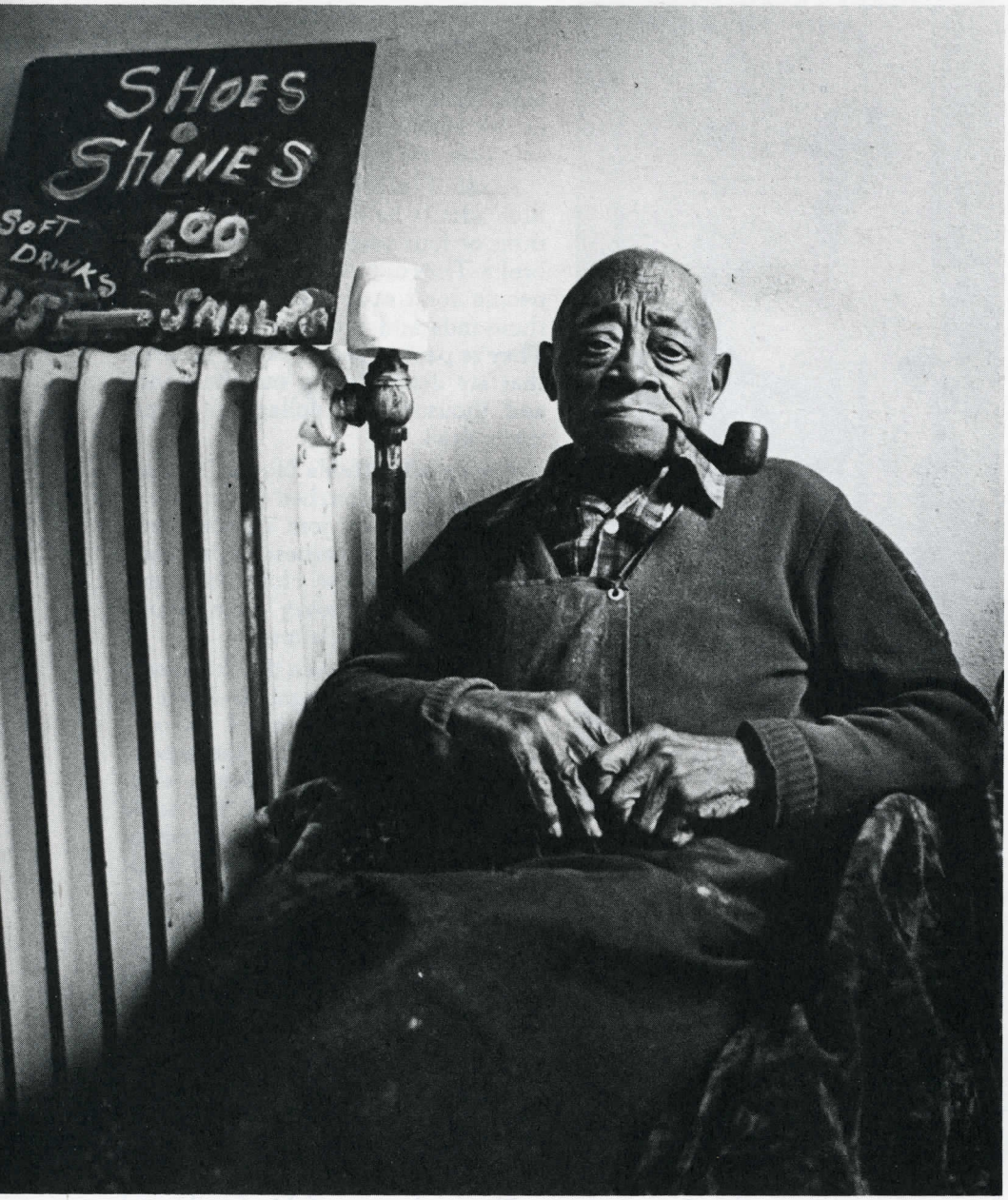
The usually affable Blue will "wisecrack" in a high-pitched voice, wait to see your reaction, join in when you laugh, then turn earnest again when he talks about the cloth footwear. "People will get away from tennis shoes yet," he proclaims.

Blue looked on when the showboats came up the Monongahela River to Morgantown at the turn of the century, and is around to see the experimental Rapid Transit System electronically slide alongside the same riverbanks two blocks from his shop. He remembers when "life for a black man in Morgantown was hard, because of prejudice. Lots of prejudice." But the Blue family "did what our parents told us. We went to church. We didn't pass no opinions that our parents didn't approve."

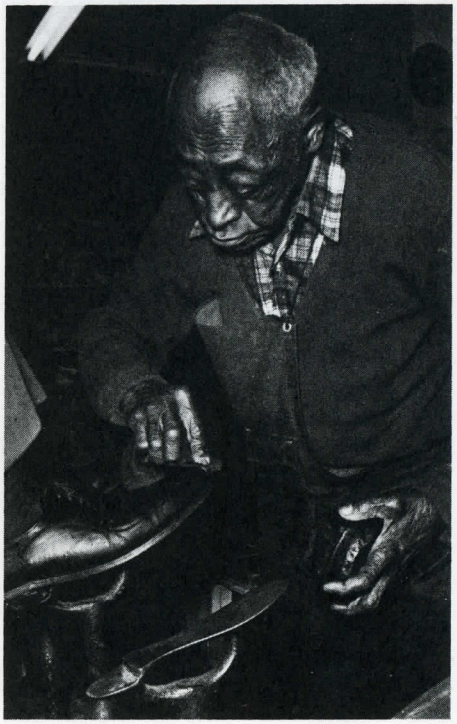
And he recalls vividly when "the river ran dry in 1932, all the way dry. Only thing running in it was sewage. People today don't believe it, but it's true."

Blue and some of his family and friends used to do janitorial work at the Old Strand Theatre, less than a block from where his business is now, and they saw the first showing of a movie in Morgantown in 1922. "We used to clean that place. We were working on that theater, cleaning it, when the show moved in. There was my brother, sister, myself, and four or five others. They put the chairs in. *Girls Will Be Girls.* That's the first show that was ever in Morgantown."

The son of a plasterer and one of ten children (a sister Calvetta and a brother Columbus, both in their 70's, survive), Blue says he continues to work so long "because God gave me hands to work." He had to go to work



Left: In chilly weather, Blue waits for customers by the radiator.
Below: There's no secret to a good shine, Blue says. "Just know what to do."



early to help the family when his father, then 40, fell seven stories and died several months later of complications.

When asked why he thinks he has lived so long, he shakes his head and doesn't answer. When pressed to reply, he just says, "I don't know. Nobody does." But he advises people to "keep active. If you're busy you don't have time for troubles." Although he smokes a pipe once in a while and used to drink some, he says he mostly leaves tobacco and alcohol alone. "I used to drink. It's no good. Drinking is no good," he says, for emphasis. "Half the women ain't no good, either."

Blue has a liking for fine automobiles. He fondly remembers a 1930 Essex and an old Buick. He contends such cars helped him to attract women, a statement of past history which he relates with a smile and a sound that is a cross between a wail, a laugh, and a spank of his knee.

But his great pasttime was playing baseball in the old Negro Leagues. He played for the Morgantown Aces. "I caught a good bit. Sometimes when we traveled I'd play second. We had some good ball clubs. We played the Homestead Grays. The Covington Cubs. Both of them had players that could make any league team. They was good ball players. Lots of those players didn't do nothin' but play ball. We had to work but we had a good team. We had a boy named Snow Parker, a long-ball hitter. Ah, he was good. But all of 'em's dead. John McGraw [the great Yankee manager] would have liked to have him but they wouldn't take him because Negroes weren't allowed."

As a twist, Blue explains with a grin that the Morgantown team occasionally used one white player, a pitcher, "and sometimes when we would travel they wouldn't want us to play on account of having him!"

Blue says that "If I had it to do over again I'd be a shoemaker. I'd learn how to fix shoes. That's the coming business. People going to get back to leather. They're going to get away from tennis shoes yet." ✱

Charlie Blevins at the Red Robin Inn.

The Coon Dog Truth

Charlie Blevins at the Red Robin Inn

Interview by Michael Kline
Photographs by Doug Yarrow

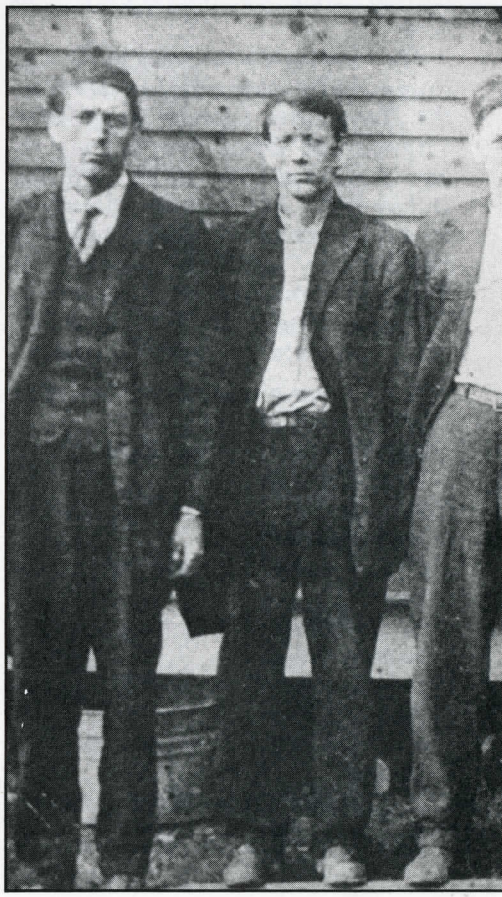
The Red Robin Inn at Borderland, just eight miles north of Williamson on old U.S. 52, has long been a gathering place for lonesome, weary travelers in search of refreshment, a good tale, and plenty of old mountain music. Charlie Blevins, the proprietor, loves to expound on "our old mountain ways" with his songs and lore, and his inn doubles as a museum. Every imaginable artifact from the hand-loading days of coal mining can be seen hanging on the wall behind the bar, along with various ancient handmade musical instruments, and other assorted antiques. Charlie has a story for every item, including his favorite tale sparked by a photograph of a 12-toed moonshiner, about whom he has written a song. His Blevins forebears were some of the early long hunters who ventured through the Cumberland Gap in the mid-18th century. His grandfathers were among the first men to go to work in the coal mines of Mingo County. Charlie himself, now 57, has subsisted by coal mining and farming. His present livelihood, the Red Robin Inn, is threatened by the construction of Corridor G highway, about which he has also written a song to a familiar John Prine tune.

The interview took place in the Red Robin Inn last year under a grant from the Humanities Foundation of West Virginia and Davis and Elkins College. A radio program called "The Red Robin Inn," highlighting Charlie's music, was produced as a part of "The Home Place," a 13-part series about West Virginia stories and music. Charlie's song, "Corridor G Highway," was featured on that program:

"When I was a child I was raised in the old coal camps
Down by that old Tug River on the Borderland shore.
There's a backwards old tavern I've often remembered,
So many times that my memory is worn.
And Daddy won't you take me back to Mingo County,
Down by Tug River where the Red Robin stays,
I'm sorry little Charlie, too late in the asking.
Old 'Corridor G' has dozed it away."

Charlie Blevins. See, there's a highway supposed to come through this

Above: The Red Robin features a large collection of musical instruments. Here Charlie plays an old fretless banjo.
Right: The Blevins brothers of Johnson County, Kentucky. Charlie's grandfather, Marshal (*far right*), moved to West Virginia in 1909, about the time this photograph was made. Photographer unknown.



area here and wipe out a lot of our heritage. They call it the Corridor G highway. And it's already supposed to have been here, but they run a little low on funds and things. This tavern is kind of a landmark where these people gather in here to meet with friends and listen to a little of this here old country music, and their old ways of life. It's kind of passing on and getting away from us, and I try to hold it together through history just the best I can. The people still enjoy it. They get away from it, you see, they go plumb off to these other states, and when they come back, they'll get right in here and hear the old-fashioned stuff they heard way back when they was young. They still want to stay with their heritage. But this modernization thing, it's whupping a lot of our heritage out, they're taking it out fast. We're trying our best to hold some of it together, to preserve it. So I kind of made this song here about when I was a kid raised in these old coal camps.

I run my own history back, all the way through my generations, and they came into this country from Scotland there, back in the 1600's. Dr. Daniel Blevins was one of them, and I believe his brother's name was William. William and Daniel. They came from Scotland down into England, which was the embarkation point back in them days for anybody coming to America. They embarked from England, then, and came into Virginia. They got an Indian land grant and settled in there for a while. And then they came out of Virginia, I'd say 1680 or so, and settled in North Carolina. Then they came out through there and down through the Cumberland Gap and scattered out all over Kentucky. Yes, William and Daniel. From them two brothers the Blevinses started springing up just like stick weeds all over the country, and yet today they still stand out true to form. They're still Blevinses.

On my dad's side I was pretty well

Scotch on both sides. They was Blevins, and Pucketts, and Comptons, and Poes. And then on my mother's side you come down into German there, you get that Hager in there, and then you come right back to Scotch again. She was a Hager on her mother's side and a Wyatt on her father's side. Wyatt or Watt, that's strictly a Scotch name.

All of my family come into Mingo County from out of Johnson County, Kentucky, over there around White House and Paintsville, Kentucky. I've got a picture of all them old-timers hanging right over here on the wall, my grandpap, my great-uncles there. By the turn of the century Johnson County was still a backward place. The mines over there hadn't ever got built up like these mines right in here. The C&O Railroad hadn't made it up there then. It was all just farming and timber, and it was even pretty hard to get your timber out of there at the time. They cut this here timber through the winter and they'd have to wait until the spring raises come to raft the logs out of there. They'd make log rafts and bring them down the creeks to the Big Sandy River, on into Catlettsburg, Kentucky. That was the lumber center for the whole eastern part of Kentucky. So everybody out there was a-cutting timber and there was a lot of competition. It was awful hard work, too. Most of them didn't mind hard work, but they figured they could better themselves coming in here and getting on this railroad that was coming through, or working these mines. There was a few that worked the road for a while, but I guess they had that there mining in their blood. Most every one of them went right to the mines as quick as the mines got started.

I heard Pap tell about when he come in here, he was a little old boy, said he wasn't over five or six years old. He's got a memory like an elephant, he can go back there and pick it up! He said one of his older sisters, Mandy, and her husband, Boyd Adams, come in here first, and Boyd worked as a guard at the Williamson tunnel. They had just put the N&W train tunnel through the mountain at Williamson. Pap said he'd go up to the guard shack and stay with his Uncle Boyd. Mostly what they watched for, you see, they hadn't ever walled the tunnel up on the inside. Loose rocks, maybe, or something would come down on the track. He'd have to go in there and remove them rocks, or get the crew if it was a big rock, to keep the train from hitting it. Later they got the tunnel all walled up with stone and cemented it.

I heard Pap tell about coming here when he was just a little old kid. Pap said they moved in here on a wagon and team away back there about the turn of the century. Pap and his oldest brother had to drive the milk cow through. Said they drove her from Paintsville, Kentucky, into Nolan, West Virginia—it's about two miles down the road here—and they settled at Nolan, back up in the head of one of them hollows. Grandpap bought a little old farm and they settled in there.

And I said, "Did you drive that milk cow all the way from Johnson County on foot, Pap?"

He said, "That's what we had to do, had no other transportation." It was just a little old wagon road through there at the time, all there was.

I said, "What in the world did you do when you got hungry?"

"Well, we just milked the old cow. She had to be milked, so we just milked the cow and drank the milk."

"How long did it take you to drive that cow from Paintsville?" I said.

"About three days and three nights."

"What did you do when night time come?"

"We just milked the old cow. We'd just tie her up and lay out and go to sleep. Morning time come, we milked, drank the milk, and hit the trail again. We made it in here."

I said, "You fellers had it pretty tough, didn't you?"

He said, "Getting here was just the start of it. When we went to cleaning up these hillsides to farm it, that's when the rough part come in."

They was seven brothers, and about the turn of the century they all come in this territory but one, my Uncle Tom. He stayed in Morgan County. See, this had just started to open up in here. The N&W Railroad come through here. I reckon it got in operation about 1892. At first Grandpap went to work on the railroad, then he went to work in the mines. As his boys got older he got them jobs in the mines. 'Course, they went to mining back then at 12, 13, 14 years old. Pap went in when he was 14, went to this old mine right over here at Borderland, on the Ken-

tucky side. He said he went to trapping for 10¢ an hour. You've got these trap doors in the mines for motors pulling out the coal on the main lines. When the motor (it's like a little train; in the old days the cars were pulled by mules) comes through there you have to open a door, which held your air up at the work face. It was your ventilation back in them days. After the motor passed through, you'd shut the door, you see, so that the air'd stay up in the face where the miners were working. I've got an old cloth bank cap, got an old oil light on it, and that's what Pap used when he went in the mines. I said, "Pap, that didn't make much light. How'd you see with that rascal there?"

"Well, Charlie," he said, "you put yourself in my position. Back in them days that's the only thing we had. We thought we had it made," he said. "You could see good with it."

He said you could use about any kind of fuel in it, you could take kerosene or coal oil and burn that, or you could take "Sunshine Wax"—I can remember that whenever I was a boy that they still had it, it come in a little old box just like a candle. You could take that wax and stick it right down in that light there. The lamp has got a little old catcher on the side there that catches your wax as it come down and run around the spout. You could buy that wax for a nickle a box, and it would last you a week. And he said if you run out of money, didn't have enough to buy coal oil with, he said you could take this here old fat, just like when you killed your hogs and things, render that fat down into lard oil, he said, and burn that lard oil in your lamp. And he said that's all they had.

Pap had another cap—I've got it over here—that was a little bigger, but about the same difference. They called it a chore torch, and they burned oil or lard in it when they'd go out to do their chores. I can remember they didn't have no electricity or nothing in here until about 1941, and you had to use a chore torch to do your chores with of a night. A lot of times, after you'd worked these fields and things, you'd be after dark and you'd have to have something to milk by. But now, they made their preparations, and they come through it pretty good there, but they had everything, and what they

didn't have they'd make it. And that's the way you'd come through and the way you survived.

And back in the tail end of the Depression, in '42 there, just when the war was getting started, we lived in these old coal camps, and they'd run you from one house to another. As the mines played out they'd sell the houses right out from under you. They'd come in then and just tear most of them down and sell them for what they could get out of them, maybe salvage five or six hundred dollars worth of lumber. They'd give us boys about a dollar a day to tear them down. They just kept a-running us there, and we run out of places to go. We was over on the West Virginia side here when we got sold out again. My pap, he said, "Damn if I ain't tired of being pushed around these here places. They've run me all my life and I'm getting tired of being run. I'm going to buy me a damn place!" I wondered what in the hell he's going to buy with. He's just worked these old mines in here like everybody else has. He ain't got nothing to buy with. Why, everyone in here is poor.

Old man, he kind of fooled us. He always was kind of shifty, and he come up with a little money, enough to pay a down payment on a little farm in Martin County. And he went down there and bought it off an old-timer. Twenty-four acres of land and a two-story house, one of these here pre-Civil War houses, way it was built. It was an awful fine place, nice barn, good pasture land, everything on it. We fixed everything up and got it rolling pretty good. That's the first home we could ever really call our own.

From then on after Pap got his start, that kind of set us all up. We had a place we could go. And once we got settled in I seemed like I had more time for things like music. I never could seem to get enough of that when I was a little old kid.

Most of the Blevinses could sing pretty good, but the real music talent come from my mother's side, it was on the Wyatt and Hager side of the family. My mother could play just about anything she picked up, she was just gifted to it. She was real good on a piano, and she could play a handsaw, or blow one of these old jugs, or play an accordian, or just anything she played.

I remember one time whenever I was a boy, about 12 or 13 years old, didn't have nothing but an old big domar hen. An old feller had an old handmade banjo. It had a groundhog hide on it. I fell in love with that thing when I heard it, and I says, Lord, I'd like to have that banjo there. I asked him what he'd take for it and he said a dollar. I said, hot dog, a dollar was as big as a wagon wheel back then. I said, there's no way in the world I could get a-hold of a dollar. I happened to think, I had that old domar hen, and I said, "You wouldn't take a big fat hen for that rascal, would you?"

He said, "What kind of a hen you got?"

I said, "I got an old big domar hen!" I went and got it, took it over there.

"Yeah, yeah, I believe I'll trade you for that hen there, boy," he said, "except for one thing. Them strings cost a quarter a set. I'll have to take them strings off."

I said, "Well, that dad-burned banjo ain't no good without the strings!"

"I'll tell you," he said, "what I'll do. You go pick me a gallon of blackberries and I'll give you the strings." Well, I was about as fast as a cat back then. I cut loose and got my old eight-pound lard bucket and filled it full of blackberries and hustled it back to him there.

And I said, "You tune that thing up for me." Well, he tuned it up, and I was so dad-burned tickled with it I done knocked it out of tune before I got to the house. I didn't know nothing about it nohow too much. I'd seen a banjo before but had never had a-hold of one, never was that fortunate. So I got it in and my mother looked at it.

"What have you got there, Charlie?"

"I got an old handmade banjo."

She said, "Where'd you get that?" And I told her what I had done.

"Let me see it." I reached it to her and she just sat down. It had them old wooden keys and things there, and she tuned that rascal up there and went to playing it. I got to listening. She was playing that "Groundhog" so plain you could smell him a-cooking.

"Where in the world did you learn to play a banjo like that, Ma?"

"Well," she said, "I played one when I was a little girl, been several years since I picked one." She just played the daylights out of that thing. So I kind of picked it up from her.

I got kind of tickled at my pa there. I'd peck and bang on that old banjo and just raise all kinds of sand. And he'd say, "Charlie!"

"What, Pa?"

"Get down over the riverbank and pick that thing, you're just aggravating me to death!" He'd run me over the riverbank, and I'd get down there

Top left: Beer was a quarter on opening day at the Red Robin, 1955. Here are sister-in-law Tina Ruther, Charlie, cousin Ford Blevins, and Charlie's father Arthur.
Bottom left: The Red Robin Inn was still ten years in the future, but this 1945 photograph finds sailors Charlie and brother Burl (*right*) in another tavern, in Las Vegas. Charlie was 19 and Burl 17. Photographer unknown.
Below: Like any tavernkeeper, Charlie Blevins dispenses free advice and good counsel.

where I wouldn't aggravate nobody, and I'd just thump and raise sand with it. I got to where I would pick it a little bit, and got to coming in on that "John Henry" there. The old man was standing up top of the riverbank one day and he heard me.

"Hey, Charlie!"

"What, Pa?"

"Come up here and play me one."

"Hell with you! You want to hear me, come down over the riverbank. That's where you run me to."

I asked him one day after I got grown, I said, "Hey, Pap, it don't seem like none of your people ever liked the five-string banjo too good. What was the matter?" About everybody in the country loved to hear the banjo back in them days. It was the leading entertainment. And I said to Pap, "You take an old banjo picker, he always got by when no one else did."

"Now," he said, "I like to hear one, but I'll tell you the reason, Charlie, that none of our people ever did like the five-string banjo. Way back there your grandpa, my dad, always told me, said if you see an old boy coming through the country, and he's got a five-string banjo strapped over his back and got a rooster under his arm, said you watch that rascal, said he's up to no good. He'll have your woman and be gone by dark. Said he'd pick, pick, pick around that woman, said she'd get struck on that banjo picking. Said, and he got that rooster, and he'd have your woman gone."

"Oh, foot, there ain't nothing to that."

He said, "Now Charlie, you watch him." And I did. And, by day, there was a whole lot of truth in it. Now the way we do it here, when we tell the truth now, we say it's a "coon dog" truth. 'Cause you can swear by your coon dog. That old coon dog, if he lies, we'll shoot him. So when we say it's a "coon dog" truth, then it's true.

Back in those days you'd see them old banjo pickers coming through the country, them old gals, they'd kind of fall for them, you know. And that rooster, well, that was his status. That let them know he had more than just that five-string banjo, he had a rooster, too.

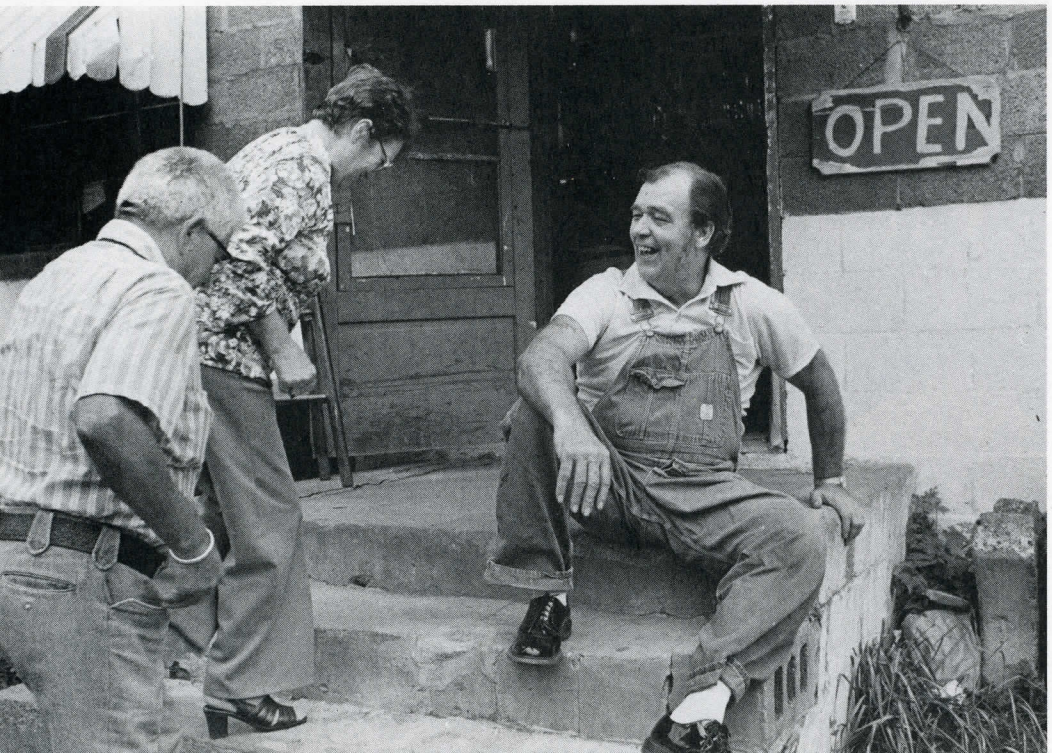
About three years ago I went over to Jenkins, Kentucky, over to a Blevins Family reunion they have over there at Laurel Lake every year. Me and my brother Bob always pick and grin a little bit for them there, and they get a big kick out of it. Well, that year one of my great-uncles, old man Hamilton Blevins, was there—he was around a hundred years old and an Old Baptist preacher—and I seed him standing there. So whenever I got up there and hit down on that old banjo I seen that old man take off at a little trot. He shook his head and he left. That was my grandpa's brother. That belief is still held there. It come right back to him that an old banjo picker wasn't no 'count. So I just rared back and played that thing as loud as I could and he got way over there in the tall timbers and stood there shaking his head.

But mostly back in the old days the biggest majority of people could pick an old five-string banjo. They were about their only entertainment. That's the way I picked up my old tunes. If I found out a feller picked, if he lived up this hollow over here, well foot, I'd go up there. Just a little boy. If he had a little time on his hands, I'd just sit there and listen as long as he'd play. If it ended up where he'd get tired, I'd go hit up the next way. Maybe the next one would have a different tune or a different key, or something, and I'd get me something a little different. I watched and watched. Back in them days there wasn't no such thing as a three-fingered roll, or picks. They had what they called a claw-hammer style, but I never could get that down pat. So I just come through and got my own patent on my style. I got what you call kind of a loping style. I keep my time in it just like an old horse a-trotting. I could do a little of that claw-hammer, but I was more comfortable with my own style.

I've got an old banjo here with a cat hide on it—I traded an old preacher out of it—I've traced it back, and I'd say that banjo is around 115 or 116 years old, been around this country for generations. It's got wooden keys on it, it's fretless. Back in our day we just called it a "slick-neck" banjo. We didn't know what a fret was, anyhow.

We'd see one of these here store-bought banjos, which in them days only cost you about 15 or 20 dollars. I seen this Sears and Roebuck catalog dated 1902 and you could get one for $2.75. Now a set of strings costs $4.50. So it just tickled us to death even just to get a look at one back then. We didn't get to touch it, we just looked at it. Back then they would value them by the brackets, the more brackets you had on it to tighten that hide down that much tighter, the more tone you could get out of it. With the modern plastic heads you never hear much about brackets anymore. I've got three, a German one, an old Gibson RB 100, and I got one of these here whatcha-callit Silver Eagle Kays that I like pretty good. They just run in dollar value today, but back then if you had a banjo

Charlie welcomes patrons to the Red Robin.



Night is the time for the old music at the Red Robin. Blevins performs regularly, as do other musicians.

you just made the best of it. There wasn't anything around sounded much better, 'cause about everybody had about the same thing. They all sounded good to me.

I've got another old instrument here, it's our old Appalachian plucking dulcimer. Now this old instrument here, it's been in these mountains for years and years. There's more of these went out of these mountains than ever came into them. This plucked dulcimer, I guess you could call it a cousin to your hammered dulcimer, one of the oldest instruments on record. It's mentioned in the Bible in the Book of Daniel, third and tenth chapter. The plucked dulcimers were brought in here from Scotland and Ireland and all over Europe. Most of them around here was made around Huntington, and I've run into them all through these hills, down through Kentucky and Tennessee.

I run this dulcimer back. It was made during the Civil War, about 1863. An old gentleman up here in Chatteroy made it, and I used to work with his nephew, Mose Alley, way back—he'd be up in his 90's now, so I know it's an old dulcimer. He said his uncle made two of them, he hadn't ever strung this one. An old preacher happened to get a-hold of this dulcimer and I traded him out of it. I traded him an old shotgun. That thing could shoot and throw rocks for 30 minutes and just kill from both ends. You know, I ain't heard from that preacher since? I don't know whether the shotgun got him, or what. But I still got the dulcimer. If he's gone, may his soul rest in peace, 'cause he sure left me a good piece.

I could play you a lot of different tunes on it, but back in these mountains, if you don't know the "Wildwood Flower" you ain't considered a mountaineer. We call that the West Virginia national anthem, and when you're off somewhere playing music, that's the first thing they'll ask for. "Hey, buddy, play that 'Wildwood Flower'." Then you can play it and they'll turn around and say, "Buddy, do you know that 'Wildwood Flower'?"

This here was a good, soft music, and these old mountain people enjoyed it in here. Well, that's what it is, "dulcimer" in Latin, I believe it's "sweet, soft music."

I have a lot of old pictures here, old photographs. Here's one, John Fleming was his name in this country, but it was Mullens to start with. I knowed that old rascal. He died back in the '50's and he had 12 toes, six on each foot. He was what you'd call our king bootlegger, from down on Kenny's Creek at the Wayne-Mingo County border. He come in this country from Kentucky where he had to leave—I was reading where he had 37 charges agin him over there. He was supposed to have killed a man over there, and according to a legend he called himself half-bear, half-cat, or half-wolf. He was something else! His feet was so big he couldn't get his shoes on and he went barefooted. I've got another picture of him setting in an old cane-bottom chair at his home on Kenny's Creek after he got older. He looks about the same in that picture, them old feet spreaded all over the porch, and his old britchy legs rolled up there. He kept the judges pretty well supplied with moonshine. There was Judge Ferguson. They'd catch old John and take him down there once in a while. Judge'd ask him, said, "John, is that moonshine any good?"

He'd say, "You ought to know, you've drunk enough of it!" And old judge just look at him and grin. He'd let him off kind of light. So he kept the judge supplied down there.

One day the judge was a-holding court there, and old John tried to get a gallon to him. He got him an old big

pumpkin and cut the top off it, and took the stuffin's out of it. Then he put a gallon jug of 'shine down in that old big pumpkin. He went in the courthouse then, old judge was a-holding court, you know, he seed John come in, kinda winked at old John and grinned a little bit. So old John says, "Judge, I brought you a pumpkin."

"Yeah, John," he says. "Just bring it up here and roll it back under my desk." So old John walked up there, and them 12 big toes all over that courthouse floor, carrying that pumpkin. He got up to the judge's bench and just laid that pumpkin there and took them old big toes, and went to pushing that pumpkin back towards the desk where the judge was holding court. Rolled it back and says, "There you are, judge." Old judge had him a gallon sitting right there between his feet in that pumpkin, and John walked out of there just a-grinning. He knew what he'd done for the old judge.

And he sold it to the high sheriff over here in Logan County. And there was a bunch caught him one time, he was going down there with a wagonload of it. This bunch of deputies didn't know him, and they captured old John, had his load and everything. Well, the sheriff had already paid for that load of white lightning that John had on the wagon. When they brought him in and the sheriff found out who he was he hollered, "What in the hell did you fellers do with that damn wagon?"

"We got it confiscated, Sheriff."

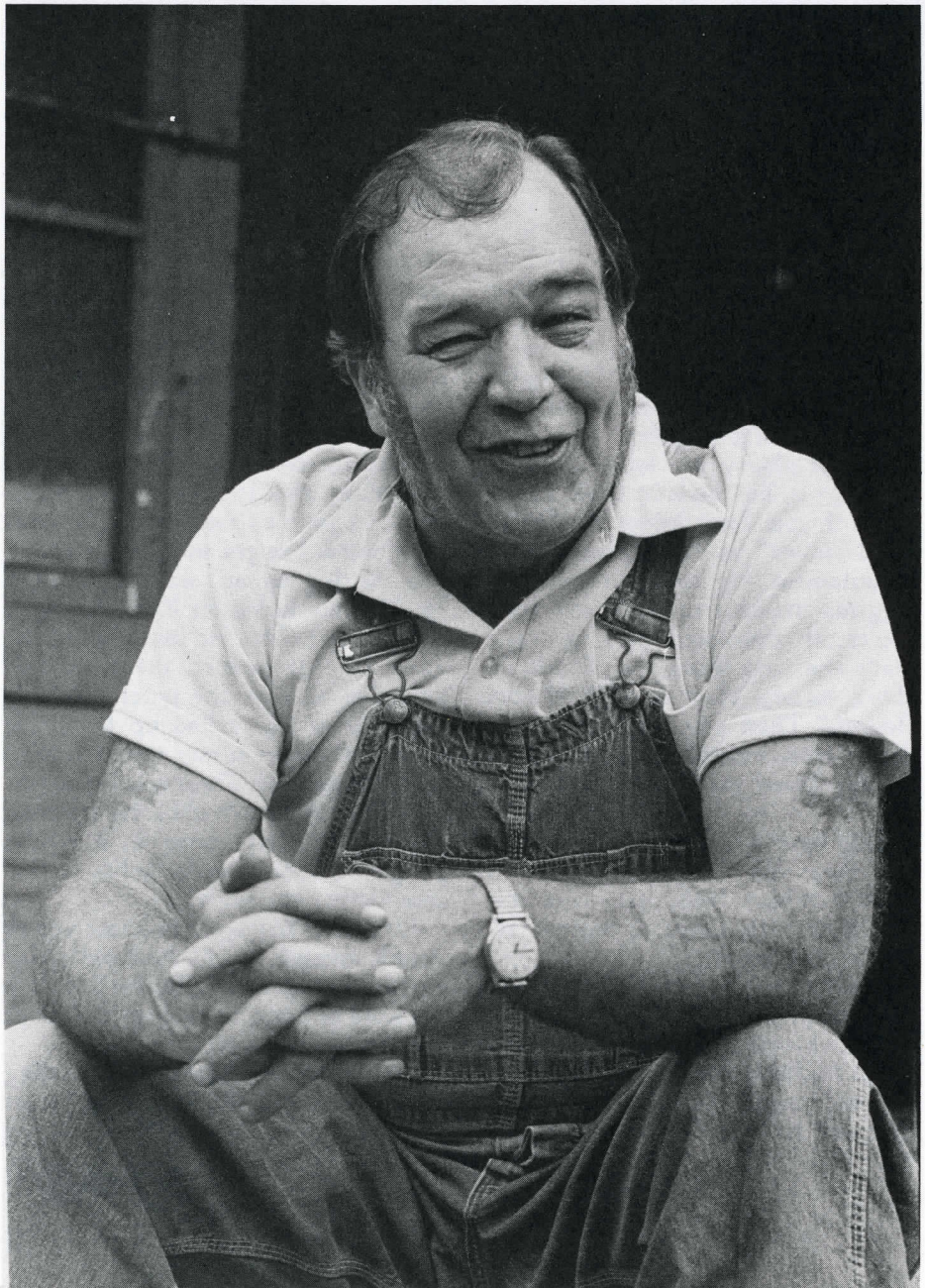
"Let's go get that wagon!"

They went and got the wagon, and the sheriff turned old John loose. "That's my damn liquor, I've paid for it," he said. That old John had a time. He's got descendants all over the country.

All these pictures and things reminds me of when this country was young and wild, and of how my family come in here to help settle it. What they went through has helped us younger fellers—'course, I'm not that young anymore, right at 56 years old—but it taught us a whole lot, learned us how to kind of survive on our own. Today, now, they agitate the people pretty bad right through this recession, inflation, and everything. But you take these old-timers around my age. They know what it was back then. We can look back and think, well foot, people now got it made to what we had it. I mean, you could make out just fine on the bare necessities.

People get used to having a lot of stuff they don't need. That's what they look forward to all the time. You deprive them of it and they think they're suffering. There ain't no suffering to that. The way we was raised kind of made us self-sufficient, the way we come through. 'Course now, we're having a time with this younger generation. A lot of it, I guess, is our own fault, 'cause we kind of made it a little too easy on them, which everybody wants to make it easy for their kids. But I try to keep mine in line and let them know where it come from. I know they got it a lot easier than what we had, but I like to make them where they're self-sufficient and where they know they can survive without being on this or that. That's one thing my family never did do, we always was proud. We never did accept no handouts, no relief, or nothing else. We didn't care how low we got, we'd always dig for ourselves. We'd help our neighbor if we could, if he was down and out, we'd help him. That's the way we worked it back in these mountains. And my family come through like that, like these old pioneer settlers. And most of them are hanging like that right today. I know I've got some brothers just about like I am, independent as a hog on ice. We always just stayed right with it.

"Now the way we do it here, when we tell the truth, we say it's a 'coon dog' truth," Charlie says. " 'Cause you can swear by your coon dog."



Millionaires' Town

The Houses and People of Bramwell

By Beth A. Hager

Nestled among the hills of western Mercer County on the banks of the Bluestone River and in the heart of the Pocahontas Coalfield is Bramwell. The small town dazzles its visitors even today, 50 or more years after its heyday. Settled by coalfield founders and early coal operators, Bramwell's elegant architecture reflects the turn-of-the-century industrial period—a generous remnant of West Virginia's version of the "gilded age." There are estimates that 11 or 12 millionaires lived in Bramwell during the period.

The story of the Pocahontas Coalfield, renowned for its ten-foot seams of high quality coal, began in 1883 when the first carload of coal was shipped by the Norfolk & Western Railway from Pocahontas, Virginia (located a few miles southwest of Bramwell), to Norfolk. In 1884 a group of Philadelphia financiers began buying great tracts of coal land along the Bluestone River in Mercer County under the name of the Bluestone Coal Company. This organization under its local manager, C. H. Duhring, planned the town of Bramwell and established its headquarters there in 1885. Many of the company's managers and professionals moved into Bramwell, looking after the Bluestone leases to coal operators. The Bluestone Coal Company later became a part of the Flat Top Coal Land Association, the largest holder of coal lands in the Pocahontas Coalfield. The Land Association maintained its office in Bramwell for many years, even after it was reorganized and changed its name to the Pocahontas Coal and Coke Company.

Bramwell was a three-year-old boom town when this 1888 photograph was made. Most of the wooden business district burned down in the great fire of 1910. Photographer unknown.

Bramwell was named for another coal land investor, J. H. Bramwell, its first postmaster. The town grew fast and was incorporated in 1889. The mining camps of Coopers and Freeman were later incorporated into Bramwell, and for many years the enlarged town had the distinction of having three independent post offices within its corporate limits.

With its dirt streets, board sidewalks, and hitching posts, Bramwell in early photos looks more like something from the Old West than the elegant town of today. The Bluestone Inn, the town's hostel, is shown in a photo of 1888, proving that it was one of the earliest buildings constructed there. Wooden frame businesses and residences popped up on either side of Main Street, as well as a train station. Bramwell was a "spur" stop on the railroad; trains had to make special trips to it because it was not on the main line. Even so, there are reports of 14 trains a day going in and out of Bramwell at its height.

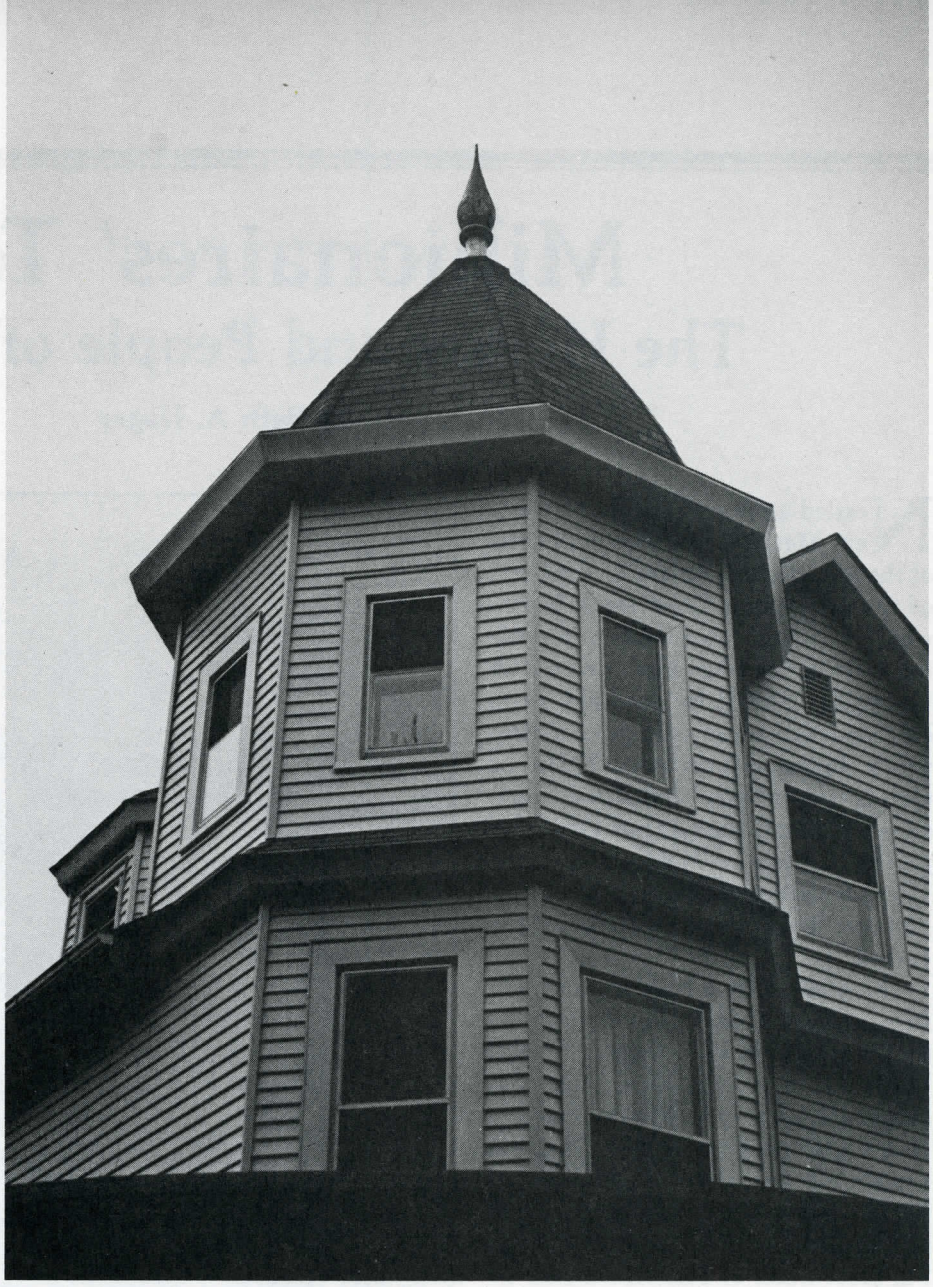
The Bank of Bramwell, famous because it supposedly was at one time

the richest bank of its size in the United States, was chartered in 1889. A handsome stone structure was built to house it in 1893. Several Bramwell residents recall that the black janitor of the bank used to roll a wheelbarrow full of cash down the street with an armed guard by his side, to load it on a train at the nearby station.

Also around 1893, the Masonic Temple was constructed across from the bank on Main Street. This two-story brick building was designed to contain a 300-seat public hall and offices in addition to the headquarters of the Masons. The offices were occupied by a lawyer and coal company executive, as well as the Pocahontas Company, the marketing organization for all Pocahontas coal. Several other coal company offices were located on Main Street. By 1896 Bramwell had a population of approximately 4,000 inhabitants.

On the morning of January 7, 1910, Bramwell's appearance drastically changed. Fire broke out in a pool room and bowling alley on Main Street, devouring that building and rapidly spreading down the block and across the street. The Bramwell Fire Department was assisted by crews from Pocahontas, Virginia, the Norfolk & Western, and several coal companies. Even so, all the buildings on one side of the block were completely destroyed. On the other side only two were saved, the Bluestone Inn and a house owned by coal operator Edward Cooper, and both structures were heavily damaged.

Bramwell immediately began rebuilding, under a new ordinance that any building constructed on Main, North River, and Bloch streets had to be of fireproof brick, stone, or mortar. Business life soon returned to normal. By the mid-1920's the business block of Main Street was again completely lined with buildings containing coal offices, dry goods stores, grocery stores, and pharmacies. The Bryant and Newbold Pharmacy on the corner of Main and Bloch streets (now the Corner Shop) was built very soon after the fire in 1910. It is said to have been the third store in the United States to stock Chanel No. 5 perfume, at the urging of its wealthy clientele. Several of the most notable houses were built in the years following 1910.

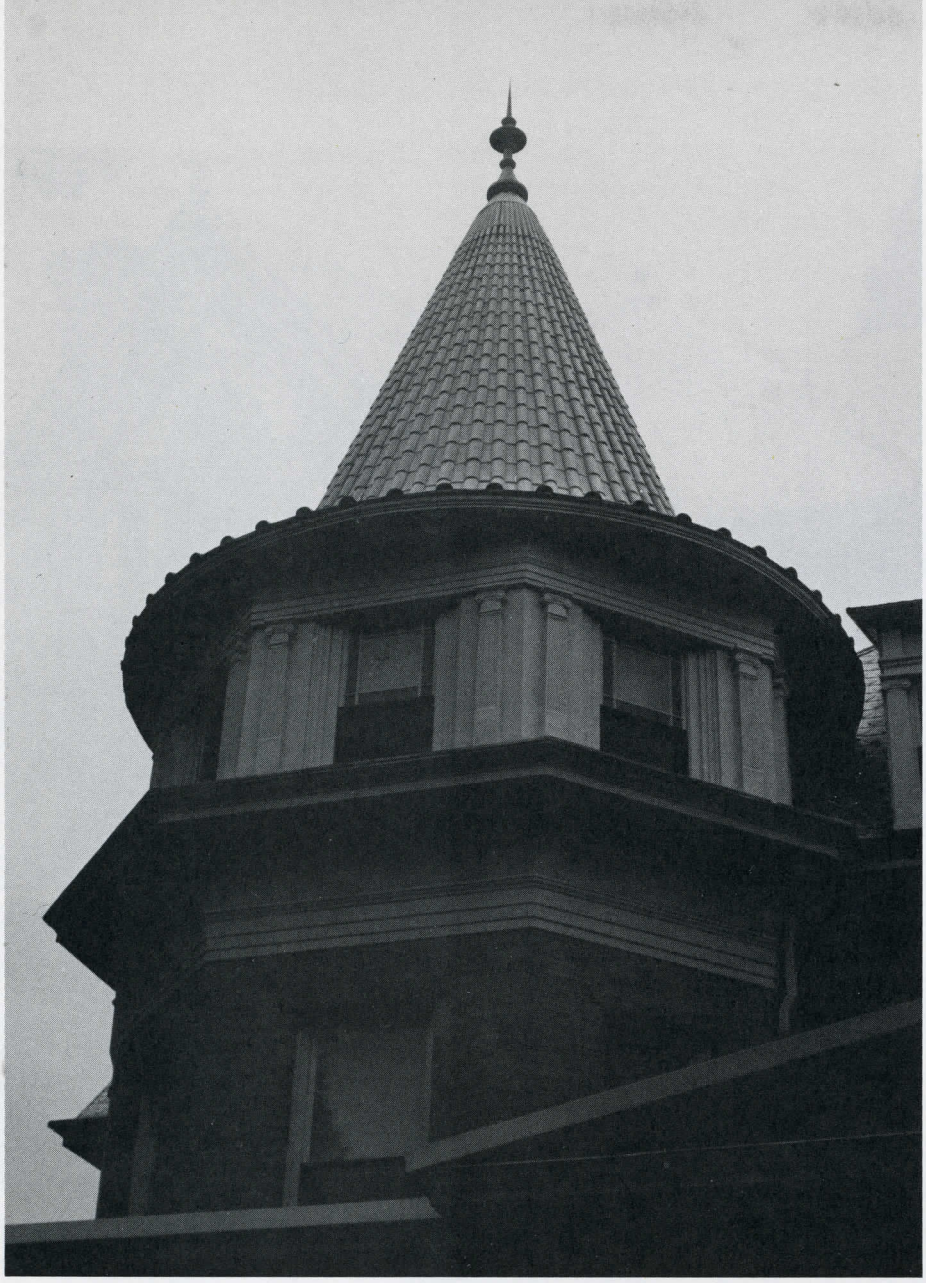


I. T. Mann's house overlooks the Bluestone River from a corner lot on South River Street. Photo by Beth Hager.

Bramwell continued to prosper until the stockmarket crash in 1929. Several local coal operators were ruined by the Depression, and the once fabulously rich Bank of Bramwell shut its doors. The closing of the bank signaled the decline of a grand era. The Bluestone Inn was later demolished, and the railroad station was abandoned and torn down sometime in the 1950's. Many families and proprietors moved away.

Little has changed since those calamities of decades ago. As one lifelong resident notes, "Bramwell is certainly not the town it once was," but it is remarkably well preserved. A renewed interest in local history and architecture has brought new people who are working to restore structures to their original grandeur. Longtime residents have made a successful effort to maintain their houses.

The result is gratifying. Bramwell may not know the traffic and bustle it once did, but the fine buildings remain as monuments to a time when business was big, and an immigrant miner's family could turn a little capital into a fortune—keeping in mind the countless hours of drudgery spent by many other miners laboring to create that fortune. The following de-



Turret of the Cooper house. Photo by Beth Hager.

Edward Cooper. Photographer and date unknown, courtesy Pocahontas Operators Association.

scriptions of houses and families are just a few of the stories of Bramwell.

Edward Cooper House

Edward Cooper was the son of John Cooper, the first man to open a mine in Mercer County. John Cooper came to the United States in 1862 from England, where he had begun working in the mines at the age of six and where his father had been killed in a mine. He and his family settled in Pennsylvania and, along with his brothers, John went back to mining. He worked his way up and in 1873 was able to open his own mine in Fayette County, West Virginia. In 1884 Cooper began the operation of Mill Creek Coal and Coke Company, making him the first coal operator in the West Virginia section of the Pocahontas Coalfield. The town of Coopers was named for him and was where he lived.

Edward was the second of John Cooper's two sons and five daughters. He became an attorney and general manager of the Mill Creek mines. Later he served two terms in Congress, beginning in 1914. He died of pernicious anemia in 1928 at the age of 54.

Bramwell became the home of Edward Cooper, his wife, and two children around the year 1900. They lived in a yellow frame house situated between the Bluestone Inn and several businesses. The house was severely damaged in the fire of 1910, so Edward had it torn down to make way for a new one. The present house was begun immediately. Visitors are impressed by this massive Queen Anne style 24-bedroom structure of orange brick specially ordered from England. The copper roof over the years has developed a bright green patina. Fountains, originally containing goldfish, are on either side of the walkway to the front door. Reportedly, miners employed by the family's Mill Creek mines worked on the house after hours.

Once inside, the visitor is amazed at the sight of the ornately carved oak staircase. A large stained glass window of a beige-gold background with a torch design in blues, reds, and greens dominates one of the landings. The meticulous carving of the staircase is repeated in decorative oak gratings in the top of interior doorways and before the large dining room window. The den has an elaborate metal ceiling which was handpainted by a man brought in from Cincinnati.

After the 1910 fire, the Coopers gradually bought the other lots from their houses down to the end of the block. Today a large yard contrasts with early photographs of the congested business block before the fire. On the grounds now are a garage with an apartment which was at one time

The Cooper house dominates a block of Main Street, across from the business district. Photo by Beth Hager.

the servants' quarters, a toolshed which was originally a playhouse, a small gazebo disguising a well, and an indoor swimming pool.

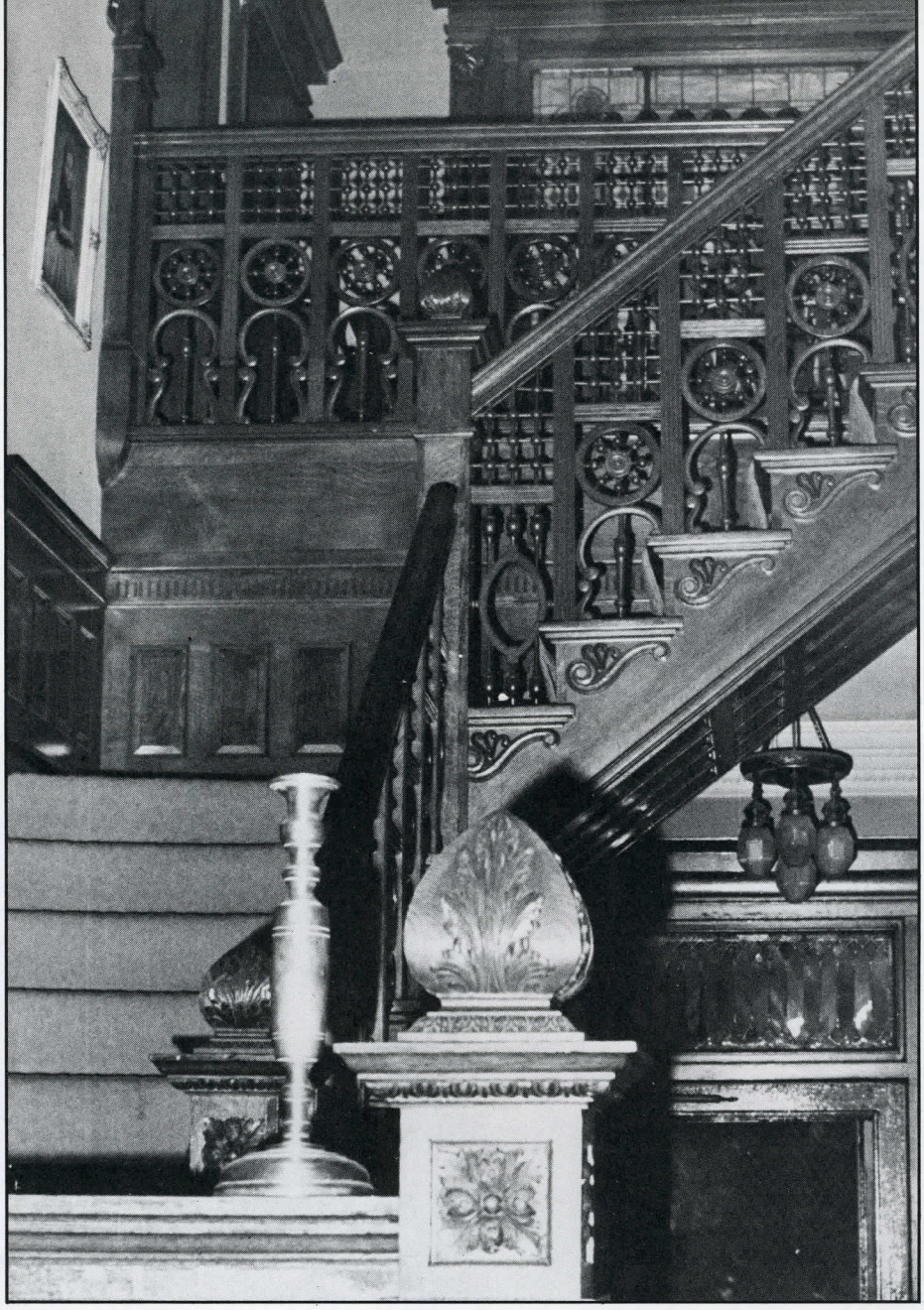
Edward Cooper, Jr., inherited the house after his father's death. He was an avid fisherman, and started a fish business by insulating the pool and keeping live fish there that he had caught himself. His daughter, Eve Cooper Murphy, and her husband, Bramwell Mayor Donald Murphy, still maintain the house, keeping it in the family.

Isaac T. Mann Buildings

No name stood so powerful in the early days of the Pocahontas Coalfield as that of I. T. Mann. Mann was the financier behind many different coal operations and was instrumental in the organization of the famous Bank of Bramwell and of the Pocahontas Fuel Company.

Mann was born in Fort Spring, Greenbrier County, one of the ten children of Matthew and Elizabeth Mann. He was named for an uncle Isaac, but according to a surviving niece he despised the name, preferring to use his initials. Mann was educated by private tutors and later began working at the Greenbrier Valley National Bank at Alderson, where his father was president. Brother Edwin also worked there, later becoming president of the First National Bank of Bluefield.

In 1889, I. T. Mann helped organize the Bank of Bramwell and was elected its first cashier. Mann was probably instrumental in the construction of the fine bank building in 1893, and according to architectural renderings still surviving, in 1901 he supervised the embellishment of the bank's interior. He added white Italian marble floors in various elaborate patterns, and solid oak paneling characterized by classical columnar pilasters and cornices. Mahogany paneling was installed in the board of directors room at the rear



The carved oak staircase inside the Cooper mansion was one manifestation of the incredible wealth of the new Pocahontas Coalfield. Photo by Billy Coram, *Bluefield Daily Telegraph.*

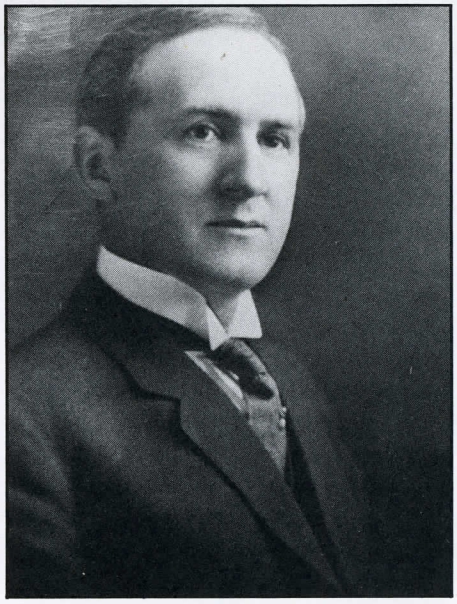
of the building, as were small carved gargoyle and horse heads at the doorways of the room. Mann's presence is still strongly felt in his old office, where his brass name plate remains on the door.

In 1899 Mann married Vernie Meyers, the daughter of Israel and Alice Meyers who owned property in Bramwell. In 1900 Mann bought three town lots from his new in-laws. There was a house on the property when he bought it, and early photos show that the house known today as the Mann house was actually remodeled from the earlier structure. This explains the rather irregular shape of the large three-story dwelling. The major renovations seem to have occurred around 1909.

The Mann house was stripped of many of its novelties and decorations about ten years ago by antique dealers and has suffered much abuse, but fortunately the present owners are carefully restoring it. The drawing room on the first floor boasts an ornately carved oak mantelpiece, and a sculpted plaster cornice surrounds the room with a thin border of gold leaf underneath. A plaster pattern on the ceiling hints where a large mural may once have been. Next to this parlor is a smaller library, which interestingly enough has walls covered in leather. A hidden panel opened by an electric device is found in the oak-paneled dining room and a servants' call bell which is still operable is located in the kitchen. The servants' quarters are attached to the main house, contributing to the long and rambling appearance of the structure. The house seems to have an endless number of rooms, with those on the third floor especially styled for children, scaled down to a lower height with miniature doors, closets, and fixtures.

Across the Bluestone River from the Mann house is a footbridge which leads to a playhouse which Mann constructed for his children—a playhouse so big that it has become a regular residence after some remodeling. A governess took the Mann children and their friends across the bridge to the playhouse, a large A-frame room with a tremendous stone fireplace, kitchen, and bathroom. A man by the name of E. L. Keesling later bought the playhouse, transforming it into a regular home, and developing the grounds into beautiful gardens which he used to advertise and charge admission to see. A man-made pond is located nearby.

I. T. Mann is also remembered in Bramwell for his generous support of the Presbyterian Church. In 1902 he gave the congregation its handsome



I. T. Mann was Bramwell's leading financier. Photographer unknown, courtesy Pocahontas Operators Association.

Left: W. H. Thomas had one of the grandest Bramwell estates. The corner view is from the Duhring Street side. Photo by Billy Coram, *Bluefield Daily Telegraph.*

Below: This 1930 aeriel view of Bramwell shows many of the town houses and surrounding estates. The Cooper house is the mansion centered across Main Street from the business district, with the Mann house (with tower) in the curve of the street near the end of the peninsula. Bloch Street intersects Main at the right end of the business district, with the Goodwill house at the end of Bloch Street bridge, center foreground. The Thomas estate sits directly to the right rear of the Goodwill house. The T-shaped Bluestone Inn is at the corner of Bloch and Main, beside the Presbyterian Church. Photograph by Underwood and Underwood.

Opposite page: This magnificent Tiffany stained glass window is at the bottom of the main staircase of the Thomas house. Photo by Beth Hager.

church building at the corner of Bloch and South River streets. It is of local bluestone styled in the neo-Romanesque mode and trimmed in green. It is said to be modeled after a small cathedral in Wales.

The Manns also maintained a home in Washington, which according to their niece was five stories high and was converted to an embassy after Mann's death. After their children were grown, the Manns spent most of their time in Washington and Mann died there of a heart attack on May 18, 1932. By that time he was broke, with his fortune lost in the stock market crash. One source says that he was worth $18 million one day and owed $81 million the next. His son, William, committed suicide in Washington some time after his father's death.

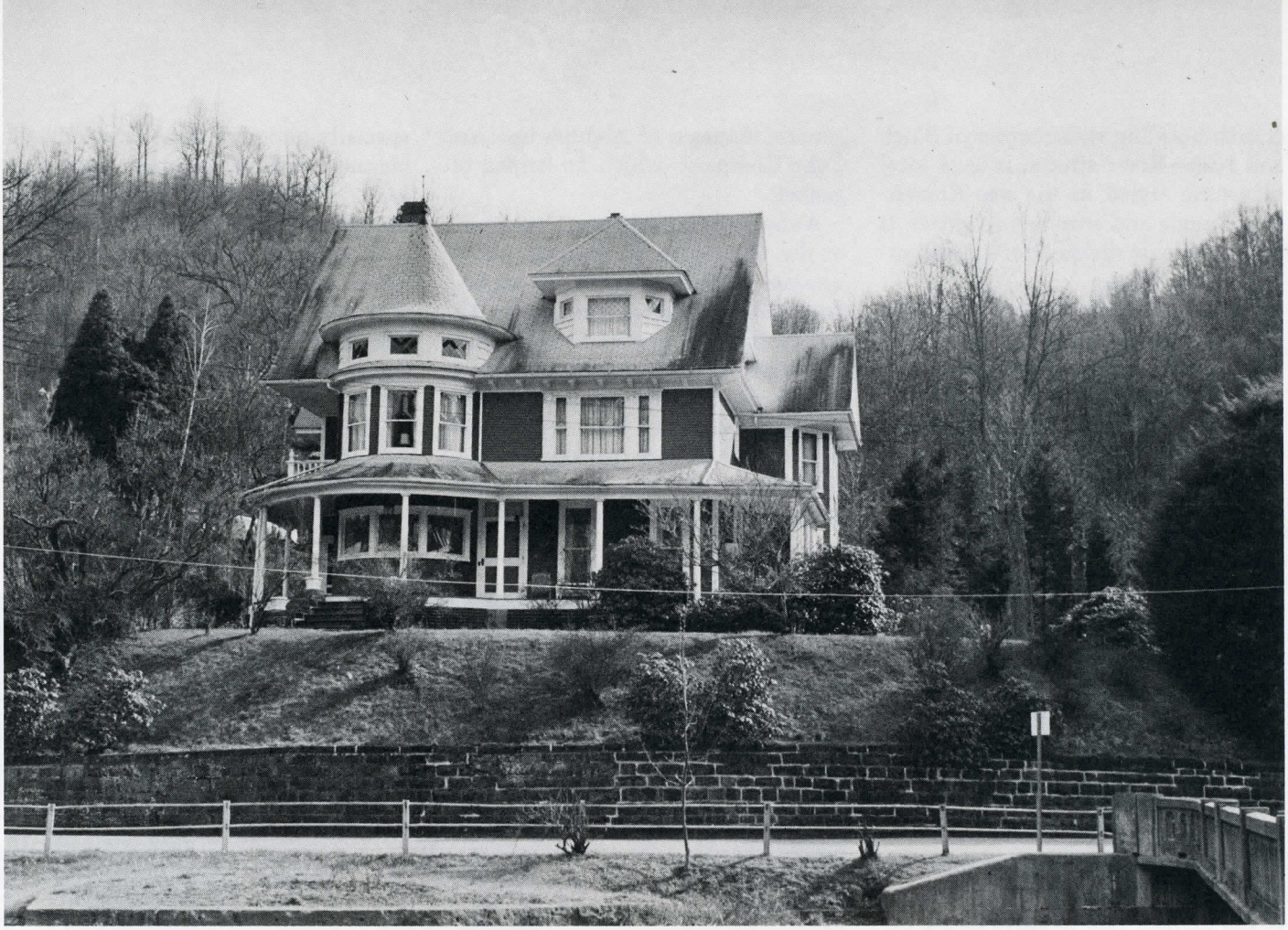
W. H. Thomas House

The Revival English Tudor house high on a hill overlooks Bramwell and the Bluestone River. This was the home of W. H. Thomas and family, another of the pioneer coal families in the Pocahontas Coalfield. The Thomases built the large house in the years between 1909 and 1912, and at the time it was considered one of the most beautiful in West Virginia.

William Harris Thomas was born in Wales on Christmas Day, 1862. His parents settled in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, when he was six years old. Thomas' biography sounds like the turn-of-the-century "rags to riches" story. He had to find work at age 16 when his father died, leaving a large family. He worked at several odd jobs, including newspaper carrier, clerk, and mechanic, before coming to the Pocahontas Coalfield in 1884 as a supply clerk for the Southwest Virginia Improvement C ompany. In 1887 he married Annie Cooper, daughter of John Cooper, and according to an 1896 edition of the *Bluefield Daily Telegraph*, "to his better half he concedes the greater share of the credit for the success which has attended his business career." That may well have been the case, for in 1889 Thomas was made manager of his father-in-law's company stores. In 1890 he became the general manager of Algoma Coal and Coke Company, which he helped organize.

A son and two daughters were born to the Thomases at Algoma. W. H. Thomas gained great wealth rapidly, developing several coal companies. The family lived at nearby Crystal while waiting for their Bramwell mansion to be completed. The story goes that the Thomases wanted a house that would reflect their British heritage so they chose the stately Tudor style of architecture. Reportedly, the timber was specially imported from England, and Herman Hill of Bramwell says that Mrs. Thomas told him that she brought masons from Italy to do the stonework in the house and on the surrounding grounds. Mrs. Thomas also told him that it cost $95,000 to construct the house, a phenomenal figure in the early part of the 20th century.

The most striking feature about the interior of the Thomas house is the magnificent stairway. The stairs split into two separate staircases after ris-



Philip Goodwill's house overlooks downtown Bramwell from across the river at the end of the Bloch Street bridge. Photo by Beth Hager.

ing to the landing, which is graced by a colossal stained glass window. Fireplaces with elaborately carved mantels are found on the first floor and in every bedroom. The living room has an ornate plaster ceiling. The third floor ballroom has a barrel vault ceiling running the length of the house.

The house had a central vacuum cleaner system, a dumb waiter to the third floor, and a shower with circular plumbing designed to surround the body with sprays of water. Most of these features are still operational.

On the grounds of the estate is a garage apartment matching the main house in the Revival Tudor style. Several different stories claim that this was once a gardener's apartment, a gymnasium, or an apartment for the Thomas son, John. The upstairs apartment has beautiful rafters.

Another Thomas story concerns the wedding of one of the daughters. Several people have said that a trellis of roses was stretched from the house down to the Presbyterian Church for the wedding and that a red carpet ran from the church to the train station to welcome guests and lead the wedding party. This story seems improbable, but in light of the many wonders in Bramwell it might well be true. Another version says that white sheets covered the walk from the house down to Pocahontas Avenue.

W. H. Thomas died in 1918, and his son died in 1920. Mrs. Thomas kept the Bramwell home for many years, but spent most of her time with her daughters in Chattanooga. It is said that they had a large house there similar to the one in Bramwell. Mrs. Thomas died in Chattanooga in the 1940's.

Philip Goodwill House

Seated on the side of a hill across the Bluestone River from downtown Bramwell is a charming deep-red Victorian house trimmed in white, once the home of coal operator Philip Goodwill. Visible from several streets, it is perhaps the most inviting of all Bramwell houses.

Philip Goodwill was born on August 9, 1852, in Pennsylvania, the son of Robert and Katherine Wake Goodwill. The family had emigrated from the county of Northumberland, England, to Philadelphia earlier in 1852. Robert Goodwill had started mining coal in England as a teenager. In his new country he continued as a miner until 1865, when he started leasing coal lands and opening mines. He had already engaged in several operations before coming to the Pocahontas Coalfield in 1886. His Goodwill Coal and Coke Company was located in the northwestern part of Mercer County, where the mining town of Goodwill was named for him.

Son Philip became a lawyer in 1884, although he never practiced his profession. After working for his father and later in a Pennsylvania bank, he returned to the Pocahontas Coalfield to serve as general manager of Goodwill mines in 1887. In that year

he also married Phoebe Douty of Shamokin, Pennsylvania. Three sons were born to them.

The 1896 "Industrial Edition" of the *Daily Telegraph* describes Philip Goodwill as "having one of the most beautiful and comfortable homes" in Bramwell. But the residence shown by the newspaper was a fairly modest two-story frame house, constructed in 1894 or 1895. Blueprints for the renovation of the exterior and embellishment of the interior bear the date of 1905, the same year that the Goodwill family sold its Pocahontas mines and Philip became president of the Pocahontas Company in Bramwell. It makes sense that Philip would have chosen this prosperous time to "victorianize" his house by adding a semi-circular turret and a third floor ballroom.

The Goodwill house is still in excellent condition. The turret takes up the greater part of the foyer, and is paneled in beautifully rich solid oak. A carved oak bench lines the walls of the turret, with beveled glass windows above. Off the foyer is Philip's den which has several wall paintings of various Masonic insignia and symbols, all still quite vivid. The dining room has thick oak beams supporting its high ceiling. A servants' call bell, still in working condition, had a button underneath the dining room table that Mrs. Goodwill could tap with her foot.

On the second floor are several bedrooms, and each at one time had a washbasin. Phoebe Goodwill's bedroom and sitting room stretch across the width of the front of the house. An intricately carved oak screen with ionic columns visually separates the two rooms, with a small balcony opening off the end of the sitting room.

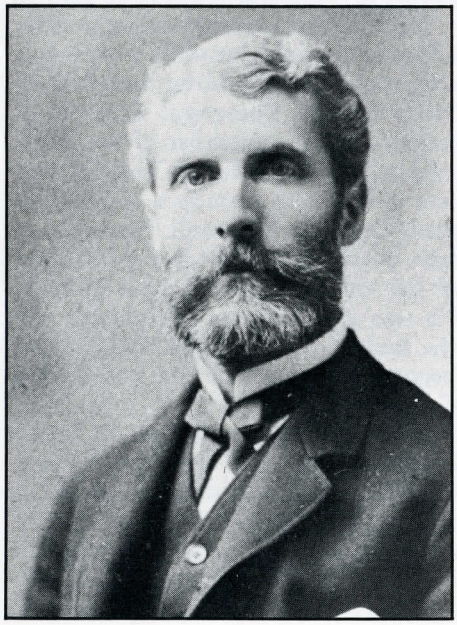
The third floor ballroom is quite spacious. Adjoining it are a couple of guest rooms and a gameroom with more Masonic paintings on its walls. The most interesting room on the third floor is the small tower room created by the top of the turret. Evidence that it was a playroom is found in the ancient children's wallpaper and some antique toys left in the room.

Diaries written by Phoebe Douty Goodwill dating from 1909 to 1941 were also left in the family mansion. These diaries are fascinating reading, capturing a protrait of life in Bramwell during its peak years. A 1932 entry looks back to the time of Phoebe's wedding in 1887, and recalls that her brother and sisters feared that her new husband was carrying her off to the wilderness. That is the way southern West Virginia appeared from the settled society of Pennsylvania.

Looking at the histories of different operator families in the Pocahontas Coalfield, this probably was the case for many wives brought from Pennsylvania by husbands who were starting new coal businesses. Through Phoebe Goodwill's diaries runs a longing for the "civilization" of Pennsylvania, and the social life of Philadelphia. Phoebe made several long visits to Philadelphia each year and these seem to have been her happiest times.

Maybe this was the key to the extravagance of Bramwell. Operators may have been overcompensating for the lack of local society by building large houses with the finest materials available and the most modern conveniences. Wives tried to recreate Pennsylvania society by hosting many elaborate parties.

For more than anything, the Goodwill diaries reveal the social character of Bramwell. Parties, teas, bridge games, and open houses were held continuously. People were either giving socials or attending them every day of the week. In the summer of 1913 Phoebe describes giving a party in her third floor ballroom, inviting 120 guests, and having to borrow folding chairs from the Masonic Hall. One Bramwell resident remembers that Phoebe went outside one day and collected bluebells for a party that night. She placed the flowers all over the house, evidently forgetting that bluebells close their petals in the evening,



Philip Goodwill. Date and photographer unknown.

Bramwell Historic District

As this GOLDENSEAL went to press, final preparations were being made to nominate most of Bramwell to the National Register of Historic Places.

Michael Pauley of the Historic Preservation Unit of the Department of Culture and History told us: "The major portion of the town of Bramwell is scheduled to be presented by the Historic Preservation Unit for nomination as an official historic district to the West Virginia Archives and History Commission in late November.

"If approved by the Commission, the nomination for Bramwell will be forwarded to the National Register of Historic Places in Washington, D.C., for review and approval.

"Listing as an historic district on the National Register will bring to Bramwell certain protections from federally funded or licensed projects. It also will qualify property owners within the historic district for tax incentives if they wish to restore or rehabilitate their homes or buildings."

The National Register of Historic Places is kept by the National Park Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior. Entry on the Register will certify that Bramwell is a significant historic site.

and by party time her decorations were considerably less brilliant.

Mrs. Goodwill also relates other incidents in Bramwell history. She gives a daily account of the things she was hearing about I. T. Mann's unsuccessful 1913 race for the U. S. Senate. In 1913 she also tells of two Presbyterians who "rolled around the street" in a fistfight over a church matter. Both men were very influential members of the Bramwell church, as were the Goodwills. Phoebe taught a Bible class for many years and, according to several people, was a very good teacher.

In 1909 Philip Goodwill was essentially left jobless when the Pocahontas Company was dissolved. After this there is much worrying over money matters in the diaries, especially in the years following Philip's death in 1916. The Goodwills survived through stocks, bonds, and trust funds, but the sons were unable to follow their father's footsteps in the coal business. Phoebe herself continued to give and go to parties, though to a lesser degree.

Phoebe Goodwill lingered on in Bramwell for nearly two decades after Philip's death, but in 1934 she left the mansion for Bluefield's West Virginia Hotel. She lived there in retirement another 19 years, before dying at age 91 in 1953. By then Bramwell's golden age was long past, the victim of the failure of other leading families who followed the Goodwill's decline by only a few years, in the Depression of the 1930's. Today Mercer Countians fondly recall Mrs. Goodwill as an impeccable lady with a sense of class, a delight to visit in her time, and they remember her town of Bramwell in pretty much the same way. ♣

Gazebo on the grounds of the Cooper house. Photo by Billy Coram, *Bluefield Daily Telegraph.*

Katherine Hewitt Barringer

While researching Bramwell I was often directed to Katherine Hewitt Barringer, the town clerk who has lived most of her 66 years there. Mrs. Barringer turned out to be a descendant of one of Bramwell's first families, and an excellent source of information.

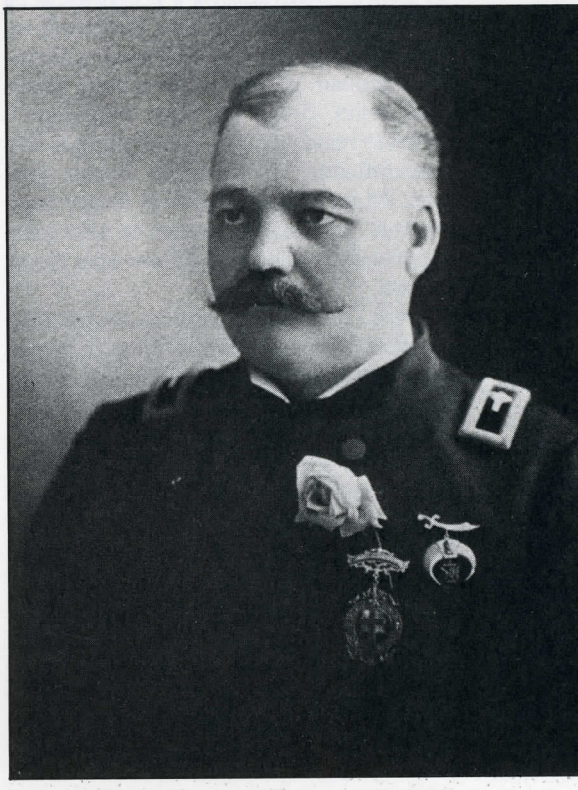
Mrs. Barringer never knew her grandfather John Davis Hewitt, who came to the Pocahontas Coalfield in the 1880's, but she knows that many people described him as a "determined, hard worker." Hewitt was born in Lancastershire, England, in 1847, and his parents brought him to Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania, at the age of five. During the Civil War he served with the 13th Pennsylvania Cavalry, and afterwards worked in the mines near Pittsburgh. In 1876 he married 17-year-old Katherine Reedy, for whom Katherine Hewitt Barringer is named. They had four sons and two daughters.

In the beginning, Mrs. Barringer says that like other pioneer operators' families her grandparents lived close to the mines, about a mile from Bramwell near present Route 52. Once they began to prosper, such families moved to town. The Hewitts were no exception. Although her grandparents did not, Mrs. Barringer says that some families lived in the Bluestone Inn on Main Street while waiting for their houses to be built. The Hewitts built a modest two-story frame house on the corner of Main and South River streets.

John Hewitt was very active in civic affairs. He was Bramwell's first mayor and one of the founding members of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church. A joiner, he was a member of the Beni-Kedem Temple, a Knight Templar, and one of the first members of the Masonic Lodge in Bramwell. He seems to have played a key role in the building of the local Masonic Temple in 1893. He was also a strong Republican. By the time of his death, in 1903, he had become a director of the Pocahontas Company.

Mrs. Barringer says that in many cases the children of the founding coal operators took over after the deaths of their fathers. However, in her family's case, the children were too young to carry on the business, and management of the Buckeye mines passed out

Left: The original Hewitt house, about 1896. This house and the one on the left were the ones torn down by Katherine Hewitt in constructing her new house. Photographer unknown, courtesy Katherine Hewitt Barringer.
Below: John Davis Hewitt. Date and photographer unknown, courtesy Katherine Hewitt Barringer.



of family hands. None of the children became coal operators and only her father, John Davis Hewitt, Jr., stayed in the area, to become a mining engineer for Buckeye Coal and Coke.

Ten years after her husband's death, Mrs. Katherine Hewitt decided to build a new house. She bought the house to the right of her old frame house, and had both torn down to make room. The wood from these houses was saved for the John Hewitt, Jr., house which Mrs. Barringer grew up in. For her own house, Mrs. Hewitt hired the Philadelphia architectural firm of DeArmond, Ashmead, and Bickley in 1914. According to Mrs. Barringer, her grandmother really had wanted a small "Anne Hathaway cottage," since her children were gone and she would be living alone, but the architects talked her into a mansion.

The house is a rambling two-story structure with long porches, built of local bluestone with light green shutters. Visitors find it hard to believe that it was completed in 1915 because it is so different from the Victorian houses built in Bramwell just a few years earlier. By the time of the Hewitt construction, the famous architect Frank Lloyd Wright was changing the world of domestic architecture with his "prairie houses." These structures were oriented more horizontally than the earlier tall, massive Victorian dwellings had been, and used building materials common to their local areas. The Hewitt house, with its native bluestone, lower ceilings, and asymmetrical floor plan, clearly shows that its architects were experimenting with Wright's new theories.

The front door opens into a square foyer lighted by a glass tile skylight over the stairwell. To the right is a dining room with built-in cabinets. Here Mrs. Barringer says her grandmother hung "luscious blue velvet" tie-back draperies. To the left is a large living room with a grand fireplace. The mantel, wainscoting, cornices, and bookcases are all of white oak, and the floors throughout the house are of Indiana white oak with a border of cherry. The paneling and heavy low ceiling beams are also of white oak.

Upstairs the house has four large bedrooms, one with a pleasant window seat. There are three bathrooms which feature thick white ceramic tiles and walk-in showers with Italian marble floors. Mrs. Barringer remembers tap dancing as a young girl with cousin Margaret Ann Freeman (daughter of another major coal operator) on the ceramic tiles in her grandmother's bathroom in order to hear their heels click sharply.

Outside, a stone garage has a three-room apartment for servants' quarters, although Mrs. Barringer does not re-

member her grandmother having any full-time servants. She says her grandmother was not "flashy" as some coal families were, with their several servants, chauffeurs, and fancy cars. Mrs. Hewitt herself never owned a car, and had a revolving "carriage wash" installed in 1914.

Mrs. Barringer remembers her grandmother as being extremely fond of plants, maintaining a greenhouse as part of her house. Across the street on another lot Mrs. Hewitt had a beautiful flower garden with a rose arbor and seats. Some of Mrs. Barringer's earliest recollections are of picnics her grandmother had in this flower garden. Mrs. Hewitt also had many teas, parties, and bridge games to entertain a close-knit group of fellow operators' wives.

Mrs. Barringer, her parents, and brother moved into the Hewitt house after her grandmother suffered a stroke in 1932. Mrs. Hewitt died around 1938. Dr. J. C. Newbold, of the Bryant and Newbold Pharmacy, then bought the house and lived in it for many years.

Katherine Hewitt Barringer's childhood memories are of spending time with the children of coal operators, especially her cousins, the Freemans. Her mother and Mrs. C. W. Freeman were sisters. Mrs. Freeman had first come to Bramwell as a nurse from Lynchburg, Virginia, to aid the Cooper family in a time of illness. She met operator C. W. Freeman, and they were married. Mrs. Barringer's mother came from Lynchburg to visit her sister. While there she met John Hewitt, Jr., and they too were married. Many Bramwell families had similar ties.

In the summer, young Katherine Hewitt and her friends would play tennis in the morning at Bramwell's tennis courts, an exclusive club which the operators had organized in the 1890's. Tennis matches between different coalfield towns were popular. In the afternoon they would swim in nearby Falls Mills, Virginia. She also remembers swimming in the Coopers' indoor pool as a teenager, right along with Edward Cooper, Jr.'s mountain trout. She laughs when she tells of Edward feeding his fish while she and her friends swam in the pool.

There was a big two-tiered grandstand down the road from Bramwell at Coopers, where coal company baseball teams played each other. This was a major entertainment in the coalfields, and Katherine Hewitt, her father, and brother went to almost every game. So did practically everyone else for miles around, be they coal operators or miners. She now recalls that ballplayers paid by the local companies stayed at the Bluestone Inn in Bramwell, sitting in a row of rockers on the porch to discuss with town residents the game just played.

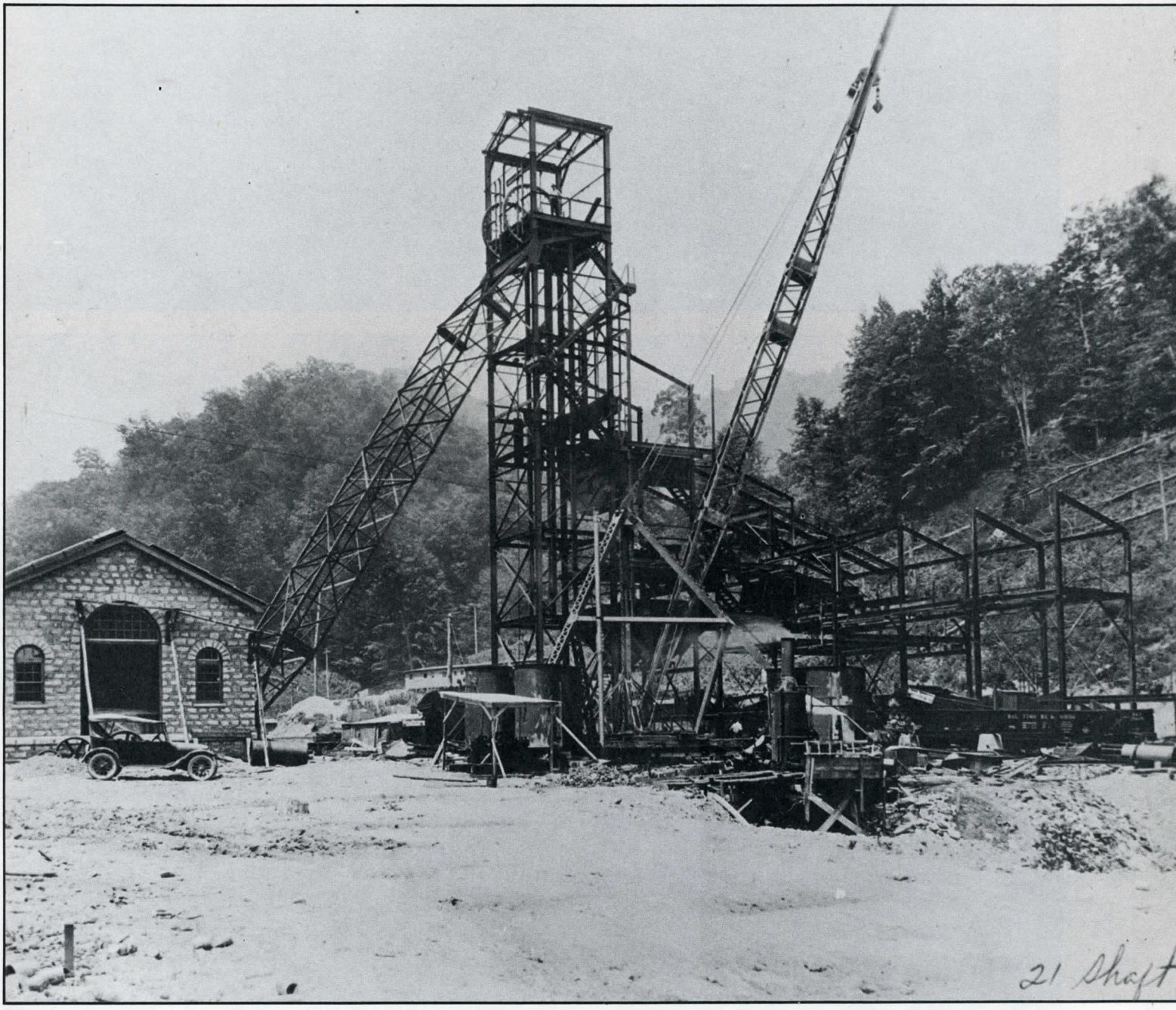
Baseball, swimming with the mountain trout, and her grandmother's fine house behind her, Katherine Hewitt eventually became Katherine Hewitt Barringer, with a household of her own to look after. She's now lived in Bramwell for most of its history. She cherishes her memories of the town as a place of exciting events and personalities, and she hopes to see it restored to its former grandeur. ♣

—Beth A. Hager

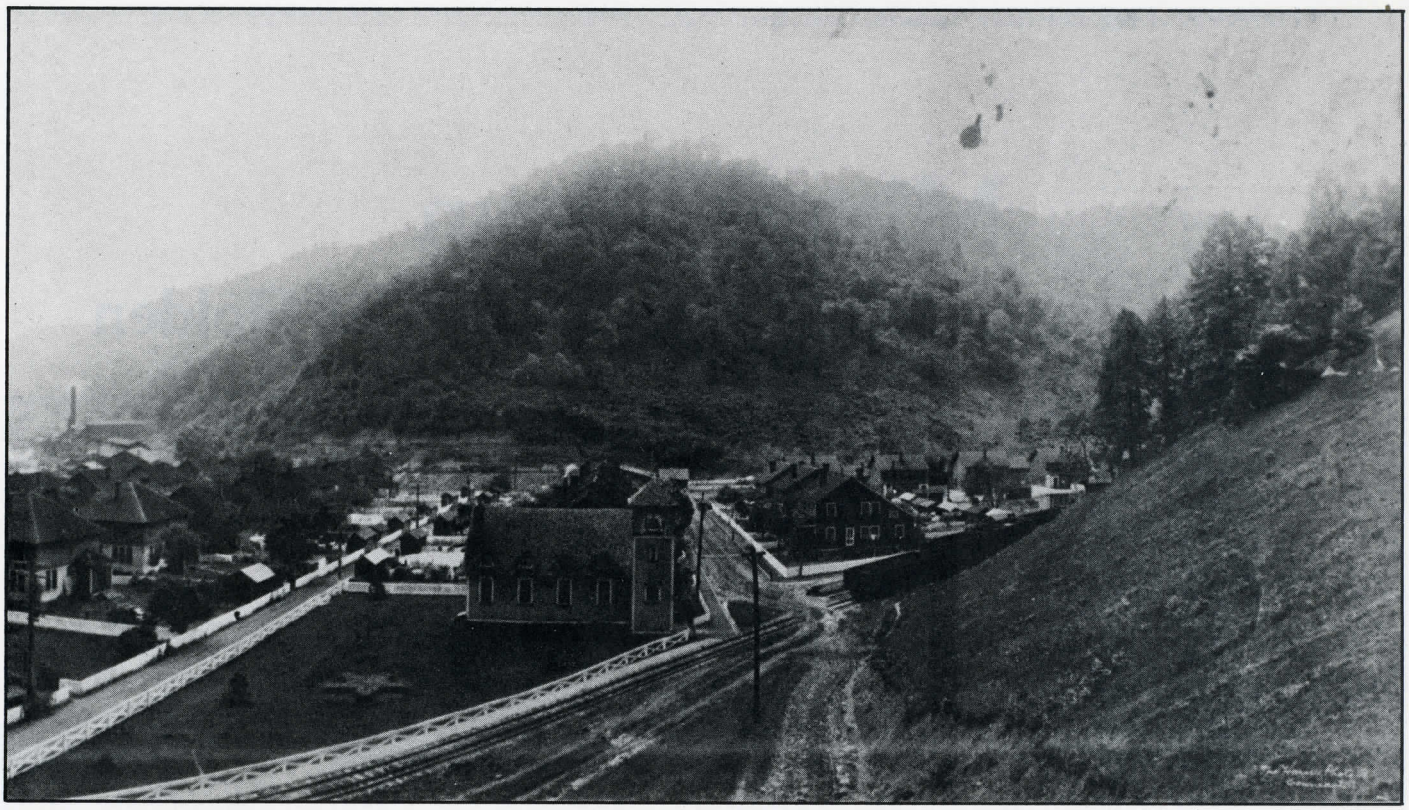
Above: Katherine Hewitt Barringer remembers much of Bramwell's history. Photographer unknown, courtesy Mrs. Barringer.
Right: Katherine Hewitt, about 1914. Mrs. Hewitt was a widow by this time, and sits here in the new house at the end of Main Street. Photographer unknown, courtesy Katherine Hewitt Barringer.

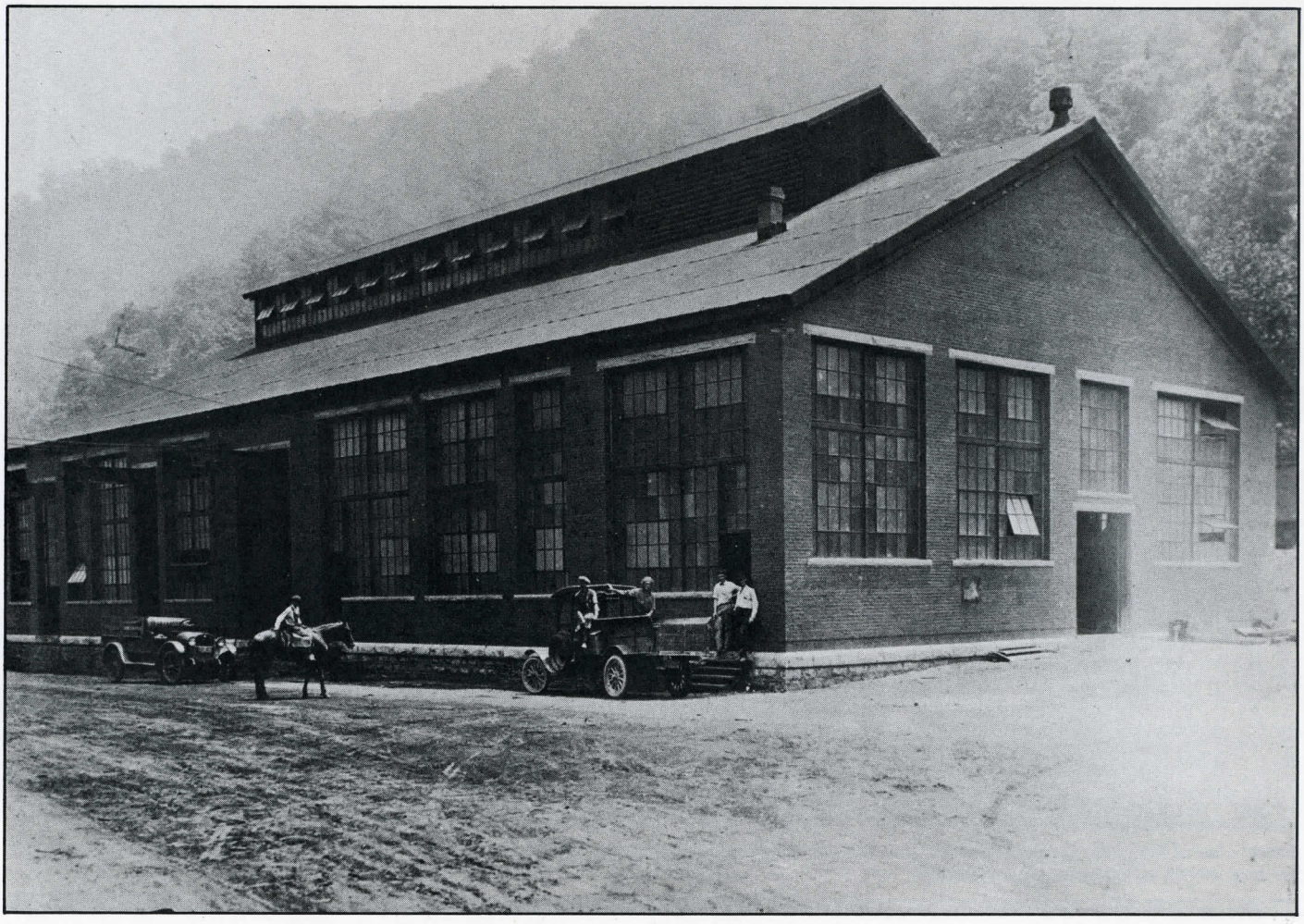
Miners' Town

The W. B. Reece Photographs of Holden



Construction of the Island Creek Number 21 shaft mine at Holden, 1915. The mining shaft is directly below the tallest part of this superstructure, with the large wheels at top operating the elevator.





Top left: The company-owned Holden Community Church dominates this Harris Photo Company view of main Holden, about 1912.
Bottom left: A horse joins two early pickup trucks outside the company machine shop at Holden, about 1910. The shop was a little over five years old at this time.

Island Creek and the Building of Holden

Island Creek Coal Company was originally a strictly West Virginia corporation, founded by Huntington attorney Z. T. Vinson and other investors. Local men lacked the money to fully exploit southern West Virginia's coal, however, and at about the turn of the century Vinson went looking for broader financial backing for the new company.

He found his backers in New England, in the United States Oil Company. That company had already bought up thousands of acres of oil rights along the Ohio River in West Virginia, and in 1902 was persuaded to send two men farther south to look into Logan County coal. That summer, agents William H. Coolidge and Albert F. Holden tramped over the large Nighbert tract of land near Logan. They found coal seams seven feet thick, and returned home to recommend the Vinson deal. U. S. Oil took their advice, voting to take over Island Creek as a company subsidiary and to buy 28,000 acres of coal land from the heirs of Logan merchant James A. Nighbert.

Island Creek's new financiers now owned a large chunk of Logan County which as yet produced no income for them. They moved rapidly to develop their new property, figuring to take most of the materials off the land itself. Work crews first built a sawmill, which was to saw well over a million board-feet of lumber the first year, then they opened a stone quarry. Coolidge later summarized the company's self-development policy by stating, "We obtained everything that went into the property out of the property."

William Coolidge went on to recall that Island Creek had envisioned building "the best coal property of bituminous coal anywhere." A model company town would be part of the overall industrial project, with the company aiming to build "something that would be attractive for everybody." It was decided to name the new town for Albert F. Holden, Coolidge's associate and fellow land scout.

In a surprisingly short time the new town of Holden had mines, tipples, machine shops, a manager's house, clubhouse, miners' houses, community church, company store, theater, opera house, hospital, and a brand new population. Holden was located about four miles from Logan, and was laid out in the serpentine curve along the waterway that had given the Island Creek company its name.

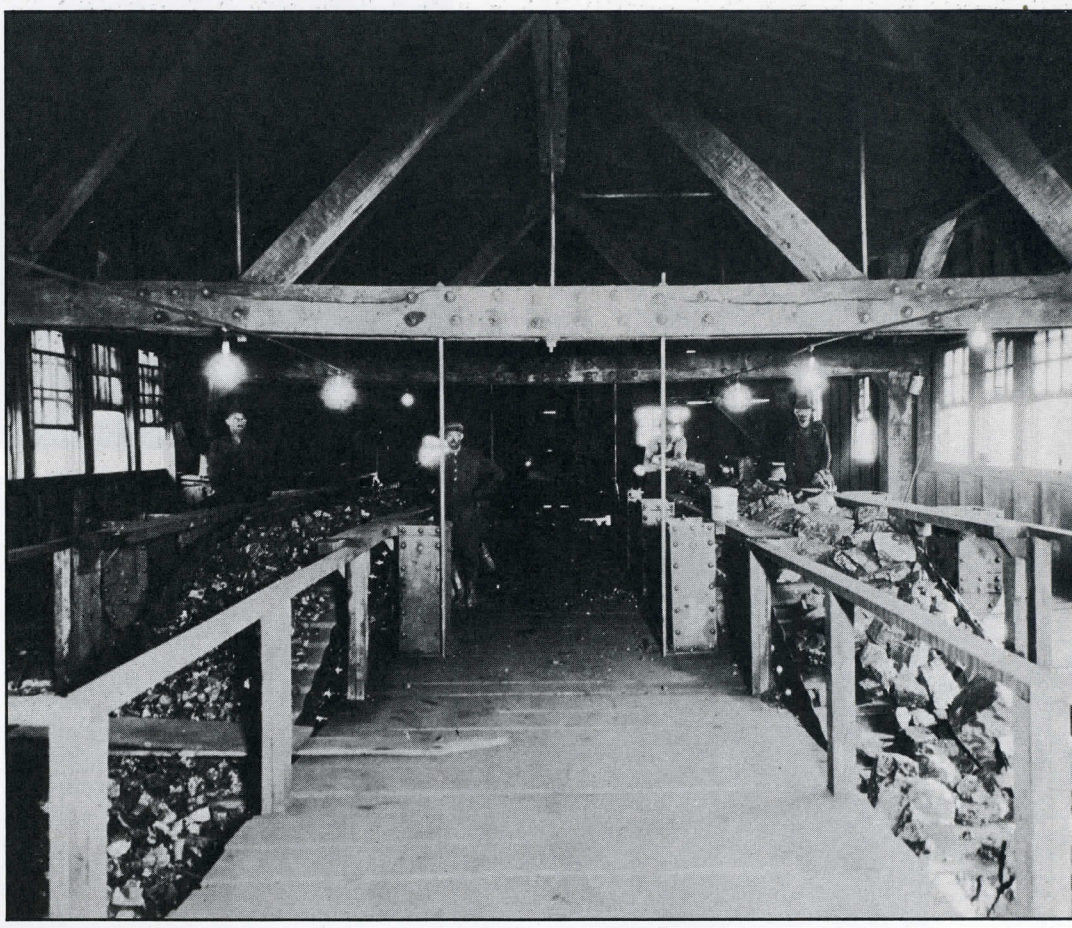
Island Creek regarded the town of Holden much as it regarded its mines, as another sound investment—this time in people rather than coal. James D. Francis, a later company president, was to write: "The industrial age in which we are living makes it a paramount necessity to provide good, comfortable homes and pleasant surroundings with facilities and services for healthful community life. Democracy, as we know it, is, after all, a 'way of life'—a cooperative enterprise in successful living."

It was left unsaid that the company naturally expected to profit by the stable, contented workforce of its attractive community. And the company expected to administer the town according to its own notion of what was good for the people. For example, the "cooperative enterprise" in democratic living described by Francis allowed no place for a union to represent Island Creek miners. When the U. S. Senate investigated the bloody 1921 Logan mine wars, Coolidge emphasized that his company would continue to resist unionization, and in 1928 president T. B. Davis blamed the UMWA for "most of the present troubles of the coal business." Cooperation at Holden was intended to be strictly between Island Creek and individual workers, and it remained that way until Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal.

The early written record reflects the official Island Creek viewpoint, and it took an observant outsider to fully appreciate the company's policy toward Holden. Such an observer was French engineer Edward d'Invilliers, sent in by the C&O Railway in 1903 to investigate whether the new mine merited the building of a C&O branch line. In his favorable report, he noted: "The general mining plant is very complete and efficient . . . . The town of Holden itself is most attractive and most worthy of praise and approval . . . . In a sense, it would be difficult to duplicate this property; it has within it every factor that should stand for permanency and cheap mining." D'Invilliers understood the relationship of Holden to the overall mining operation, and the intention of the Island Creek Coal Company to invest everything necessary in its mines and people to insure the efficient extraction of coal on a permanent basis.

—Robert Spence

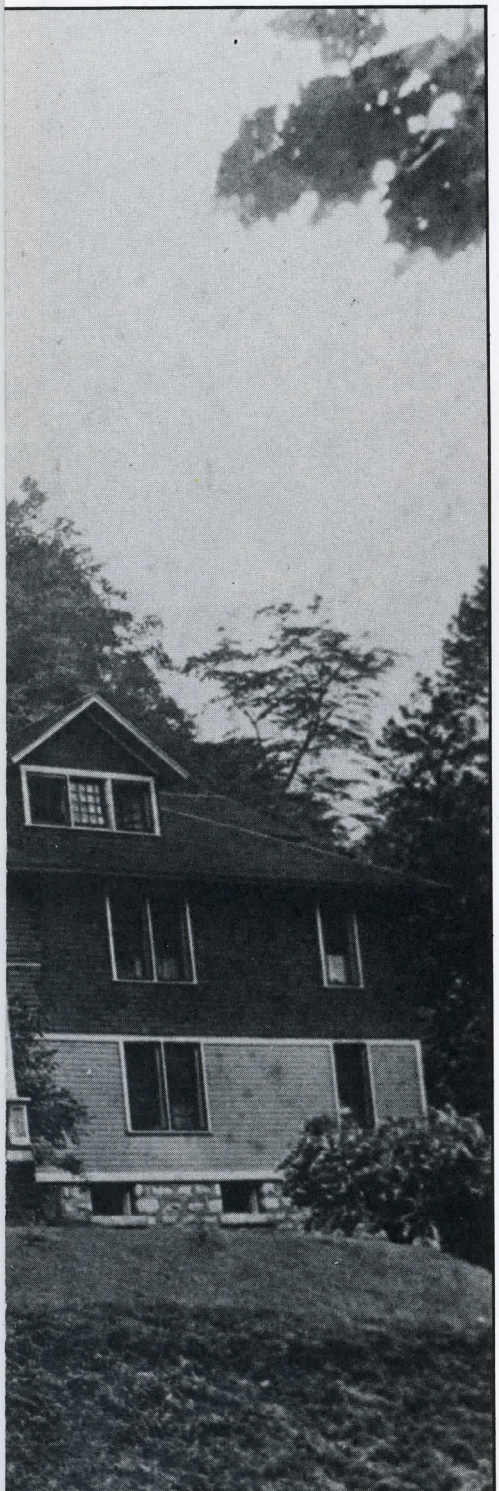
Above: The manager's house was located on a bluff, away from the bustle of the mine and downtown Holden. This photograph is from about 1914.
Left: Dr. and Mrs. Farley at the Holden manager's house at an unknown date. For some unexplained reason, there appears to be a large searchlight mounted on the porch next to Mrs. Farley, which is not there in the 1904 photograph. Dr. Farley was the Holden company doctor.
Above right: Coal entered the tipple by conveyor belt for grading and clearing before being loaded onto railroad cars. This tipple is at the Island Creek Number 1 mine, about 1905.
Below right: Miners in the Number 2 mine at Whitman, about 1907. Miners wore soft caps at the time and, curiously, few of these have their head lamps attached. Three are carrying safety lanterns.

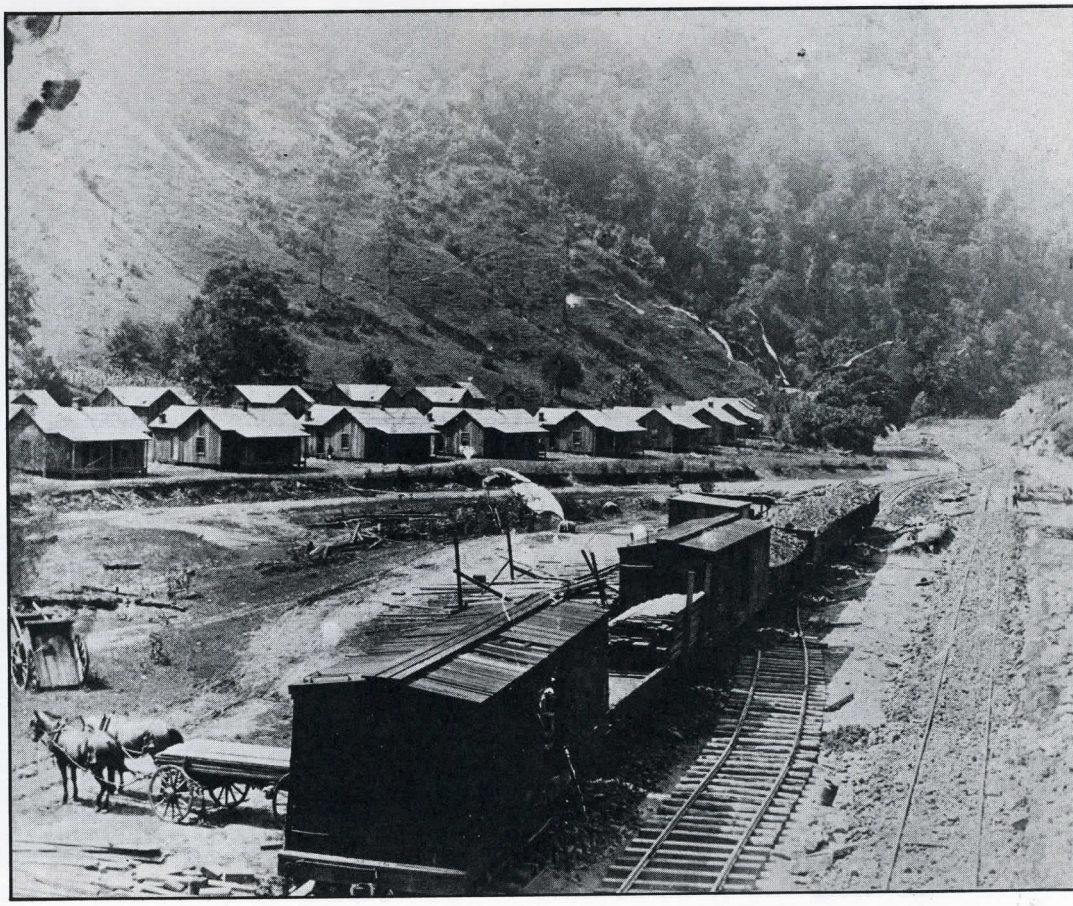


Right: Coal was the only reason for Holden's existence, and it left town by the trainload. The wooden car shown in this 1905 photograph, of the Chicago, Columbus, Cincinnati and St. Louis line, was built in 1900.
Below: Most West Virginia company towns had clubhouses, with dining and recreational facilities on the main floor and lodging rooms above. This undated photograph of the Holden clubhouse shows an addition to the originally smaller building, to the right of the porch.

Top right: Old and new forms of transportation contrast dramatically outside the Number 1 company store, although a double yoke of oxen must have been an unusual sight in Holden in 1905. West Virginians were potato eaters, then as now, and Island Creek brought them in by the boxcar load.

Bottom right: Like other large company towns, Holden was divided into smaller communities named for mines. This early construction scene is of "Holden 21," near Island Creek's Number 21 mine. The train cars at the rear carry rock ballast for the unfinished railroad, while lumber is being unloaded from the flatcar.





"A Good Historical Record"

The Reece Sisters Recall Their Father and Holden

Interview By Robert Spence

Robert Spence. Tell me a little about your father, what he was like when he was growing up, and how he got interested in photography.

Pauline Reece. Well, his mother died when he was five and his father let an elderly aunt take him in to look after him. She had a little grocery store—I'm not sure if it was in Hurricane or somewhere else in rural Putnam County—and she took care of him all through the years he was growing up.

Kathleen Reece. He went through the McGuffey Sixth Reader, which was the extent of the education available there, but I never asked him to help me with any lesson that I ever had in high school, even my math or anything, that he couldn't help me with.

PR He was self-educated from the McGuffey base, but I would say he must have learned a lot of bookkeeping from his Aunt Lou because he was an expert bookkeeper by the time he was ready to take on a job. I think his first paid job was with the C&O at Guyandotte Station, then he was promoted up the river to Midkiff as station agent.

KR One of the things that we've always enjoyed telling about his years in Guyandotte was that salaries were so low that the fellows always liked to pick up a little extra money by going out in bad weather and snagging logs that came down the Guyan. The lumber companies had their own marks on the ends of the logs, and these young men would go out and see how many they could get. It was dangerous work, but they got paid so much per log that came loose from the rafts they could snag before they went into the Ohio. After they got into the Ohio, they were gone.

PR They would take their canthooks and go out and walk on the logs and bring them to the banks of the river. Then they saved them until the lumber companies came through and paid them. I think that was probably his introduction to Logan County.

RS What year was your father born?

PR 1874.

RS So we are probably talking now about the 1890's?

PR Yes. Dad and Mom were married in '97, and he would have worked in the Guyandotte from about '96 to

The photographer and his wife: Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Reece. Date and photographer unknown.

'99 or something like that. I don't exactly remember when he went to Midkiff.

RS Am I right in thinking that he got started with the railroad because that was the main industry in Guyandotte then?

KR Yes, that was the main industry. I don't know how he lucked into a job like that at the time, except that he had taken advantage of what education he had and was capable.

PR We don't know whether he had somebody pulling for him, or just how he got the job at the station there at Hurricane or Guyandotte. I think that Midkiff must have been just, well, not even say a wide place in the road. It was a jumping-off place, but it did have a station and there were several influential Lincoln County families living around there.

KR At Midkiff, he became interested in all the big barrels and copper tubing that was going through to Harts because Harts was the bootlegging center for the area.

PR He became acquainted with one of the ladies that had a pretty good still down there. She would make trips back and forth to buy barrels and she would talk to him about the mines that were being opened in nearby Logan County. So he became more curious about it, and eventually, he had to look into what was going on.

RS What did your father's relatives and the people he was working with think when he got interested in the mines being opened?

PR I think some of his friends thought that he was giving up a sure thing for a very questionable thing because, at that time, none of the coal had been shipped, and it was just "maybe they will make it and maybe they won't."

KR But our father was sort of a forward-looking man. He thought that if it was what he wanted to do, he'd better do it now.

RS What year was that?

PR I would say early 1903 because we moved in the fall of that year.

RS Did he ever tell you who he talked to about getting a job with Island Creek?

PR I think it was J. G. Beebe. I don't know who was in Holden then as supervisor of works, but evidently they had expert planners because, by the time he got here, the sawmill was working, the powerhouse was being built, and the streets were built.

KR Mr. Beebe was here at least part of the time, but at least someone was an expert in organization because there were engineers, carpenters, and other lumber workers here.

RS What was your father's first job with Island Creek?

PR He was a clerk. He was hired first as a general clerk, and then later became a real estate agent. I think at first he was in the payroll and records office.

RS I think you told me at one time that your father became interested in photography because he saw all the construction work going on and decided to buy a camera to make a record of it. Is that true?

PR He had done some photography before the family moved to Holden. We have a few photographs going back to his time in Guyandotte—some of Sunday school classes and things

Pauline and Kathleen Reece in their Holden home. Photo by Rick Lee.

The Reece sisters are proud of Holden. "Of course there was criticism," Kathleen (*foreground*) says, "but at the time in Logan County it seemed like a workable solution to the idea of a community." Photo by Rick Lee.

like that. But the first records we have of any great deal of photography was when he first came to Holden.

KR He must have foreseen that it would make a good historical record. One of his first pictures was that old log house located right by the school building.

RS I understand that the management of Island Creek had the idea to build a model coal town at Holden. Did your father ever talk to you about that?

PR It was sort of understood that it would be the model town by the time we came along. Most coal camps up to that time had what I called "cookie cutter" houses—everything alike. But if you go through main Holden, you will find three or four styles. Of course, on each street, every house was alike. But one of the great things about Holden was the community feeling. We still have it. Those of us who have been here for a long time feel that our neighbor's problems are our problems.

RS Was that attitude encouraged from the beginning of Holden?

PR Yes. Island Creek thought that a happy miner would stay in the community, and they were right because in many instances a family would stay two or three generations in Holden.

RS What can you tell me about growing up in that atmosphere?

PR It was just great to grow up here. The schools were good, and in the community, the company encouraged family activities. They built a lodge hall for community organizations and would sponsor band festivals and get-togethers.

KR In the '20's and '30's, the company sponsored competitive games between towns like Whitman, Monaville, Verdunville, and Holden, and would buy the refreshments and furnish sports equipment and prizes to be given away.

PR I think, under all the managers of Island Creek, the people were as important a consideration as the prosperity for the company. That was not always true of mining companies. But I think Island Creek had the community interest at heart—maybe not as interested in a community as they were in getting the coal out, but that was still a high priority.

RS Would you say also, though, that part of the reason for that attitude was to keep the United Mine Workers from organizing the area?

PR Well, I would assume that was true. By the time Holden was started, the UMW was beginning to wield some power, and I think Island Creek felt that if they paid more and furnished better working conditions, they could keep the non-union status. I don't know just what year the first attempt at unionizing came, but the men who lived here themselves didn't encourage it because they felt they already had better than the union would be able to bring to them.

RS What do you think led to the decline of the "model town"-type paternalism that Holden represented at its best?

PR I would say economics. It got more and more expensive to maintain all the houses. By the late 1960's, the houses in Holden had been standing for at least 40 years, and it took too much money to buy equipment to keep them in good shape. So the company sold the houses to the families that could afford them.

RS How do you think Holden could best be described under the paternal control that Island Creek had at one time?

PR We don't know what all [the company's] motives were, but it worked out. They were successful with the business end, and I don't think all paternalism is bad. There was enough freedom of thought, and you didn't have to think the way the company thought.

KR Of course there was criticism, and a lot of people felt about the company stores just the way they were described in the song "Sixteen Tons." But at the time in Logan County it seemed like a workable solution to the idea of a community.

An Old-Fashioned Winter

By William J. Wilcox

Some say it was the winter of 1930–31, and others contend it was the winter of 1931–32. All I can remember for sure is that it qualified to be remembered as one of the "old-fashioned winters" I had heard the older folks talk about. Though it didn't "start snowing in late September," and the snow went off before "the middle of April the next spring," the thermometer did run down the broomstick to a frigid -15° or lower.

Snowfall was not out of the ordinary in Marion County that year. We had the usual number of five- or six-inch snows common to those days, but the thermometer just didn't seem to want to get up out of the low 'teens. The creek froze over even in the riffles, and it was an every morning task to cut holes in the ice for the livestock to water.

The hay in the mow went down real fast that winter, for the livestock would go to water and then return to the bars to stand all hump-backed in the cold. We left them out only long enough to clean out their stables, and to put down fresh bedding. Once the barn door was opened, and the bars laid down, they wasted little time in getting in out of the bitter cold.

Most of the people stayed indoors near the fire. I say most, for that winter produced a phenomenon not seen for many years. Some of the older young people hunted out their parents' and grandparents' ice skates which had long hung in the granary or attic. Between spells of huddling around the bonfires on the creek bank, they bumped and bounced over the frozen pools and long neglected ice ponds. Some had to eat several meals from the mantel, and others hobbled around for days on sprained ankles, but it was a new and enjoyable experience, that business of ice skating.

The only icehouse in the area had long since fallen into disrepair. Many of the boards were missing from both the exterior and interior walls, the heavy door was missing a hinge, and sheets of roofing were missing. One bright morning just after chores three men showed up at the building with a team and sled. At first I thought they were going to tear it down, but then they started putting new boards in place, repaired the roof, and put the door in working order.

Much of the next day was spent in hauling sawdust from the remains of the pile in the bottom just below our house. They filled the big double door, the walls, and placed a thick layer over the packed earth floor. Watching them out of the living room window, I could but wonder to what intended use the building was being prepared.

It turned off snowy for several days, and I almost forgot the work that had been done on the icehouse. That is, I forgot until I chanced to look out the window and saw these old men gathered on the bank of the big pool at the crossing near the icehouse. When they started pulling all sorts of tools from the horse drawn sled, I suspected they were going to cut a large hole through the ice for watering livestock.

But they started stacking ice on the creek bank, and I was beside myself with curiosity. Even from the living room, I could see they were sawing out big cakes rather than chopping them as we did to prepare a place for our livestock to drink. It seemed sort of silly to take all the ice off that pool, for with the cold weather it would simply freeze over again.

It was not until the pile of ice on the bank had grown several feet thick, and the men started loading the cakes in the sled, that I began to see what they were about. They were harvesting ice to store in the icehouse.

The weather stayed fair, and by the evening of the third day the men had the icehouse over half filled with cakes of ice stored between layers of sawdust. They had harvested every large pool on that portion of the creek which lay near the icehouse. Then they spent almost half a day hauling more sawdust and covering the pile of ice.

The strangest thing about the whole affair was that none of the men would have considered seeking employment at such an arduous task, nor did any of them really need the ice. It was simply a matter of three old neighbors getting together to do something they had not done since they were young men.

Some effects of the cold weather were not apparent until the following spring. The last snow came in late March, while Dad was planting early field corn. This one did not last on the ground, and within weeks, he made a trip to the orchard to see what kind of a peach crop we could expect.

Now, it was during the Depression, and we depended on the surplus peach crop for money to buy necessities during the summer and early fall. When he returned to the house that pretty spring morning, even an 11-year-old boy could tell that all was not well. After examining several buds on the trees, he had determined that most, if not all, were dead.

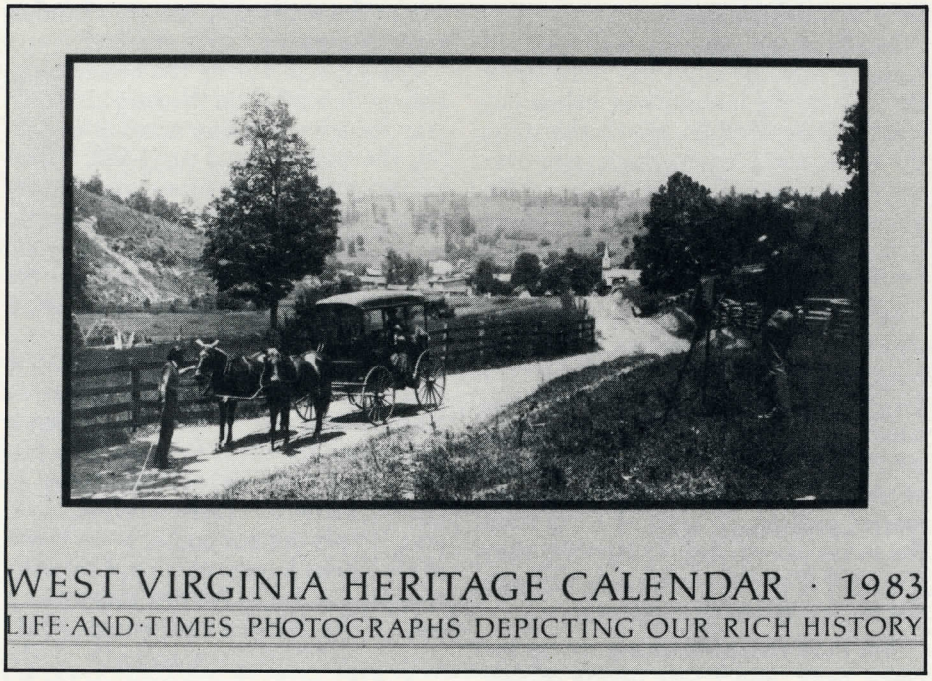
When it came time for the trees to blossom, there were a few scattered blooms on a few of the trees. When it came time for them to leaf out, a few trees had tiny deformed leaves in widely scattered clusters. Most, however, simply did not bother to set leaves at all. Those leaves which did set soon withered and fell. We lost every peach tree in the orchard that winter. Only a stray seedling in a rockpile at the end of the orchard survived, and it did not bear fruit for many years.

Whether the cold weather had anything to do with it or not, and I suspect it didn't, that summer the Lord sent us a real blessing to replace our lost peach trees. Almost the entire 30-odd-acre cove pasture came up in dense patches of wild Allegheny blackberries. That season we picked and sold over 300 gallons of them, and within a few years the field yielded over 1,000 gallons of those big juicy berries.

(Continued from page 4)
and-ink drawings of all major structures. There are actually two tours outlined. Both begin at the dining hall, with Tour One proceeding back toward the familiar Old Mill at the camp entrance, and Tour Two taking in the upper camp, behind the dining hall. Meador notes that much of the impressive construction was done by the WPA public works program during the Depression.

Active in 4-H since his Mercer County boyhood, Meador later served four years as the Extension Agent in Boone County. He is a frequent contributor to GOLDENSEAL, and has promised a future article on the West Virginia 4-H movement.

A Walking Tour of Historic Jackson's Mill is an attractive 50-page booklet, printed by McClain Printing Company of Tucker County. It may be ordered for $3.50 (plus 80¢ postage) from Michael Meador, Box 395, Madison 25130.



1983 West Virginia Heritage Calendar

The West Virginia Heritage Calendar celebrated its third anniversary by releasing the 1983 edition this fall. As in 1981 and 1982, the new calendar features 12 historic photographs drawn from West Virginia's history.

The 1983 photographs are printed from original black and white pictures, dating from the 1880's to the 1940's. None of them have ever been used in past Heritage calendars, and some have never before been published anywhere. The photographs were taken from both public and private collections, and depict scenes from different parts of the state.

The closed calendar measures 9" x 12" (18" by 12" on the wall), and is made of fine heavy-stock paper. Producer Gary Simmons says the printing, again by Pioneer Press of Terra Alta, will be up to the past two years' high standards. Simmons especially recommends the calendar as a Christmas present, and says that calendar photographs from 1981 and 1982 have become lasting keepsakes for many people.

Although distributed in past years by the *Charleston Gazette*, the 1983 West Virginia Heritage Calendar is being marketed independently. Orders (for $5, post-paid) should be sent to Augusta Press, P. O. Box 1024, Charleston 25324. West Virginia residents should add 5% sales tax.

Goldenseal and Other Herbs

Pipsissewa herbalists of Blacksburg and Christiansburg, Virginia, puts out an attractive catalog of "native Appalachian herbs and condiments of a purer nature." They sell goldenseal (*Hydrastis canadensis L.*, also known as yellow root) in bulk, wild ginseng in up to 300-pound barrel lots (prices beginning at $150–$180 per pound), and dozens of other herbs once common to mountain folk medicine.

The Pipsissewa catalog offers various exotic concoctions and potions as well as bulk herbs. Natural essence fragrances, including apple blossom, jasmine, and wisteria, are sold at a price—$12 per quarter ounce—comparable to that for imported perfume. Several teas are available, including "steamboat toot tea" and a pregnancy tea.

One product, Indian Earth makeup, promising "radiantly glowing skin, naturally-blushed cheeks, wondrous eyes, and color-kissed lips," sounds hard to beat at any price. Less enticingly, there are herbal flea collars for dogs and cats and Red Tiger muscle balm for the sore.

The company is named for the small astringent herb pipsissewa, which grows wild throughout the forests of Appalachia. Pipsissewa invites inquiries on current prices and products, at P. O. Box 777, Blacksburg, VA 24060, or by phone at (703) 382-1588.

GOLDENSEAL Back Copies

Jack Frazier of Summers County writes in that he has a complete set of GOLDENSEAL copies which he'd like to "trade to an individual or library for something of equal value."

"I'm very anxious to trade these magazines, as my living quarters are cramped and there isn't space to store all of them, plus the new ones," he writes. "I've seen letters in GOLDENSEAL practically begging for back issues. I'm looking forward to hearing from your readers."

Those wanting to deal with Jack may write him at General Delivery, Indian Mills 24949.

Unfortunately, our own supply of extra back issues is rather depleted, and nowhere near a complete set. We should have copies of this issue for a while, but the Summer and Fall '82 magazines are no longer available. The three issues before that are still available in limited numbers, as are a few from 1977 and 1978 and the Mother Jones issue from 1980.

As far as we know, GOLDENSEAL now goes to all public and school libraries in West Virginia and readers interested in back issues may want to check those institutions first. We will continue to honor requests for the back copies we have, so long as a particular article or issue is specified.

—Ken Sullivan

Fiddlin' John Johnson

Fiddler John Johnson. Photo by Doug Yarrow.

Fiddler John Johnson, featured in a Winter 1981 GOLDENSEAL interview by Michael Kline, has cut his first record album. The album, "Fiddlin' John," was released late last summer on the new Augusta Heritage Records label.

Johnson is a fiddler's fiddler, regarded as one of West Virginia's finest even by—or perhaps especially by—the state's other top fiddlers. Recognizing his mastery, the Augusta Heritage people decided to record him unaccompanied. This is unusual for a fiddle album, but lets Johnson's music stand alone and places full emphasis on his effortless style.

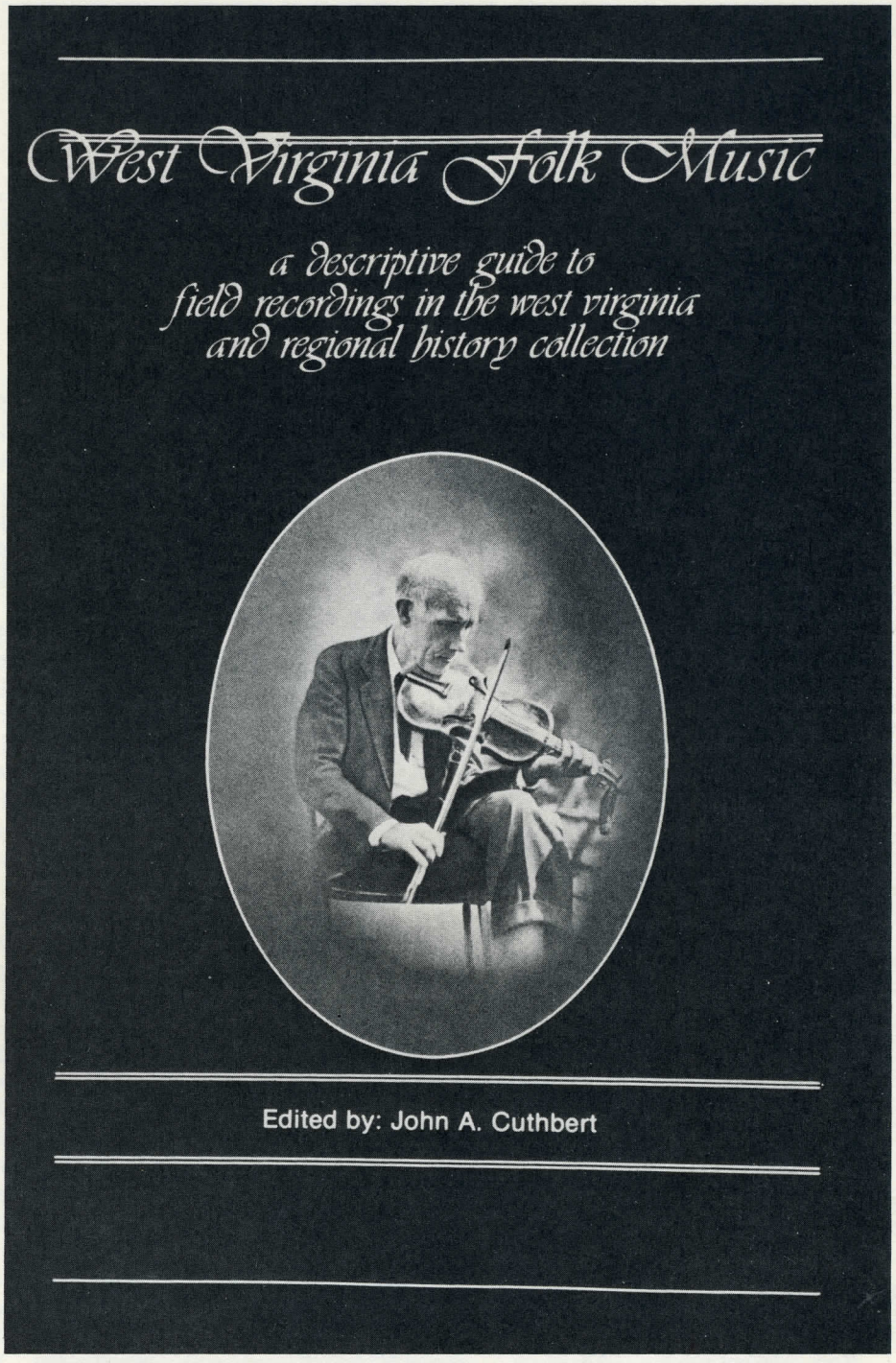
The Johnson style is notable for a smooth bow, tasteful selection of notes, and ease of playing. Another championship fiddler recently characterized Johnson's playing as having a distinctive "Clay County flavor," brought to a state of technical perfection unusual even for that hotbed of fiddlers. Johnson stamps his forcible personality on all the album's material, including such standard tunes as "Bonaparte's Retreat," done here with a haunting bagpipe sound.

"Fiddlin' John" is the first album of Augusta Heritage Records, an affiliate of Augusta Heritage Arts Workshops of Davis and Elkins College. The album's producer is Michael Kline, with early fieldwork by Kline and Gerry Milnes. The recording was done at the Davis and Elkins studio, with technical engineering by Paul Reisler. Augusta Heritage Records now has a second album in the works, featuring guitarist Blackie Cool, interviewed in the Fall 1981 GOLDENSEAL.

Johnson's album may be ordered for $7, from Augusta Heritage Records, Davis and Elkins College, Elkins 26241; (304) 636-0006.

Book Review

West Virginia Folk Music: A Descriptive Guide to Field Recordings in the West Virginia and Regional History Collection, *edited by John A. Cuthbert.*



West Virginia Folk Music is the latest of several impressive guides and bibliographies to come from West Virginia University Library. The new book, edited by John Cuthbert, is reminiscent in organization and style of *West Virginia History*, edited last year by Harold Forbes, Cuthbert's fellow assistant curator at the Library's West Virginia and Regional History Collection. Cuthbert's book features the same meticulous indexing and cross-referencing, and with its narrower field of interest pays even closer attention to detail.

West Virginia Folk Music catalogs the extensive holdings of sound recordings in the West Virginia Collection. There are thousands of such recorded items, mostly made in the field by traveling scholars. The earliest date from the 1930's, with most of the rest coming from the '40's and '50's. The most recent recordings were made in the early 1970's by musicologist Thomas S. Brown, and feature the current generation of old-time musicians—Wilson Douglas, Ira Mullins, Melvin Wine, and others familiar to many readers of GOLDENSEAL.

The heart of the WVU folk music collection is the Louis Watson Chappell archive, which is given more than 50 pages of this new book. Chappell lived from 1890 to 1981, and began a long career as a professor at Morgantown in 1922. He is best known among folklorists for his scholarly study of the John Henry legend, published in Germany in 1933. In 1937, Chappell acquired a cumbersome portable recording machine and began roaming West Virginia to record traditional songs on 12-inch aluminum disks. Over the next decade he recorded over 2,000 items on 647 such disks, all now part of the West Virginia Collection.

Although none is as large as the Chappell archive, there are three other collections which claim most of the remaining pages of *West Virginia Folk Music.* These are the work of black scholar Cortez D. Reece of Bluefield State College, WVU professor Kenneth L. Carvell, and Brown. Carvell's work is the most extensive of these three, and consists mainly of gospel music. He has a particularly rich collection for the Monongalia Tri-District Sing, with almost monthly recordings from mid-1957 through 1959. During this period Carvell faithfully followed the Sing from church to church in Monongalia County, where different fundamentalist denominations regularly joined together with a

host congregation for music worship.

Cuthbert devotes sections of his book to each of the four archives, with introductory sketches on the collectors. Within these sections, each recording session is entered separately, with further separate listings for individual items (songs or tunes). Each session is identified by performer, place, date, access information, and notes on the type of music and sound quality of the recording. Each item within the session is further annotated by title, key topics, bibliographic reference, number of verses and type of refrain, and medium (for example, solo voice).

It is the latter information that makes Cuthbert's guide so useful. Every one of the thousands of recorded items is cross-referenced in the index comprising more than a third of this book, and here it is possible to look up general subjects of interest. Death is the subject of hundreds of songs, for example, while "humor and nonsense" is featured in slightly fewer, and love outscores both of those together by a very wide margin. Of course, many tunes feature several topics, with love, nonsense, and death undoubtedly all combined in at least a few West Virginia folk songs.

Recorded items are also indexed by type—there are dozens of "bawdy songs," for example—and by performer and title. Variations in title are indexed separately, with the familiar ballad "Barbara Allen" listed no fewer than seven different ways.

Needless to say, all this was accomplished through the magic of computers. Efforts to classify the recordings by hand began in 1973, but the huge mass of material was really brought under control only with the beginning of a computer-assisted cataloging program in late 1979. The new project, supported in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities, got rolling the next year. All available data on each song and tune were painstakingly punched into the computer, and—to make a long story very short—in due time emerged as this handy reference volume.

Although it is an attractive, well-illustrated paperback, *West Virginia Folk Music* is not meant for bedtime reading. Consisting mostly of page after page of coded numerical listings, it will best serve scholars and serious musicians seeking the roots of our mountain music. The book's value to such people is in opening up the treasures of the West Virginia Collection sound archives. Those treasures are many, including (in the Chappell archive) the only known recordings of Edden Hammons. Hammons was the most legendary of all West Virginia fiddlers, and a fine portrait of him fittingly adorns the cover of Cuthbert's book.

—Ken Sullivan

West Virginia Folk Music *is a 185-page paperback, illustrated with photographs from the West Virginia and Regional History Collection. The book may be ordered for $10, postpaid, from West Virginia University Press, West Virginia University Library, Morgantown 26506. Make check or money order payable to the West Virginia University Foundation.*

Recorded Musicians Sought

John Cuthbert, editor of *West Virginia Folk Music*, is seeking information on the musicians recorded by Louis W. Chappell between 1937 and 1947. Under a $47,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, Cuthbert is directing what a recent West Virginia University news release called "a statewide search in the Sherlock Holmes tradition to trace 85 Appalachian folk musicians."

Some of these musicians are still well known a generation later. Fiddler John Johnson was on the cover of GOLDENSEAL a year ago, for example, and this year released a record album on the new Augusta Heritage label. Others have been lost sight of altogether. Many are undoubtedly dead now, and in such cases Cuthbert would like to hear from surviving relatives.

Unfortunately, Chappell's own notes are not much help. "They are almost entirely devoid of information concerning the folk musicians' personal backgrounds," says Cuthbert, adding that this is exactly the kind of information he's after. "We want to learn who they are, where they came from, their musical sources, and other biographical data," he explains.

GOLDENSEAL readers wanting more information on the search, or with information to contribute, may contact Dr. John Cuthbert, West Virginia and Regional History Collection, West Virginia University, Morgantown 26506.

Goldenseal Index

Volume 8, 1982

Articles which appeared in Volume 8 are indexed below, under the categories of Subject, Author, Photographer, and Location. Under the Subject category each article is listed under its major subject area, with many articles cross-referenced under alternate Subject headings. When more than one article appears under a heading, the order is alphabetical by first word of title. Each entry is followed by the month and year, volume and number, and page number. The short notices which appear in the regular column "Current: Programs-Festivals-Publications" have not been included.

The index for the first three volumes of GOLDENSEAL appeared in the April-September 1978 issue; the index for Volumes 4 and 5 in the January-March 1980 issue; the index for Volume 6 in the October-December 1980 magazine; and the one for Volume 7 in the Winter 1981 issue. In the future, the index for each volume will appear in the last issue of the calendar year.

Subject

Author

Photographer

Location

In This Issue

DOUG CHADWICK was born in North Carolina and grew up in Maryland. He attended Reed College in Portland, Oregon, Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington, and a school for filmmaking and video in Rome. Chadwick moved to West Virginia in 1970 and has worked as a photographer for the *Fayette Tribune* and the *Raleigh Register*. *True Facts . . . in a Country Song*, a film by Chadwick and Susan Burt, premiered at the Cultural Center in December 1980. He has contributed periodically to GOLDENSEAL.

JOHANNA EURICH is a native of Philadelphia who grew up in Southeast Asia. She has extensive experience in public broadcasting, working in Texas and Pittsburgh, and is a frequent contributor to National Public Radio. She worked in Pocahontas County at WVMR, and has since moved to Alaska.

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, contributing periodically to GOLDENSEAL.

BETH HAGER is a Huntington native. She studied history and art history at West Virginia University, and is now a graduate student at the University of Delaware. She served as the historian in residence with the Pocahontas Coalfield Centennial Celebration, Inc. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

NORMAN JULIAN, a Clarksburg native, is a WVU graduate. He was founding editor of *Panorama*, the Sunday magazine of the *Morgantown Dominion Post*, and has been editorial page editor of that paper. Norman's most recent work for GOLDENSEAL was the Spring 1982 story about Augusta Gallozzi.

MICHAEL KLINE is a Washington, D.C., native who spent childhood summers in Hampshire County. After receiving his B.A. in anthropology from George Washington University in 1964, he moved to Appalachia full time, working in various poverty programs in Kentucky and West Virginia. Michael served as assistant to the editor of GOLDENSEAL in 1978, and now lives in Elkins where he is associated with the Augusta Heritage Arts Workshops. He is a regular contributor to GOLDENSEAL.

TIM MASSEY, a native of Price Hill in Raleigh County, has 20 years' experience as a newspaperman. He first worked for the *Raleigh Register* in Beckley, later moving to the *Baltimore News-American*, UPI, and the *Charleston Gazette*. He holds a B.A. and M.A. from Marshall University, and now works for the *Huntington Herald-Dispatch*. His most recent work for GOLDENSEAL was the article on slow-pitch softball, "Letemhitit," which appeared in the Spring '82 issue.

RON RITTENHOUSE, a Mannington native and senior photographer for the *Morgantown Dominion Post*, in recent years has won several first place awards in the Professional Photographers of West Virginia contests. His hobby is collecting old cameras and photographs, of which he has one of the largest private holdings in the state. Ron's most recent photographs for GOLDENSEAL were in the Fall 1982 issue.

JAMES SAMSELL is a Morgantown native, a graduate of West Virginia University, and an Air Force veteran. He was formerly chief photographer for Beckley Newspapers, Inc., and also worked as a reporter for the *Beckley Post-Herald*. Currently working as a commercial photographer in Beckley, he is married and has a daughter. Samsell's photos of Frank Pizzino accompanied Mack Gillenwater's interview in the Fall '82 GOLDENSEAL.

BOB SPENCE was born and raised in Logan, and his people have lived there since 1790. He graduated from Marshall University in 1974 with a B.A. in journalism. He worked for the *Logan News* for 11 years, and for newspapers in Weirton and Welch, and now makes his living as a freelance writer. In 1976 Bob wrote *The Land of the Guyandotte*, a 600-page history of Logan County. His article on Dr. Thomas Dunn English appeared in the July-September 1979 GOLDENSEAL.

DOUG YARROW has lived in West Virginia since 1969, and has taught photography at Big Creek High School in McDowell County since 1978. His work has appeared in many publications, including a *Newsweek* cover in 1978. He has contributed periodically to GOLDENSEAL

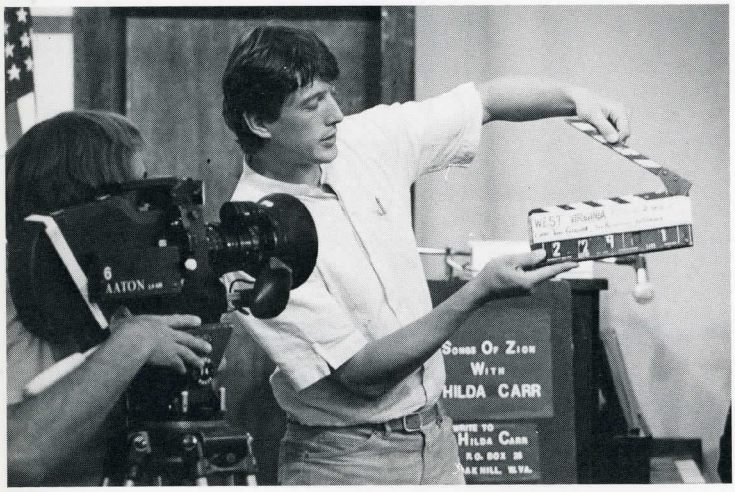
BBC Films West Virginia

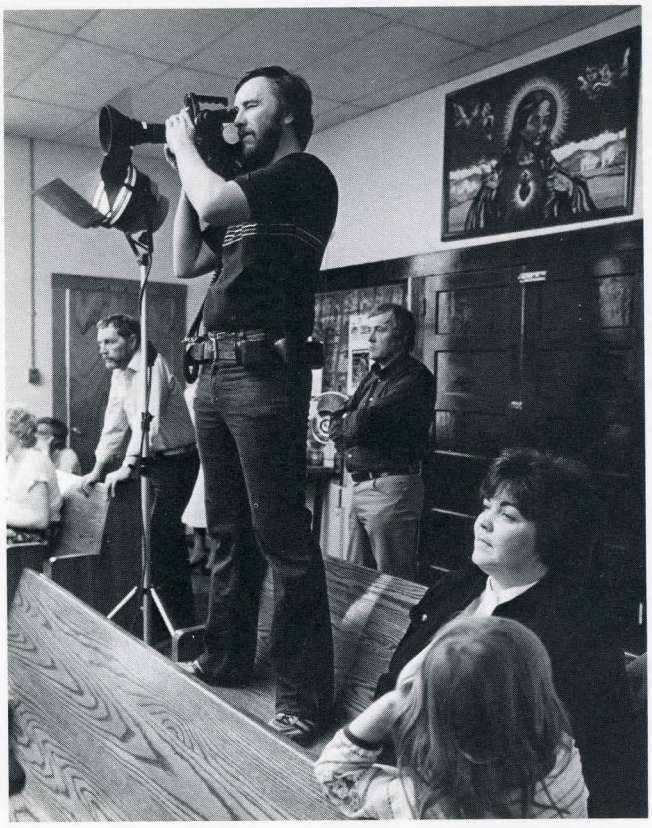
A Welsh crew from the British Broadcasting Corporation spent most of September and early October in West Virginia filming for several television programs on the state. The programs, to be broadcast in Britain in 1983, will emphasize our Mountain State folklife, including religion, traditional music, and other subjects. Photographs by Rick Lee.

Below: Assistant cameraman Huw Davies signals the beginning of a "take" in the BBC filming of Sister Carr's weekly religious TV program.

Right: Filming from the back of the Scarbro Full Gospel Church.

Bottom: BBC producer Brynmor Wiliams (seated) enjoys the sunshine while his men film Clay County musician Sylvia O'Brien and John Morris, on O'Brien's front porch in Clay County.





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