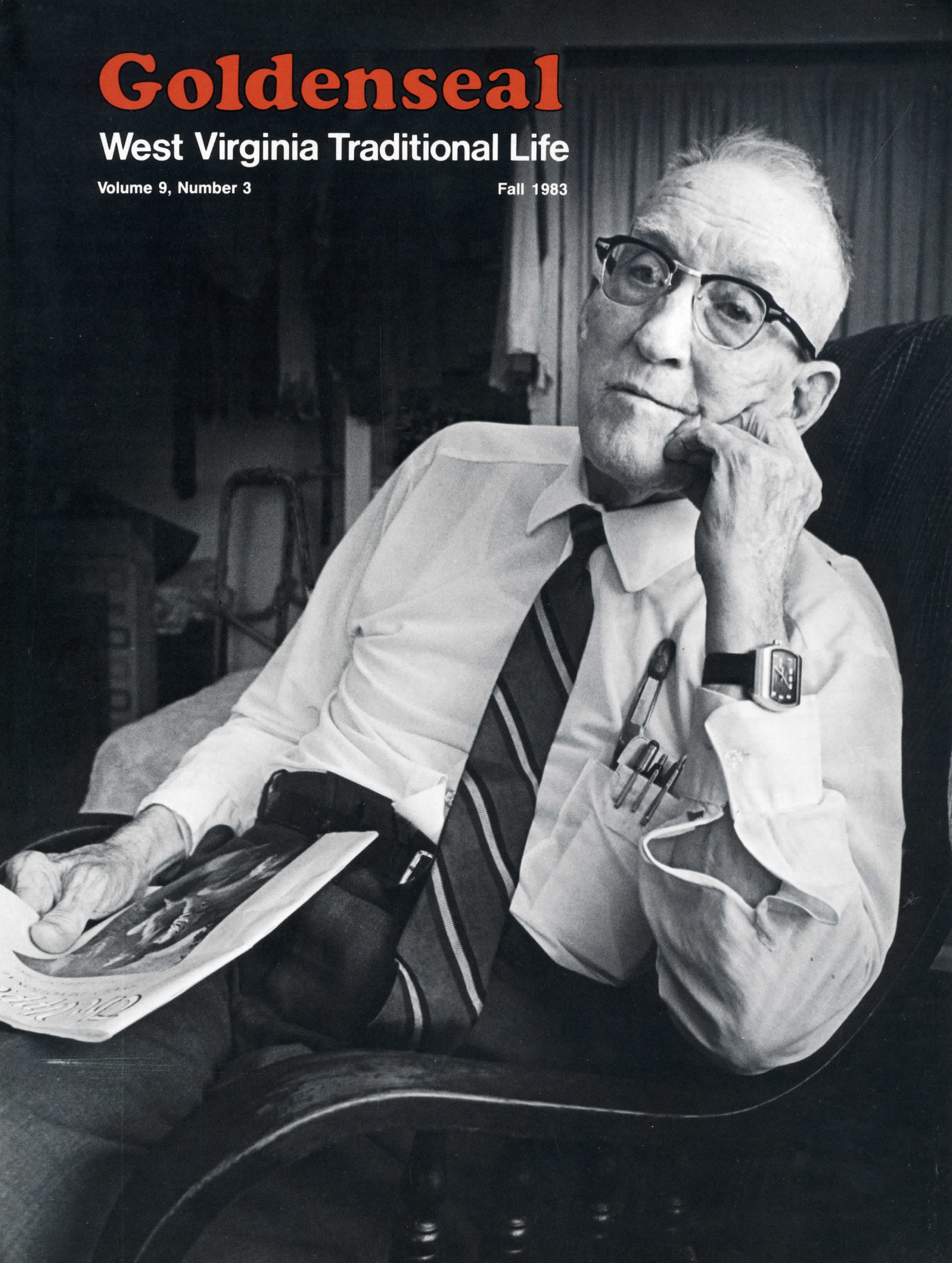
Goldenseal

West Virginia Traditional Life

Volume 9, Number 3 Fall 1983



From the Editor: Renewal Time

It's time to renew your voluntary subscription to GOLDENSEAL, or to begin one for the first time.

You'll be receiving a letter soon, reminding you of that. The letter will go out to everyone on our mailing list as of this issue, and we hope that readers will respond as generously as in past years.

I labored over that letter off and on all summer, for I figure it's the single most important thing I write each year. GOLDENSEAL's survival depends on the financial support of its readers, so I want the letter to be as persuasive as possible without being nagging.

Considering its importance, I suppose it is ironic that I'm never sure of just what exactly to say in the annual voluntary subscription letter. Any letter should state its business right away, so I put the renewal reminder right up front, on the top line, as I have in this editorial. An appeal for financial support is not a social letter, and I think readers appreciate that point as well as I do. Beating around the bush is not likely to help us.

After stating our reason for writing comes the tricky business of building our case—of telling you why you should send your money to GOLDENSEAL, in other words. Certainly, our *need* for your support has to be emphasized. While the Department of Culture and History remains firmly behind us and will continue to subsidize the magazine, the Department can no longer pick up the full tab. Voluntary contributions must make up the difference. It's as simple as that.

The best way for me to make that point in the short space of a once-a-year letter was to recall our shaky condition of a couple of years ago. We were in real trouble then. The mailing list had been "frozen" several times, causing endless headaches here at the office and frustration for prospective new readers, and some issues were delayed for weeks for lack of postage.

Voluntary subscription money pulled us out of that crunch. For the past two years we've been able to deliver your magazine on time, and we've reopened the mailing list to new readers. Perhaps most important, we've been able to get our minds back on our real work here, which is to produce the best magazine we can. Money problems will never be completely behind us, but your support allows us to concentrate more on the content of GOLDENSEAL and worry less about simply paying the bills. If we've been able to improve the magazine recently, that's the main reason for it.

Of course, I noted in the letter that we can't rest on the fundraising accomplishments of the past two years. This GOLDENSEAL starts us into the new fiscal year—financially, the state government year begins in the summer—and last year's money is spent. All of it. We must have your support again this year, and will need it in each of the years to come.

The letter you'll receive includes a coupon, with your mailing label already affixed, and a postpaid return envelope for your convenience. There also is a coupon in this magazine, if you prefer to use that or if you want to add new names to our mailing list. GOLDENSEAL voluntary subscriptions have become popular Christmas gifts, and we'll be pleased to send a card if you ask.

The letter runs only a few paragraphs, and some things had to be left unsaid. Unlike many fundraising letters, it doesn't say much about the "product" being promoted, for example. Everyone receiving the appeal has seen GOLDENSEAL, and I hope the magazine speaks for itself.

My letter does briefly mention the variety of articles published from all over West Virginia—from the Southern Coalfields to the Northern Panhandle, and from Berkeley Springs to Huntington, in the past four issues alone. We can't feature every part of the state in every issue, but we do cover a lot of ground. If you haven't read about your neighbors in GOLDENSEAL yet, chances are you will soon.

There is also little said in the letter about the workings of the voluntary subscription plan itself, since I imagine that after two years most readers are already familiar with the idea. For those who aren't, I prefer the description I recently heard from a reader: This person, in speaking to a friend unacquainted with the magazine, said that GOLDENSEAL took subscriptions on the "honor system."

For us, the attraction of such a system is that it involves minimal bookkeeping. We don't have to add an expensive circulation department to monitor expiration dates and send out bills and reminders the year round. For readers, this system means that you'll never be bothered by such bills and reminders—nobody will dun you, for there's no one here to do it. Every dollar you contribute goes directly into the production of GOLDENSEAL, and none of it has to be paid for an extra staff person to keep track of your own money.

Under the voluntary subscription plan we can also continue sending GOLDENSEAL to those unable to donate money at present. This includes in particular many older readers on limited incomes, some of whom have already generously contributed their own life experiences as stories for the magazine. That kind of support is priceless, and without it we'd be out of business as surely as without financial support. Our mission is to document West Virginia's traditional ways, and we can't do that without the help of older West Virginians.

We also understand that others may be hard pressed to pay for voluntary subscriptions in the present economy. With that in mind we've kept the suggested contribution amount to $10, for the third year in a row. We gratefully accept less—or more—and in the past have received checks ranging from $1 to $200. The important thing is personally to decide what GOLDENSEAL is worth to you and then send what you can, when you can.

The letter, incidentally, will automatically go out to everyone on our computerized mailing list, including those who have already renewed their voluntary subscriptions recently. If you're one of those, please ignore the letter and accept our thanks. If not, we hope to hear from you soon.

Ken Sullivan

Published by the
STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA

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Governor

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

Printed by Watkins Printing Co.

Goldenseal

West Virginia Traditional Life

Volume 9, Number 3 Fall 1983

COVER: Bob McGuffin looks back on a long life in Point Pleasant, including exciting years as a river diver. "And Never Learned to Swim" begins on page 15. Photo by Rick Lee.

PHOTOS: James Balow, Reuben Fernandez, Carl Fleischhauer, Michael Keller, Rick Lee, Loar Studio, Arthur Prichard, Ron Rittenhouse.

Letters from Readers

Ormond Beach, Florida
June 19, 1983
Editor:

Enclosed is our check for $10 to help defray expenses in publishing your priceless magazine, GOLDENSEAL.

Both of us are native West Virginians, out of New Martinsville, Wetzel County. I taught in the New Martinsville elementary schools from 1925 through 1943. Paul worked in the southwest for 21 years and we moved back home, where I taught again until retirement.

What amazes us is that even after living in West Virginia and later keeping in close contact with home folks, now that we've found your magazine we are learning things about West Virginia that we had never heard of before!

I was taking classes from Fairmont College, West Liberty, and some toward the end of my teaching career (in the 1970's) at WVU, and I still must have had my head in the sand!

To all of this new awareness about West Virginia is the added enjoyment of finding such interesting things with which we can relate. Just out of school, Paul worked with the C&P Telephone Co. and helped install poles and lines along the upper counties and back toward Sutton and points between. Much of your material brings all those memories rushing back to him.

Although we've been located in Florida for a while, we make at least a May and an October trip to Wetzel County, with stops to see friends and relatives at several points in the state. We have also been working with Wetzel County Genealogical Society's members on their current project of publishing a new Wetzel County history, to be published in December 1983.
Sincerely,
Paul H. and Helen P. Westerman

Blevins Reunion

Grand Chain, Illinois
July 12, 1983
Editor:

Enclosed is my check for the coming year of GOLDENSEAL. I was just recently introduced to the magazine, by cousin Charlie Blevins. I find it wonderful that some of the culture and traditional life of our state is being recorded and preserved for the younger generation.

I'm a native West Virginia girl, now living in the farm belt of southern Illinois. My husband and I, along with our son Tom, grow beans, corn, cotton, and wheat.

It's a good life, but my heart is still in West Virginia. I find myself traveling back each Fourth of July to attend the Blevins Family Reunion. It's a wonderful time we have, of games, dancing, music, singing, and the most fun of all is the laughter and talking over old times. I'm sure the friendliest people of the whole world live in West Virginia.

Friendly and laughing ways, a heritage handed us from our Irish and Scottish ancestors, have prepared us to overcome any disaster. This was proven to me when I saw my family, at Nolan, come through the 1977 flood with nothing left but their good humor and a high spirit of determination to fight back. Our family reunion was bigger than ever that year and the fun and laughter just as great, with the words, "Well, you can't take it with you," often repeated.

Yes, I'm proud of my West Virginia heritage. Please keep the good work going.
Sincerely,
Geraldine Poley

Glen Jean

Catawba, Virginia
June 20, 1983
Editor:

I am enclosing my $10 check for the wonderful magazine you print. It brings back a lot of old memories. I lived in Glen Jean when I was a little tot in 1923. I remember some of the names very well, especially Benny Vento and a Lewis Grant. I went to school with these boys. I also remember the old gentleman, Bill McKell (Volume 8, Number 3, Fall 1982).

We lived in Sun, and the old store building was a sight to see. We moved from Sun to Eccles right after the 1926 explosion. That explosion was not mentioned in your article. In 1929, we moved to Summers County, near Hinton, so just about everything that you write about in Fayette, Summers, and Raleigh counties brings back a lot of memories.
Thank you very much,
W. W. Westmoreland

Coal Town Baseball

Hinton, WV
April 26, 1983
Editor:

A friend of mine gave me a few copies of GOLDENSEAL some time ago, and while I was browsing through them there before my eyes was the Lillybrook baseball diamond (Volume 6, Number 4, October-December 1980). I began looking at the town and things didn't look just right. You see, we have to back up some 20-odd years before the picture to about 1915, when I was there. Yes, we had a baseball team at that time, and while I wasn't on the team I loved to watch them play.

Getting back to the picture of town, I was confused until I located the post office. Then everything fell into place. The buildings shown were on the Fireco side of the tracks, while the baseball diamond was on the Lillybrook side.

Graham Moore was mine foreman when I went to work. He was later replaced by Alex Carmen. Ross Kiplinger was mainline motorman, and his brakeman was electrocuted on the Saturday after I went to work on Monday. I do not recall the Mr. McGraw featured in the article. In case he reads this, I lived in the hollow just below the old pumphouse.

In 1922 work was slow, so I headed back to my old hometown of Hinton in Summers County. In 1923 I signed on with the C&O Railway, where I worked for 31 years. On February 23, 1954, I laid my tools away for the last time.

Needless to say, I sent a check for my subscription to GOLDENSEAL and the first issue has just arrived.
Sincerely,
Oscar B. Yancey

Roosevelts at Arthurdale

Beckely, WV
June 5, 1983
Editor:

Our first issue was the one covering the Lilly Reunion. Of course, we loved that issue. Then came the issue with the article on the Ellison Family—and since my wife and I are both somewhat near to the Ellisons, we were very interested in that issue.

My brother was sent from the National Youth Administration facility at South Charleston to Arthurdale during the days of F.D.R. He told me of the many things that were done to help the people in that locality. He said the picture of President Roosevelt shown in GOLDENSEAL, where he was sitting in the wheelchair, was the only picture he knew of that was published of the President in a wheelchair that was not concealed.

My brother was one of the cooks at the facility. He told how Mrs. Roosevelt would come to the kitchen and sample most all the "dishes" before sitting at table in the dining room.

The above articles are just a few of the "enjoys" we have had from GOLDENSEAL. We hope to have many more.
Sincerely,
Joseph S. and Vergie Lilly

Bound GOLDENSEAL Volumes

Columbus, Ohio
June 21, 1983
Editor:

Please send me information on obtaining bound back-copies of GOLDENSEAL.

We have recently suffered a fire at our home. Of the seven or eight periodicals I received, GOLDENSEAL is the only one I plan to replace. I look forward to each issue and read it in its entirety. I also enjoy rereading past issues. I especially enjoy the articles by Arthur Prichard, a long-time family friend.

Thank you for this fine publication and all of the hard work which goes into each issue. I appreciate your assistance in obtaining copies of back issues.
Sincerely,
David K. Phillips

Bound sets of GOLDENSEAL are available for 1980, 1981, and 1982, and (late this year) for 1983. The hardback volumes feature library-quality binding, with the GOLDENSEAL name, volume number, and year stamped on the spine. They may be ordered for $25 each (plus $1.50 postage and handling, and $1.25 sales tax for West Virginia residents) from The Shop, The Cultural Center, Capitol Complex, Charleston, WV 25305.

—Editor

More on Elk Garden Ice Cream

Buckhannon, WV
June 12, 1983
Editor:

With interest I read the letter in GOLDENSEAL about Elk Garden ice cream. I can confirm Mrs. Nell Yeager Coleman's statements. My home was at Shaw, but I attended and graduated from Elk Garden High School. I have bought ice cream at Felix Cannon's and it was delicious. The little community of Shaw no longer exists because of the construction of the Bloomington Dam.

I remember too Old Ike's place which was across from Norman's Store. It was owned and operated by Mr. I. D. Junkins with the help of his daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Dick. When I was attending Elk Garden High School Mrs. Coleman's father, Chris Yeager, was the custodian and her sister Josephine was a student.

I find GOLDENSEAL very interesting and hope to read forthcoming issues. The feature about Black Angus cattle was good.
Sincerely,
Paul E. Murray

Current Programs • Festivals • Publications

Oral History Meeting

OHMAR (Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region) will hold its annual fall meeting on October 15 in Harpers Ferry. The group last met in West Virginia in April 1981, with a successful conference at Canaan Valley State Park.

The National Park Service will host the October meeting, which will focus on uses of oral history by the Park Service, particularly in the Blue Ridge area. The NPS audio production service at Harpers Ferry National Historic Park will provide technical information on its operations and discuss its use of oral interviews in media programs and for documentary purposes. There will be a variety of other presentations, as well.

As usual, the OHMAR meeting will provide an opportunity for amateur and professional oral historians to get together and compare notes. The conference will be held at the National Park Service Mather Training Center, with registration at 9:30 a.m. For further information, write to OHMAR, P. O. Box 266, College Park, MD 20740, or call (301) 654-8073.

Golden Delicious Festival

The 10th annual Golden Delicious Festival will be held in Clay September 22-24. The festival, sponsored by VFW Post 4419, celebrates Clay County's world-famous Golden Delicious apple.

The weekend will include such events as the coronation of the Golden Delicious Queen, the Grand Parade, bluegrass, gospel, and country & western concerts, a distance run, horseshoe pitching contest, and of course the highlight of the festival, an apple pie judging contest.

How the original Golden Delicious tree came into existence is still something of a mystery. It was discovered by Anderson H. Mullins, who found it growing on the hillside of his 36-acre farm at Porters Creek in Clay County. In 1912, he sent three of the tree's big yellow apples to Stark Brothers Nurseries in Missouri, who were so excited by the find that they promptly dispatched one of their people to West Virginia to investigate the new apple.

Mullins had already found that the tree continued to bear fruit later in the season than his other apple trees, and that the winter fruit kept in his cellar was in good condition until late spring. Stark Brothers paid Mullins $5,000 for all rights to the new strain, and con-

tracted with his nephew, Bewell, to maintain the tree.

Although Bewell faithfully performed his maintenance duties for about 30 years, the original tree is no longer standing. The Golden Delicious apple, however, successfully developed and marketed by Stark Brothers, went on to win the Wilder silver medal, the Nobel Prize of the fruit world. The fruit has been lauded by such notables as Dr. John Harvey Kellogg of breakfast cereal fame, Luther Burbank, the renowned horticulturist, and Queen Marie of Romania. It has sired a number of promising varieties of fruit trees and is now one of the most popular apples enjoyed the world over.

The year's Golden Delicious Festival planners are seeking donations to help defray costs. Contributions may be sent to Golden Delicious Festival, c/o Murray Smith, Clay County Bank, Clay 25043.

Great Kerosene Lamp Exhibit

The "Great North American Kerosene Lamp Exhibit" opened at Huntington Galleries over the summer and will continue through November 13. On view at the museum are more than 1100 lamps, dating from 1850 to 1925, from the collection of Catherine M. V. Thuro.

The exhibit traces the artistic and technological development of kerosene lighting throughout the 75-year period. While emphasis is placed on lamps designed and produced by glasshouses in the Ohio Valley, imports from Canada and Europe are also featured. Among West Virginia manufacturers represented are Hobbs-Brockunier and Central Glass Company of Wheeling, and the Riverside Glassworks of Wellsburg.

"In size, in range, in variety and in quality, no other such exhibition of glass kerosene lamps has heretofore been assembled," Curator Eason Eige notes. "This collection has no equal, either public or private. It contains not only a vast number, but also an extraordinary variety, of lamps from the beginning of the kerosene era to the end of popular usage."

Huntington Galleries will host a public forum from September 22 to 25, featuring discussion by nine recognized authorities on kerosene lighting. Those interested in further information on the forum or the exhibit may call (304) 529-2701. The museum is open from noon until 6 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday, with evening hours Wednesday. There is a $2 admission charge, $1 for students and senior citizens.

Pioneer America Society

The Pioneer America Society, Inc., invites history-minded West Virginians to join its ranks. The nonprofit educational organization, founded in 1967, strives to document surviving elements of pioneer America.

The Society's definition of "pioneer" is a broad one, not limited to the frontier or to life in pre-automotive America. Rather, it includes "all life in rural areas and towns which to some degree still typifies a former, more common, way of American living." Arguing that the recently popular historic preservation movement is most concerned with preservation of sites associated with "the wealthy and important," the Society says that its main interest is in the "life, work, heritage, and environment of the common man."

The group seeks to make a written and graphic record of unpretentious but representative houses, and other ordinary structures, including barns, sawmills, smokehouses, stores, churches, schools, and many other types. The Society publishes the latest such research in its journal, *Pioneer America*, in PAST (Pioneer America Society Transactions), and in occasional booklength publications.

GOLDENSEAL readers interested in joining should send $15 annual dues to the Pioneer America Society, Dr. Allen G. Noble, Director, University of Akron, Akron, Ohio 44325.

Fort Henry Arts & Crafts Show

The Fort Henry Arts & Crafts Show will be held at the Wheeling Civic Center over the weekend of November 18-20. The show is sponsored by the Upper Ohio Valley Travel Council.

This is the first year for the Fort Henry Show, and its organizers are optimistic. "The Fort Henry Arts & Crafts Show will be, beyond any doubt, the largest and best arts and crafts fair ever held in the Upper Ohio Valley," said the noted West Virginia toymaker Dick Schnacke, chairman of the show. Schnacke added that the show "will be limited to exhibitors of proven talent and ability from throughout West Virginia, western Pennsylvania, and southern Ohio." In selecting exhibitors, particular attention will be paid to creating a balance in the show, according to Schnacke.

The show will be open from noon to six, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, with exhibitors offering their wares for sale to the public. Admission is $2, with lower rates for students and senior citizens. Further information is available from the Upper Ohio Valley Travel Council, 1012 Main Street, Wheeling 26003; phone (304) 233-1320.

Harvest Moon Festival

Parkersburg's 21st annual Harvest Moon Festival, to be held in the City Park on September 17 and 18, will showcase more than 95 exhibitors from West Virginia, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. Sponsored in past years by Parkersburg's Fine Arts Council, this year's event will be the joint effort of the Arts Council, the West Virginia Artists & Craftsmen's Guild, and the Wood County Recreation Commission.

The festival will feature exhibits by designers in stained glass, pottery, and furniture, as well as a variety of handmade apparel, some with applique or lace techniques and others made of woven wool or with batik designs. Traditional and contemporary quilt designs will also be on display, along with handmade jewelry, dolls, toys, and home accessories.

Five professional woodworkers will be exhibiting their work at the festival, including well-known Parkersburg woodcarver Bill Reed, who fashions the popular "rocking animals" and small whittled figures. Other West Virginia woodcarvers featured at the festival will be Bill Warren of Middlebourne, who specializes in wood calligraphy, and Drew Cathell of Palestine, who crafts handmade furniture, custom woodwork, and specialized architectural treatments and restoration work.

For further information on the Harvest Moon Festival, contact Damienne Dibble, Director, Fine Arts Council, Inc., P. O. Box 1706, Parkersburg 26101; phone (304) 485-3859.

Continued on page 66

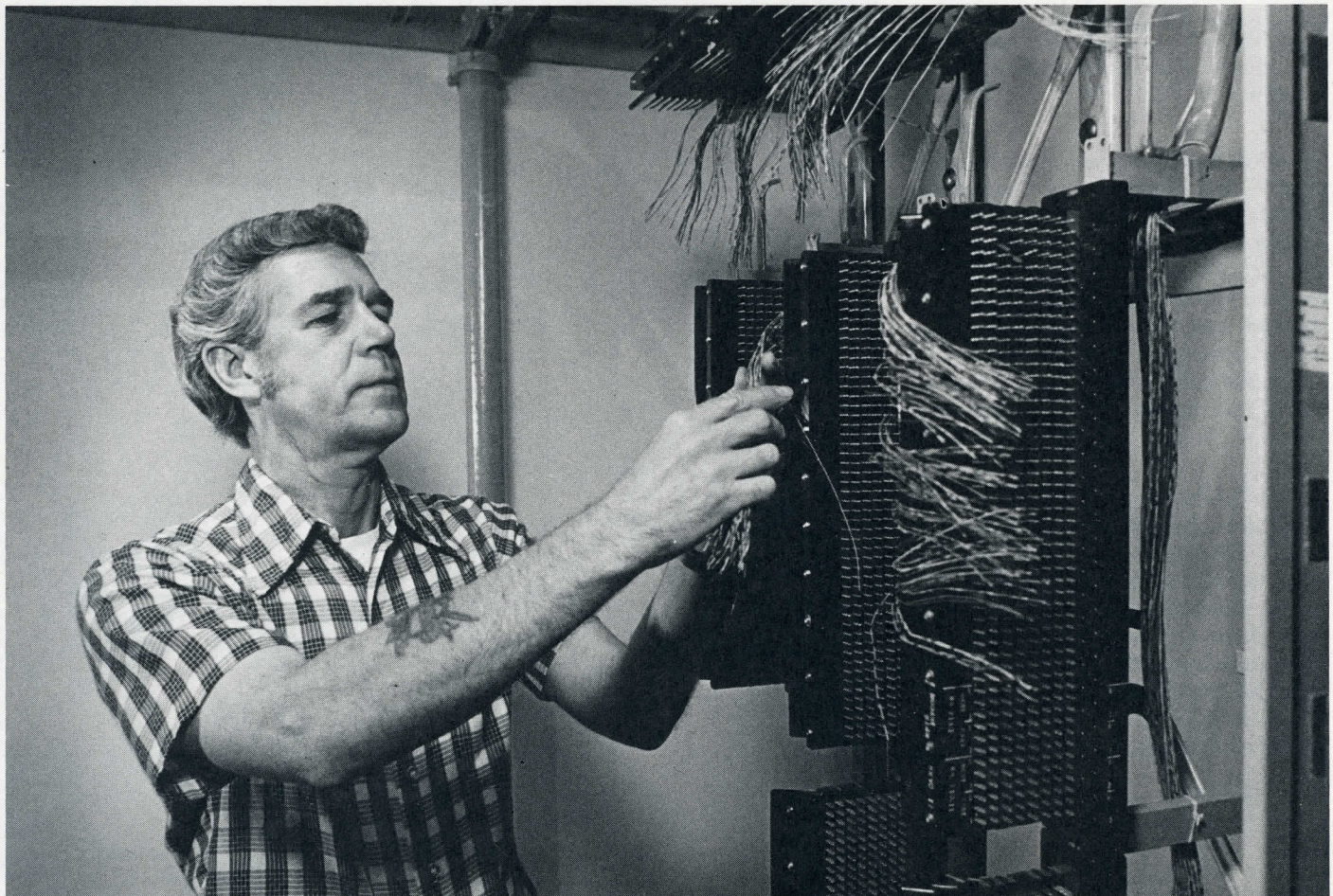
Making Connections

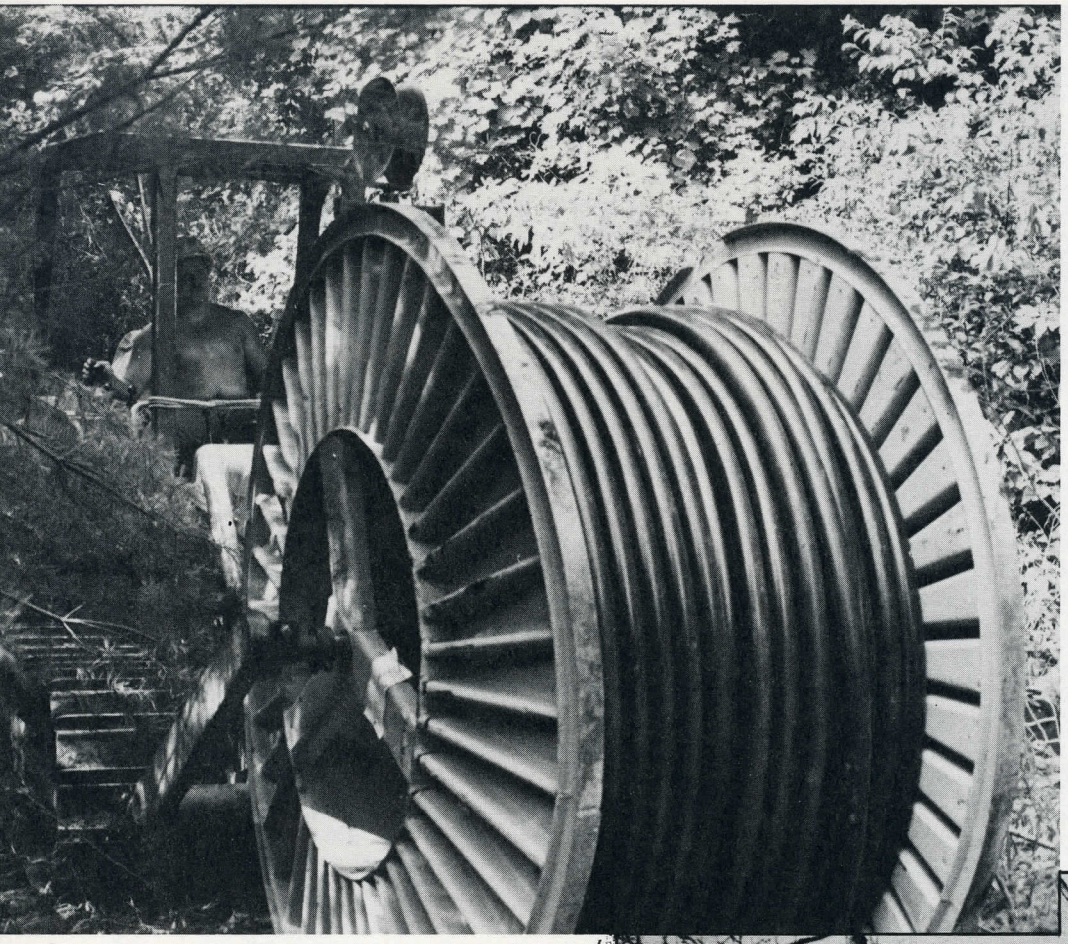
Telephone History at the State Museum

The State Museum at the Cultural Center in Charleston recently opened a major new exhibit. "Making Connections: The Telephone Spans the Mountain State" chronicles the first century of telephone communications in West Virginia.

The heart of the exhibit consists of three sections of the historic Charleston switchboard, displayed front and back to show its inner and outer workings. The

Left: Cable splicing took good eyes and unlimited patience. This is B. B. "Bert" VanHoose at work in Logan in 1938 or 1939. This picture is featured as one of the photomurals in the "Making Connections" exhibit. Photographer unknown.
Below: Norman Fisher works on a more recent wiring job, during installation of the exhibit in the State Museum. Circuitry in the exhibit has been made fully operational, for demonstration purposes. Photo by Rick Lee.





Above and right: West Virginia terrain remains as rugged as ever, but telephone line work has changed drastically over the years. The early linemen are at work near Hawks Nest in September 1915. The recent picture shows a C&P cable being laid in Marion County. Early photographer unknown, new photo by Arthur Prichard.

beautiful mahogany units, pictured on page 7, saw service for 50 years, from installation in 1932 until the final calls during the summer of last year. "Cordboards" of this sort required telephone operators manually to connect calls through matched pairs of cords. Progress in this aspect of telephone service is dramatically shown in the exhibit by the location of a modern electronic operator console near the old switchboard.

The "Making Connections" exhibit is flanked by telephone poles, connected by cables as in real life. The exhibit also features cable racks, relay racks, historic telephones, and other equipment and artifacts. Wiring has been made operational for demonstration purposes. The Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company donated the switchboard and other equipment, and C&P, Western Electric, and the Telephone Pioneers contributed advice, labor, and expertise to the design and installation of the new exhibit.

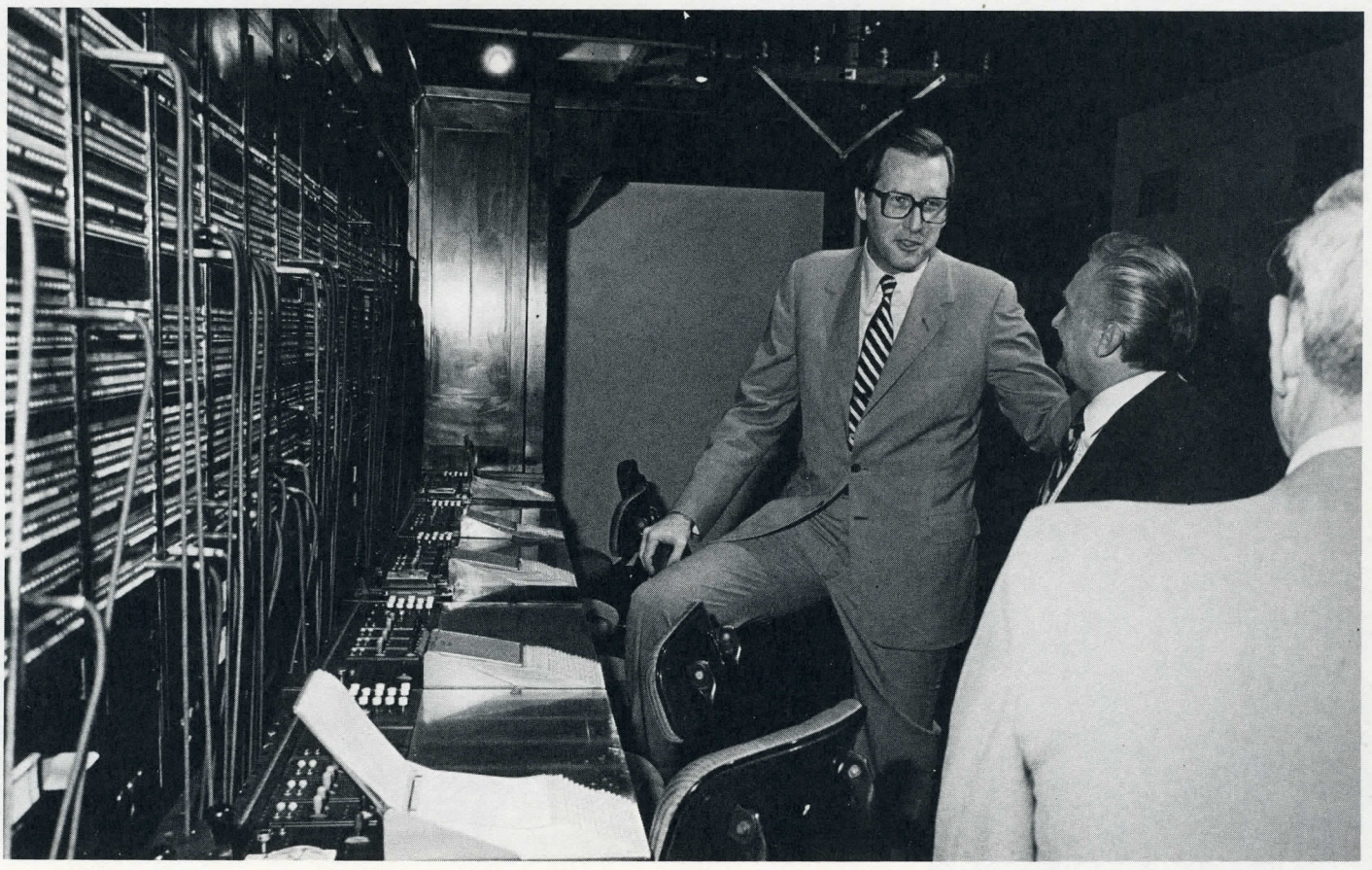
Photomurals, historic photographs, and display maps round out the exhibit. Plans are underway now to put another section of the cordboard and a smaller version of the exhibit on tour in the Culture Rig, the Department of Culture and History's mobile unit.

"Making Connections" was officially opened by Governor Rockefeller in a special ceremony on August 29. The exhibit may be seen during regular Museum hours, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. on weekdays and 1 p.m. on weekends. There is no admission charge.

Above right: Indoors, much telephone work was "women's work." Here Anna Lee Wilson oversees a section of the Charleston switchboard, about 1940. Photographer unknown.

Below right: The Charleston switchboard was no longer the busy center of telephone communications in West Virginia when Judy Prader connected the final call there last year. Sections of the old "cordboard" have been transferred to the State Museum and form the heart of the new exhibit. Photo by Rick Lee.

Above: Norman Fisher and John Reynolds struggle to raise one of the telephone poles at the exhibit. Photo by Rick Lee.
Below: Governor Rockefeller inspected the nearly completed exhibit with telephone company officials. Here the governor confers with N. C. Sheeler of Western Electric. Photo by Michael Keller.



"Are You In the Book?"

Early Telephone Service In a West Virginia Town

By Arthur C. Prichard

Alexander Graham Bell patented his telephone in 1876, the American Centennial year. The nation, already accustomed to instant if somewhat inconvenient communication by telegraphy, was ready for the improvement. Bell's invention caught on with amazing rapidity and telephone systems—small at first—popped up in cities across the country within a very few years. West Virginia got its first commercial phones in 1880, when an exchange serving 32 subscribers was organized in Wheeling. The telephone reached my town of Mannington in 1894. Service initially was provided by the independent Fairmont and Mannington Telephone Company, with competitive Bell System lines being strung soon afterwards.

Mannington telephone operators Betty Glover, Bernadette Phillips, and Willa Mae Ryan are observed by chief operator Emma Gump. Date and photographer unknown.

The new invention easily wove its way into the fabric of community life and telephone operators were prominent among the early heroines of Mannington. They informed, befriended, and assisted townspeople on both ordinary and extraordinary occasions.

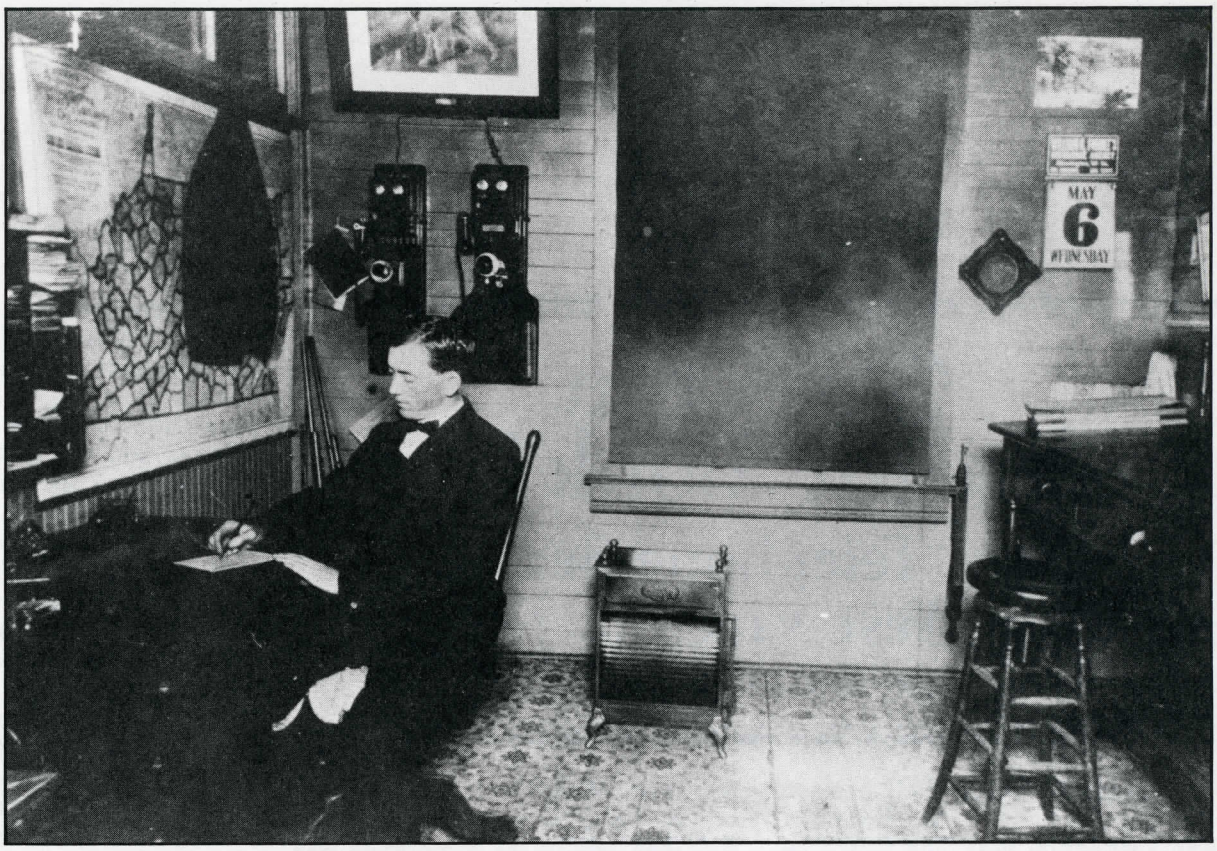
Once Ellen Smith, widow of prominent teamster W. D. "Bill" Smith, fell in her home when living alone. Attempting to rise, Mrs. Smith experienced severe pain. Realizing that she was badly injured and that it might be hours before anyone found her, she began to panic. Each time she tried to move, she suffered more pain. Then the elderly widow heard a voice. It seemed near, but at first she couldn't locate it.

It turned out that in falling Mrs. Smith had knocked her telephone receiver off its hook. The operator at "Central" was puzzled. She saw Mrs. Smith's light on the switchboard, but no one was speaking. She asked, "Mrs. Smith, are you all right? Are you all right?"

Finally sensing that the voice was coming from her telephone, the widow called from the floor, "No, I've fallen and I'm hurt." Immediately, Central telephoned the Lazear family, relatives living nearby. Berry Lazear hurried to the Smith house and got assistance for Mrs. Smith, who had a broken hip.

The operators at Central served in community disasters as well as individual emergencies. Through the years they were busy whenever high water threatened our town. As severe storms raised the creeks, telephone operators alerted businessmen and families in flood-prone areas, allowing precious time to move merchandise and household goods.

On the occasion of Mannington's worst recorded flood, July 25, 1912, the *Fairmont Times* noted services rendered by the "telephone girls." Under the headline, "Brave Telephone Girls Stick to Post," the *Times* reported: "The



Above: Competing telephone companies sometimes meant two telephones side by side on the same wall. Here Mayor Carney Mockler sits in front of his Consolidated and Bell Company phones. Photographer unknown, 1908.
Right: Berry Lazear (left) has the workings of the telephone exchange explained to him by Robert Scott. Mr. Lazear was involved in the dramatic telephone rescue of the elderly widow, Ellen Smith. Date and photographer unknown.

exchange of the Consolidated Telephone Company on the second floor of the Bank of Mannington building is about the only place of business that is in use. Three girls have been constantly at their post of duty all night with the floor below them filled with water and constantly rising."

The operators braved fire as well as water. Two weeks before the big flood of 1912 a main block of the town's business section, the east side of Market Street from the railroad tracks to Water Street, burned. Only a portion of the Bank of Mannington building was damaged, but the fire came near the Consolidated Telephone exchange inside. The women remained at the switchboard throughout the blaze.

People, upon discovering a fire, routinely turned to the telephone operators to spread the alarm. Bernadette Phillips Haught recalled the roundabout procedure.

"When there was a fire the police or someone else would call, saying, 'There's a fire at So-and-So's place.' I would call my father, who lived near the firehouse, and he would run there and blow the whistle. After talking to him, I would start calling the volunteer firemen, telling them where the fire was. This helped to give them a little headstart. Later on, the telephone company frowned on my doing this, saying 'You are taking on too much responsibility.' "

But alerting the firemen to the blaze didn't end the operators' work, for the sound of the whistle generally started people ringing Central for information. Mabel Calvert, one of the three operators who remained at their post during the 1912 flood and fire, tells of the many calls they would receive when the fire alarm sounded. "One of our most regular inquirers about the location of the fire was Mrs. Leahy, Dr. W. J. Leahy's wife. Almost always she immediately phoned when the fire whistle blew. Husbands at work called to find out if their homes were ablaze. Wives wished to learn if their husbands' businesses were on fire. And some people were just curious."

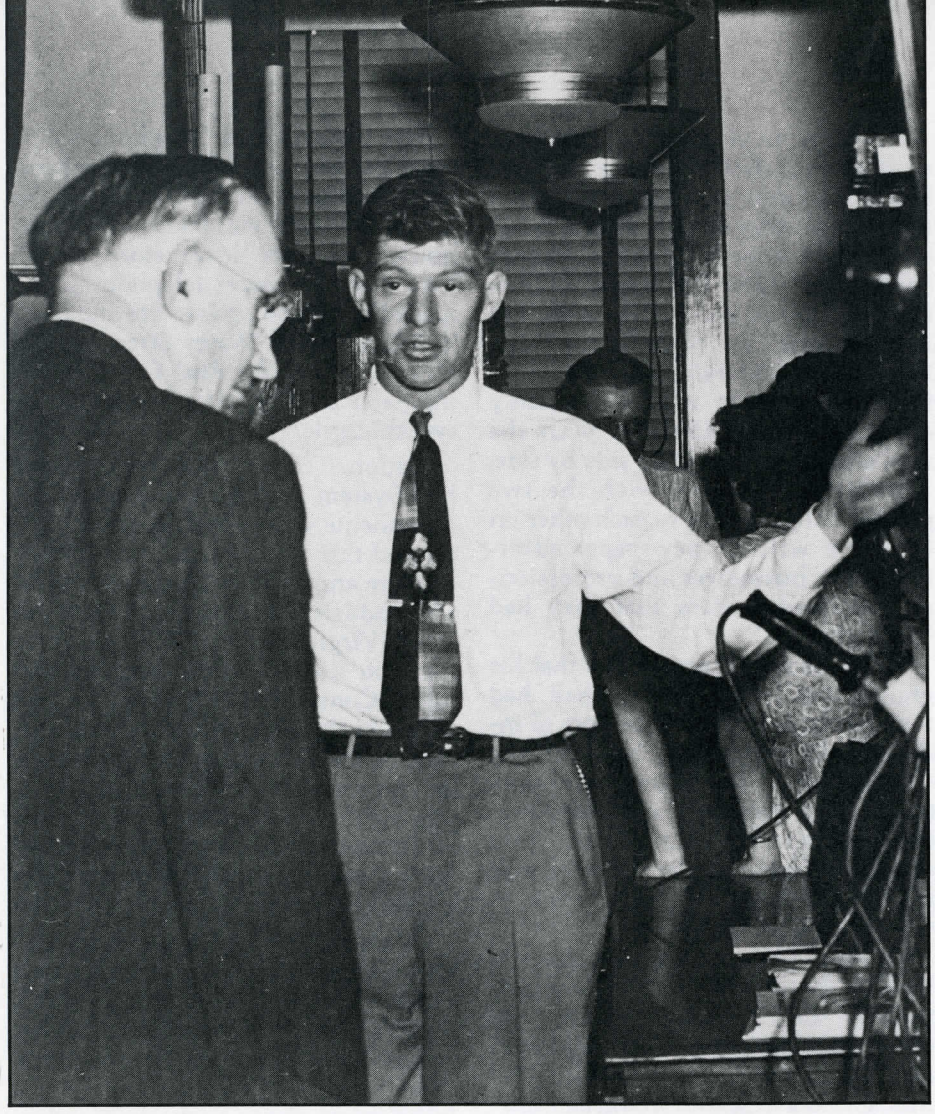
One night in the late 1950's when Jean Hall Bruce was the only operator in the office, the switchboard began to light up with calls. "Where is the fire?" was the question that bombarded her.

"There hasn't been any fire reported," she told the callers.

"There must be, there is so much light over Mannington."

In a little while so many calls were coming in she couldn't keep up with them. Then she learned there wasn't any fire, but that the aurora borealis—northern lights—was putting on a brilliant display, lighting up the sky to the extent that people thought the town was on fire.

Winter weather likewise tested the operators. West Virginia's freak snowstorm of the 1950 Thanksgiving weekend hit Mannington's telephone exchange with full force. Beginning on Thanksgiving and continuing through Saturday, at least 45 inches of snow fell on the town, closing almost everything down. However, the telephone



switchboard continued to function.

Inga Shane Yoho remembers the difficult time she had in getting to work. The snow was too deep for the family car, so her husband Robert tied one end of a rope around himself and the other end to her. Off they started, to struggle the mile from their home in Jerico to the exchange on Pleasant Street. With Robert going ahead to break trail, Inga was able to make it to work. Jean Hall Bruce tells of reaching the office that day through the strenuous efforts of her own husband. Others couldn't get to the building at all, so the few who did had to camp there several days. They slept on cots between shifts at the busy switchboard. Nearby restaurants sent in food to show their appreciation for the operators' service. Again, the "brave telephone girls" helped hold the marooned community together.

Manningtonians also looked to Central for help with their small crises. "We operators," says Florence Ryan Kilcoyne, "had people telephoning us for advice about many things. Sometimes mothers whose children had just had accidents, or who were ill, would call asking what they should do for the youngsters. They used to turn to us for all kinds of things. Also, I remember a policeman in Mannington who would drop by at night, maybe several times, to tell us where he was going and how we could reach him."

Folks asked those at the switchboard to do them various other favors, among which were locating people. Burch Koen traveled a road near the Joe Town telephone office to reach one of his oil leases. When there was a message at home, his wife would ask the Joe Town operator to catch him as he passed by.

In bad or changeable weather people would call asking what the weather was going to be, or to inquire as to the condition of the roads. Following ball games, especially high school football and basketball, fans would ring Central to learn the results. Another common practice was to telephone for the correct time. "In fact," Bernadette Phillips Haught recalls, "people used to call to ask about almost anything."

The early operators worked hard, but informality prevailed. Young Daisy Flowers was a Bell operator just after the turn of the century. She was one of a group of girls remembered as the "Hungry Seven" by one of the mothers whose icebox they frequented. The young women enjoyed ice skating, but sometimes when conditions were best Daisy had the misfortune to be tied down to the switchboard in the Colonial Building. Often her friends took turns working the switchboard while Daisy got in a little skating on nearby Buffalo Creek.

In the early years informality was also the rule between subscribers and operators. Before the advent of dial phones even local calls went through the switchboard, and veteran operators recall that it was hard to get people to provide the necessary number rather than a name. The late Emma Gump, Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone operator in our town from 1922 to 1961, once said, "Often people would ring the board, saying, 'Central (or calling me by name), will you ring John Blank up on Dents Run for me?' "

In fact, America's first telephone exchanges didn't have numbers at all, with operators keeping track of individual names instead. This changed early in the big cities, as the number of local telephones increased from dozens to hundreds and thousands. But subscribers on the smaller town and country systems continued asking operators for people by name. In Mannington, it was, "Daisy, I want to talk to Katie Prichard," or, "Mabel, will you ring 'Doc' Vance for me?"

Bernadette Haught tells of C&P efforts to get subscribers to use numbers. "We operators were instructed to ask the person calling us, 'What number, please?' When a caller would say, 'I want Pop Matthews' Drug Store,' I would counter with, 'I will give you Information,' and would signal another operator. The second operator would say, 'This is Information. Whose number do you want?'

"Often the person calling would shout, 'I don't want Information! I want Pop Matthews' Drug Store!' It wasn't easy getting folks to call numbers."

As the local telephone exchange grew larger, the percentage of people using

Mabel Calbert was one of the "brave telephone girls" who stood by their posts during the flood and fire of 1912. Photo by Arthur Prichard.

numbers grew. And when new automatic switching systems, such as the cross bar, came into operation, numbers had to be dialed by everyone. It was all part of the modernization that brought more efficient, if less personal, telephone service.

People may have resisted such changes but they could scarcely have been surprised by them, for the story of the telephone itself was the story of change. This was true in Mannington as it was elsewhere. After that first Wheeling exchange was installed in 1880—only four years after Bell had patented his invention—telephone service spread rapidly across West Virginia. By 1896, telephones were in operation in Parkersburg, Charleston, Moundsville, Martinsburg, Grafton, Clarksburg, Bluefield, Fairmont, Morgantown, and Huntington. Long distance service was first initiated in 1883 between Wheeling and Pittsburgh, and by 1889 all the exchanges in the northern part of the state had been interconnected.

Mannington phone service emanated from Fairmont. A private line was brought to that town in 1892, and a Bell System office and switchboard was established in the Skinner building on September 1, 1894. Bell extended a line to Mannington soon afterwards, but the company was preceded there by the independent Fairmont and Mannington company, which apparently opened service in 1894. For years the rival companies competed side by side, sometimes literally, with the two phones hanging next to each other on the same wall. In newspaper advertisements, businesses and professionals informed readers that they had "both phones."

Ralph Campbell remembers that his grandfather, Joseph S. Campbell, had two telephones. Both these were of independent companies, however, the Consolidated Telephone Company (sucessor to Fairmont and Mannington) and the Kuhntown and Wise Company headquartered upstream from Mannington on Pyles Creek, in the community of Metz.

"It was very convenient at times to be able to reach a larger number of people," Ralph Campbell says. "At other times his being connected to two companies wasn't as convenient for him. Often a neighbor would call, asking him to telephone a particular person or store on the other line. So there Grandfather would be, using two phones, acting as an intermediary, relaying messages back and forth."

Mannington's very first telephone was installed in J. Oliver Huey's drugstore on Market Street. When a call came in for a local citizen, someone, often young Emmitt Mockler, was sent to deliver the message or to summon the party to the phone. The messenger was paid a nickle a trip. As the Fairmont and Mannington Company's business grew in Mannington, Huey became its local manager.

Marion County courthouse records show that the Fairmont and Mannington Telephone Company was incorporated on April 5, 1895, the year after it started doing business. The company merged with the Clarksburg Telephone Company and the Grafton Telephone Company in September 1901. The combined company was called Consolidated Telephone, and it also was independent of the Bell System. Consolidated incorporated in 1904.

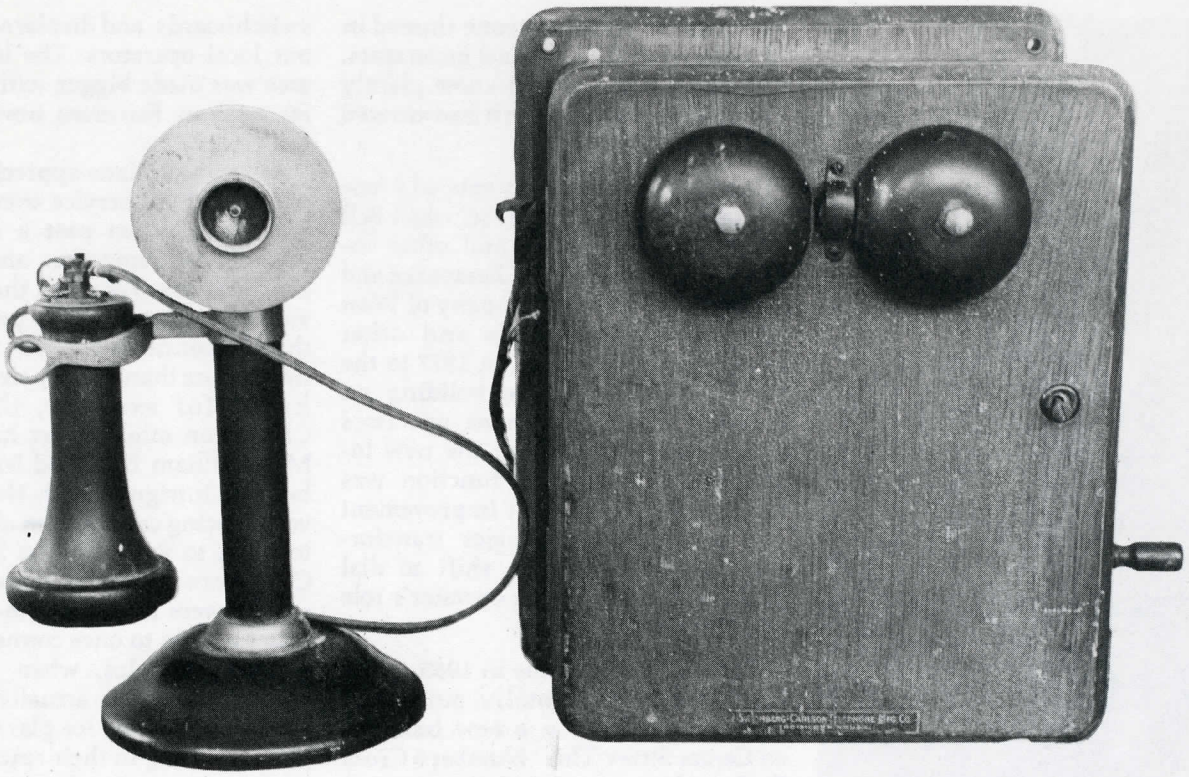
The Consolidated Telephone Company located its exchange over the Bank of Mannington, in the building at the corner of Market and Water which now houses the state liquor store. It was here that the "brave telephone girls" made their stand against fire and flood in 1912. Across Water Street on the second floor of the Real Estate Building (later the Colonial) Bell set up its switchboards.

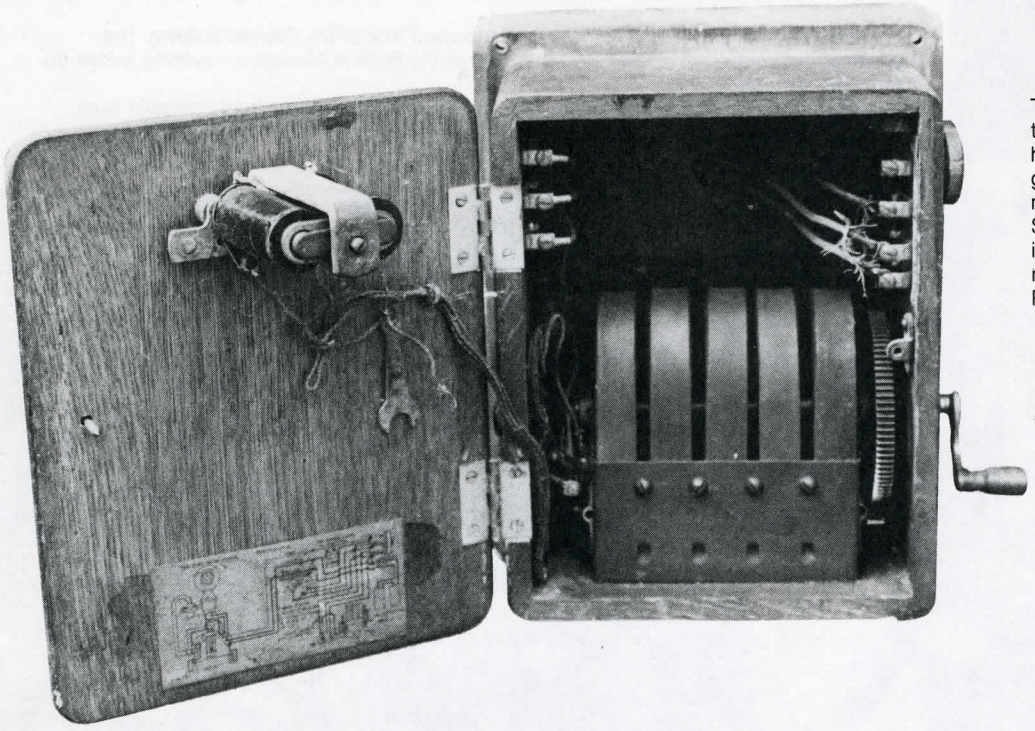
National competition between the Bell System and the hundreds of independents was keen and often heated, and this was no less true in Mannington and Marion County. A special 1908 industrial edition of the *Fairmont West Virginian* pointedly failed to mention the local Bell company, but called Consolidated "one of the best telephone systems, if not the best system, in West Virginia. This great public convenience and utility has been organized and perfected . . . in the face of the most hostile opposition, backed by unlimited money." The latter was a thinly disguised dig at Bell, of course.

Nor were the independents bashful in speaking for themselves. The 1911 combined directory of the "Consolidated Telephone Company and Other Independent Telephone Companies in West Virginia" advised people that the independent phone book was the place to be: "Look in the Book and See; Perhaps you are not aware how many of your friends and business connections you can reach by the INDEPENDENT TELEPHONE. Get into the spirit of the age. Learn to appreciate the value of time. Save time by use of the telephone. Are YOU in the book?"

For a long time Mannington and the surrounding area had numerous party lines, with as many as eight households to a line. The party lines afforded ample opportunity for the talkative to visit with friends, relatives, or sweethearts, but left others waiting impatiently to get their own messages through. Eavesdropping for choice bits of news became common.

Some people had highly individual uses for the party line. George Hart recalls that "Bub" Cunningham had one of the first Victrolas in the area, and generously shared its music by telephone. Sometimes he would aim the phonograph horn at his telephone, call a friend, and play a favorite selection or new record from start to finish.





The familiar "candlestick" telephone was powered by a hand-cranked electrical generator. This instrument was manufactured by the Carlson Stromberg company and used in a Wetzel County home for many years. Photos by Arthur Prichard.

Others on the line had no choice but to listen in or wait it out.

While the telephone quickly established itself as an indispensable aid to doing business, summoning aid, and neighborly chatter, occasionally it also was turned into an instrument of criminal mischief. The *Fairmont Times* recorded one such case in the hotly contested Mannington election of May 1906, when the question of whether or not to license liquor sales in our town was put to a vote.

It seems that the "dry" forces got word of a plan by the "wets" to ship in a carload of outside voters before daylight that morning, for the obvious purpose of throwing the election. The wets posted their own people at the train station to identify the outsiders as they came in. Just before the 3:00 a.m. train rolled in, however, the station was plunged into darkness, and the visiting voters scattered in the confusion. It turned out that the night man at the power plant had been lured from his post by a telephone call, and

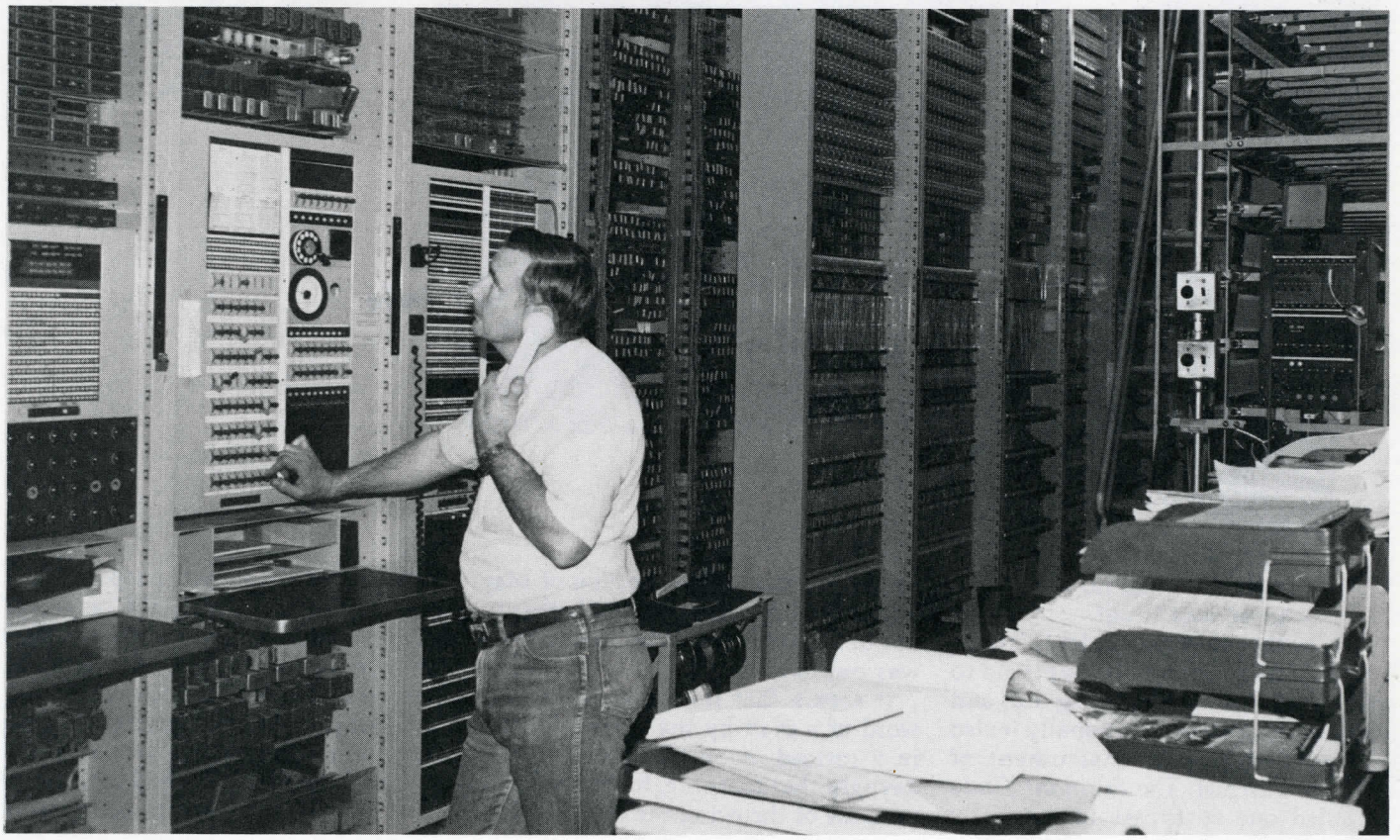
kept talking while someone slipped in to shut down the electrical generators. Tracks in a late spring snow plainly revealed where the culprit had entered and left the building.

Local telephone history entered a new phase on December 30, 1916, when Bell acquired Consolidated and other independents to form the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company of West Virginia. Switchboards and other equipment were moved in 1917 to the second floor of a new building on Pleasant Street. Telephone operators continued to work from the new location, although their function was gradually reduced with improvement and automation. A major transformation came with the shift to dial phones, eliminating the operator's role in most local calls.

The big change came in 1965, when C&P installed a totally automatic switching system in a new building on Center Street. This "Number 5 Cross Bar" exchange replaced the manual switchboards, and displaced the last of our local operators. The local calling area was made bigger, with calls to as far away as Fairmont now becoming toll-free.

Manningtonians appreciate the improvements in service over the years, but many of us past a certain age nonetheless remember and miss the old operators. We recall that their service was always warmly personal, and that the connections made were sometimes more than strictly electronic. We know, for example, that Nellie Charleston might never have become Mrs. William Byrd had Mr. Byrd not become intrigued with that pleasant voice placing calls for him after he came to town to work for the South Penn Oil Company in 1904. Those early operators were not infallible—Jean Hall Bruce admits to once connecting a call to Mr. Orda Ice, when the poorly enunciating caller actually wanted to order ice from the ice plant—but they were unfailing in their spirit of service to the community.

Left: Until 1917, the C&P exchange was on the second floor of the Colonial Building. The Consolidated Telephone Company occupied part of the Bank of Mannington building across the street. Photo by Arthur Prichard.
Below: Automated telephone exchanges brought the end of an era, as local operators were replaced by more efficient machinery. Here J. D. Cunningham tests the C&P exchange in Mannington. Photo by Arthur Prichard.



"And Never Learned to Swim"

Bob McGuffin and the River

Interview by Irene B. Brand
Photographs by Rick Lee

Point Pleasant is home to Robert F. McGuffin. Except for a short spell in the army he's lived here all his life, 90 years. For all but six of those years he's resided on First Street near the waterfront, and his present apartment in Tu-Endie-Wei Manor is built on land he once owned. He was born just up the street, "on the corner, in a big double house," in 1892.

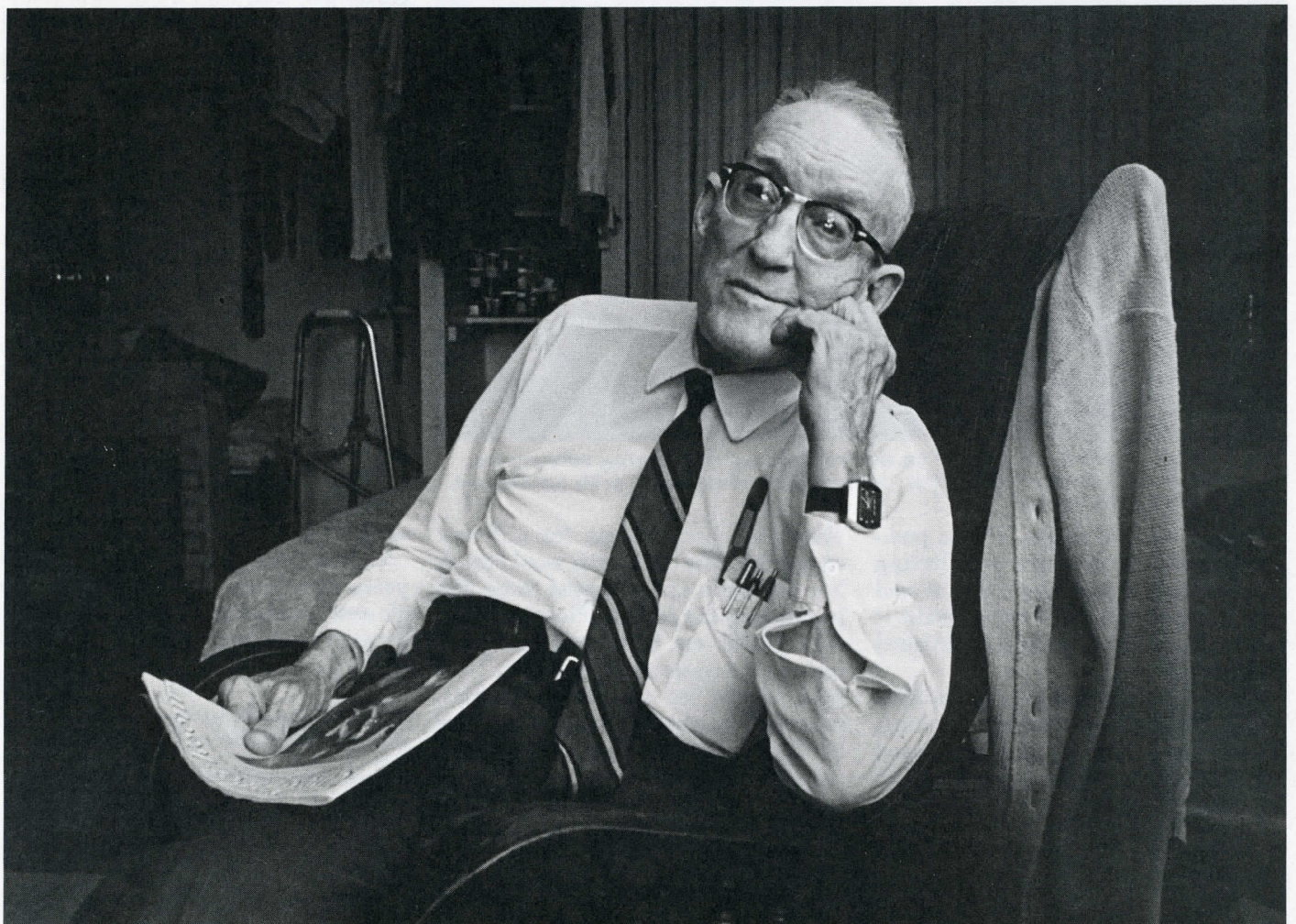
His town occupies an important position in West Virginia river history, sited strategically at the juncture of the Kanawha and the Ohio with the traffic of both passing by its doors. Years ago, before the building of the modern system of locks and dams, Point Pleasant's importance as a river town was even greater than it is today. During the dry months of the year barges coming down the Kanawha traditionally "tied off" there to await deeper water on the Ohio. A local service industry of docking and provisioning firms grew up to support the river trade, and Point Pleasant earned much of its livelihood in this manner.

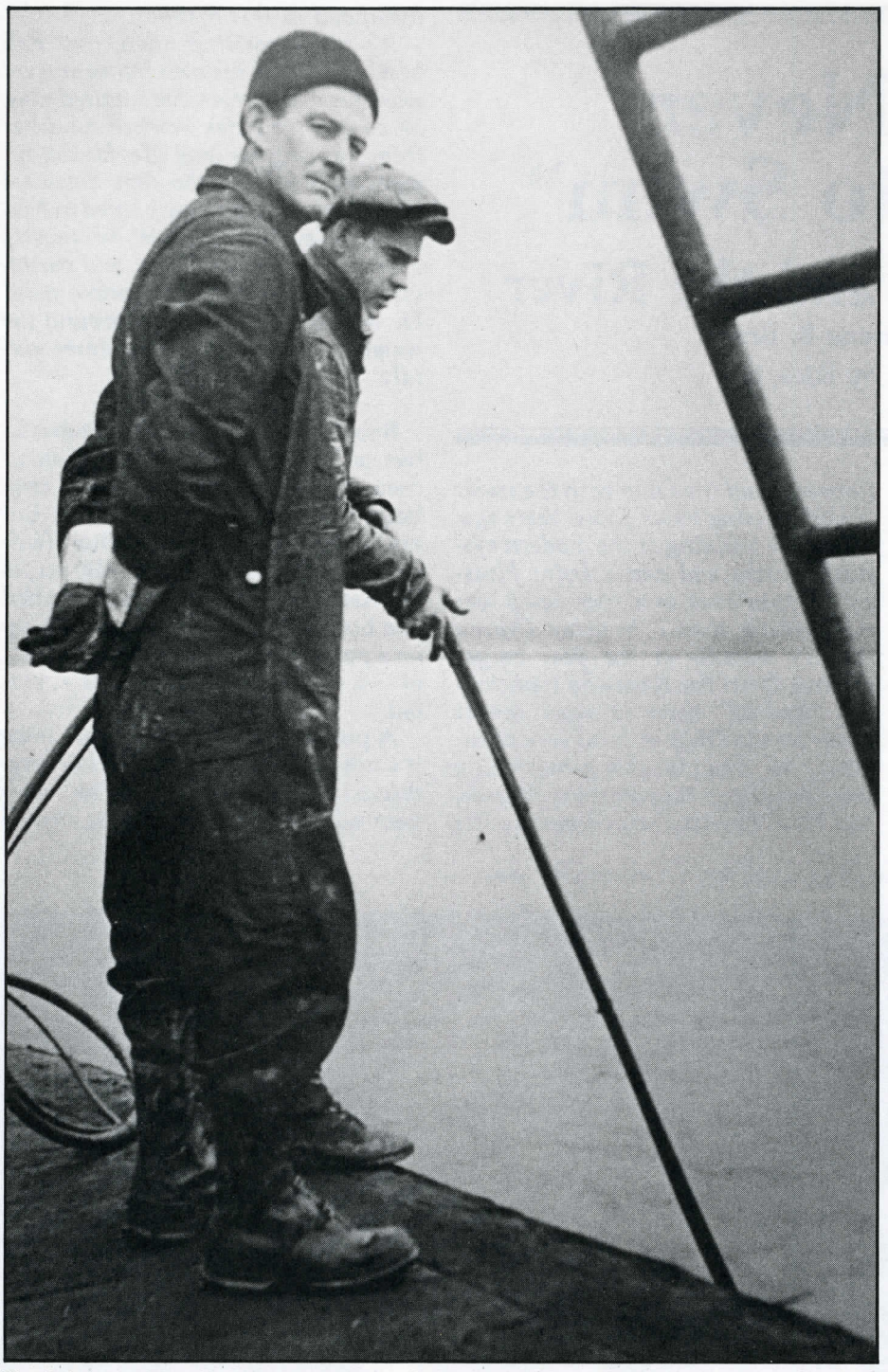
It's not surprising, then, that Bob McGuffin made his own living at river work for many years. He's retired now, of course, and has worked at other things during his long life. He can remember bottling "the first bottle of genuine Coca-Cola ever bottled in Mason County," for example. But mostly he stuck to the two rivers, and particularly the Ohio, during his prime years. He worked on, under, and around the water, and he recalls those times vividly.

Bob McGuffin. I've been under 63 feet of water, and could go down as deep as anybody, stay as long as anybody, and never learned to swim. But my father tells me that his whole family, his sisters and all, could swim across the Kanawha River and back. He had one brother, John, who was blown up on a pump boat, and that was in March of '94. I was just a little over a year old.

A pump boat is a little square boat; it's not built like a steamboat or anything. It has a big long spout on it that goes out, and you swing that around

Bob McGuffin has done about every kind of river work there is, and figures it was time well spent.





Diver's helpers, or tenders, had charge of the diver's safety underwater, watching the pump and seeing after his hose and rope lifeline. It was "pretty much of a responsibility," as Mr. McGuffin says. Date and photographer unknown.

to pump out the barges. It was powered by steam, and John was having trouble with it, and they claim he said that morning that he'd either make it work or he'd finish it. And he finished it. Blew up.

That was right up here at what used to be called the Armstrong Landing. There was old Captain Armstrong, and he had two sons. Amos was one of 'em. They held barges there for different companies. The companies would bring 'em out—you know it used to be you had to drop out at Point Pleasant—and they'd hold 'em here until you got a raise in the water to go on down. They held barges for various companies, whoever brought coal there to take care of. They'd keep 'em pumped out and ready to go at any time.

Then there was two other, three other, boat landings that held barges. The old Campbell's Creek Company was above the bridge on the Henderson side, and right below the bridge there was a small outfit. I forget who that was. And right up here, this side of the creek, Crooked Creek, the Hatfield Coal Mining Company had a landing.

There used to be three sets of docks here, too. That's where they pull the boats out, pump 'em out, and repair them. Put new bottoms in 'em and everything. The upper one was just above Crooked Creek there, the mouth of Crooked Creek. That was owned and operated by the Gardners. I don't remember old Captain Gardner's name.*

And right out here they had Kanawha Docks. Their office was right down there across the street from the floodwall office, where the floodwall office is now. That was operated by J. F. Burdett and Sons. And right on down in front of the park was what was called Point Pleasant Dry Docks. All three were in the Kanawha River.

Kanawha Docks Company used to even build barges out there under the bank. They had marine ways out there. That's skids that come up on the bank and run out. They'd have timbers crossways, and they'd lay their foundation on that and just build a barge from the ground up.

Incidentally, Campbell's Creek Coal Company had a marine ways up at Dana, West Virginia, and my father put 'em in. Did the diving on them, I mean. I've got a piece here somewhere that says the brother, which was my uncle Tom, of the man who put them in, made repairs on them 50 years later. That was up at Dana.* That was quite a coincidence.

My father was a diver to start with, but he had a real bad accident. I guess he was showing off, or something; anyway instead of going down a ladder like we always did, he jumped off a pier, and something happened to his eyes. He was in a dark room for 13 weeks, but he finally got all right. He could read the paper a lot better at 88 years than I can, with no glasses. No glasses! And he had all of his own teeth, except two, when he died at 88 years old.

*George P. Gardner was principal stockholder of the Enterprise Marine Dock Company.

*Dana, near Charleston, is now Port Amherst.

Irene Brand. Tell me a little about the diving. What was the purpose?

BM A hundred and one things. To repair piers, to repair marine ways, to lay pipelines across the river. They'd take a dredge boat and dig a ditch, and lay pipelines clear across the river and come out on the other side. Lay cables, like electric and telephone cables, across the river under water.

Repair sunken boats and raise 'em out of the water. They used big heavy chains—oh, boy, they were big and heavy! You'd run them down under the boat, work it by twisting it with lines under the head of the boat and spring it up just a little. Then run another until they got enough under there, and then they put two timbers across barges, and had jacks there. They was raised up by screw jacks.

In later years, they got to what they called bulkheading, which meant that you went down, crawled down through the hull of the boat and repaired the damage to the hull, and then bulkheaded all the way around, closed all the openings. Then they'd buy muslin, three or four bolts, get some women around the town, wherever they was raising the boat, to sew it together, put that muslin around up against that bulkheading, and that held it pretty tight. In other words, it didn't leak enough to bother you too much. You could still pump it out.

IB What kind of special equipment was needed for this diving?

BM Well, what they call the dress was an outfit made of rubber and canvas. Somehow or other they laminated a little bit of rubber between two sheets of canvas. It come up to the neck, and around here. What they called your breast, had a thick rubber thing around there with holes in it, and that fit over the breastplate. The breastplate went down inside of your dress. Bolts—stud bolts—12 of 'em, come up through the breast of your dress, and then bolted down with clamps, had four clamps, two on the front and two on the back.

The helmet had an air hose come to it, went in right behind the left side, and an exhaust valve on this side, in case you got too much air, which sometimes you did. You couldn't use much air down there, because it would wallow you around, you know. And of course we always used a lifeline, which was a half-inch grass rope that went around your waist, and a belt that had, I believe, ten lead weights on it.

Some divers—most divers—used shoes with one-inch lead soles on them. Uncle Tom, well, he had 'em, but I never saw him use them in his life, and I never had them on. I never put 'em on. I've went on jobs, and people say, "Aren't you going to wear them shoes?" and I'd say, "No, I never wear 'em."

But you've got to be awful careful, 'cause it'll upset you down there. Your air, if you're leaning over and working, and bending over, will kind of upset you, you know. You've got to watch yourself, and be careful.

I well remember the first time I ever put on a diving suit. I was just back out of the army, and we were down at Dam 31, about 10 miles below Portsmouth, Ohio. I'd never seen a diving suit before, but we were down there on the dam. We needed a 12-inch pipe L to complete the job, and we were waiting on a boat from Cincinnati to bring it.

A river diver breaks the surface. This is probably Bob's uncle, Tom McGuffin. Date and photographer unknown.

In the meantime, Tom got sick, and although he'd cautioned me not to get in the suit, I was just dying to try it on.

Well, when the boat came, the superintendent said, "Now we've got the L, but we don't have a diver." And I said, "Put the suit on me, and I'll go down."

Tom McGuffin, shown here in diving dress, was the man who got Bob started. "When I came out of the army, Tom got after me to go with him," Bob recalls. "That was in '19." Date and photographer unknown.

The super said, "Are you a diver?" and I told him, "No, sir, I've never seen a diving outfit until last week."

He said he didn't want to risk sending me down, but I insisted. Up until then I thought you could see a little light in those outfits, but the minute my helmet went under water, it was just like being in a dungeon. Talk about a scared boy! I knew if I went on down, it might be the end, but I knew if I went back up, everybody would rag me to death, so I went on down and finished the job. That was my first experience as a diver.

And I remember the first job I took by myself. I believe it was at Ironton, Ohio. They called me and wanted me to come and do the work. I said, "Well, I'm not the diver, I'm the diver's helper." Tender, or helper, they called it.

He said, "Well, you're the man that's been recommended. You're Bob McGuffin?"

And I said, "That's right."

He answered, "Well, you're the man that's been recommended. If you'll take a chance, I will."

So I told him, "If you feel that way, I'll come down and talk to you." He wanted to know how much we charged a day, and I said, "We charge $40 a day, and all expenses from the time we leave home until we're back."

He said, "Well, that's pretty high. We've only been paying $14."

They had a guy down there from Portsmouth, and they'd took out the cap of an intake. I believe it was a 42-inch intake that run away out in the river. They'd taken that out, and he couldn't get it back because the sand kept running in on him and he couldn't do anything.

Well, in working with sand underwater—I don't suppose you know anything about that—you pick up a shovelful of sand, but by the time you get where you're going to dump it, you've got maybe a handful. But when I went down there, I saw the conditions, and I got me a bucket. Took it down there and dipped that bucket full of sand and carried it downstream, oh, eight, 10, 12 feet, and laid the bucket right down on the bottom and emptied it real easy. That sand would go away, wouldn't bother me any. I finally got it. I think I worked at it most of two days, got it so I could get the head in, and bolt it in.

I never will forget, I worked one day after I got there, that day, and part of the next day. They told me to be sure and come over to the office and get paid. So I went over there, and the girl said, "Mr. Howell, the superintendent, said you'd have a day, and so many hours for today." I said, "Sister, we don't have any hours. If I'm here 20 minutes, that costs you for one day. That's a day."

And she said, "How much a day?" and I said, "We get $40 and all expenses."

"My goodness," she said, "what in the world have you been doing?" And I tried to tell her. It's hard to make people understand that was never around any of that stuff.

IB Forty dollars was a lot of money that long ago.

BM Oh, you thought you was a millionaire! And we got up to $50, $60. It's about $250 now, something like that, maybe $300, I don't know.

IB What did you do as a diver's helper?

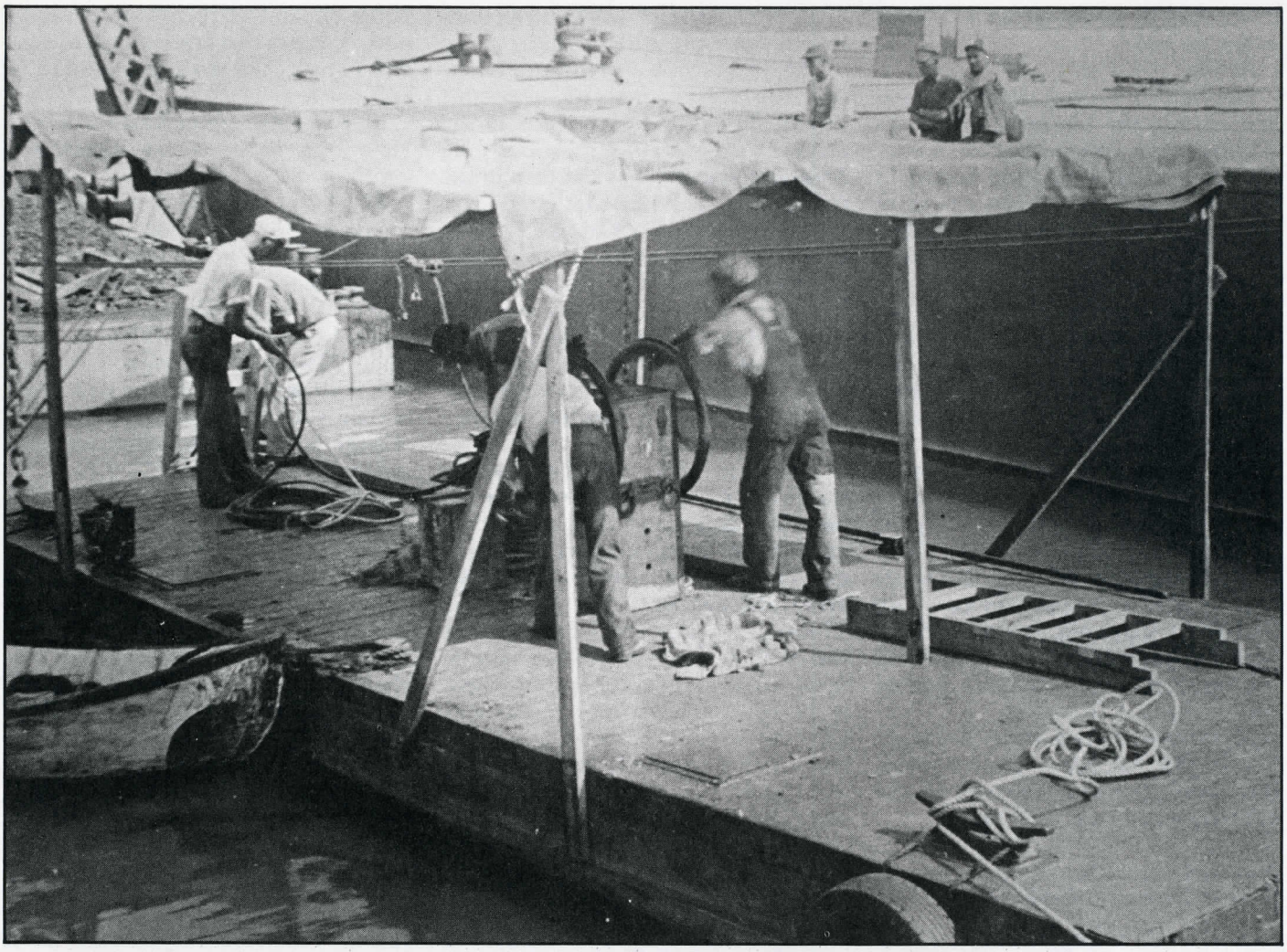
BM I stayed on the float, barge, or whatever, and I had to dress Tom. Of course, a man can't put that stuff on himself. You have to dress him. And when he went down, I had to watch the pump and see that the pump men pumped properly. Sometimes they'd get to going too slow, and you wouldn't get enough air. Sometimes they'd go too fast, and you'd get too much, and you'd be wiggling around down there. I had to watch that pump. I had pretty much of a responsibility.

IB Was it an electric pump, or a gasoline pump?

BM Hand. This was a great big pump, and each wheel weighed about 125 pounds. Each wheel on it. They put the handles opposite.

IB You mean the ones you operated?

BM I did not operate it. I just watched it. People on the job always had to furnish the pump help, and all the other help there. I had to stand there and hang onto the hose and the lifeline, to keep up the slack. He couldn't have too much slack, 'cause he'd get tangled up in it. And be sure and keep your eye on that pump, and watch them boys that were pumping. In later years, the last 10 years maybe that I worked with Tom, he had a little gasoline pump. Just a little tiny thing.



Pump helpers manning a two-handled air pump for the diver below. The tender, partly visible at the front of the float, bends over to hold the hose and lifeline. Date and photographer unknown.

It was about two and a half feet long, a foot square maybe, and it worked all right.

IB How long did you work with the diving?

BM Several years. When I came back out of the army, Tom got after me to go with him. That was in '19. The first job I was on as a tender with him was four barges sunk down at Kenova, and we went down there and raised them. I never will forget, we went in a restaurant one day to eat, asked the girl what she had for lunch, and she said, "biled pork." We laughed about that.

IB Did you go overseas during the war?

BM No, ma'am, I did not. Bill Park and I went in together. We went to school together. We were turned down two different times on enlistment. Then when we decided we didn't want to go, they came along and drafted us.

They started me out of here at 5:00 in the evening with 40-some men. I was in charge of the 40-some men, and the Putnam County draftees joined us here. We all went to Parkersburg, and joined others from four or five counties, had a regular troop train up there. And I discovered that Dr. Barbee, who was head of the draft board here, had only given me one meal ticket—that is, one ticket for the 40-some. We was going all the way to Georgia, so we got to talking, and someone said, "Let's go call him." So we called him, and Dr. Barbee told this man, "You go ahead and issue them the other tickets, and we'll take care of it."

So we finally got them, and we got into the stockyards in Cincinanti. Of all places to eat your food! They came out there, and had a lot of little boxes, had a sandwich, an apple, a couple of little cookies in it. That was called a meal, and each of us got three or four of them. Three, I believe, of them, and that was our meals until we got into camp.

That was Camp Greenleaf, Chickamauga Park, Georgia. And we were transferred from there to Augusta, Georgia. Incidentally, I have missed two Christmases away from home. The first one was in the army in '18 in Augusta, Georgia. The next one was when we was raising a little boat at Augusta, Kentucky, on which 11 persons were drowned. Tom got, I believe, it was nine of them out of the boat, out of the interior of the boat. The other two were floated later on that year.

That was a sad thing. There was a colonel down there building the dam, I believe it was Dam 33 or 34. His wife and two little children were coming up to Augusta for mass the next morning, and that boat sunk and turned over on her side. When we got there she was laying over on her side. We had to put hitches out on the bank—"nigger"

lines. You don't know what that is either, do you?

IB No.

BM Well, it's a big heavy line, and you operate the nigger—capstan it's also called—by steam. You wrap your line around that and keep taking in the slack, and that draws up them things. I forget, I believe we had four or five of them lines out there to right that boat up. It was my first experience of anything like that. Tom found the night watchman, and this woman, and two little girls, in a stateroom at the forward end of the cabin. Evidently trying to get out, and the rest of them were scattered different places.

The supposition was that the mate was negligent, and allowed the boat to fill up with water, and that the pilot attempted to make a turn. He threw his rudders too far left, and that water run over there and tipped the boat over. It was only supposed, for no one could tell what happened. Putting two and two together, that's what they figured out.

IB What was the name of the boat?

BM The *Margaret*. Just a small government boat that they used around building these locks and dams.

IB What kind of work did you do before you went to the army?

BM I had worked in three different bottling works, making pop, soft drinks. The time I was called to the army, I was operating the Coca-Cola Bottling Company that was then in the old Allinder building that faced Fifth Street, behind where Citizens National Bank is now. I bottled, and still have right there in my file cabinet, the first bottle of genuine Coca-Cola ever bottled in Mason County. I had bottled a number of substitutes, like cherry cola, Pepsi Cola, oh, three or four different ones, but I'd never bottled any real genuine Coca-Cola.

This was under the Parkersburg franchise, and they used to ship it down here, four dozen cases. We'd take it out and deliver it around here. And one day, here came a barrel of Coca-Cola syrup, and they said, "Start your own." There was a guy from Parkersburg, Harry Price, had come down here to operate it. He didn't know a thing about it, he couldn't even mix simple syrup—just sugar and water. He didn't know a thing about it, but he was an awful good man. A nice fellow. He was standing there when I took the first bottle off, and he reached for it, and I said, "Oh, no, that one belongs to me," and I stuck it in my pocket. And I've still got it.

IB What about your floodwall work? How long were you the superintendent?

BM I was on there about eight and a half years, the first superintendent they ever hired. I didn't have any idea about the operation of the floodwall. I never will forget. There was two engineers come up here. One of them said, "Now, Mr. McGuffin, a man in this position is supposed to be an electrician, a mechanic, a good all-around laborer, and so forth. What are your qualifications?"

I looked at him a minute, and said, "TB."

"What do you mean by that?" he said.

And I said, "Total Blank. I don't know anything about electric except to stay away from it. I'm not a mechanic, and I'd be a poor laborer." He said. "Well, I don't think you'd qualify," but Krodel* just kept insisting on me taking it because of my river con-

*B. W. Krodel was mayor of Point Pleasant at that time.

Divers were called on to do a "hundred and one things," Mr. McGuffin says, but much of his own work was the salvaging of boats and barges. Here the *Volcano* is partially raised, with a salvage barge just visible beyond the sternwheel. Date and photographer unknown.

nections, you know, and of course, that was a big advantage. And on many occasions, my predictions of a flood stage was closer than the engineers'.

I'll never forget one time that they called me and predicted 49 feet. "Well," I said, "I don't think you predicted enough. I think there's gonna be more than that."

They said, "How much do you predict?" and I said, "That's not my job," and I wouldn't predict. The next morning he called me back and said, "We want to revise that crest prediction." And I said, "I think you're in for a revision." He cut it down from 49 to 48 feet, and I said, "Now, I know you're wrong," and he kept at me to tell him what I thought.

I finally said, "All right, put down somewhere in a corner, 52 feet, and after the crest, call me and tell me what the crest was at Point Pleasant." And believe it or not, the crest was 51.97 feet—lacked that much of being 52 feet.

Used to be a woman reporter down at the *Register*, can't think of her name. She used to come up and want the reports and all, and I'd say, "The government report's right there on my desk." And she'd say, "Oh, they don't get anyways near close. I want what you say."

They had access, calling all up and down this river to all these locks and dams, they should of been in a position to come a lot closer than that.

IB Could you talk a bit about the floods before we got a floodwall?

BM My, oh my! At that time we had a small house right over here. Incidentally, in later years, we had a big house, and my lot come over here to this side of the door. That side of my apartment is on ground that I used to own. And that house set right down close to the ground. Took 47.3 feet of flood water to get in it, and we moved quite often. It used to come up on Second Street, then get on Viand Street.

IB Did you just go upstairs?

BM Practically all of the time, we moved upstairs.

IB If you did have to leave the house, where did you go?

BM Well, we'd just have to find someplace uptown. I can remember one time when I was working at the old Point Pleasant Grocery, I took a lot of stuff, piano, up there. Had an elevator, and I took it upstairs there. That was in the '37 flood.

IB How long was the water up in '37?

BM I don't recall that, but it was usually up four or five days to a week. And boy, then you had a mess when it went down! Mud and slop two or three inches deep, and you just had to hose and hose and hose and scrub. You never did get it all out.

IB So you think the floodwall was a good idea, do you?

BM Wonderful, wonderful! I was the first floodwall superintendent that was hired. But they didn't want to pay me anything. I think the most I made was $275 a month, with all that responsibility. Huntington man was getting $700 to $800. 'Course, he had a lot more to look after than I did.

But when I went on the floodwall, they didn't have any money, and wasn't to get any until December. I was hired in September, and F. W. Ingraham, a member of the board, and Krodel, them two offered to loan me money from the time I went to work until I got paid. Fortunately, I had a little money, and didn't have to take it. But I thought it was awful nice of them to offer that.

Here's something that might interest you. That's a list of all the floods from 1880 to 1979. The floods of '13 and '37 were exactly the same here at my house. Exactly.

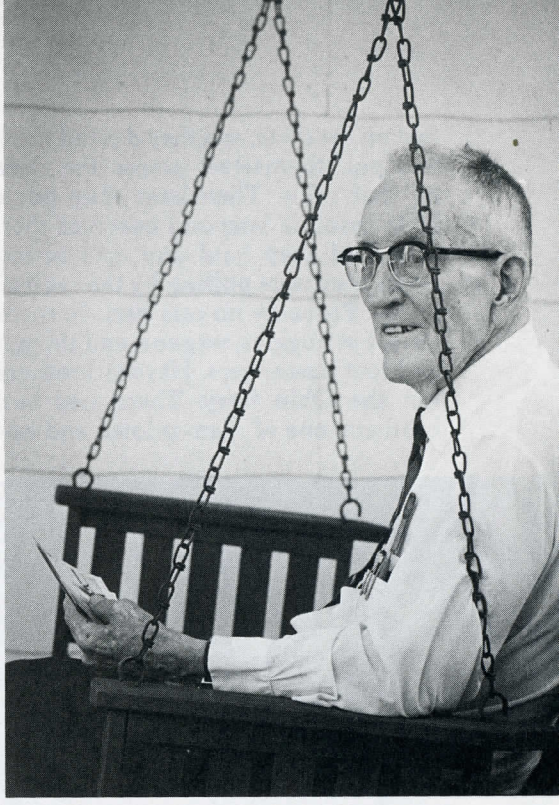
IB It says 62.8 feet. How many feet of water would that have put right here where we're sitting?

BM Fifteen feet of water right here. Both '13 and '37 were upstairs. We had a new house, eight big rooms, and two utility rooms, and it was higher up off the ground than the old one. It took 50 feet even to get in it, and the water was upstairs in it twice. We always kept a yawl or skiff. Always had one.

I was just trying to think. I took Doc Eshenaur somewhere in a boat, and then Captain Homer Varian. I took Homer Varian around to the floodwall levy, carried him up over there and down, and put him in an ambulance, and took him on up to the hospital. That house was outside the floodwall. The Stone property, too. Used to be a couple of little houses out there, but they're all gone years ago, now.

IB What about changes in these rivers when the locks went in?

BM Lock 11 was built before I was born. I've locked through it many a time. I never will forget one time. They



Mr. McGuffin recalls his first diving job. "Talk about a scared boy!" he says.

used to have to drop barges out a little piece, tie 'em up, then go back and get some more, and wait for water. We had 21 or 22 barges tied up about 'Brosia [Ambrosia]. We locked over there all day long. The sun was shining, and I took off my shirt, and I was blistered. I can remember that as same as yesterday. Boy, I can still feel it! That was awful.

IB Did you ever work at the Marietta plant?

BM Yes, ma'am. I worked there as a tumbler man. After they would cast their castings, they were full of dirt and sand. They'd put them in a round steel drum, then lock it, and tumble them around to get that dirt and sand off of them. That polished them up, and they'd come out clean and nice. I also painted up there. I helped paint three steamboats that they built and shipped overseas to South America.

IB Do you remember the ferries before we had the two bridges?

BM Yes, I do. Henry Stone, that's Charles Henry's grandfather, and Fred Stone, and Will Stone, who later became a dentist, ran this ferry down here—the Kanawha River ferry. They had a flat, with what they called an apron, and they had a cable across the river, and when they weren't using it, it sunk, went down. They had a stick about that long, and about that big around, had knots in it, and they had

that on the cable, and they'd stand there and pull themselves across the river by that cable. Then later, they got a little gasoline boat and operated that.

IB Did they haul any cars across when they were pulling by the cables?

BM Probably no cars back in them days, but buggies, wagons, and things, and foot passengers. Haynes brothers ran the Ohio ferry. There was two brothers, one of them piloted and operated the boat from up in the pilot house, and the other tended to placing the cars, wagons, and things, loading and unloading. They operated that boat back and forth across the river there for several years. And one of them Haynes, one winter, they said—I didn't see it—hauled a complete bathroom outfit on a sled across the ice with two horses. The river was froze over.

Bob McGuffin's career has surely been as exciting as anyone's but he always preferred work that kept him around Point Pleasant. He admits to being a homebody, and says, "I'm proud of it."

The Ohio ferry was between First and Second streets, but you went down the hill right down here at the park.* That ferry boat would land between First and Second streets. And the other one was down here just above First Street. Still got the road there, but it was paved and all.

I can remember when there wasn't any paving in Point Pleasant except two blocks from Ninth to 11th streets, up on upper Main. That was made out of soft brick, and they all deteriorated and broke up, and I can't remember when they paved Main Street. It must have been around '04 or '05, and this street [First Street] was paved in 1907. I remember that. I was working in Van Gilder's Drugstore at that time. Making big money—$3 a week.

IB Did you ever go to Hooffs Opera House?

BM My goodness, yes. They had all kinds of shows, musicals and melodrama. I remember one show in particular. I'll always remember that, called *The Flaming Arrow.* They had two great big, beautiful white horses, live horses, on the stage. That was upstairs. The stairs went up right beside Hooffs Drugstore. They took them horses up there, and up through the aisle. They had a ramp built there, and up on the stage. Two of 'em. Nice, great big white, pretty things.

They had three curtains on the stage. It was an elevated floor, but now, they took out the elevation, leveled it up, took all the seats out, and made apartments.

IB What about the showboats that used to come?

BM I really enjoyed them. They had pretty good comedy and stuff. I remember one time being out at Chillicothe, Ohio, and there was four or five boys, four or five girls, and I mentioned showboats. They'd never heard of 'em, and I had to explain all about them. Of course, there haven't been any showboats around here for a long time. Those calliopes made a lot of noise, and fairly good music.

IB Did they come regularly in summertime?

BM Maybe a couple, three times a year. Not too many a year, always in the summer.

IB Do you remember the *Homer Smith* excursion boat?

BM I took many a ride on the *Homer Smith*, and I sold tickets on it. They bought tickets at the head of the boat, and turned them in as they went up the stairway. They didn't have any special route. They made different trips. I remember one Sunday, they went to Huntington. I was on that. And to Parkersburg, and they made trips to Cincinnati and Pittsburgh, and around. The *Homer Smith* burned to the water at Pittsburgh, but I can't tell you the date.*

They had a good orchestra, had dancing on there. It was very nice. That was a beautiful boat. I never will forget the Sunday morning she come in here right after she was built. I was in Sunday school up at the Methodist church, where I always went, always was at Sunday school, and of course, several of us went down to see her come in, see her land. George Strothers, his dad was steamboat captain and pilot, George played the piano and calliope on there. Captain Henry F. Burnside was the captain for awhile.

IB Did you ever do any other work on boats?

BM Yes, ma'am, I made two trips as a deckhand, I went in as second mate, or a watchman, as some called it. And I was lamp trimmer on the old *Robert P. Gillham.* I was mate on the *Eugene Dana Smith.* I didn't have any license,

*Tu-Endie-Wei Park, on the point where the Kanawha joins the Ohio.

*The *Homer Smith* was built in Point Pleasant in 1914, and burned at Pittsburgh in 1931.

but she was under tonnage, and didn't require any license. I was on the *Sally Marmet* quite awhile as second mate. Captain Curry was the captain.

IB Well, you've done a lot of things in your time. What have you enjoyed the most?

BM Well, that's hard to answer. I can tell you the most dissatisfying thing. Being on the river boats wasn't very satisfying. That's the reason I never went on and got any license. You was away from home all the time, and you was confined right there. You got awful good food, and a lot of it, and you got a good bed.

But the most dissatisfying thing was when I was auditor at the state tax department for seven and a half years. I was away from home all the time then, and I didn't like that. Leave here, that oldest girl waving, "Goodbye, Daddy," it would just break your heart. I'd leave home Monday morning, and come back Friday evening. I worked in the Charleston office for I don't know how long, and then I was put out as a deputy, did fieldwork.

IB I believe you're a homebody.

BM Yes, yes indeed! Doc Eshenaur used to say I was a mama's boy, and I said, "I'm proud of that." I'm proud of it.

"Boy, How Things Have Changed!"

Bob McGuffin Recalls Turn-of-the-Century Point Pleasant

Bob McGuffin speaks most enthusiastically of his working days on Point Pleasant's two rivers, but he also has many sparkling recollections of the town itself. Among other memories he recalled the following for interviewer Irene Brand:

I remember when the old Point Pleasant bank burned, but I was out of town at the time. Didn't come back 'til the next morning. They had a terrible time that night, they claimed. Their hose froze up. The city had four carts with hose on them, and volunteers would run and get them out when a fire would break out. They gave you $3 if you answered a fire call.

Around the late 1880's, there was a furniture factory located on the Kanawha River bank at the west side of the mouth of Crooked Creek. I think it burned around the early 1890's. I have heard the family speak of this factory, at which my grandfather Allen Vickers worked.

The old Mason County fairgrounds, now Park Drive, was a familiar sight in my early boyhood. Mr. Robert Liter was owner, trainer, and driver of racehorses. He had two or three real good horses and they put on some very good races.

Elmer Davis ran a meat market on Main Street in the early 1900's, where the H & R Block tax office is now. I remember my mother would go and get 15¢-worth of steak, and that was enough for her, my sister, and myself.

I can remember when what was then called the Merchants National Bank used to be located in a house on Second Street. It was a brick building down where the Moose Club is today. The entrance to the dwelling side was on Second Street and the entrance to the bank was clear around the front, the river side. There was a street where the floodwall is today, River Street.

From there the bank moved up to the IOOF building on the corner across from the post office. Next they moved over to the hotel building, and then they went into their new building. I don't remember when they changed their name to Citizens National.*

Mr. Charlie Bowyer was the cashier then, and Mr. Tol Stribling was the teller. That's what they called them. Mr. John McCulloch, old John McCulloch, was president. I used to see him come down the street with an old hickory walking stick in his hand. I can remember that as a little fellow.

Now they've spread out 'til they employ about 60. Boy, how things have changed!

Tu-Endie-Wei Manor, where Mr. McGuffin now lives, is on the site of his former residence. He's comfortable in his apartment there, but says he didn't want to sell his old house to the city back in the mid-1960's.

I didn't *sell* it. They took it away from me. I held out for a while. But Mr. Biggs* kept at me and I finally said, "I won't stand between you and progress." He told me they had to pay less than $11,000, so I got $10,900 and some.

I had almost sold that house for $10,000, five or six years before that. But when I come home and mentioned it, my dad said, "Well, son, I don't expect to be here much longer and I'd like to spend the rest of my days at home." I said, "Captain, you'll be right here." Everything was arranged except paying the money, and the deed, but I went right back and changed it. We had moved to that place in 1900.

Since he's resided there for more than 90 years, it seemed right to ask Bob McGuffin what he thought of Point Pleasant as a place to live. He answered without any hesitation at all:

Ideal! It's home! Right here you have all the advantages you'd have anyplace else in the world. And there's no place like home!

*The name was changed on August 18, 1928.

*G. A. Biggs was chairman of the City of Point Pleasant Housing Authority at the time.

To spend an afternoon with West Virginia poet Muriel Miller Dressler is to take a small step backward in time. Her St. Albans home is virtually a library brimming over with books from the past, and the lady herself is deeply immersed in the task of trying to salvage a unique way of life. It is the traditional mountain way, which she believes has considerable value for a society now plagued by a lack of simplicity and dignity. Her work, which includes two collections of poetry, Appalachia *and* Appalachia, My Land, *serves as a link between the two worlds.*

A tall, amiable woman in her senior years, Muriel retains a youthful vigor and moves with a grace and confidence imparted to her through a careful upbringing. She is a handsome woman with fair complexion and thoughtful features heightened by softly waving silver hair. Her voice is low and melodious, and her delightful drawl quickly puts listeners at ease. This image of a gentlewoman may not coincide with her reputation as a fierce mountain poet, but appearances can be deceiving, as no one knows better than a mountaineer. Even the casual observer will note Muriel's rather stern outward repose, and the perceptive flash of her keen blue eyes.

Born the last of seven daughters to Joseph and Fannie Miller in the small town of Witcher in Kanawha County, Muriel's roots and those of her ancestors are deeply imbedded in the mountains. Not only has she experienced

"Thank You, Lord, I'm Home!"

An Interview with Poet Muriel Miller Dressler

By Renie Carlson

Photographs by Michael Keller

the thrill of splashing barefoot as a girl through icy mountain streams, but she has also known the hardships peculiar to the Appalachian way of life. She witnessed the growth of the mining industry in West Virginia, and saw it take its toll on the land and people. She responds with such compelling understatements as, "I'm gettin' tard of wearin' black" (from the poem "I Have t' Talk to You"), and with passion such as, "O, go tell the children the mountain is dead" (from "Go Tell The Children"). Like many of her neighbors, she has been visited with more than her share of death; but has been able to bear her loss with a sense of dignity and purpose. It is such dignity and purpose which Muriel attempts to convey to her readers through her use of distinctive imagery and of dialect and mountain idiom.

Muriel's mother had a profound influence on her, and is partly responsible for her strong convictions and sense of identity. Fannie Underwood Miller, through daily readings and recitations from the Bible, poetry, and the classics, instilled in her daughter a love of good literature, and a pride in her land and her heritage. The latter serves as the frequent theme of Muriel's poetry. As she says in the foreword of her first book, Appalachia, My Land, *"If at times my fierce pride asserts itself, I would remind all that this mountaineer has been 'beyond the rise,' and having been is quite content to live in the Appalachian hills. I have tradition and heritage. I am content in this knowing.*

"And so I send you greetings from the hills; as my mother often greeted her neighbors, I offer you an invitation: 'Come set a spell. You're as welcome as the flowers in May.' "

Muriel Dressler. I really can't say just when I began to write. I know I was young, because I wrote poems to Mom and Dad. I would show what I'd written to Mama or to one of my teachers, and one time on a history test I answered a question and made a poem of it. That wasn't easy. My friends wouldn't believe that I used to be a fairly shy child. I would write when it was enough for me just to know that I had done it. But I turned into a West Virginia ham.

Renie Carlson. Do you remember when you published your first poem?

MD Yes, it was in a newspaper in Staunton, Virginia, years ago. Remember when I told you about answering the question on the history test in rhyme? Well, it intrigued the teacher and she asked if she could send it in. I can't remember dates, but it was many years ago.

RC In a newspaper story you once said that "My mountain mother is the strongest image in my life." Tell us about her.

MD My mother was Fannie Underwood from West Union in Doddridge County. She loved to read. She read the classics and could recite poetry by the hour. Mother would even use poetry when admonishing us for being naughty. We would much rather have had a spanking and gone on about our business. Mother read all the great masters. I have some of her books. She read all the old McGuffey's Readers. A lot of people underestimate McGuffey Readers because they don't know what they contain. Sure, according to standards today, they had a lot of corn in them. But 100 years from now someone will look back at this age and say, "Boy, how corny can you get!" The thing I'd like for us to do is to remember that each generation builds upon the preceding one.

RC Did any other members of your family write?

MD No, but they loved to read. When one of my sisters died, I was surprised when I went through some of her books. I cried when I read the titles of some of them, because I thought, "Oh, Sister, how could anyone ever know you if they didn't go through some of your old books? I thought I knew you, and yet I didn't know that your favorite type of reading was all about knights and ladies and lords."

I have so many old books myself. I've got stacks of them packed away. I enjoy getting them out and going through them. They really used to have class when they put books together. You couldn't afford that kind of printing now. But I love the paperbacks because they brought the classics down to the very people who needed them. Not everyone could afford to pay a fortune for a book.

I was always exposed to good literature. Even when I was a child and we would come into Charleston to the library, I was so fortunate in that the librarians were always nice ladies, and they sort of guided you as to what would be good for a girl of your age.

RC I would also like to get a picture of your father. Could you tell us something about him?

MD My father was, you could say, a "Jack of all trades." My mother was the dominating force. Men worked away from home a lot. My father worked at the work available, in coal mining, in timbering, in the oil fields and shipyards, on the barges. He followed the work.

He wasn't home all that much. He was home, but children go to bed early, and years ago men worked more than eight hours a day. My mother took

care of all the punishing. She was a tremendous lady, and you can emphasize the lady part. I was more like my father in that I was quick to be temperamental.

RC Were you particularly close to any of your sisters?

MD Well, yes, I was close to all my sisters, but I had two that were really close. My sister Jo and my sister Fannie. We were the ones that argued over hair ribbons, and whose turn it was to do the dishes, and whose to black the stove. We took care of our rooms and helped with the sweeping, mopping, and canning. I wrote a poem about the canning years ago. I wrote, "I wish Mason jars were hung on the Mason-Dixon line." I was the baby in the family and my hand fit in the jar, so I had to do the jar washing. Then Mama would put them on the fence palings. But you know, no child wants to do the things that have to do with labor when the hills are there and the creek is running. We were regular tomboys.

Now I only have one sister living. So you see, being the youngest in the family can be a little heartbreaking, too.

We were like most of the people in the area. We didn't have all the money in the world. When Mama took us anyplace we would ride the train. Sometimes when the train vendor would come through with his little basket of things Mama would tell us not to ask for anything, because she knew she didn't have the money to buy things for us. Mama was a very proud woman.

I suppose we were just about like most of the people, and no one really had a lot then. You had large gardens and you had to watch what little money your husband made.

Above: At work on a television special for WSWP-TV at Grandview State Park. Photographer unknown.

Below: Mrs. Dressler writes of everyday people, but her work has brought her into contact with celebrities. Here she greets the late Will Geer, TV's "Grandpa Walton," at Kanawha Airport. Photographer unknown.

RC Tell us a little about your own husband.

MD My husband is a wonderful man. We have had many happy years together. He's a native West Virginian. We have one son and one grandson, who are also native West Virginians. After all, that's the best way to be!

RC Why do you write poetry in the dialect of the Appalachian region?

MD Because it says what the people say! If I use the dramatic monologue, I can allow my characters to use the language of the early mountaineers. I write a lot of idiom poetry mainly to show my grandson. When I would come up with an expression, he would say, "Grandmother, where did you hear that?" Then I have to go back and tell him, "When I was a little girl. . . ."

I'm all for progress. Time does not stand still and that's good. Things should progress and get better. But I often wonder if some progress is really better.

Television is the main outlet for the young child today. His toys are all mechanically run. I do think it's good for children to get out and play as we did years ago. But then, where do the children go now? Everything is run by counselors in recreation centers. Rural children do still get out, but even in rural areas, the children have become preoccupied with radio and television. I like to tell young people, "There's nothing wrong with television. I like television. However, it does all the work." I tell them to read.

I think, certainly, in the schools today the children are alert. Most of them are very alert. It's just that there are parents who allow television to be the babysitter, instead of letting the children do something. Television is all cut and dried. It does everything for you. I do think some of the children's programs, like "Captain Kangaroo" and "Sesame Street," are good, and educational television has a lot of good programs for children. I'm grateful for that. But I think we all need to do something ourselves, have an outlet for our own creative juices.

I can tell you exactly how my childhood evenings were spent after the work was done. In winter my mother would gather us all around the fire, get some apples in her big apron, and tell stories, read the Bible, and recite poetry. We had a family close to us with a lot of children, and these children would all come over because they loved to hear mother recite, read, tell ghost stories, and sing ballads.

In the summer we played outside. When I was a little girl the saltworks at Malden were working a good bit, with huge piles of salt, and we used to play on the salt. Of course, we got all wet. We also went in abandoned coal mines after being told not to. But

Mrs. Dressler advises aspiring writers to "write it and send it in, wherever you can get it published. I think the great mountain writer Jesse Stuart put it very well when he said, 'Pick up your pencil!' "

you know children, even the best of them. Parents tell them, "Don't do this or that," but they have to try it.

I remember going up the creek picking wildflowers, gathering nuts in the fall, and blackberry time. I can't ever remember it being boring. There always seemed to be something that you had to do. We worked in the garden, helped bring in the wood, all those things.

Getting back to the dialogue, the idiom, of the people: They were never content to just call a man a liar or a cheat or a thief. They embellished it! And this made for some of the most delightful language in the world. People in the Appalachian region have a dialect all their own. I don't think it sounds strange. I get a lot of mail from all over; not only West Virginia, but from all areas of the country remarking on my usage of dialect.

It just fascinates me when I go into schools and give the students some of the old sayings. First of all, I tell them that I realize that language has changed; and that's good, because if it didn't we would still be using "thee" and "thou." Every time the language changes I think we get something from it. My basic idea was to keep the idiom, the heritage the mountain people have, as a good thing, not to apologize for the mannerisms of speech.

I think we, as Appalachians, are a unique people. Sometimes in our eagerness to please the rest of the world we want to say, "Yes, we're exactly like you." I just don't want us to throw the baby out with the bath water. Let's keep what is Appalachian. Of course, people will say, "You speak two brands of English." Possibly! What's wrong with that?

The old mountaineer pronounced "I" as "oi," and gave you "pisen" for "poison," and so forth. People outside the area have a little problem understanding that, but I just tell them that if they'll keep in mind the Elizabethan influence, and stir it and mix it well, they'll get the mountain lingo. I tell them that it's a colorful language. Where else would you hear, "He's like a bull frog. What ain't belly is head and that's mostly mouth," and of course, we've all heard this one, "I'm too poor to paint and too proud to whitewash."

These are the things I've heard all my life. They fascinate me. As you

"Stranger, You Don't Know Me"

Selected Poems by Muriel Miller Dressler

Go Tell the Children

Go tell the children the mountain is trembling,
An earth-moving monster is eating its way
Through grape vines and shumate and wild laurel thickets
And even Sweet William has fallen prey.

Go tell the children their true love is dying,
The whippoorwill's song no more shall they know;
Go tell the children to bow down in sorrow;
The fullness of mountains—of mountains must go!

Go tell the children to weap for the passing
Of red bud and sarvis—a sight to be seen!
Tell them to hang down their heads in their sorrow
As they sing, "Green gravel, the grass is so green."

The flowers of the fringetree are blacker than midnight,
The blue fruit now lies on the crust of dead earth;
No more shall white flowers hang down like fringes;
O, go tell the children I weep at their birth!

Go tell the children that trailing arbutus
Lies in cold ashes of campfires once red,
That pipestem and spicebush now yield to the slaughter;
O, go tell the children the mountain is dead!

Aunt Suzie and the Preacher

The preacher said, "She gaums her face
With powder, like a strumpet.
She won't get in them pearly gates
When Gabriel blows his trumpet!"

And two rows back Aunt Suzie clicked
Brown-stained teeth and said, "Amen!
She hadn't ought to do them things
Seein' it's a mortal sin."

"You petticoatin' chasin' men
Seekin' out fast company
Had better straighten up your rows."
Suzie, amened and agreed.

From *Appalachia*, published by MHC Publications, Charleston, copyright 1977.
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"You younguns sowin' your wild oats
Had best list to my teachin'."
Aunt Suzie said, "In all my life,
I ain't heard better preachin'."

The preacher said, "And rubbin' snuff
Leads to a soul's unsettlin'."
Aunt Suzie said, "He's gone hog-wild!
Stopped preachin'. Started meddlin'."

Appalachia

I am Appalachia! In my veins
Runs fierce mountain pride: the hill-fed streams
Of passion; and, stranger, you don't know me!
You've analyzed my every move—you still
Go away shaking your head. I remain
Enigmatic. How can you find rapport with me—
You, who never stood in the bowels of hell,
Never felt a mountain shake and open its jaws
To partake of human sacrifice?
You, who never stood on a high mountain,
Watching the sun unwind its spiral rays;
Who never searched the glens for wild flowers,
Never picked mayapples or black walnuts; never ran
Wildly through the woods in pure delight,
Nor dangled your feet in a lazy creek?
You, who never danced to wild sweet notes,
Outpourings of nimble-fingered fiddlers;
Who never just "sat a spell" on a porch,
Chewing and whittling; or hearing in pastime
The deep-throated bay of chasing hounds
And hunters shouting with joy, "he's treed!"
You, who never once carried a coffin
To a family plot high upon a ridge
Because mountain folk know it's best to lie
Where breezes from the hills whisper, "you're home;"
You, who never saw from the valley that graves on a hill
Bring easement of pain to those below?
I tell you, stranger, hill folk know
What life is all about; they don't need pills
To tranquilize the sorrow and joy of living.
I am Appalachia: and, stranger,
Though you've studied me, you still don't know.

I Have t' Talk to You

Well, John, I'm here again. I wuz lonesome;
Now please, don't scold fer all it's after nine;
I know that decent folks are all a sleepin'
But honey, I jest had to talk to you.
This burden in my heart kept on a pressin'
And I couldn't sleep; I went out in the yard,
Fer somethin' told me if I shared it with you
It wouldn't seem to bear down quite so hard.
Now John, you know in times of trouble
That you're the rock of comfort to my soul,
And honey, that's the only reason
I got out of bed and come up to this knoll.
Do you recall, John, when we laid our least one
Up here one greenin' spring I found no peace?
And your a tellin' me to bear my sorrow
Couldn't make that sinkin' feelin' cease.
I know right off the bat our boy wuz different,
But I wanted him to live fer he wuz our'n,
And so it shames me when I hear them sayin'
That I was do-less; I didn't mean no harm
To come to him, leastways I don't think it's true;
My mind is quiled like an adder's twistin',
Fer I loved him jest as much as I love you.
The neighbors narrer eyes all seem to foller
Me around condemnin' the disgrace
Of our youngest child a bein' smothered;
And a wonderin' 'bout that piller on his face.
Their tongues went slith'rin like a rattler's
Vexed forkin'! John, wuz I keerless like they say?
Did I *wish* him dead in my heart's yearnin'?
Will the Lord hold it agin me on His Day?
Yes, I know I prayed that he would go afore me,
But that ain't the same as wishin' he were dead;
So you can see, John, why it's so perplexin'!
And that's the reason I got it in my head.
I didn't understand it when they told me
When he wuz borned that water on his brain
Caused his head to keep a growin'
Whilst his body didn't. Yes, it wuz a strain
To tend his needs, but John, I done it;
And I'd do it all again if he were back;
There's too much of me here on this hillside,
And John, I'm gettin' tard of wearin' black.

Muriel Dressler is a strong mountain woman, in a long line of such women. "Mama was very proud," she says.

travel from state to state you find a lot of these things with variation. I love to go to New York. There are so many dialects there, and in Boston there are many dialects. To me this is America. Why try to make everybody the same?

If you understand a little about our lingual heritage, you know it basically comes from the Scotch-Irish, the English, German, and Welsh. People came from all areas, especially the depressed parts of the world, to mine coal, work in the lumbering camps, etc. Can you imagine when children would play together from all these different cultures? You know, they absorb languages much more quickly than you and I do. So the dialects began to mix.

When I was very small, my mother would say, "Now young lady, don't be brigety." That meant don't be too big for your britches, or don't show off. That's Scottish. My husband's people were German, my father's also. My mother's people were English, Irish, and Scots. I'm like what the old mountain man says about his smoking tobacco—a "Duke's mixture." That's what the mountain people are—a mixture of all the people who came in to settle the area.

I take my mother as my authority. I tell the kids today that my mama was an unpublished lexicographer. She had the most fascinating language that was a mixture of old English and of the old ballads. My mother said one thing to me that I will remember all my life. If she thought I was going to do something unladylike or unseemly, she would say, "If you do that, child, you will sup sorrow." And I often wondered how you could sup, or drink, sorrow. All through my poem, "Madonna," I used the expressions that came from the Bible, because my mother brought me up with all those old books of the Bible, the sayings of the prophets. She felt she couldn't improve on that.

I think we need to be proud of what we are. Certainly we have areas that need change. I don't know of an area of America that doesn't need change. There are probably areas in every state where the residents of the state sort of close their eyes and say, "I wish this was not in my state."

That reminds me when, years ago, I was riding along with some people from out of state. We passed some old gentleman's house with some people sitting on the porch—you know, just rocking back and forth. Someone said, "Don't you feel sorry for them? They think they're happy!" Well, you know, all at once the humor of that struck me. "They *think* they're happy?" I said. "Well, isn't happiness a state of mind?"

"But they've never heard a symphony, or maybe she's never had an orchid," my friend said.

Well, life does not consist of a symphony or an orchid. Those things are nice to have, but there are other things in life. I'm sure we all have looked at other people and made remarks. I've probably done it myself because I think something is strange or not what we consider to be proper conduct. You see, what would make you happy might not move me to any great ecstatic state at all.

I think I find my greatest satisfaction when I recall all the things from the era in which I grew up—Mama talking to her mother, and she telling her things that happened in the family years ago. My grandmother was married during the Civil War, and she lived with us for a while. I was all ears, and Mama said I was all mouth. I always asked a lot of questions. And then later, when I would think about these things, it was just natural for me to put them down on a piece of paper.

You take back years ago in my mother's time, for instance. I've heard my mother say it would be 20 miles to your nearest neighbor. Should an independent mountaineer want to be isolated, he isolated himself. Distance was measured by "a whoop and a holler," and they had horns that they would blow to summon those neighbors from far away. They were people who liked space. They didn't like being on top of their neighbors. And on top of their neighbors meant 20 miles. I'm a firm believer in every man to his own mind as to what constitutes his happiness.

I love the rugged individualism of the mountain people. Now I'm not saying that other people don't have it. If you read, you know they do. But I just love the closeness of kin, clan loyalty, and courtesy. I think most of the time West Virginians are a courteous people. We hear so much from outsiders saying, "I like these people." And we are a peace-loving people.

I enjoy going out of state, but I'm always too happy to come home because my roots are here. Joseph's Mill, West Virginia, was named after my great-great-grandfather, and Frank's Run was named after my Uncle Frank Smith. I don't apologize to anyone for my background or heritage and when I hit the mountains I breathe a little sigh and say, "Thank you, Lord! I'm home!"

Roy and Regina D'Ariano welcome our photographer to their Fairmont home.

Crossing Over

The D'Arianos Come to West Virginia

By Paul F. Wachholz

Photographs by Ron Rittenhouse

Roy and Regina D'Ariano of Fairmont have lived in West Virginia longer than most natives, but they were born far from our mountains, in the Italian province of Benevento. Roy immigrated in 1912, established himself as a shoemaker in Monongah, and brought sister Regina over after World War I. The two have worked as a team since that time, building a comfortable life together in their new land.

The D'Arianos came from a middle class family in Italy. They thought their prospects would be brighter in America, but they were not driven here by poverty. Either could have expected to fare well in the home village of San Bartolomeo, and that fact itself made the decision to leave particularly difficult. It seems to have been especially hard for Regina, who left against her parents' wishes and remembers agonizing "What have I done?"

Nonetheless, like millions of other immigrants, the D'Arianos made that hard choice. Today, there is no doubt that both they and their adopted country are the better for it, for they have been productive, successful citizens. In this interview they recall that exciting period of more than 60 years ago, when brother and sister left home to make a new start in a new world.

Paul F. Wachholz. Roy, how did you decide to come to America?

Roy D'Ariano. To start with, when I was a boy after having gone along with my father to Argentina, I came back to Italy with him. My father then told me it would be better if I learned a trade. So, in the morning I went to school and in the afternoon I went to a shoe shop to learn the trade.

The Italian people who were in America wanted to come back to Italy—because, you know, the idea was to come to America, make yourself a few dollars, then go back to Italy and buy yourself a little land. Then they'd have their own farm and make a better living. These people, they came back to Italy, telling about America. Bragging how much better it was there than in Italy. At the time the Italian farmer only made about 20¢ a day—that's a *lira*, you know. So I thought, "Oh, my God, five *lira* in America, that's a lot of money!" I thought, well, there were too many shoemakers. At that time there were 300 apprentices in town and I thought to myself, I said, "If all these 300 boys become shoemakers and start their own shop, there's going to be too many shoemakers in town and nobody's going to make anything."

So I said, "It's time to do something else." By that time I had learned the trade, and at 15 I made my first pair of shoes for myself to come to America. So I asked my father about it. He said, "What, go to America? You know that takes a *man*!"

I said, "I don't know about that. I think I'll go to America. I've learned a trade now and I can make a little money in the trade and I still want to go to school. I'm young now and in a couple more years I'll be too old to learn the English language. Now that I'm 15 it would probably be a good time." I couldn't go to a foreign country before I was 16, anyway. Even then, I had to have a man to take care of me to get out of Italy. So a man who was going to America with a certain group of people agreed to take care of me until we got to New York. Then after that I'd be on my own.

Left: The young shoemaker in 1916. Roy had been in West Virginia less than two years when this portrait was made. Photographer unknown.
Below: After Roy went to America Regina remained in Italy for several years. Here she is (at left) in 1916 with brother Giulio and their father and mother. Photographer unknown.

I was 16, 16 in May and I started in December. On the eighth of December I left home. That was 1912. So I left home in the morning and I kissed my father and as I got on the bus, he gave me a punch in the back and he said, "You had better be a man." I didn't pay much attention to that because I didn't understand what he meant.

I started on the bus and we went to Naples. From Naples we took a boat and came to New York. That boat was a German named *Moltk.* It was a large steamship. What they spoke was German.

PFW What sort of accommodations did you have?

ROY Oh, very good accommodations. My accommodation was very little because I was traveling third class. You don't have a bed. There's a hold and you go down there and there's no sheets. Just a bunk and a hard mattress, probably of straw. No pillow, anything like that.

PFW How was the food?

ROY Very good and a little wine with it. I remember the number of my passport. We were all in line and I remember one of the officers, was a German officer. He was collecting these passports and he read the number on the passport and I remember him saying, "*zweihundertzweiundzwanzig*"—222. That was the number of my passport. So we arrived in New York.

It took us 13 days. We had a storm, a terrible storm. Four days from New York.

PFW Did you get seasick?

ROY No, I didn't, but a lot of them did. Vomiting all over the place.

PFW Do you remember what the passage cost?

ROY I think about 200 *lira*, about $40.

PFW Tell about your arrival in New York, please.

ROY We went to the Island, Ellis Island. Saw the "Lady in the Harbor" from the deck. But it was real cold, was in December and I didn't have an overcoat. I thought we didn't need one here, thought it was like Italy. From the deck I looked at New York. We got there that evening and stayed overnight on the boat. And I saw all the lights. Never saw so many lights in all my life.

Next morning we went to the Island and got off the boat. We went into a big hall and when we arrived, at certain desks were girls and women in their 20's and 30's distributing a package with lunch. My package was an orange, a bologna sandwich, a boiled egg, an apple, and some cheese, probably. The company paid for that. It was free.

We didn't see anybody but the passengers. Nobody was permitted to be there, only passengers. I was acquainted with others on my boat, from all over Europe, not only Italians. There were Germans, French, English, Czechoslovakians, Rumanians—people from all over Europe.

We got there, then we got this lunch. We ate the lunch and then they had

placards all over the place, signs being carried on a pole, telling the state where you were supposed to go. When my time came I read the sign saying, "Pennsylvania, Greensburg, Pennsylvania." I got behind the sign and the man gathered all these people that went on the train. We went to the train and got on.

We went to Pittsburgh that evening and the next morning we got to our destinations. There we met some people, *paisanos** of ours, and the man that was to take care of me. 'Course, I followed him all the time and he knew some of the people from Italy. He went into a bar, and of course, I went with him. I thought the bartender was gonna run me out because I was so young and small. But he said, "That's okay."

Then we were supposed to go to a mining camp. A building contractor from our hometown came at the same time and I decided I'd go with him if I couldn't get anything else. He took us to the town where we were to work. That night we visited some people there and they set us up with a bed. The next morning was the day before Christmas. The day after Christmas we went to work.

In Greensburg Roy worked building track for coke ovens. He started at 7 a.m. December 26, 1912. He carried mortar to bricklayers, for which he made $1.65 per day. He got 10¢ less than the regular wage of $1.75 because he was young and small, but he didn't care—it was good money for him. That lasted a year. Then he worked outside with a coal company for six or seven months, after which he rented a room behind a barbershop and made a living as a shoemaker and shoe repairman until the barber left.

He went to Youngstown, Ohio, attracted by the factories and night schools. For six months, while attending school, he went to the hiring hall every day, only to see the sign "We are not hiring today." His money was getting low and this was the "Panic of 1914," with many people out of work. A man from Kent, Ohio, needed men for railroad maintenance. Roy was afraid he was too small, but he was willing, and he got the job. He worked on the railroad for five months and was laid off in November. He then went on to Canton, Ohio, for a month.

In late December of 1914 he received a letter from his brother who lived in Fairmont, inviting him to spend the Christmas holidays there. This brother was a harnessmaker by trade, but found little demand for his services in America and was forced to take employment as a mechanic in the railroad roundhouse.

While in Fairmont Roy looked around for work. A glass factory offered 50¢ per day, too little to meet expenses. Roy took a job at a shoe shop for $6 per week. His brother suggested he ask for $10, as $6 hardly covered food and rent. The shop owner refused to give Roy the raise so he quit on Saturday. On the following Monday the shop owner hired another helper for $4 per week.

PFW You lost that job because you were outbid as a shoemaker's helper in Fairmont?

ROY Yeah, somebody else got the job because I had asked for $10 and he offered to work for $4 a week. Well, then I went to another shoemaker in Fairmont and asked him if I could help him a little. He said I could because he was pretty busy. So I worked there, but without pay. He said, "Listen, there's a place in Monongah that was occupied by a jewelry man." The jewelry shop had been there for two years and for some reason they moved out into another place. Now this place was vacant. He said, "You can go over there and rent that little place. I don't think the rent is very much."

So I went up. I told my brother—he was six years older than I was—and he said, "I'll take you out." We talked to the owner and asked him, "How much you want for rent?" He said, "Not much, about $5 a month." So I started to work.

I wasn't getting very much work until this big man came to me. He asked me if I couldn't make new shoes. I said yes. He said, "Can you? How old are you?" I told him I was about 17 or 18. He said, "How come so young? Can you make new shoes?" He said, "I went to Pittsburgh many a time and they couldn't fit me." And he said, "If you make me some new shoes and they don't fit, what then?" I said, "You don't pay, you can take the shoes home without paying."

The D'Arianos cited better educational opportunities as a major reason for emigrating. Both acquired college degrees in West Virginia.

*Used in this sense, "paisanos" means people from the same area of Italy.

He said, "All right, then, make me a good fitting pair of shoes." I took the measurements and I saw that he had bunions and a lot of calluses and I said to myself, "I'll have to make a last for his foot." I asked him what size shoes he wore. He said that it was eight and a half, triple E. That's something you can't buy, is triple E. You have to make your own. He asked when they would be ready and I asked him to give me at least a week's time.

So I made a last and I took a measurement of every callus and bunion he had. I made this last to reach every callus and bunion. Then I put a piece of leather at each point, so that whenever he'd put the shoe on, each callus would fit in a vacant place. I made the shoes and they looked like those you bought in the store, nice and shiny. They were beautiful shoes, made of goat skin. They're soft, real soft.

So he came in and said, "They look nice, what did you do, buy them in a store?" I said, "If you can't get them in Pittsburgh, how you gonna buy them here?" He laughed and I told him to go ahead and try them on.

He tried them on. He slammed his foot on the floor. He weighed 300 pounds. Was a big man. He walked around a little bit. Bang!—he slammed that foot, a 300-pound man. I was afraid he'd tear up the floor—a big man like that slamming his foot, anything is liable to happen. He didn't say anything. I said, "Well, how did that feel?" He didn't talk much. He took them off and said, "How much are they?" I said, "Eleven dollars." He looked me straight in my eye. He asked me again how old I was and I said I was 18. He said, "How come a little boy like you can make shoes like that? I couldn't get anyone in Pittsburgh to fit me." I didn't say anything and he gave me $11.

I asked him if he wanted a box. He said no, that was okay, and he took the shoes by the uppers and he went out the door. He paraded down the street and he stopped in every store. He told them what beautiful shoes they were and how wonderful fitting. He told my story and told how he couldn't get any in Pittsburgh. After that the work began to come in.

He was the chief of police. He liked me, too, for some reason. But then he came one day to collect taxes and I didn't know anything about the law. So I gave him a dollar for the head tax he was collecting. A man came in and said, "I saw you give a dollar to the chief of police. You're not 21 years old yet." When the chief of police came back I asked him to give me my dollar back. He said, "That's right!" Gave me my dollar back.

While the young shoemaker was establishing himself in business in West Virginia, his parents and siblings continued their life in the Benevento province in the mountains of the Italian peninsula. Between the Mediterranean and the Adriatic, their home village was located in the hinterland of the beautiful port city of Naples.

Regina at home in Italy at age 15. Photographer unknown, 1917.

Roy's sister Regina was still at home, and she recalls that period.

PFW Do you remember the day that Roy left Italy to make his fortune in America?

Regina D'Ariano. I was sleeping upstairs. We had a store downstairs and upstairs Mother kept only the beds in order to see the children were around her. I heard so much noise. It must have been around 6:00 and I woke up and I saw so many people coming in and out and I remembered that my brother Roy—or Rizieri—was going to leave for the United States. I was too young a child and didn't understand too much. I thought he was going to *Napoli* [Naples] or *Roma* [Rome] and I thought he'd be coming back soon, but when I went downstairs I saw my mom was crying and Daddy, too. The bus was just a few paces away from our store, I remember.

Then I remember the whole day the people were coming to the store and telling us that "I bet you're going to miss Rizieri very much." But our mother, she was such a strong character. She didn't want to show her feelings and she said "Yes, but he is a good boy and I'm sure that he's going to do fine." But I could see that her eyes were full of tears.

Then we waited until the first letter came. He said he arrived in the United States well, he's well and he's working, but he would never say how hard his work was, or if he had a hard time. He never said much, I remember reading his letters.

My mother used to say he spent all his money to send the letter, for just two lines! But he was typing and that takes up less space, just a few lines, that's all I remember. When the war came I remember he said, "Don't write me in the United States because at a certain time I'm going to France. God willing," he said, "I'll have the chance to come to Benevento in Italy."

PFW Would you please tell us about your life in Italy?

REGINA The people had to work in our vineyard and then there were four ladies who had to wash clothes for my momma. They used to wash clothes in the river and they used to take me along because I always enjoyed outside activities. Then we used to go to the vineyard, those ladies as well as men. Some had a mule, some had a donkey, and they were carrying the hoe. Some rode the mule, some would walk and talk and sing. They were happy people. They'd eat their breakfast of cheese and ham while they were walking to work. I was a funny girl, inquiring all the time, "What is this? What is that?", just like any other children. They loved to have me around because they said, "She's so inquisitive." But that's the only way I learned.

Now we went to wash the clothes in the river. The ladies put the clothes in a big basket and they had soap. Mother used to bake round bread and sometimes she cut the center of the bread out about four inches and put in fried peppers. She'd send some cheese from the store and some oranges. Sometimes they were a little

tainted and she'd cut that out. She'd put them in a white cloth. A lady carried that in her basket and she'd put some wine in a little keg, maybe two quarts, and then we'd get to the river.

Now here's the way they washed the clothes: There was a certain place with a slow current and clean with a gravel bottom. They then would bring a big stone to the bank and put some straw behind it to kneel on. Then we'd wash on the stone and in the water. Sometimes after they finished washing there'd be tiny fish that I would try to catch. But they were slithery and hard to catch. I was ready anytime to go to the river or to the vineyard.

My daddy owned a mill and this mill would grind corn and wheat for the town. He had to feed the machine with lots of wood. We had also a lumber camp for charcoal which we sold at the store. I remember his saying we had to get coal for the steam boiler from Germany. It was hard coal that came from Germany.

When the war broke out my brother [in Italy] had to go to the army. My sister died. We had another sister who was a nun and had been many years in Naples and she came back home to get the fresh air of our hometown. She died also in 1916 and everything seemed to go from bad to worse.

PFW Where in Italy was this little town?

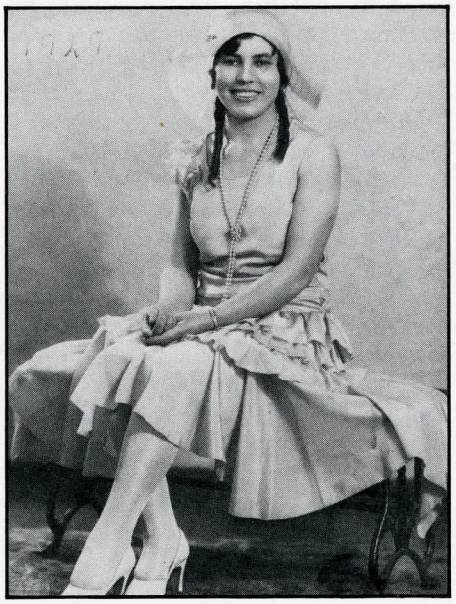
REGINA San Bartolomeo in Galdo, Provincia Benevento, Estado Napolitano, 60 miles from the Adriatic in the center of the mountains in the middle of the peninsula.

The climate was like it is here now, but it never did freeze. The mountains there were sloping and we used to raise corn and wheat. At my time we raised more wheat than any other town around. 'Course, today it's all different.

Meanwhile, Roy D'Ariano, who proved his professional mettle by making the comfortable and attractive shoes for the 300-pound police chief, began to prosper in Monongah from 1915 to 1917. But the whole world then lived in the shadow of World War I, which saw Italy allied with England and France. President Wilson declared our formal entry into the war against Germany and the Central Powers on April 6, 1917. Shortly thereafter posters of Uncle Sam pointing at whoever cared to look, and saying "I want you!" were seen on the walls of post offices throughout the land.

As an Italian citizen, Roy had the choice of returning to his homeland and serving in the armed forces of our Italian ally or answering the call to serve under the Stars and Stripes of his new country. Roy chose the latter and became an American doughboy.

ROY Registration was in 1917. In the year after that I got a card that I was eligible for the army and that they were going to call me whenever things got ready. So, finally, I got the card that I was to get to a certain place for examination. I took the examination and



Regina as a West Virginia bridesmaid in 1929. Photographer unknown.

waited four or five months and then I got the notice to be inducted in the army on the second of April 1918.

I got ready, closed the shop, because every other shoemaker went to the army too, and there was no shoemaker to fill the shop. I just closed the shop and went to Camp Lee.

While we were in Camp Lee, we were placed with other boys in a battalion that was to furnish men to other companies that were depleted so that they would come to full strength. I was in this replacement battalion about 40 days. Then I was put in the 80th Division, 310 Regiment of Infantry in Company H of riflemen. After 40 days, then, we embarked for France. We crossed the ocean in two weeks, and had to watch for submarines. There were lots of ships sunk. We were really fortunate.

Roy D'Ariano's war service was short but hellish (see the accompanying "A West Virginian's War Stories"). His unit started moving back from the front on November 12, 1918, the day after the Armistice was signed, but was ordered to winter over in France before leaving for home the following spring.

ROY In May 1919 we left France and got into New York after two weeks. From there we went to Camp Chillicothe, where I was discharged on June 14. Then I came back and started to work again. Later on my sister came from home. I sent her to school, and after I made a little money I rented the shop and went to school myself.

PFW Regina, what was going on with the D'Ariano family in Italy while Roy was with the American Expeditionary Force in France?

REGINA Roy wrote that he was going to France to serve under the flag of America rather than under the flag of Italy. For eight months we didn't hear a word about him. So many young men had gone to America and were fighting under the United States flag. We heard of so many people dying. When they heard that, everybody in town would dress up in black. We lived in fear, Mother, Dad, and I. My other brother was in France, too. We would just pray to God and try to make other people comfortable.

We were having a hard time living at home. We couldn't get people to work for us. We had to do the work ourselves. Mom and Dad were getting old, too, up in their 60's, and I was the only girl. With those fevers, malaria and typhoid fever, and the influenza I had, I was supposed to have been dead.

When the war came to an end we got a letter from France that Roy was to come to Italy for two weeks vacation under the order of the American government to pay us a visit before going back to the United States.

ROY Well, yes, I want to tell you why. At that time I was promised to go to Italy by my captain. Then my captain was promoted to major and transferred and I was transferred from H Company to Headquarters Company in the band. The new officers didn't know me from Adam so when I went to tell them I'd like to have a

furlough to Italy because my parents were living in Italy, they said, "No, you can't go, because we're due to go back to the United States in a month."

REGINA Yes, we finally got a letter from France saying that, "We're leaving tomorrow for the States and I'm sorry that I wasn't given the furlough to come to Italy."

Well, we all cried and felt very, very bad and my dad said, "I don't think I'll ever see my son again." He said, "I prayed so much to God and the Virgin Mary for those children to be safe and now he's getting far away from me and I know that I'll never be able to see him again."

I didn't know my own mind at the time, because I had so many young men asking for my hand to be married. They told my mother but I said, "No, no, I want to leave Italy and go to the United States." They all made fun of me and said, "Why do you want to go to the United States? People who were in the United States come back to Italy because things there were hard."

I said, "I don't care. What I want to do is go to school. Learn a little more. I haven't had the chance since I was 11 years old." The fifth was the top grade we had in Italy. So I insisted, "I don't want to get married. I want to see the world."

So then I started to write my cousin, Doctor D'Ariano. He told my mother and father that the way for me to get over malaria was to cross a big body of water. I said the only big body of water that I knew was the Atlantic Ocean. I wrote to Roy. He answered that America was not for me. Not to come. My parents said, "You'll not get anything from us to go. You can walk there if you like, but nothing from us." We had a fight about it.

My brother in Italy was getting married in October and I told my mother and father that his wife could take my place. She could especially help because she was a country girl and could do much more than I could. They said, "No, remember, she is our daughter-in-law and you are our daughter." Oh, then I had a great fight.

Roy was scared. He said, "If she comes here and in this Monongah, which is nothing but a mining camp, she might marry one of those men here. Well, what kind of life will she lead?" He was afraid that instead of getting something better it will get worse. "She'll go down to the level of the peasants." In my hometown, it was like this: You marry people in better condition than you are; if you are a country person, you marry a country person. If you are white collar, you marry a white collar.

But finally he sent me the paper I needed and then I needed money. I had a dowry my mother and father had put into the bank for my marriage. They also had my trousseau. I told them, "This is my dowry, you better give it to me, because I have to pay for my passport." They said they would not give it to me, "because you're not going."

Then I wrote to Roy and I said that I needed the money to come. He said he had some of his own money in the bank and I could have that. So my parents changed their mind. The dowry was left there and somebody else used it.

There was this man, a good friend of ours who was taking care of things. He said, "Regina, don't worry, honey, I'll take care of everything and you'll go."

I was supposed to go in January. On the first day of December he came over from his office and he said, "Regina, I have a vacancy on this ship called *Regina d'Italia.* Would you like to go to America and spend Christmas Day with your brother?"

I was delighted, but at that time I was so confused. I did not know. Finally, I told Mom and Pop and they started to cry and said, "At least you ought to have Christmas with us, with our new daughter-in-law and your brother."

I said I had this chance now.

I got things ready and sent all the stuff to Naples. Then I had to go to pass a test. Daddy came with me to the bus to Naples. The next day we came back. I was to leave home on the third of December to be in the city on the fifth of December to go through all the stuff there to get to the ship.

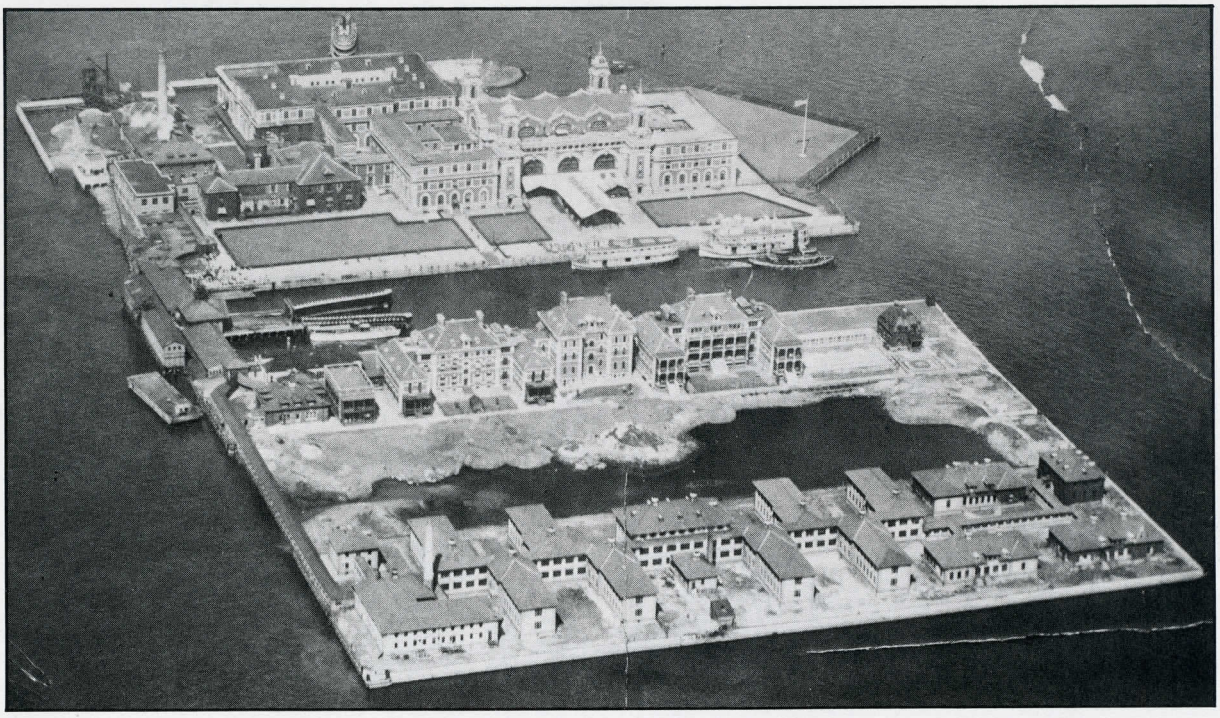
On the morning I was going to leave, there were about 13 young men leaving San Bartolome to come to America. They were all country people. One young boy was a shoemaker and he was about a year younger than I was. His mother said, "My son is going to take care of you." I said, "I'll take care of him, too." I was about 19 and he was 18.

When I left home that morning, the place was packed, all over the store and all over the house. There were hundreds of people and I was afraid, because the house was old, that we were going to fall down through the floor into the basement.

I was crying, because Daddy kissed me. I saw Mother crying and she said, "Daughter Regina, you're going to break my heart. Why don't you stay home?" If I wasn't strong enough I would have said, "Goodbye, America, I can't go, I'll stay home." I don't know why my mother and father took this so hard. When we left, people were crying. I thought I was dead instead of alive.

I started thinking, "Oh, I'm leaving Italy? I'm leaving my home, my momma and poppa, my brother and sister-in-law, all my relatives and friends. Where have I been, what have I done?" I was so confused.

Regina has had a lifelong talent for needlework, and busied herself with such work during her first homesick days in America. "I was busy sewing, making beautiful doilies," she recalls. "I wanted to see the house look like a little church."



Ellis Island, the U.S. Immigration Station in New York Harbor. Date and photographer unknown, courtesy American Museum of Immigration.

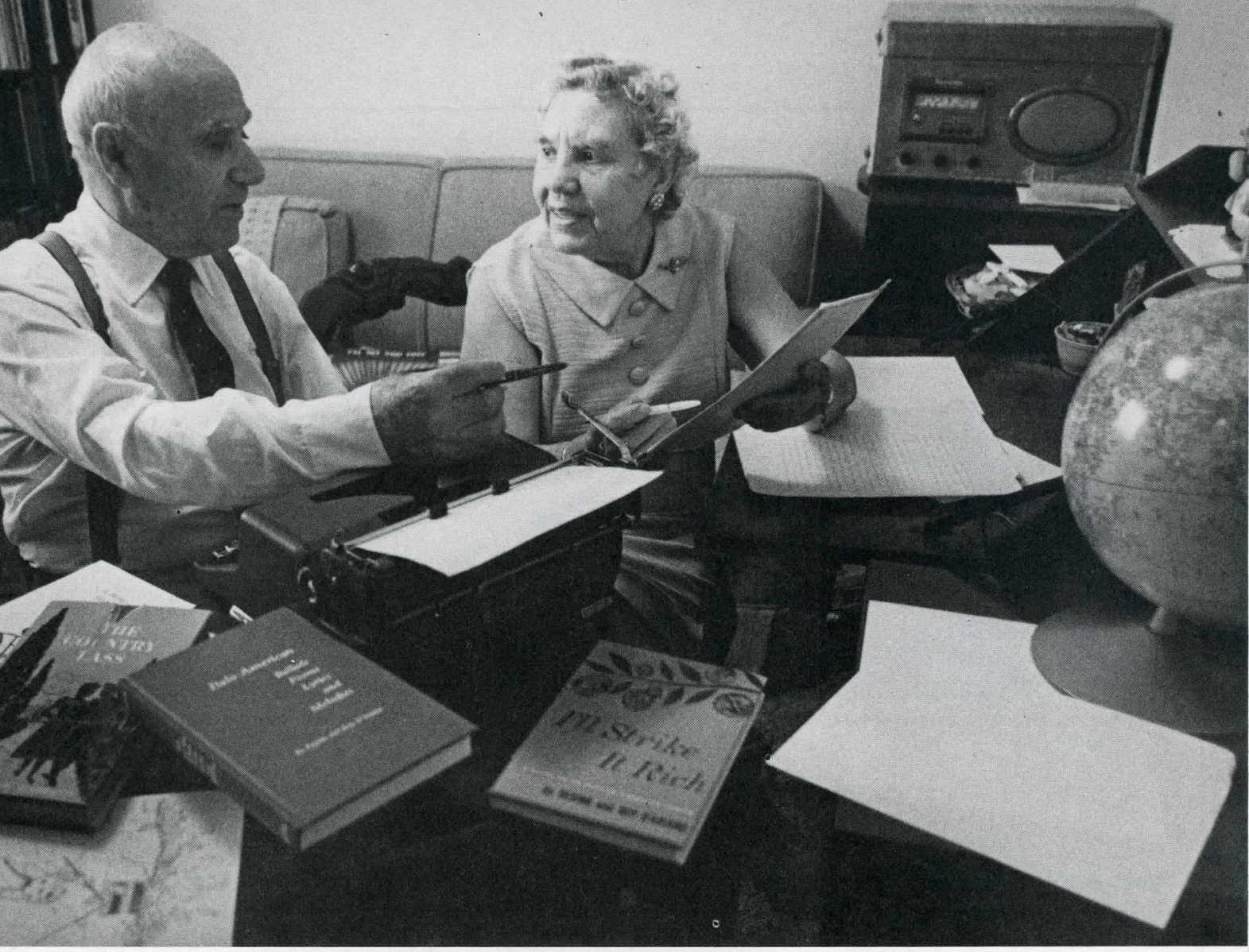
Ellis Island Survey

Roy and Regina D'Ariano entered America by way of Ellis Island, as did many other future West Virginians. The U.S. Immigration Station in New York Harbor opened in 1892 and before its closing in 1954 processed more than 16 million immigrants from all over the world. Today being rehabilitated as a national landmark by the National Park Service, Ellis Island will soon draw tourists rather than prospective new citizens, but its contribution to American history has not been forgotten.

One of the groups most interested in that part of our history is the Friends of Ellis Island. Early this year, GOLDENSEAL received the following letter from Friends' Director Leta W. Clark:

> Dear Sir:
>
> As long time admirers of GOLDENSEAL we are writing to enlist your help in an archives project that might be of interest to your readers.
>
> Friends of Ellis Island is a not-for-profit volunteer organization headquartered in New York City, incorporated in New York State in 1980. We have been working closely with the National Park Service since 1977 on projects and programs concerning Ellis Island and the immigrant experience.
>
> One of our major activities is assembling an archive of first-person information from people who entered America through Ellis Island. There is scant documentation available, and none of it is in any way standardized.
>
> Working under the guidance of folklorists at the Library of Congress, we developed a four-page questionnaire that can be used by untrained people to gather data. The questionnaire was offered first in a small article in *Woman's Day* magazine and the response has been wonderful. We now have stories from 49 states, Canada and Great Britain.
>
> It's an exciting project, filling in some of the blanks in American history, and we wondered if you could help us spread the word to GOLDENSEAL readers, explaining the project and asking them to send stamped, self-addressed envelopes for the questionnaire.
>
> Sincerely,
> Leta W. Clark

The project is a good one, and we agree with Director Clark that GOLDENSEAL readers should be represented in it. Those interested in participating may request copies of the free questionnaire by writing to Friends of Ellis Island, 149 West 10th Street, New York, NY 10014.



The dynamic brother and sister team have collaborated on books, songs, and music documenting their Italian-American heritage.

When we got on the bus, all the people were crying, those on the bus too. Leaving home, some were newly married, leaving their wives. But then Daddy started to talk about this and that. Then we got to Naples and we got on the ship.

When I got to the ship where we had to walk up, my father came with me. He took me down in because I went not on second, but on third class. They told me second and third were alike. I wish I had known!

I got down there and quickly made friends with the women and children. Then Daddy showed me the bed, with no mattress, no cushion, nothing. There was no place to hang clothes. I thought I'd put my beautiful clothes in a closet!

The next day I got seasick. I was sick for 15 days across that ocean. It was terrible. The ship was "down and up, down and up" and I was sick all the time. I thought that, "Well, I'm going to die here anyway."

When we landed in New York, we landed in the morning and we couldn't leave that ship until the next morning. We landed farther from Ellis Island than Roy had. When I saw those docks I saw great big rats. I said, "I bet here I'm going to get worse malaria than I had in Italy." I was terrified.

Then the captain came around and said, "Miss D'Ariano, what's the matter with you?" I said, "I don't know if I'm coming to the United States or to Africa or where."

He said, "Don't worry, honey, you are in the right place."

So we landed and we got in this great big room and the organ was going on and there were lots of lines of immigrants. They gave me a package and I had to pay $5. Five dollars for a package that had a little bit of everything. They gave me a number, number seven. They pinned it on me and on my valise. Then they said you follow that number, number seven that said "Pennsylvania and West Virginia." I did, I and the other people. We got on the train to Philadelphia. When we got to Philadelphia I met a beautiful lady, like a stewardess. She saw I was terrified. She asked me my name and I said, "Regina, Regina D'Ariano." She said, "So nice to meet you, Miss D'Ariano, are you going to West Virginia?" I said I was, so she said that "You'll find out America is different from Italy, but you'll enjoy it." She encouraged me.

Then I got on another train and we traveled the whole day to Grafton in West Virginia. I arrived about 6:00 at night. From Grafton I had to take a train coming to Fairmont. The train looked so dirty, the lights were terri-

ble. The people looked like they were all black. I had never seen a black person before in my life. I got really scared, very scared.

I was so tired, hadn't slept in two nights. A tall young man came by me and talked in English. I didn't know what he was talking about, but I understood that I should sit down there till we got to Fairmont. He would watch for me until we got to the station and I understood him, not because of his words, but because of the action.

I must have gone to sleep when I felt a hand on my arm. I jumped up and he motioned for me to get off, that we had got to the station. I thought I would meet Roy there. But Roy was nowhere and there were only three or four people in the station.

This young man talked to the conductor to see if he could find someone who could speak my language and send me straight to Monongah. Then all at once, I heard a man speaking our dialect who said, "Oh, I know your brother. He's a shoemaker."

I said, "Yes, how do you know him?" He said, "I'm from Watson and I go up to Monongah often. I'm a shoemaker myself. Don't worry, I'll take care of you." But I was worried if I could trust him or not.

He took me to the Jordan Bank, an Italian bank just this side of Washington Street. We took the right side of the street. Roy must have taken the left side of the street to get to the station. When he went over there and he couldn't see me, he went to the show.

Then we met another man who knew this fellow I was with. He said, "Where are you going?" The first man said he was going to take this girl, me, to her brother, the shoemaker in Monongah. The other man said, "I'm going there, I'll take her."

Well, then they started to fight between them. He wanted to take me and the other one did. I said, "Somebody's got to take me. If this man's going there anyway, then he can take me."

We got on the street car and the people were just packed like sardines. It was very dark when we left Fairmont. We passed a low bridge, called Calvert Bridge. The man said, "I want you to see how beautiful this is." We saw all sorts of fires reflected in the river. He said they were the coke ovens and we were getting into Monongah. It was a beautiful evening when we arrived in Monongah. People were in the stores, because it was Christmas time. This man took me over to Fusi's, a store next to Roy's shoe shop.

When the Fusis saw me, they appeared just like they saw some angel. They took me upstairs to their house. They wanted to feed me, the girls were all giggling and they started to talk to me in Italian. About 10:30 I heard someone say, "Roy is coming, Roy is coming!"

Well, I didn't know the name of "Roy," he was known to me as Rizieri. So when he came up, I saw a little fellow, real small and he looked so strange to me—you see, I hadn't seen him in 11 years—I must have cried, he looked so cute, but bald. I said, "Roy, they fed me." He told them, "Shame on you!" The old lady of the family said, "Roy, don't you talk that way. She's like our own daughter."

So Roy said, "Let's go home!" Home was next door, you know, and he had a beautiful four rooms, nicely furnished. It was such a beautiful place and I was so happy. He said, "I'll make coffee. I don't have cups, but I can give it to you in a glass."

Regina with examples of D'Ariano musical endeavors. She became a serious collector of ethnic music after reading of Stephen Foster's use of black folk tunes in his compositions.

The next morning I went out on the porch and I saw the mountains. Everything was wild and I started to cry and cry. People started to come up and I couldn't understand what they were talking about. I cried, I think I cried every day for a year.

Roy said, "You must quit your crying and learn to speak English. I'll teach you at night and you be sure to repeat what I teach you." I tried, but the words wouldn't come. I was too busy sewing, making beautiful doilies for the house, and cleaning. I wanted to see the house like a little church.

So he said, "The best thing to do, if you want to speak English, is to go to school." I said, "Roy, I'm 19. How can I go to school?" He said don't worry about the 19. I was small and looked more like 13 or 14. He said, "Either you go to school and learn the language or I send you back to Italy."

I said, "Oh, oh, I'd rather die than go back to Italy and take the chance for those people to talk about me that I came to America, gonna do good here, and then I go back." I said, "No," Then I started going to school.

PFW This story that I've just heard from both of you makes me think that you left a beautiful village, and that your family was reasonably well off there. They had a business, a nice vineyard, you had a very attractive life. Why did you leave Italy?

ROY First of all, I left Italy because I saw no future in it. The town was big enough all right, 18,000 people, but then I thought there'd not be enough work for all the shoemakers. When I was an apprentice, there were 300 boys as apprentices. I thought, "I'd better get out of here, as there's not going to be any future."

A West Virginian's War Stories

Roy D'Ariano Remembers World War I

Roy D'Ariano and his comrades sailed for the war in France in mid-May 1918, "and after two weeks we got to Brest and went to camp," he says. They began advancing toward the front lines right away, training as they went. Roy still vividly recalls that summer and fall as a time of blood and confusion.

It was hot that first day and we had to march about 20 miles in the sun and dust. The pack weighed about 60 pounds and I weighed 110, and was five feet tall. So I wasn't very strong to carry all that load. When we were marching I could feel my heart, "In and out, in and out." I remember that. I thought every moment I was going to faint, so I'd take a deep breath.

At camp that night we were in a British sector. In the morning they were to "go over the top," that is, to start advancing to another position.

We put up tents and naturally we went to sleep, the whole company. About 3:00 in the morning the British began to shoot. They started a barrage to cover the advancing units that were going over the top in the morning. That barrage made so much noise. I'd never dreamed of anything like that. It was dark and I was laying alone in my tent. Big cannons were shooting about 15 to 20 miles away. No fire coming from the opposite direction and I couldn't figure it out. I was scared and I was praying, too.

For six months every day we advanced toward the front. We trained every day as we marched. When we got to the front line, we were to go over the top with the American units on the 27th of September and that night, the 26th, we got in a woods. All the kitchens lit their fires. I was figuring that they lit the fires because they wanted to find out the location of the German batteries by killing a lot of boys.

I was with Lieutenant Payne sitting on the side of a large tree waiting for orders to move on, when the Germans directed their barrage toward those fires. One platoon was destroyed by the barrage. Lt. Payne began to give orders, "Move out, move out," so we ran out of the place so we could get out of the range of the German guns. We went on from there and we got to a certain ravine.

The fire at this time was very heavy. A machine gun was playing, a 75-mm cannon was shooting and I could hear the machine gun bullets by my ear, "chiu-chiu." Only they were too high. Six inches lower and we'd get it. But we laid low in this ravine. Later on the order came to move on and Lt. Payne came to me and he said, "I got the order from the captain." The captain was substituting because the major got killed.

The lieutenant said, "D'Ariano, the captain said you were supposed to be left behind to guard the packs." You see, I was the captain's orderly. Everyone was to move out, except me. At first order nobody moved because they were shooting too much, "boom, bam, bang bang!" On the second command everybody was moving out on the double.

I was left with three days' rations, each consisting of two packages of crackers, small can of bully beef. I finished that the second day. The third day I was pretty hungry. At this time the engineer company came around to work on the road and they were having beans for dinner, baked beans, and they were not very soft. They hadn't been cooked very well. But being hungry, I ate a couple of helpings and, oh boy, I got sick from those beans and I had cramps all day and all night and I didn't know what to do.

PFW Have you ever had any regrets? When things were bad, did you ever have any second thoughts?

ROY The only time I regretted it was when I was on the ship and we had that storm. I thought the ship was going to go down. The storm was terrible.

PFW You're well-known collectors of Italian-American folk ballads. How did you get interested in that?

REGINA I always had a certain feeling for that since the time I was a young girl in Italy. I heard the ladies working in our vineyard singing at their work. I couldn't remember all their songs forever, so I thought it would be nice if we could write down those songs so we'd have them in the future.

In 1933 I was in college and I was taking a course on children's literature for my degree. In doing this I came across Stephen Foster. I read about his life and from the class discussion I understood that he really didn't write all those songs. He heard those words being sung by the black people on the plantation. Later on, people thought that they had originated with him.

I thought that since Stephen Foster collected these songs from the black people in America, and I was acquainted with so many songs from the foreigners that came from Italy, Poland, and other European countries, I should collect some of their songs.

Then I had my mother here in 1934 and she made me write down some ballads. She used to love to sing those ballads. I said to my mother, "What am I going to do with them? We don't speak Italian here in the United States, we speak English." She said, "You write them and put them aside. You don't know what you want to do with your life. You are still young."

After three days the cart came back to pick up the packs. They picked up the packs and went on. The road had been shattered by the German guns and they'd stop to shovel into the holes and then proceed, go on.

They stopped at an old building by the roadside and an empty ammunition box was on the road. I spotted a piece of bread by it in the mud. I was hungry. I picked the black mud off this piece of bread and I was eating and standing on a box. All at once I heard a large shell, the kind we called a "garbage can" because it was so large. I heard it coming. The smaller ones went "jee, jee, jee," and the big ones "joo"—but this big one went "joo-ooo-ooo." When I heard that I hit the ground. It fell about 15 feet from me. I waited a couple of seconds, and when nothing happened, I got up and ran. That one was a dud, a dead one, and I said, "This is not my day."

So while this was going on, the cart with the packs went off the road about a half mile up the hill to a camp somewhere. But I didn't know that, and I went on and couldn't find the cart.

I got to a road flanked by some woods. I walked, but I had no gun, because I left it in the cart. As I was going in that direction I heard the report of a gun. My head turned like that and the bullet shaved my ear. I felt the wind from the bullet. A sniper had taken a shot at me. I didn't pay any attention, I had heard so many of those things. Later on I reflect. On my way back in the same place, this time it was on my other side, see. I heard the report again and the wind on the other ear. I said, "That's it. There's a sniper over in the woods someplace." I got out of there.

The Armistice had been signed when this photograph of American Expeditionary Force buddies was made in France in the winter of 1918. Roy D'Ariano is at center left, in oversize coat and gloves. Photographer unknown.

By that time I saw a lot of soldiers coming from another direction. There was a camp by the side of the road, a field hospital and the soldiers came there running and hollering. By that time the barrage had started again. Those guns hit the field hospital with lots of wounded boys. You should have heard the hollering! It was hell that day!

When I was running from that field I heard my Lieutenant Payne hollering, "Hey, D'Ariano, come here with me." I saw it was the lieutenant and I joined him. I had been left behind and we now proceeded to the target that we were supposed to take. I joined the lieutenant where we were supposed to camp for about three or four days. After four days of active fighting we were relieved by another unit. Then they came back to rest. They rested for about a week and then went on again. That was that way from September until November 11 when the Armistice was signed.

The night before the Armistice was signed we had a report from the Regimental Headquarters which said that perhaps tomorrow they would sign. We were awaiting the order that night for us either to go back or go ahead. So at 10:00 the order came and said, "Go back!" Oh, boy!

The boys were so happy that everybody began to shoot into the air, you know. On the 12th of November we started to march back and we marched until Thanksgiving Day. We marched about 200 miles. Every day in the snow, the mud, and the rain. But we didn't care!

Pruntytown

"A Good Place To Do Time?"

By Bill Moulden

Pruntytown is closed. I'm not talking about the town, an unincorporated village just west of Grafton on Route 50, but about the West Virginia Industrial School for Boys that has been located there since 1891. On January 18, 1983, the State Department of Corrections transferred the last remaining 52 boys to the state institution for girls at Salem. Now West Virginia has a co-educational institution for delinquents as well as the forestry camp at Davis. Some of the 83 staff members were also transferred to other posts in

The Pruntytown Administration Building as it appeared in the early 1940's. Earlier views of the building, constructed around the turn of the century, show a tall central tower. Photographer unknown.

the correctional system, although most of them lost their jobs.

To generations of boys the threat of being sent to Pruntytown carried a particular kind of finality. It was the ultimate punishment that the state could mete out. That's the way most West Virginia boys saw it. A man I know who was a boy in Morgan County in the 1930's and '40's told me, "Pruntytown was the bogeyman." He was never given any specifics about what horrors awaited him there if he didn't stop getting in trouble. Neither did he ever know a kid who had been sent there. Yet the warning to "be good or be sent to Pruntytown" was part and parcel of his disciplining.

Actually, most of the boys sent there were from such urban centers as Charleston, Huntington, and Parkersburg, or from the coal mining areas, not from rural counties like Morgan. Though the state girls' institution at Salem was opened only a few years after Pruntytown, girls never seem to have been threatened with Salem to the extent that the boys were with "Pruntytown."

There is no evidence that the townspeople ever worried about this reputation. In fact, the history books show that the town campaigned to have the institution placed there. They fought to have it remain open and later tried to get the federal prison system to take over the empty buildings and property. The economic importance to the region of having an operating facility is obvious.

It all started when the county seat of Taylor County was moved from Pruntytown to Grafton back in 1889. This left an unused courthouse and jail at Pruntytown. Coincidently, the state was then looking for a site for its first juvenile institution. A delegation from the legislature was traveling around evaluating sites for this purpose. Pruntytown invited them to look over the vacant courthouse and jail. According to Martha Glenn Flesher, daughter of a former superintendent of the institution, the town added 176 acres to the offer and $5,000 was raised by citizens to sweeten the deal.

A very early portrait of inmates with an unidentified school official. Dress and discipline were military style in the earliest days, with rank indicated by epaulets and shoulder patches. Date unknown, Loar Studio of Grafton.

This proved tempting enough to bring the state around. They approved Pruntytown as the site for the "West Virginia Reform School" in 1889. According to one source, the first inmate was received in 1890 by a C. C. Showalter, who had been named the first "principal." All other accounts set the opening date at 1891 and the sign that remains in front of the vacant facility says "Estab. 1891."

An old photograph shows 17 boys in military-style uniforms standing on the steps of a building identified as "the old Taylor County Court House." Three adults are also shown, probably early staff members. The courthouse is gone but the jail building remains, now used as a residence for two families. The buildings that formed the institution in use until 1983 are on either side of Route 250 heading east from the center of town.

The Administration Building was one of the first to be built. Another old picture shows that building with all of the boys and staff members lined up on the front steps. A notation under the picture identifies it as "Flag Day 1904." You can make out Amer-

Above: Everybody turned out for Flag Day 1904. Photo by Loar Studio.
Below: The staff posed separately for Flag Day, but boys may be seen peeking out the window. This group includes several guards, and the cook, baker, shoeshop supervisor, and stable boss. Loar Studio.

ican flags displayed along the building facade. I counted 250 boys in this picture along with 32 adults. About 25 black boys are clustered together on one side of the group. All of the boys are wearing military uniforms.

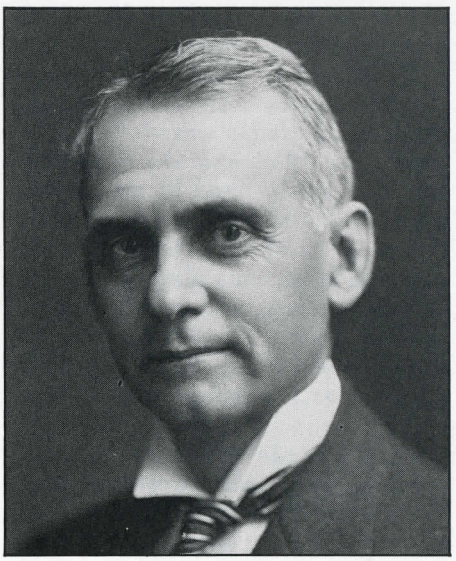
A separate picture, taken the same day, shows a staff group. An attached note identified them as guards, cooks, engineers, teachers, and a shoeshop supervisor.

From such evidence, it is apparent that the institution started small, in the original buildings donated by the county. But it grew rapidly to a population of 250 or so by 1904. The title "guard" given to some of the staff shows the punitive intent of the institution. It also appears that vocational training was an important part of the early program, and that military discipline was established as the routine.

As grim as the early reform school appears in retrospect, it represented an attempt to improve the treatment of juvenile offenders. Readers may need to be reminded that prior to the early 1900's there was no legal distinction between juveniles and adults. Voices had been raised against the practice of confining children in adult jails and prisons, however, with West Virginia Governor William Erskine Stevenson speaking out as early as 1865. At that time there had been a round of publicity about the conditions of West Virginia jails, a concern that continues to this day.

E. W. Wilson was the governor during the 1880's when groundwork for the Pruntytown institution was laid. In one biographical sketch, he is identified as a "liberal Democrat." No mention is made of any direct action on his part in getting the reform school started, but it was the liberal thing to do in those days. Times change, and today the closing of juvenile institutions in favor of a policy of "deinstitutionalization" is considered to be the liberal approach.

A. B. Fleming was governor when Pruntytown opened, and he and his successors dealt with the problem of high supervisory turnover at the new facility. Between 1891 and 1905 there were five superintendents. The boys' school began settling into its modern character only in the latter year, when H. E. Flesher began the longest tour



Above: Harry E. Flesher entered the scene as superintendent in 1905, and made major reforms over the next 30 years. This portrait was made in 1922. Photographer unknown.
Below: Retired Colonel Martha Glenn Flesher, daughter of Superintendent H. E. Flesher, was born and reared on the grounds of the reform school. Colonel Flesher is now writing a history of Pruntytown. Photo by Ron Rittenhouse.

of duty of any superintendent in the history of Pruntytown.

Martha Glenn Flesher was born on the second floor of the Administration Building. Her father was in charge from 1905 until 1934, and she remembers that the family lived in the upstairs apartment until a Superintendent's Residence was built in 1922. "My father stayed downstairs playing chess and eating chestnuts with a friend while I was being born," she recently said. "My mother was furious. She had a dislike for chess and chestnuts from that day on."

As she reminisced with me about growing up as the superintendent's daughter in a boys' institution, it was clear that she had not enjoyed sharing her father with 300 to 400 boys. "Father never stayed long in his office. He was always moving around the institution. He brought the paperwork home to do at night. During the day, he always kept boys around him. It was a very disturbing thing for me to see him walking across the hill playing with those boys who just adored him."

H. E. Flesher had come to Pruntytown on two years' leave from his position as Superintendent of Schools of Preston County. But the challenge of the new job held him for a career. Martha Glenn said that he built and directed the institution through its "golden age." Listening to her talk about her father's accomplishments and dedication to the boys, it is clear that she has long since gotten over the jealousy of her childhood. After a career as a newspaperwoman, Martha Glenn Flesher entered the Women's Army Corps and retired a Colonel. She is now writing a definitive work on her father's era in the history of Pruntytown. While there naturally may be some loving bias in her remembrances, the research she has done is professional and she was most generous in sharing it.

She sees her father as a pioneer in the field of juvenile corrections and a fighter for "his boys" against a pennypinching State Board of Control. He also had to deal with suspicious townspeople, regressive attitudes of officials, and indifferent parents and communities.

In those early years, parents and citizens could commit to the institution

Left: A 1950 view of boys relaxing with comic books in the Number 3 Cottage day room. The minimum age was 10 by this time, and many of these boys appear to be no older than that. Photographer unknown.
Above: Sleeping quarters were barracks-style. Photographer unknown, 1940's.

any child who they felt was out of their control by merely getting a magistrate or judge to issue an order. Martha Glenn remembers one whole cottage being devoted to boys who were six to eight years old. A staff member they all knew as "Daddy Smalley" presided over them. "Father let him alone with them," she says. "They loved him and he loved them."

But Superintendent Flesher was disturbed at having such young boys there and he worked to get an age limit set. This was done in 1914, when the legislature established a minimum age of 10.

Flesher also did away with the bars on the buildings and with the detention cells that the boys called "the dungeon." He decreed that he would handle discipline personally and did so throughout his tenure. Some paddling was called for, but, as Martha Glenn explained, "There was never a chain used at Pruntytown while my father was there."

Also to go, under Flesher, was the military-style discipline that had been a part of the routine at the beginning. The program, in his years, stressed education, training, and farmwork. Flesher set up a six-day week for the boys, three at school and three at training or work, alternating days. In 1905 the institution had offered schooling only as far as the fourth grade. By 1917 they were offering eight years, a full grade school education. He didn't believe in organized team sports and thought football promoted violence. "There was plenty of time for informal games and play," Martha Glenn remembers, "and Father made every holiday a celebration."

Correctional historians have noted that what is brought inside the institutions in the way of program generally reflects what is considered important for success on the outside. This seems to have been true at Pruntytown, for farm skills, some vocational training, and an eighth grade education formed a good basis for success in West Virginia in the early 1900's.

Flesher attempted to make the institution self-sufficient. He acquired farmland all through his tenure, bringing the total up to 2,000 acres by 1933. The boys grew most of the food they consumed and worked along with

the staff in maintaining the facilities. They helped in constructing the new buildings, including the trade building and dairy barn in 1927 and the school in 1930. Starting in 1922, they made state auto license plates and did all of the institution's printing. There was a time when they made their own shoes and clothes and even mined the coal that was used in the heating plant, some boys receiving training as miners in the process.

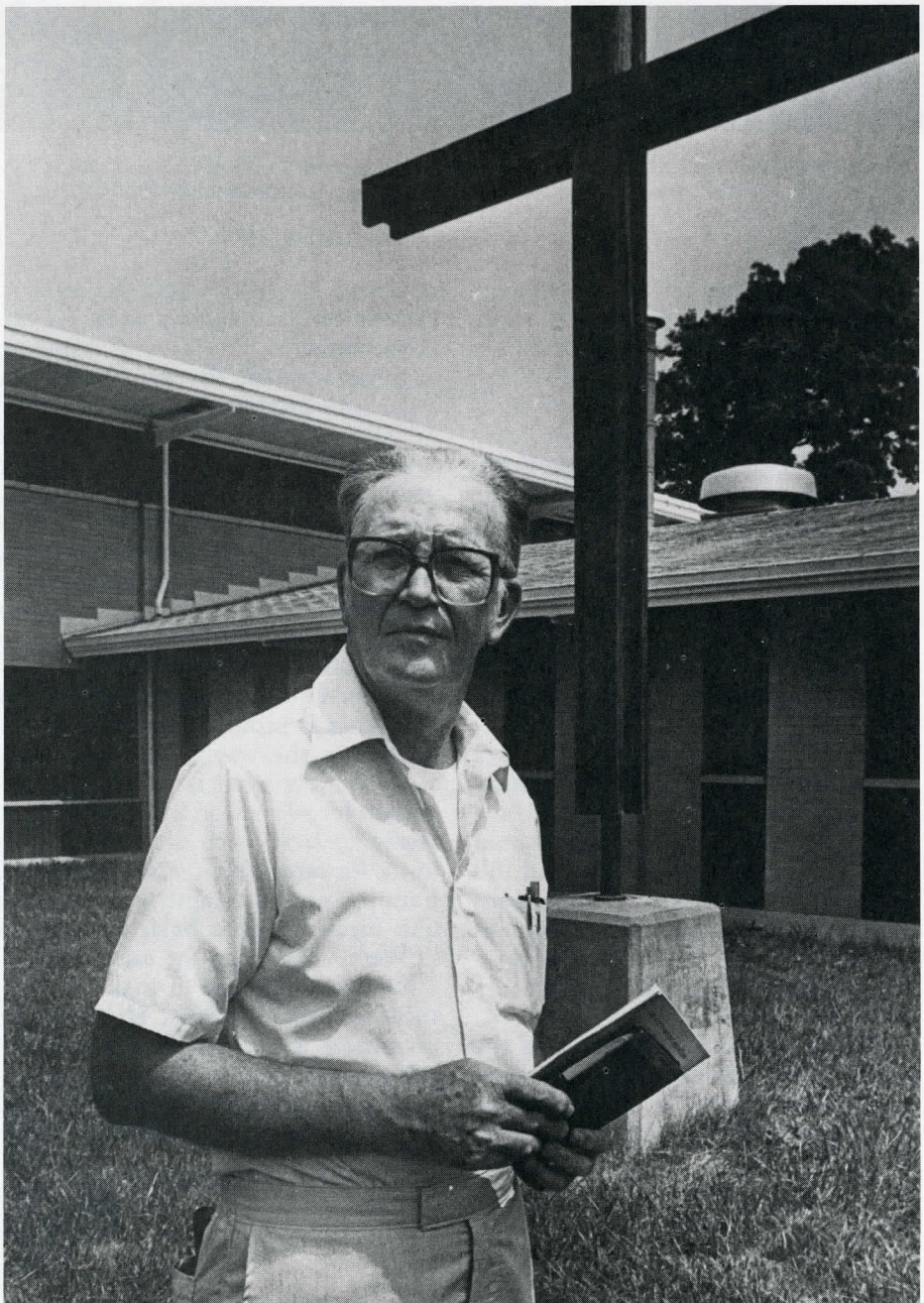
Martha remembers that her father didn't force boys to leave at 18 if they did not have anything to go home to. "Some stayed on until they were 26 and became like staff."

But the institution couldn't be totally self-sufficient and the state never seemed to provide everything Mr. Flesher wanted. Martha Glenn particularly remembers one occasion when her father had 400,000 feet of timber cut from his own land to build the Pruntytown cattle barn.

An important crisis Flesher had to deal with was the treatment of Negro boys. His daughter said that he objected to their role as "second class citizens" within the institution, where they were segregated in most activities. The only solution that was acceptable in the 1920's, she explained, was to establish a separate institution. Separate facilities were being turned to in other areas, too, as racial segregation hardened in the United States generally. The "State Industrial School for Colored Boys" was built at Lakin in Mason County, and on December 22, 1922, all of the black boys at Pruntytown were transferred there.

The move was also designed to help with the overcrowding facing Pruntytown at the time. There were 425 boys at the institution prior to 1922. Inmates were staying only six to nine months because of waiting lists, according to Martha Glenn Flesher. Her father didn't consider this enough time to have an effect on them, and he hoped that the opening of the black reform school would ease the situation. But, as often happens, the existence of a new institution increased commitments from the courts. The Pruntytown population was up to 432 by 1927, even with black boys being sent to Lakin.

Former Chaplain Reneau found himself acting as emotional as well as spiritual counselor to the boys of Pruntytown. "You don't have to be churchy," he says. Photo by Ron Rittenhouse.



Perhaps such developments contributed to Superintendent Flesher eventually reaching the conclusion that such institutions as his should be done away with. Martha Glenn said that he once told her "the boys need a more homelike atmosphere and a chance to participate in the life of their communities." Truly visionary in Flesher's time, this idea is popular today. It is, in fact, the philosophy that resulted in the closing of Pruntytown, although of course H. E. Flesher never lived to see it. He retired nearly a half century ago and died in 1965 at the age of 93.

A source of later information on the history of Pruntytown is the Reverend Oren Reneau. He came on as chaplain in 1950 and remained to the end. Population levels were coming a little more under control by then. He remembers an average of 250 boys through the '50's, '60's and '70's, with a high of not much more than 300. Farming was declining in importance but the boys continued to operate farms until 1976 or '77, when the farm property was turned over to the state.

Education was the major thrust in these later years. Reneau remembers that school principal Paul Bartlett built up a strong education program. Extracurricular activities were emphasized and the institution fielded a varsity football team that competed against junior high schools and some high school teams from the surrounding area. A former pro football star, Frank Gatski, was coach for a number of years and an inspiration to many boys, ac-

Above: The 1949 West Virginia Industrial School for Boys football team. The school competed against high school and junior high teams in the area. Loar Studio.
Below: A teenage inmate does press work in the school print shop in the mid-1950's. Photographer unknown.

cording to the Reverend Reneau. Gatski had played for the Cleveland Browns and earned "All Pro" honors, as well as a place in the West Virginia Hall of Fame.

In 1956, Pruntytown was racially reintegrated with the closing of Lakin. A new forestry camp at Davis was opened with boys from Lakin and Pruntytown. Then the remaining black boys from Lakin were moved into Pruntytown. This was accomplished smoothly, according to Reneau.

In the '60's and early '70's, Pruntytown had cooperative relationships with the Job Corps and other federal efforts. The AFL-CIO sponsored a program whereby some of the boys were selected for seamanship training at the union's National Seaman's School.

Reneau remembers inmates spending a year to a year and a half at Pruntytown on average during this era. An "honor boy" program allowed some to gain release earlier than that. This

evolved into a fairly complex system of levels, which were distinguished by different color shirts. In addition, a grading system was developed as a basis for moving boys from one level to another. It became possible for some to earn release in nine months with good progress through these levels.

In the '60's and '70's American society turned toward concern for emotional development as a factor in success or failure. Seeing a psychiatrist became acceptable and counseling became common in school and at work. At Pruntytown, diagnostic resources were made available. Reneau remembers personally becoming involved in the cases of emotionally disturbed boys. He helped Pruntytown develop a relationship with psychologists at the state mental institution where boys could be taken for evaluations and recommendations.

Along with this, several therapeutic programs were incorporated into the Pruntytown routine. One of these was called Positive Peer Culture, introduced in the 1970's. It was hoped that the boys could be involved with each other in a positive way to counteract the negative aspects of their informal relationships.

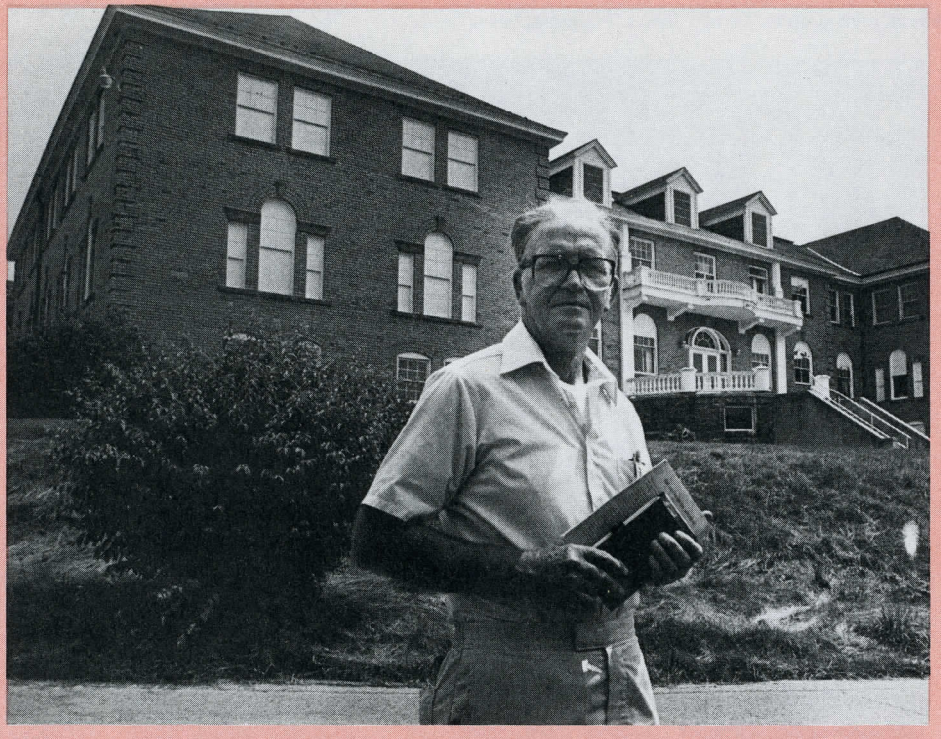
Nationally in the '70's the federal government was funding big research in correctional treatment. The results said, in effect, that nothing much worked toward rehabilitating delinquents in institutions. Without denying that some youngsters were helped, it was shown that the chances of a delinquent going on to further trouble were *increased* if he had had a stay at an institution. Such findings naturally filtered into the public debate.

In West Virginia, opinions by the State Supreme Court as well as legislative acts established policies that resulted in fewer commitments to the facility. Banned from commitment entirely were kids who had become uncontrollable by their parents and teachers, but who had not committed specific crimes. The policy of using

The Reverend Reneau

33 Years as a Pruntytown Chaplain

By Bill Moulden



The Reverend Oren Reneau, "Rev" to the inmates, was chaplain at Pruntytown for 33 years. Photo by Ron Rittenhouse.

Fairness, firmness, and faith—I guess these three words sum up my philosophy in dealing with the boys," the Reverend Oren "Ned" Reneau told me when I recently asked him about his 33 years as the Pruntytown chaplain. "Those were the words of Jessie Riley," he added, referring to a former superintendent of the institution.

Ned Reneau finished his college training in Kentucky, his home state, and was ordained a minister in the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, in 1946. After serving in Kentucky churches, he decided he needed further training in counseling. He considered going into a Ph.D. program but an advisor told him, "If you want to work with people, take clinical training." That training provided him an internship in the Federal Reformatory at Chillicothe, Ohio, where he was introduced into the new breed of correctional chaplains who acted as both spiritual and professional counselors.

Reneau came out of this internship seriously interested in making work in institutions his life mission. He considered possibilities in the federal system, in the state of Washington and at Pruntytown, West Virginia. After checking out the offers, he reached the conclusion that "Pruntytown was the last place on earth I would want to work." And when he came in 1950, he came with the idea of staying only a few years, as did many others. But he stayed until it was closed down in January of 1983. The boys called him "Rev."

commitment to an institution only as a last resort caused the Pruntytown population to plunge from 250 in the '70's to the 52 who were transferred out early in 1983.

When I visited Pruntytown last June, there was a forlorn look about it. The grass had overgrown the walks since there were no inmates or equipment to keep up the place. Former Deputy Superintendent Paul Gabel acknowledged that "the townspeople are complaining." And, he added reflectively, "We had beautiful lawns here when we were open."

There were groups of people from other state correctional institutions looking over furniture and movable equipment for possible use at their facilities. Some had brought along trucks and trustee inmates to help with transferring larger items. I talked with a group of inmates from Huttonsville. One young man said that he had been at Pruntytown a few years back. "How was it?" I asked. "I liked it fine," he said, adding, "It was a good place to do time."

The use of the prison jargon "do time" was a clue to the attitudes about the institution in those last few years. Some of the photographs and accounts of Pruntytown's earlier years seem to project a positive and vigorous character. But some of those early pictures raise questions also. The one that shows a bedroom jammed with cots, the paint peeling from the bed frames, and the mattresses sagging certainly does. Trying to imagine those beds filled with children, some as young as 10 years old, I found it difficult to conceive of positive values coming out of that atmosphere. Another shot, perhaps in the '40's or '50's, shows a day room with boys sitting around reading comic books. Some seemed alive and smiling, but most of them looked bored, glum, or just plain sad.

In 1982, the Juvenile Justice Committee of the State Supreme Court of Appeals investigated a disciplinary method in use at Pruntytown called "level zero." Problem boys were iso-

He quickly learned that the chaplaincy at Pruntytown had traditionally involved a lot of other duties. One of his predecessors had been the recreation director as well as the chaplain. Another was in charge of the drum and bugle corps. Chaplain Reneau was to become a teacher, counselor, and therapist, among other things, during his own tenure.

He remembers the Christian Education classes he taught at the school. "Most often they became group therapy. You know, most anything that happens in life has a relationship with religion. Christianity has something to contribute but you must deal with a life as a life. And you don't have to be churchy." And further, "It doesn't matter what you offer so much or what you do, the important thing is how the person reacts. There is something inside them that makes the difference."

Asked about whether he had made a difference or not, Ned Reneau commented, "In the short term, you have to face a lot of disappointment. Long term you find a lot of success." He recalls three men coming to see him one day, two brothers and a cousin. All had been boys at Pruntytown, but he honestly could not claim to remember them. They were all working in good jobs and said they had made the trip to thank him. "For what?" he asked.

"Well," one of the brothers began, "one day you called us in to tell us that our father had died in a mine accident. The way you handled that situation and helped us afterward made all the difference."

The chaplain usually had this grim duty at Pruntytown and this memory brought on another one. It was about a boy who had an older brother as a model. Reneau explains, "He was really the only relative he knew who he could depend on. The older brother was wounded in Korea and won a medal for bravery. He was recovering at Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, D.C. He had visited Pruntytown and his little brother had taken him around the place, proudly showing him off to the staff and boys. Then I got the news from the Red Cross that the brother had died suddenly. When I told him, he was crushed and angry. He leaped up and swung his fists in the air saying, 'I hope the whole damn world flies apart.' Of course," said Reneau, "that's what had just happened to his world. I got him a ticket for a bus ride home for the funeral. The parents offered him no help whatsoever. After that, we spent a lot of time putting his world together again. Then, two years later, he walked back to visit and insisted on paying us back for the bus ticket. He was living with an uncle, working, and he was doing fine."

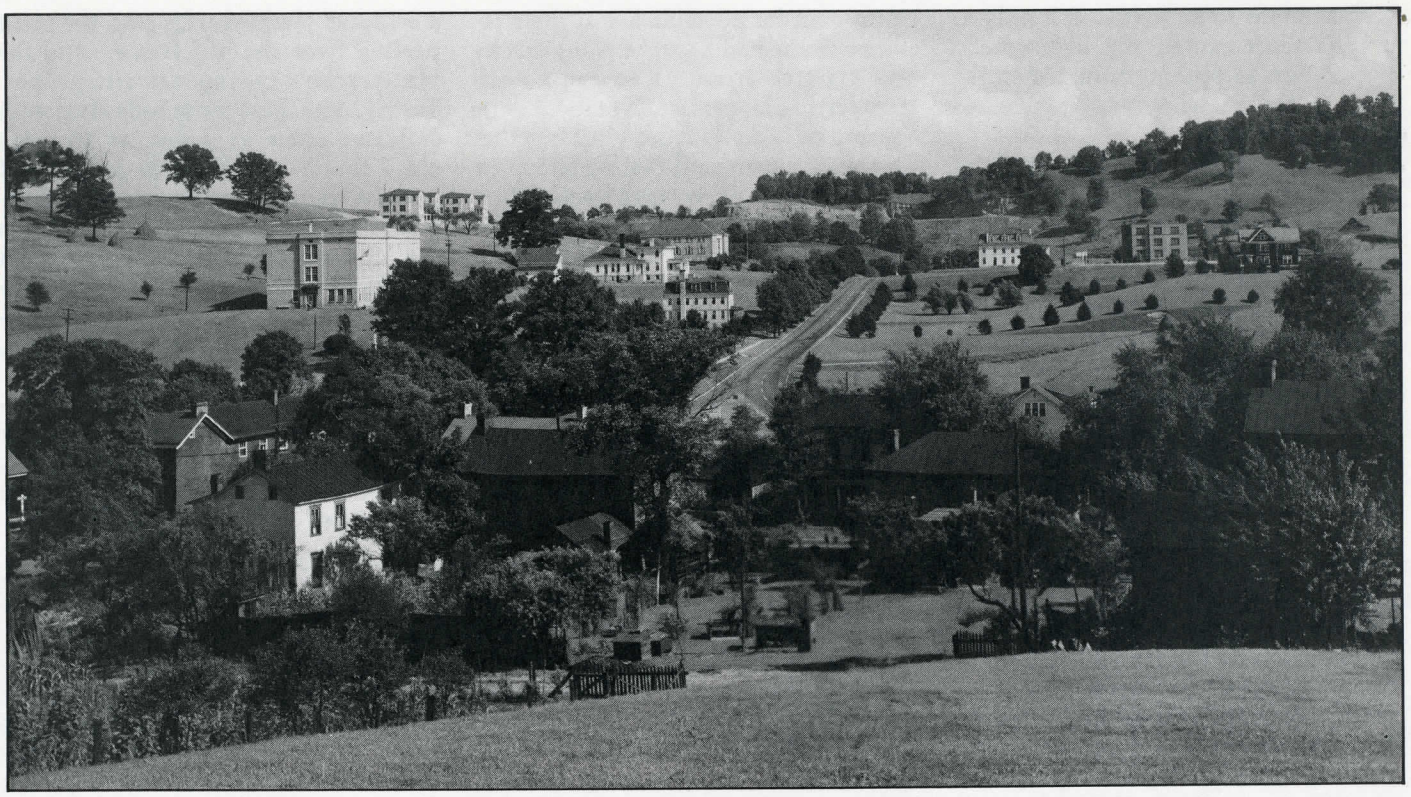
Reverend Reneau and his wife raised nine of their own children to successful adulthood. The youngest is now finishing up at West Virginia University. So his entire life—work and family—has been immersed in youth. This promises to continue, for now there are the seven grandchildren for whom he is building a treehouse out back.

Work and family didn't always stay separate for the chaplain. There was a boy who came to Pruntytown at the age of 14. He had been banned by his county judge from returning home until he was 21. "This is something that could be challenged in the courts today," explained the Reverend Reneau, "but we didn't think to do it then."

The boy did well in school and was permitted to bus into Grafton to take his sophomore and junior years of high school there. "He was ready to leave Pruntytown but couldn't go home. He wanted to finish high school here so we took him in. He lived here until he graduated high school and we saw him get his college degree from Alderson-Broaddus. When he was ready to get married, his fiancee didn't believe he had ever been a delinquent at the infamous Pruntytown, so he had to bring her down here to prove it."

All memories are not good ones. Reneau's personal research and other studies have shown that 40% of the boys got into more trouble after leaving. In later years, he became disturbed about an increase in the attitude of "It's all right as long as I can get away with it."

The move now is away from institutionalization, but Ned Reneau still thinks that "there is a place for institutions" in juvenile corrections. "Not just for the hard core, but for the boys that need protection. You have to think about protection of society, too. We've got to get a balance in there." You get the impression that "Rev" Reneau provided a lot of balance for a lot of boys who had to come through Pruntytown during the last 33 years.



Above: An overview of the Pruntytown campus in 1951. This picture looks east, down Route 250. Photographer unknown.

Below: Administration Building offices are empty for the first time since the turn of the century. Area residents and officials hope to find an alternative use for the closed institution. Photo by Ron Rittenhouse.

lated in rooms, denied programs, and, in some cases, denied contact with other boys. There was an instance where a boy had been chained to a wall. The State Director of Corrections, Joseph McCoy, eliminated these practices immediately upon receiving the report of the committee. But one can't help harkening back to 1905, when incoming superintendent H. E. Flesher found boys being punished in detention cells they called "the dungeon."

These glimpses of Pruntytown by no means constitute a full history of the place. There were good years and bad years, and positive stories to counter the negative ones. In any event, it is certain that an era in the treatment of troubled juveniles has now come to an end in West Virginia. What will replace the old ways will not be as easily defined as is an institution, which is a physical place of confinement, with or without bars and chains. Communities will have to work out programs to keep most of their problem children with them, and there naturally are concerns as to how best to do that. Maybe we can draw consolation from the knowledge that Pruntytown itself got started almost a century ago with some of the same feelings of doubt and uncertainty.

Tracking the James Gang
Folklore of the Great Huntington Bank Robbery of 1875

By Joseph Platania
Photographs by Rick Lee

On a Sunday afternoon in the summer of 1966, my grandparents, my mother, and I drove from Huntington across the Ohio River to a rural area in the Ohio hills called Indian Guyan. We were going to visit the Dardens, longtime friends of my grandparents who had lived many years in Huntington before moving to a small farm. They now occupied a stately, three-story, white frame house that had been built before the Civil War.

During our visit Mr. Darden took me out to a wooden building near the house. It had been the farm's washhouse but was now used for storage, filled with castoff furniture, lumber, tools, and farm implements. Going into the darkened interior, Mr. Darden pulled loose a heavy board that was worn and water stained. He leaned one end against the wall near a clouded window. I could now see that it was part of a very old piece of furniture, a simply made headboard with lathe-turned posts.

Mr. Darden tapped his knuckles on the wood as if to add emphasis to what he was about to say. "This headboard was made by Frank James when he was living out in Wayne County. He was a carpenter by trade."

He spoke matter-of-factly and without elaboration, as if he assumed that I knew that the desperado Frank James had lived for a time in West Virginia. I did know that a part of the James gang had robbed the Huntington bank on September 6, 1875, and that Frank James was believed to have participated. (Jesse James himself was not a suspect, with Frank and the notorious Coleman Younger evidently leading the outlaws that day.) But the implication of what Mr. Darden told me—that Frank James had settled down to make an honest living for a while in Wayne County—was news to me.

More than a dozen years later, after Mr. and Mrs. Darden had died, I asked their daughter Genevieve Sayre about the history of the headboard I had been shown. She said that her parents had acquired the bedstead—actually just the headboard and matching footboard—attributed to Frank James from an "Old Man Queen" who had lived in rural Wayne County.

Mrs. Sayre remembered that as a little girl she and her parents had gone, sometime in the mid-1930's, to a remote part of the county to visit an elderly couple known as Ma and Pa Queen, who were friends of theirs. The Queens lived in a log cabin near a creek. There had been a recent flood and the high water had floated a bedstead into a tree. Mrs. Darden saw that the bed was old and well-made and, knowing the story of its maker, she offered to buy it. Pa Queen, then near 80, told her, "Honey, if you want it, you can have it."

Mrs. Sayre now assumes that, considering his age at the time, Pa Queen himself had bought the bedstead either directly from James or from a middleman soon after it was made.

The story attached to the bedstead is that Frank James, under an assumed name, had rented a house in Wayne County and set up a cabinetmaking shop to provide himself a "cover" and perhaps a short-term livelihood. He acquired a local reputation for making good furniture, worked hard, and generally behaved himself. But one morning a nearby farmer found that his best horse, a fine bay, was missing from the barn. The following morning the horse was back, tied to a fence rail. The day it had been missing was the day the Huntington bank was robbed. The cabinetmaker had disappeared from the neighborhood.

Is the origin of the old bedstead a fascinating slice of local history, or is it simply folklore embroidering a famous outlaw's exploits in the area? The truth may never be known, and it may not matter. Heroes and villains take on a new life each time a tale is retold. What is certain is that in the imagination of many people now living in Wayne and Cabell counties, the James gang once traveled their backroads and one of the bad men stayed for a while, to live honorably among their ancestors.

Frank James has been recalled in stories which have him tending a Wayne County farm, making well-crafted furniture in his shop, and getting along peaceably under an alias. Such lore has grown like moss around the central event of the robbery itself, providing a collection of sometimes conflicting stories.

In talking with people about the holdup you often hear that the robbers hid out afterwards in a cave in Cabell or Wayne counties or over in eastern Kentucky. This may be an allusion to the famous cave hideout of Jesse James and his accomplices in Missouri.

Another story is that during the gang's hasty exit out McCoy Road, which goes over a steep hill behind Huntington and down to Wayne County, one of the riders threw away a sack of coins at Hodge, near the county line. This money was recovered by surprised local residents.

Other stories include Jesse James in the four-man party, although there is


American Bankers Bank Museum

no evidence that he was ever in Huntington. There used to be an old house several miles past Huntington's southern limits that was pointed out as the place where Jesse James and his men spent the night after the robbery.

The histories of Huntington and Cabell County usually include the bank raid, sometimes referred to as the "Jesse James Robbery," as one of the exciting events of Huntington's early days.

Colonel George S. Wallace, who was a prominent Huntington attorney and local historian, described the facts of the bank robbery and subsequent chase in his 1935 book, *Cabell County Annals and Families.* Wallace reported that some citizens who saw the four strangers riding into town thought they were preachers, since there was a Methodist Conference in session. These folks commented on what good horses the men were riding.

After the robbery Cabell County Sheriff D. I. Smith promptly organized a posse and started in hot pursuit out the "Wayne Road," now McCoy Road. Wallace's account says that Smith later often made light of the chase, claiming that as his men closed in some of them "had to tighten their saddle girths," thus giving the outlaws their chance to escape.

A unique story in Wallace's book relates a chance meeting between the robbers and the only Catholic priest in that part of the state at the time. Father Thomas A. Quirk in 1872 had come from his native Ireland to Guyandotte, upstream from Huntington on the Ohio River. Shortly after his arrival, a little chapel was built and a cemetery laid out on an acre of donated land. Father Quirk could see that Huntington was to be the center of population and he soon had a small church and school built in the new city.

"Father Quirk's love for good horses brought him into contact with the bank robbers," says Wallace in his book. Standing near his chapel in Guyandotte on that first Monday in September, "his eye was attracted by a group of men mounted on fine horses." He approached them and started talking about horses in general, theirs in particular. In the course of the conversation, he supplied them with directions to the bank several miles west in Huntington. He had not, of course, the slightest idea of their intentions and remembered them as pleasant, well-mannered men. Only later in the day did he learn the purpose of their visit.

A knowledgeable source for robbery folklore is Byron T. Morris of Kenova. He is a soft-spoken, retired teacher and federal employee who has spent many years studying the history of his native Wayne County. A noted authority on local families, he writes a column, "Out of the Past," for the *Wayne County News.* In his research Morris has become familiar with the lore associated with the bank robbery, much of it centered in Wayne County, since it is believed the robbers entered and exited Huntington through that area.

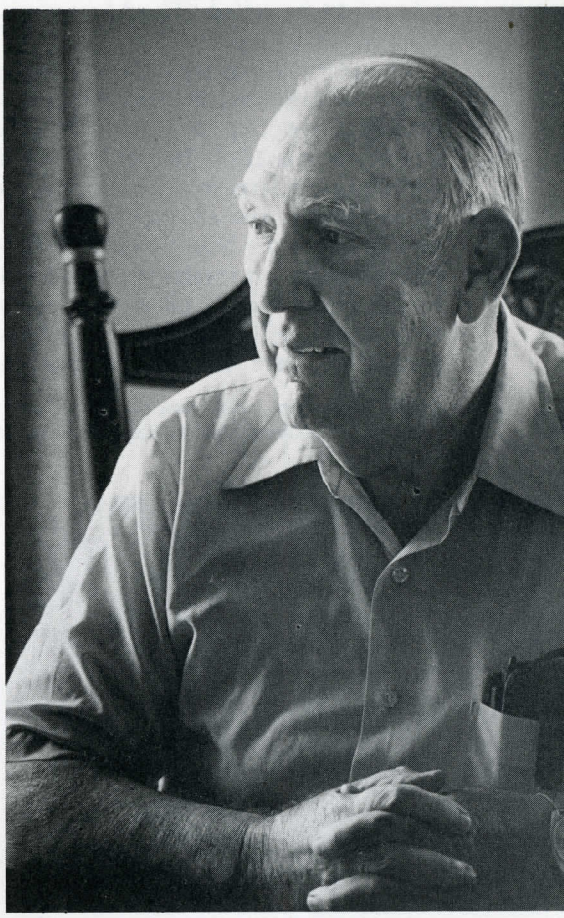
The removal of the old bank building, that once was home to the Bank of Huntington at its original site on Third Avenue, to a spot in Heritage Village in downtown Huntington, "brought to mind the many stories that sprang up in Wayne County about the James gang who robbed the bank," Byron Morris told me.

"One story is that the gang broke up after the robbery to avoid capture. By this time the report was that the robbers had crossed the Big Sandy River at the Turman Ferry, which operated between the Turman farm in Boyd County, Kentucky, and Round Bottom [now Prichard] in Wayne County." Morris added that the Turman farm was his grandfather's place.

"Another story has it that the four robbers forded the river, two men at different spots, since it was late summer and the river was probably low.

"Frank James left the gang and hid out in a remote part of Wayne County under an assumed name," Morris continued. "He was said to have been a skilled cabinetmaker and made some beautiful pieces of furniture while in hiding near Cove Gap [a small community close to the Lincoln County line]. A store owner there is supposed to have acquired several pieces of furniture made by Frank James, including a fine sideboard, a bed, a dresser, and some chairs. The sideboard was made of thick walnut with natural-size buckeyes on the panels. The posts were made of seasoned fence rails and it was so heavy and well built that it would last forever," stated Morris.

In searching through 1930–31 Wayne County newspapers, Morris once found a record of some of the stories that had been circulating in the county up to



Above: Wayne County historian Byron Morris was a generous source of information about the James Gang legends.
Opposite page: The old Bank of Huntington building has been spruced up and moved to a new location in Heritage Station, but otherwise probably looks much as it did at the time of the robbery. City founder Collis P. Huntington now stands guard out front.

that time. Even then, a little more than 50 years after the bank raid, there was a difference of opinion on the subject.

A man who lived in Huntington at the time, who claimed to have been a friend of Frank and Jesse James and known them well, believed that neither of them ever lived in Wayne County. However, some of the county's residents continued to believe that Frank lived there for about two years, Morris relates. In the newspapers from the early '30's that he checked, the events of the mid-1870's would have been within memory of some people still living in Wayne County.

Byron Morris wove the bygone folklore into his own newspaper accounts. He showed me a copy of his column of June 26, 1975, in which the story, as people remembered it a half-century ago, was told. This particular

tale might be called "The Mysterious Man at Cove Gap."

The story began with the arrival of a man calling himself Frank Morris at remote Cove Gap in upper Wayne County about 1874. He settled down and bought a farm for himself and his wife. Morris was an expert cabinetmaker and built many pieces of furniture during the several years he lived in the area. "Nearly all of the pieces were made of black walnut which seemed to have been in abundance around the area," reported Byron Morris.

Although Frank Morris soon became highly regarded in the community, there was "an air of mystery" around him and his wife. They were friendly and sociable but they did not discuss their past lives.

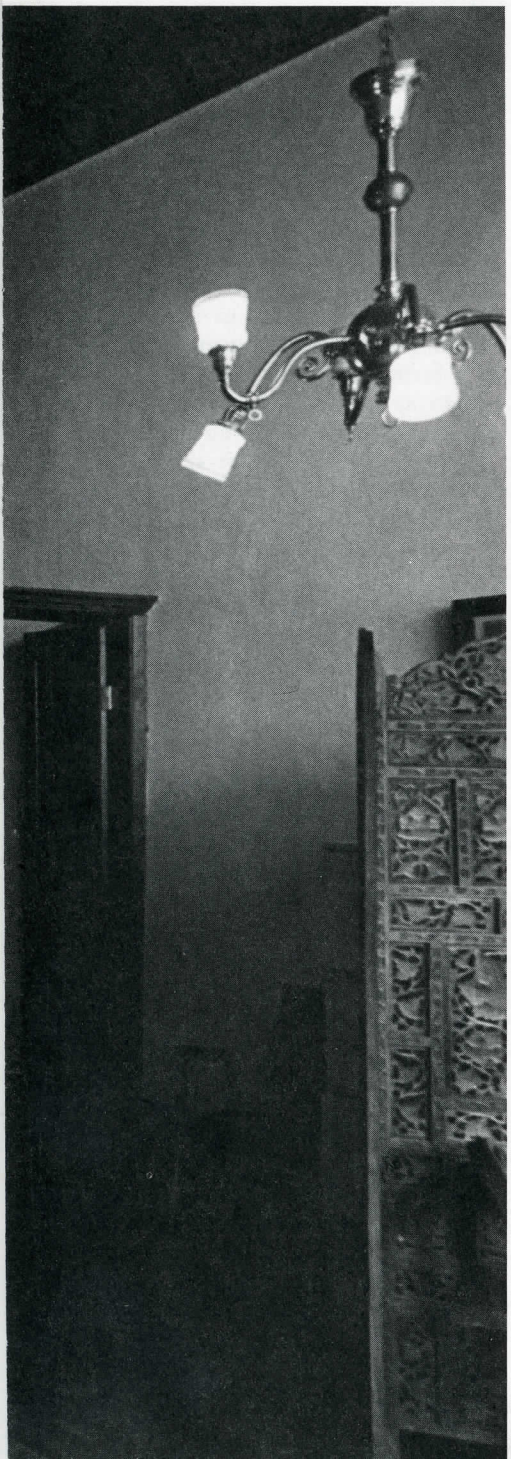
The Wayne County clerk during the period, Hezekiah Adkins, later remembered the Cove Gap stranger well. He recalled that Frank Morris was about 5'10" and 160 pounds, with dark hair and a sandy beard. He did not think that Morris was Frank James since it was thought that Frank James was a smaller man. Others also claimed the stranger did not come close to matching James' physical description.

Byron Morris found another piece of the story in a 1931 letter to a Fort Gay newspaper from a "W. H. Peters." Mr. Peters said that his father, D. J. Peters, who lived in Lincoln County near Cove Gap, "had almost adjoining farms to Frank James and saw him

Interior of the bank, which now houses artifacts of the American Bankers Bank Museum. The two "inside men" cornered cashier Robert T. Oney behind the counter, while their accomplices kept watch outside.

often." Their family's knowledge of the alleged James began one day soon after the Huntington bank robbery when a man and a woman, each on horseback, came past the Peters farmhouse and asked for a drink of water.

The man gave his name as Eddie Morris and shortly thereafter bought some land near the Peters farm and built a house. The letter writer stated that "the house was built so perculiar [sic]—as you looked at it—you seemed to be impressed by an air of mystery."



After he got his home built and a carpentry shop and turning lathe set up, the mysterious Eddie Morris had his stepfather come to live with him until the family sold out and left. Mrs. Morris' name was Annie and the stepfather was known as "Old Man Samuels," the letter continued.

The Peters letter added that "Frank James [Morris] was a kind and friendly man and a good neighbor. He had all kinds of tools and every make of gun barrel and was a fine cabinetmaker." He sold Peters' father a sideboard and a large corner cabinet that "reached to nearly the ceiling" and was in two sections that could be used as separate pieces of furniture. Both the sideboard and the corner cupboard were still in the family at that time.

Peters concluded that no one could convince him and many others around Cove Gap that Eddie Morris was not Frank James.

One of the reasons many people thought that this stranger was Frank James, the story goes, was that as soon as word reached Wayne County that Jesse James had been killed, he (Eddie or Frank Morris) immediately made preparations to leave. He sold out to a neighbor and disappeared as mysteriously as he had come. This neighbor, incidentally, had no doubts as to Morris' identity and later asked the Wayne County prosecuting attorney for *Frank James'* address so he could forward the balance owed on the farm.

The final proof for many in the area came when the "Morris" house was torn down years later. Amid the debris, a Bible was found. On the flyleaf reportedly was written "Mrs. Frank James."

Whether to believe this long and involved tale is best left to the reader, concludes Byron Morris with a smile, but he cautions that a lot of Wayne County people were convinced of its veracity. Skeptics may point out that Frank's local retirement at the very least must have been much shorter than reported, for he definitely was present at the James gang's disastrous raid on Northfield, Minnesota, the year after the Huntington robbery. Both brothers retired for a while after that bloody fracas, from which only they and Cole Younger escaped alive, but there is no doubt that the two rode together again before Jesse's assassination in 1882 in Missouri.

Byron Morris told me of another story which had the outlaws staying at the home of a Moore family before the robbery took place. The Moore house was across the Big Sandy from Wayne County, on the Kentucky side. In that era of long, tiring horseback rides and few public accommodations, it was not unusual for travelers to stay overnight in private homes. The Moores, having no reason to suspect anything, supposedly lodged the robbers for one night as they approached the Huntington area.

Mr. Morris next directed me to his friend, Wayne County native Doris C. Miller, who now lives in West Huntington. I found her to be an articulate 79-year-old, a former newspaperwoman now retired from the *Huntington Herald-Dispatch.* She is also the author of *A Centennial History of Huntington, 1871–1971.* She once wrote a series of articles on the famous robbery for a Wayne County paper, detailing the events as they were known as well as some of the surrounding folklore. The story is still clear in her mind.

"The four men split into two groups coming from Kentucky into Wayne County," Mrs. Miller told me. "This was their pattern, to split into two parties of two men each. Two of the men crossed into the state at Prichard in Wayne County, riding through a community which used to be called Centerville near where Whites Creek Road divides, one road going toward Wayne and the other to Prichard. After they passed through Centerville, they went over a ridge and down to Lynn Creek where the creek forked and followed the right fork over to Newcomb Creek and down what is now Newcomb Creek Road at Shoals."

Miller herself was born at Shoals and she knows the lore of the place well. "The pair went past my grandfather's house on this same road, stopping at several places to inquire about lodging and old corn for their horses. They were directed to the home of John Backus Bowen and his wife, Hester, which was at Shoals. Bowen was an early member of the State Legislature from Wayne County," she added.

"The men found lodging and food for their horses at the Bowen home. The two men wore black suits, wide-brimmed black hats, and the long linen dusters fashionable for horseback

riders of that day. They said they were preachers going a distance into Ohio for a meeting. On Sunday the men sat out in the yard reading their Bibles. Later in the evening it turned cool and Hester Bowen started to go up the stairs to take extra covers to the guests' room. She opened the door to the stairs and could see up into the room and saw the men were busy cleaning their guns. One man had two pistols and the other had one. She told her husband and he came to look, then quietly closed the door.

"It was not unusual for travelers then to carry a firearm for protection, but it was very odd to see preachers carrying guns," Mrs. Miller explained. "Both Mr. and Mrs. Bowen were past middle age and they sat up the rest of the night in their room worrying," but the men departed peacefully the following morning.

This story was told to Doris Miller by the Bowens' great-granddaughter who died several years ago. "For various reasons, it was thought that one of the two men who stayed at the Bowen home was Jesse James," says Doris. Most other accounts leave Jesse out of the picture, however, and have the gang led by Frank James and the notorious Coleman Younger during the Huntington adventure.

The restored Miller-McDaniel house at Shoals in Wayne County. Two of the robbers are supposed to have come by here on their way to Huntington.

Mrs. Miller picked up the story with the other two robbers making their way to Huntington. They "crossed into Wayne County at Fort Gay where the two streams called the Tug Fork and the Levisa Fork come together to form the Big Sandy River," she said. "The men followed the left branch of Camp Creek and came out south of Huntington. There they rode along what is now McCoy Road across the Wayne-Cabell line and up a long steep hill toward McCoy Ridge. In this vicinity there used to be a small community, a post office, really, called Hodge or Hodge's, named after a family who lived there.

"At the foot of McCoy Ridge, the two men found lodging at the home of James Barbour where they stayed the Saturday and Sunday before the day of the robbery. The story goes that as each man finished a meal at the Barbour home he left a silver half-dollar in the plate and a silver dollar was left on the bed as each man arose in the morning. They stayed for two days and nights and left a total of nine dollars which was a nice amount of money for a farm family in those days." This story was related to Miller some years ago by a grandson of the Barbours.

She continued. "After the robbery, the bandits fled back out McCoy Road. Near Hodge one of them threw a sack of coins close to the Barbour home. Residents of the area picked up the coins, which were returned to the bank. It might have been that one of the robbers wanted the Barbour family to have the sack of coins.

"Another story has it that as the robbers rode hard out McCoy Road after the robbery they passed Mr. Barbour who was taking a load of produce to Huntington. He saw that the men had been riding hard and asked how things were in town and one of the men told him it was 'hot as hell' in Huntington and rode off."

The two pairs of bandits retraced their separate routes after they got into Wayne County, "one pair heading back to Prichard and the other to Fort Gay. The story is that the two men who went to Prichard had stopped to water their horses either at Twelvepole Creek or at a well when a young man rode up to water his horse. He could tell the horses had recently been ridden hard. Rather than raise any suspicion, the two robbers asked the young man

to show them the way to Prichard, although they knew the route. He did, and, as they stopped at Prichard, they threw down a bunch of pennies; then, as the young man went to pick them up, the men rode their horses in the direction of the Big Sandy River."

Doris Miller's interest in the famous bank holdup and in the James gang goes a little deeper than just her knowledge of Wayne County and Huntington history. She told me that back in her family she is related to the James brothers. Her great-grandmother, Hannah James Endicott Copley, and Frank and Jesse James' father were sister and half-brother. The James brothers' father was a minister who died when the boys were teenagers and their mother remarried a Dr. Samuels.

Miller said that her grandfather, Winfield Scott Copley, was reluctant to talk about the relationship in the family. He answered her questions on the subject by saying that "at one time, as a young man, he was introduced to two men under certain names, not their own, and later he was informed that these men had been Frank and Jesse James."

Doris Miller is aware of Frank James' local reputation as a cabinetmaker, and herself once owned a large "Welsh dresser" attributed to him. This fine piece of furniture, now in the possession of her daughter at the family homeplace at Shoals, has been in the family since the turn of the century. Its story, as recounted by Mrs. Miller, places James on upper Twelvepole Creek in Wayne County either before or after the Huntington robbery.

"In the 1870's it was customary for men to pass the winter months in the upper part of Wayne County by making handmade articles for sale, mainly barrel staves and plain straight chairs made of hickory," she told me. "When the thaw and spring rains came and Twelvepole Creek rose and became navigable, trees were felled to make rafts on which the staves, chairs, and occasionally a piece of furniture were floated down to the mouth of Twelvepole at Ceredo."

During this time a Wayne Countian named Mark Stephenson ran a store at the "Falls of Twelvepole," near what is now Dickson. He bought for his wife a big "Welsh" style dresser with a mirror, drawers with combination locks, and a large lower cabinet. It had come down on a raft from upper Twelvepole, supposedly in a large basket made of woven tree branches to provide protection on the rough journey.

Doris Miller is another expert on the robbery and subsequent lore. Here she shows the "Welsh dresser" sideboard attributed to Frank James.

Mrs. Miller explained that her grandmother was a first cousin to one of the Stephensons and the dresser came into her immediate family when she bought it from another relative who had inherited it. Mrs. Miller also said that there is no definite proof that Frank James made the dresser or other articles of furniture, although it has become a strong tradition in the upper part of Wayne County that he did.

To satisfy my curiosity, I went out to the home of Doris Miller's daughter, Kathryn McDaniel, on Newcomb Road at Shoals, eight miles south of Huntington. The brick house, restored over the past nine years by the McDaniels, was built in 1847 by Kathryn's great-great-grandfather and has been occupied continuously by members of the family.

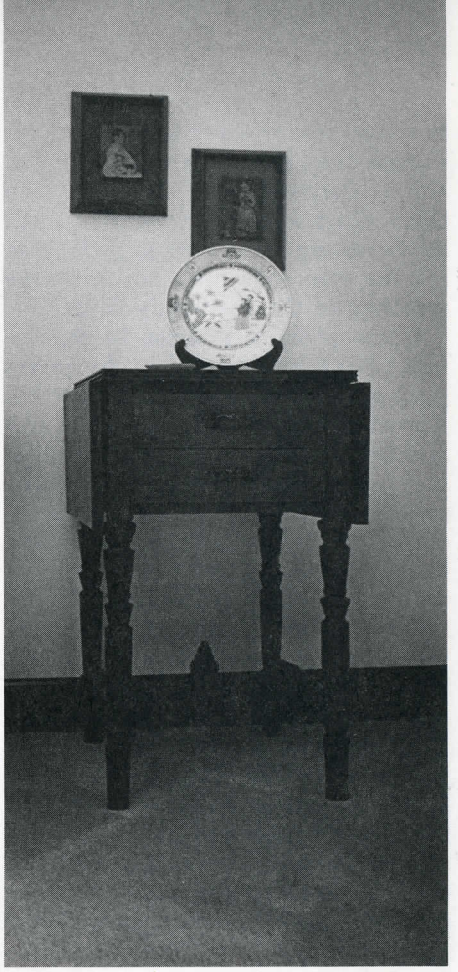
The furniture attributed to Frank James is in the dining room against a wall. It takes its place along with the many other pieces of restored antique furniture in the house. Mrs. McDaniel classifies it as more a sideboard than a dresser. It is an imposing piece, about six feet tall, in a warm, reddish-brown color. It is topped with a large oval

mirror with a wide frame that has a bunch of cherries carved at the top. There are two drawers with carved wooden handles mounted on either end of the cabinet top and below are two more drawers and a large cabinet whose doors have peaches carved on each panel. The lower drawers and the cabinet doors are opened with small, slender keys that move back and forth to operate combination locks. This furniture is obviously the work of a skilled craftsman.

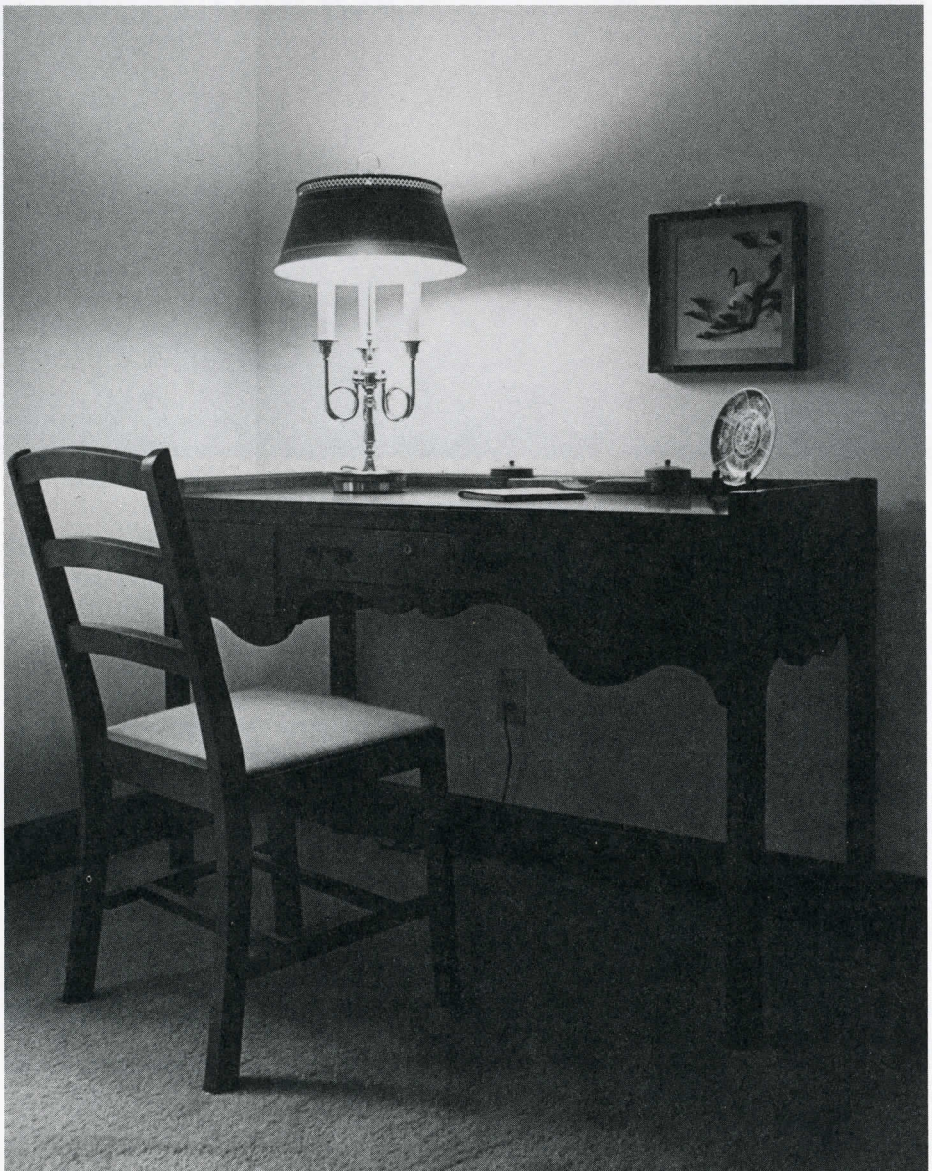
The dresser/sideboard has been in this home since about 1940, when Doris Miller bought it from an aunt who had inherited it. Storekeeper Stephenson died in the early years of this century and the piece eventually had passed from his wife to her sister, Alice Stock. From there it went to a niece and then to her daughter, the woman from whom Mrs. Miller purchased it.

Kathryn McDaniel knows of several other people who are supposed to own Frank James furniture, including one Huntington woman who called her four years ago claiming to have a James bedstead. Mrs. McDaniel can't be absolutely sure that Frank James made her sideboard, but she has no doubts that he lived in Wayne County for a time and that he made furniture there.

My investigation into the local legend led me to one more informant. Byron Morris had earlier told me that he believed that Chad Ketchum or his son Menis, both local attorneys, had a piece of furniture credited to Frank James. I found that Menis had the restored desk, cut down in height from its original size, in his home in the Westmoreland section of Huntington. He referred me to his father for more information.



Below: This desk was made by a mysterious stranger about the time of the robbery, in exchange for lodging at the Wesley Ketchum farm in Wayne County. The desk was shortened from its original stand-up height by inmate craftsmen at Moundsville when son Menis E. Ketchum was warden there. *Right:* This table was made from leftover parts when prisoners modified the desk. Both pieces are now in the home of Warden Ketchum's grandson, Menis, in Huntington.



My interview with Chad Ketchum, still active as a lawyer at 71, took place in his Huntington office. He told me that the Ketchums originally were from Lincoln County, where his grandfather Wesley had been a timberman. For two years in a row there wasn't enough high water to float the logs out on the Guyandotte, however, and he lost his business. The family then relocated to a rented farm in the Whites Creek area of western Wayne County. Some years later Wesley Ketchum became the jailer at Wayne.

Chad Ketchum related the story handed down with the desk. "When my grandfather Wesley and his family were living in that part of Wayne County, a man riding on a beautiful horse came by their house one day and asked if he could stay with them. They took him in and he stayed for a month or so, leaving occasionally for a day at a time. In return for his lodging he built a "stand-up" desk, made of walnut and put together with wooden pegs.

"It was a well-made piece of furniture that was the work of a cabinetmaker rather than someone who just

Frank, Cole, Devil Anse, and Senator Elkins

Frank James' and Cole Younger's ties to West Virginia history and folklore go beyond their alleged participation in the Huntington bank robbery in 1875. Their names are also associated with such famous state historical figures as Devil Anse Hatfield and U.S. Senator Stephen B. Elkins.

V. C. Jones, in his 1948 book *The Hatfields and The McCoys*, tells of a meeting between Devil Anse and Frank James soon after the Huntington incident. While out hunting one September day—whether hunting squirrel or McCoy, Jones does not specify—Hatfield came upon a horse and rider attempting to cross the Tug River, which was swollen and treacherous after recent storms. The stranger, obviously not a McCoy, was in his early 30's, with sandy whiskers trimmed into a goatee, and was mounted on a skittish black mare. According to Jones, the man wore a black slouch hat, black string tie, a long, reversible riding coat which was checkered on one side, and half-length boots.

The two men exchanged a few words, to the effect that the water was quite deep at that point in the river, and a crossing would be better attempted elsewhere. The stranger then turned his horse and disappeared into the woods. Jones tells us that this man on the fine black horse was Frank James, still evading pursuit after the Huntington robbery while on his way to scout the bank of Princeton.

How the stranger came to be identified as Frank James, Jones does not mention. Apparently he was later recognized in Princeton. According to the Jones account, neither man introduced himself during the brief encounter beside the Tug. Neither does he give his sources for the story. But verifiable or not, this tale of a meeting between two of the most famous, or infamous, men of their time, figures of both history and popular legend, provides an intriguing footnote to West Virginia folklore.

The outlaw Cole Younger's relationship with the man for whom the town of Elkins was named is more solidly documented. After graduating from the University of Missouri in 1860, Stephen Benton Elkins taught school in Cass County, Missouri, until joining the Union army in July 1861. Among his pupils were the Younger brothers, including Coleman Younger.

With the outbreak of the Civil War the Youngers rallied to the Confederate cause, joining Quantrell's guerilla band. At some point during the war—Cole placed it during October 1862—Elkins, by then a captain in the Union army, fell into the hands of Quantrell's men. Unfortunately for the captain, Quantrell's rule was to take no prisoners, and Elkins expected little more than summary execution. But one of Quantrell's men recognized Elkins as his former schoolteacher and, interceding on his behalf, managed to secure Captain Elkins' release. The man was Cole Younger.

Accounts of the incident appeared in various newspapers with regularity throughout Elkins' later political career. Most of them are contradictory on certain details and the exact sequence of events, but the basic fact—Cole Younger's rescue of Stephen Elkins—remained undisputed. (Younger himself gave somewhat varied accounts to the *Washington Post*, Nov. 17, 1895, and *The New York Herald*, April 25, 1909, as well as in a letter written to Senator Elkins on July 10, 1898. This letter is now in the West Virginia University archives.)

Over 30 years later, when Younger was serving a life sentence in Stillwater Penitentiary for the unsuccessful holdup and murder in Northfield, Minnesota, Elkins, then Secretary of War, interceded on Younger's behalf, helping to obtain an eventual pardon for his former pupil. In 1901, after more than 20 years in prison, Younger was paroled, and in 1903 received a full pardon.

The Civil War incident proved a popular subject for decades afterward. During Elkins' bid for the Republican presidential nomination in 1908 the 46-year-old event was revived, with the *Pittsburgh Dispatch* even headlining a special Sunday feature on the West Virginia Senator, "Member of Jesse James Gang Saved Senator Elkins From Death." But in the end, Elkins lost the nomination to former President Teddy Roosevelt's choice, William Howard Taft, and Cole Younger teamed up once more with Frank James—this time in a legal venture—as headliners for "The Great Cole Younger and Frank James Historical Wild West Show," which played Huntington in the summer of 1903.

—Margo Stafford

For the supposed work of a bad man, much of the Frank James furniture has ended up in gentle surroundings. Here the ornate sideboard stands among other antiques not attributed to James.

knew carpentry. The desk was similar to those once found in banks where you could rest your elbows on the top as you stood to write out a bank draft or deposit slip. There also was a small wooden railing around the edge of three sides to keep things from being knocked off or falling off the top of the desk.

"The man stayed with my grandfather's family until he left early one afternoon and didn't return. The following day, the Huntington bank was robbed. The description of the cabinetmaker's horse matched that of one of the horses in the holdup party and people suspected it was Frank James who had been around the area." The Ketchum family figured that the times their lodger was away he had been studying the bank or meeting with his accomplices.

The desk attributed to Frank James passed to Chad Ketchum's father, Menis E. Ketchum. He was a federal probation agent, Wayne County sheriff, and a deputy U.S. Marshal before being appointed in 1941 as warden of the West Virginia Penitentiary at Moundsville.

"While at the penitentiary, Dad had some inmates redo the desk, lowering it so that you could sit at it and write," Chad Ketchum explained. "He kept the refinished desk in his office for the seven years he was warden, and there was no doubt in his mind that the desk was made by Frank James." It is ironic that the desk "served time" while its

supposed builder never spent a day in prison for his crimes.

There are no markings on the various pieces of handmade furniture to validate them, so oral tradition has become the only source for their authenticity. It is equally hard to determine whatever truth there may be in the many folk tales, although if we may follow the old "where there's smoke, there's fire" adage, there's definitely no shortage of smoke here. Certainly not *all* of *all* the stories can be true, for they contradict each other at too many points. On the other hand, they share so many similarities as to suggest the stories fed off each other in the telling and retelling, and may all have been built from some original core of truth. For the most part the individual stories at least don't contradict the known historical facts of the robbery.

Frank James himself was no help, when someone got around to asking him about his West Virginia exploits, for he not unexpectedly denied even participating in the holdup. This was on the occasion of his visit to Huntington with a Wild West show in 1903. He and Younger had teamed up with a Chicago showman to form "The Great Cole Younger and Frank James Historical Wild West Show," which rolled into town on a special 33-car train early on an August Sunday morning.

Memories of earlier crimes had been mellowed by nostalgia, and the newspapers reported that James and Younger walked the streets hindered only by crowds of curious onlookers. Both roamed about freely during the shows, although as a condition of his Minnesota parole Younger was not allowed actually to take part in the performance.

The subject of the 1875 robbery naturally came up during this visit 28 years later. Frank James' response must have satisfied no one.

"I was not in the gang that robbed the Bank of Huntington on the fourth [sic] of September, 1875, nor have I ever been in the town before in my life," he told a reporter for the *Huntington Advertiser*. "I was at my home in St. Joe, Missouri, at the time.

"Not only have I been unjustly accused of robbing the Huntington bank, but many others as well," Frank went on sanctimoniously. "I am as innocent of complicity in the robbery of the Huntington bank as a little babe."

The Huntington Bank Robbery

The Facts Behind the Folklore

By Joseph Platania

The real story of the daring daylight robbery of the Huntington bank is scarcely less exciting than the folk tales, and may remind you of scenes from a Hollywood Western. In fact, the event took place on a cold Monday, September 6, 1875, when four armed robbers made their getaway from the Bank of Huntington on fast horses with almost $20,000 of the bank's money stuffed into cloth sacks.

Established in 1872 as the city's first bank, the Bank of Huntington occupied a small brick building on the north side of Third Avenue just east of Twelfth Street. At the time of the robbery, in the early afternoon, bank president John Hooe Russel had gone out to lunch and cashier Robert T. Oney was alone in the bank.

The original newspaper account reported that two men, with revolvers drawn, entered the bank while the other two stayed outside. Both of the "inside men" jumped over the counter and secured an ivory-handled Colt revolver lying on the desk. Oney lunged for the pistol, one of two kept on Russel's desk for just such an emergency, but he wasn't fast enough.

With four revolvers now drawn on him, the cashier knew he was defenseless. The robbers told him that they wanted the money and if he tried to raise an alarm they would kill him. They coolly ordered him to open the safe. He said it was open and they replied that they wanted the inner compartment opened. He told them the key was not there but one of the men opened a drawer, found the key, and again ordered the cashier to open it.

Outside, the other two men, their hands near their guns, kept a close watch on the street. The bank was in an out-of-the-way part of town and few people were about.

Inside, the confrontation between Oney and the robbers continued. The stubborn cashier still refused to open the inner compartment in the safe. After a few minutes had elapsed, the robbers tired of waiting and swore that they would blow his brains out unless he did. This time he complied.

Oney handed out two packages of money and said that was all of it. One of the men stooped and saw that the cashier had pushed a package back. They ordered him to hand that out, too. The robbers seemed disappointed because there wasn't more and made

Oney show them the previous day's cash ticket before they were satisfied.

From the newspaper account, the gunmen apparently liked the cashier's spirit. They asked Oney if any of the money was his. He replied that he had about $7 in the bank. Probably to his great surprise, since he had just been threatened with his life, they said, "Well, we don't want this little scrape to cost you anything," and counted him out $7. They told him that "they had been in that business for sometime, but he was the coolest man they had ever come across." Of course, it must be remembered that the newspaper story of the holdup was based mostly or entirely on Oney's recounting, since the outlaws weren't giving interviews.

In the meantime, a messenger known only as "Jim" stumbled on the scene with some papers he had brought from the post office. The gunmen ordered him to stand in the corner and keep quiet and he would not get hurt.

They then took Oney and Jim at gunpoint and marched them across the street to where the horses were hitched. Bank president Russel, returning from lunch with another merchant, saw this from the corner across from the bank. When Oney noticed that only one of the men was pointing a pistol at him, he yelled and they jumped on their horses.

Russel ran into the bank for his pair of Colt revolvers, but found them gone. He dashed out into the street, shouting the news of the robbery as he ran.

When the two robbers went into the bank, the newspaper reported, a "Mr. Powell," who had his store across the street, had seen "them jump over the counter and was about to raise an alarm." The gang's outside men rode up in front of Powell's store and one of them dismounted, went inside, and asked for a cigar. He noticed that the storekeeper was agitated and asked him if he had any firearms on the premises. He got between Powell and the back door and told him, "those men in the bank were going to take what change there was, and if he undertook to raise an alarm or escape, they would kill him." Powell was held out on the plank sidewalk until the inside men emerged from the bank with Oney under their guns.

The robbers mounted their horses, fired their pistols into the air, and, within a minute, were riding west down the avenue in a cloud of dust. They turned their horses south and rode full speed away from town and toward Four Pole, a meandering creek that runs at the foot of the hills south of Huntington.

Russel notified Cabell County Sheriff D. I. Smith who quickly organized a posse and started after the robbers. Banker Russel armed himself with a doubled-barreled shotgun and rode out with Sheriff Smith "at breakneck speed up the hills on the other side of Four Pole." Several Huntington merchants locked their stores, took their horses from the stable and also set out on the trail of the bandits.

The robbers' escape route led them up a long and narrow winding road over a steep hill (now McCoy Road, which goes past the Huntington Galleries) and down to the Wayne County line. They headed for the town of Wayne and then turned west toward the Big Sandy River separating West Virginia and Kentucky.

Soon two posses were riding hard after the four bandits, with George R. Miller leading the second from Barboursville in an attempt to head off the thieves. The Huntington posse led by Sheriff Smith and Russel got so close that near the Wayne County line the outlaws dropped a sack containing $32 in coins and a certificate of deposit for $5000, which were recovered.

Meanwhile, telegrams had been sent to Catlettsburg, Kentucky, and all stations between there and Louisville; also to Charleston, Barboursville, and other places in West Virginia. Those in the main posse followed the robbers to the Big Sandy. Most of this party turned back at the state line, but Russel and four other men went 20 miles into Kentucky and did not return until Tuesday night. Miller's posse continued the pursuit through eastern Kentucky until the following Monday.

Eventually one of the robbers, Thomas J. Webb, was captured in Tennessee with between $4000 and $5000 of the bank's money on him. He was returned to Huntington for indictment and trial. Another robber, Tom McDaniels, was wounded by two Kentucky farmers wielding old Army muskets. He died from his injuries. Both men were identified in person by cashier R. T. Oney as belonging to the holdup party.

Webb was tried in the December 1875 term of the Cabell County Circuit Court, found guilty, and sentenced to 14 years in the West Virginia Penitentiary. Frank James and Cole Younger, alleged leaders of the raid, were never brought to justice for the Huntington robbery. Frank himself never served a day in prison for any of his crimes, and later denied knowing anything at all of the two outlaws who made off with most of the Bank of Huntington's money on that September Monday. ♣

Aunt Dorie's Harvest

By Rosalie Scott

The garden was plowed in the fall of the year, to allow winter moisture to soften the ground. In early spring the soil was cultivated with another plowing, and by harrowing. Planting followed, and the hard work of tending crops. Then came harvest time, with different crops "coming in" through the summer and fall. For my Aunt Dorie Hainer, this meant canning time. She canned outside, over an open wood fire, or inside on the kitchen stove.

Strawberries came first, ripening along the back side of her garden in early June. Aunt Dorie washed pint jars and rinsed them in hot water, leaving the zinc lids and red rubber seals boiling on the back of the stove. The stemmed and cleaned berries were cooked with very little water and lots of sugar. After thickening, the preserves were poured into the sterile jars and sealed. There were always fresh strawberries left over, good over split biscuits with sugar and cold milk.

A June apple tree stood to the left of Aunt Dorie's garden gate. Canning apples was an easy chore. Some were placed in jars with water to within an inch of the top, the quartered slices kept firm by two aspirins in each jar. Apples for applesauce were cooked only two minutes, then mashed with sugar for canning. Sweet apples from her father-in-law's tree were canned whole with a syrup flavored with cinnamon. Apple peelings from a tree on the hillside were made into jelly with twice as much sugar as juice. The jelly came out light red, with glazed golden bubbles on top. There were many ways to preserve apples.

When apple butter time came, a fire was built under a black copper-lined kettle. Aunt Dorie prepared her apples beforehand, shooing yellow jackets away with a flick of her paring knife. The peeled and sliced apples were poured into the kettle a bushel at a time, with sugar added. The mixture was stirred constantly until the pulverized fruit became smooth and thick. Cinnamon drops were added and the bubbling apple butter funneled into half-gallon jars, with plenty put aside to be relished on a hot biscuit with churned butter. By the time the apples were finished wild blackberries were ripe for picking on the mountain, to be canned in their own juice.

Canning beans took much of the summer. Aunt Dorie strung them as the menfolk brought them in from the garden. Crisply broken pieces were tamped down into half-gallon jars, filled almost to the top with cold salt water. Rims and lids secure, the cold-packed jars were placed gently in a galvanized tub and left to cook for five hours over a hot fire. Towels were placed in the tub bottom and between cans to prevent breaking during the vigorous boiling.

Cans of rhubarb and peaches from the market took their place on the shelf. By the last part of July, cucumbers were pickled with the right amount of sugar, salt, spices, and vinegar. Beets were prepared in much the same way. Cut tomatoes with peelings scalded away were brought to a boil, Aunt Dorie holding hot jars with a towel while she scooped them full. She cut corn from the cob and cold packed it for cooking three hours on the open fire.

Around the first of August, a 10-gallon churn was filled with finely chopped cabbage, cores included. The cabbage was packed down by a well-scrubbed sandstone to ferment, and a clean white cloth was tied around the rim of the churn to keep the sauerkraut clean. It would be very tasty with weiners or spareribs.

Irish and sweet potatoes were dug by the men and spread out to dry for a day or two, then put into burlap sacks or baskets to join the kraut in the hillside cellar. Cornfield beans were strung on twine to hang behind the cookstove. These were called leather britches, fodder beans, or plain dried beans; they were good cooked all day with a slab of salt bacon. Popcorn was always hung somewhere to dry for winter, and onions were tied in bunches to hang in the kitchen or smokehouse.

In September, time was taken out for the Hager family reunion. Soon after, the autumn chill drifted in, signaling molasses time. Stripped cane stalks were fed into the horse-powered mill, and a fire kept burning under evaporating pans where the extracted green juice turned to a bubbling golden brown. The hot syrup was constantly stirred, with scum dipped from the top and poured into a skimming hole. Neighbors came from miles around to partake of the work and play of molasses making.

December brought hog-killing day. The fattened hog was shot, and then sledded in. The animal was hung from a rope and pulley, the entrails removed, and scalded and scraped of hair. It was then lowered back to the sled, where the men of the farm sawed up the carcass. Aunt Dorie salted the hams away on smokehouse shelves and cut up the rest with a large butcher knife. The right proportions of fat and lean were ground by a hand grinder, with sage added for delicious sausage. She fried some meat to be put away in jars with hot grease poured over, and also canned spareribs. Souse was made from meat scraps, for Aunt Dorie wasted very little.

Hog killing marked the end of food canning and preservation for the year, but by then the garden was plowed for the next season. And work never stopped for Aunt Dorie, at any rate. Winter evenings found her making clothes at her treadle sewing machine, or knitting gloves and sweaters. Sundays and holidays she cooked for company - huge meals of baked hen with dressing, cornbread, mashed potatoes, canned beans, corn, and pies and cakes for dessert. She lived to the age of 80 on Hainer Branch in Logan County, a busy Christian woman with time for her own family and, when necessary, to deliver babies for others and to lay out neighbors for burial.

Continued from page 4

More Mountain Movies

Since publishing "Films on West Virginia and Appalachia" in the summer issue, we've learned of three other movies which may be of interest to GOLDENSEAL readers. They are "All Hand Work," "How To Make Sorghum Molasses," and "John Mitchel Hickman," all by Carl Fleischhauer of Washington.

"All Hand Work" (color, 15 minutes, $17 rental) is the story of Jenes Cottrill of Clay County. Until his death in the winter of 1980, Jenes and his sister Sylvia O'Brien were regulars at Vandalia and other festivals. As a musician and master craftsman he was a major influence in passing knowledge of the old ways to the current generation, as Sylvia still is. "All Hand Work" was filmed at Cottrill's Deadfall Mountain home in 1970, during a visit by the late folklorist Patrick Gainer.

"How To Make Sorghum Molasses" (color, 20 minutes, $20 rental) is a detailed documentary, following the process from cane cutting through boiling off the syrup. The movie was filmed in Gilmer County in 1970.

"John Mitchel Hickman" features an Appalachian banjo picker, playing with a bluegrass band in a Columbus tavern when the film was made in 1967-68.

Fleischhauer was a major formative influence on GOLDENSEAL in the early days, working closely with founding editor Tom Screven. He now is a folklife specialist at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. "John Mitchel Hickman" may be rented directly from him for $20, by writing to Box 1546, Washington, DC 20013. The other two films may be rented from the University of California, Extension Media Center, Berkeley, CA 94720. All three are also available for purchase.

New Cass Publication

Trackage Rights, Inc., recently announced publication of *The Cass Collection: Volume 2, The Logging Years.* The large format, softbound book documents through words and pictures the "glory years" of railroad logging in the high mountains around Cass. Local timbering began in 1901 and continued to about 1960.

The Logging Years is by railroad historian John P. Killoran, who also authored Volume I of the Cass series. For the second volume he has drawn historic photographs from his own collection, and from those of other historians and retired loggers. Railroad buffs will be particularly interested in the photographic roster of all Cass locomotives, including those pulling excursion trains for the Cass Scenic Railroad today.

The publisher notes that copies of Volume I are still available for purchase. The volumes may be bought for $12 each (including postage and handling) by writing to Trackage Rights, P. O. Box 299, Scott Depot 25560.

Mountain Memories II

Fans of Granville A. Deitz's *Mountain Memories*, published in 1981, will be pleased to note the recent appearance of *Mountain Memories II.* The new book is by the late Mr. Deitz's brother, J. Dennis Deitz, who compiled the original *Mountain Memories* for publication.

Mountain Memories II offers more recollections of family life from the Deitz home country in the Meadow River area of Fayette, Nicholas, and Greenbrier counties. His mother's side of the family had been there "for 99 years before I was born," says Dennis Deitz, and he was born in 1913. His life's work has taken him to other parts of West Virginia, but it's clear that his heart remains at the ancestral home.

Mr. Deitz writes of his own growing up, of his immediate family, and of family friends and relatives. As with the original *Mountain Memories*, occasional chapters of this book are contributed by other writers. Readers may recall that GOLDENSEAL published one such chapter from the earlier book, "As We Lived A Long Time Ago," by Mr. Deitz's mother, in 1981.

Mountain Memories was published privately, and it is an indication of its success that the second volume has been picked up by a commercial firm, Jalamap Publications of Charleston. *Mountain Memories II* is available in bookstores throughout West Virginia, or by mail (for $5 plus $1 postage and handling) from Jalamap, 833 Scenic Drive, Charleston 25311.

***Preservation Sourcebook* Published**

Preservation Alliance of West Virginia, Inc., recently published its *Preservation Sourcebook: A Guide to West Virginia Historic Preservation.* Preservation Alliance is a statewide nonprofit organization designed to encourage public awareness of West Virginia's historical, architectural, and environmental heritage.

Previously, there has been no one source for preservation information in the state, and the *Sourcebook* is an attempt to remedy this. The handbook begins by identifying preservation and its sometimes confusing vocabulary in layman's terms. It provides basic information on state and federal historic preservation programs and agencies, including the National Register of Historic Places and its criteria and classifications. Funding options for organizations and individuals are discussed, with advice for property owners on the rehabilitation of older buildings and information on the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981, with its investment tax credits for historic preservation projects.

The booklet also contains a section describing the various architectural styles found in West Virginia, with accompanying photographs of buildings from around the state to illustrate each style. A bibliography of books, periodicals, and other publications related to preservation is provided, along with addresses of government agencies and other organizations involved in preservation. There are illustrated sections on West Virginia's covered bridges and National Landmarks, as well as photographs of other historic sites and structures throughout the booklet.

The *Sourcebook* was published by Preservation Alliance with the help of grants from the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Historic Preservation Unit of the Department of Culture and History, and includes an introduction by First Lady Sharon Rockefeller. The booklet is available to members of the organization at no charge; cost to non-members is $3.00 per copy. For membership information, or to order copies of *Preservation Sourcebook*, contact Preservation Alliance of West Virginia, Inc., P.O. Box 1135, Clarksburg 26302; phone (304) 624-9298.

"The Soulful Side of Mountain Life"

Ten Years of the John Henry Festival

By Edward J. Cabbell

Friday, August 31, 1973, was a fine day in the mountains. It was Labor Day weekend. In the hills surrounding Hugo Payne's camp outside Beckley, the first annual John Henry Memorial Authentic Blues and Gospel Festival was seeing the light of day. The festival was conceived, produced, and directed by black Appalachians with and for black Appalachians. Since that time the festival has gone through many changes.

E. Michael Lassiter and I had met two years earlier at a Miss Black Teenage West Virginia Pageant in Beckley, sponsored by attorney Donald L. Pitts. Lassiter and I became engaged in an extended conversation concerning the lack of any effective communication in Appalachia among blacks. His wife, Phillippa, and my wife Madeline, joined us in the discussion that led to the conclusion that West Virginia needed a black newspaper, a black magazine, a non-partisan Black Political League, and some type of annual event that could draw black people together. I brought to Lassiter's attention a proposal I had been working on since 1969 concerning the development of a black arts and cultural center that would focus around the John Henry folk legend. We then went our separate ways.

Later I met Clarence "Butch" Wright, then connected to the now defunct

Spike driving contest at the 1978 festival. Photo by James Balow.

Black Appalachian Commission. Wright encouraged me to pursue the center idea but with a much stronger black Appalachian viewpoint. During this time the Lassiters met James "Sparky" Rucker, a folk-blues musician from Knoxville, Tennessee. Rucker frequently performed at white Appalachian music gatherings in the southern mountains. Rucker and the Lassiters pursued the idea of a black festival honoring the John Henry legend and formed the John Henry Memorial Committee. I was the John Henry historian for this Charleston-based committee and also involved in setting up an independent John Henry Memorial Foundation in Princeton to do research on the John Henry story and the heritage of blacks in Appalachia.

With the support of John and Dave Morris of Clay County, the Charleston committee produced the first John Henry Festival. The Morris brothers had received a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation to sponsor a series of festivals in the Appalachian region, and they chose to help support John Henry as one of them.

Brooks Gore and E. E. Johnson provide music on stage in 1978. Photo by James Balow.

That first year had a good mix of black and white performers. Bluesmen Johnny Shines and Buddy Moss joined the Reverend Pearly Brown, Sparky Rucker, Uncle Homer Walker, Tommy Winslow, Nimrod Workman, Phyllis Boyens, Earl Gilmore, Joe D. Harrison, and other regional and local performers for a weekend of traditional music and workshops. Cornrow braiding and hambone contests were held. Vegetarian soul food was provided by Edral Winslow as well as down-home cooking by several local ladies. Adriene Belefonte taught African dances and Della Brown Taylor presented workshops of African arts and crafts. Cecilia Tucker, Miss Black West Virginia, was a special guest who performed gospel music at the Sunday

The Legend of John Henry

More than 100 years ago the abolition of slavery freed millions of southern blacks from the cotton fields of the old Confederacy, leaving them without jobs, without homes, and without money. Many of these blacks headed for the more industrialized North in search of work, in search of opportunity, in search of their new-found freedom.

"Among those who took advantage of this surplus labor were the American railroads. The railroads symbolized the massive power of industrialization that later was to pave the face of America, but first they had to snake through the Alleghenies, as the United States spread its empire from ocean to ocean and beyond.

"The Chesapeake & Ohio Railway planned its route through the West Virginia hills in the 1860's. The Big Bend Mountain at a loop of the Greenbrier River in Summers County stood in the way. The tracks had to go through it. The railroad hired 1,000 men and boys, most of them ex-slaves, to chisel a tunnel through the mountain.

"Legend has it that John Henry snatched one of the jobs offered by the railway on the Big Bend project. The six-foot, 200-pound ex-slave earned a notch at the head of the tunnel construction, the most dangerous section, as a steel driver. When progress being made on the tunnel became so slow as to be discouraging, the W. R. Johnson Contracting Company decided to give steam-driven piston drills a trial. John Henry boasted he could beat the 'drillin' contraption.' A contest was arranged. John Henry won.

"As a result of this legendary feat, John Henry became the railroad figure rivaling Paul Bunyan, the Hercules of the lumber camps. Songs and ballads celebrating the champion steel driver raced across the Great American Plains with the railroads."

This is the version of the John Henry story preferred by the John Henry Memorial Foundation, Inc. The nonprofit Foundation takes John Henry as its particular focus, but describes its mission more broadly as the presentation of "the heritage and life history of minority groups in the Appalachian region and their participation in the growth and the development of the region and the country."

The Foundation organizes the John Henry Festival each year, publishes Black Diamonds *magazine as funds are available, and occasionally releases records on the* John Henry *label. Those wishing to support such work may send contributions to the John Henry Memorial Foundation, P. O. Box 135, Princeton, WV 24740.*

afternoon service. I presented a workshop on the John Henry folk legend. Butch Wright was very busy at the festival encouraging black Appalachians to organize and monitor the programs sponsored by the Appalachian Regional Commission and the poverty programs.

The second festival was held at the old Booker T. Washington-George Washington Carver State Negro 4-H Camp at Clifftop in Fayette County, over Labor Day weekend 1974. This one was called the John Henry Memorial Authentic Blues and Gospel Jubilee. The event received national coverage in black publications, and was funded by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the We Shall Overcome Fund, the West Virginia Arts and Humanities Commission, and the Committee for the Humanities and Public Policy in West Virginia.

The '74 festival brought together an outstanding group of mountain performers as well as some well-known outsiders. Nationally famous Taj Mahal played his music, Bessie Jones and the Georgia Sea Island Singers sang for us, and activist Stokely Carmichael paid a surprise visit. Nonetheless, the 1974 festival ran into financial difficulties and was the last one sponsored by the John Henry Memorial Committee of Charleston.

Sparky Rucker and I joined forces with Mary Ellen Griffith in 1975 to save the festival, renaming it the Appalachian Inter-Cultural Heritage Festival. The new sponsor was the John Henry Memorial Foundation of Princeton, with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts. We decided to present the diversity of Appalachian culture and invited about equal numbers of black and white musicians and craftspeople. Country singers Hazel Dickens and Anne Romaine joined blues musicians Charlie Sayles and Pegleg Sam Jackson. The 1975 festival was held the weekend prior to Labor Day, at Camp Virgil Tate outside Charleston.

The year 1976 brought us still another name, this time simply the John Henry Folk Festival. Again we were at Camp Virgil Tate, on the same weekend as the year before. Folksinger Odetta was there, as were legendary bluesmen Sleepy John Estes and Hammie Nixon, as well as Big Joe Williams. Dancers from two northeastern

Percy Marshall and Arnett Howard survey the grounds at the 1977 festival at Camp Virgil Tate. Photo by Reuben Fernandez.

African tribes, on tour that summer with the Smithsonian, Cherokees from North Carolina, and a Nigerian drummer added a multi-cultural flavor to the gathering. That year's festival was picked up for a two-hour broadcast on National Public Radio's popular "Folk Festival USA" program.

A host of blues, gospel, country, and mountain musicians joined us on the same weekend the next year, again at Camp Virgil Tate. The black string band, Martin, Bogan & the Armstrongs, as well as Big Chief Ellis, Sweet Honey in the Rock, Pigmeat Jarrett, and many others, were there. Walter and Ethel Phelps and Percy Marshall gave especially memorable performances. National Public Radio taped us again, and the festival was taped and filmed for European radio and television by a crew from Germany. A reviewer called the 1977 festival "the real McCoy, bringing together artists and fans to celebrate the soulful side of mountain life."

In 1978 we returned to the traditional Labor Day weekend date, kept

The late Uncle Homer Walker was a favorite at John Henry and other festivals. The 1980 John Henry Folk Festival was dedicated to his memory. Photo by Carl Fleischhauer.

11th Annual John Henry Festival

The 11th annual John Henry Folk Festival will be held September 23-24, at the Appalachian South Folklife Center near Pipestem. Don and Connie West, founders of the Folklife Center, will host this year's event.

As usual, the John Henry Festival will offer a wide variety of workshops and concerts, featuring music ranging from "blue reggae" to traditional black Appalachian gospel. Food will be sold, and camping is available on the grounds of the Folklife Center throughout the weekend.

Admission to the festival is $5. The event is sponsored by the John Henry Memorial Foundation of Princeton, and further information is available by calling (304) 425-9356.

the same name, and moved the John Henry Folk Festival over to Pence Springs, in Summers County. That put us in real John Henry country, for Pence Springs is only a few miles from the C&O's Big Bend Tunnel where the legendary "steel drivin' man" made his last stand in the early 1870's. The blues of Louisiana Red joined the country rhythms of the Everett Lilly Band, the fiddling of Franklin George, and the old "slavery days" stories of Icie Sweeney. Crafts and farm life demonstrations were plentiful. Sledge hammers rang like gunshots during the railroad spike driving contest. The winner, John Mize, received an all-expense paid trip to the B&O Museum in Baltimore to demonstrate his skills. Viola Clark, the West Virginia Golden Voices, the Carper Singers, E. E. Johnson, the New Era District Two Shape Note Singers, and the Badgett Sisters all provided gospel music.

Members of the Lindside Senior Citizens Center square danced for us that year. "I came to dance," said 82-year-old Laura Witt, adding that she had been dancing since she was a child. "I might get in trouble with my preacher if he knew I was here dancing but I really don't pay any attention to what other people think. What I do is between me and my Lord, as long as I don't do my dancing in any of those roadside honkytonks." The first issues of *Black Diamonds* magazine and the first album from John Henry records* was released at the 1978 festival.

During the rainy Labor Day weekend of 1979 we held the seventh John Henry Folk Festival at Pence Springs. Local talent was featured, including Raymond Johnston, Carl Rutherford, Jimmy Costa, the Upsetters Blues Band, the Summers County Modern Dancers, and others. The highlight of the festival was a very fine folk sermon based on the John Henry story by the Reverend Mrs. Elizabeth Fitzgerald. The weather forced us into the Memorial Building in Hinton, where we celebrated "The Year of the Child" with popular music by Rushon Colin's Reconstruction Band.

The 1980 John Henry Folk Festival was held the last weekend in September in conjunction with Concord College's Appalachian Heritage Week. The event was dedicated to Uncle Homer Walker who had died in January, and the award-winning film, "Banjo Man: The Life and Music of Uncle Homer Walker," was shown several times. "The Legend of John Henry," by Pyramid Films, and the "Morris Family Old

*"Blue Roots: Pre-Blues Music from West Virginia," featuring banjo players Uncle Homer Walker and Clarence Tross.

Above; Tommy Symms breaks ground at 1977 festival. Photo by James Balow.
Below: A typical John Henry crowd scene, this one from the 1978 festival at Pence Springs. Photo by James Balow.

Appeal to Readers

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Hazel Dickens, Sparky Rucker, Phyllis Boyens, and Tom Green in 1977. Dickens received one of the first John Henry Awards in 1980, and Rucker, whose association with the festival goes back to the earliest days, was honored in 1982. Photo by James Balow.

Time Music Festival," by Bob Gates, were also shown. The first John Henry Awards were presented to Hazel Dickens and Yank Rachell, establishing a tradition of recognizing the best in traditional music at the festival. A fine quilt show by local quilters and a display of mountain books and records rounded out this modestly funded festival.

On September 18-19, 1981, we returned to Concord College and presented our ninth annual event, again in conjunction with Appalachian Heritage Week. As usual, 1981 featured old-time, country, gospel, blues, and bluegrass music. The festival was dedicated to the late Carl Martin who provided mandolin and vocals for Martin, Bogan & Armstrong, billed as the last of the great black string bands. John Henry Awards were presented to Martin, Bogan & Armstrong for outstanding string band music, to the Lilly Brothers for bluegrass and old-time country music, and to the Land Ownership Task Force for documentation of land ownership patterns in Appalachia. A surprise guest at the festival was Benedetto Rocca, a banjo player and vocalist from Rome, who opened the concerts with some fine old-time mountain tunes. Appalshop and WSWP-TV filmed the festival.

Last year's John Henry Folk Festival was celebrated as an old-fashioned picnic on September 18, at Cash's Hill in Summers County. Events leading up to the 10th anniversary picnic included a John Henry Field Day at the Pine Street Playground in Princeton, and participation as a guest institution at the Folklife Festival of the 1982 World's Fair in Knoxville. Etta Baker, Sparky Rucker, Ted Bogan, and Howard Armstrong represented John Henry at the Fair along with the Marc Pruitt Band, the Hartman Brothers, and Jean Ritchie. I presented a lecture on blacks in Appalachia.

The John Henry Festival enters its second decade this year, under the slogan "jobs, peace, freedom." The 11th festival will feature the band Afrikan Dreamland, as well as Serious Bizness, Guy and Candie Carawan, Elizabeth McCommon, Sparky Rucker, and Jane Sapp. Their catchy rhythms, tight harmony, and strong lyrics will speak out against racism and other forms of discrimination. The festival will still feature old-time, country, gospel, blues, and bluegrass, and thus retain its customary mix of folk culture and grassroots activism. We expect a warm combination of friendly people and good music in the pleasant surroundings of the Appalachian South Folklife Center at Pipestem. The 1983 John Henry Folk Festival will be held on the weekend of September 23-24. Won't you come join us?

In This Issue

JAMES BALOW was born in Detroit and grew up there and in New Jersey. He studied civil engineering at Brown University and received both the B.A. and B.S. degrees. In 1976-77 he taught photography and filmmaking to McDowell County students under an artist-in-residence grant, and later worked for the John Henry Memorial Foundation, documenting rural black life. He now lives in Lincoln County with his wife, GOLDENSEAL designer Nancy Balow, and divides his time between farming and freelance photography.

IRENE B. BRAND, a lifelong resident of Mason County, earned her B.A. and master's degrees at Marshall University. She has taught at Point Pleasant Junior High School for the past 17 years and has been doing freelance writing for several years. This is her first article for GOLDENSEAL.

EDWARD J. CABBELL is a native of Eureka Hollow in McDowell County. He is founder-director of the Princeton-based John Henry Memorial Foundation which sponsors the annual John Henry Folk Festival. He recently completed the M.A. program in black Appalachian studies at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina. His last work for GOLDENSEAL, on black shape-note singing, appeared in the Winter 1981 issue.

RENIE CARLSON, originally from Alabama, has lived in West Virginia for the past 12 years. She has a degree in business, and is now studying writing at the University of Charleston. Donna Taylor assisted her in writing her first story for GOLDENSEAL, "Thank You, Lord. I'm Home!"

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

BILL MOULDEN was born in Washington, D.C., and reared in Maryland, graduating from the University of Maryland in 1951. His career in corrections began in the Federal, Air Force, and D.C. correctional systems. He later helped VISTA and The Teacher Corps develop programs in corrections, helped the State of Virginia set up Virginia CARES, a program to help ex-prisoners, and taught college courses to Maryland inmates and correctional officers. He and his wife now live in Morgan County, where he consults in corrections, does some freelance writing, and chops wood. The Pruntytown articles are his first work for 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. A freelance writer for the past six years, he published his first GOLDENSEAL article, on West Virginia glassmaking, in the Spring 1983 issue.

ARTHUR C. PRICHARD, born and reared in Mannington, graduated from West Virginia University and McCormick Theological Seminary (Presbyterian) of Chicago. Mr. Prichard served as pastor of churches in Ohio and Pennsylvania, and in Wheeling and Mannington before retiring in 1970. He was a moderator of Wheeling Presbytery and the Synod of West Virginia for his denomination, and in 1969 received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Davis and Elkins College. He writes frequently for GOLDENSEAL, and is currently at work on a history of Mannington.

RON RITTENHOUSE, a Mannington native and senior photographer for the *Morgantown Dominion Post*, in recent years has won several first place awards in the Professional Photographers of West Virginia contests. His hobby is collecting old cameras and photographs, of which he has one of the largest private holdings in the state. He is a frequent contributor to GOLDENSEAL.

ROSALIE SCOTT was born at Hainer Branch, near Curry in Logan County. After graduating from Chapmansville High School she worked for the *Logan Banner* for a number of years, and still does some freelancing for that paper. She now lives in St. Albans where she is currently studying with a writers' group. "Aunt Dorie's Harvest" marks her first appearance in GOLDENSEAL.

PAUL WACHHOLZ came to the United States from Brazil as a teenager, learning English in Kentucky and southern Ohio. After retiring from the U. S. Army, he taught German and coached football and golf until 1978, when he turned to research, travel, and writing on a full-time basis. He has worked with GOLDENSEAL contributor Michael Kline on oral history projects, published his poetry in *Backcountry*, and is the author of a forthcoming book entitled *Was Magellan Really First?*

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