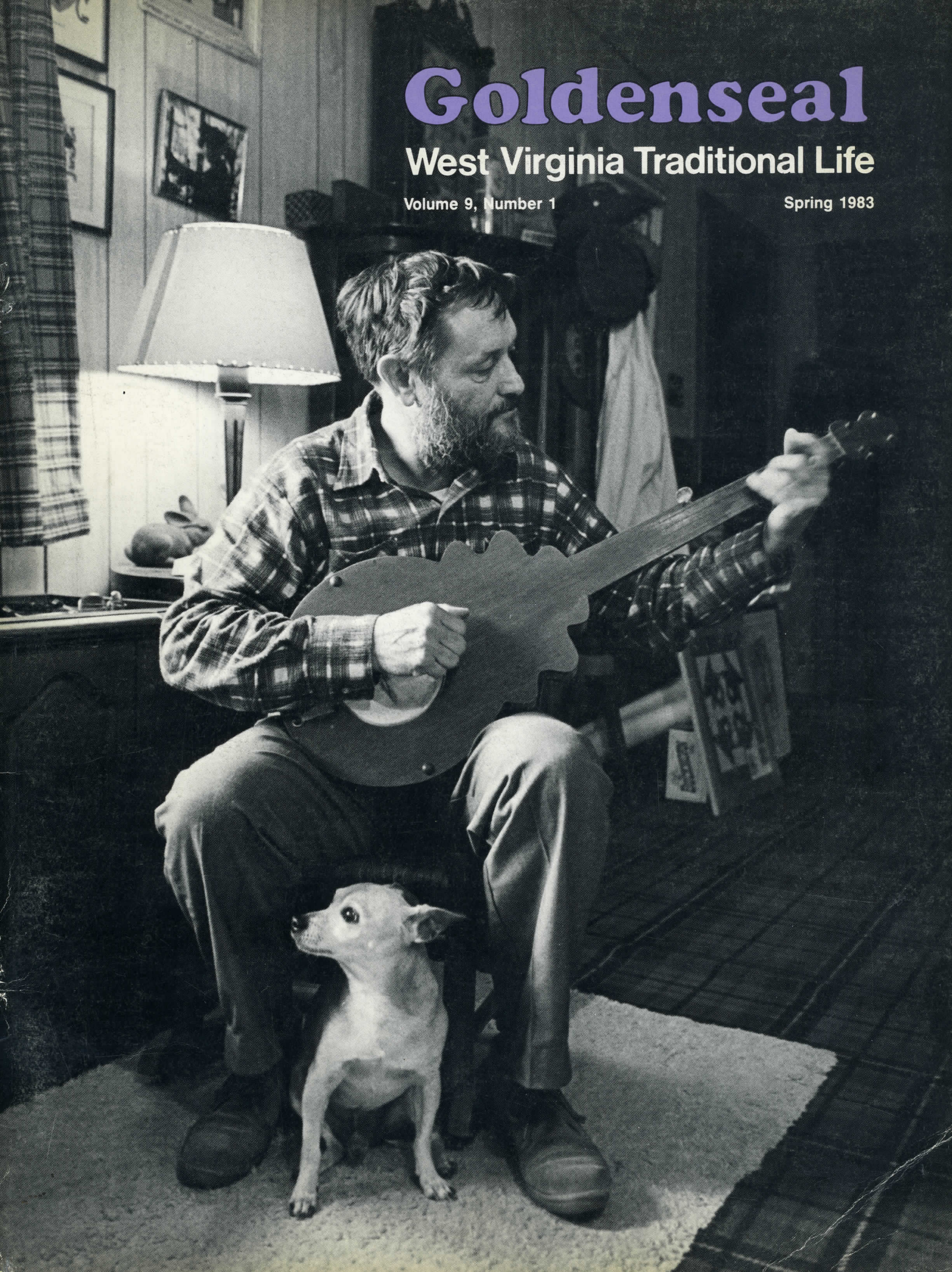
Goldenseal

West Virginia Traditional Life

Volume 9, Number 1 Spring 1983



As of April 1, the finest of West Virginia crafts will be offered in the gift shops at Cacapon, Blackwater Falls, and Hawks Nest state parks, through a cooperative project of the Department of Culture and History and the Department of Natural Resources. The above design, by GOLDENSEAL designer Colleen Anderson, will symbolize the crafts marketing program of the Department of Culture and History and will serve as the official logo of The Shop in the Cultural Center in Charleston. Crafts offered in the program are selected by The Shop through a jury of craftspeople.

Quilts 1983. The annual quilt exhibition at the Cultural Center will run from May 27 to September 11. West Virginia quiltmakers wishing to enter their work in the competition may contact Sherri Hairston-Hughes for entry forms and more information, at the Department of Culture and History, The Cultural Center, Capitol Complex, Charleston, WV 25305. Receiving dates for quilts are March 28 to April 8.

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Norman L. Fagan *Commissioner*

Ken Sullivan
Editor

Margo Stafford
Editorial Assistant

Colleen Anderson *and*
Pat Cahape
Graphic Design

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Goldenseal

A Quarterly Forum for Documenting West Virginia's Traditional Life

Volume 9, Number 1 Spring 1983

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Cover: Frank George plays an ornate pre-Civil War banjo while dog Seamus stands by. Michael Meador's interview with Frank begins on page 26. Photo by Rick Lee.

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.

Andover, Ohio
November 6, 1982
Editor:
My husband and I would like very much to receive the magazine GOLDENSEAL on a regular basis. We recently had the opportunity to examine copies in the home of some friends. Although we subscribe to *Wonderful West Virginia*, we had not known of GOLDENSEAL.

My husband's father, A. B. Tenney, was born and raised in the area around Buckhannon and his mother, Irene Fink, was born in Grassy Meadows in the White Sulphur Springs area.

My mother, although born in Pennsylvania, was raised in the area of Flatwoods. She was Jessie Sparks. My father, Lester Spencer, was born in the Knobs across the mountain from Richwood. I am the granddaughter of William McClellan Spencer who was the youngest son of Allan and Polly Knapp Spencer. My great-grandparents were quite prominent citizens in the Richwood area and many of their descendants are still doing well in the area.

We always return to our roots at least once each year and have traveled extensively throughout the state of West Virginia. As I am a public school teacher planning to retire at the end of this school year, we are hoping to have even more time to spend in "Almost Heaven, West Virginia."

Thank you for your consideration, and we will look forward to receiving GOLDENSEAL with the beginning of the new year.
Sincerely,
Avalyn L. Spencer Tenney

Glen Jean and Bill McKell

Hinton, WV
October 25, 1982
Editor:
I just received the Spring, Summer, and Fall issues of the GOLDENSEAL magazine. I am enclosing my check for $10. Keep them coming! I am also enclosing $10 for a subscription for my brother, who now resides in New York. Please send him the same as you sent me, that is, Spring, Summer, and Fall of this year.

The story about Bill McKell, "Let 'Em Hit It" softball, and Glen Jean sure brought back fond memories. I was born and raised in Glen Jean, and my aunt (my mother's sister) cooked for Bill McKell back in the early '30's.

Thank you for being so prompt in sending me the magazines, and you can rest assured that my dues will always reach you on time.
Respectfully yours,
Lewis C. Grant

Oil Fields

Ft. Lauderdale, Florida
October 19, 1982
Editor:
My husband and I are both native West Virginians, born in Marshall County and St. Marys, Pleasants County, respectively. We lived in McMechen when we met and were married. Later, his business moved us to Wheeling, Parkersburg, and Charleston before we were moved out of the state.

Just recently, another native West Virginian living here loaned us a half dozen GOLDENSEAL magazines. Every one had items about areas we were very familiar with. Too many to go into detail about, but enough to get me to request that we be put on your mailing list.

In one issue, you wrote about Boggs Run (out of Benwood). We wondered if you knew about the Boggs Run Tunnel. My only experience with it was walking through it with some high school friends who lived out Boggs Run, as a short cut from the Union High School—from which I graduated in 1927. My husband was more interested as his grandfather Gatewood was one of the workers that built it. Is there a story there?

Although I was born in St. Marys, our family didn't live there long and I didn't have any knowledge about the oil wells there. However, my mother was born and raised in Jacksonburg, Wetzel County, and as a child I spent a lot of time visiting my grandparents, the James Milton Andersons, and there were many oil derricks all over their farms. An uncle, Richard Anderson, worked for the South Penn Oil Company pumping wells until he retired, then lived to be 91 years old. My mother was 95 in June 1980, then died the following December.

I have an aunt, now 101, Rhoda (Anderson) Henthorn, whose husband had worked during the early days in the oil fields. Aunt Rhoda lived all her life in the same little farmhouse along the railroad track in Jacksonburg about 2 miles from the one in which she was born—until she broke a hip a few years ago. Since then, she has lived with her daughter, Carrie Fox, in Morgantown.

Please send the GOLDENSEAL along.
Sincerely,
Mary M. Gatewood

Elmore City, Oklahoma
October 21, 1982
Editor:
I have just received two copies of the GOLDENSEAL since I subscribed, but would hate to see it have to stop now. I am enclosing a check to help finance it.

I was raised in Kanawha and Gilmer counties, and still come back to visit at every opportunity. I was raised in a family of oil field workers and have done that type of work all my working days. I am now retired. I enjoy the stories of the old oil and gas production.

I also enjoy the articles on country music. I met Emmett and Robert Shafer at the Vandalia Gathering and also at the Glenville Folk Festival this year, along with Woody Simmons. I went to school with "Lefty" Shafer at Clendenin in 1932. I have their albums and play them often.

All the stories on West Virginia history are so interesting, I hope they can continue. I am still a hillbilly at heart.
Sincerely,
Bruce A. Hanlin

Lefty's new album, "Lefty Shafer Fiddles, Sings, and Whistles," is avail-

able for $7.50, plus $1.50 postage and handling, from The Shop, The Cultural Center, Capitol Complex, Charleston, WV 25305. West Virginians should add 38¢ sales tax.—ed.

Eccles Explosion

Mabscott, WV
January 3, 1983
Editor:
Just this past week I was given a 1982 Spring edition of GOLDENSEAL magazine, with the account of the Eccles and Layland explosions. It was a great story.

My father, Allen Winfred Hedrick, was employed at Eccles and we lived there. My father was in one of the pictures. I was four years old, and my sister, Mrs. E. E. Rogers of Hinton, was three years old. Really, I can remember the black smoke.

Would you please add my name to your mailing list? Thank you for a great publication. I am enclosing a check for my contribution.
Sincerely,
Mrs. Paul R. (Thelma Hedrick) Gunter

Norman's Store

Front Royal, Virginia
January 9, 1983
Editor:
I have received my first copy of the GOLDENSEAL and read it from cover to cover and enjoyed it very much. I certainly would like a copy of the Fall issue of 1982. I'm interested in reading the article concerning Norman's Store of Elk Garden, Mineral County.

My husband was born in 1918 and grew up in Mineral County around Elk Garden. He often talked about an old ice cream parlor located in Elk Garden where, as a young boy, he and all the youngsters bought delicious homemade ice cream. I think he called the place "Old Ike's"—but I'm sure it wasn't Norman's. He never mentioned Norman's Store as an ice cream parlor, but talked so often of the other ice cream parlor.

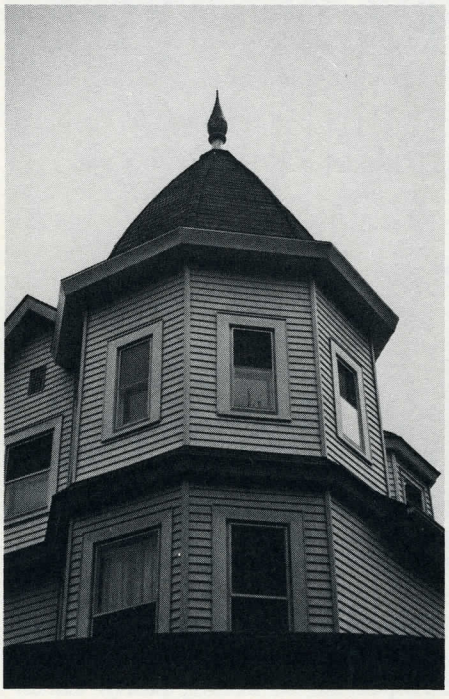
I remember Norman's Store from my first visit to Elk Garden, which was the summer of 1936. It was in a very old building and served the Elk Garden area as a general store.

I'm very curious now about the other ice cream parlor my husband remembered, so will see what I can find out about it.

I'm sending my check for $10. Thank you for a very interesting magazine.
Sincerely,
Louise Morris

Bramwell

Wayne, Pennsylvania
January 14, 1983
Editor:
Your GOLDENSEAL, Winter 1982, article about the "Houses and People of Bramwell" was excellent. Phil and Jean DuPont sent the magazine to us from Charleston, where we lived from 1950 to 1956.



My twin sister, Cynthia, and I were born in Coopers in 1923 and were graduated from Bramwell High School in 1940. My parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Martin, now live at the Glenwood Park Methodist Home between Princeton and Bluefield. They will be 95 and 88 years old, respectively, in April. My father worked for Mill Creek Coal and Coke Company for 41 years. He was hired by Mr. John Cooper.

They were both active in civic, church, and community work in the Coopers and Bramwell area, and after retirement, in the Bluefield area. Governor Rockefeller visited the Glenwood Park Methodist Home last fall and congratulated my parents for their past contributions to the community.

Again, thank you for the history, and please thank Beth A. Hager for the thorough, accurate, and professional way in which she handled this assignment.
Sincerely
H. Kent Martin

Clarksburg Greeks

Clarksburg, WV
November 10, 1982
Editor:
A friend loaned me a copy of the Fall issue of GOLDENSEAL so I could read the "All Greek and All Hard Workers" article. Having attended grade and high school with Irene Miller Muscatell and Alex Xenakis, I wept as I read of the hardships. My mother at age 17 worked at the Weirton Steel mills "flopping tin." She had told me of these ambitious people, and I know it's all true.

I grew up in this community, so would be pleased if you have any extra copies so that I may own one of my own.

Enclosed is $40 for my family and me. We're so happy to be introduced to your fine magazine.
Sincerely,
Mary Virginia Davis Sprouse

Kanawha River

Sun City West, Arizona
October 22, 1982
Editor:
As a former West Virginian I want to thank you for the GOLDENSEAL magazine. I don't know how we became so lucky to receive it.

The last issue was especially interesting because my father, Harry L. Salmons, was lockmaster at Dam #5, Marmet. Our whole family was born there. Our first brother was drowned at the Dam when he was only four years old.

My deceased husband, Charles S. Wiseman, was principal at Union High School, Benwood, when the Perkovic family attended school there. The Perkovic family was one of the very fine families living there. The article was so very interesting to me.
Thank you,
Mary C. Wiseman

New River Symposium

Only trees now populate the once-booming town of Sewell in the New River Gorge in Fayette County. Ron Lane will present "The Story of Sewell" at the 1983 New River Symposium. Photo by James Samsell.

The second New River Symposium will be held at the Donaldson C. Brown Center in Blacksburg, Virginia, on April 14–16. The meeting place is on the campus of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, a major center for research on the New River.

The first New River Symposium was held in early May of last year, at the Ramada Inn in Beckley. The sponsors for the 1982 event were the West Virginia Department of Culture and History and the New River National River unit of the National Park Service. The two agencies have been joined by several other organizations, including groups at VPI and at Wytheville Community College in Virginia, in sponsoring the 1983 Symposium.

The annual conference is expected to rotate among the three New River states, with the Appalachian Consortium joining to co-sponsor the 1984 Symposium in Boone, North Carolina. In 1985 the New River Symposium returns to West Virginia.

Like the 1982 meeting, this year's Symposium plans to bring together a wide variety of people with an amateur or professional interest in the New River. There are oral presentations scheduled from the natural and physical sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities. Historical presentations reach as far back as the Revolutionary War period, with a discussion by author Patricia Johnson of patriot and tory action in the New River Valley, then a newly settled frontier region.

GOLDENSEAL readers may be especially interested in presentations on the New River Gorge towns of Sewell and Thurmond in Fayette County. Walter Witschey, author of the paper on Thurmond, is a descendant of the Thurmond family now living in Richmond. Other West Virginia presentations include several studies on the Bluestone Lake area, particularly archaeological research from U. S. Army Corps of Engineers investigations.

Again this year there are several strictly scientific studies, focusing on the quality and flow of water in the river, and on aquatic life. Southern West Virginia's irritating black fly, an object of controversy at the first Symposium, is examined this year as an element in the New River food chain. Some presentations deal with fishing and other recreational uses of the river. Altogether, there will be 19 presentations at the meeting, with presenters drawn from five states.

As plans went forward for the 1983 Symposium, final arrangements were made for publication of the 1982 *Proceedings*. The 600-page volume, containing all presentations from the first New River Symposium, is expected to be ready for sale by the time of the April meeting in Blacksburg. Pre-arrangements have already been made for publication of the 1983 *Proceedings*, and each annual volume may be purchased for $10.

The 1983 New River Symposium will get underway at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 14, with registration beginning at 11 a.m. that day. The registration fee (undetermined at GOLDENSEAL press time) will include a luncheon, banquet dinner, and wine and cheese social. Limited accommodations are available at the Donaldson C. Brown Center. Further information may be obtained from William E. Cox, New River Gorge National River, National Park Service, P. O. Drawer V, Oak Hill 25901; phone (304) 465-0508.

Current Programs • Festivals • Publications

Early West Virginia Recordings

Old Homestead Records has released "West Virginia Hills," an album of early recorded music from the Mountain State. The material was gathered by Ivan Tribe, an authority on West Virginia's early country music and an occasional writer for GOLDENSEAL.

"West Virginia Hills" includes some of our very earliest recorded music, dating as far back as the mid-1920's. The songs themselves often go back even farther, with a few authored late in the last century. Some of the album's songs have proved durable enough to survive to the present, including such country-bluegrass standards as "Wreck of the Old 97," "May I Sleep in Your Barn Tonight, Mister?" and "Footprints in the Snow." But only the most dedicated fan is likely to remember many of the performers, including groups bearing such names as the Moatsville String Ticklers and the West Virginia Night Owls. Clark Kessinger, the legendary fiddler who performs his "Kanawha March" with brother Luches Kessinger, is now probably the best known of the lot.

The songs were taken from original sources, and the cuts vary in technical quality. The 18 selections are not up to present recording standards, but they do forcefully convey the vitality of a lively musical heritage for which, as Tribe puts it, modern West Virginians "need neither fear, shudder, nor apologize."

"West Virginia Hills" may be ordered from Old Homestead Records, Box 100, Brighton, Michigan 48116. Tribe expects to release a follow-up album through Old Homestead soon, and is now finishing a written history of West Virginia country music.

The High Alleghenies

The High Alleghenies, by J. Lawrence Smith, was recently published by the Allegheny Vistas publishing company. The volume is illustrated by drawings by Bill Pitzer, former artist for the *Charleston Gazette*, with a center section of historic and recent photographs.

The new book is a wide-ranging exploration of West Virginia's eastern mountains, from the time of their geologic formation down to the present, with a concluding look toward the future. Primarily, it is historical in approach. There are chapters on the area's pioneer heritage, the logging industry, and the heyday of the lavish resort springs of Greenbrier and Monroe counties. One chapter is devoted to the New River country, and another to the Potomac headwaters on the other side of Smith's mountains.

The author is aware of the way our history, natural history, and geography are entangled, and he takes care to blend the three throughout his book. Smith's earlier writings have been mainly on nature subjects, and parts of *The High Alleghenies* were originally published as articles in *Wonderful West Virginia* magazine. He hopes eventually to publish a companion volume on the western part of the state.

The High Alleghenies, hardbound, 200 pages, is available for $17 postpaid, from Allegheny Vistas, Box 20, Tornado 25202.

Voices From the Mountains

At the end of 1982 the University of Illinois Press published a new edition of *Voices From the Moutains*, compiled by Guy and Candy Carawan. The large format paperback book was originally published in a very similar edition by Knopf in 1975.

Voices From the Mountains is primarily an annotated collection of songs, both words and music, profusely illustrated by black and white photographs. The book focuses on recent activism in the Appalachian region, including strip mine abolitionism, the campaign for health and safety in the mines, and the reform movement in the United Mine Workers of America. The 1972 Buffalo Creek flood is featured, as are several mine disasters and other flash points of the period.

West Virginia claims a fair portion of the republished book. There are songs by Billy Edd Wheeler, by frequent GOLDENSEAL contributor Michael Kline, and photographs by Bob Cooper and other West Virginians. Hazel Dickens' haunting song, "Disaster in the Mannington Mine," is one of the strongest statements in the collection, as it is anywhere it appears. The words and actions of many individual West Virginians are featured, including Don West, former Congressman Ken Hechler, and Arnold Miller.

The voices here are the voices of protest. Compiled in the early 1970's, the book came at an ideal time to document political upheaval in the mountains. The general activist movement was then at its height, and the Miners For Democracy reform of the UMWA had not yet gone sour. *Voices From the Mountains* is a broad sampling of the substance and especially the spirit of that time, and a good place to start any study of our recent history.

Voices From the Mountains, 232 pages, may be ordered for $13.95 from the University of Illinois Press, Box 5081, Station A, Champaign, IL 61820. Authors' royalties from the book will be contributed to an Appalachian community fund to be administered by the Highlander Research and Education Center.

Bound GOLDENSEAL Volumes

Again this year we are offering a limited number of bound GOLDENSEAL volumes for sale. This special hardbound edition of Volume 8 (1982) includes all four issues for last year. The volume is topped off with the full 1982 GOLDENSEAL index printed in the Winter magazine, making a handy reference book.

Volume 8 of GOLDENSEAL matches the bound volumes for 1980 and 1981. The same light golden buckram fabric was used, with the same distinctive red stamping on the spine. The library-quality binding was done by Mount Pleasant Bookbinders of Hampshire County, as in past years, with much of the work again done by hand.

A few of the 1980 and 1981 volumes are still available, and the three will make a fine matched set for any West Virginia bookshelf. Fortunately, the prices also match, since the binder was again able to hold down his price to us. Volume 8 of GOLDENSEAL may be ordered at $25, plus $1.25 sales tax

(and $1.50 postage and handling, if mailed).

Address mail orders to The Shop, The Cultural Center, Capitol Complex, Charleston, WV 25305. Prepayment of $27.25 should accompany all mail orders, with checks or money orders made out to The Shop.

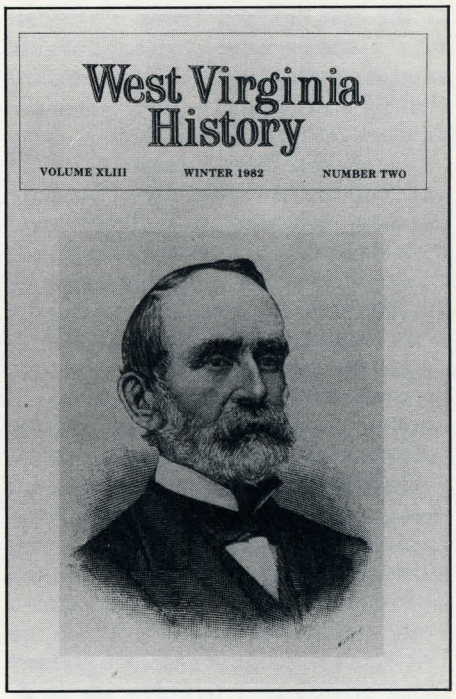
GOLDENSEAL Goes to College

Two past articles from GOLDENSEAL have been republished in the latest edition of *Appalachia: Social Context Past and Present.* The popular textbook is used in college-level sociology and Appalachian studies classes. While GOLDENSEAL articles have been widely reprinted in newspapers and other magazines, this is the first appearance in a college text.

The two articles are "Warm Receptions and Cordial Invitations for Mother Jones in West Virginia," by Lois McLean, from the January–March 1978 GOLDENSEAL; and "Holiness People," by Yvonne Snyder Farley, from April–June 1979. McLean, a Mother Jones authority living in Beckley, has written several stories for GOLDENSEAL, usually on labor history or the coal industry. Farley, also of Beckley, is one of our most frequent contributors, writing most recently of Clay County turkey hunter J. C. Legg in the Winter 1982 issue.

Appalachia: Social Context Past and Present is edited by professors Bruce Ergood and Bruce E. Kuhre of Ohio University. The 368-page, large-format paperback may be ordered for $19.95 from Kendall-Hunt Publishing Company, 2460 Kerper Boulevard, Dubuque, Iowa 52001.

West Virginia History



GOLDENSEAL readers may be interested in *West Virginia History,* another publication of the Department of Culture and History. The scholarly journal is published four times a year by the Department's Archives and History Division.

West Virginia History takes a more strictly historical approach to West Virginia's past than does GOLDENSEAL, following a more academic style and covering much earlier periods. Each issue contains full-length articles, book reviews, and special features, including complete lists of new books and other items recently acquired by the Archives. There are several illustrations, usually historic photographs, per issue.

The quarterly begins its 44th year of publication in early 1983. Among other articles, the following will be included in the four issues of Volume 44:

—"The Civil War in Bulltown," by Professor Barbara Howe, describes several military engagements at the Union encampment at the small rural community on the Weston and Gauley Bridge Turnpike, including the Confederate attack of October 1863 led by Colonel William "Mudwall" Jackson.

—"Gunboats at Buffington: The United States Navy and Morgan's raid, 1863," by Myron J. Smith, Jr., explores this rare naval engagement on West Virginia's Ohio River border when Confederate General John Morgan and his men, conducting an extensive raid through Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, and West Virginia, were captured.

—"Ideology and Perception: Democratic and Republican Attitudes on Civil War Politics and the Statehood Movement in West Virginia," by Professor Richard O. Curry, presents primary documents on the fears expressed by many West Virginia politicians on the continued existence of the newly formed state government in the late 1860's and early 1870's.

—"The Case of Taylor Strauder," by Stephen Cresswell, details the crime, court trials and decisions, legal maneuverings, and portions of Strauder's life in a study of the civil rights case, *Strauder vs West Virginia,* which was appealed to the United States Supreme Court and resulted in the court decision affirming black jury rights.

—"Land Speculation in West Virginia in the Early Federal Period: Randolph County as a Specific Case," by Professor Leo Soltow, investigates the size and value of land purchases in the county in order to project the influences on early settlement and development.

Volume 44 will also include articles on the early iron industry in Monongalia County; the attempt by out-of-state capitalists to assemble a large tract of sourthern West Virginia land for tobacco farming; and the successful integration of a black state college following the 1954 Supreme Court desegregration decision.

Subscriptions to *West Virginia History* cost $8. You should send your check, made payable to the West Virginia Department of Culture and History, to *West Virginia History,* Division of Archives and History, West Virginia Department of Culture and History, The Cultural Center, Capitol Complex, Charleston, WV 25305.

Rural Life on West Virginia Public Radio

By Susan Leffler

Susan Leffler of West Virginia Public Radio specializes in documenting traditional West Virginia, covering much of the same ground and occasionally the same people as GOLDENSEAL. She drops by to compare notes from time to time, and recently gave us this report on her new WVPR series:

I took the title for the series, "It's a Hard Life But a Good Life," from an expression I heard from many of the people interviewed. Oldtimers and young homesteaders alike described West Virginia country living as hard but good. Each of the half-hour programs examines some aspect of this life, from farming to environmental issues and attitudes toward women's health care. The programs are produced in a documentary style, and I try to let people speak for themselves.

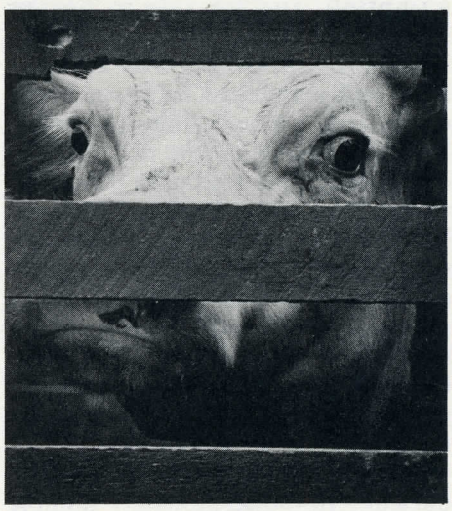
In the "What's Happening to the Family Farm?" program, John Bill Fleshman told of how he's seen farming change since boyhood, when he harvested wheat with a hand cradle and plowed with a horse. With that perspective on tape, I traveled to Monroe County's Union High School, to visit the coming generation of farmers in the Vocational Agriculture Class. Teacher Randy McCutcheon introduced me to student Chris Van Dyke, who plans to practice scientific agriculture on the family farm after college. Betty Dransfield of Union talked of raising children on a farm, and her son, Jeff, now running the Dransfield farm, told why he decided to stay. Jeff spoke eloquently of the modern family farmer's headaches. To round out the half hour, Agriculture Commissioner Gus Douglass gave an overview of farming in West Virginia, compared to the agribusiness states of the Midwest, and shared his fears of overdevelopment and the loss of irreplaceable farmland.

I use as much natural sound as possible to give the listener a good feel for the scene, and for the farm program pulled on knee-high rubber boots to wade through a barnyard recording cows eating and sloshing through the muck. For the Cranberry Wilderness program, a Pocahontas County official told me that much of the local economy depended on timbering, so I headed off to a small sawmill to gather the sounds of machinery and flying woodchips. I talked with the men running the saws, but the racket was so loud we had to shout to be heard on the tape.

"Rural Attitudes Towards Women's Health Care" was recorded at two rural clinics, one in Monroe and one in Greenbrier County. To give the listeners a sense of being involved, I recorded myself going through the various parts of a physical examination. Since I forgot to bring a microphone stand, I had to hold the mike while lying on the examination table.

Each program is summarized at the end by a local scholar, and designed to leave the listener with something to think about. Each segment is broadcast twice a month, usually at 2:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday and at 11 a.m. on the third Saturday of the month. The series may be heard over the six stations of West Virginia Public Radio, at 88.5FM Charleston, 91.7FM Beckley, 88.9FM Buckhannon, 89.9FM Huntington, 89.9FM Wheeling, and 90.9FM Morgantown.

Major funding for "It's a Hard Life But a Good Life" comes from the Humanities Foundation of West Virginia, a state program of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and The Friends of West Virginia Public Radio, with additional funding from the Hillview Nursing and Convalescent Center in Huntington, the Onion Restaurant of Union, and Heartland of Charleston nursing home. A complete set of cassette copies of the programs in the series will be available for borrowing from The Humanities Foundation by late June.



This Roane County cow on its way to the auction block appears remarkably pessimistic, but Susan Leffler of Public Radio found family farmers in West Virginia to be holding their own. Photo by Rick Lee.

The Hard, Good Life on a Monroe County Dairy Farm

Clayborne and Virginia Campbell of Sinks Grove are dairy farmers, maintaining one of the top milk-producing herds in the state over the past decade. They were featured on the "What's Happening to the Family Farm" program, and the following comments are from Clayborne:

"Well, I used to say that I like to live where my children and chickens didn't mix too much with the neighbors' children and chickens. I do like to have room to look up and look out without looking at somebody else, or hearing the squeal of tires and smelling the fumes of gasoline. Of course, the dairy business is not completely without smells.

"Dairying is something that in my opinion is never going to be a large corporate business, for the simple reason that somebody has to give detailed attention to those animals. Cows don't know anything about an eight-hour day, a five-day week. Nobody's ever educated them to that fact."

The Big Blackberry Patch

By William J. Wilcox

Just why they chose to appear the year following the hardest winter of my childhood still remains a mystery. Some contended they came up from seeds dropped by birds after feeding on our domestic blackberries almost half a mile away. Others speculated that the briars originated from dormant seed just waiting for the proper growing conditions. From whatever source, or for whatever reason, the three flats which interrupted the steep hillside of our small Marion County farm quickly developed into what may have been the single largest colony of Allegheny blackberries (*Rubus allegheniensis*) in our part of West Virginia.

That they had come up the previous year there can be no doubt, since first-year canes do not blossom or bear fruit. Dad did not discover them until our hillside became splotched with the white of their blossoms that spring a half-century ago. Beginning that summer, and for the next five years or so, those splotches of white in the spring presaged many days of hard labor picking blackberries for our own consumption, and for sale in nearby Rachel, Farmington, and Mannington.

While our neighbors were scouring their well-manicured farms in hopes of picking a three-gallon galvanized bucket of berries in five or six hours, Dad would have normally picked 15 or more gallons, and my younger brother and I from 10 to 12 each. We each carried a five-quart picking pail on our belt, and wore a billed denim cap to which we attached the tip of the fruit-laden canes. This allowed picking with both hands from the dense clusters of briars which often measured 20 or more feet across.

The first picking was always the most difficult. To indiscriminately trample one's way in meant damaging canes and losing a later harvest. Since Dad was most adept at breaking trails, and since there might be an old copperhead waiting in the patch for a mouse or bird, he always opened the way for us boys. Once broken, his trails served for the balance of the picking season.

Our normal picking day commenced just after morning chores, and ended only when that day's orders were filled. This was usually around 1:00 p.m., but occasionally the day stretched until 1:30 or 2:00. Even when all crates were filled, there remained the refilling of our picking buckets to replace the volume lost to settling during transportation.

Once all the containers were filled, Dad shouldered an eight-gallon crate, or two six-gallon crates, and each of us boys shouldered a six-gallon crate for the half-mile trip to the house. After placing the crates on the bannister of the front porch, and pausing for a drink of water, we retraced our steps up cow paths which seemed much steeper than they had at 7:00 a.m., to bring in the rest of that day's picking.

Following a brief pause for a late lunch, the berries were loaded into the old Model-T touring car, or later the "Fast Four" Dodge sedan, and Dad and one of us boys would spend much of the afternoon delivering to our customers.

Our first delivery each year was to Carl Booth, who lived on top of the Ireland Addition hill just back of the high school in Farmington. He always placed his order the previous December. As we carried the 12 to 15 gallons up the long flight of steps and paths, women would come out on their porches to ask us to stop for their orders on the way back down. By the time we reached the car after that first delivery, we normally had enough orders to keep us busy for a week or more. This was in spite of the fact that we charged 40¢ a gallon, when many farmers were selling berries for as little as 25¢, for we made sure there was no debris or stems in the berries we picked. Five days a week, we picked for market, and on Saturday we picked for ourselves.

It took only a couple of years for the reputation of our wild blackberry patch to spread throughout Marion and surrounding counties. Most of our neighbors asked and were granted permission to pick the small scattered patches. Others were not so considerate, and we had to patrol the field every Sunday to keep carloads of pickers from as far away as Clarksburg, Salem, and even West Union from sneaking in. Toward the end, it even became necessary to carry a loaded shotgun.

The last year, Dad decided to turn picking over to two large families in exchange for them clearing the field that fall. Though it meant the loss of money from hundreds of gallons of berries, being able to relax on Sundays seemed worth the cost. By their count, those two families and friends picked just over 1,000 gallons of berries that season in our 20-odd-acre field.

The next spring, the field looked beautiful—no bushes, no briars, just clean pasture land. The berries did not come up that spring, nor the next as some predicted. As a matter of fact, they never again dotted the hillside with their white blossoms. The brush came back, but not the big juicy berries. Within a few years, the field returned to the woodland that Dad found when he bought the place in 1922.

Even now, when I close my eyes to sleep, I sometimes have a recurring vision that frequently delayed sleep after those long days in the berry field. There are big ripe berries, green berries, overripe moldy berries, stink bugs, rust-infected leaves, plus chewinks, catbirds, and robins noisily protesting our intrusion. Unfortunately, this is all that remains of that tremendous blackberry patch on our steep little farm on Mods Run.

St. Joseph Settlement

By M. A. Whiteman
Photographs by Michael Keller

St. Joseph Settlement is nestled on the top of a hill in southern Marshall County, just barely up into the Northern Panhandle. The Settlement

Overleaf: St. Joseph Roman Catholic Church has been the hub of the German settlement for a century and a quarter. The present church building was erected in 1888, on the site of the original.
Right: The Parish Hall, built in 1910, remains the recreation center for St. Joseph community.
Below right: The original St. Joseph Church, a more rustic affair than the present building, was constructed in the mid-1850's. Photographer and date unknown.

spreads over an area approximately 12 miles long and four miles wide. The closest towns of any size are Moundsville and New Martinsville.

The St. Joseph area has been referred to for many years as the "German Settlement." During the 1840's and 1850's, German immigrants came to the United States from places like the Upper and Middle Rhine, Coebury, Saxony, the Grand Duchy of Baden, Hesse, Bavaria, Die Lorei, and Wurtemburg. They sought religious and political freedom. A few of them settled in Marshall County, my ancestors on both sides among them.

Cheap land was one local attraction. At the time Marshall County land was selling for a mere $3 per acre, while land in Germany might cost 100 times as much.

The German settlers were Catholics, and they built their community around their church. The first mass was said for them by Father Mossblack in 1851, and in 1853 Bishop Whelan of the Diocese of Wheeling bought them two acres of local land. This land, since added to, was to be the site for St. Joseph Roman Catholic Church, and the associated school, rectory, and cemetery. At first a priest came only about four times a year from Wheeling, at that time a hard journey by riverboat and horseback.

Originally a missionary church, St. Joseph did not become an independent parish until January 15, 1873, after a new rectory had been constructed. The first parish priest was the Reverend Theodore Vorman, earlier one of the missionaries. The present rectory was built in 1921, during Father Bucheit's time.

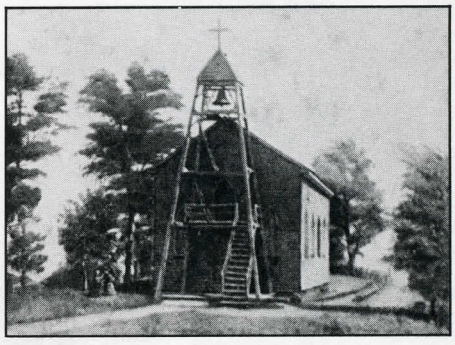
The school was built early, in 1854, only the third parochial school in the Wheeling Diocese. Peter Kolz was the first teacher. Later on, the Pollotine Missionary Sisters took over the teaching. Father Schuerman was the priest when the current school was built in 1926, and St. Joseph School is still in use today.

My father, Cyril W. Klug, said he had to milk three cows and feed the chickens every morning before walking the three miles to school. Most of the other children had to do work at home before going to class. Dad said if you were late for mass, which was said each morning before school, you had to kneel in the aisle.

My mother, Margaret E. (Foland) Klug, had to walk five miles each way to attend school. In bad weather, she and her three sisters stayed during the week with the nuns who taught school and cooked. She said in the evenings all of the girls had to take their buckets several hundred yards to fetch water for their baths.

The nuns turned the school over to lay teachers in 1978. Mr. William Slater, the teacher, gave me a tour of the classrooms and chapel last spring.

The present church building was erected in 1888 on the site of the original church. My great-grandfather, Joseph Klug, was one of the carpenters. Wood for the structure was logged and sawed on the Redfox farm, and Joseph Singer hauled in the pews by horse and wagon. The church is a white frame building with seats for over 200 people. It has beautiful stained glass windows depicting various saints, and a solid oak floor. There was once a massive chandelier over the center aisle. The walls and ceilings are ornately decorated, and the nearly life-sized figures of Jesus, Mary, and the



Sacred Heart seem to reach out to you. A bas relief carving of the Last Supper is set into the front of the main altar. There is a huge pipe organ with chimes in the choir, and the music can be heard for miles.

The neatly kept cemetery is directly behind the church. Many of my relatives are buried there. Graves are recorded back as far as 1856. Some German phrases on the tombstones read: "Hier Ruht in Gott," and "Ich Der Vater, Ihr de Kinder Nehmet Diese Mahning Hin, Bleibt in Glauben Ever Vater, Und Vergesset Eure Elten Nicht." Edward Estep translates these inscriptions as, "Here Rest in God," and "I the Father, you the children take this remembrance back with you, and remain in the belief of the everlasting Father, and do not forget your parents."

An old pump stands at the back door of the church so people can water the flowers on the graves of their loved ones. Originally, there was a large

A statue of St. Joseph and the infant Jesus dominates the church interior.

wooden cross in the center of the cemetery, but it has been replaced by a monument in memory of Father Holtzmer, a St. Joseph priest who died in an auto accident in Clay County in 1937. Bordering the cemetery are stone stations of the cross, commemorating the points of Christ's progression to the cross. The stonework was done by a parishioner.

Change came slowly to the St. Joseph area. For years the narrow roads were dirt, and often mud. Many farmers put their cars up on blocks for the winter, storing the wheels and battery in the cellar. The first decent gravel road, running 21 miles from St. Joseph to Moundsville, was completed the day before Thanksgiving in 1932. Electricity came only in 1946.

For a while during the early 1900's, the Settlement was very busy. Oil and gas rigs were going up everywhere, with as many as 100 derricks dotting the hillsides at one time. South Penn Oil Company was the first to drill in the area, followed soon by Tri-State, Hope, and Manufacturers. Many of the oil workers were brought in from outside, and lived in tents. Landowning farmers were paid an eighth share on drilling profits, and local people were hired to haul equipment with their teams and wagons. Oldtimers recall a 16-horse hitch that moved heavy equipment to the Brinkmeir Station on Whetstone Creek. Today most of the wells are capped, but you can still see the old derricks here and there.

In 1910 during Father Bucheit's stay, the people erected a recreation hall. It became a beehive of activity, holding school functions, dances, and meals. The hall was also the meeting place for such organizations as the Ever-Shining 4-H Club, founded in 1932. My father was an early member.

My own memories of St. Joseph are from a later period, during Father Mark Kraus' time. Father Kraus would take us high school students fishing, or riding in his two-horse surrey. Sometimes he would let us drive, and he wasn't very happy the time I put the surrey into a ditch on a sharp turn.

Father Kraus took his horses seriously, and he used them in his work in the parish. In bad weather he would saddle up his favorite, a palomino stallion, and tie him to the bumper of his old car. Then he would drive very slowly down the blacktop road with the horse trailing behind, until he came to the mud or dirt road he needed to turn off on. There he would park the car, untie his horse, and proceed on horseback to whatever isolated farmstead he was needed at.

I recently interviewed Father Kraus, now living in retirement with his brother's family in Lewis County. "When I went to St. Joseph Settlement in 1952," he told me, "I took a buckskin horse that came from Wyoming. I taught him to rope calves and broke

Above: The Klugs were among the solid German Catholic families of St. Joseph settlement. This photograph is of author M. A. Whiteman's great-grandparents, with their children. Photographer unknown, about 1889.

Above right: Father Lee is the present pastor at St. Joseph. The church rectory dates from 1921.

Below right: Traditional German iron crosses mark early graves in the St. Joseph cemetery.

German-American Tricentennial

This year marks the 300th anniversary of the arrival of the first German immigrants to America in 1683. President Reagan has appointed a special Presidential Commission on the German-American Tricentennial to coordinate a year-long national observance in 1983.

While it is not known when the first German-Americans arrived in Western Virginia, they were among the earliest white settlers. Sweeping down from the misnamed Pennsylvania Dutch country and up from the Shenandoah Valley, they became an important component in the basic population stock of what later became the state of West Virginia. Today many of us bear names of German origin, and German place names dot the state.

German-Americans have had an important impact on the history and culture of West Virginia, as articles in this GOLDENSEAL note. In "Log Barns of West Virginia," writer LeRoy Schultz discusses the influence of Pennsylvania German building methods on log structures, and thus on much of our early folk architecture. In "Grandpa Got Me Started," fiddler Frank George relates his German ancestors' adventures in what was to become Monroe County, although it's clear that Frank's music came from another branch of the family.

We take our main tribute to the German-American Tricentennial from St. Joseph Settlement, on the Marshall-Wetzel line. Writer M. A. Whiteman is descended on both sides from German immigrants who settled the area before the Civil War, and her article and accompanying interviews show that St. Joseph was a uniquely German place in West Virginia. To some extent it still is. Some older residents even speak German, though as Marie Miller wistfully notes, there are few others "around here to talk with me anymore." The language will undoubtedly be lost altogether in a few years, but the spirit of ethnic community will remain, both in St. Joseph and among its children scattered throughout the Upper Ohio Valley.

Our best to West Virginians of German descent in this historic year.

him for harness work and driving. I also used to ride this horse coon hunting with friends. One night I was using a flashlight to see by and I shot a coon in a tree the hunting dogs had led me to. The coon was probably some 40 to 60 feet up in the tree, but I got him on the very first shot. Try this sometime with your horse walking uphill and you trying to time your shooting to your horse's heavy breathing!"

Father Kraus remembers that his palomino came from Ohio, and speaks of another of his horses, April Glory, which was the granddaughter of Roy Roger's Trigger.

Father Kraus is living in retirement in Lewis County now, and I too have left, for a new home in Tyler County. We both enjoy talking about St. Joseph Settlement, and for both of us it remains special—a place where you can step back in time by attending a square dance or enjoying good home-

cooked food in the recreation hall. The biggest event of the year is still the Fourth of July celebration. Back in the old days, winter ice from the creek was stored in sawdust at Harry Fox's store on Lynn Camp, and then hauled to St. Joseph to make ice cream for the Fourth. That part has changed, of course, but the spirit—of neighbors getting together for a patriotic celebration and a good time—remains the same.

And St. Joseph Roman Catholic Church remains the hub of the community, as the original immigrant settlers intended. Some of the spellings have changed, but the German family names—Foland, Yeager, Frohnapfel, Klug, Wayman, Estep, Herrick, Blatt, Hohman, and others—still predominate in the area. Their church sits firmly on the hill among them, as it has for well over a century, with the bell still tolling the services and the white steeple reaching out to all.

As I drove the gravel shortcut from my father Cyril Klug's farm on Coffield Ridge to Marie Miller's house at St. Joseph, I couldn't help thinking that the road did not look much different than it did back in the '50's when I used to ride my sorrel gelding on it. The trees had grown closer together, now making a roof for sections of the road, but otherwise there was little change. I had to stop on the Hawkey Hill to move a tree limb out of my path and a rabbit jumped out in front of me going up the Baker Hill. The small run between these two hills is called Whetstone.

Marie lives alone in a two-story white frame farmhouse on a gravel road close to St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church. She greeted me on her front porch, where she had been stripping paint. "I'm getting too old to do this, but someone has to do it," she told me. "I worked on the posts and now have the first coat of paint back on them. When I get through with them, I want to work on the floor. Today it's just too hot for me to work." It was 87° and very humid, and she seemed glad for a chance to stop and talk.

When the German settlers first came in here years ago, you know, like my grandfather Nolte, the ground was all growed up and they bought this land for next to nothing an acre. At first they just put up little shacks and then later on when they got the land cleared they built better houses.

My mother was born on this side at St. Joseph. Her name was Corlena Foland, but everyone called her Lena. In 1893, my mother married John Weidel who had a bakery at Martins Ferry, Ohio. They were married about two and a half years when he and another guy went out into the Ohio River on Decoration Day. He drowned. They said the other man just couldn't save him.

Mom then moved back to the Folands' with my half-brother Harry. On May 20, 1897, she married Charles Nolte, my father. I was born February 20, 1898, in the hills of Marshall County. They were only married three years when Dad died of typhoid fever on February 8, 1900. Mom thought Dad was recovering from the fever when he died. That was a bad time. Altogether, within a six-week period, my grandfather Nolte buried three of his children. They were Aunt Lizzie, Uncle Johnny who was only 18, and Charles who was 31.

My mother then married Valentine Blatt and they were married for over 52 years. I grew up with three brothers, Carl, who died as an infant, Leonard, who died at 18, and Harry at 25. There were two sisters, Christine and Pauline.

We rode to church in the spring wagon in good weather. In the winter we walked to church. The church was a mission at first. Father Bowers is the first priest I can remember, but Father Bucheit was the first one I really got to know well. I can remember them all from Father Bucheit on up to today. He was the one who was there when I went to school at St. Joseph.

We stayed with our grandfather and Uncle Joe Nolte during the week to go to school at St. Joseph, because it was closer for us. We picked up the mail on Friday at Klug's Post Office on our way home for the weekend.

When we were kids in school at St. Joseph's on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday we had singing. On Tuesday and Thursday we said the rosary. Tina Weigand, my sisters, Christine and Pauline, and I would take turns saying the rosary in German. They didn't have the mass every morning back then because we didn't have a full-time priest.

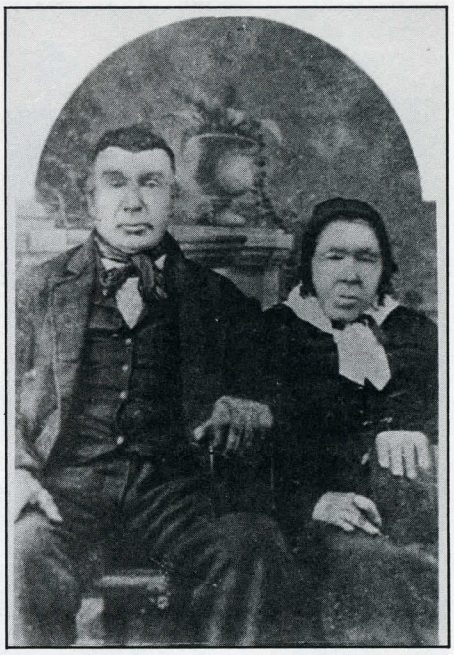
They had the English Reader and the German Reader in school. I don't think I could read much in the German Reader now. It gets away from you. I still like to talk in German, but there isn't anyone around here to talk with me anymore. Probably Albert Estep's son Eddie would be the only one who could talk German.

We went barefoot to school in warm weather. In cold weather we wore shoes a man by the name of Yates in Wetzel County made for us. At home and school we played ball and marbles. Father Bucheit used to play ball with us. We played marbles mostly in the

"When I Was Home as a Child"

Marie Miller Recalls St. Joseph Family Life

Interview by M. A. Whiteman
Photographs by Michael Keller



Left: Marie Miller with author M. A. Whiteman.
Right: George Foland and his wife were among the early German-speaking settlers of Marshall County. "They were both very strong," Marie Miller says. Date and photographer unknown.

winter when it was too cold to be outside. During the summers we had to work in the garden and fields and do our chores.

Father Bucheit organized a band. There were over 20 in it. I remember that they played bass horns, trumpets, bass drums, and tenor drums. One night the band was playing and Lee Wayman played the big bass drum. He wasn't playing it just right and Father Bucheit took the hammer you hit the drum with and he hit it so hard he burst the canvas! I never will forget that!

At first the people didn't dance to the music. During breaks and at times during the picnics the band would play and we would stand and listen to them. They had a stand built up around a big tree. The fellows all sat up there and played the music. It was nice. At the time the band was first started, most of the guys weren't married.

When Valentine and Bernettie (Weigand) Foland first got married, they lived where Uncle Nick Blatt used to live before he moved to Marietta, Ohio. The Folands, your grandparents, rented from Frank Estep who lived in Elm Grove. I can remember seeing your mother's three older sisters walking to school. Your mother wasn't old enough to go to school then.

When I was 14 years old, they had a serenade for Valentine and Bernettie Foland. Mom, Aunt Gertie, and I went over there. To dance in them days, they filled the floor up with people. They needed one partner and somebody asked Mom if I could dance and she told them yes. So I danced my first dance there, with Jim Postal.

My half-brother Harry Weidel died at 25. He and his wife went to a recreation area at Cleveland, Ohio, and he tried to hit that thing to make the bell ring and didn't. So he tried again and got it to ring. Then he fell backwards at his wife's feet, dead of a heart attack.

The first church we had up here was behind where the church is today. Grandpap said they would go up that tower on the outside and ring the bell. Grandpap Blatt and Aunt Mary Foland (your great-grandmother) went to that old church. When Joe Nolte died, your Uncle John (they called him "Judy") was the administrator of Joe's estate and he sent me a bunch of old pictures.

I want to tell you about my great-grandfather George Foland who was your great-great-great-grandfather. He and his wife were both very strong and years ago they would take wheat over to Rosby Rocks to be ground. It is quite a way up there from here; about ten miles, I think. He would carry three bushel and she would carry two bushel on their shoulders. When they got up to Weigand's Low Gap where Jim Herrick lives now, he would say in German, "Das ruhe bisher." "We'll rest a little bit now." And then they would go clear on into Rosby Rocks which is past Harry Fox's Store at Lynn Camp, up the hill and down the other side, and down the creek. They would get the wheat ground and carry the flour back.

Anyway, when they would come up that hill my grandpap Charles Foland would just laugh when George would say to his wife, "We'll rest a little bit now." Anyone else would have had to rest many times on this trip. It was amazing how they could carry all that weight. They are buried in the cemetery at St. Joseph. They have black iron crosses as markers.

George Foland, your great-grandfather and the grandson of Old George, married Mary Blatt who was a sister to my step-dad, Valentine Blatt. Mom told me that down over the hill near the fence on the right of where your grandfather Valentine Foland lived on Blake Ridge was the house that your grandfather Val was born in. It's been gone now for years.

Your great-grandparents, the Folands, then built the house on Blake Ridge and moved up there. Later on Valentine and George traded houses. The house your step-grandmother, Annie Foland, lives in today was the one your great-grandfather lived in. It used to be made of logs before they covered it with wood siding.

We used to go see Uncle George and Aunt Mary (Blatt) Foland. She took us in the back room one time and said,

Both Marie Miller and Albert Estep remember the St. Joseph band organized by Father Bucheit. "At the time most of the guys weren't married," Mrs. Miller recalls. Date and photographer unknown.

"I got Dan Dophler to make me this cupboard to put clothes in. I just had to hang George's shirts on the wall back of the door and I got tired of that."

She had a cupboard and a big box they used to ship coffee in in her kitchen, too. After they died, my son, Hilary, took a horse and a little wagon and went to ask Valentine Foland if he wanted to sell anything. Anyway, Hilary came home with those three things for only $8.00. Now, you know that's been a while back!

Bernettie (Weigand) Foland, your grandmother, was eight or ten years older than I was. I can still remember my Aunt Mary Foland, your great-grandmother, was very upset the day your grandparents went to town and didn't get back when they were supposed to. That was the day your grandmother died on the sidewalk near the post office in New Martinsville. That was on March 10, 1943. Val Foland then married her youngest sister, Annie. Val died on July 13, 1976. I attended his funeral.

We went to your grandparents Nicholas and Clara (Estep) Klug's 50th wedding anniversary. I can remember Clara telling me, "Now when you have your 50th wedding anniversary, you have to celebrate! It's so much fun! Father Kraus even gave me a kiss!" He hitched up his horse and took them for a ride in his buggy, too. Clara had her hip broke on their 60th anniversary and her husband died shortly after that.

I married Nicholas Miller on April 30, 1919. We were married at St. Joseph and celebrated our 50th and 60th wedding anniversaries at St. Joseph. Clara was right. Anniversaries are a lot of fun. Everything was decorated so nice. Nick died about a year after our 60th anniversary in 1979.

We raised wheat, oats, hops, corn, and so on on our farm. We had mostly hogs, but there were some cattle. The fellows hunted deer, rabbits, just about anything you could think of. They even fished some.

We would milk the cows and strain the milk into crocks, and let that cream raise. As it gets hard, it will raise. Then we would take the top part off and churn it into butter. We would take that over to the country store and sell it. I don't know what they did with it, because it would only keep a couple of days in the heat.

We had a cave we kept things cool in during the summer when I was home as a child. Although I was born in Marshall County, I grew up near Valentine Foland's farm.

In later years, they got separators to separate the cream and milk. At first they were hand-cranked, but then later on they had gasoline engines. We would add our warm cream to the cream just separated and stir it and we would keep it and sell it to the man who came around once a week to all the farmers to buy cream.

We made butter different ways. I used separated cream and a little salt. Separated cream don't give you much buttermilk. At first, I had a wooden dasher churn and later on I got a daisy glass churn and it had a wheel on it and you churned that way by turning the wheel. I had a pound print mold that I used to mold the butter. I used to sell a little butter around here to some of the folks.

We cooked on a wood stove and heated the house with wood back when I was home as a child.

I never made cheese, but Albert Herrick used to make good cheese. He made it in five-pound molds. You know, he had to have certain equipment to make his cheese. I forget how many gallons of milk it took to make five pound of cheese, but it was a lot.

Ice cream was mixed up with milk and sugar and whatever flavor you wanted to make it. We had a gallon metal handmixer to make it in. I used four eggs beat up good and a little milk and heated that up good to make a paste and then added that into the milk and sugar. Oh! I used to make good ice cream! You put the mixture into this metal container and put the ice around the outside. We put salt on the crushed ice and ground the ice up.

We made wine and cider. They used to say I made good wine. I used blackberries or grapes. You crush them up and put them in a crock and let them work. Then when they got worked out (there would be like a white scum on them), we would strain that. If we were making a 12-gallon keg, we would put about two-and-a-half gallons of juice and about 25 pounds of sugar. It was usually at least two months or more before we would start using the wine after we made it.

With the cider, we used to grind the apples and press the apples and then let them work out. As soon as the cider was worked out, it was ready to drink. It didn't have to sit like the wine.

To make jelly, my mother used to take so much juice and so much sugar and cook that down until it got heavy. When I started making jelly, I always used Certo. I still make a little jelly, but not much because I'm here by myself.

We used to fry our food in pure lard. Some people even dipped bread into hot sausage grease. And now they say that will kill you.

We had gas light in this house and one of those old crank-type wooden telephones when we moved here. We have gas heat and got electric in the house in 1947.

During the oil and gas boom days there was a big pumping station on Whetstone called Brinkmeir Station. It was a gas pumping station and it blew up one day. The line exploded close to the station and caused heavy damage to the station. A man by the name of "Moody" McIntyre was killed. It was such a terrible noise and steam went up into the sky as far as you could see. We could see it from here. Right after that, Nick and I and some of the kids went down. We were afraid to get very close the way that thing was acting. That was at least some 40-odd years ago, because Nick wasn't crippled then and he was crippled 30 years before he died.

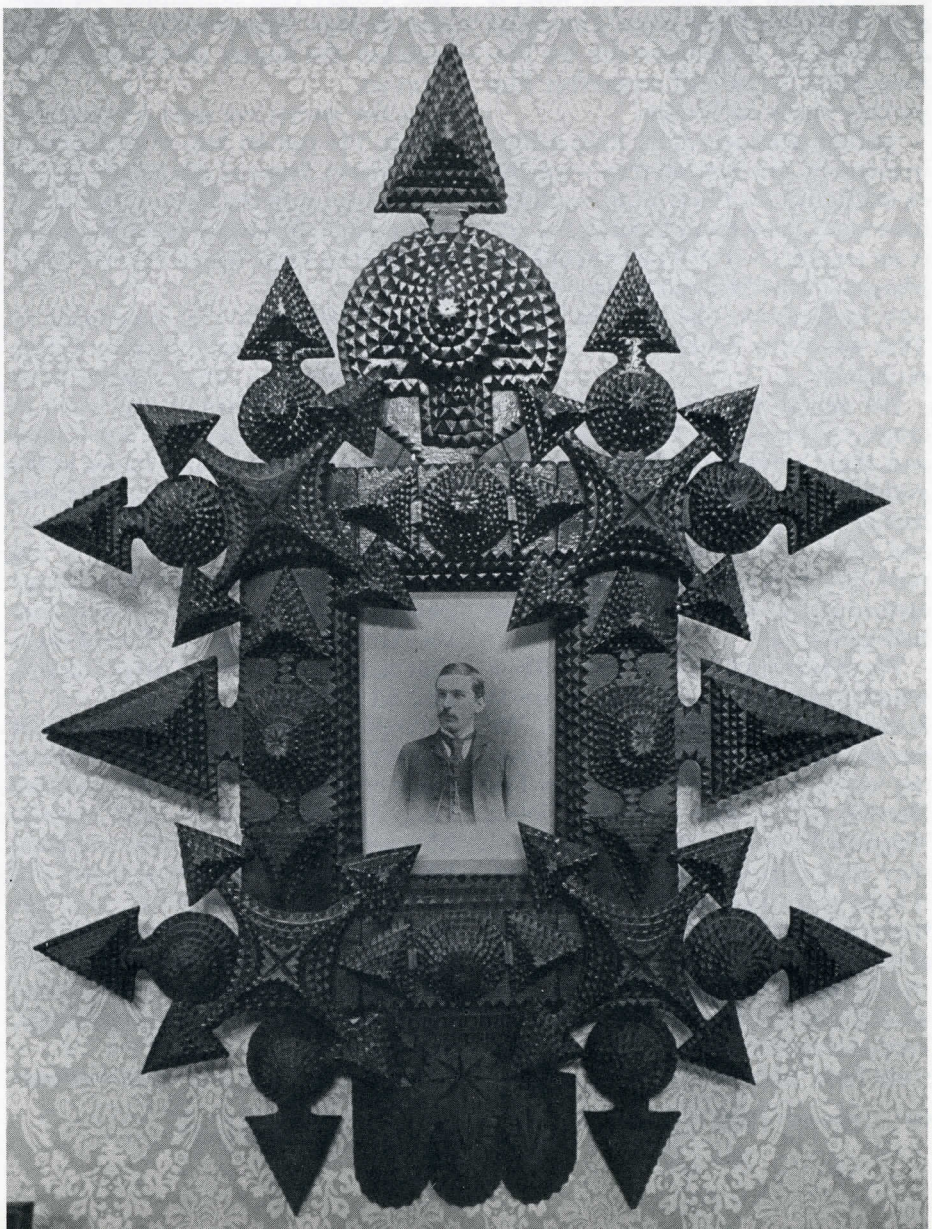
Never did hear just what caused the explosion. There was a great big wheel in there and it was going round and round real fast. "Doc" (Sylvester) Estep was the operator in there. We were afraid to go in. Doc said, "I'm afraid of this thing," but he stayed and helped out. Right after that, Hope Natural Gas came in and took out the station.

Doc Estep is dead now, and Marie noted that most other members of the older generation are also gone. There are several hardy survivors, however, and she named some of those for me. "Attie Frohnapfel is 91, Frank Estep is 93, Albert Estep is 88, I'm 84, Joe Weigand is 83, and Clara Hohman and Margaret Fox are 82. There aren't too many of us oldtimers left around here anymore," *she added.*

But Marie Miller is not one to dwell on such things, and she immediately plunged into another happy recollection of the time "when I was home as a child."

I almost forgot, I wanted to tell you how Mom made bread. She boiled the hops and used that liquid and mixed it with corn meal into little cakes. She would let that dry and then the night before she was going to bake she would soak the cakes and then bake them the following morning. When I got married and started baking, we used yeast.

Marie Miller's father, Charles Nolte. The elaborate frame, of eight thicknesses of cigar-box wood, is in a style now prized by collectors of folk art.



Albert Estep Remembers St. Joseph Rural Life

Interview by M. A. Whiteman

My parents were from St. Clairsville, Ohio. My grandparents came to the United States from Gürol, near the Rhine River in southern Germany. I was born on July 9, 1894, at St. Joseph Settlement. I grew up with four brothers and two sisters.

About 1900, I went to St. Joseph School. I also attended Santa Fe Public School, which was located on what is now the Frank Estep farm. There was a blacksmith shop there run by Mathew Haid. I can still remember him putting shoes on horses.

At first, sermons at St. Joseph were in German, but later on they were given in English. As I first recall, we didn't have mass there every Sunday, but later on we did. I can still remember Mrs. Margaret Scheibelhood saying the rosary in German. She was the leader. That was Corie Scheibelhood's mother-in-law.

We would till the soil, plant the crops, cultivate, and then weed them, and then harvest the food later that summer and fall. We raised corn, beans, tomatoes, lettuce, cucumbers, and so on. Much the same things we raise yet today in our gardens. We canned all our vegetables in quart and half-gallon jars.

We harvested the wheat with a wooden cradle which had a metal blade. This was done by hand. We mowed hay with a horse-drawn mowing machine. Albert, Andy, and Bill Herrick had a store at Proctor, West Virginia. We sold them our wheat and they would grind it into flour and sell it back to us. We bought a few things from them from time to time. Later on at harvest time we had steam-driven threshing machines to harvest the wheat. The machines were pulled by kerosene-driven tractors and traveled from farm to farm to thresh.

We traveled mostly on horseback or by walking. The roads were narrow and muddy. We had a buggy with one seat, and a surrey with two seats, but mostly we used a farm wagon. We scraped the ruts in the roads with a metal road scraper. It had metal wheels and was pulled by a horse. When I walked to Proctor, I walked the Clarence Goudy Hill. Sometimes we traveled to New Martinsville. I can't remember the names of the stores we went to.

In the winter we used a horse and sleigh. We put on lots of clothing to keep warm. Some of the people heated bricks to put on the floor of the sleigh to keep their feet warm and piled quilts on them to keep warm, but we never did.

Joe Palmer was the undertaker at Proctor. He had a small furniture store and lived beside a run at Proctor. Later on he sold the business and store to Everett Mason. They laid out bodies in houses and the bodies stayed at the houses until taken to St. Joseph Cemetery or buried on the people's farm.

Peddlers came on foot with a big pack on their back carrying things people needed in those days and later on they came in wagons. Two of them that came around were Carter Darvish and Ed Daniels.

People dressed very modest—not like they do today! They wore clothing made of cotton or wool. Women wore long dresses, bonnets, and shawls. Men wore long pants, shirts, and hats. We wore high- and low-cut shoes and leather boots, but they all had low heels, not like some you see today. The children always went barefoot during the summers. In the winters we wore long, heavy coats, scarfs, stockings, and hats.

We raised sheep and spun our own yarn on a spinning wheel for clothing. We raised cows for milk, butter, cheese, and meat. We had chickens and pigs, too.

The mail came from Proctor out to St. Joseph. The St. Joseph Post Office was run by Mollie and Annie Klug. People had to go there to pick up their mail. When we went to church on Sundays, we would stop and pick up our mail. The mail route later went on to Teutonia. You turned right onto Coffield Ridge and there used to be a school there called Peabody.

We had apple peeling parties where all the neighbors would come in and help you peel apples. Then the next

Albert Estep at his home in New Martinsville. Photo by Michael Keller.

day we would put water in a big brass kettle and heat it on a wood fire outside and when the water got warm they put in the apples and sugar. We had to keep stirring it to keep it from sticking with a wooden stir. When it got dark brown, it was done.

We also raised cane and would make a barrel of molasses. The cane went into a press with two vertical cylinders and a harnessed horse would walk in a circle which crushed the cane to compress the pulp from the juice. We used a great big pan about three feet wide and about ten feet long and built a wood fire under it outside. We had to keep stirring to keep the molasses from burning. It took several days to make molasses. Urban Klug still has a cane mill press.

I remember one time we made a barrel of molasses and we had it sitting right close to the creek. We had a hard rain and the creek came up. The force of the water knocked the plug out of the barrel and we lost all of it down the creek. I will never forget that!

We cooked our ketchup outside like we did the apple butter and it had to be stirred too. We made cider from apples. We picked blackberries, elderberries, mulberries, and so on. We made jelly and wine from them. Everyone had a wine and a cider barrel. In the fall we picked hickory nuts, chestnuts, butternuts, and quince.

We made sauerkraut by the barrel. We put salt in and stomped it down with a wooden mall real solid until the water formed on it and then we would put a wooden board on top of the kraut with weights on it and it would sink as the liquid formed. Then we put a cloth over the top of the barrel to keep the dirt out. Then we would just let it sit and get sour.

We cooked on a wood stove in the house and used oil lamps to see with. For heating, we used a huge wood stove.

We had quilting parties. After the ladies would have all their little pieces

This farm was Albert Estep's boyhood home, with members of the family gathered in front of the smaller house. The German families built to last, and the large farmhouse (*below*), remains in good condition today. Photo by Michael Keller, early photographer and date unknown.

of scrap material sewn together by hand, we would all get together and quilt. They put heavy cotton between the patchwork and lining and quilted them together.

We had log-raising parties. We would cut and hew logs for our houses. Part of the old cellar house, now on the Fletcher Andrews property, still has hewed logs. There is an old log house still standing south of Proctor on State Route 2.

Sawmills in those days were run by steam engines. We cut most of the trees down with crosscut saws. One man got on each side of the long saw and they worked together to cut down a tree.

There were "home parties" on Sunday nights. We would go to different homes and visit. This is how the younger generation met one another and started dating. There was always homemade wine and cider.

When we butchered in the fall we took the lard and used it for cooking. The remainder left in the kettle after the lard was rendered was called cracklin's. That is, what didn't get burned up. We ate them and also fed them to the hogs.

We leached wood ashes with water and filtered them with a cloth. Then we boiled the liquid until it got slippery to touch. Then we used it with lard to make our soap.

At St. Joseph there was a picnic ground down over the hill from where the recreation hall is today. They had a big area with a roof on it and a special platform for the people to square dance. Then later on, Father Bucheit organized a band of 28 that played our music. My brother Bill played in the band, but I don't remember what instrument he played.

They used to play baseball down on Whetstone and someone sold homemade ice cream. They got ice from Harry Fox's store down on Lynn Camp. He stored it in sawdust to keep it frozen. You had to use a hand mixer to make the ice cream. You put ice around the inside of the metal mixer and turned a crank for a long time.

We always had a big Fourth of July Celebration at St. Joseph. There was homemade ice cream, cakes, pies, all kinds of food. We always had fireworks out there on the Fourth, too. We always looked forward to this celebration.

The first auto I remember owning was a 1914 black Saxon. We had a garage to put it in. I still drive when traffic isn't real heavy.

A lot of men worked in the oil and gas fields and lived in tents. Most of them were outsiders with the companies, although some of the local men worked there.

The supplies that came into our area stores came by riverboat from places like Wheeling, Pittsburgh, and Cincinnati. Later, most of the supplies came by trains along the Ohio River.

My wife and I were married at the Wheeling Cathedral in Wheeling, on November 17, 1930. She was Anna Mae Cunningham. We moved to St. Joseph to live and later on moved to Hundred.

We had two daughters, Patricia Ann and Lois Jean, and one son, Edward E. Estep. I lived at Hundred for 20 years and worked for Manufacturers Light and Heat Company. I moved to New Martinsville to live with my son on August 15, 1956.

Birds of My Hollow

Claude Kemper, Bird Carver

By Noel W. Tenney

Photographs by David L. Anderson

He may divide his time between Florida and West Virginia, yet his thoughts are almost always on his hollow home tucked away in the foothills of Gilmer County. And with an adept flash of his pocket knife or the steady flow of his paint brush his scarlet tanager, his wood thrush, and his black-capped chickadee all magically come alive with a burst of color and a song of morning sweetness. Claude Kemper is a bird carver. Both he and his wife Ethel have a love for West Virginia's winged beauties that goes back to their very early childhood.

"I lived all of my life until I left to go to college on a 150-acre hill farm up a hollow in a very rural area of West Virginia," Claude says. "It was a wonderful place. You don't come in contact with very many people, but you do come in contact with nature. My oldest sister and I each spring got to hunting out bird nests. Now, we knew where every bird nest was in the vicinity of our home. We kept close tab on how many eggs were in the nest, when they hatched, and when the young left the nest. Our dad always told us that we must not put our hands in the nest because birds have a very keen sense of smell and if we put our hands in the nest the mother would abandon the eggs or young birds. We were also told that if we touched the young birds that ants would eat them and we certainly didn't want either of these things to happen."

So they were cautioned and instructed in the ways of mountain birds, learning to identify different species by their colors and their songs. Ethel, reared by her grandparents in a small Webster County community, also developed a deep interest in birds and Claude attributes much of his accomplishment in bird carving to Ethel's influence. He adds that "as of last June we have been married 50 years and she probably reads me better at times than I do myself."

Claude doesn't exactly remember when he received his first knife, but an old school photograph made when he was about four years old shows a small knife attached to a chain in his bib overall pocket.

"I've often said I learned to use a knife long before I could write my name. Every boy had a knife and we made the things we played with, the

The small black-capped chickadee is one of the most common West Virginia birds, and a familiar visitor to backyard feeders. White wing markings, carefully reproduced by Mr. Kemper, distinguish it from its cousin, the Carolina chickadee.

The yellow throat and the female and male indigo bunting. As in many other species, the male bunting receives the bright coloration, with the female a drab brown. Male and female yellow throats are similar in appearance, although the female and young lack the black "mask" shown on this male.

fun things, whistles, sling shots, squirt guns, and so on. We learned to use the knife and I learned to make it do what I wanted it to do."

As he grew up in rather isolated Gilmer County, he spent a lot of time in the fields and woods with his father, learning to observe nature's beauty around him. He would later admit that his ability to render lifelike qualities in his birds through carving and painting can be attributed to those hours of close observation, when he learned the difference between "seeing and just looking."

"My dad had to make dollars wherever he could since money was pretty scarce," he remembers. "Usually in August, after the corn was laid by and the hay harvesting was done he would take his team and wagon and work for the local oil company to bring in a few dollars. Now this didn't mean that I got the days off when he was gone. I was usually sent up on the hill to cut 'filth,'" the bushes and brush that had to be cleared from a new field or pasture.

"It wasn't a pleasant experience for me except I'd usually go on the hill at 7:00 or 7:30 in the morning and I'd sort of lay out what I thought was a good day's work. Then I'd jump into it and cut like all get-out until by the middle of the afternoon I'd have the allotted work done and would have the rest of the afternoon off. You see, I wouldn't go home until about six, since that was considered quitting time. When I had that time off I'd usually go into the woods or under a tree and get myself comfortable and watch what was going on around me. One of the things I liked best were the birds."

Yet actually carving birds came much later in his life. Claude was graduated from Tanner High School and went up to Glenville College in the summer of 1930. Within a period of about a year he had received a teaching certificate, met and married Ethel, and found a teaching job in rural Gilmer County. In 1937 he enrolled at West Virginia University, finished a B.S. degree in Agriculture in 1939, and later took a position with the University Extension Service which he held until his retirement in 1970.

Upon retirement, the Kempers began to travel considerably and Claude sought other activities to occupy his spare time. He tried clay working but wasn't totally satisfied. On a trip down the Eastern Coast, Ethel picked up a duck blank in a village shop. Claude was "surprised with the ease I shaped it the way I wanted it and from then on I was basically hooked on carving."

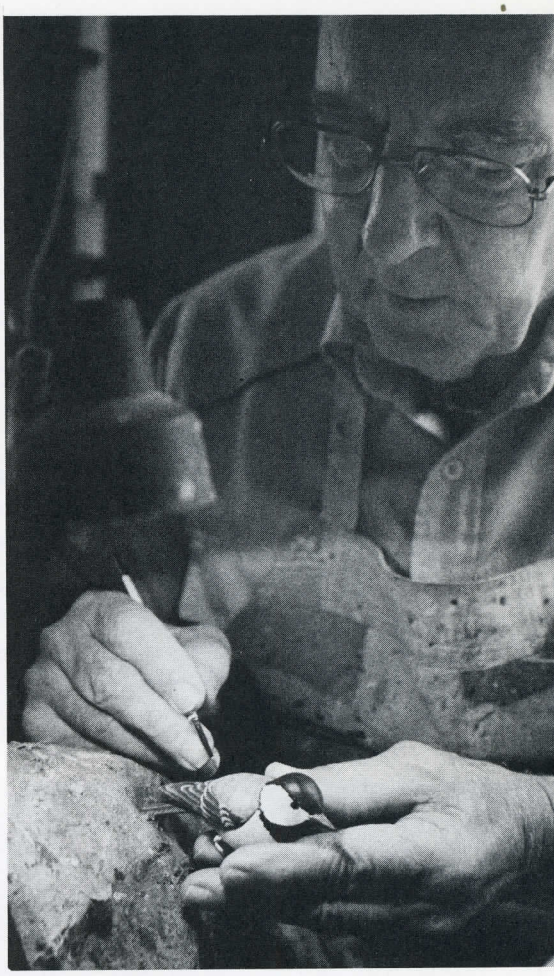
Claude's carvings start from his personal feelings toward certain birds. "The song birds are my favorites, for they are not only beautiful to the eye but to the ear also." Of the 30-some species that he carves, his admirers seem to like the black capped chickadee the best. Yet he finds his larger birds, the ruffed grouse, the screech owl, and the mourning dove in constant demand as well. Although Claude has had numerous requests for ducks, he hasn't carved any other than the one that started him in carving. "I think it's basically due to the fact that ducks were never important in West Virginia. There aren't very many ducks, just a few passing through."

When asked if he had carved any hawks, he replied, "No, I carve only the species I love, and as a child I came to look upon all hawks as enemies." He adds, that, "West Virginia has plenty of hawks and when I was a kid growing up on that hillside we felt that the hawks were our enemies. If you've ever seen a hawk fly in and grab a young chicken or turkey and fly off with it, with all the commotion that it causes with the other chickens, you can see why I just don't quite yet have a warm

feeling for hawks. When younger I'd spend half a day hunting for a hawk's nest so I could destroy it for killing a turkey or a chicken, but I don't think I was ever successful in finding one. My dad saw a hawk come in and pick up a turkey that weighed about a pound and fly off with it. He grabbed the shotgun and ran up the hollow, 'cause he knew it wouldn't go very far with a turkey that size. He got it and brought it in.

"I may sometime do a hawk," Claude figures. "If I do I think it will be the small hawk we call the bird hawk. There are many more birds I want to do, though, before I do the hawk." Crows also fall into the uncarved "enemy" category.

The beginning stage of actual carving for the numerous species that he does is the creation of the shape pattern. "I spend as much as six to eight hours" drawing up the cardboard pattern, which is then placed against the basswood (linn or linden) blank. Kemper next roughs out the basic shape on the bandsaw or with a coping saw. From that point on, the long hours of knife carving take place. While some carvers attempt to carve in all the feather details, Claude chooses to add that finer detail with paint. His only son and daughter-in-law have supplied encouragement and helpful painting advice. His daughter-in-law, a practicing artist and teacher, helped out in the beginning by advising him to use



Right: Claude Kemper's work calls for steady hands, a good light, and sharp eyes. Here he paints in detail on a black-capped chickadee. Photo by Noel Tenney.
Below: The beautiful eastern bluebird is unfortunately a rare sight in much of West Virginia today. It sings while flying and prefers open farmland with scattered trees.

acrylic paint. He feels that as a totally untrained carver and painter he has had to struggle from time to time to "get the colors just right," but at the same time believes that he has come a long way from his first painted bird.

"I spend about twice as much time on the painting as I do on the carving and I don't profess to be an ornithologist or any kind of expert. I just paint the colors and major identifiable markings till I think they look right." His large stack of bird books and wall charts are secondary references to the keeness of his own "seeings and remembrances." With each bird that he carves and paints, this natural master strives for a more total "true spirit" of his small winged friends. The bird is complete when he mounts the individual or group of birds onto driftwood picked up along shorelines of West Virginia flood control lakes.

Kemper stresses the fact that his work is only a hobby, and most collectors of his work easily recognize from the modest price tag that Claude Kemper doesn't do his carvings for a living. His birds reflect a generous heartful

Top: This grouping is of the white-eyed vireo, chipping sparrow, and yellow throat. The vireo makes its home in thickets and underbrush, while the chipping sparrow prefers gardens and suburban yards. Sometimes known as the hairbird, the sparrow will pluck nesting hair even from sleeping dogs.
Left: The killdeer frequents the shores of lakes and other bodies of water. When its ground nest is threatened, the adult feigns injury to distract the predator safely away.
Right: Kemper captures the essence of the wood thrush in showing it as a singer. Of its song, Henry David Thoreau said, "Whenever a man hears it he is young, and Nature is in her spring; whenever he hears it, it is a new world and a free country, and the gates of heaven are not shut against him."

of skill and love and are an extension of himself, the true mark of an artist.

"If it comes to the place where I have to keep account of my time in my carving, or if I had to make a living from carving my birds, I just think I wouldn't be able to carve," Claude acknowledges.

He admits that it "makes me feel good inside for people to admire my work" and his many friends encourage this artist's spirit by continually requesting additional birds for their collections. Claude and Ethel do only two annual fairs, the West Virginia State Folk Festival at Glenville in June and the Stonewall Jackson Heritage Arts & Crafts Jubilee at Weston over Labor Day weekend. Claude comments on both the pleasure and frustration of the Jubilee exhibition last year when he notes that "it was a four-day affair but I was sold out of my 73 pieces by the second day."

He has trouble dealing with the question of selling his birds. Although understanding the merit of his work and people's love for birds, Claude nonetheless affixes his personal attachment to individual carvings, and hates to see them sold. Ethel keeps close tabs on where every bird goes, never allowing any to be bought for resale. Seldom will the same person be allowed to buy two of the same species. Claude constantly reminds those who purchase his birds that he has a great fondness for his creations and wishes each to find a good home. He seldom compares his work to other carvers' and is satisfied only that many people come back year after year for his birds.

The sharing of his talent does not end with offering individual carvings for sale. Claude demonstrates his carving techniques through an educational program entitled "Birds of My Hollow." During the winter the Kempers "go south" to Florida where his work also finds an appreciative audience. In their winter community Claude conducts weekly workshops and feels especially rewarded when someone invests in a bird book or a carving knife. As they return to their summer home in West Virginia, the Kempers follow the Blue Ridge Parkway where for the last four years they have been invited by the rangers at certain campsites to present mini-demonstrations. There's a two-week demonstration each year in the Studio at Pipestem State Park. Claude modestly says, "I don't really teach people how to carve, but at each exhibit I demonstrate my technique, show people what I do."

Ethel recalls positive encounters with bird enthusiasts during their extended travels. "One of the nice things about Claude's work is that it's portable enough to carry with him. After we set up camp in our travel trailer along the Parkway everyone is so friendly, they just sort of gather around where Claude is working. One of his greatest desires is to encourage people to learn to identify birds. If the next day they return and say they have bought a bird book then we are both pleased."

Ethel knows birds quite well, and she adds a dimension to the demonstrations with her bird song recordings and her informative talks about the species which Claude carves. She recently has begun to do small relief carvings of birds herself.

Upon arrival at the Kemper homeplace near Newberne one is greeted first by the little sign on the fence, "Kum Ba Yah," an African phrase inviting everyone to "come by here." All are welcome in the Kemper house and at Claude's screened studio out back. The Kempers practice true West Virginia hospitality, whether toward a 50-member "elderhostel" group from Glenville College or the casual visitor who simply drops by to check out the "birdman up the hollow."

As for the future, Claude Kemper figures he has plenty to do. He talks of his new warbler group, and of that species' beauty in color and song. He mentions a "whole group of sparrows I need to do," adding that there are some birds he wants to do again. "Each time I repeat a bird species I am repeating my goal to capture more of the real spirit of that feathered beauty. I just wish I had more time but that is the way it should be, not having enough time to do the things that you want to do"—for Claude is the kind of person who would rather have too much to do than not enough.

There's no doubt about Claude's plans for his time. "I'm just a bird carver," he says, and he assures us that "as long as my eyes and hands hold out I plan to carve and paint birds."

Photo by Noel Tenney.

"Grandpaw Got Me Started"
Frank George and The Old-Time Music

Interview by Michael Meador
Photographs by Rick Lee

My first encounter with William Frank George was at a 1963 Centennial celebration in Mercer County. He came dressed in a Scottish kilt, complete with elaborate regalia, and stalked about playing the ancient music. A long line of mesmerized children trailed behind.

I never forgot Frank George after that, but it was several years before I could count him as a friend. I really got acquainted with him and his wife Jane in 1970, when I became involved with the Mountain Heritage program sponsored by the West Virginia University Extension Service. Both had played a major role in developing that program, and I soon became a regular visitor. Their home was always open to anyone who might drop by to discuss mountain heritage, play music, talk knives, shoot guns, or even just visit. The house was furnished with all manner of interesting antiques, and guarded over by a ferocious, unpredictable rat terrier named Seamus. Frank once told me he took that dog places to get even with people.

A visitor might find Frank in his underwear shining a knife, or trying to analyze a particular piece of Bulgarian bagpipe music. He's eccentric, no doubt of it, and has been called—among the things that can be printed here—authentic, independent, cantankerous, rare, and even anachronistic. Jane says that she's his manager, "if anyone can manage him." With her help I thought it was time to get Frank George on record, in his own words, for the readers of GOLDENSEAL.

Michael Meador. Frank, tell me a little bit about your background, where you were born, where your family is from and so forth.

Frank George. I was born in Bluefield, West Virginia, October 6, 1928. My mom was from Berlin, Tennessee. They say "Burlin" down there. It's six miles north of Lewisburg, Tennessee, but I guess really you could say that Berlin doesn't exist anymore. There's only two or three houses and a little store left.

My dad was born near Ingleside in Mercer County and grew up in Bluefield more or less, but they lived all over: Rock in Mercer County; Dry Hollow near Shannondale in Tazewell County, Virginia; Mud Fork; the East End of Bluefield—they lived all over Mercer and Tazewell counties.

MM Was your mom's family several generations back in East Tennessee?

FG Oh, yeah, way back—it goes back to what's now Marshall County, Tennessee, and at one time was Bedford County, North Carolina. Her grandmother's people were Boyetts, and there's an old tax ticket, where one of the Boyetts had paid property taxes in Bedford County, North Carolina, to

King George III in so many shillings and pence, so we know that was before 1776.

My mom's maiden name was Ownby. They were real handy people—could make about anything. I've got a picture here of an Ownby making mountain rifles back in the 1920's. They did everything: weaving, spinning, crocheting, carpentry, blacksmithing, shingle riving, leatherwork. If somebody wanted a wagon and they had time, they'd build them a wagon and sell it. They were just that kind.

MM What is the background of your dad's family?

FG Oh, they go way back in Greenbrier and Monroe counties. My fifth-great-grandfather, Joseph Ulrich Swope, who was originally from Germany, walked into what was to become Monroe County in 1751. He moved in from Staunton, Virginia, and settled at Wolf Creek.

There's a story that when he first got to Wolf Creek he was spotted by some Indians and he had to hide inside a hollow tree until they had gone. He stayed on Wolf Creek with his family. One day he sent his five-year-old son, Joseph, to the spring for water and the boy was kidnapped by a band of Shawnees and taken to their town on the Scioto River near Chillicothe, Ohio. He was kept prisoner there for nine years before he was brought home. He was a "white Indian," didn't hardly remember anything about his family. But he finally got back into the swing of things. He knew three languages, German, Shawnee, and English, but I doubt if he could ever write his name. He was my fourth-great-grandfather.

The Georges are from near Blue Sulphur Springs in Greenbrier County. My Grandpaw Ellis moved to Mercer County from Greenbrier about 1870, right after the Civil War. He moved over there to right where they put the tunnel through East River Mountain when they were building Interstate 77. He had an enormous farm over there. When they dug the tunnel they moved his grave to Princeton.

My Grandpaw George left home early—he was an orphan and they were trying to make him a bound servant so he just took off and came to his uncle's house, to my Grandpaw Ellis. He married his uncle's daughter Martha who was also his first cousin. That was the start of all the trouble.

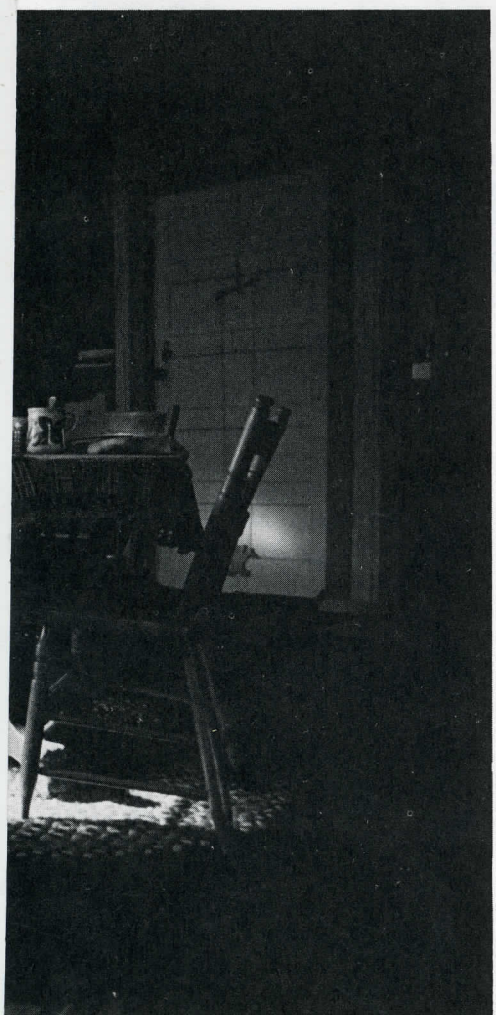
Jane George. Frank's mother says that's where he gets his nature. They talk about Frank's uncle Doan Ellis as being such a hot-headed, high-tempered fellow. She calls Frank "Uncle Doan" when he gets mad.

MM Was "Doan" his real name?

FG Mardonias Algernon Ellis. They almost named him Mardonias Algernon Butterfield, but somebody came to their senses and left the Butterfield out of it. The Ellises thought they were English and were all hung-up on society and being rich and owning land, they were from Wolf Creek in Monroe County.

MM Tell me about the musical background in your family.

FG On my mother's side I had a grandmaw who was a Jackson—close kin of "Old Hickory"—she could play a harmonica. That's the only music I can find on Maw's side of the family. The Ownbys couldn't carry a tune on a stretcher. All my musical ability, such as I got, came from my dad's side of the family. The Georges had the music, the Ellises couldn't carry a tune in a jug with a stopper in it, the Ownbys couldn't either, but the Georges and the Jacksons seemed to have got a double dose.



Frank George with dog Seamus at home in Roane County.

MM How did you get started playing music? Did you have any formal training?

FG Well, this is the part that I don't like for anyone to know about, but since it's a fact there's no use in trying to hide it. The first tunes I ever tried to pick out was on a piano. I could pick out tunes with one finger when I was about four years old.

MM What kind of tunes were you picking out?

FG Tunes that Maw would play or something that I'd hear on the radio. I don't really remember exactly what tunes. Something gave Maw the idea that I ought to have lessons. So when I was about five years old I started taking piano lessons from Miss Ella Holroyd who lived in Athens. She would come to Bluefield every Saturday to Tom Scott's and gave lessons all day long. My lesson was about 9:00–9:30 and cost $5. My dad nearly went through the roof when he found out how much it cost. I walked about a mile to the place she gave lessons. So I guess you can say I started the first of my music playing on a piano with a bona fide teacher.

JG Frank's mother tells about the second or third lesson he took from Miss Ella, he was waiting for his lesson and the girl ahead of him was playing the same tune that he had been working on. Frank said to Miss Ella, "She's playing my tune but it's in a different key." And Miss Ella said to his mom, "You're going to have trouble out of this one."

FG Miss Ella would then hit a key in the middle range on the piano with me in the other room and I would tell her the note. She said right away that I had "perfect pitch," but I don't know exactly what that means in my case. I still know middle C if I hear it, but I don't know about the rest of 'em.

MM What did your parents do for a living that they could afford a five-dollar-a-week piano lesson during the Depression?

FG Well, my dad, who was named Otie A. George, worked steady as a carpenter. Maw was a nurse and during the Depression she worked for the WPA with a program where she went around to people's houses that didn't have outhouses and helped them get

one. There was a crew going around building toilets and Maw worked with them. Her name is Elizabeth Ownby George.

MM How long did you take lessons from Miss Ella and when did you make the transition to Appalachian music?

FG Oh, lord, I took lessons from Miss Ella for 11 years, and then she quit coming to Bluefield for some reason or other and that wound that up. Anyhow, when I was about six years old I got interested in old-time music and that was mainly because of my Grandpaw George visiting. You know, Grandpaw'd come over quite often and after Grandmaw died in '36, which would put me in my eighth year, he moved over there to stay.

MM What was his name?

FG W. W.—William Washington, he's the one from Greenbrier County around Blue Sulphur. His mother was an Ellis and his uncle was an Ellis and his wife was his first cousin. Anyhow, what really got me started—across the hill to the north from where we lived, they'd have these dances almost every Saturday night and maybe oftener. They'd have them there on Stadium Drive between Cherry Street and the Bluefield City Park. So here we'd go over the hill, my dad carrying me on his shoulders. Sometimes Maw would go and sometimes she wouldn't. It was those dances that turned me on to old-time music, hearing the fiddles, and "banjers," and the guitars. That got me started.

When Grandpaw finally moved over there I wasn't interested in anything but fiddles and banjos. In fact, the piano thing from then on in was just something to go through.

MM Did you get pretty good on the piano?

FG Only good enough to win second prize in the state contest in Charleston when I was about nine. I don't know what grade it was or who competed. A girl from Bluefield walked away with first place.

JG Miss Ella thought that Frank was going to be her world-famous student, but somewhere along the line he switched off and quit playing the piano and organ. Now it's the truth, though, that he did play chamber music with her on the cello.

FG Hell, yes! We played classical music to beat hell!

Although he plays many instruments, Frank is best known as a master fiddler.

JG I asked Frank one time, "Why did you quit playing the organ and the piano?" and he said, "Well, when I quit and got interested in the other music there were lots of people playing the piano and organ but there wasn't anyone my age playing old-time music."

MM How did you acquire your first fiddle and banjo?

FG Believe it or not, my dad made my first banjo and fiddle. The banjo he made had a maple head and a calfskin head and the fiddle I think was pine or mahogany. The fiddle looks like a toy but it was playable, but I didn't really learn on it because by the time I learned the fiddle I could hold a regular-sized one. But I did learn to play the banjo on the one that dad made. He put a copper strip on the neck so that I wouldn't wear grooves into the neck.

MM So it was your Grandfather George that got you playing old-time music?

FG Yes, he is really the one responsible for getting me started, but he really wasn't the strong influence. He was the first, though.

The strong influence was Jim Farthing who came from down around Alta Vista in Pittsylvania County, Virginia, as a young man. He always lived around Brush Fork in Mercer County or Falls Mills in Tazewell County, Virginia. He knew so many more tunes and played a style that I considered better than my granddad, that I just

shifted my style. Of course, Grandpaw was getting so old that he was playing down on the fingerboard and slobbering all over the fiddle and really wasn't playing too well.

MM What type of tunes did your grandfather teach you to play?

FG Oh, he taught me to tune in A: E-A-E-A first. He played "Cripple Creek," "Sourwood Mountain," "Old Joe Clark," "Fire on the Mountain"—typical stuff. He played a lot of reels and hoedown stuff. He played a few G tunes and D tunes, but he just didn't have the range and he was just getting too old to hack it.

MM Was your grandfather a banjo player, too?

FG Oh, lord, yes. A far better banjo player than fiddler, and a real good dancer. If he had been as good a fiddle player as he was on the banjo he'd have been something. By the time I got interested in old-time music, around 1935, he was getting about 79 years old. He was born in 1856. He was getting real forgetful and shaky music-wise by the time I was old enough to remember him.

MM How would you describe the style of Jim Farthing? Was it more Appalachian or British Isles?

FG Well, that's a good question, 'cause he's the one that made me realize where the stuff came from originally, the British Isles, even though he didn't realize it himself. He would play tunes that would remind you in style of some of our local fiddle players and then he would play stuff that would sound just like some of the famous Irish fiddlers. His style is real hard to describe but it was certainly unique and—the thing that got me—he knew so many tunes and so many old tunes. That was the reason that I tried my best to copy him.

MM Do you have any idea when he was born?

FG Yes, he was born in 1884 in Pittsylvania County, Virginia. He died in 1962, which gave him a far greater influence than my grandpaw, who died in 1944 when I was 16. I had a lot more time to work with Jim Farthing.

MM What influence, if any, did your friend John Hilt from Tazewell County have on your playing?

FG He played real nice, but I didn't meet him until 1950, and he told me once that he played more music with me in the last few years of his life than all the rest of his music in previous years. I taught him a lot of tunes so that I could play banjo with him at the Tazewell Market. He could only play the fiddle so I played the banjo with him. We'd go to the market sometimes every Monday and play.

MM What influence did your stint in the Army have on your music?

FG The only thing positive the Army did for me was to station me in the British Isles. I had the opportunity to go to Sterling Castle and play the bagpipes with the Argyle and Sutherland pipe band.

All that we've said so far is that I got my fiddle music basically from Jim Farthing, although Grandpaw got me started. He taught me how to hold the fiddle and how to tune it, although I didn't know you could tune a fiddle any other way but E-A-E-A for a couple of years.

Jim Farthing told me that he learned most of his fiddling from his daddy-in-law who was Charlie Hawley, and that Charlie learned most of his stuff from Nute Crockett and a fellow named Gillispie from Tazewell County. Of course, Nute Crockett was kin to Davy Crockett whichever way they moved around.

MM When you started playing was there much interest in old-time music? Did you have trouble finding people to play with?

FG Well, there was interest as far as getting together and playing—but as far as with the general public, no. By that time if you turned on the radio you weren't apt to hear any music like we played at home. It had already changed. If you could get together with the right people, like Emory Horton, Alf Arnold, old man Gilbert Williams, and Charlie McCoy, you'd hear down-home stuff. There was plenty of old-time music around then but people generally didn't pay much attention to it.

MM When did the colleges and folk festivals begin to take an interest in Appalachian music?

FG I think that 1950 was the date of the first folk festival at Glenville.

JG Dr. Patrick Gainer at WVU was the first to do anything in the state with folk music. He had a lot of influence on individuals but it took a long time before the idea caught on. He also started something like he had at Glenville at Beckley, but it didn't last.

FG Oh, he really got the people out. He was the first person to get performers like Russell Fluharty to play in public. He also had an influence on the Morris Brothers.

JG He got interest in folk music and culture stirred up, but it was a long time before there was any real interest in courses on Appalachian culture and music.

FG I didn't see any interest in old-time music until the late '60's. I used to go to the festival at Galax, Virginia,

Jane and Frank George spend their leisure time in study and in reading to one another.

back in the early '60's and there wouldn't be hardly anyone there from outside the area. "Folk music" was popular then but people thought it was the Kingston Trio and Peter, Paul, and Mary and the like. Folk music was a whole different thing then. People didn't know what down-home music was then. "Down home" reminds me of that fellow that was talking about one of them "home rifles." I never heard a mountain rifle called a "home rifle" until lately.

MM What do you think caused the general public to suddenly take an interest in Appalachian culture in the late '60's?

JG In this state I think that the Mountain Heritage programs offered by the West Virginia University Extension Service definitely got the youth interested in Appalachian culture. In the early '70's there was almost an explosion of interest in our heritage. Frank once said to me, "If someone had told me 20 years ago that today there would be so many people playing bagpipes and fiddles I wouldn't have believed them." Another important person who helped develop interest in Appalachian culture was Dr. Norman Simpkins at Marshall University. He came home in the '60's from

Frank George's Music

Although he turned down an opportunity to play at the 1982 World's Fair because he "wasn't in the mood," Frank George is a versatile musician who has performed very widely. From Princeton University to the bars of Princeton, West Virginia, he has made his music, and taken it through nearly a dozen European countries and across America. His knowledge of Appalachian and Anglo-Irish music is extensive and he prefers the instruments native to that music. He plays the hammered and plucked dulcimer, Scottish and Irish bagpipes, and the fiddle and banjo, and is probably best known as the master of the latter two.

The fiddle tunes that Frank likes to play are for the most part traditional melodies that would have been recognized 100 years ago by fiddlers in Appalachia or the British Isles. Brought over by the early settlers, the music lingered in the mountains because the people here were isolated from outside influences for so long. Frank has been approached by British scholars researching tunes and styles that have been lost at their place of origin, but preserved by Appalachian musicians in this country.

The fiddle style which Frank claims to have adapted from a friend of his youth, Virginia fiddler Jim Farthing, is comparable to that of the great Irish fiddlers. It is characterized by complicated runs and grace notes which embellish the traditional tunes. Frank tries to play the different types of music at the speed at which they were intended to be played when first composed, in contrast to some musicians (bluegrass groups are the worst, he says) who play everything at breakneck speed. "Just because you're playing the tune as fast as you can doesn't mean that you're doing it the way that it sounds best," he figures.

The fiddle music of the British Isles and its variations in America were divided into five broad categories: jigs, reels, hornpipes, waltzes, and slow airs. Each category had its own particular rhythm which was hardly ever tampered with traditionally, because much of the music was used as accompaniment for dances which had a strict tempo. Frank is very careful to always play a tune at its "correct" tempo and he's not particularly complimentary when he hears a tune such as a lilting hornpipe played so fast that the notes run together.

When Frank plays a fast tune he has the ability to sound each separate note clearly and distinctly as opposed to some "old-time" fiddlers who saw and scratch their way through. He can read music, but claims that anyone who learns to play a fiddle only from written music will never develop a personal style. He suggests that beginning fiddlers should learn to hum or whistle a tune first and then try to pick it out on the fiddle, adding embellishments as they become familiar with the melody.

Frank has developed his own technique for holding the fiddle bow, as opposed to the standard position used by classical violinists. He hooks his little finger under the screw, spreads his middle fingers over the wood of the bow and keeps his thumb between the wood and the bow hair. Because of the exceptional control he has with his bow arm he can glide through tunes such as jigs that many fiddlers play "jerky," with great smoothness. I once observed a professional violinist studying Frank's bowing techniques in an attempt to learn how to "fiddle."

According to Frank, the only real difference between a violinist and a fiddler is that the violinist has to observe all the rules and the fiddler can do pretty much as he pleases. The technical possibilities of the instrument are the same, no matter what it's called.

For his banjo, Frank prefers the old mountain pronunciation of "banjer," and the style he plays is purely traditional. No finger picks are used and the hand is held stiffly, with the thumb bent "hitch-hiker" fashion. The method is known as clawhammer, or frailing. Melody notes are plunked out by striking the strings with the side of the index finger, and the bent thumb plays rhythm on the short fifth string. This style was popular with banjo players long before finger picks were introduced in the years around World War II, moving the instrument into its bluegrass period.

—Michael Meador

Those wanting to know more about Frank George may sample his music on "Swope's Knobs," featuring Frank and his friend John Hilt. The double album (Anachronistic 001) is available for $12.50 from The Shop, The Cultural Center, Capitol Complex, Charleston, WV 25305. Mail orders should include 63¢ sales tax and $1 for postage and handling.

out west where he was studying the Indians and set up a course in Appalachian studies at Marshall, which was the first such course I've ever heard of. His classes have been a huge success.

MM Jane, how did you get involved in the Mountain Heritage movement?

JG I was hired as 4-H Extension Agent in Putnam County in 1967, at a time that the Extension Service was encouraging its agents to do innovative programming. One thing we were told was if you have a good person in your community who knows some skills or knowledge that ought to be kept, get them together with the youth so that their knowledge won't be lost. With the urging of Ernest Nesias who at that time was Dean of Extension at WVU, I started the first heritage program in Putnam County. The first demonstration Mountain Heritage program was in the spring of 1968 at Hawks Nest State Park, where we introduced youngsters from southern West Virginia to various aspects of Appalachian heritage. With the help of Norman Fagan, who was then with the Arts and Humanities Council, we got the only grant nationwide for a demonstration program in local heritage, and through the grant we were able to take the Mountain Heritage program statewide.

MM How did you and Frank get acquainted?

JG We first met at the craft festival at Cedar Lakes and I invited him to participate in the first Mountain Heritage program at Hawks Nest.

FG She introduced me to everyone in West Virginia involved in the Mountain Heritage program. At that time I was going to Southwest Virginia festivals and wasn't going to any in West Virginia except at Glenville. I didn't know there were any others in West Virginia. I really hadn't been much north of the Great Kanawha until after we met. We were married December 6, 1969, down in Norton, Virginia.

MM Frank, where all have you performed?

FG Outside of the state, places like Yale, Harvard, the Smithsonian, Carnegie-Mellon in Pittsburgh, University of Chicago, Port Townsend outside of Seattle, Washington, Black Point, north of San Francisco. Port Townsend was where they had the American Fiddle Styles Workshop. In this state I've played at Marshall, WVU, Morris Harvey College. There's been so many schools—everything from kindergarten to universities all over West Virginia, Kentucky, Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. Probably every college in West Virginia. Another place was Southern Methodist University at a real good festival. Once a lady from Voice of America interviewed me and Aunt Jenny Wilson from Logan County for a program called "Critics' Choice" and beamed us around the world. Aunt Jenny was funny. When we started the interview she said, "Now, Frank, what on earth does this woman want?"

MM In the last few years do you think your interest in folk music has shifted from Appalachian to that of the British Isles? Are you playing one particular music or are you somewhere in between?

FG For a time I was on a British Isles kick but I shifted back when I realized that I was neglecting the other. Now I'm playing more Appalachian music, leaning back home more. The only thing I have to watch is to keep from going out here in the yard and stomping up all my instruments into splinters I get so tired of playing

Frank is an expert marksman and has collected many medals over the years, particularly for the pistol and muzzle loading rifle.

them. I'm paying more attention to our local fiddlers like Mose Coffman and not running around so much playing all over the place. You get tired of the same thing over and over again.

MM Are there any particular types of tunes that you enjoy playing on the fiddle more than others? For example, do you like to play hornpipes better than jigs?

FG I'd rather play hornpipes than anything. I'm partial to reels and I like it all, but my favorite is hornpipes. My favorite keys to play in on the fiddle are D and G. A is all right, but it is difficult. Fiddlers from different places will play the same tune in different keys. There's a tune called "Ferrell O'Garra" that the Cape Breton fiddlers play in G and I play in A. I could do it in G, but I'm too lazy to work it out.

MM Do you play the banjo primarily in the standard G tuning or do you use others?

FG The old way was what I call A and you call G. A-E-C#-A-C#. We lowered it one note to play in G so your G would be about the same thing. Quite a bit of the old-time stuff was in D, which you get by dropping the fourth string and once in a while you raise the second string to get the A-modal tuning. There was a few tunes played in the A-modal but that tuning wasn't used much. But there's quite a few tunes that sound better in that tuning, though, like "Pretty Little Dog" and "Pretty Polly." You really can't play "Pretty Polly" in anything else.

There are only about four tunings that I think sound good on a banjo, standard, D, A, and modal. Now, Aunt Jenny Wilson tunes to a couple more that I never did use—I might could get there but I never did use them. There's one more that I call the "Cumberland Gap tuning" that's ungodly. Really something else.

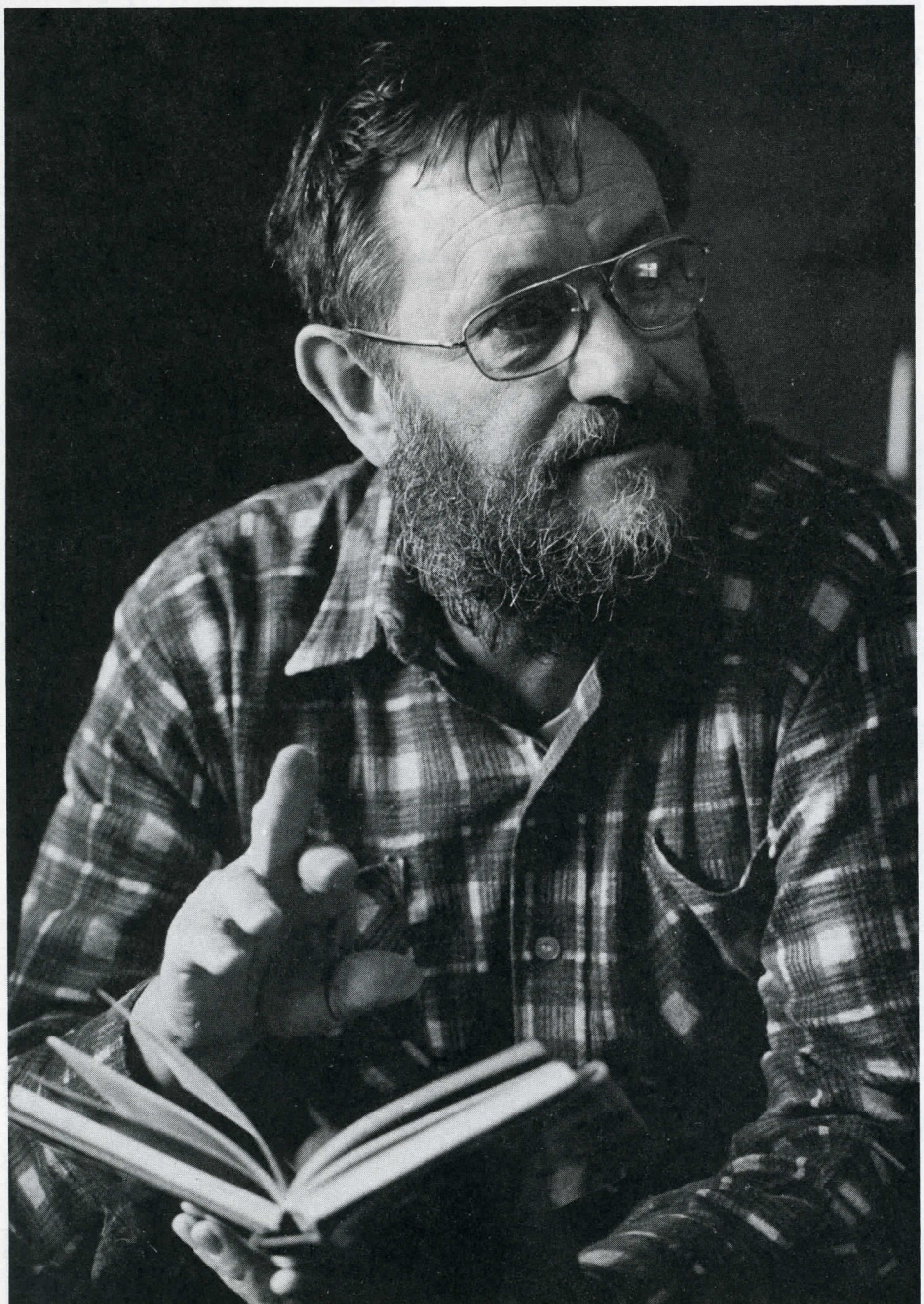
MM Did you ever belong to a dance band?

FG I've been a member of one band in my life. In fact, I was the leader of the band. It no longer exists, kind of went under about 25 years ago. We didn't even have a name for the group. We played for dances all around Bluefield but folded up around 1949. Now, I've gotten a lot of offers in the last several years from people starting bands and wanting to go on the road. But I just didn't want to get involved, mainly because you can't play old-time music the way I like it on the road. You have to play for the crowd, which means that you're dead if they don't like your music. I've always been able to pick up accompaniment wherever I've gone, so I've not really missed a band. I really don't need to travel around much, either, because if people want to see me they come here. I think it's better not to travel so much and stay home and do what you want to. I still travel a good bit, though.

MM Looking down the road, do you think that the public interest in Appalachian music will continue to grow or do you see it dying out?

FG I think that interest will fizzle out, and in another 50 years old-time music as I knew it won't exist. One bright spot, though, is that places like the Library of Congress have recorded the performances of many of our great local musicians, and years from now if there is a renewal of interest in Appalachian heritage the feel of our culture can be recaptured. The conditions that caused our culture to develop have changed and disappeared. Appalachia is becoming like the rest of the country because of TV and swift means of transportation. Old-time music was the product of a culture that has just about ceased to exist but, thanks to recordings, the music and styles at least can be preserved for future generations that might be interested.

Frank has made a life's work of studying our mountain heritage and its roots in the British Isles. He believes that "the conditions that caused our culture to develop have disappeared and Appalachia is becoming like the rest of the country."



Doing the Impossible

An Interview with Don Mole

By Gene Ochsendorf with Michael Kline
Photographs by Doug Yarrow

One Sunday night a friend called to tell me about some walnut lumber he knew of for sale, cheap. I was immediately interested, since the Randolph County Sheltered Workshop which I direct is always in need of good hardwoods for its woodshop training program. My friend said I should contact Jim Hancock, and gave me his number. The lumber was a good buy, but by far the greater benefit was getting to know Jim Hancock and his buddy, Don Mole.

Jim was interested in our program right away, since we employ disabled individuals. Jim only has one eye. He has a good right eye and Don a good left one, and, as both would be quick to point out, between them they've got a complete set. So maybe it was only natural for the two to join together in a partnership of working, traveling, and in general just having a good time.

Jim has been a carpenter all of his life, working in Georgia, Florida, Ohio, and since 1950 in West Virginia. Today at 85 he still builds houses, because, as he says, "Once you build two it gets under your skin."

Don Mole was born in Elkins, although his family was originally from Job, over near the Randolph-Pendleton line. Don has worked in coal and timber, but through it all he has remained a woodworker and fine craftsman, true to a family tradition which, including his two sons, now spans four generations.

McDowell County photographer Doug Yarrow was visiting with Michael Kline and me over Thanksgiving, and I had arranged an interview with Don. I knew that Jim Hancock would fit into the story, too, and we picked him up on our way to Don's shop. According to Jim, Don had worked on fabricating parts for the restoration of the U.S.S. Constitution, *the famous "Old Ironsides" of the Revolutionary Navy.*

"You see, boys," Jim said, "he's got the most wonderful memory you ever seen in your life, and he'll tell you anything you wish to know. I wish I had it. I envy him. He's another one-eyed guy. That helps you a little bit, you have to think. If a man goes through life and he's handicapped, that makes him more determined. What he lacks in physical set-up he has in determination. He can do anything."

Don Mole. We've been in the woodworking business since 1924. My dad, Bernie, learned carpentry from his daddy. My grandfather's name was James. Primarily he built houses, then they built caskets in their spare time. They would also turn out cant hook handles, and things that they needed around the sawmill at Job. The caskets were made out of most any kind of wood, whatever people wanted and was available. At that time nobody had the money to stock any items, so you only had a couple, three days when somebody died to get a casket for them.

I'd say it was hundreds they made, though I only saw one that my granddad made for himself. It was a fairly nice casket, but it was crude compared to what you see now. He kept it in his shop. Then they came along and said you had to be licensed to be in that business. Well, they wasn't financially able to get the license so that put them out of the casket business.

My dad and mother—her maiden name was Lessie Kerens—left Job and come to Elkins, lived in the Cain building where Trickett's Hardware is across from the Tygart Hotel. Then I was born in Elkins in 1924.

When my dad first come to this town they were building the Valley Supply Company building. That was 1923. He went to the contractor and told him he'd like to get a job. He was told they didn't want to hire no boys, they wanted to hire a man. He said, "If I don't do twice as much work as any man you got, I'll work a day for nothing, and you don't owe me anything. But if I do twice as much, you pay me and give me a job." He went to work and he worked till 2:00 and the man told him to go home and come back the next day, he'd done enough for the day. That was the only way you could get a job. You had to be able to produce more than the other fellow.

Don Mole in his Elkins woodworking shop.

I started in 1946 with my dad. He was the type of fellow that didn't talk much and wouldn't want to show you too much of anything. He expected you to pick it up by watching him. That's the only way he had to learn.

We've been in the woodworking business ever since. I'm 58 and I'd like to be in it another 30, 40 years.

We've made stuff for all over the

Jim Hancock, a young 85, continues a lifelong career as a carpenter.

country. We made all the doors for Rockefeller's house at, ah, Boyer, I believe it is. The average door is too short for him. He's too high to get through, so we had to make the doors eight-foot high. You see, whenever there's a job that nobody else'll do, this place is the last resort. Nobody else would take that *Constitution* job. It was a job that two other people had made a failure on and then we picked the thing up and got it completed.

Gene Ochsendorf. How did you hear about this "Old Ironsides" job?

DM Well, there was a fellow in Pittsburgh, he was a lumber broker and he jumped on this thing. He contracted it. Then I subcontracted from him. He had a local agent here in town, operating under the name of Shenandoah Hardwoods.

Now these were some knee braces that went in "Old Ironsides," the old *Constitution*, when they restored it. I believe it was in 1975. They were big timbers, 12 inches by 14 inches. There were 25 beams and as I recall around 11,000 board feet of lumber went into them. The same type and species as was taken out of the ship, all white oak.

The first ones we made, we made a total failure of them. The original beams were laminated, that's the reason why they had to be duplicated, exactly the same. I'd never seen any of these timbers and knew nothing about them till I'd talked to this one man and he was explaining to me. This fellow that was the inspector was trying to make a big name for himself more than anything else. He steered me wrong on the thing to start with. He told me which way to glue the boards together. We had the right dimensions and everything. The only thing, the boards wasn't laminated together the right way when we took them to final inspection. They rejected the whole load of them. We had to junk them and start all over.

If you would read them specifications it's just something that's fantastic, out of this world. It was evidently smart people that wrote them up. Must have been architects or draftsmen. I'll show you one little thing in there, in that specification. Ordinarily, if you go out to buy a board you don't look at the annual rings in it to see which way they're a goin' and how many of them there are, but let me show you a little thing here: "The annual growth rings in laminations and lamination components shall be so oriented that tangent lines to the annual growth rings form an angle of less than 45° with the wide surface of the piece." You see, it tells about the annual rings. You see this board here? You see how these rings go flat? Any board flat sawed like this you couldn't even think about using. Really it would have to be cut out nearly the middle of the log in order to get them grains. Evidently the grain was like this in the original. Now I suppose they came up with that in order to make the thing strong. A board with a flat grain in it has a lot of tendency to warp.

Michael Kline. When you glued up those beams for the *Constitution* the first time, did you suspect they were wrong?

DM No, I had no idea, but I knew they wasn't the way they should be. But when the higher-ups tell you to do it and it's their money, you can't hardly disagree with the man with the pocketbook.

The glue we ended up using was made by the Koppers Company. It was a two-part glue, one part liquid, one part powder. It was kind of a maroon-looking color. When you mixed it together, you only mixed what you're gonna use because it would set up, even though you sealed it airtight. It was a chemical reaction that would make it get hard. You get it on your hands and the only way you could get it off was to wear it off or take sandpaper and take it off. Nothing that we know of would cut the glue. We tried all kinds of solvents: paint thinner, lacquer thinner, and everything else. Nothing would dissolve it. If you got it on your clothes, when you went home at night you just stood them up. It was something similar to an epoxy glue, but an ordinary epoxy glue can be used on metal or anything else. Wood was all this was designed for. You had a set-up time of about two hours and if you didn't use it then you just had to dump it out and start all over again.

When we had one ready with this new glue they took it down to Mt. Savage, Maryland, and they picked it up 80 feet with a crane and dropped it endways on the concrete to see if it would break. I'd say they weighed about a thousand pounds apiece. That's the way they checked to see if the glue joints were gonna hold or not. The beams held.

After they were glued, they had to be planed on all four sides. We had to devise a planer to plane them. There was no planer around in this part of the country big enough to handle anything that size. So the first thing we done we went to the iron and metal place and got two steel beams. We put them on the concrete floor and leveled them with a transit. We had to bolt them down. Then I made this frame, it was a four-legged affair, with four wheels on the bottom of it. It rode on this track—these two beams we had

bolted to the floor. Then we had cross-pieces between them where we lay the timbers on. The carriage just run a-straddle of it and had a big electric motor set up endways with a big fly-cutter on it. This flycutter would cut the width of that timber. The glue that we used had some abrasive in it and ordinary steel wouldn't hold up. So what we done on the cutters, we took the tools out of a metal lathe. You know, real hard steel. That's what we used on this head. It was a head about 14, 15 inches. These little cutters stuck down through it like teeth and it would just spin around while it cut the timber.

The timbers were so heavy that they were hard to handle. The only way you could move them was with a lift. On this carriage we could turn them over with a cant hook and plane one side at a time. It took four operations to plane one. After the job, we dismantled the planer. I was afraid OSHA would catch it. There was a local fellow, manager at Elkins Builders, he came over and looked at that thing when we was operating it. It would just throw shavings and chips every way. When you ran it you had to wear knee guards to keep from getting your legs skinned up. He called it an OSHA special.

After the restoration was completed I had an invitation to go up and see it, but I didn't get to go. I lost so much money on the deal I didn't have enough to go see it. Couldn't get out of town.

The thing that was kind of unique about the job was the fact there were three generations a-working on it: my dad, me, and my son, Joe.

Joe here makes these candle holders, bowls, and things. We've got to revamp the plans on this candy machine. What happens is when you fill this up with candy, they'll wedge in there. This needs to be made like a hopper. I didn't actually invent it. I seen one my daughter got at a sale someplace, but it was a very crude-looking thing. The fellow that was making it originally was just gouging the router down in there and running it freehand. Well, it didn't work smooth. So I decided I would make him a jig to cut the spiral and this is what we ended up with. It's a real Rube Goldberg deal. Now that slot there is a misleading looking thing. I thought you could take and cut that slot in the jig straight through on an angle. That's where the big problem come in. Every time this handle moves a little bit, the angle of that slot changes. You have to make a twist cut and you have to know how much travel you're going to have over what part of a revolution. I didn't know of any equipment in the machine shops around here that could do that, so I cut it by hand. You just can't give up.

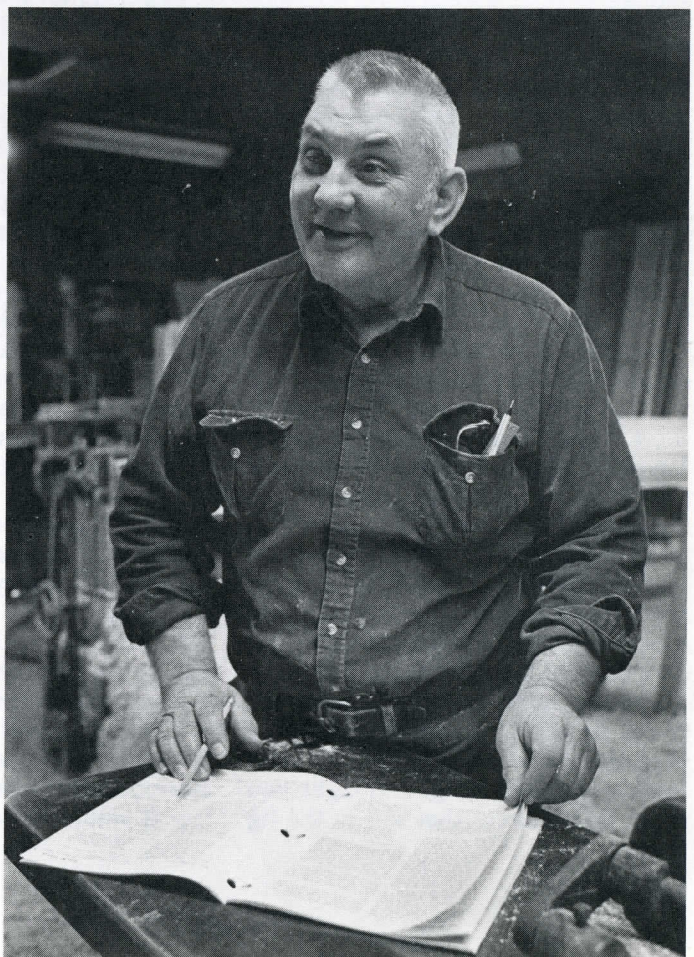
The part that holds the router was the old tailpiece off of a turret lathe and I took and done some adapting to it. When you don't have any money you have to use what you've got at hand. If you could go out and buy what you needed, life wouldn't be enjoyable. When you have to devise your own things, that's what makes the joy in it. Like this jig for the candy machine—I don't know anything else it might be used for. It's a crude-looking piece of equipment, but it does the job. It's amazing what you can do with a fifth-grade education.

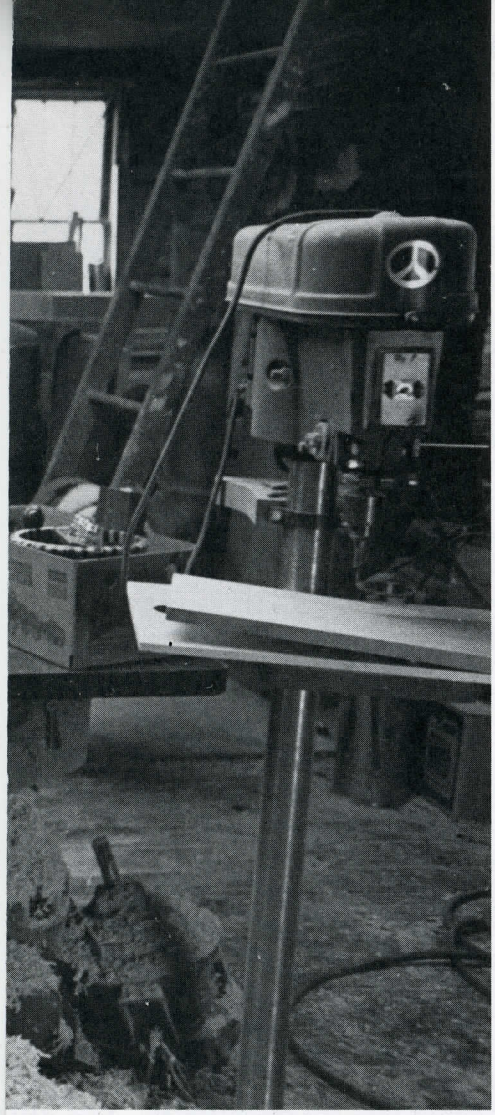
I went to school here in Elkins, it didn't hurt me too much. Actually, I lacked one year of finishing high school when Uncle Sam needed me and I had to go to World War II. When I come back they figured there wasn't any hope for me so they just gave me my diploma. I didn't learn too much when I was in school, I had other things on my mind—big, fantastic things. But after I got out into real life, then it became a necessity. I had to learn; just like a little bit about engineering. Well, I had no money to go to college. The only thing I could do was gather up a book now and then and read. I'm self-taught.

Mathematics is the most important thing. I've stumbled on a lot of little things in mathematics. I'll show you a little thing if you're doing a lot of figuring in mathematics. It's a common everyday thing that you run into. Say you had a fraction, 1-15/16, what's half of that, right quick. Just add the numerator and denominator together, see, 15 and 16, that's 31, then double the denominator, you get 32 and your answer is 31/32. Now, say you had 3-3/4 and you want to take half of that. You do the same thing. Three and four is seven, double the denominator, that's 7/8. You take half of the whole number and throw the odd one [fraction] away. So it'd be one—1-7/8. If it was five it would become two, you throw the odd one away and it would be 2-7/8. But it only holds true to odd numbers.

Say you had 2-15/16, it won't work on that. If you had 2-15/16 you'd take half of the whole number, that'd be one, and double the denominator, 15/32; so 1-15/32. With two, four, or six you double the denominator, leave the numerator the same, and take half of the whole number. But now when you're dealing in the odd fractions—like one, three, and five—you add the numerator and denominator together to get the new numerator, and double the denominator, then take half of the whole number and throw the odd one away. It'll take you a little bit of time to get onto that. A fraction you would have to sit down and figure out and change the common denominator on it, you know, figuring on paper—you can now add them together in your head, and right quick you can tell what it is. I stumbled on to that one day. I was trying to figure something out and I seen it worked on this one particular thing I was doing. Then I just kept

Bernie Mole learned woodworking from his father, and started the family business in 1924, the year Don Mole was born. Bernie still helps out around the shop.





Above: The woodworking shop is cold in the winter and sometimes dangerous, but it's home to Don Mole, Jim Hancock, and Joe and Bernie. *Far left:* Don's shop custom-makes fine interior and exterior doors, including those for Governor Rockefeller's Pocahontas County farmhouse. "The average door is too short for him, so we had to make those eight feet high," he recalls. *Left:* Don reviews the specifications for the *USS Constitution* restoration. His shop laminated the massive white-oak beams, which were tested by dropping them 80 feet onto a concrete floor.

trying it and found it would work on any fraction.

One time Joe had a mathematics teacher that was always sending some screwball problem home to figure out, and then he'd want to know what the theory was. So I wrote this down for Joe and told him to take that to the schoolteacher and for him to tell what the theory was.

Joe Mole. He tried to tell me it wouldn't work on every fraction.

DM But it will, it'll work on any fraction. Try it sometime; sit down; it'll work on any fraction.

JM My teacher said it wouldn't work until he started working on it. He didn't know what to say then.

DM I could tell you lots of these little things I've run into.

I used to read a lot of these books about the old-time mathematicians. I picked up one and read about this Archimedes. Now he was 512 years before Christ. He figured out that it was impossible to measure from one corner to another one of a square. Say, like you had six inches square, if it's square it's impossible to measure it from one corner to the other diagonal. It just goes out to an infinity, there's no end to it. You can get close but it's impossible to tell you exactly what it is. Them old Greeks were some of the finest mathematicians in the world.

GO Have you done other things besides woodworking?

Don Mole's New Math

When Don Mole was explaining his math shortcuts to us, he at first thought we weren't catching on. This was no doubt caused by the blank looks on our faces. Actually we caught on but were struck dumb by the whole theory. Both of us have had experience in building and woodworking, but had never come across the shortcut for halving a figure that contained an odd whole number and fraction. The other method for use with an even whole number and fraction is common knowledge. However, since that day we have shown Don's odd-number method to many people, including experienced carpenters, engineers, and teachers. None had heard of it before and all of them were immediately taken by its simplicity. Here it is one more time, in case (as Don says) "It takes you a little bit of time to get onto it":

Math

To halve a number with an even whole number and a fraction, such as 2-15/16:

1) Divide the whole number by 2. That gives you 1.
2) Leave the numerator as it is. That gives you 15/.
3) Double the denominator. That gives you /32.
4) Put it all together—1-15/32.

You probably already knew that. Now for the new part.

To halve a number with an odd whole number and a fraction, such as 3-¾:

1) Divide the whole number by 2. That gives you 1-½.
2) Discard the fraction. That gives you 1 for your whole number.
3) Add the numerator (3) and denominator (4) to arrive at your new numerator. That gives you 7/.
4) Double the denominator. That gives you /8.
5) Put it all together—1-⅞.

One more time, this time with 9-⅞:

1) 9÷2=4-½. Discard the ½=4.
2) 7+8=15/.
3) 8×2=/16.
4) All together—4-15/16.

DM I worked around several mines as an electrician. In fact, I got covered up one time. Ordinarily when you're gonna get a roof fall you get a little warning. You can hear the timbers a-crackin'. You can hear the coal a-fallin' down. You can hear the ribs a-screechin'. But sometimes you get an incident and it don't occur that way—the roof just falls. That's what happened to me. The only thing that saved me was an electric motor. The electric motor was high enough to hold the rock up off of me. It broke my hat and my light.

I had a funny experience when this rock fell on us. There were two of us there and it had us pinned. It didn't hurt us, but we couldn't move till they got the rock off of us. The rock probably weighed 10 or 15 ton. The foreman came up and he looked the situation over and I could hear him talking. He said, "Well, the only thing I know is to drill and shoot." And there we were underneath of the rock! Well, there wasn't nothing you could say. I wanted out. Finally they went outside and got some jacks and come back and jacked the rock up.

MK What else have you done? Did you have to make a little liquor during the Depression?

DM Well, I wasn't old enough during the Depression. You must mean the first Depression—I may have to go to it in this one. A fellow I know, he's a multi-millionaire now and that's the way he started. He didn't manufacture it, but he would broker it. He would go out and buy and then resell it.

He told me a little story one time about when he first got started. He said a fellow that was one of his customers called him up and told him to bring a gallon of moonshine; that he needed it right bad. So he said he went up and knocked on the door. The fellow came and there was big tears in his eyes and he was a-cryin'. He said he needed that whiskey real bad. My friend asked what had happened and he said, "Well, my wife passed away. My gosh, why did it have to be her? I just took out an insurance policy on me for $50,000."

They tell another story on this same fellow that needed whiskey and it involves insurance, too. He had a habit; he would buy property, insure it pretty heavy, and the first thing you know it would catch a-fire, and burn down. Several buildings that he had would catch a-fire and burn. Now I don't know if it was arson or not, but it appeared that way. One day we were doing some remodeling on an old house he had bought. He told me, he said, "Now the insurance man's gonna be here in a little bit. I want to talk to him but I've got to go away. You tell him I'll be back in a little while." So I told him and he come back and they discussed the fire insurance policy. When he got done the insurance agent asked him if he wanted to include cyclone on the policy. "No," he replied, "I don't know how to start one of them." That's an actual story, there's nothing wrong with that.

Don Mole points to the gumball machine problem as one typical of the ingenuity required of a woodworker. When pulled, the machine knob automatically rotates a quarter-turn, dispensing a gumball from the jar. Don's homemade jig, at right, holds the knob piece in the inner cylinder, whose handle projects through the quarter-turn spiral slot in the outer sleeve. This handle is turned in the slot, while an overhead router (not shown) reproduces a smaller quarter-spiral in the knob piece. "When you have to devise your own things, that's what makes the joy in it," he says.

GO Have you done any restoration work besides the *U.S.S. Constitution*?

DM We done a lot of work a couple years ago when they restored the old Bethany College. We made all new windows for that thing and they had to be the exact duplicate of the original

ones. I think the original ones was around a hundred years old. They had to be put together with wooden pegs. They couldn't be made like a modern window. The molding even had to be duplicated on it. We made a lot of the special trim where they had to patch up, and special molding. Those windows was made back when lumber was plentiful and had very little price in it but they used lumber that had knots. So they wanted the same thing. Wanted me to use lumber that had knots in it like the original windows. Today if I was making a window for you I wouldn't even think about putting a piece with a knot in it. 'Course, they wanted it back like the original thing.

MK What kind of a price would you put on the restoration of the Graceland mansion at Davis and Elkins College? [GOLDENSEAL, Vol. 5, No. 3, July–September 1979.]

DM I'd have to go in there and look at it before I'd even think about quoting a price. We could do it as good as anybody because we can set up to make these special things that would need replaced. I could duplicate anything they got in there. It would have to be something far out of the ordinary if we couldn't reproduce it. The thing you may run into reproducing it would be that you may not get the material that was as old as that in there. You may not completely restore it back to its original condition. The workmanship and the material would be available, but maybe not with the age on it like that's got on it.

I believe restoration should be taught. You need to teach kids today to go into this thing. 'Cause the old people are dying off and there's nobody going to be able to take their place. There's only about two or three people left in Randolph County that can really do the woodwork. They're getting some age on them and it won't be long till they're gonna be passed on. It would be a great education for kids and it would give them a little prestige, too, by working on a building as old as Graceland is. It's a famous place. You can go most anywhere and talk about it and they know what you're talking about. They would realize what it takes to put the thing in shape and I would say that they would get a lot of education out of it, and probably take better care of it.

The average person today don't realize the cost of restoring the old buildings. Back when they were made labor was cheap and materials was cheap. Today you got both of them high. Graceland could probably be done at a third of the cost of getting some outside contractor to come in here, he wouldn't know where the labor was available to do that kind of work. Also, if you used students, it would be about the most sure way of raising the money. A thing like that could get a lot of local contributions on it. People would donate money if they knew local people and students were working on it.

GO Aside from Graceland, what other projects would you like to get involved in?

DM The impossible; more of the same, I guess. I done a lot of foolish things, but I've had a pretty good life. Never did make no money but a fairly good living. That's about all you can get out of life.

Three generations of Mole craftsmen. Between larger jobs, son Joe turns out bowls and other small pieces.

Log Barns of West Virginia

Text and Photographs by
LeRoy G. Schultz

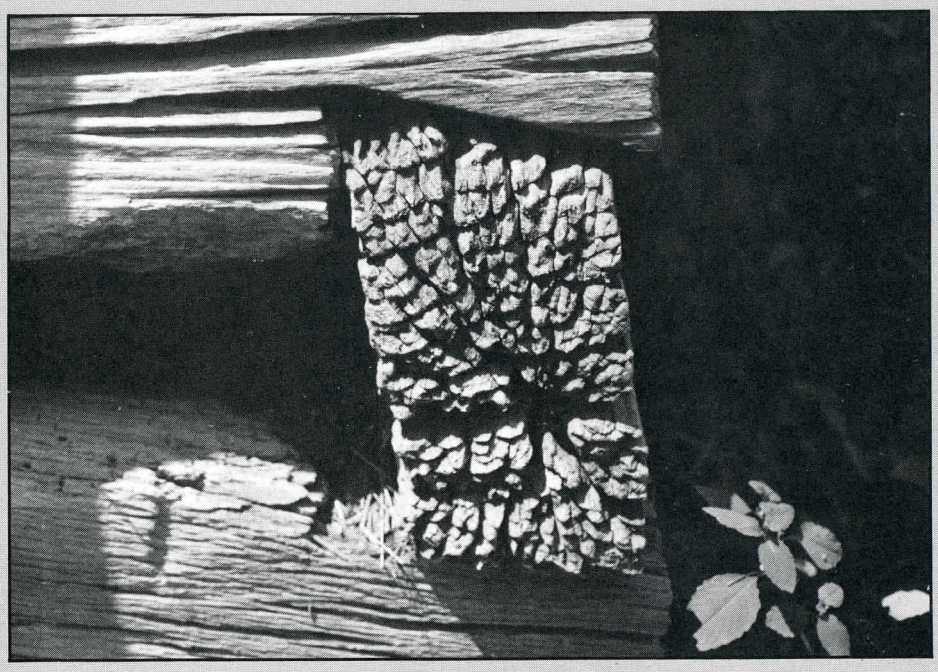
Early white settlers came to Western Virginia on foot, on horseback, by wagon, and by flatboat down one of our rivers. They were of European origin, but what they found here had no parallel in European experience. There were virgin forests so thick that sunlight had not reached the ground in centuries, and more types of trees than in all Europe combined. Sheer unadulterated nature in all its beauty and savagery offered a staggering plenitude.

The pioneer farmers, or their near ancestors, had left Germany, Scotland, England, Wales, and Ireland to make a new life in our valleys and on our hillsides. But they had not forsaken all in leaving their earlier homes. They brought with them the simple tools and traditional building methods that had served well in the past. Germans sweeping down the Shenandoah Valley into the Eastern Panhandle carried a rich heritage of building with wood, while the English moving up from Old Virginia, and the Scots and Irish from Pennsylvania and along the Ohio River quickly adapted to wood building.

They used wood because wood was what they found here, and in great abundance. Stone and brick were for the rich, but wood was considered "democratic." Logs were used to construct every type of building in early Western Virginia. Log barns appeared in the 18th century, of a basic design which could be accommodated to various farm sizes, with add-ons as needed. The versatile old barns could be made to serve other purposes as well. Henry Flesher built a log barn in 1776,

Above left: This 1840's Cabell County barn was recently still in use for air drying tobacco. Logs have been trimmed square, with V-notchings.
Below left: This Pendleton County log barn dates from the 1820's, and like many others has been partly sided, in this case with slab lumber. The unusual saddle notching suggests it may have been built by German settlers.
Above: The Bond family moved to Lewis County in 1825, and built this barn in 1839. It measures 22 by 41 feet, and was in active use as a sheep barn until 1980.

The corner notch was the most critical structural component of the log barn, and the different styles provide a handy identifying mark. The half-dovetail joint, here shown in an 1820's Harrison County barn (*right*), was a characteristically German style. So was the V-notch (*below*), this one from the 1839 Bond family barn in Lewis County. Wooden pegs were sometimes driven into the corners to add strength (*far right*). The pegs do not actually join timbers together, but rather tighten the corner joint by expansion. This Gilmer County barn was built in the 1830's.



at what is now the corner of Center and Second streets in Weston, which became Lewis County's first courthouse.

In our central counties, the Scots and Irish settled in large numbers, bringing log building methods learned from the Germans in Pennsylvania. They and the Germans had similar histories of religious persecution and economic depression, and quickly joined forces against the English. Both groups fought Indians side-by-side, and there was a natural meshing of cultures, including a borrowing of one another's building and farming techniques.

Hard labor, in building and later filling the barns, was required of all early farmers, using various axes, and the scythe, cradle, sickle, rake, pitchfork, and corn knife. Such methods persisted into the present century. Ken Jones, owner of the log barn at Glenville, remembers that he and his father and two brothers cut hay by hand, taking about 10 hours to the acre. Since loose hay needed drying by air, large spaces were left between the logs in their barn. Green hay easily molds and may burn from spontaneous combustion unless air circulates freely.

Determining the age of West Virginia's surviving log barns is difficult, because there are few written records and log barn styles changed little over time. It is known that log barn building reached a peak around 1830, when different wood, different building techniques, and changing agricultural needs called for larger barns of a different type. It is a mark of their durability that some log barns from this classic period a century and a half ago are still in use today.

The few log barns still standing in West Virginia retain the spirit of craftsmanship of the pioneer builders. They are simple, instinctive structures, arising from a thousand years of combined European and American tradition. Building plans were carried exclusively in the mind of the builder, and transmitted to the next generation by tradition, sweat, and plentiful building-site profanity—a handing-down of information and technique by the old methods of word-of-mouth, observation, replication, and apprenticeship.

The builders worked hard and for low wages, if money changed hands at all. Red Morris of Burnsville has an

1885 diary showing barn-building wages at 75¢ a day, plus cornbread and creek water. More often, families swapped labor, in barn raising as in other heavy tasks. Neighbors gathered in early for a hard day's work, and at dusk the new barn door was lifted off its hinges to serve as a dinner table. Generous servings of beans, corn cakes, cuts of pork, and other farm produce closed out a productive day. The aroma of homegrown tobacco filled the night air, as workers relaxed after dinner or surveyed the day's work.

Then as now, a sound barn was the heart of any farm. The first barn was built before the settler's house went up, and then served as the family's temporary dwelling. Most early barns were built six to eight feet tall, with roofs of straw or tree boughs held in place by saplings or stones. To ward off the wind, a mixture of mud and horsehair was used as chinking between logs.

The critical element in all log buildings is the corner joint, shown in the accompanying photographs of construction details. V-notching and half-dovetailing were introduced into Western Virginia by German settlers, and diamond-notching by the English. Trees were cut down and "snaked" to the barn site by oxen, and there cut to size and notched by broadaxe. Wooden pegs, so-called "tree nails," reinforced the joints on many barns. The pegs were sometimes left protruding to be driven in further as the green logs dried, adding strength.

West Virginia log barns, once a measure of rural welfare in their unsophisticated splendor, are now on the brink of extinction. The death of horse and ox agriculture has contributed to their destruction, as have new hay storage methods, and fire, flood, wind, insects, the tax collector, and simple age.

Like the passing of family farming the disappearing log barns are a great loss to us, for with them we lose a part of our heritage. I am reminded of what Robert Coffin said of America's early barns. He found them "empty now of men and sweet-breathed cattle," predicting that they "will return to the wild as rotted wood, and when the last of these barns goes, a history and a republic will be gone forever." Coffin wrote in 1951, and the situation now in West Virginia is much worse.

Below: This 1830 barn, in the so-called "ask no favors" style, now sags by a Ritchie County road. It is unusual in retaining a wood-shingled roof (poplar of an undetermined age).
Bottom: The basic strength of the log barn was demonstrated in Marshall County in 1974. A larger barn had been built around the log barn, but a windstorm that year blew away most of the newer barn, leaving the underlying 1840's log structure intact.
Right: The 1866 Jones family barn in Gilmer County is a picturesque favorite of Glenville State College art students. The door is two large planks, hand hewn, with wooden hinges and pins, and wooden pegs and blacksmith-shop nails. The roof, now galvanized metal, was formerly of split poplar shingles. The sled and triangular harrow shown here were made by members of the family.

The barn is still in the family. Ken Jones says it was built "on the hilliest part of the farm. No use wasting good land. They don't build them like this no more. Costs too much. You can't find a carpenter in Glenville who will work for wages a farmer could pay now.

"See Highway 119 running right in front of my log barn? That was a creek bed, most of the time full of water. We had to swim our ox teams 'cross there to plow the other side of the fields. Building Highway 119 was the first promise a politician kept to a farmer in West Virginia.

"You know, I raised some of West Virginia's best oxen in that barn. Could drive a team of oxen through a knot-hole, outwork any damn horse team around here."
Bottom right: This decaying Monongalia County barn, built in the 1830's, features square corner timbering. The popular double-cribbed style provided two barns under one roof, with room in the "breezeway" middle for storage of large implements and rainy day work.

Clearing Up a "Hazy Proposition"

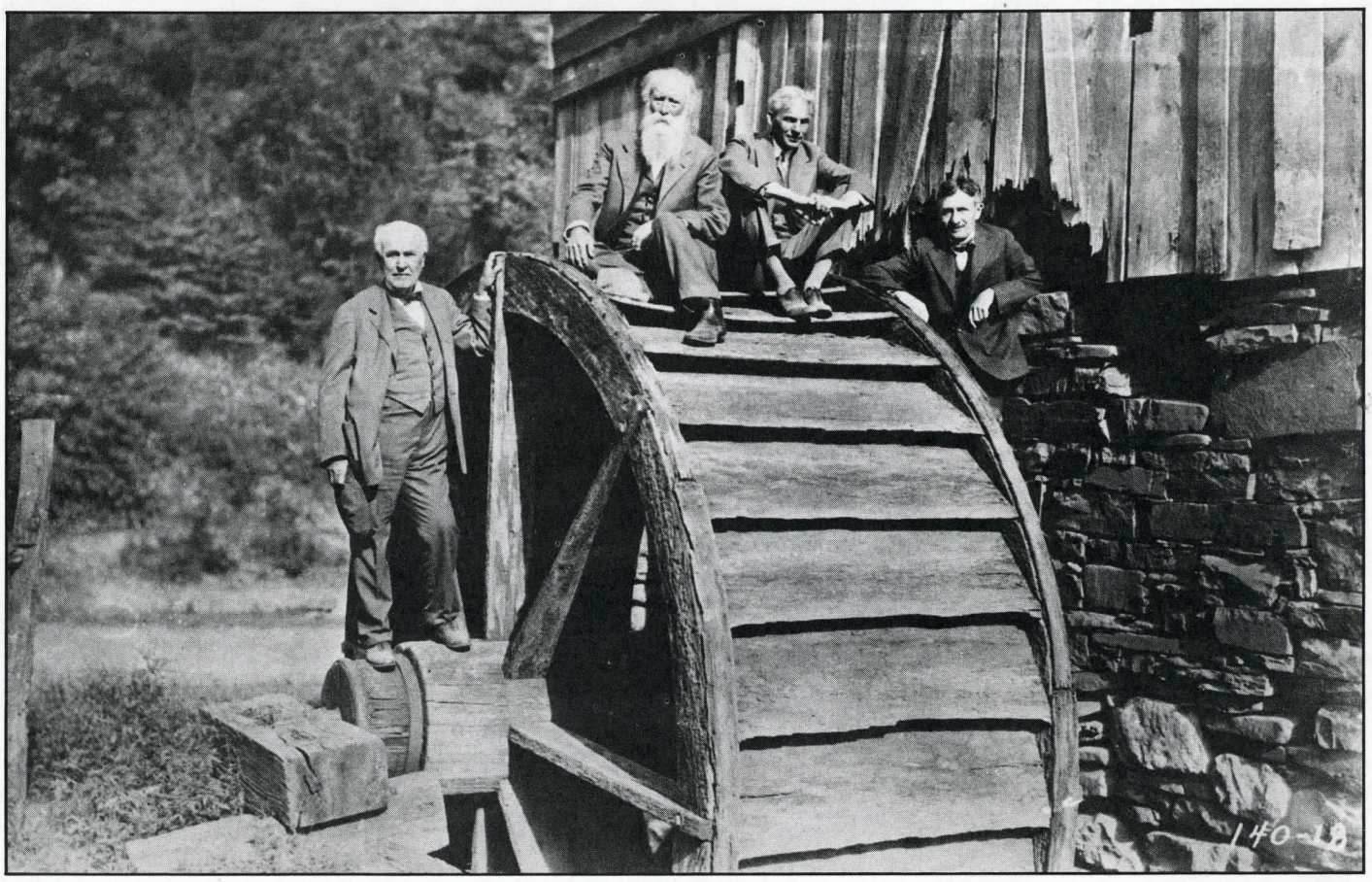
Ford, Firestone, and Edison Explore West Virginia

By Donald L. Rice

Americans had been caught up in World War I for over a year when, in the summer of 1918, several of the nation's leading industrialists and scientists decided to take a respite from pressures thrust upon them by the wartime mobilization. Their proposed holiday was a two-week camping jaunt which would take them throughout the Appalachian region, including 200 miles of West Virginia.

As camper Thomas Alva Edison noted, the men desired "to revert back to nature and get away from fictitious civilization." Their group included automobile tycoon Henry Ford, then 55 years old; Harvey Firestone, 50, the tire manufacturer; Edison, 71, America's foremost inventor; and renowned naturalist John Burroughs, at 82 the senior member. These prominent citizens were joined by R. J. DeLoach, a Chicago professor of agriculture and plant pathology, Chairman Edward H.

Edison, Burroughs, Ford, and Firestone pose at the old Evans gristmill in Tucker County, on August 20, 1918, their first day in West Virginia. Photo courtesy Ford Archives/Henry Ford Museum, Dearborn, Michigan.



Hurley of the United States Shipping Board, and Charles B. Hansford of the Navy Department.

Several of the men had engaged in an automobile tour of New York and the New England states in 1916, but America's entry into World War I made a hoped-for second trip in 1917 impossible. By August 1918, things looked better and the industrialists decided to break away from the war effort. Firestone expressed the sentiments of the group when he stated, "We all were head over heels in war work, but we decided that a couple of weeks off would freshen us all a bit and make us better able to go on with our work."

They gathered in Pittsburgh on August 18, with a planned itinerary that would take them down through Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia, Tennessee, and North Carolina. From Asheville, in the North Carolina Smokeys, they would head back to the northeast, crossing Virginia and eventually winding up their trip at Hagerstown, Maryland. Firestone called it "Mr. Edison's route, for the rest of us didn't know where we were going."

They didn't exactly propose to rough it. They set off from Pittsburgh with a caravan of three touring cars and three trucks, laden, as one writer described, with "genius and generalship and cooks and culinary contraptions." Following an overnight stop at Greensburg, Pennsylvania, they moved on toward Connelsville. Near there, a break-down stopped them. They were fortunate to have a good mechanic in the person of Henry Ford, and the rest of the group halted while he made repairs.

The party made it to West Virginia on the afternoon of August 20, camping that night on the banks of Horseshoe Run near Lead Mine in Tucker County. Edison rigged electric lights for the camp, running wires to the battery of one of the vehicles. Before dark the group had its picture taken at the old Evans gristmill nearby, with Ford and the 82-year-old Burroughs perched on top of the huge overshot water wheel and Edison and Firestone on either side.

John Burroughs provided a running commentary on the 1918 adventure, including camping in Tucker County.

Ford played engineer, with Firestone as fireman, on a logging locomotive near their camp in Tucker County, August 21. Courtesy Ford Archives/Henry Ford Museum.

In his book, *Under the Maples*, the naturalist told of finding that first campsite in West Virginia. "I got the reluctant consent of the widow who owned it to pitch our camp there, though her patch of roasting-ears nearby made her hesitate." Burroughs figured that she "had probably had experience with gypsy parties," and added that she "was not impressed in our favor even when I gave her the names of two well-known men in our party."

Burroughs convinced the widow that the millionaires would stay out of her corn patch, but he found some of his group to prefer a different camping place anyway:

> "Edison was not attracted by the widow's open field; the rough, grassy margin of the creek suited him better, and its proximity to the murmuring, eddying, rocky current appealed to us all, albeit it necessitated our mess-tent being pitched astride a shallow gully, and our individual tents elbowing one another in the narrow spaces between the boulders. But wild nature, when you can manage her, is what the camper-out wants. Pure elements—air, water, earth—these settle the question. Camp Horseshoe Run had them all."

"Wild nature" was just what the campers got in the northern Tucker County of 65 years ago. One journalist on the tour reported that the chosen spot on Horseshoe Run had all the wildness, roughness, and loneliness of a Jesse James hideout. The loneliness ended when the local citizens showed up to look the visitors over, although the correspondent grew even more apprehensive at what appeared to him a distinctly rough-looking group. But Ford put everyone at ease, convincing his fellow travelers that the "piratical bunch" were actually the most genuine and congenial folks to be found in the surrounding mountains.

There were many logging camps in the vicinity, and a logging railroad ran

Above: Harvey Firestone cradles wheat on a Pocahontas County farm while Ford and the astonished farmer stand by. Courtesy Ford Archives/Henry Ford Museum.
Below: Later, bearded John Burroughs engaged Firestone in a sheaving contest. Courtesy Ford Archives/Henry Ford Museum.

close to the campsite. One lumberman, learning of Edison's interest in the railroad, brought a locomotive on the morning of August 21 so that the great inventor could climb into the cab, be the engineer, and see exactly how it operated. Ford also played engineer, with Firestone as fireman.

Later in the morning of August 21, the entourage departed Horseshoe Run and traveled by way of Parsons toward Elkins. Burroughs continued his description of the countryside and its people:

> "At our lunch that day, by the side of a spring, a twelve-year-old girl appeared in the road above us with a pail of apples for sale. We invited her into our camp, an invitation she timidly accepted. We took all of her apples. I can see her yet with her shining eyes as she crumpled the new one-dollar bill which one of the party placed in her hand. She did not look at it; the feel of it told the story to her. We quizzed her about many things and got straight, clear-cut answers—a very firm, level-headed little maid."

From such meetings, Burroughs the naturalist developed more of an interest in the people of West Virginia than in the abundance of nature he found. "Birds and flowers and trees and springs and mills were something," he wrote, "but human flowers and rills of human life were better." Burroughs specifically recalled another "maiden, twelve or thirteen years old, to whom

we gave a lift of a few miles on her way." This girl had never been far from home and when asked the distance to Elkins, replied, "Ever and ever so many miles."

The tourists covered those miles to Elkins in good time, and upon their arrival were greeted most cordially by flattered community leaders. Elkins was later recalled by the visitors as a town of about 8,000 people, little more than a quarter-century old and with some of the features of a western boom town. But it was remembered as a pleasant place, "full of shade trees and well paved streets."

The prominent men were followed wherever they went. Elkins children, in particular, were attracted to John Burroughs with his flowing white beard. *Randolph Enterprise* editor J. Slidell Brown introduced the old man as Santa Claus, leaving Burroughs to explain that it was too warm for his reindeer. Henry Ford's transportation also needed some explaining, for Brown found him riding in a Simplex automobile. Ford told the editor that the Simplex belonged to Edison and that the party's other vehicles were all Fords.

Editor Brown kept tabs on the visitors as they wandered about. He noted that Edison was so deaf that it was difficult to converse with him, and passed along Burroughs' explanation that he was not the Burroughs who invented the adding machine but was a relative of his. The suntanned Ford was as usual the most congenial of the bunch, rambling around bare-headed and enjoying the crowds.

After dispatching some telegrams from the Elkins office, the tourists departed for Cheat Club House, 32 miles south at Cheat Bridge. While traveling between Elkins and Beverly a spring shackle bolt broke on one of the autos. Ford, not to be disturbed by such a mechanical inconvenience, secured a usable bolt from a threshing machine in a nearby field. After about two hours' work the caravan was on its way again up Tygart's Valley.

The party arrived at the Cheat Club House for a late evening dinner on August 21. A tent camp was set up to which Edison and Burroughs returned for the night, with the other campers preferring to stay at the more comfortable Club House. Burroughs remarked that this part of West Virginia compared with the Catskill Mountains of New York, but was colder. The temperature dropped to 30° that mid-August night. The visitors were fascinated by the large trout outlined in paper along the Club House walls, attesting to past great catches from nearby Shavers Fork.

At ten on the morning of the 22nd, the campers set out for Hot Springs, Virginia, by way of Pocahontas County. While passing an open field near Bartow, they observed a farmer cradling oats. The party stopped at the behest of Ford and Firestone. Both men had lived on farms and, while the Pocahontas County farmer stood by, the two industrialists entered into an impromptu cradling and sheaving competition.

Everything the great men did was taken down by journalists. One West Virginia newspaper ran a cartoon of Edison eating pie, noting in a weak pun that his favorite was "not current, but apple." Edison enjoyed his apple pie even at breakfast, and Sato, the Japanese cook, had trouble keeping sufficient pastry ingredients, despite his truck loads of provisions. Consequently, Sato found himself bartering along the way to get the items needed for baking cakes and pies.

After crossing from Pocahontas County into Virginia the travelers found a prosperous local citizen stranded with car trouble. Henry Ford came to the rescue again, putting the luxury auto back into running order in a short time. "How much can I pay you, stranger?" the man asked, according to one report. Ford refused payment, saying he didn't need the money. He was riding in one of his own company's cars that day, and the Virginian looked it over. "My good man, I insist on paying you for that work," he said. "No man would be riding in one of those little cars if he had all the money he needed."

Harvey Firestone remembered this part of the trip well, and later wrote of it in his book, *Men and Rubber*. "We were nearly a week in Virginia and West Virginia, crossing many times the border between the two states, now in one, then in the other, all the time among the mountains, with a succession of glorious views from mountain tops and along broad, fertile valleys," he recalled. "Soft water and hard water, cold springs and warm springs, mineral springs and trout brook springs, alternate with each other in those mountains." Altogether, he figured,

On their last day in West Virginia, the illustrious visitors take a camp breakfast on the Stinson farm, near Princeton. Courtesy Ford Archives/Henry Ford Museum.

they "became pretty intimate with the backbone of the continent."

Following the visit to Hot Springs, the group returned to West Virginia to camp one night near White Sulphur Springs. The next night's camp was on Wolf Creek, between Narrows, Virginia, and Princeton. They proceeded through Mercer County, going to Bluefield and then back into Virginia for the final time, before heading on to Tennessee and North Carolina. The illustrious group eventually returned north, disbanding in Maryland after 13 days on the road.

Along the way, the men worked or amused themselves according to their own natures. Ford would grab an axe and keep the campfire supplied with firewood and take care of mechanical troubles as they cropped up, while Firestone preferred to read. Burroughs the naturalist found plenty to look at; in Tucker County, for example, he recorded his "first view of the . . . painted bunting—a bird rarely seen north of the Potomac." Thomas Edison, never a man concerned with personal comfort, may have enjoyed the adventure more than any of them. One observer said he turned vagabond very easily, going with his hair uncombed and his clothes unattended for long periods. The old inventor was the main organizer of the trip.

The travelers parted ways at Hagerstown on August 30, going back to busy schedules in the world of science and industry. After the war, Ford, Firestone, and Edison returned to West Virginia at least once, hoping to camp some more along Shavers Fork in Randolph County. There were ladies along this time, and bad weather forced the group indoors, to spend the night at the Randolph Hotel in Elkins rather than in camp.

Besieged by the weather and by curious citizens, the distinguished visitors apparently holed up in the hotel, appearing before the public only briefly. They stayed only the one night, and saw little of the countryside this trip. Their impressions of West Virginia were formed entirely during the earlier camping jaunt. Of that 1918 expedition, Harvey Firestone wrote, "Mr. Edison said that West Virginia had always been a rather hazy proposition to him and he was glad to get a clear impression of it, which I think was the case with us all."

Henry Ford's Dream for Appalachia

The 1918 camping expedition into West Virginia and nearby states was mainly for rest and recreation, but the vacationing millionaires could never quite keep their minds away from work. Looking back, Henry Ford later reported that he and Thomas Edison had concocted a grand scheme while traveling through the mountains.

Speculating about the industrial potential of the Appalachian region, the two men were especially interested in the possibilities for generating hydroelectric power from fast mountain streams. Throughout the trip they were "looking seriously into this business of water power," the automaker said. "It is a shame, a tragedy, the way this country and all countries, for that matter, are letting go to waste the natural power resource, water, which is literally inexhaustible."

Ford and Edison were decades ahead of present-day advocates of using the small streams of West Virginia for the production of electricity, but that is exactly the sort of project the two master tinkerers had in mind. "There are thousands of vicinities in the hilly section, where horsepower enough to light a whole town, heat it, run its cars and even cook its meals, is utterly going to waste," Ford figured. Edison believed that even the smallest such streams could be harnessed, and proposed to link up the electricity from several to create a usable energy source. What Edison had in mind was "to gather up this power and divert it into a main reservoir of power in the vicinity," the more talkative Ford explained. "And he can do it, too."

"My part is the utilization of the electric power which Mr. Edison is ready to gather from the running streams," Ford went on. "I would establish factories of one sort or another near the points where the best hydro-electric assets were located."

Ford was among the chief capitalists of his time, but he envisioned worker-owned factories for Appalachia. "I do not mean factories of my own," he elaborated. "I mean factories that the workers themselves should own . . . Off hand, I might say sawmills, woodworking shops, furniture factories, etc. These would be appropriate to hilly country which is generally wooded, too. Right at hand would be the raw materials as well as the chief power."

In August 1918, of course, all such plans had to be deferred, as Henry Ford knew. "After the war, when I get through fighting to bring about peace," he promised, "I will make the machinery for such factories as I have mentioned . . . . I can turn out woodworking machinery cheaply in great quantities, while Edison gathers the current to drive it."

After the war, however, Ford became caught up in the rush to peacetime production of automobiles and in the intricacies of easing son Edsel into control of the Ford Motor Company. Over the years the Ford family had made major energy investments in Appalachia, including West Virginia, but that money was cautiously put into the old standby, coal. Nothing came of the great water power plan, which apparently went unmentioned during Ford and Edison's 1921 return visit to the state.

e an actor on a stage, the glassblower on his platform is a star of the glassmaking process.

"Objects of Beauty and Light"

Glassmaking in West Virginia

By Joseph Platania

Photographs by Rick Lee

My maternal grandmother, Caroline White, who lived in Huntington from 1911 to her death in 1975, collected glassware of all descriptions for more than half a century. She didn't collect as an investment nor to resell, but to display on shelves, in china cabinets, what-not corner cabinets and shelves, on mantles, dressers, and on the tops of room dividers and kitchen cabinets. She cared only that the glass piece, to her exceptional eye, was beautiful or unique. Stretch glass, Depression and carnival glass, cased glass, hobnail and milk glass, hand-painted glass, lamps made of blown glass, and other glassware of every color of the spectrum filled her home.

The centerpiece of her collection was displayed on the living room mantle. As I can remember, from the late 1940's it held two rows of beautiful glassware and pottery, one above the other. Some of the pieces would be changed several times a year but others remained almost as fixtures on the mantle.

Below the mantle were two bottle-green, four-foot-long glass canes shaped like shepherds' crooks. They were suspended one below the other in wooden braces. The tapered ends of the canes were finely twisted, the shafts were ribbed glass, and the curved handles, one open and one circular, were of twisted glass like light green, vitreous licorice sticks.

The canes had been given to my grandmother by her half-sister Eunice, and were one-of-a-kind pieces from

Roberto Moretti works swiftly and precisely to shape hot glass faster than the camera can register.

a northern West Virginia glass plant. The canes were thought to have been "end of the day" pieces created from leftover glass. They remain two distinctive works of glass art made by the hands of unknown artisans more than 30 years ago.

Until the early 1950's Eunice lived about 200 miles from Huntington in East Liverpool, Ohio, across the Ohio River from West Virginia's northern tip. She later moved downriver to Marietta, across the Ohio from the Williamstown, West Virginia, home of the Fenton Art Glass Company. When my grandmother visited Eunice at Marietta they would patronize Fenton to buy glassware, especially factory "seconds" and discontinued pieces you could only find at glass factory shops.

I can remember as a child going by taxi with my grandmother into downtown Huntington to browse through antique shops that specialized in glassware, five-and-dime stores, and department stores. We would occasionally return from our shopping trip with a piece of glassware or ceramic pottery which was not expensive but which my grandmother thought would be attractive for her home.

When Grandmother Caroline died in 1975, boxes of glassware and china were found stored in the house where she and my grandfather had lived for 60 years. Much of it had been given to her by family and friends in the 10 to 15 years before her death at age 80. The glassware had been carefully stored in boxes she had labeled in pen or in pencil. She had run out of display room, and sets of cups and saucers, vases, bowls, china, plates, and glasses, after they had been taken from their boxes and admired, had to go back into storage until another time.

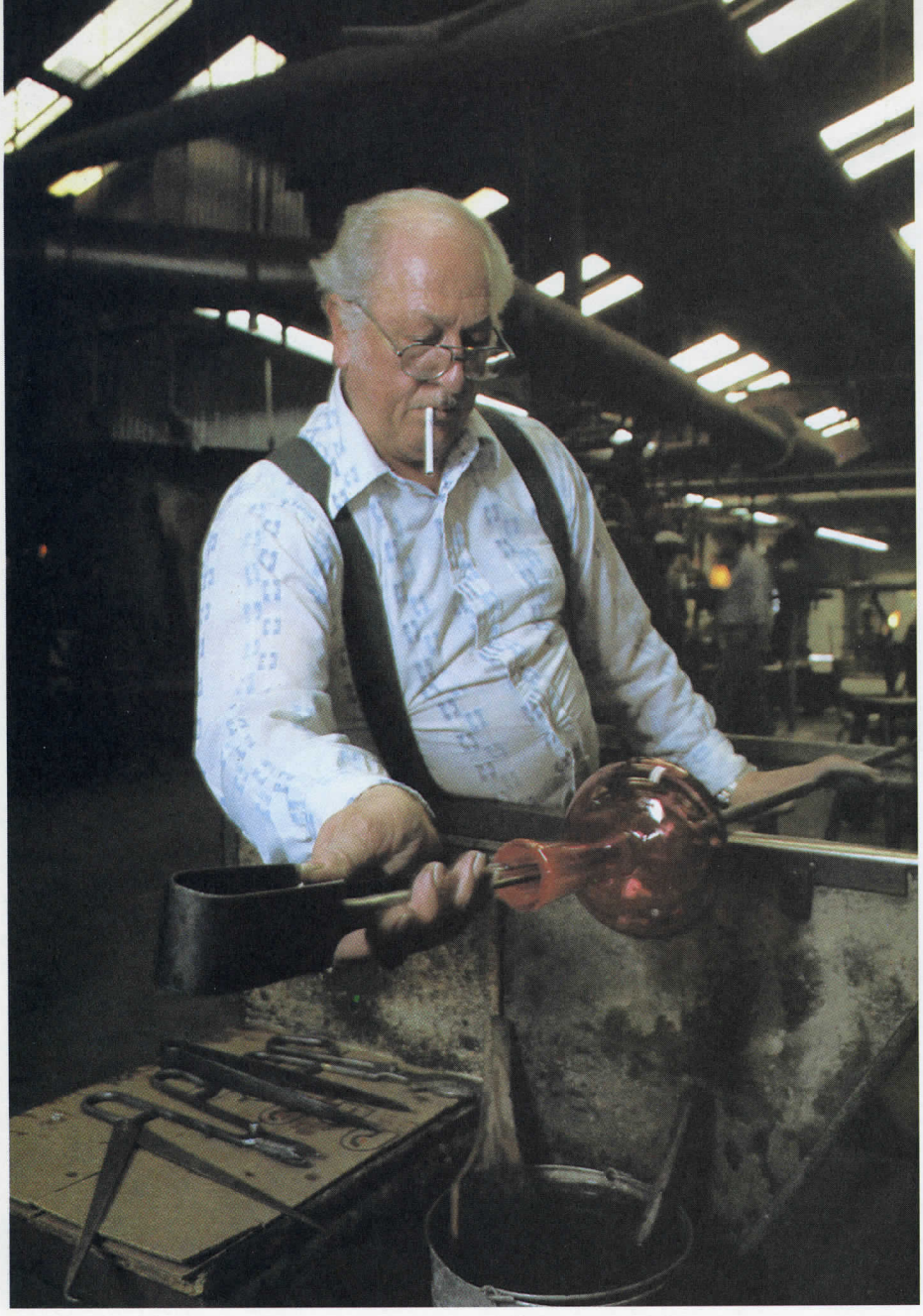
It was fortunate for my grandmother that there are glass houses in West Virginia from the Northern Panhandle down to the Huntington area. Fortunate for the rest of us, too, that in this part of the country known for grimy coal mines and steel mills there is an industry making objects of beauty and light.

West Virginia's glass history goes back to the earliest days of the state. With the 1864 development by a Wheeling plant of a revolutionary soda-lime formula for glass, the new state was on its way to becoming a major glass producer. The Ohio Valley was particularly well suited to glass manufacturing, with its cheap river transportation, an abundance of coal and natural gas to fire the furnaces, and even a supply of silica. Industrial growth after the Civil War guaranteed a skilled local labor force of native and immigrant craftsmen. Today the Valley remains a production center, with nearly three-fourths of America's handmade glass coming from this region.

To watch glass being made on the floor of a West Virginia glass house is to witness an almost Biblical transformation of base elements into three-dimensional objects of grace and beauty. Silica sand, soda ash, and lime are the principal ingredients.

Other chemicals are added to the "batch" of raw materials to give the glass special physical properties and to create colors. Fenton lists sugar, iron, and sulphur as the additives for amber glass, copper for blue; iron or chromium added to the batch produces green; and selenium and cadmium sulfide produce orange. Fenton's opaque milk glass requires fluoride and aluminum, and their "Gold Ruby Glass" is made with pure coin gold. Wayne County's Pilgrim Glass Company says that their Cranberry glass is made by "fusing solid gold with lead crystal."

The batch of raw materials is fed



Moretti adds the finishing touches to the vase's mouth.

into a "pot furnace" or a "day tank furnace," where it melts down into glass. The clay pots are in a furnace which circulates the flames outside the pots but where no flame touches the glass that is being "brewed." The day tank is three times the size of a pot and melts glass by fire directly on the batch. The pot melt takes 24 to 30 hours, but a day tank needs only 12. Temperatures of 2500° F. are used to melt the batch.

The jargon associated with glassmaking, words like "gob," "blow shop," "stomper," and "glory hole," is vivid, earthy, and blunt. There is little flowery language in this craft that produces so much beauty. The jargon is first cousin to that of the coal and steel industries with which the glass factories have co-existed for decades. The craftsmen themselves are given the self-descriptive titles of "gatherer," "presser," "blower," and "finisher."

Against the heat and roar of the glass furnaces and the racket of tall metal fans running on the high setting, the glassmakers of West Virginia quietly go about their centuries-old craft. The craftsmen are mainly middle-aged men. Younger assistants bring in the hot glass from the furnaces at the center of the factory floor, help with the glassmaking, and pick up the finished pieces. Together, the skilled older artisans and their helpers make vases, pitchers, plates, jars, glasses, baskets, trays, figurines, slab glass, antique stained glass, and other glassware in a rainbow of color and designs.

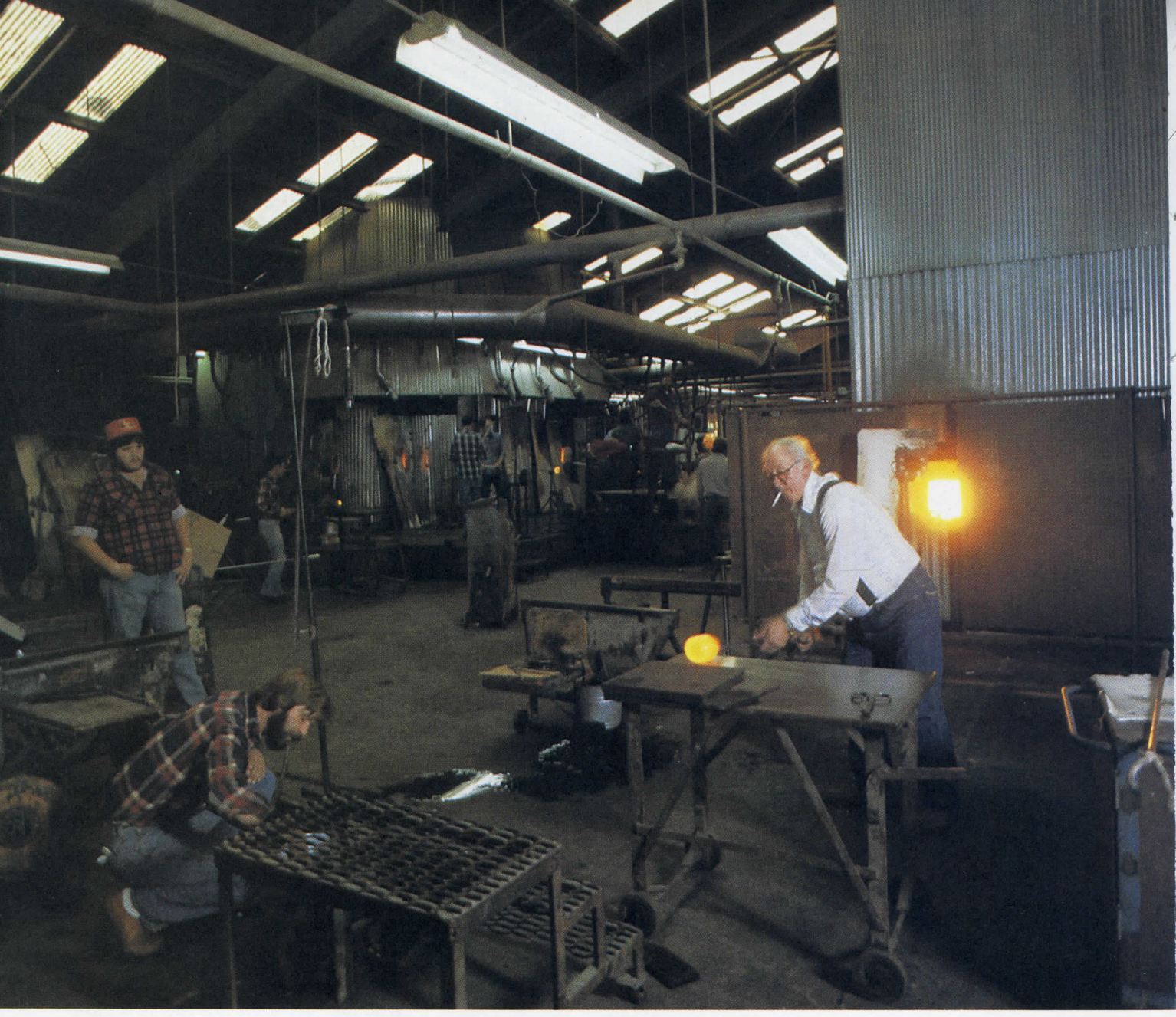
The molten glass or gob is removed from the furnace on a long metal ceramic-tipped "punty" or point, or on a blowpipe by the gatherer, who peers into the white heat of the fiery furnace. He must judge the proper amount of glass to gather, so that each piece of glassware gets started on its way neither too heavy nor too thin. The speed at which he turns the punty or the blowpipe, together with the size of the tip, determines the amount he gathers. A large piece sometimes requires as much as 10 pounds of glass. He must also shape the gob properly, and drop it into the center of the press mold if pressed glass is being made.

The glowing, molten gob is now in the hands of the presser, who snips off the glass dropped into his mold by the gatherer and flips the cut end back into the mold to prevent a shear mark. He then pulls the lever and holds it for just the right amount of time to form the hand-pressed glass.

In a blow shop the process is similar. Here, the gatherer gathers a globule of hot glass on a hollow blowpipe and delivers it to the "blocker," who cools and shapes the gob in a wooden block placed in a tub of soapy water and gives the piece its first bubble of air. After breathing the first breath of life into the shapeless gob of glass, the blocker hands it to a "carry-over boy" who delivers it on the end of a blowpipe to the blower.

The glassblower is the figure most associated with glassmaking in the public eye. It is he who first reheats the roughly shaped piece in a mini-furnace called a "glory hole," and then rolls the ball of glass on a flat steel "marver" plate to obtain a shape similar to that of the blow-mold.

The glassblower often stands on top of the traditional blower's wooden platform. As much as three feet high with half a dozen wooden steps, the platform looks like a small stage, but it is a purely functional arrangement to accommodate the long blowpipe, the gob, and the blow mold. He receives the pipe from the carryover boy, and with a gentle puff sends a pocket of air into the hot ball of glass. With a wet scoop-shaped block and paddle of



wood, together with an iron, tong-like tool called a "pucella," the glass is shaped to fit the mold in which it is to be blown. It takes years of experience to accomplish this task repeatedly, for all this must be done quickly, perfectly, and without a moment's hestitation.

The glass form is then blown out further and inserted into a water-soaked mold of cherry or applewood where it is expanded and continuously rotated. When the piece is sufficiently expanded within this wooden mold it is withdrawn. The glass is allowed to cool very slightly as it comes from the mold, then a helper attaches a long "pontil" rod, tipped with a bit of hot glass, to the center of the new piece. The piece is cracked off near the end of the blowpipe by chilling with water, then carried to the finisher who reheats it. The ragged, uneven edge is then cut off, leaving a clean straight edge.

From the molds the glass in transition to becoming glassware is taken to be placed in a "snap" and then reheated at the glory hole until it becomes hot enough to be crimped, flared, or straightened by the finisher.

The finisher is a maestro on the busy factory floor. The glass form is completely crafted by him to the design indicated in the working drawing. He flares the piece, crimps it, changes its shape with an artist's eye, adds glass to it, and straightens the stem on footed pieces. He is like a sculptor finishing a carving, but instead of having days and weeks the glass finisher must work within minutes or his medium rigidly hardens.

One hand holds the rod on which the heated glass is attached, quickly turning, lifting and lowering it, while with the other hand he uses the tools of his craft. The finisher then removes the finished object from the rod with a file-like tool and a gentle blow on the rod. It is like the severing of a glass umbilical cord as the new piece of glassware enters the world. The "carry-in boy" then receives the piece on an implement called a "fork" and places it in a lehr or annealing oven, to emerge three and a half hours later as a finished piece.

Another specialist in the glass industry is called the "handler," for his art is putting the handles on baskets

and jugs and, where needed, on other forms of glassware. Working as rapidly as the finisher, the handler attaches a glowing ribbon of hot glass to a piece, forms a loop, and attaches the other end.

Like the handler, the "vase swinger" is a skilled specialist. He first reheats the top of a thick-walled goblet in the glory hole, loosening its molecules with fiery heat until it is pliable. He then swings the glowing glass in soaring arcs while centrifugal force draws it into a long slender vase as if it were redhot taffy. The final shape of the vase will depend on the speed he swings the piece, the time he allows the glass to cool, and the number of revolutions he makes with it. Glass manufacturers of West Virginia can legitimately claim that no two of their vases are ever alike.

In handmade glass certain characteristics differentiate the products of the various glass houses. Fenton glass has become famous for its crimped edge and the "Silvercrest," or crystal edge, on its glassware. Like a ruffle on a petticoat, the ruffle of the crimp and double crimp edge is applied by skilled craftsmen. The crystal edge is applied to the opaque white milk glass after the glass has received its basic shape, but through the glassmaker's hands it seems to be a part of the original piece.

Pilgrim Glass has its unique Cranberry glassware, and "carved" glass animals. Viking of New Martinsville and Huntington has frosted glass figures and glassware, while Blenko Glass of Milton is known for its ruby and cobalt glass and its antique stained glass. Blenko stained glass adorns Grant's Tomb and St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York, a Yale library, the Air Force Academy Chapel, and other landmarks around the world. ["Most Radiant Windows: West Virginia Stained Glass," by Martha Manning, GOLDENSEAL, vol. 8, no. 2, Summer 1982, pp. 21–26.]

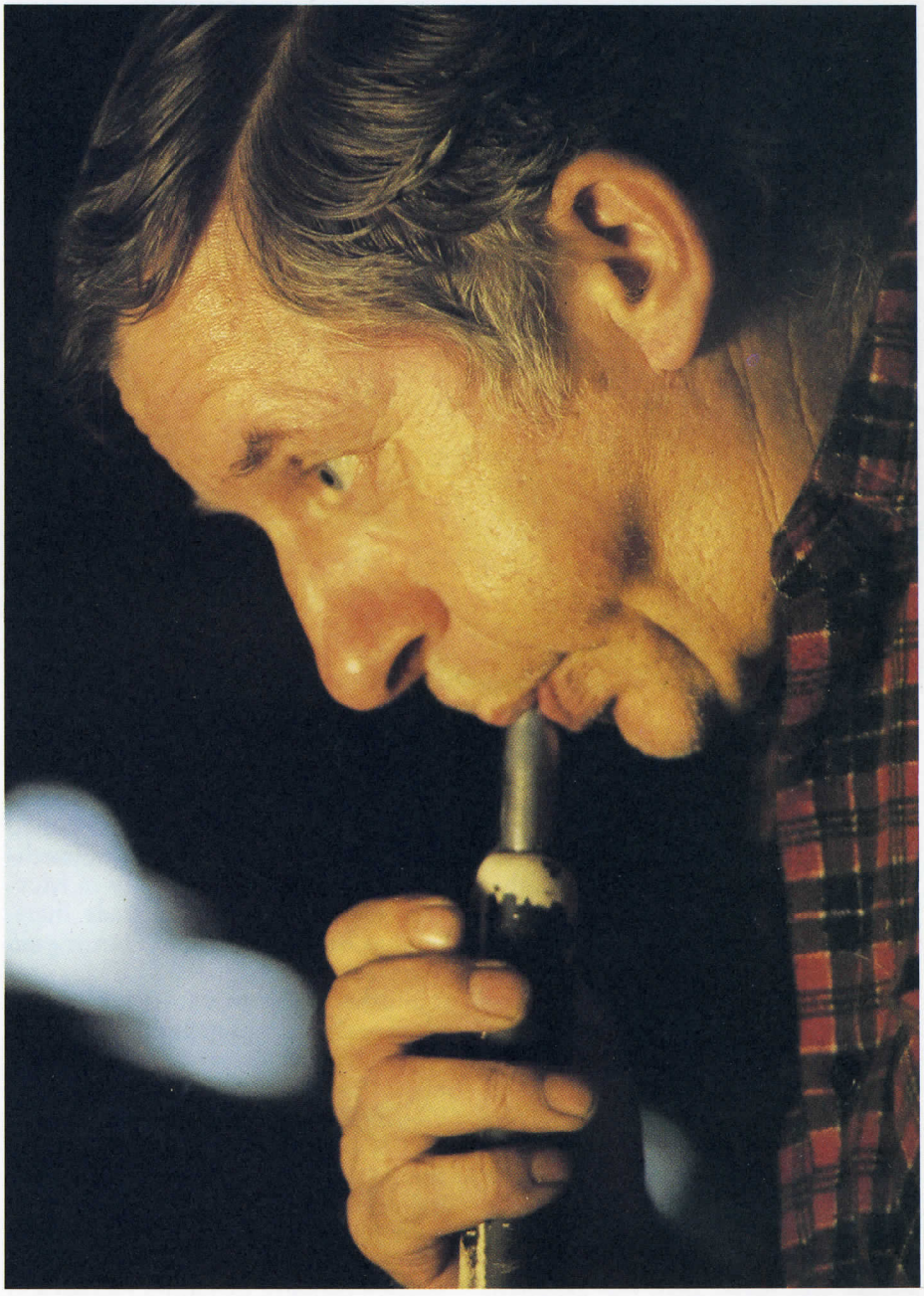
To appreciate the glassmaking process, one has to visit a West Virginia glass house, several of which provide tours or observation areas. The first thing you notice, as a half-dozen of us did at the Pilgrim plant one day last summer, is the heat and the ceaseless roar of the natural gas furnaces and the high-powered electric fans.

We stood in a semi-circle around a seated middle-aged man, with a thick crop of white hair and a pink face. This was Alessandro Moretti, one of the best. He was putting the final touches on a tall clown figurine with a ruffled collar and guitar, made of clear glass streaked with color. Moretti's assistant, more like an apprentice, was an energetic young man in his 20's who quickly fetched with an iron rod a small gob of orangish-red glass just from the furnace. He carefully placed the molten glass on top of the clown's head for the artisan to turn into a small top hat.

Moretti, in a short-sleeved shirt and glasses, worked quickly. The tong-like pucellas and a small wooden paddle, the traditional tools of a glass finisher, were laid out on a table at his side. He occasionally glanced out at his audience, a pleasant smile creasing his broad, flushed face. Heat poured from the several reheating furnaces nearby, and more intensely from the larger furnaces in the roaring interior of the plant.

Quickly and expertly he fashioned

Left: The delicate art of the glassworker comes paradoxically from the clutter and confusion of the factory floor.
Below: Technology has found no substitute for the strong lungs and good judgment of the glassblower.



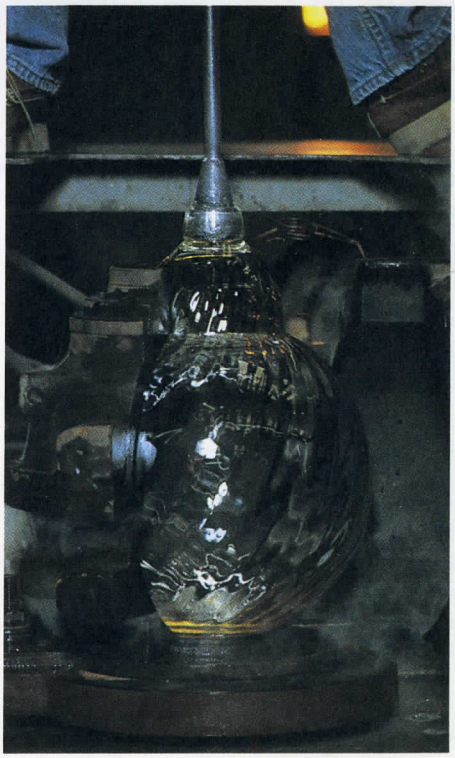
Glass animals, a Pilgrim specialty, begin as a molten blob in the craftsman's skilled hands. This will be a bull.

the clear top hat to perch on the clown's bald head, turning up the brim and molding the crown as the molten glass cooled. The assistant brought another small amount of glass and Moretti added trim to the clown's suit and collar. It was apparent that we were watching more than an ordinary glass finisher. Here was a sculptor, working in a medium that chilled even as he worked it and which, when finished, could be destroyed by the whisk of a hand.

After Moretti had finished and gone outside to cool off, a man in our group told the apprentice that he had watched glassmaking in Venice but that this artisan was better than the Venetians he had seen. I knew from newspaper clippings inside the Pilgrim sales shop that Moretti himself was from northern Italy, from the small city of Murano. He had learned his trade there, but has been a resident of Huntington since 1955.

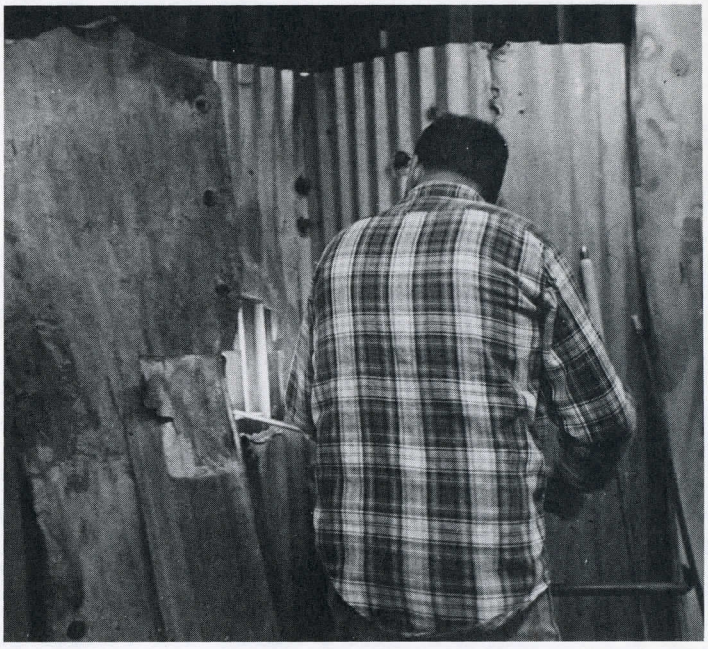
Brother Roberto Moretti is also a glass sculptor, and is perhaps the better known of the two. He was imported in 1958 to join Alessandro at Pilgrim. The brothers come from a long line of glass artisans dating back to the 17th century and as teenagers trained in Murano's glassworks, as had their father and grandfather. Roberto has been commissioned by major modern painters, including Picasso and Chagall, and his glass sculptures have been exhibited nationwide. Together, the Moretti brothers have greatly influenced the production of the carved or tooled glass that Pilgrim has become known for.

The Moretti brothers are exceptional, but there are other master craftsmen in West Virginia glassmaking and the general standards of the industry are high. Grandmother Caroline recognized this in a lifetime of collecting glass. She never met the men who labored to create the beauty she prized, for the artisans are mostly anonymous. She knew them, however, in another sense, for a shared love for the glass itself easily bridged the gap between the roaring factory and the gentle quiet of an old lady's home.

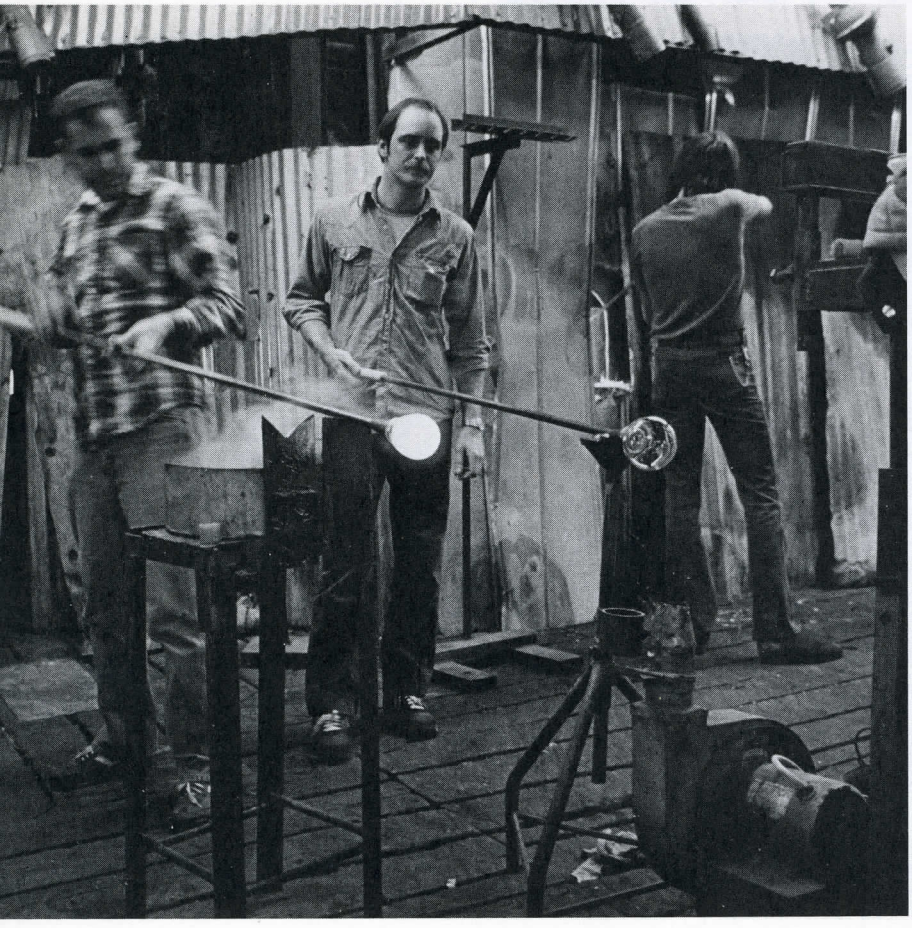


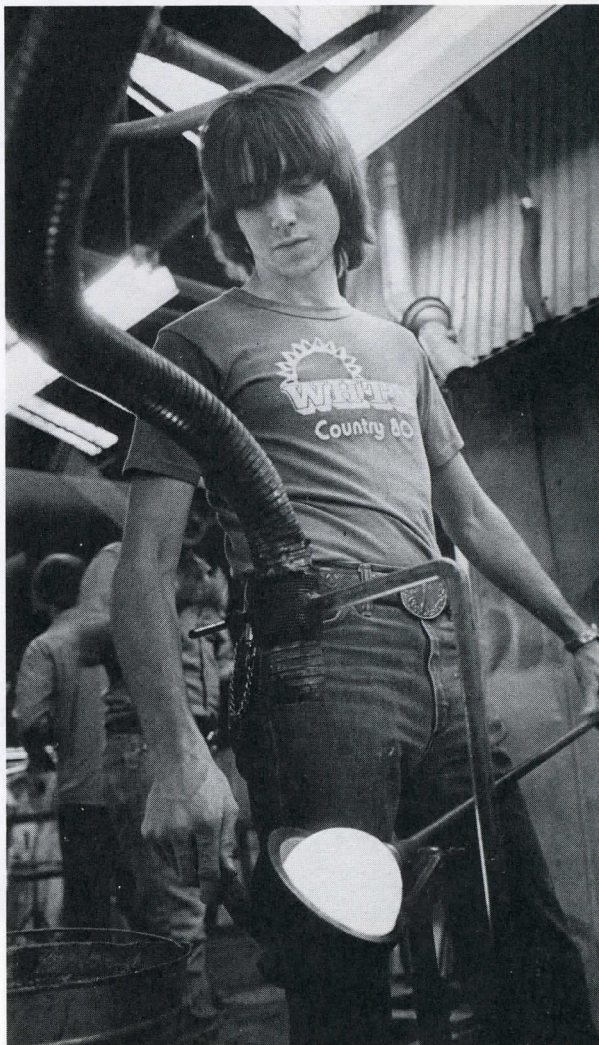
Production Line Glass at Pilgrim Glass Company

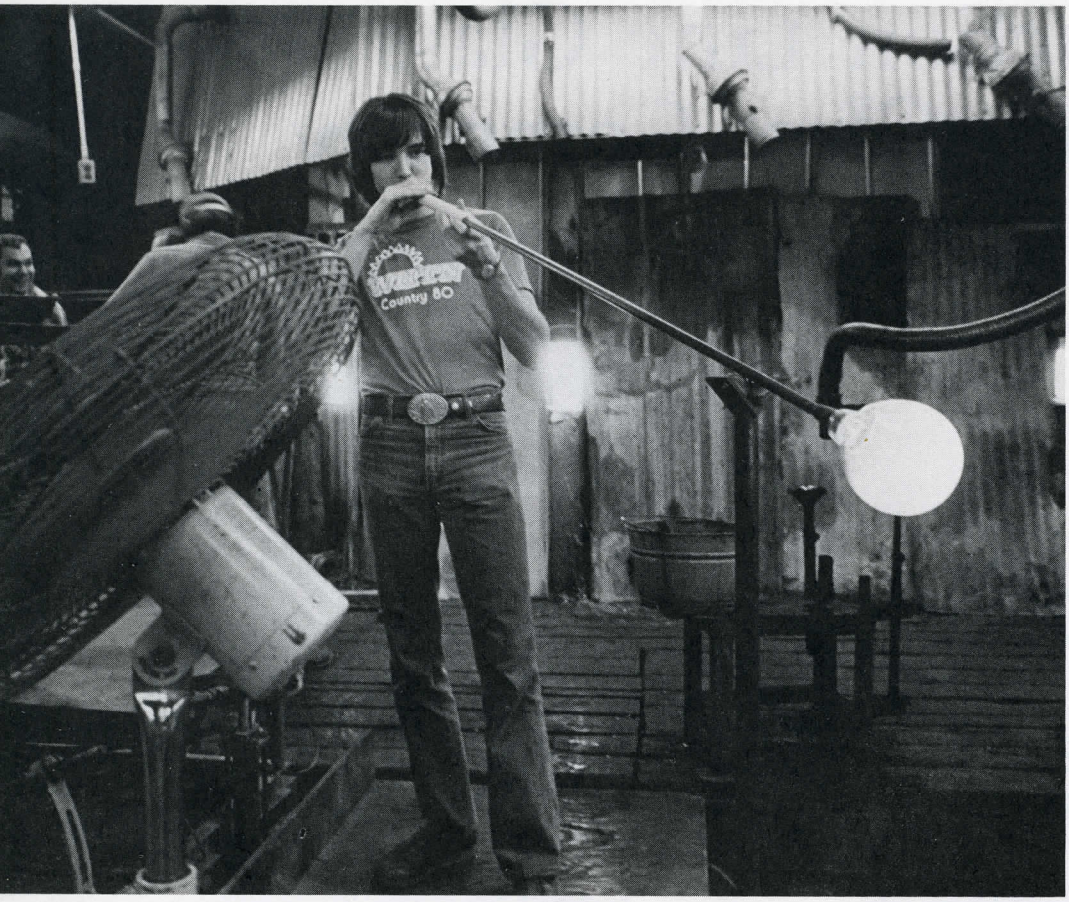
Photographs by Rick Lee

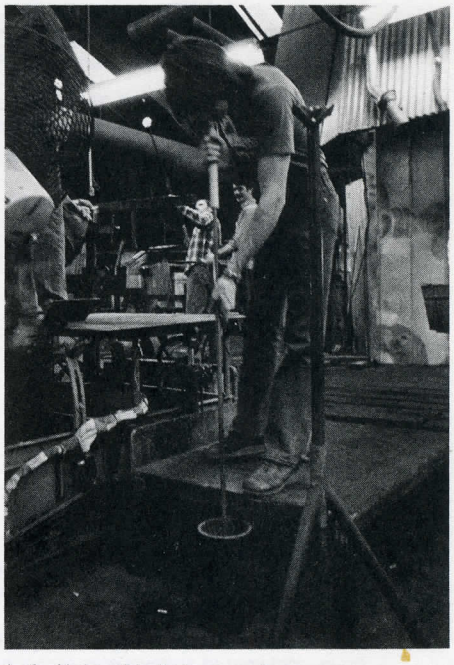


Right: Charlie Williams takes the first gathering of glass from the furnace where it is made. Inside temperatures here are about 2000°F.
Below left: Williams has dipped the glass into the steaming brass container of soapy water and is now rotating it to form a perfectly round shape. Dale Burd holds the previous piece of glass to cool further over an air blower. Burd's glass is only a few minutes older, but has already cooled to transparency. Keith Adkins (*right*) is gathering more glass on a still earlier piece.
Below right: Adkins blocks and re-cools the now larger glass piece. The "block" is a wooden cup, which has just been dipped in water.



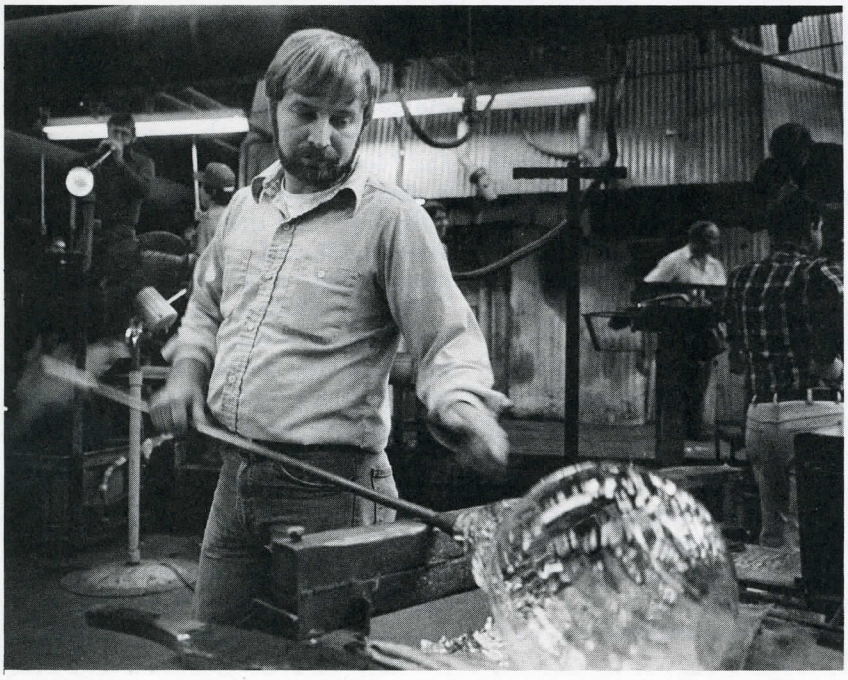


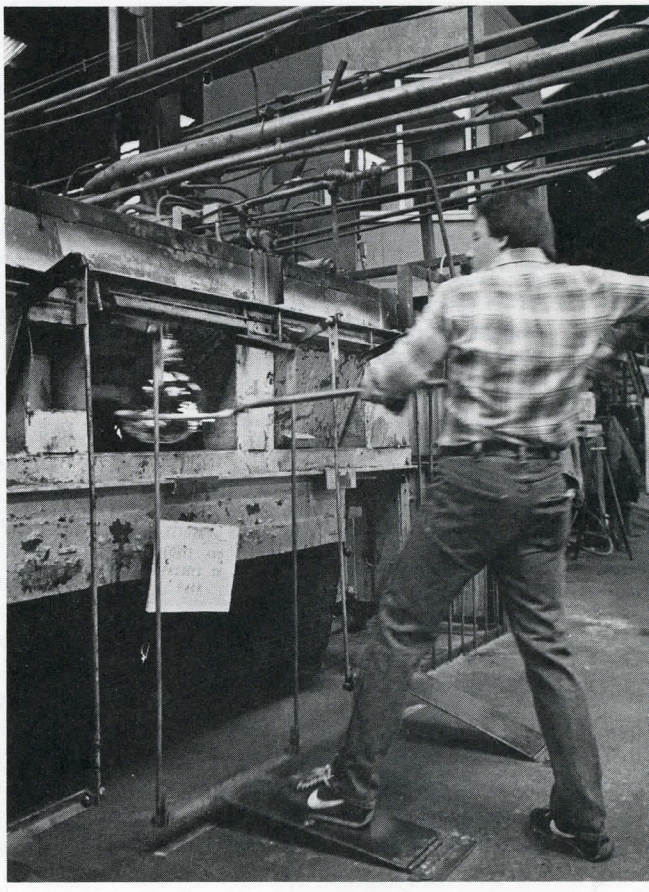




Left: Air is added at every step.
Above: Adkins inserts the glass into its first mold. This spiraled mold gives the piece its final optical pattern.
Below left: Adkins hands the piece to glassblower Doug Chapman.
Below right: Chapman cools the piece before blowing into the mold. A blower judges temperatures by color and long experience.

Above left: The piece enters the mold.
Above right: In a blur of movement, "crack off" man Richard Dillon takes the piece from the mold.
Below left: Dillon quickly cracks off the nearly finished vase. Blower Doug Chapman is already at work on a new piece at left rear.
Below right: In the final step, "carry in" man James Howard transfers the new vase to an annealing oven, or lehr, for a last heating.





Trains lined 10-deep on shelves, tucked into boxes, stacked on the floor, competing for space with records, games, cookie jars, and toy soldiers. Is this any way to run a railroad?

For John Newbraugh, head of the highly successful Newbraugh Brothers Toy Company of Berkeley Springs, it is. Newbraugh's firm customizes toy trains and trucks, silk-screening the customer's logo or slogan on the side of a boxcar or trailer.

"I don't have the complete train because they're very hard to find. It was a flop. The girls didn't want it," said Newbraugh. "It had a white transformer—I do have the white transformer—and it had all pastel-colored cars. There's a lavender hopper and blue caboose and a real odd-shaped yellow boxcar that I'm missing. They're very rare."

"An Obsession"

John Newbraugh of Newbraugh Brothers Toy Company

By Diane Tennant
Photographs by Dennis Tennant

The main office of Newbraugh Brothers Toys is tucked into a corner of the basement of Newbraugh's house, his wooden desk squirreled into a cubbyhole among glass display cases, overlooking his backyard. But the true master of Newbraugh's basement is a massive collection of toy trains crowded onto grocery store shelving and packed away in boxes. He has trains large enough to ride on and small enough to sit in the palm of his hand. The cattle cars line up beside refrigerated boxcars and passenger trains, steam-producing locomotives and a pink girl's locomotive created in 1957.

The pink train is one of Newbraugh's rarer pieces. Girls didn't want it, boys didn't want it, and consequently many of the candy-cotton-pink engines were repainted a conventional black, lost, or destroyed.

John Newbraugh runs his toy company, writes for train magazines, and teaches school days and evenings. All this is enough work to keep him busy six days a week, day and night, 12 months a year.

Newbraugh founded his company in 1974, with the help of brothers Tom and Dan, and cousins Ken and Troy. It was founded on an idea, and blossomed into an international business after a chance meeting at a York, Pennsylvania, Train Collectors Association meeting.

"In 1974 I wanted to have a train car made up for Berkeley Springs for the Bicentennial, and I wrote to Lionel and they wrote back to me and said, 'It's a great idea, do you want 5,000 or 10,000?' I only wanted 100 cars, so I really got into looking to see what it would take to produce one myself," Newbraugh explained.

The very first customized boxcar made by Newbraugh Brothers Toy Company said "Town of Bath*," set with type from the local newspaper office. Several other cars soon followed, along with a growing demand for customized trains. But the time required for designing, producing, and marketing the cars became too great, and Newbraugh decided to seek help. A small sign on his booth at the York train meet did the job. "Help—Silkscreener Wanted," it read, and led Seymour Knight to introduce himself.

"That's the first time Seymour had ever been to a train meet, and he's a full-time silkscreener. He's an industrial plastics printer. It just so happens his hobby's the same as mine," said Newbraugh.

Knight operates the Pleasant Valley Processing Company in Cogan Station, Pennsylvania. Now regarded as an "adopted" Newbraugh brother, he has done all the toy firm's printing

*Officially the town is named Bath, and the post office is Berkeley Springs.

His rolling stock is all down-sized, but John Newbraugh in this photograph looks every inch the railroad tycoon.

since 1978. Amidst orders from IBM and other large corporations, Knight gears up to print "Amos' New and Used Furniture" or other slogans on orders of as few as 48 boxcars.

Newbraugh's customers are not limited to local merchandisers. Every year for the past five years he has designed and printed a car for the Canadian Lionel Collector's Club. Displayed in his glass cases are cars with slogans for San Diego, New York, Hagerstown, and the C&O Canal.

"We seem to have a gap in our printing. We haven't done much for the middle part of the United States—the states around the Mississippi—but we've done lots for California, Nevada, and Canada," Newbraugh noted. "I'm not bragging, but I would say probably 90% of our business has come to us instead of going to them, particularly in the last four or five years." But Newbraugh Brothers Toys is not too big to print a car for the Berkeley Springs Junior High School railroad club or the local Jaycees.

"What sold our early products was an idea," said Newbraugh. "I said I want a car made with Berkeley Springs on it, and I'm sure there's other people out there who would like to have toys printed with something on them other than 'Roadway' with the trucks, for example."

One of Newbraugh's largest orders came from some enterprising people who wanted to run the world's longest model electric train. With 50 locomotives and 1,007 cars printed with Newbraugh's distinctive triangle trademark and the notation "Guinness Book of World Records," they ran the train around an Ohio shopping mall and had their feat listed in the 1982 record book.

"Of course, momentarily they made out, because as soon as they broke the record the price of the cars just went up. Everybody wanted to own one of the cars that was in the record-breaking train," Newbraugh recalled.

Newbraugh Brothers Toys also prints cars on speculation, hoping to come up with an idea that will appeal to collectors. One of the company's biggest speculation sellers was a set printed shortly after the Three Mile Island nuclear plant accident. Three gauges [sizes] of red and white boxcars with a radiation symbol were a hotter item than the near-meltdown of the Pennsylvania plant. A car commemorating the release of the American hostages from Iran and another car saying, "Thank you, Canada," for aiding the escape of seven other Americans, were also popular.

During the 1980 presidential campaign, Newbraugh printed cars with portraits of Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan, along with the Democratic and Republican emblems. He sent a complimentary car to each candidate, and received a thank-you letter from Carter.

"I have the letter back there in the safe from Jimmy, but we never heard anything from Reagan," he said. "That was one of the first jobs we did on speculation. We used to think of an idea, produce it, then go out and sell it."

Newbraugh isn't too proud to admit that he's also had some bad ideas. The West Virginia car, with a cardinal, state flag, state seal, and nickname on the sides, didn't sell well.

Newbraugh keeps a sample of each car printed, including best sellers and slow movers. Also in the display is a shiny gold-painted car, a present from Knight to Newbraugh to commemorate the printing of the 10,000th car.

"It was intended as a hobby and I still would say it would have to be a hobby more than a business. I mean, I haven't tendered my resignation to the Morgan County school system yet," he noted.

During the day, Newbraugh teaches alternative education, special classes for students who can't adjust to regular high school classes. At night, he teaches adult education classes, a job he has held for 13 years. On Sundays, he has accumulated 27 years of perfect attendance in church, and he is a regular columnist for train magazines, writing about the history and lore of train collecting.

At that, he is an expert. Most of his

Above: The scales vary on the cars in John Newbraugh's collection, but they all make him look like a friendly giant.
Below: The Newbraugh boys took a serious interest in model trains at an early age. This family snapshot is of John with younger brother Dan.

basement is devoted to a collection of trains, which he plays with as enthusiastically as the neighborhood children. "If the trains were meant to sit on the shelves back there, they'd have had square wheels on them," Newbraugh pointed out. "I do want to run them. I did run them down at the old house. We had a house downtown which we lived in right after we were married. It had 17 rooms in it. I did have them running everywhere down there.

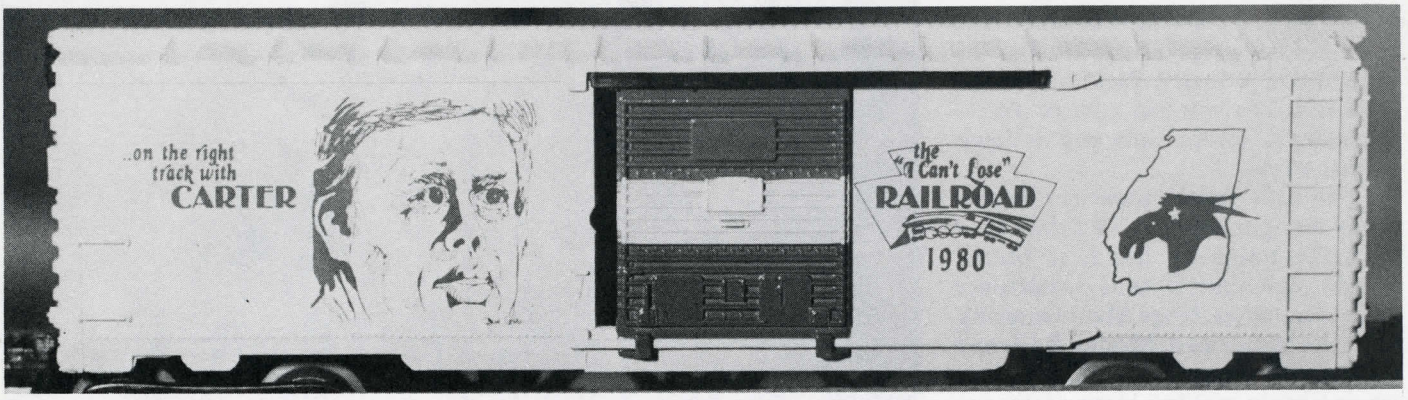
"From Thanksgiving to Christmas this basement just buzzes. Plus, I have an outdoor railroad that actually runs. I eventually hope to run it down through my backyard and park it in here."

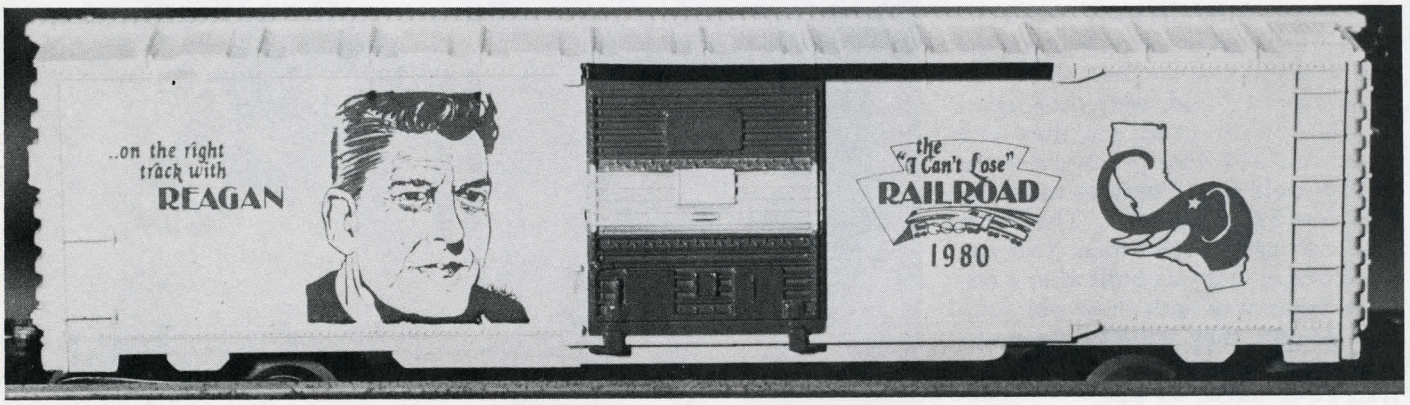
The train collection is a big hit with the local children, who flock to the basement along with Newbraugh's own daughters, Sarah and Kate. He mourned the fact that many of the trains would not be ready to run for Christmas 1982 because, five years after moving to a new house, he still hasn't managed to unpack all the boxes.

One train runs every Christmas, no matter where the family is, or how deeply the model is packed away. It's the first train Newbraugh ever owned, a gift from his grandmother in 1951. He framed the thank-you letter he wrote to her, and it hangs on his basement wall. "It probably isn't worth $10 but it was my very first set. I set it up every year. There's probably three dozen more like it on the other side of the basement in boxes, but that's the one," he said.

Newbraugh tries to center his collection on the different manufacturers of toy trains. Much of his collection came from yard sales and another hobby—auctioneering.

Picking up a train from the shelf, he explained, "There are a lot of people with more Lionel than I have, a lot of people with more American Flyer than I have, but this, for example, is from





Above: Newbraugh Brothers made up special "I Can't Lose" Railroad cars for the 1980 presidential election. John keeps a note from loser Jimmy Carter, acknowledging his gift car, but never heard from the winner.

Below: Three Mile Island cars in three scales were a big seller for the toy company following the near meltdown.

a separate company, long defunct. The train industry was a little bit like the automotive industry. Back during the '20's and '30's you had a lot of different manufacturers, now you're down to just a few.

"The little independent companies really intrigue me as to why they tried to make trains in the first place." Newbraugh himself owns two defunct train companies, Hoge Manufacturing and the American Model Railroad Company. He hopes to eventually tool up and begin making Hoge again, using designs from the early 1900's.

The Hoge cars in his collection stand out, so distinctive are their shiny, unusual shapes. "God, were they ugly," he said. "I mean to tell you they were as far removed from prototype trains as you could get." Pointing to an engine close by, he explained, "The Union Pacific actually ran this train. That was a prototype, that was built after a real train. Same way with these old standard gauges, they actually ran trains like that on the real railroad. But that stuff Hoge made, no way."

One of the oldest pieces in his collection is a Weeden Dart. It ran off live steam, produced by pouring alcohol in the tender and striking a match to it.

Another line sought by collectors, and found in Newbraugh's basement, is Fandor, produced by two brothers in Germany. Produced later in the United States, the name was rearranged to become Dorfan. Newbraugh even modeled the name of his toy company after the old-style manufacturers, many of whom were brothers.

Threading his way among the many shelves, he stopped at a set of cars, all identical to the casual eye. "Here's the kind of thing that train nuts get into. Here are the refrigerated boxcars. They're all essentially the same car, but there's little variations. That's 3462, 3472, 6482, and they essentially all do the same thing—the man comes out the door and sets the milk cans on the platform—but collectors really get strung out trying to get variations."

Moving on down the line, he again paused by a group of identical cars. "Probably my favorite Lionel car is this one. It's the Lionel cattle car. It works off vibrations. The cattle come out and go round the little ramp and in the other side.

"If you'll notice the number—3656—that's my telephone number. I used to have a whole string and I probably will when I set it up again. That's really neat when they all pull up at one place and you hit the button and all the cattle come out and go around back in the other side."

John Newbraugh's collecting interests range well beyond toy trains. Here he sits before a vintage FDR campaign poster.

One car he's particularly proud of is an orange Smith-Miller boxcar nearly two feet long. "Probably the granddaddy of them all is the Smith-Miller boxcar," he says. "That's the only train piece that company made. It sold for $40 in 1950—that was way beyond the market. You could buy a complete set of Lionel trains for that—track, transformer, and the works."

John Newbraugh is proud of his collecting, which doesn't stop at model trains. Stashed in other parts of the house are a record collection, a phonograph and music box collection, and the entire contents of a hardware store he purchased, stored in the same position it held in the store and left, he says, "to age."

"I'm 34 years old now and I've been collecting, I would say, for 25 of them. I have a newspaper article when I was eight years old, I entertained a Kiwanis Club with my old record collection," said Newbraugh.

"I was fortunate in that I had a family that would put up with me collecting. I guess hoarding, collecting, whatever you want to call it, it's an obsession."

He looked around his basement, at the stacks of boxes and layers of shelves. "I know there's a lot of collections larger than this, but I've enjoyed putting it together. It's not the acquisition, it's the fun I've had putting it here."

Above: Beverly Cotton captures the exuberant spirit of Vandalia. Photo by Rick Lee.
Below: A five-banjo band is a rare sight, except at Vandalia awards night. These are banjo contest winners. Photo by Rick Lee.

Vandalia Gathering

Memorial Day Weekend is a traditional homecoming time in the mountains, a time for family reunions and clan gatherings. In recent years another type of gathering, larger but in the same spirit, has taken place in West Virginia. People come from all across the state to Charleston for Vandalia, the statewide folk festival. Vandalia Gathering has become a time for renewal of ties and a common celebration of our state's rich folk tradition.

This year will be no exception. The seventh Vandalia Gathering is scheduled for May 27-29, at the Cultural Center and on the surrounding grounds of the State Capitol. Recognizing the broad diversity of West Virginia, Vandalia will showcase traditional mountain culture as well as our black and ethnic heritage.

Plans were incomplete when the spring GOLDENSEAL went to press in late winter, but the festival will again include a wide variety of stage performances, music contests, dancing, craft demonstrations, and dozens of lively jam sessions throughout the weekend. Early suggestions included the possibility of a freestyle clogging competition for the first time. It is also expected that storytelling, a popular event at the Sixth Vandalia, will be repeated this year.

Vandalia gets underway each year with a Friday evening opening concert in the theater of the Cultural Center. Saturday and Sunday feature two full days of indoor and outdoor festivities, topped off with two more evening theater programs. Fiddle and banjo contests begin at midday, and run all afternoon both days. The contests attract master musicians from throughout the region, with winners presented in the evening each day.

Vandalia Gathering is sponsored by the Department of Culture and History, and is open to the public at no charge. Photographs on these pages are from Vandalia 1982.

Left: Polka king Frank Yankovic brought dancing music to the Great Hall of the Cultural Center on Saturday afternoon. Photo by Rick Lee.
Above: Mike Barker on stage. Photo by Rick Lee.
Below: Vandalia Gathering remains a family affair. These folks are taking in the outdoor fiddle competition. Photo by Rick Lee.
Above right: The twin fiddles of Mack Samples and Joe Dobbs provided square dance music. Photo by Michael Keller.
Below right: Crafts are an important part of Vandalia. This is chairmaker Jeff Shriver of Alderson. Photo by Michael Keller.

"Are You Sure He's Dead?"

Stories from Vandalia 1982

At last year's Vandalia Gathering a new feature was introduced, daily storytelling sessions. The 1982 sessions were organized to commemorate master storyteller Riley Wilson on the 30th anniversary of his death, and also as an experiment to see if old-fashioned talk could hold the attention of festival audiences in this day of electronic entertainment.

As it turned out, the sessions drew large crowds throughout the weekend. People gathered to hear tales of privy diggers, preachers, bears, talking—even opera singing—dogs, and other notable West Virginians. The host storytellers were Joe McHugh of Beckley, Bonnie Collins of Doddridge County, and George Daugherty of Charleston, with amateurs brought onto the back porch stage as they volunteered from the audience. By Sunday the experiment was judged to be a success, and storytelling is expected to become a regular part of future Vandalias.

We've transcribed the first few tales for publication here. George Daugherty opened the 1982 storytelling event with some reflections about the importance of the storyteller:

George Daugherty: I think that storytellers are important. So let me say, if I may just for a moment, something about the role of a storyteller.

You know, in America we don't pay homage to the older folks like they do in the Orient, or even in Europe. Over in Ireland, when the storyteller came all the kids were tickled to death, and they'd gather around to hear him. He'd be given the best seat at the table. He'd be cut the biggest piece of beef at suppertime. He'd be given the best bed in the house.

The reason was, they recognized that what these storytellers do is carry on the legend and the traditions and the historical facts. They tell the kids stuff about their families that they needed to know. Those were the days of oral history, when that was the only way it could be passed on. So the old storyteller was a very valued and honored man. And it's kind of a shame that anymore, because we've got books and television and things to distract us, we don't get to hear the storytellers.

A story I tell to illustrate that is a little story about Sam Chilton. Sam Chilton died here seven years ago at age 92, and we're still telling stories about him. The story is about the lady who talked to Sam one day when Sam was in the bar at the Charleston Press Club.

She said, "Sam Chilton, you come up here every day to this Press Club, at 10:00 in the morning, and loaf around all day long, and then you close the place down at 2 a.m. the next morning. Don't you just get sick and tired of sitting around and doing nothing?" Sam looked her right in the eye—Sam was a wise gentleman—and he says, "Madam, you don't quit just because you're tired!"

Now, Sam knew that what he was doing was important. He knew he was worthwhile. That lady didn't know it. She was very busy minding everybody's business but her own and seeing to it that everybody worked and did the things you're supposed to do, and overlooking the good things in life. See? I'd much rather be Sam Chilton, or Riley Wilson, than that kind, misguided lady who could not see the good things around her like these storytellers do.

A good storyteller improves on his stories. In other words, he'll take a story he's heard and he'll work on it a little bit. And the stories get better and better.

Sam Chilton told me an example of Riley doing this—the story about the young couple who went into the courthouse to get a marriage license. The clerk was a little suspicious—"Ain't you awful young to be getting a marriage license? Are you sure you got your parents' consent?" And the boy said, "Well, what do you think the old man standing in the corner with a shotgun is doing?"

Now Riley played an improvement on that story—this was Sam's example of how Riley could improve on it: When the clerk said "Aren't you a little too young to be getting a marriage license, are you sure you got your parents' consent?"—Riley had the boy say, "You don't think the old feller over in the corner with the shotgun came in here to get a hunting license, do you?"

Somebody over in Virginia wrote Riley a letter and asked him to contribute to an old family graveyard over there, someplace in some little town in Virginia. And Riley wrote them a very flowery letter back and he said, "Well," he said, "the fact of the matter is I don't think I care to contribute." They wanted to build a fence around this graveyard. He says, "I don't think I care to contribute to a fence around that graveyard." He said, "You see, everybody that's outside doesn't want to go in, and those that are inside can't get out. I don't reckon we need a fence."

Bonnie Collins: I was brought up in a very strict religious home. In fact, when they had what we called protracted meetings, the preacher would bring all five or six of his kids—he'd usually have five or six—and he'd stay in our house for two weeks. They'd stay until the vittles ran out or the meeting closed, whichever came first.

So one time I remember we were running low on wood, and my mother wanted to be polite, and she kept saying, "Stand back and let the preacher up to the fire." Well, I stook back until I froze. So finally I went to bed. And

George Daugherty tells a big one at Vandalia '82. Photo by Michael Keller.

after I got warmed up real good I went to sleep and I had a dream. My dream—well, it was a horrible dream, you'd say it was a nightmare.

When morning came I came in through the kitchen and there's that preacher eating hotcakes like someone taking pills, you know—"gluck, gluck, gluck." He said, "How are you this morning, young lady?" (That was in my tender youth when I was a lady.) He said, "How are you this morning, young lady?" And I said, "I'm fine, but," I said, "I had this horrible dream last night. I dreamed I was in this hot place and there was an old man with a pitchfork chasing me around." He said, "Why, you know what that was? That was hell." I said to myself, "It sure was!" And he said, "Well, tell me, what was it like down there?" I said, "Just like it is in West Virginia. They just kept saying, 'Stand back and let the preacher up to the fire!' "

Joe McHugh: When you've been away from home for a long time, you want to find out how things have been while you've been away. So, this fellow's been away over a month now visiting and he came back home, the first person he ran into was his neighbor about a mile from his house there. And he said, "How are you, Harry, how you doing?" "Oh, I'm all right," he says. "You been gone a good bit." "Any news around home?" "News? No, I can't think of anything," says Harry. "Well, there's gotta be something happening in a month's time." "Well, whoa, come to think of it, your dog died." Said, "My dog died? Well, how in the world did that happen?" Said, "Terrible thing. Got into some burnt horseflesh and it just killed him."

"Burnt horseflesh? Now, how in the world did he get hold of burnt horseflesh?" "When your barn burned down them horses couldn't get out. Your dog ate that burnt horseflesh . . . " "My barn burned down? For goodness sakes, man, how'd that happen?" "Well, it started from the house. When it was on fire the wind blew some of the sparks over and caught your barn on fire."

"My house burned down? Goodness gracious, how did that happen?" "Well, I think it's one of the candles fell over, see, and caught the house on fire." Said, "Candles? Well, I never let candles in my house. What were candles doing there?" Neighbor said, "Candles around the coffin. You see . . . " "Coffin! Well, who died?" Said, "Your mother-in-law. When your wife ran off with that traveling salesman it

Right: Jim Costa was another featured storyteller. He takes most of his material from his native Summers County. Photo by Michael Keller. *Middle:* Joe McHugh told bear stories, dead dog stories, and many others. Photo by Michael Keller. *Far right:* Bonnie Collins swears that her Doddridge County stories are all true. Photo by Michael Keller.

just broke her heart and killed her and the candles from her coffin burned your house up and that caught the barn on fire and the horses burned and the dog got in there and ate that burnt horseflesh and it killed him—but other than that there's nothing new around here."

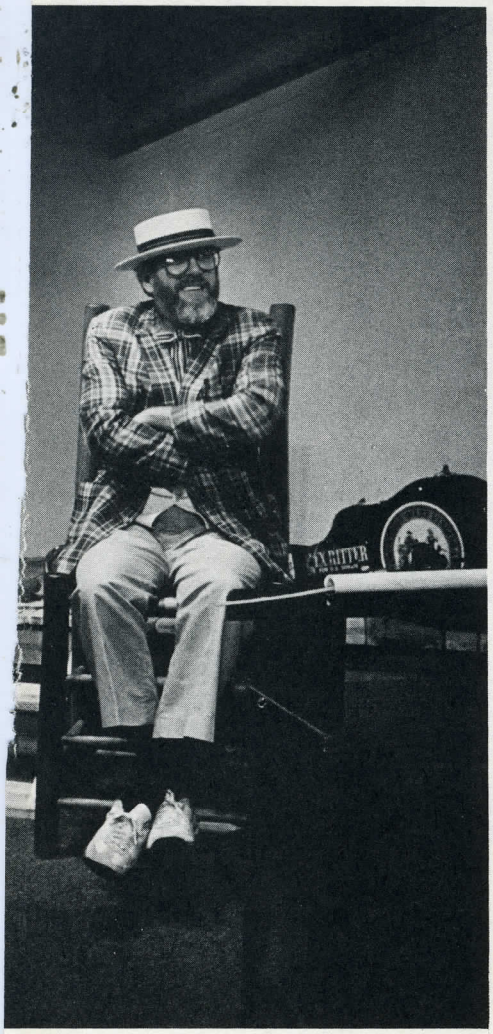
Bonnie: There's a man in Doddridge County where I live, well, he's kind of a character. He lives right in my neighborhood, and I hope they never make him clean up his yard, because it makes my house look good. He lives up on the hillside and his front porch is high off the ground. He was raising hogs under there. So the county sanitarian came out and said, "Well, Mr. So-and-so"—wouldn't dare tell you his name, 'cause this is true—he said, "Mr. So-and-so, you can't raise hogs under your front porch." "Why not?" He said, "Well, it's not sanitary." "What do you mean, sanitary?" He said, "Well, it isn't healthy." He says, "Well, hell. I ain't lost a hog yet!"

Joe: Old John, he found out pretty soon when you live back on one of these farms you can't make a living, that's why nobody else wants the farm. And after a while he decided to get a job—and this is down in Raleigh County where I come from, I tell a lot of stories from there—so he got a job at about the only place you can get good work down there, and that's in coal mining. And he's a Yankee. Some folks didn't mind that too much. In fact, he was the kind of fella who got along well with everybody, so that didn't make any difference.

But the problem was, the fellas on his section where he did all his work were all avid bear hunters. Now that's what they like to do. Had a little place up in Pocahontas County where they'd go off on weekends and hunt bears. So every lunch hour he'd be sitting there with his round dinner pail there like all the other miners, well, one miner and the next miner'd tell bear stories, about where they'd killed this bear and that bear and this funny thing and that, and of course he never had anything to say.

So after about two weeks, one lunchtime came around and he said, "You know, I been thinking, I did go bear hunting once." And they all kind of looked at him. He said, "It was up in Maine, up there," he says, "New England. I shot a bear at 400 yards with five shots, but I got him down." And he waited. And they all said, "That's a good story! Did you really do that?" You see, they all knew he was lying. But they kind of encouraged him. They liked the fact that he wanted to get in the conversation. So he said, "Really!" He said, "Oh," he said, "I remember that like it was yesterday."

Well, next lunch hour, of course, he shot a bear at 100 yards in New York state, had one bullet go between the eyes. Oh, that must have been a shot,



they told him, yessir, and they're all kind of winking at each other. And after a few weeks he was killing 'em with knives, and with his bare hands, and all kinds of things. He'd lost all sense of proportion, you know. They never let on.

But unfortunately, now, one Friday, just about time to get ready to quit work, one of these boys says, "What you doing this weekend, John?" "Oh, I ain't got a thing to do." "Good, you're going bear hunting with us!" "Oh," he said to himself, "bear hunting!" He was scared to death of a bear. But here he'd been telling them all those big tales and now they had him stuck—he'd told them he didn't have any plans for the weekend. He said, "All right, I guess I could come." They said, "All right." And they all made sure that they took him to his house to get his things, so he wouldn't get "sick" all of a sudden. And they all took him up in Pocahontas County and they settled in, laid down there—they had a little one-room cabin with about six beds in it. Well, all night that poor fellow tossed and turned and all he could think of was bears, and big teeth and things like that, you know. He was just a nervous wreck. Finally, about 5:00 in the morning, he slipped out of bed and put on his shoes—they're all sleeping away there—and he stole out. He figured he'd go out and hide in the brush someplace, then along about evening he'd come in and say he didn't have any luck at all.

But just about 100 yards from the cabin, in the first light of day, he ran into the biggest black bear he ever thought he'd see. And that bear was hungry! He got to sniffing and he thought that was a good breakfast and started for the fellow. He turned around and ran back to the cabin—the bear's chasing him! Oh, it was just a couple of feet behind him! He was too close to make it through the door, so he just kind of started running, around and around that cabin, and that bear just snapping and chasing him the whole time. After about three times, he was about give out, and he figured if I don't try now I'm a dead man. So he lunged up to the door, and he got the door open but he fell down on the porch. And that bear was so close behind, he leapt so hard he jumped clean over that fellow, into the room, the men all waking up in there, and there's a big black bear in the room with 'em! And that city fellow, he thought quick, and he said, "Here boys, you skin this one. I'll go back and get another one!"

George: I was born in Mannington, but I was raised up at Elkview and a lot of pretty interesting things were happening there, like in all communities. There was one old gentleman who had about 10 boys and he decided to educate the last one. And so he sent him off on the B&O, put him on at Blue Creek, sent him up to Morgan-

Lew Baxter of Charleston was one of several storytellers to volunteer from the audience. Photo by Michael Keller.

town to school. Gave him about $50 to last all semester, figured that would take care of all the expense money.

The young guy was pretty resourceful. He wrote the old gentleman and he said, "You know, Dad, they got a school up here in Morgantown to teach dogs to talk. Not all dogs can do that, but I've explained our dog John to 'em, and they seem to think that John has a lot of promise, from what they hear about him. And I believe if you send John up here on the B&O, and about $100, which it would take to enter him, why, they think John would be a good candidate. We'd have a talking dog." Well, the old man got to thinking how that would be pretty big around the store, you know, so he gives him to the conductor and gives the conductor $100 to turn over to the boy when he gets up there. So John goes to college.

About a month goes by, and the $100 is gone, and the kid writes home and says, "Dad, they said John's one of the most promising students they ever had." And he says, "As a matter of fact, not only can he talk, he's getting real fluent. But he's a good singer. He's got a wonderful voice. So I believe if you'd send another $100—he needs some books, he needs a little more tuition, and all that stuff, singing lessons—well, we'd have a marvel. We could probably get him on some of those amateur shows." So the old man, he gets very excited, he sends off another $100.

About another month goes by and the kid writes home and he says, "You know, John has such a good voice, they think he's an opera singer. They say he's a natural. And of course, he's gonna have to take some languages to learn Spanish and Italian and all that. I think if you'd send another 100 bucks up here, we could get him in the language school and we'd have an opera singer on our hands." So the old man, of course, he gets off $100 right quick.

Then between-semesters is coming, it's time for the young man to come home to the old gentleman, and bring John home to show the boys at the store how he can sing opera. Of course, the old gentleman meets the train at Blue Creek, the boy gets off the train, and he says, "Good lord, where's John? Get him out here and let's take him down to the store."

The young man says, "I got some bad news for you." He says, "John did real well. They said he was the best speech student they ever had. His vocabulary was phenomenal. Of course, singing, he was just priceless. And he was set to play the lead in 'Carmen.' But," he says, "a terrible thing happened. What happened was, after he learned to talk, and then to sing and all that, he kind of got a big ego, and he developed this horrible character defect." He said, "He started lying."

The old man said, "Good lord, we got $300 in him. A lot of opera singers probably tell lies." He says, "You got to overlook a little something when a dog's talented like that, you know."

The old boy's in trouble, and he says, "Well, Dad, as a matter of fact, it got to where I just had to shoot him." The old man says, "Shoot him! Good lord! With $300 in him, an opera singer and all that?" He says, "What do you mean, you shot him?" The boy says, "Well, he got to lying." Says, "You can't put up with things like that. He even got to claiming that he'd caught you and the hired girl out behind the barn!"

And the old gentleman said, "Are you sure he's dead?"

In This Issue

DAVID L. ANDERSON, a Buckhannon native, studied at West Virginia Wesleyan College, Glenville State College, Beaver Community College, and Triangle Institute for Professional Photographers in Pittsburgh. He worked for the Charleston division of Chromalloy Photographic Industries of St. Louis, Missouri, before opening his own portrait and commercial studio in Buckhannon. This is his first appearance in GOLDENSEAL.

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.

RICK LEE and MICHAEL KELLER are staff photographers for the Department of Culture and History.

SUSAN LEFFLER grew up in Pennsylvania and graduated from American University in Washington, D.C. She has worked in Washington and San Francisco, and as news director for radio station WRON in Greenbrier County. For the past three years she has worked for West Virginia Public Radio as an independent producer funded by the Humanities Foundation of West Virginia. This is her second article for GOLDENSEAL.

MICHAEL MEADOR was born in Hinton and grew up in Princeton. He attended Concord College and Marshall University, graduating with a degree in sociology. He now works in Madison for the Boone County Community Action Program. His last contribution to GOLDENSEAL was the series of articles on Mercer Healing Springs Resort, which appeared in the Fall 1982 issue.

GENE OCHSENDORF grew up in the Weirton-Steubenville area and, after graduating from Ohio State University, taught American History in the Bucyrus, Ohio, school system. He moved back to West Virginia in 1978 and currently resides in Elkins where he is the director of the Randolph County Sheltered Workshop. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

JOSEPH PLATANIA is a Huntington native who earned his B.A. and M.A. at Marshall University. He has worked for the West Virginia Department of Welfare and as a claims examiner with the Veterans Administration, and also as a part-time instructor in the political science department at Marshall. In the five years since he began freelance writing, he has published articles in the *Huntington Herald-Dispatch*, the *Charleston Gazette*, and several local journals. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

DON RICE, born in Bridgeport, Harrison County, has been a resident of Randolph County since his early years. He received his B.A. from Davis and Elkins College and his M.A. from WVU. His teaching career began in Pocahontas County and, after a stint with the Army National Guard, he has since served as a teacher and administrator in the Randolph County schools. An officer of the Randolph County Historical Society for nearly a quarter-century, Rice has contributed periodically to local and state historical publications.

LEROY G. SCHULTZ, who says he spent most of his 1930's childhood in a barn in rural Missouri, has lived in Morgantown since 1968 where he is a professor of social work at WVU. Schultz is West Virginia's only "barnographer," and is currently preparing two books on international agricultural architecture. He contributed an earlier article on barns to the April-September 1978 GOLDENSEAL.

DENNIS TENNANT, a seventh-generation Monongalian countian, graduated *cum laude* from West Virginia University. He served as a photo intern at the *Charleston Daily Mail*, worked as staff photographer for the *Morgantown Dominion-Post*, and is now with the Associated Press. He has won a number of awards for his photos, most recently from the West Virginia Press Association for sports and feature photography. His latest photos for GOLDENSEAL, which appeared in the Fall '82 issue, accompanied his wife's article on Bing Keller of Preston County.

DIANE CASTO TENNANT, a native of Ripley, Jackson County, and wife of photographer Dennis Tennant, graduated *cum laude* from West Virginia University in 1978 with a degree in journalism and a minor in wildlife management. She has been employed as a news reporter for the *Raleigh Register* in Beckley and the *Parkersburg News*, and now works for the *Morgantown Dominion-Post*. In 1982 she received a West Virginia Press Association award for newswriting under deadline pressure. Her most recent work for GOLDENSEAL, an interview with Preston County's Bing Keller, appeared in the Fall '82 magazine.

NOEL W. TENNEY, a native of Upshur County, earned his B.S. in art education from Concord College, his M.A.T. at West Virginia Wesleyan College, and is currently a Ph.D. candidate at Pennsylvania State University. He has taught visual arts for the past 13 years in West Virginia public schools and at Penn State, and is now writing about the historical aspect of crafts in Appalachia. This is his first article for GOLDENSEAL.

M. A. WHITEMAN, born and raised in New Martinsville, Wetzel County, is descended from the founding families of St. Joseph Settlement. She attended the Elliott School of Business in Wheeling and now works as corporate secretary for Magnolia Distributing Co., Inc. She and her husband, Raymond Gene, live near Middlebourne, in Tyler County.

DOUG YARROW has lived in West Virginia since 1969, and has taught photography at Big Creek High School in McDowell County since 1978. His work has appeared in many publications, including a *Newsweek* cover in 1978. His last work for GOLDENSEAL appeared in the Winter 1982 magazine, to which he contributed the photos of Charlie Blevins of Mingo County's Red Robin Inn.

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