Goldenseal

West Virginia Traditional Life

Volume 10, Number 1 Spring 1984

Folklife • Fairs • Festivals

As you may have noticed, we've changed the name of GOLDENSEAL's "Summer Craft and Music Events." This was done for several reasons, chiefly the fact that when the events listing was first instituted in the early days of the magazine, it was devoted soley to crafts and music and covered only the months of June through August. Over the years it has expanded to include a rather diverse catalog of events, from community homecomings to ice cream socials, from ramp feeds to horseshoe pitching contests, that are part of the traditional culture of West Virginians, and now generally covers a longer period than just the summer months.

But don't be confused. Even though we've changed the title, this is still the same listing. As in previous years, it was prepared several months in advance of publication, and although the information was accurate as far as we could determine at the time the magazine went to press, we do advise that readers check with the organization or event to make certain that dates or locations have not been changed, as sometimes happens.

April 5–7
Heritage Days (Parkersburg Community College) — Parkersburg

April 6
Jackson County's 8th Annual Quilt Show (United Methodist Church) — Ripley

April 14
Eleanor Ramp Dinner — Red House

April 14
Feast of the Ramson — Richwood

April 14–15
Braxton County Arts & Crafts Show (Armory) — Gassaway

April 15
Clay County Ramp Dinner — Clay

April 26
Dogwood Arts & Crafts Festival (Civic Center) — Huntington

April 30–May 5
Quilt Show (Grand Central Mall) — Parkersburg

May 3
Dogwood Festival — Mullens

May 5–6
Antique Steam & Gas Engine Show (Mason County Farm Museum) — Point Pleasant

May 5–6
Grand Vue Park Arts and Crafts Fair — Moundsville

May 10–13
23rd Annual Wildflower Pilgrimage (Blackwater Falls State Park) — Davis

May 11–13
Blue Ridge Quilt Show — Harpers Ferry

May 11–13
Fox Fire Balloons & Bluegrass — Milton

May 16–18
Heritage Festival (Huntington Galleries) — Huntington

May 19
Traditional Music Day (Pricketts Fort) — Fairmont

May 20
Maifest (Bavarian Inn) — Shepherdstown

May 24–27
Webster County Woodchooping Festival — Webster Springs

May 25–27
Vandalia Gathering (Cultural Center) — Charleston

May 25–27
Spring Festival — Nitro

May 27
Guyandotte River Regatta — Logan

May 30–June 3
West Virginia Strawberry Festival — Buckhannon

June 1–2
Bobby's Riverbend Bluegrass Festival — Crum

June 1–2
Aracoma Festival — Logan

June 3
Rhododendron State Outdoor Arts and Crafts Festival (State Capitol) — Charleston

June 8
Vienna Volunteer Fire Dept. Ice Cream Social — Vienna

June 8–10
13th Annual Mountain Heritage Arts & Crafts Festival — Charles Town

June 10
West Virginia Scottish Clan Gathering & Highland Games — Hurricane

June 15–17
Locust Grove Bluegrass Festival (Nevera's Farm) — Hazelton

June 15–17
West Virginia State Folk Festival — Glenville

June 16–July 17
Tri-State Fair & Regatta — Huntington

June 20
West Virginia Day Festival (Hopemont Hospital) — Hopemont

June 22–24
Summersville Bluegrass-Country Music Festival — Summersville

June 23–24
West Virginia Birthday Party (Cross Roads 4-H Community Center) — Fairmont

June 23–24
Pioneer Days (Mason County Farm Museum) — Point Pleasant

June 24–August 25
Woodworking 1984 (Oglebay Institute) — Wheeling

June 29–July 1
West Virginia Regatta Festival — Sutton

June 30–July 4
Mountain State Art & Craft Fair (Cedar Lakes) — Ripley

July 1–July 4
July Jamboree (City Park) — Fayetteville

July 5–August 30
Hymn Sing in the Park (Wheeling Park) — Wheeling

July 6–8
Pioneer Days — Marlinton

July 13–15
Arthurdale Golden Anniversary Celebration — Arthurdale

July 14–15
Local Crafts Weekend (Pricketts Fort) — Fairmont

July 14–15
12th Annual Moundsville Open Horseshoe Tournament — Moundsville

July 15–August 17
Augusta Heritage Arts Workshop (Davis & Elkins College) — Elkins

July 19–22
New Martinsville Regatta — New Martinsville

July 20
Volunteer Firemen's Ice Cream Social — Williamstown

July 20–22
Upper Ohio Valley Italian Festival — Wheeling

July 23–28
4-H and Wood County Fair — Parkersburg

July 27–28
12th Annual Old-Time & Bluegrass Fiddlers Convention (New Glenwood Park) — Princeton

July 28–29
Crafts Weekend Workshop (Pricketts Fort) — Fairmont

(continued on inside back cover)

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Goldenseal

Volume 10, Number 1 Spring 1984

COVER: Aunt Jennie Wilson of Logan County, at last year's Vandalia Gathering. Robert Spence's story on Aunt Jennie begins on page 9, and our Vandalia feature starts on page 65. Photo by Rick Lee.

PHOTOS: Robert L. Campbell, Doug Chadwick, Bill Grafton, Michael Keller, Rick Lee, Ron Rittenhouse, Dennis Tennant, Andy Yale.

Our 10th Birthday

GOLDENSEAL enters its 10th year with this first issue of 1984. We had in mind to publish a commemorative issue sometime over the course of the year, to consist entirely of the best articles from Volumes 1 through 9. We've pretty well decided against that now, in part because devoting all that space to back articles would postpone publication of new material.

We were also uncertain just how to choose the best. Readers such as yourself are the obvious judges but there's no sure way to gauge reader opinion, short of a full-blown survey. It's easy enough to discern your favorite writers by mail flow, but we've never kept actual tallies on the response to specific articles.

We have our own favorites here in the office, of course. We're cagey enough not to mention particular names, but it seems safe to say that I think GOLDENSEAL has done some of its best work in exploring West Virginia's diverse religious heritage, looking into our labor and industrial history, and documenting traditional music. Assistant Editor Margo Stafford is partial to historic preservation.

It did not seem fair to pull out material on our own favorite subjects for republication, however, especially since reader interest seems to depend as much on the quality of individual articles as on the subject in question. That quality itself comes from our hardworking writers and photographers, mostly freelancers, so maybe the proper thing would have been to poll those people.

Anyway, we've not done any of that, for the space consideration ended up being decisive. Perhaps the *GOLDENSEAL Book* eventually will be published—it's a good idea that gets resurrected occasionally—and surely that is the appropriate place for the "collected best."

We do intend to commemorate the 10th year, however, and will even republish an article from time to time. We'll start right here, with Earl Core's "Goldenseal," from Volume 1, Number 1. There is still some confusion about our magazine's name, and noted WVU naturalist Dr. Core knows as much about our namesake as anyone. We're including Andy Willis' fine sketch of the goldenseal plant, first printed in our fifth anniversary issue.

On this anniversary occasion we also must acknowledge the help we've received. Our first gratitude goes to our readers, for support, advice and criticism, and especially for voluntary subscription contributions in recent years. Thanks also to our freelancers. They run into the hundreds now, and it's impossible to name each one, but we must mention some of the more prolific. They include photographers Doug Chadwick, Ron Rittenhouse, James Samsell, and Doug Yarrow; writers Yvonne Farley, Michael Kline, and Arthur Prichard; and the writer-photographer team of Diane and Dennis Tennant.

Culture and History photographers Rick Lee and Michael Keller, and Steve Payne before them, have bailed us out more times than we can count. They're excellent photographers, and also have performed much magic in the lab for us. I've never been able to come up with a suitable credit line for that laboratory work on old pictures, but you've seen the results many times in GOLDENSEAL. That you may not have noticed is a tribute to the skills involved.

A special thanks to founding editor Tom Screven and to our boss, Culture and History Commissioner Norman Fagan. Norm has consistently allowed us the leeway for our "warts and all" reporting, when it would have been much easier for someone in his position to insist on a prettied-up approach. He shares, I believe, our philosophy that the West Virginia story is so overwhelmingly attractive on balance that there's no need to sugarcoat any particular aspects of it.

Finally, a pat on the back for ourselves—editorial staff, designers, and printers. We've worked hard at it, but if the work has been difficult it has also been rewarding. The reward comes in praise from readers and in our own satisfaction in doing the job. That's what has kept us going for almost a decade, and I'm confident that the same thing will keep GOLDENSEAL coming to you for the next 10 years.

—Ken Sullivan

In the shadows of the mighty forest that covered the Appalachian, or Endless Mountains, and the hills to the west, the American aborigines before the coming of the European invaders had discovered hundreds of plants useful to them in various ways. Poles and bark of trees were used in housing; canoes were made by certain techniques, baskets and bags by others. Parts of some plants could be used for food; others formed the basis for alcoholic drinks; still others had remarkable narcotic properties. Many were used in the treatment of the various physical ailments that assailed their bodies.

Many of the plants the Indians used in attempts to cure diseases were, of course, to no avail, as is true of many of the remedies we buy in drugstores today. But, through a long and costly process of trial and error, others had been found to be of value. When the Europeans came, this knowledge was transmitted to them, with the result that the valuable plants quickly came to be very scarce. Goldenseal is one of these.

Goldenseal is a member of the crowfoot family and has the Latin name *Hydrastis canadensis*. It is interesting to note that only one other species of *Hydrastis* is known to exist and it (*Hydrastis jezoensis*) is half-way around the world, in the forests of Japan.

Goldenseal is found in the rich soil of deep woods, and in moist places at the edge of wooded lands, flowering from April to May, fruiting in July. It was found originally from Vermont west to Minnesota and eastern Nebraska, and eastern Kansas. It was most abundant, however, in the Appalachians, where it has probably been growing since Mesozoic times, when dinosaurs roamed the forests and Indians were still millions of years in the future.

Goldenseal

By Earl L. Core

Nothing about the general appearance of the plant would have attracted the attention of the Indians. It is certainly nondescript in character; the plant is low, six to ten inches high, hidden by other forest herbs; the flowers are inconspicuous, lacking petals entirely, and with only three tiny, pinkish, early-falling sepals. The greenish-white stamens and pistils essentially constitute the flower, and it is not very noticeable. The fruit, unexpectedly, develops to resemble an enlarged red raspberry.

Perhaps it was the thick knotted rootstock, with its bright yellow interior, that attracted the notice of the Indians. The color was pleasing to their eyes, and the root became the source of a yellow dye for their clothing and their implements of warfare.

A rootstock so handsome in color must certainly possess other virtues. Some of these, through experimentation, the Indians discovered: they used it as a general tonic, a stomach remedy, as an application to ulcerations. It even served as an insect repellent.

The fresh rootstocks, gathered in autumn, were chopped and pounded to a pulp, then perhaps boiled in water and the resulting liquid applied as a wash for skin diseases or sore eyes, or as a gargle for inflammation of the mucous membrane of the throat. For use as an insect repellent, the Cherokees pounded the rootstocks with bear fat and smeared it on their bodies. The pioneers chewed the rootstocks to heal a sore mouth.

The results secured from the various uses were in general so satisfactory that the plant was highly valued by the aborigines, and also by the early settlers. The rootstocks were included for many years in the U. S. Pharmacopoeia and commanded a high price, probably second only to ginseng. In 1909, for example, when most crude plant drugs were selling for five cents or less a pound, goldenseal was bringing $1.50 a pound. It is no wonder that in many places it became completely extinct and in most places quite rare. Most of the drug is now secured from plants grown in cultivation. Production amounts to seven or eight tons of rootstocks annually. The wholesale price of the powdered root, in 1975, was about $50 a pound.

Its use in so many different ways could be explained by the fact that the rootstocks contain at least three alkaloids, hydrastine, canadine, and herberine. It is valuable as an astringent and thus helps in the treatment of ulcers and sore eyes. Whether the drug is really useful as a tonic or in treatment of stomach disorders is not known; perhaps it is only psychological, as is certainly true of many pharmaceutical preparations today.

A tincture, in alcohol, as prepared today, has a reddish-orange color, staining everything with which it comes in contact a deep yellow. It has a persistent bitter, then burning taste, no distinguishable odor, and a slightly acid reaction.

Many other common English names have been used, such as golden-root, orange-root, yellow puccoon, eye-balm, ground raspberry, Indian tumeric, Indian paint, Indian dye, and yellow root.

Reprinted from Volume 1, Number 1.

Letters from Readers

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

Elk Garden, WV
November 7, 1983
Editor:
I paid my $10 in March, but I'm sending another $10 to help defray the expenses of printing a fantastic magazine. Many stories bring back memories for us senior citizens, and give the younger readers a glimpse into the past that I feel many do not always believe. They can't imagine a time of having never seen an airplane, TV, radio, and yes, even the automobile.

Of course, there are many more things we older ones recall with nostalgia—not to wish for them to return, but to feel we lived in a time that was not the easiest, but a time that enriched our lives, made us more resourceful and creative. Many times we had to do with what we had, not only food but other things as well, and in so doing, we learned to create.

From these "hard" times many new things were invented.
Sincerely,
Cora Hanlin Davis

Baltimore, Maryland
December 3,1983
Editor:
I am a native of West Virginia who has been transplanted to the wilds of Baltimore, Maryland. Even though it is no longer my place of residence, I will always consider your beautiful state my real home. Now that I've lived elsewhere for two years, I find that I appreciate West Virginia's largely unspoiled ruggedness and more relaxed way of life more than I ever did while I lived there. Those who have never lived in the mountains can never understand what I'm talking about. Indeed, a common put-down here is: "Are you from West Virginia or something?" I've had the pleasure of saying, "Yes, I am," on more than one occasion.

I would like very much to receive GOLDENSEAL on a regular basis. Enclosed find my $10 contribution.

Thanks. Keep up the good work.
Sincerely,
Alan Byer

Orrville, Ohio
January 20, 1984
Editor:
While getting a haircut the other day I happened to notice your magazine in the rack. Being a native of West Virginia, I was quite interested, especially in the articles about Pocahontas County where I was born and Elkins where many of my relatives live.

I was very young when my family moved to Ohio. I've read several publications on West Virginia life but I must say that yours gives a more accurate and meaningful expression of the way life was, and is, there. Being a fan of the late President Kennedy, I was pleased to find out recently, through books about his life, that he held a special place in his heart for the West Virginia people.

I would be very pleased if you could add my name to your mailing list for GOLDENSEAL. The copy that I read was dated 1979, so I am hoping that the magazine is still in publication and I hope this letter will further serve as encouragement to continue publication.
Sincerely,
Ron Armentrout

Primitive Baptists

Tarrytown, New York
January 17, 1984
Editor:
This is a fan letter to you for your magazine in general, and to Yvonne Farley for the Indian Creek Primitive Baptist Church article, done so well in the Winter '83 issue.

A long way from West Virginia and the kind of historical situations you write up, I am constantly impressed by the quality and depth that GOLDENSEAL always displays. Real class about often plain and simple life!

A loving masterpiece, as well as an objective account, was accomplished in Yvonne's articles, so informative and well illustrated. Religious journalism is not often easy, and superficial or patronizing notes keep slipping into a

lot of it. But not in the unfamiliar subject she wrote up so comprehensively!

As an over-educated, urban outsider who'd like to understand the varieties of religious experience of ordinary people, I am gratefully educated now, and want to pass on my particular thanks.

Also, could you send an extra copy to a clergyman friend of mine in New Jersey who's got a daughter at Bethany College?
Sincerely,
The Rev. William D. Eddy
Rector, Christ Episcopal Church

Tin Kitchen

Mt. Lebanon, Pennsylvania
January 25, 1984
Editor:
My West Virginia mother passes along her old copies of GOLDENSEAL and I enjoy them very much—especially the articles on folk architecture.

In the Winter 1983 issue you asked if anyone could identify a "tin kitchen" mentioned in an 1861 account of items found in an outbuilding.

Tin kitchens, sometimes called reflector ovens, are cooking devices made to rest on a fireplace hearth and be used for roasting or baking. One side, placed next to the fire, is open, and the other side is closed to reflect the heat onto the item being cooked. There's a photo of one in the folk art volume of

the new paperback, *Knopf Collectors' Guide to American Antiques.*

I imagine the tin kitchen mentioned in the article had been relegated to an outbuilding because it was old fashioned and no longer useful. By 1861, iron cookstoves had replaced fireplace cooking in towns and even in many rural areas.
Sincerely,
David Mackey

The Minturn Crib

Leon, WV
January 13, 1984
Editor:
On December 17, 1983, I received a copy of GOLDENSEAL (Winter 1983) in the mail from LeRoy G. Schultz, who did the article "West Virginia Cribs and Granaries." On page 48 is the picture of my great-grandfather Isaac Minturn's crib here in Mason County, where I live today. He purchased this piece of land on March 14, 1889, and it passed down to my grandmother, then my father, and now to me.

I enjoyed the whole issue so very much that I'm sending in my voluntary subscription of $10 at this time. I'm also enclosing $2 and would like to receive another copy of GOLDENSEAL, Winter 1983, Volume 9, Number 4, for my daughter. She would like a copy as a keepsake. We think the picture of the crib is such an excellent one. I've always enjoyed history and hearing older people talk about "old things," even when I was a child.

Sure am looking forward to the Spring 1984 issue of GOLDENSEAL. A very interesting and great magazine.
Sincerely yours,
Carol A. Kay

Forester John King

Bartow, WV
December 22, 1983
Editor:
All employees of the Greenbrier Ranger District of Bartow thoroughly enjoyed reading "Protecting Uncle Sam's Interest: A Year in the Forest Service," by John King. We are proud to share the history and traditions of the District with the people of West Virginia. We strive to continue the fine service started by the earlier District Rangers such as Don Gaudineer and forester John King.

Richard Reigel, a current Forest Service employee and graduate of the New York State Ranger School, suggested that the school would very much appreciate a copy of alumnus John King's article. If possible, could you forward a copy of the Winter 1983 GOLDENSEAL to New York State Ranger School, Wanakena, New York.
Sincerely yours,
David M. Stack
District Ranger

Bowden, WV
December 21, 1983
Editor:
I really enjoyed the article by John King. We had lost contact with Mr. King for several years.

My late husband, Bill Showalter, was in the Glady Fork Civilian Conservation Corps camp in the middle '30's and John King was his boss while there. Bill often told us stories that happened when they were working together.

Glad to know Mr. King is still working in the forests. Maybe later he can give us another article about those days.
Respectfully,
Mildred Showalter

Dunbar, WV
January 20, 1984
Editor:
I have enjoyed your magazine which I first learned of when you had the write-up about the Cheat River Club in Pocahontas County (GOLDENSEAL, Spring 1983). I had been there several times as a young girl. Once was to a square dance which was given to the young folks of Durbin by Price Gragg and his wife Vera.

In the Winter 1983 issue a friend, John King, wrote about my home and hometown of Durbin. The motorcycle in the picture was the first one I ever rode. I am now 72 years old. I have written John asking him to the Hiner family reunion.

Since my first magazine I have called and asked you to send it to five different families who tell me they didn't know about the GOLDENSEAL magazine but are now enjoying it.
Sincerely,
Helen Hiner Bassett

Showboating

Marion, Ohio
December 22, 1983
Editor:
The article "Showboating: Garnet Reynolds Recalls Life on the *Majestic,*" by Irene B. Brand, in the Volume 9, Number 4, edition of GOLDENSEAL magazine brought back a lot of fond memories of times I spent aboard the *Majestic* with my family.

The daughter of Captain Thomas J. Reynolds and his first wife, Maggie, I was born aboard the *America* showboat and grew up to be the leading lady, piano and calliope player for the *Majestic* which is now listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

If you still have them, please send two copies of the magazine in which the fine article about Garnet appeared. Also, my check is enclosed for a year's subscription for the GOLDENSEAL magazine.

Best wishes to you and your staff for the holidays.
Sincerely,
Catherine Reynolds King

Autumn Amos

Auburn, WV
December 20, 1983
Editor:
Your story on Autumn Amos brought back memories. That dear lady was my music teacher from the first grade through high school.

I graduated from Burnsville High in 1956. The band picture in the story was the picture in my yearbook, 1955–56. I was not in the band in high school, but I had choir to her.

Keep up the good work.
Sincerely,
Mrs. Dale J. Ratliff
(formerly Dixie L. Wilson)

Current Programs • Events • Publications

Friends of Old Time Music & Dance

FOOTMAD (Friends of Old Time Music and Dance) is a nonprofit corporation organized in 1981 to promote traditional music and dance, especially in the Kanawha Valley. Since its founding, the group has sponsored a yearly concert series featuring traditional music from America and abroad; held annual festivals spotlighting West Virginia musicians; organized informal house concerts; and hosted monthly dances with music provided by local musicians. FOOTMAD also publishes *Footprint*, a monthly newsletter covering subjects of interest to members.

The popular yearly concert series best showcases FOOTMAD's efforts to bring fine folk music to local audiences. Among the musicians to play in 1983 were the Red Clay Ramblers, British musician Dick Gaughan (formerly of the Boys of the Lough), the group Kornog from Brittany, and Mike Seeger. The concerts are held at Ferrell Auditorium at West Virginia State College and at other locations in the Kanawha Valley.

The next FOOTMAD concert, on April 14, will feature Celtic Thunder, an Irish-music group of American musicians working out of Washington. Celtic Thunder is expected to perform polkas, jigs, reels, and sing the songs of Ireland and Irish America.

Concert tickets are available at B&B Loans in Charleston and Fret 'n' Fiddle in St. Albans, or by mail from FOOTMAD, P. O. Box 1684, Charleston 25326. Membership information may be obtained by writing to the same address. Dues are $10 yearly, and include the newsletter subscription and discounts on tickets.

Wooden Calligraphy

Bill Warren of Tyler County defines "wooden calligraphy" as the "term coined to describe a combined art-craft form that emphasizes beautiful handwriting fabricated in wood." Whatever it's called, Mr. Warren's Wooden Porch shop in Middlebourne specializes in it, turning out fine wooden letters, numbers, words, and signs. The characters are most striking when cut out and left free-standing, either individually or joined into words or number groups, but may also be routed into sign boards.

The Wooden Porch recently sent an example of the cut-out work (the word "GOLDENSEAL," two feet long, in the same typeface we use on the cover), along with a brochure. Thirty-nine types of letters, figures, and logos are described, with prices ranging upwards from $1.25 per letter or number. Custom orders are available by advance estimate. The brochure particularly suggests that combinations may be crafted for street or mailbox numbers, names for desks, or signs for businesses, among other uses.

More information and a price list may be obtained by writing to The Wooden Porch, Route 1, Box 262, Middlebourne 26149.

Round Barn Survey

Preservation Alliance of West Virginia, Inc., is currently conducting an historic survey of West Virginia round barns for the Historic Preservation Unit of the Department of Culture and History. The survey will also inventory other unusually shaped barns, such as hexagonal and octagonal structures, even though these types are rarer in West Virginia than the more common round barn.

Although this exotic shape—first introduced in New England around 1824—had become popular in West Virginia by 1900, most of the state's round barns have fallen into disrepair or have disappeared altogether. In his 1978 GOLDENSEAL article, LeRoy G. Schultz of West Virginia University reported that he was only able to locate six round barns still standing.

Unfortunately, it is suspected that not even all of those are still in existence. To help in the important work of locating, identifying, and researching the history of West Virginia's remaining round and many-sided barns, Preservation Alliance is asking that anyone who knows of such structures get in touch with the Alliance. Round barns already under investigation include the well-known Hamilton barn near Mannington in Marion County, one on Route 219 near Montrose in Randolph County, and one near Moorefield in Hardy County. Another Hardy County structure being studied is the many-sided peaked and gabled Leatherman barn at Old Fields.

If you know of other round or unusually shaped barns, or can supply information on the ones already being researched, please contact Ralph Pedersen, Executive Director, Preservation Alliance of West Virginia, Inc., P.O. Box 1135, Clarksburg, WV 26302; (304) 624–9298.

West Virginia Videotapes

Each year GOLDENSEAL publishes an updated list of West Virginia and Appalachian films available from the West Virginia Library Commission. A growing number of state and regional videotapes are also available, in the ¾-inch format. This tape size is not suitable for home videoplayers, but the programs may be viewed at machines in libraries or taken out by those with access to professional video equipment.

The following video productions were recently acquired by the Library Commission. They may be booked, at no charge, through any of the 167 public libraries in West Virginia.

An American Adventure: The Rocket Pilots
77 minutes Films, Inc.

West Virginia native son Chuck Yeager, hero of the popular book and movie *The Right Stuff*, is the focus of this spectacular television documentary about post-World War II jet flight. Yeager was the first person to break the sound barrier. He and other test pilots helped develop the X-15, the rocket plane which took man to the edge of space.

Hills of Green, Palace of Gold
28 minutes WNPB-TV

The Hare Krishna temple outside of Moundsville is one of the top tourist attractions in the state. Every year thousands of visitors come to see one of the most elaborate religious shrines in the country. The history and sociology of the community is shown, as well as neighbors' reactions to this amazing work of architecture.

West Virginia Filmmakers
28 minutes WNPB-TV

This videotape looks at several filmmakers in West Virginia who have decided to stay home and make films about local stories and issues. Charlestonian Robert Gates, Wheeling director Ellis Dungan (who made Tarzan movies in India for a decade), and Buckhannon filmmaker Peter Griesinger are profiled and discuss the problems of making "home movies" that cost thousands of dollars.

West Virginia's Black All-Star

Friends and fans of Clint Thomas, 82 when he retired as Chief Messenger for the West Virginia Senate three years ago, will be pleased at his inclusion in *The All-Time All-Stars of Black Baseball.* The new book by James A. Riley lists all the great players of the black leagues, throughout the long period of sports segregation in America.

Riley describes Thomas as a "complete player, . . . a lifetime .333 hitter, an outstanding center fielder defensively, and a skillful base-runner over a career that spanned 19 seasons. He was nicknamed 'Hawk' because of his sharp eye at the plate and his speed and agility as a ballhawk in the outfield." Thomas, now living in Charleston, was interviewed by writer Paul Nyden for GOLDENSEAL in 1979.

Those wanting to know more of Clint Thomas and to compare him to his teammates and opponents may purchase the All-Stars book for $12.95. The 300-page paperback is available from TK Publishers, P.O. Box 779, Cocoa, FL 32922.

West Virginia Banjo Man Honored

Elmer Bird was voted top old-time banjo player at the national convention of the Society for the Preservation of Bluegrass Music in America, held at the Opryland Hotel in Nashville in late January. The West Virgina musician, known as the "Banjo Man from Turkey Creek," lives in Putnam County.

Bird beat out some of the nation's finest to receive his award, including Mike Seeger and Cathy Fink, among other nominees. Nominations were made through mail-in ballots from bluegrass club members and readers of *Bluegrass Unlimited* magazine. The final vote was taken from among the 3,200 fans and performers attending the convention, at which he performed.

Bird is now at work on a record album with John Hartford, to feature songs he learned while growing up on Turkey Creek. Hartford, one of the top performers on the bluegrass circuit, will play fiddle and banjo on the record. Bird has released two other albums, "Elmer Bird's Greatest Licks" and "Home Sweet Home."

GOLDENSEAL readers will have the opportunity to hear the Banjo Man in several West Virginia performances this year. Among other shows, he will be making music at the Potomac Highlands Festival in Moorefield, the Foxfire Festival in Milton, the Huntington Sports Show, and the Huntington Galleries. He had a nine-day engagement at the 1982 World's Fair and will audition this year for a similar stint at the 1984 World's Fair in New Orleans.

Third New River Symposium

The New River Symposium originated back in late 1980, as the brainstorm of members of the Department of Culture and History and the New River Gorge National River unit of the National Park Service. Such a thing—the organizing of a conference of amateurs and professionals around a common interest in a great river and its watershed—had never been done before, as far as any of the planners knew, and it was more than a year before the idea was brought to reality. The first New River Symposium was held in the early spring of 1982 in Beckley.

That first Symposium was viewed as a trial, with no advance commitment to ever doing it again. Fortunately, it was a success, with participants coming from several states and from as far away as the British Isles. Scientists, social scientists, and humanists from many fields of study got together with rafters, fishermen, and civil servants—and probably all surprised themselves by discovering that they could talk to each other. It was decided that year to continue the Symposium as an annual affair so long as the common interest survived, and to rotate it among the three New River states of West Virginia, Virginia, and North Carolina. The second Symposium, also successful, was held last year at Virginia Polytechnic Institute in Blacksburg.

The third New River Symposium will be held on April 12–14, 1984, at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina. The 1984 meeting is jointly sponsored by the Appalachian Consortium (an alliance of regional colleges and universities), the New River Gorge National River, Wytheville Community College of Virginia, and the West Virginia Department of Culture and History.

There will be a total of 16 sessions, most including several speakers, from Thursday afternoon through Saturday morning. GOLDENSEAL readers may be particularly interested in this year's Symposium, since the scheduled proceedings are more historical than in past years. A Thursday session will feature discussions of the history of Hinton and Pence Springs in Summers County, for example, with other sessions taking up other aspects of New River history.

Speakers from other fields will discuss historic preservation, wildlife, archaeology, and the recreational use of the river. The black fly problem, a controversial subject along West Virginia stretches of the river and the object of debate at the 1982 Beckley Symposium, will be reconsidered this year by VPI professor J. Reece Voshell. Subjects to be discussed at the 1984 Symposium divide about equally among the three New River states, with featured speakers coming in from Pennsylvania as well.

Dr. Cratis Williams, one of Appalachia's foremost elder scholars, will be the after-dinner speaker at the Friday night banquet. Dr. Williams' topic will be "The New River Valley in Settlement Days."

The three-day Symposium will be held at the Center for Continuing Education on the Appalachian State campus. Lodging is available at the Center and at motels in Boone. Symposium registration is $35 per person, if made after March 12, and includes the banquet and four refreshment breaks. Registration and reservations should be made through the Center for Continuing Education, Appalachian State University, Boone, NC 28607; telephone (704) 264–5050. Further information and a brochure are available from the New River Gorge National River, P. O. Drawer V, Oak Hill, WV 25901; telephone (304) 465-0508.

In 1985 the New River Symposium returns to West Virginia, with the meeting scheduled for April 11–13 at the Holiday Inn in Oak Hill.

Spring Baseball

By C. Robert & Lysbeth A. Barnett

Spring is lost on adults. All they really think about is fertilizing the lawn, taking off the snow tires, and putting in the screens. It's a shame, because they once knew how to fulfill the promise of spring. Long ago, before the spread of Little League baseball, when they were kids, they knew what to do on the first warm spring day.

That first true spring day usually occurred in our small Northern Panhandle town of Newell sometime in late March, following a mild spell which had melted the last pile of dirty slush but hadn't yet greened the grass. The morning sun rose unusually bright. The ground was damp, but not muddy. It was warm enough so that mothers didn't force their kids to wear boots, winter coats, or hats with ear flaps. Instead, tennis shoes, sweatshirts, spring jackets, and baseball caps all smelling faintly of mothballs were taken from closets. Clearly, it was the day for the first baseball game of the year.

The baseball glove was located in the back of the downstairs closet buried under a mound of boots, snowpants, and a stray winter coat or two. It was just as it had been left in the autumn, with the four large rubber bands still wrapping it around a baseball to make a pocket. The ball had turned a little brown from the neatsfoot oil which had been smeared on the glove to keep it soft over the winter.

The baseball bat leaned in the other corner of the closet. It was a beautiful 35-ounce, thick-handled, Richie Ashburn model. The bat was a little heavy to swing levelly and slightly cracked because until the middle of last summer it had been the property of the Homer Laughlin China Company team in the adult Industrial League. It had been salvaged from the broken bat pile and lovingly repaired with tiny screws, tacks, and electrical tape until it was almost as good as new.

Unfortunately the official Pittsburgh Pirates baseball cap never survived as well as the other equipment. Somehow it had been put into the toy box and had spent the winter being crushed. The bill which had been so carefully molded into an inverted "U" now looked more like a lopsided "S." But at least it still fit.

The run to the field was an unaccustomed experience. The tennis shoes felt like part of your feet, arms and legs moved freely, and the wind whistled past ears which had for too many months been protected by ear flaps.

Enough kids were already there to start a three-on-a-side game, with right field as an automatic out and the team at bat providing the catcher. After an inning and a half, more kids arrived. New arrivals seemed to come only in odd numbers, and intense negotiations developed about how to absorb the new kids into the game.

The matter was complicated by the disparity of talent and qualifications, which could upset the delicate competitive balance of the teams. If you took Stinky, who had to play in the outfield for obvious reasons, you would also get the rich kid, who had a new white baseball, uncracked bat, and official Wilson big-league glove, but who was the only kid in town with braces. Would a team fielding both a "tinselmouth" and a "Stinky" be at too great a psychological disadvantage? If you took the big eighth grader, you would also have to take the inevitable little brother someone's mother had forced him to bring, the kid who could barely lift a bat and who cried each time he struck out. Fortunately, "The Mouth" was there. With the tact of a seasoned diplomat and the decisiveness and authority of a hardnosed negotiator, he would proclaim, "You take Stinky and Tinselmouth. Give us Fat Boy and Bear and we'll take the little kid."

"Don't call me Stinky," said Stinky. But the matter was settled. A balance of power had been achieved. The game resumed.

Later, more kids arrived and were absorbed into the game, either by negotiation or by choosing new teams. When there were seven on a side, right field was no longer an automatic out. More kids arrived and replaced the kids whose mothers called them to lunch.

After lunch the men came to play. Big men. Old men. Some of them juniors and seniors in high school, some of them out of high school and married with little kids of their own. The little brothers, who had cried only three times and one of whom actually hit the ball (but in his excitement ran to third base instead of first), were crowded off the field and wandered off to play little kid games. The men took over the infield positions, and the original players moved to the outfield (or maybe second base). That was okay, because the men could throw and hit hard. When the men hit ground balls they made an ugly zinging sound which usually meant a bad hop to the face. It was better to be in the outfield than to have everyone see you turn your head on a ground ball.

The men tired quickly. After only a couple of hours, they had their fill of baseball for the summer and drifted off to do whatever old men do.

The game dwindled back to seven on a side and then to five. By this time, the game had reached the 47th inning or maybe the third inning of the ninth game and no one, not even the weak-hitting and weak-armed "A" student, could remember the score. No one really cared.

Near suppertime, the game began to disintegrate. A sharp line drive was hit between the left and center fielders. Neither chased it but instead argued about who should have caught it. Meanwhile, the batter walked around the bases. The next batter hit a grounder to the shortstop. The throw to first was a little low and the first baseman refused either to reach down and scoop it up or to chase it. Suddenly, everyone was tired and hungry. They remembered that their mothers had told them to be home early for dinner. The game was over. Spring had officially arrived in Hancock County.

Virginia Myrtle "Aunt Jennie" Wilson at home at Peach Creek.

"I Grew Up With Music"

The Memories of Aunt Jennie Wilson

By Robert Spence

Photographs by Rick Lee

Holding her "banjer" under the television lights in the center of Southern Community College in Logan, Jennie Wilson began telling her young audience about a different and older way of living. She told of growing up in Logan County when it was still a farming area, of learning to play mountain music, of her pleasure when her songs became popular long after they were thought of as antiques, and of the need to preserve the old style of playing Appalachian instruments.

As the audience listened she began strumming a tune in her familiar clawhammer style. Aunt Jennie smiled when she caught the eye of a friend among the listeners, delighted with both the reception from the crowd and with the knowledge that she has helped save the music of her time and place. The smile stayed on her wonderfully lined face long after she turned her attention back to the audience.

Virginia Myrtle Wilson will be 85 years old next February. She is a survivor, having lived through the arrival of the coal industry in southern West Virginia and the gradual fading away of the manner of living that her preindustrial parents knew. She has known many of the sorrows and joys of the region. Her husband, Jim Wilson, was killed by a slate fall in the mines when he was a young man. Jennie finished raising their children alone in the 1940's, a time when the economy of the area was showing the serious weaknesses that have become intense in recent years.

Yet it is through playing her music that Jennie has been most typical of the strong-willed and poetic women of Appalachia. She began making music as a child, abandoned it to have a home and family, and then returned to it nearly 30 years ago when younger Americans began rediscovering the beauty of the old ballads and instrumental music.

"When I was growing up, nobody knew how to read music, but we really made music," she said. "If it wasn't at one person's house, it would be at another one's. If it was in the summertime, we'd get out in a big barn someplace and play music until the wee hours of the morning. That was the way we played music and that was the

Aunt Jennie making music with her grandson Roger Bryant at the 1983 Vandalia Gathering.

way I liked it. I don't like to play in buildings. I think it is more authentic to be out and play under the trees."

Jennie Wilson was born an Ellis, on her family's farm on Little Buffalo Creek near the town of Henlawson in February 1900. In Logan County then the farming families all knew each other well and appreciated the differences in individuals. Many of the Ellis clan were picturesque and eccentric and nearly all of Jennie's line could pick out songs on a guitar, a banjo, a dulcimer, or a fiddle.

"I grew up with music on our old farm down there," she said. "My father was Hughie Ellis, but he always went by the name Dock. My mother was Cinderella Lockard. And my brothers and sisters were Lewis Webster, Mandeville Warren, Genevia Ann, Jesse Wilmer, Eliza Catherine, William Hughie, Isaac Calvin, Leotas Richmond, Cora Belle, Biddie Adeline, and I was the youngest, Virginia Myrtle. Now isn't that a collection?"

She remembers their lives together as a cooperative way of doing things. "Children then," she said, "went to school for six months, then they would let them go home and farm. Everybody farmed, you know. My father and my brothers, they were timbermen. They worked at sawlog jobs and at sawmills, but they farmed in the summer.

"The work was all done by hand because we had no machinery. We just used mules and horses to plow with and we didn't have tractors or things like that. And then we had just plain old broad hoes to hoe out the crops."

Yet if the work was difficult it also was done in a way that let young people enjoy their free time. "If we had a lot of corn to hoe out there would be gangs of young people to come in and help hoe that whole field of corn," Jennie said. "It was the same way when the fall of the year would come. We had bean-stringings and apple-peelings and would get all those things ready to dry. Then after that was all over, we'd all dance. Just so the work came first, that was all that was necessary. That's the way we grew up."

It was during those evenings when the crowds of young women and men played their old-fashioned songs and shared their tall tales that Jennie Ellis fell in love with the music. In 1909, when she was nine years old, she met in that setting the first person who inspired her to learn to play an instrument.

In many ways it is a shame that not very much is known about Delpha Maynard, who must have been a personable and charming woman, and whose way of playing a banjo eventually was considered pure enough to be preserved by the Library of Congress through Jennie's playing. Aunt Jennie herself remembers Delpha as one of the liveliest women she has known.

"One summer my brother Hughie started dating a girl named Delpha Maynard, who could play the banjer and dance just like anything and I wanted to be just like her," she said. "So I started learning how to play the clawhammer style when I was nine years old. My fingers were too small then to reach around the neck of the banjer, but I would pretend that I was playing like Delpha until I got to be 10 and could reach the chords."

Delpha was born, most likely in the 1880's, in the area that became Mingo County and died at about 75 in the early 1960's. "She was a real pretty-made woman," Aunt Jennie said. "She was about five-feet-three and weighed about 130 pounds and had kind of a round face with a pretty smile. She usually wore blue clothes and she had

Left: Husband Jim Wilson as a bachelor in 1916. The two women were mutual friends who introduced him to Jennie Ellis. Photographer unknown.
Right: Jennie Wilson in 1939, the year her husband was killed in the mines. Photographer unknown.

long strawberry blonde hair that she wore in a bun.

"She was about 21 or 22 years old when she met my brother while he was playing at a dance somewhere and they dated for about a year. She loved children and she took to me because it pleased her that I wanted to be so much like her. I liked for her to come to the house and I would sit on her lap and, you know, she'd pay attention to what I'd say.

"Most women then didn't play the banjer and she wanted me to learn how to do it. Delpha never told me who taught her to play, but I always thought she must have learned it from her family or from some older person who lived near her and she passed it along to me. I wish now that I'd had a picture of her and kept it all these years."

Jennie's father and her brothers Jesse and Hughie were glad that she wanted to play the banjo and they too taught her something about it. Dock Ellis told his young daughter that he would buy her a banjo of her own the next time he made a pushboat trip to Huntington. He did, and Jennie began learning music much faster. The songs were learned in a way that later was seen as an authentic folk process.

"The songs," Aunt Jennie said, "were the same folk songs that they sing today. About the way we'd do those songs, well, we'd all be sitting around to play and sing and maybe you'd know a song that I didn't know. I'd like that song and I'd say, 'Write me the ballad to that.' So you'd do it and the song would just pass around like that. That's how we all learned our songs.

"We didn't have songbooks or anything. Oh, there were some Christian songbooks but the love songs and the old ballads were songs that somebody would learn someplace and just pass it on. If someone did know music it was someone like a preacher who learned it out of a songbook."

Another way that mountain music was learned was in the informal setting of a country square dance. Social life for young people in Logan County then was centered around hunting and fishing, the town's annual Christmas get-togethers, church meetings, and square dances. Older persons often disapproved of waltzing. The square

dances were morally acceptable, but were spirited in their own way.

"When I began playing and going to square dances I was about 14 years old," Jennie recalled. "I would go along with my brothers and they would fix me a box or something to sit on and I would get up on that box and play my banjer so it would blend with their fiddles and guitars. And we'd have the best times there ever was.

"Sometimes, of course, it wouldn't be too good. They would get into a fight like they do today, but not as often as they do now. I've really seen some skirmishes at dances, I'll tell you. Today that would scare me to death, but then it didn't scare me the least bit. One night someone fired a pistol and the shot went through my banjer and I thought for sure I was shot. I remember many a time I would go to a dance carrying a pistol when I was just a girl. If you didn't take care of yourself, nobody would take care of you.

"But still," she added, "we always enjoyed ourselves. Each one would see just how much fun they could be. If somebody was a kind of still-turned person, well, they weren't too popular. But the meaner they were and the 'all for a good time,' why, they were the most popular."

Yet if the county was rowdy in Jennie's younger days, there were still many old-style customs that affected the way younger people behaved. She has vivid memories of the old practice of family members telling each other ghost stories and tall tales. She also remembers the courting customs of the time.

"When a boy had a date with his girl, he would ride his horse to her house and then go in," Jennie said. "She's meet him at the door and take his hat and coat and then tell him to sit down, or else her parents would, and just treat him the very best. If there was another boy and girl there all of you would sit and talk or play games like checkers or dominos—something like that. The parents would go on about their business.

"When the boy would go to leave, usually around 10:00, his girl would walk out on the porch with him and bid him goodnight, but they didn't sit and talk out there. If they did the parents would tell them to come in the house. They were just that strict, but you didn't see so many divorces. Sometimes on Sunday the boy would have dinner with all of them, but usually that was when things were getting serious."

Jennie's own courtship was, typically, very different from that. "I met Jim Wilson when his family moved to Henlawson. Some of my girlfriends met him and were telling me what a good-looking boy he was. I asked the Wilson girls—they weren't any of his relations—to introduce me to him. They said he was already engaged, but I laughed and said, 'Well, I can out-talk her!' One day they came up to the house and he was with them. He was the nic-

Left: Writer Robert Spence, a Logan County friend and fan of Aunt Jennie, joins her for a laugh.
Below right: Aunt Jennie remembers rough times at country dances. "One night someone shot a pistol and the shot went through my banjer," she says. "I thought sure I was shot."

est looking boy I ever saw but he was one of the stillest people I ever met. The next time I saw him it was at a party and I walked right over and started a conversation and we really had a great time. Then one day I went to the post office and he was there and he walked me home.

"All the Henlawson girls were stuck on him but I didn't think I was, because he was so quiet and he wasn't musically inclined. But then he was at a party once when I was playing the banjer and he asked to take me home and then asked me for a date. We went to a circus in Logan together. His girl heard about it and gave him his ring back and eight months later we were married. That was on December 16, 1918, when I wasn't quite 19 years old."

After she married Jim Wilson, Jennie gave up music and concentrated on raising the four children that the couple produced. They were Willard, Virginia, Lowell (who died in 1931), and Evelyn. The 21 years that Jim and Virginia Wilson were married were a period of change for southern West Virginia, as the area was altered by the changing coal industry. The couple felt the impact. "We moved a lot in those years, to wherever the coal was working good," Jennie says.

Where the coal was working was sometimes hard to find, for the industry was in decline. The first and most hopeful era of Logan mining had occurred during the years from 1904 to 1918, when new operations were being opened almost daily and the future looked wonderful. The second era of that history took in the years 1919 to 1946 when the industry's hopes were shattered and men and women became aware of how difficult it would be to live and work in the coalfields. Aunt Jennie's memories of the nightmare of the Great Depression in the coalfields are a story of their own, to be told another time. For now it is enough to know that as the Depression was ending she experienced a more personal sorrow, when Jim Wilson's life became one of those lost to the production demands of coal mining.

"Jim was killed in the mines here on Peach Creek," she said. "He was hurt in a slate fall on August 9, 1939, and died on November 2 that year. To get along I took $300 of the insurance money that I got and paid for the house that I'm living in now. I figured that if I had a roof over the children's heads we could get along. I got $35 a month in compensation and took in washing and did whatever I had to do, so we'd make ends meet. Two of my children were grown, but Evelyn was in grade school. Willard went in the service and Virginia did housework and we did all right until Evelyn was grown."

In those few spare sentences Jennie Wilson tells the story of how many widow women found ways to live during the 1940's and 1950's, when at times it looked as though the coal industry was dying in southern West Virginia. Other people, perhaps less hardy, despaired and moved away. As men and women left Appalachia to find work in other states, many of them took along the music their parents had made.

The heart of the music remained in the mountains but the sound traveled well, adapting to far-off places as the mountain people themselves adapted. Enough survived in mainstream country music and through the efforts of collectors to show the coming generation the value of the style. By the 1950's there was more interest in saving the traditional songs than there had been for decades. Among those in West Virginia who knew the value of that revival was the late Dr. Patrick Gainer. He is credited with "discovering" Aunt Jennie Wilson, and she remembers him well.

"In 1955," she said, "Dr. Gainer of West Virginia University taught a class in folklore over at Logan High School. He told his students that they had to bring someone in who could tell the class about how things were done here when I was growing.

"My son-in-law, Clyde Bryant, told one of our neighbors who was taking the class that if she could talk me into going with her and playing the banjer she would have it made. Now I hadn't played the banjer in about 35 years, but I went to that class and it came back to me right away."

Jennie Wilson has seen good times and bad times in the coalfields. "The woman who has had more trouble or more pleasure than I've had is just a bigger woman than I am," she says.

She added that that was about the time when arts and crafts fairs and folk festivals were being started all over West Virginia. People soon heard about Aunt Jennie Wilson of Logan County, and she has been in demand ever since. She has played often at the Mountain State Art and Craft Fair at Ripley, and at the Vandalia Gathering in Charleston nearly every summer.

Yet there is more to Aunt Jennie's story than her popularity at folk festivals. Dr. Gainer, a serious student of Appalachian music, was so impressed with Jennie's clawhammer style that he made arrangements for her to go to Washington to make recordings for the Library of Congress. Another close friend, Billy Edd Wheeler, arranged for her to record her songs for "A Portrait of Aunt Jennie."

In that way her music was recognized as one of the most perfect gifts that Appalachia has given to American culture. Among those who agree and who appreciate that gift is musician Karen Mackey of Lewisburg, who has been learning the clawhammer style from Aunt Jennie. She has shown that appreciation by dedicating an album to Jennie for sharing " . . . her courage, strength, wisdom and wit . . . the birthright of mountain women everywhere."

Aunt Jennie Wilson is now famous in certain circles. Her reaction is modest, yet in character. Thinking back on her times she said, "It was a hard life, but it was a good life. I'm grazing 84 now. The woman who has had more trouble or more pleasure than I've had is just a bigger woman than I am."

Aunt Jennie Wilson has crossed paths with a lot of musicians. This is in part a natural outgrowth of her recent prominence as a folk musician, as she travels around and people come to Peach Creek to see her, but the interaction goes back to her youth. In 84 years she has influenced, and been influenced by, a host of musicians.

One of the first was Frank Hutchison. Though his work is not widely known in West Virginia today, this Raleigh County native was one of the most influential Appalachian musicians. His use of the blues in his music was one of the factors that shaped modern country music, and at least one of his tunes entered the country mainstream, although under another name than the one he gave it.

Hutchison, who was born in 1897 and died in 1945, lived in Logan County much of his life. Reliable information about his life is hard to come by, so I was delighted when Aunt Jennie told me she had not only known Frank Hutchison but had once been engaged to marry him. Her memories of the man and his music follow.

Robert Spence. Aunt Jennie, how did you meet Frank Hutchison?

Jennie Wilson. When I first met him it was at Slagle on Rum Creek. He was working on a timbering job; he was a right young man. Then at different times I would go to dances and parties and things and he would be there. So eventually I got to dating Frank and I dated him I guess for two years. Frank and I got engaged after we had gone out for a couple of years, but we didn't get married.

RS What can you tell me about the way Frank played his music?

JW Frank had a unique way of playing. I remember he had a kind of steel bar, and he would hold his guitar on his lap and play it like you would a steel guitar. He could make it sound just like a steel guitar.

He also played a mouth organ—what we call a harmonica today. He had kind of a contraption that he put around his neck and held the organ on it. I have heard different people sing the song "Coney Isle,"* but Frank wrote it and he could really play it with his guitar and that mouth organ.

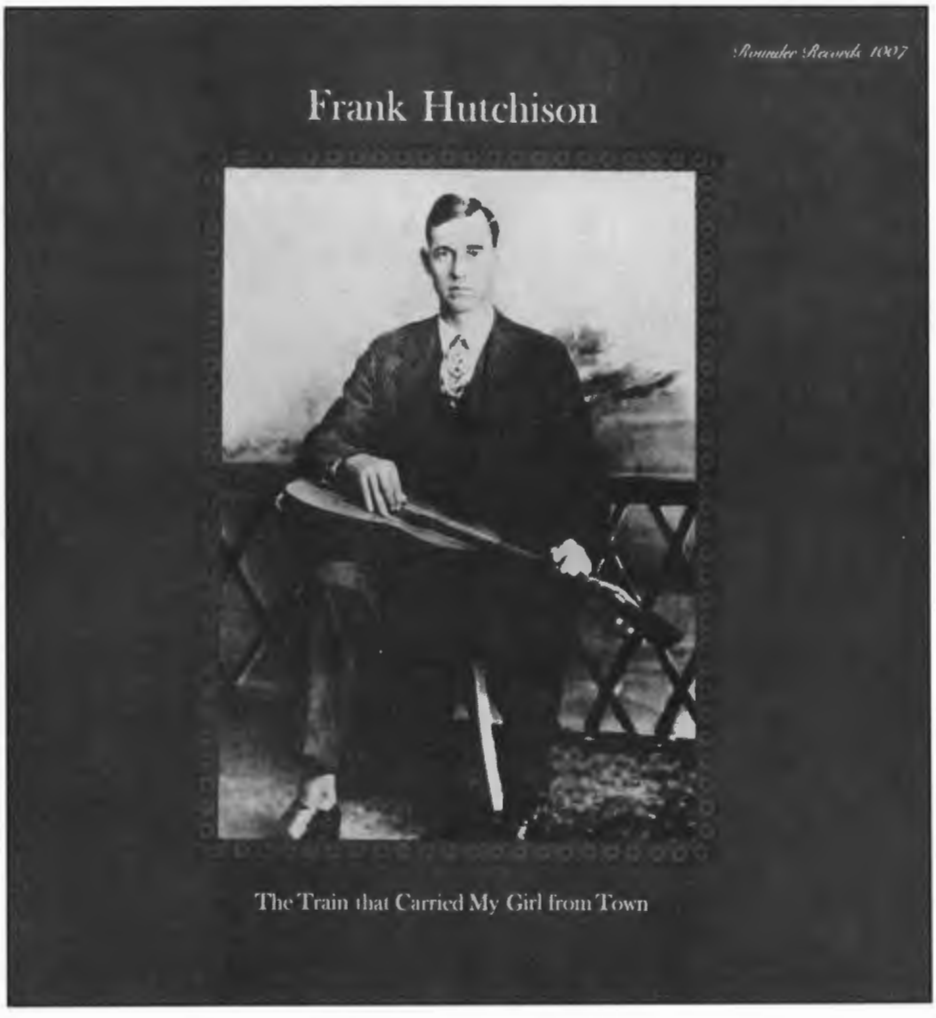
RS What about Frank himself?

*This, or a very similar tune, later became known to country music fans as Cowboy Copas' "Alabam."

"A Real Fine Looking Man"

Aunt Jennie Remembers Frank Hutchison

Interview by Robert Spence



Frank Hutchison's music is again available, on Rounder Records #1007.

JW Oh, he was real outgoing—a real friendly fellow. And he was a real fine looking man.

RS Was Frank very much interested in the old ballads, the English and Scottish songs?

JW That was a strong interest that he had. Everybody around loved those songs like "Barbary Allen," and he could really play them. He sang those songs as well as the ones he wrote. He loved those songs.

RS Did he ever tell you who taught him to play the guitar?

JW No, I don't believe he ever did, but I thought that he just taught himself how to play, like so many people did, by just practicing and fooling around with it himself.

RS Frank is supposed to have been one of the first white musicians who started working the sounds of black songs into his music.

JW I think that was probably true. Both Frank and his friend Dick Justice loved the blues, though Frank probably didn't love them as much as Dick did.

I knew Dick right well. He worked in the mines down at Kitchen and up at Ethel and MacBeth. He played the guitar like Frank did, and the fiddle. They'd go to dances together and play half the night. Chet Atkins couldn't do anything with a guitar that Dick Justice couldn't do.

They went down to Cincinnati once. That was the place where a lot of musicians went to record, like Nashville is today. A representative of a company told them he would pay their expenses to come and make a record there. I never knew exactly what happened, but they never made a dime off the recordings.

RS Did Frank ever tell you about the trips he made to record for the OKeh Company in New York?

JW Yes. When he came back I asked him how it went, and he laughed and said he messed up the first sessions because he tapped his foot too hard. I used to have a lot of their records on the old 78's, but through the years they all got lost or broken.

RS Do you remember anything about the shows Frank put on in the 1920's?

JW He'd play a lot of songs, of course, and tell stories in a very funny way. He always told one about a cross-eyed man and a near-sighted man who bumped into each other. The cross-eyed man said, "Why don't you watch where you're going?" And the near-sighted man answered, "Why don't you go where you're watching?" It would be so funny the way he'd tell it.

I never knew too much about him after he married. He married Minnie Garrett and they had two children. But I heard that Frank took to drinking. Then they left here and I didn't know his children. I heard that he kept a little store down at Lake and for a while kept the post office, too. I can tell you where he is buried—it's over on Hewitt's Creek.

Frank was very original. I've heard any number of people since his time use the guitar like he did, but Frank was the first one I knew who played like that. I think it is a good thing that people are getting interested in his music again.

The door is still open at Round Bottom, but the hospitable Gwinn family is gone.

Round Bottom

Home of the New River Gwinns

By Leona G. Brown

Photographs by Doug Chadwick

Almost encircled by a wide bend in the river, between Prince and McKendree, within the area now administered by the National Park Service for the New River Gorge National River, lies an abandoned farm, known for almost 130 years as Round Bottom, home of four generations of the Gwinn family. Only the rapidly deteriorating remains of the fine white house Loomis Gwinn built in the early 1900's mark the spot that holds so many memories for me, Loomis's granddaughter, and, I'm sure, for many other people who lived there or visited when Round Bottom was still "the Gwinn place."

The house Loomis Gwinn built, of lumber sawed from his own trees at his own sawmill, was spacious and well planned. The floors and interior trim, including tongue and groove wainscoting and mantels for the three fireplaces, were all of hardwood. Each fireplace had an opening at the back of the hearth through which ashes could be swept to fall to the basement to be removed through an opening in the flue, so that they did not have to be carried through the house. In the full basement was a hand-dug well, from which a hand pump brought water up to the kitchen sink. A carbide light system, buried underground, with the carbide gas piped to fixtures in the house, furnished light at night.

Across the front and around one side of the house was a wide veranda, its roof supported by round white columns connected by a railing. At the top of the wide concrete steps leading to the porch, two doors led into the interior of the house. The door straight ahead opened into the sitting room, or family room, where a cherry-manteled fireplace, with a large mirror above it, provided warmth and cheer in the cooler months. Here the family gathered in the evenings, to work, read, play games, listen to the windup Victrola or battery radio, or just to talk.

The door to the right of the front

steps, seldom used, opened to a foyer. To the right of the foyer was the parlor, with its dark, leather-upholstered furniture and ornate parlor organ. The parlor was used only for special occasions, such as weddings or funerals, although occasionally some family members would gather there to sing as someone played the organ. My first memory of a funeral is of the time, when I was a small child, that the body of a relative lay overnight in a coffin in the parlor. Next day, after a brief funeral service, the men of the family carried the coffin across the fields to the family cemetery.

From the foyer a hallway led to the rear of the house, past a first-floor bedroom, to the spacious dining room with its china cupboard and the 12-foot table Loomis Gwinn built to seat the 20 or more people usually present for meals. Another door from the dining room led to the kitchen, where there was another table and a woodburning cookstove.

A wide oak stairway led from the foyer to the hallway upstairs, from which five sleeping rooms opened. The largest of these, called the big room, was over the kitchen and was the place where visiting grandchildren were often bedded down on straw ticks or featherbeds. One of my earliest memories is waking, very early in the morning, to the "ka-thump, ka-thump" of the wooden dasher in my grandmother's churn in the kitchen below, as she worked to make the butter while the day was still cool.

To reach my grandmother's house, in those days, it was necessary to go by car or train either to Prince, about three miles upriver, or to McKendree, about a mile below, and walk to the boat landing opposite the house, passing through the Stretcher's Neck railroad tunnel if walking from Prince. At the boat landing, a loud "Hee-hoo!" was the signal for someone to row across in the boat and "set us over" to the sandbar on the other side. For me, as a child, this was a trip straight into Paradise.

First, there was always a warm welcome from my grandmother, Rosa Gwinn, and whatever aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends happened to be present. There was wonderful food, some of it not common on many West Virginia tables in those days. The rich river-bottom soil and the mild climate

Nell Gwinn Wriston has boxes full of family memorabilia.

A Daughter Remembers

From an interview by William E. Cox

Nell Gwinn Wriston, daughter of Loomis Gwinn and aunt of writer Leona G. Brown, grew up at Round Bottom and remembers it quite well. She also knows the earlier history of the place, as related within the family.

"Grandfather Gwinn willed the farm, to be divided between the three boys," Mrs. Wriston reports. Of her father's section, where he eventually built the big house, she says it was originally "nothing but a rock pile, the way he described it."

It didn't stay that way, for Loomis Gwinn set out to improve it. "He first threw up a 'Jenny Lind' house, close to the cemetery," she continues. "As time and money came to hand, and as the family increased, he added on to it. Finally, he got situated well enough so he could build the new home."

It was 1912 when Gwinn "got situated" and went to work on the house. He had a sawmill and he didn't have to look far for his timber. "Everything was sawed from his own property," his daughter recalls. "They even built the mantels and put them in the house."

The new house had 12 rooms, and was none too big. Loomis and Rosa Gwinn raised ten children there, counting Nell, and "usually there was an extra hired hand, or uncle, or stray cousin—or somebody—in," she remembers. The size of the place became a burden only after the family was gone, prompting Rosa Gwinn finally to let it go during her widowhood.

Nell Gwinn Wriston is now a retired nurse, living in Raleigh County. Her recollections provide a direct connection to New River history and we've excerpted several passages in the pages that follow. The interview itself was done as a part of the National Park Service's comprehensive documentation of the New River Gorge National River area of Fayette County.

Above: The interior of the abandoned house in early 1984.
Below: The young Loomis Gwinn family, about 1904. Sons Russell and Carl stand at rear, with baby Laban II between them. Othor sits on mother Rosa's lap, with young Leonard with his father. Photographer unknown.
Bottom: By the mid-'30's, son Wallace (right rear) and five daughters had joined the family. They are (left to right) Lena, Elsie, Nell, Mona, and Leila. Grandson Joel A. Gwinn, who slipped in at the rear, is now a professor of physics at the University of Louisville. Photographer unknown.

Above: A midsummer view of Round Bottom Farm in its heyday. The eight-acre field between house and river shows a fine crop of corn.

in the sheltered New River Gorge produced peanuts, sweet potatoes, strawberries, watermelons, and cantaloupes. There were fruit and nut trees, and berries to pick. Sand to build castles in, the river to fish and swim in, boat rides—what more could a child want?

It was on one of these walks to the

Below: The house Loomis Gwinn built served a large family for many years, but has now fallen into ruin.

The lights in the farmhouse worked like regular gas lights, which were common in parts of West Virginia at the time, the difference being that the gas was generated on the premises rather than piped in by a public utility. Nell Gwinn Wriston recalls the intricacies of Round Bottom lighting and plumbing in considerable detail.

Q. Can you tell about the lighting system that you had?

"It was a carbide system. It had a big steel cylinder that went down into the ground. That contained water, a certain amount, and had a hopper. In that hopper you put the carbide and set a bell on top of the carbide. As the carbide dropped into the water, it would form gas. The gas was piped into the house, and as you used the gas that regulated the flow of the carbide into the water."

Q. So the bell was a dome to collect the gas as it formed? How did it work?

"The bell rose up in the water when your gas was forming under it. When you were using your gas, the bell would sink down and trip a lever that let more carbide into the water and started your gas again. That kept the level of gas steady."

Q. Was this something unique, or something that you could buy somewhere?

"Well, I suppose it was fairly common, but I don't know of anyone else that had a system like it. I'm sure it had a brand name, but I don't remember what it was."

Q. What about your water supply? Didn't you have a well in the basement?

"There was a well down there, and when I first remember there was a little creek running through the basement. Mother kept her milk and butter down in the basement, in that cold water running through the basement floor. We had no refrigeration at that time and no way of getting ice over there. On a hot day a chunk of ice would melt before you could get it across the river."

There's not much left of the carbide gas generating system today. This is the main cylinder Mrs. Wriston speaks of, with some of the plumbing still intact.

boat landing, on a sunny day in the 1930's, when I was about 10 years old, that my father told me a little of the story of how the Gwinns came to be at Round Bottom; how Laban, Loomis's father, had come there with his young wife, Mary Jane, nearly a hundred years before. I was fascinated with his stories of their life on the frontier. He told how Mary Jane, when Laban was away on an expedition to Kanawha Falls to trade for much-needed salt, had spied a deer swimming in the river. The family was short of meat, so Mary Jane got the boat out. With her young son, Loomis, handling the oars, she grasped the deer's antlers and held its head under the water until it drowned.

He also told of the time, during the Civil War, when a group of Thurmond's Confederate Rangers burned the farm. Laban, who had been forewarned by a boy he had befriended, took his wife, their three small children, and as many possessions as he could carry in a wagon, and made his

way as a refugee to Indiana, where he stayed until the war was over. He returned to rebuild the farm and raise his family there.

Only within the past two years, with help from a first cousin, A. N. Gwinn of Grand Rapids, Michigan, who is the custodian of the old family documents, and from my father's five sisters, have I been able to fill in more of the history of Round Bottom.

The first Gwinn to own the "round bottom tract" was John Gwinn, known as "Squire John" because he was the seventh sheriff of Fayette County. One of the first settlers in the Meadow Bridge area, he became an extensive landowner in Fayette County. He acquired the "round bottom tract" from Isaac and Elizabeth Sanner in 1855, and in 1861 deeded it to his son, Laban. At Laban's death, the property was divided among his three sons, Loomis, John, and Lewis. The Lewis Gwinn house is still standing, about a mile upriver from the larger Loomis Gwinn house, and near the place where Laban and his wife, Mary Jane, lived in a cave while rebuilding their farm after the Civil War.

Loomis Gwinn, my grandfather, had need of a large house, for his family consisted of six sons and five daughters. He also felt the need for a school on the south side of the river, so that his children would not have to cross in bad weather to attend the Estuary School. When his house was finished, he sawed the lumber for and built his own schoolhouse, and petitioned Fayette County to send him a teacher. They sent Miss Gertrude Skaggs, who was to have a profound effect on the lives of his children.

Last summer, I visited Miss Skaggs, now 92, at her home in Alderson, and she relived for me her experiences as a young teacher in Fayette County. Her first teaching job had been a teacher's nightmare; she taught 70 children, some

Mrs. Wriston remembers the New River boats as more than 20 feet long and up to four feet wide. Here, teacher Gertrude Skaggs sits in the stern with Leonard Gwinn and Gertrude's sister Gladys seated in the middle. They're accompanied by younger Gwinn daughters. Date and photographer unknown.

Nell Gwinn Wriston remembers the garden crops grown at Round Bottom, and that the family would peddle the produce down the river by boat.

"My father grew melons, sugar cane and corn, and other staples in the summer time. Beans, tomatoes, and that sort of thing. He and my brothers took those to the coal camps downriver by boat to sell them. Places like Thayer and Claremont. They'd go as far as Thurmond.

Q. Did they have any problems getting the boat back upriver?

"Never seemed to complain. They used the poling method. There was one or two in the boat, and someone on the land pulling."

Q. How large were these boats?

"Oh, 22, 24 feet, something like that, possibly four feet wide. They were large boats. Daddy always referred to them as 'skiffs.'

"He made the boats, sawed the patterns himself. As well as I can remember, during the time I spent there he must have made six or eight. Some of them he gave to other people or traded for something else. But we usually had two boats, one at the upper landing and one at the lower."

Q. Did you ever see the men poling the boats up through the rapids?

"I not only seen them, I helped them pole. You traveled along with the strongest one on the ground with the rope, sometimes two people. And two in the boat—one in the front and one in the back, with poles. You just kept it away from the rocks and the team on the ground pulled the boat up over the rapids. Above the rapids, you'd go into what we called 'eddy water,' where the water swirls back in the other direction. Then you'd get your rest before you came into the next rapid."

Q. Did you ever go out in the boats for pleasure?

"Yes, that was our Sunday afternoon dating—get out and ride the rapids in the boats. That was about all there was to do. We'd row so far into the eddy water and cut out into the white water. You'd get quite a ride."

The original Laban Gwinn founded Round Bottom, and rebuilt after the Civil War. He and wife Mary Jane rest under this marker in the family cemetery.

of whom could not speak English, in a one-room building in a coal camp on Loup Creek. So the invitation to teach at the Gwinn school was something of a welcome relief. Miss Skaggs lived alternately with the two Gwinn families, Lewis's and Loomis's, and taught their children as well as the children from a lumber camp farther up the river. She participated in all family life, including sharing the chores. She laughed as she related how Russell, second oldest of the Gwinn boys, and quite a prankster, teased her by putting a stick of stovewood into the large pan of dishwater as she was washing dishes one evening. She retaliated by stuffing the wet dishrag down the back of his neck.

The education the Gwinn children received from Miss Skaggs prepared them well for later life. All of them went on to some kind of higher education, and all became successful adults. Carl, Russell, and Leonard all found careers with the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad. Othor, a master carpenter, worked for a time in the Panama Canal Zone, then, during World War II, at the Army ammunition plant in Radford, Virginia, and then at Radford University. Laban, named for his grandfather, was a supervisor at Union Carbide in South Charleston, and Wallace became a mine superintendent. One of the daughters, Nell, trained for a nursing career at McKendree Hospital, as did daughter-in-law Mabel Gwinn, wife of Wallace [Goldenseal, Fall 1981]. Three of the daughters, Elsie Casler, Lena Johnson, and Leila Walters, now live in Florida. Another, Mona Frost, lives at Edison, Ohio, and Nell Wriston lives near Beckley, where she worked as a nurse before her retirement.

About 1920, Loomis Gwinn tore down the schoolhouse he had built, which was no longer needed, and floated the boards across New River at the lower landing. Here, beside the train station at McKendree, he used them to construct a store building. He operated the store, serving incoming and outgoing train passengers and hospital personnel and patients, until his death in 1927.

In the 1940's, following the closing of McKendree Hospital, Rosa Gwinn found it impossible to continue to live on the farm, and sold the property. The cemetery, where Laban Gwinn, his wife Mary Jane, Loomis and Rosa, and many other family members and friends are buried, remains family property. The surviving Gwinns, children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren, come from homes in many states to meet on the Sunday in July closest to Rosa's birthday, July 14, to eat a meal together and recall the happy times at Round Bottom.

Mrs. Wriston received her own basic education at the Gwinn School, and remembers it quite well. She says the school offered a "well-rounded curriculum" in a supportive family atmosphere.

"It was a little one-room school that my father built. He went to the Fayette County Board of Education and told them that he would furnish the lumber and the fuel for the school if the County would furnish the teacher and the seats. And that's how the school was built.

"My brother Leonard, who is dead now, was the oldest boy going to the school. He would carry me there on his arm. I was only four years old, but Mother let me start to school because I wanted to go.

"The first teacher I remember was Miss Gertrude Skaggs. She boarded at our house. Miss Skaggs was a very, very interesting person. She was laughing about those days at my nephew's funeral here a while back. She was talking about the little part that my youngest sister and I played in the school play. We had an umbrella and somebody poured water on us. She had made us a little poem and it was real cute."

Q. Was this a school for the Gwinns only, or did other children attend as well?

"Well, to begin with, there wasn't anybody but Gwinns attending. There were five girls and three boys from our family and four in my Uncle Lewis's family that attended. And then there was my Uncle Jimmy across the river. The Estuary School wasn't there then, so some of his children came over to our school. They were only there a year or two."

Q. What were some of the subjects that were taught, do you recall?

"Oh, we had all the subjects, the basics. You know, reading, writing and arithmetic, English, some sort of a program in health. It was a pretty well-rounded curriculum."

With the children educated, Loomis Gwinn tore down his school and moved it across the river to build a store near the McKendree train station. Here he stands proprietorially out in front, in the 1920's. Photographer unknown.

Nature Always Worked
Opal Freeman, Moatsville Midwife

By Judith Gibbs

Photographs by Michael Keller

Opal Freeman of Philippi estimates she has helped bring 200 babies into the world.

It was probably around midnight one night in August 1933 when a Barbour County moonshiner knocked on Opal Freeman's door. She had been expecting him sometime soon. A slim, bespectacled woman, Mrs. Freeman grabbed her bonnet and black bag and set out for the moonshiner's home four miles away. The midwife of Moatsville had work to do.

They got there in time that night, Mrs. Freeman, now 90, recalls. Her earliest record book shows that the moonshiner's wife had a healthy baby girl at 5:30 a.m. on August 13, 1933. It was all in a night's work for Mrs. Freeman, who delivered more than 200 babies during a career that spanned 40 years. But deliveries weren't always so easy for a rural midwife with no formal schooling in the arts of medicine or nursing.

Once, Mrs. Freeman recalls, she saw an infant emerging from the birth canal with the umbilical cord wrapped dangerously around its neck. "I just run my finger around the baby's head and unwrapped the cord," she remembers. "You had to act fast. There was no time to study what you was going to do."

Another time she delivered a baby that was determined to enter the world feet first. "I had a little trouble there, but I got my baby," Mrs. Freeman recalls. When the doctor arrived after the birth and she explained what she'd done, he told her, "An angel could have done no better," Mrs. Freeman says.

And there was the time she had just delivered a baby girl and was cleaning up the infant when the mother com-

Above: Mrs. Freeman had time for her own family as well. Here she is on an outing with husband Perry. Date and photographer unknown.
Below: Many of Mrs. Freeman's "children" were born within the Freeman family. They appear to be thriving at this late-1930's family reunion. Perry Freeman is the tallest man in the back row, with Opal to his right. Photographer unknown.

Left: Perry and Opal Freeman in the 1930's. Photographer unknown.
Right: As a midwife, Opal Freeman had dealings with many babies, but this one—granddaughter Wilma—was special. Photographer unknown, 1932.

plained about new pains. "I rushed over to her and said, 'Oh, my goodness, there's another one!' " Twins had not been expected. When the second one arrived, it was blue and nearly dead. Mrs. Freeman rubbed the tiny body until finally the baby gasped and caught its breath.

These were some of the complications she faced once she got to the mother's bedside. But first she had to get there, and in rural Barbour County 50 years ago, that itself was no easy feat. Although Mrs. Freeman and her husband had a farm horse, it was "scared to death of trains," and unfortunately many of the homes she had to visit around the small community of Moatsville were across the railroad tracks. "I'd probably have gotten thrown into the river" if she had ridden, she laughs. So she walked. Two or three miles was not uncommon. Four or five miles was not unheard of. "My land, I used to walk. One time it was raining so hard my husband said, 'You're not gonna go.' So I didn't. He was the boss, you know."

When Opal Syck married Perry Freeman in 1911 and let him carry her from Pike County, Kentucky, into the mountains of West Virginia, she had no intention of becoming a midwife. Born in Grant County, Minnesota, in 1893, Mrs. Freeman had come to eastern Kentucky with her father, a harness maker, and her only sister, Pearl, 10 years older. Their mother had died when Opal was 12 and their father decided to move the girls back to his native region. In Pike County, Opal went to school and helped earn her own way by working in a boarding house. It was here that she met and married Freeman, who was surveying for the C&O Railroad. When he brought his bride home to Barbour County she was 19 years old and expecting their first child, a son, Wilbur, who was born prematurely and died within five months. A second son, Ira, followed two years later. Tending him and their 57-acre farm kept Mrs. Freeman plenty busy.

"We did it all by hand, too," she recalls. On Monday the wash was done on a washboard. On Tuesday it was ironed with a flatiron heated on the stove, making the house hot in the summer since the fire had to be kept

stoked. "We used cradles to cut the oats and buckwheat and raked it by hand. I planted corn, milked cows, worked in the garden," she says.

She also was cultivating a local reputation as a nurse. Perhaps it began during the serious flu epidemic that ran through Barbour County and the rest of the country in 1918–19. "If I knew someone was sick, I'd go and see if I could help out," she now says simply. Although Mrs. Freeman had no formal training as a nurse—"I just did it out of my head," she says—her ministrations showed common sense combined with a medicinal knowledge of the plant life around her.

Her natural medicines were many. She used peach leaf tea for sluggish kidneys, wild raspberry leaf tea as a painkiller, "boneset" tea for colds, and catnip tea for the nerves. Pokeberries worked well for rheumatism and mullein and honey combined to make a cough syrup. "I've forgotten so much of that stuff," she confesses now. Nor will she swear by the medicinal properties of the plants she used to administer—except for the peach leaf tea. "I do know that works. Oh, I've tasted better things, but it's better than pills," And, she adds, "I do know that we got along and we lived and did well."

Sometime in the early 1920's—she isn't sure exactly when because she kept no records at first—Mrs. Freeman delivered her first baby. She did it "just particularly to show a doctor that I could," the independent woman asserts. She had been attending the births of neighbor women for some time and had fallen into the role of assisting the doctor. "He liked to torment me about it," she recalls, goading her to deliver a baby on her own. Her chance came when she was at the bedside of a sister-in-law and the baby arrived before the doctor did. "I had it all cleaned up and done up before he got there," she recalls. "I'd done such a good job and he said so."

Before long, she was so well known as the midwife of Moatsville that when a young nephew saw her coming toward their home one day carrying a flour sack of rhubarb he said, "Well, if here don't come Aunt Opal with us another baby!" He was the oldest of 14 children, most of them delivered by Aunt Opal.

On another occasion, a family of 11 or 12 children moved from the community. Their only daughter, perhaps a bit resentful of her many siblings, was not sorry to leave the neighborhood. She supposedly told her parents, "I bet that damn Opal Freeman won't find us down here!"

Those stories and others are remembered by Mrs. Freeman's granddaughter, Wilma Davis of Clarksburg, who used to accompany her grandmother on check-up visits three or four days after a baby was born. Mrs. Davis recalls that as a young girl she was so used to visiting bedridden women and then getting to see their three- or four-day-old infants that she couldn't imagine another reason for a grown woman to be confined to bed. As her grandmother prepared to leave after a different kind of bedside visit, Mrs. Davis, then about five, protested, "But Ma, I didn't get to see the baby!" The sick woman said, "There's my baby," as she pointed to a middle-aged woman in the room. She herself must have been near 80.

Mrs. Davis also remembers waking up some mornings at her grandmother's house to the smell of Lysol. That was the sign, she says, that Ma had been out delivering a baby during the night. The Lysol bottle was a constant fixture in Mrs. Freeman's black bag which she carried to all deliveries. She would wash her own hands well in soapy Lysol water and then cleanse the mother before and after the birth with a similar solution.

The midwife's bag also contained scissors, cord for tying the umbilical cord, and little wax capsules of nitrate of silver, which she got from the State Health Department to use as eyedrops in newborns' eyes. Tucked around all the rest would be a crisp white apron, which Mrs. Freeman washed and boiled after every birth before returning it to the black bag to be ready for the next time. While the apron was intended to cover her own clothes with a clean, sterile surface, Mrs. Freeman once put it to another use. "One baby came and there was nothing in the house to wrap it in," she recalls. The family had told her there was a sheet, but she couldn't find it, so she wrapped the newborn infant in her own apron.

In some ways Mrs. Freeman was ahead of her time. She didn't hold with the old wives' tale that an expectant

Mrs. Freeman shares memorabilia with writer Judith Gibbs and granddaughter Wilma Davis during a recent visit.

Opal Freeman is rightfully proud of her years of medical service, but she looks back with amusement on past licensing practices. "If a person started out now like I did then, a doctor would probably have them arrested," she figures.

mother shouldn't lift her hands over her head for fear of wrapping the umbilical cord around the baby's neck. And when most newborns of the time were separated from their mothers for up to 12 hours after birth, Mrs. Freeman believed in putting them to breast-feed at once. "That's nature," she says. "All other young things nurse right away after they're born."

Today fetuses are monitored almost from conception. High-tech doctors listen to their heartbeats, tap wombs for fluid to determine the gender, and regulate the mother-to-be's nutrition to assure the healthiest baby possible. But Mrs. Freeman remembers when things were done differently. There was no prenatal care. "When we had babies then we never saw a doctor beforehand. The usual thing was two or three weeks before it was due you'd tell the doctor, 'We're looking for a baby.' "

Although Mrs. Freeman approves of hospital births, she believes that all too often today's doctors are in such a hurry to deliver a baby that they opt to induce labor or perform a Caesarean section when it might not be necessary. "Get it over with in a hurry. The doctor's got something else to do," she says. "Well, nature always worked for me. When the apple gets ripe, it'll fall."

Her don't-rush-it attitude meant some false alarms. "A lot of times I'd get called out and it would just blow over and I'd go back home," she recalls. There would be no charge until the baby did arrive, and then it was only $2 in Mrs. Freeman's earliest days as a midwife. Later on she raised the fee to $5 and much later it became $10. Still her popularity remained high. She remembers one woman who had been in the hospital for an unrelated ailment and insisted on coming home to have her baby so Mrs. Freeman could deliver it.

The boom years for Mrs. Freeman were in the 1930's and 1940's. Her practice, she says, began to dwindle in the 1950's as hospital births became more and more popular. Finally in the early 1960's, when she was approaching 70 years of age, she called it quits. "I didn't want to do it any more. There wasn't that much of a need." Still, one man called on her in 1963 and insisted she deliver his wife's baby. "I told him I'd quit. He said I had to come because he couldn't get a doctor. I don't believe he even tried." She delivered her last baby at the age of 70.

Even after retiring as a midwife, Mrs. Freeman has continued to help where she can—with fall butchering chores, canning fruits and vegetables in the summer, cooking and, until recently, babysitting. "I like all babies," she explains, "but I'm afraid I'll drop one now." She broke a hip last fall and finally gave up the farm. After recuperating at the home of a niece in Moatsville, she rented an apartment in a high-rise senior citizen building in Philippi. She stays busy now visiting with her seven living grandchildren, 24 great-grandchildren, and 18 great-great-grandchildren (not counting one on the way, she says). "I don't run anymore, but I still get around," she adds with a sly smile.

Wherever she goes in Barbour County, she's almost sure to see some of her "babies," all grown up now and with babies of their own. They are a reminder of years past when Opal Freeman was the midwife of Moatsville. There hasn't been another since she retired.

Things have changed and local women have access to modern, and presumably better, obstetrical care. Although she looks back with satisfaction on her own medical service as the best available at the time, the old midwife isn't opposed to the new ways. "In my opinion, if a person would start out now like I did, a doctor would have them arrested," she says.

From Home to Hospital

Changing Ways of Birth in West Virginia

When Opal Freeman began her career as a midwife, the only requirements for her state-issued license were a letter and a dollar bill. Today she would never be able to get a license at all.

"Granny midwives" like Mrs. Freeman have disappeared from West Virginia, according to Nancy Tolliver, director of the Women's Health Center in Charleston. "Last year we tried to find any granny midwives still practicing in West Virginia and we didn't find any," she says.

What happened to them? They've been replaced by nurse-midwives like Ms. Tolliver, trained health care professionals with specialized skills for dealing with all aspects of maternity.

The West Virginia Legislature sealed the fate of granny midwives in 1974 when it passed legislation changing the licensing requirements for midwives. Since then, a licensed midwife must be a registered nurse and a graduate of a certified program in midwifery approved by the American College of Nurse-Midwives, according to Ms. Tolliver.

The new law exempted midwives who were licensed and practicing at the time, so a handful of granny midwives continued to work, mostly in rural areas.

Dr. Harry Weeks remembers that there were "at least 20" certified granny midwives still practicing in the early 1970's when he was a new member of the state's Medical Licensing Board. Dr. N. H. Dyer of Princeton says there were "about 12" left when he retired as a public health officer in 1977.

Sometime between Dr. Dyer's departure and Ms. Tolliver's search last year, the last of the licensed granny midwives apparently retired. "I haven't heard of any of them in some time," says Dr. Jack Basman, director of maternal and child health in the State Health Department.

Dr. Basman would have been the last to issue licenses to granny midwives before the 1974 law. He says the only requirements he recalls were a small fee and a letter requesting licensure. "I believe they would pay $1 or something like that," he says. "They used to send it in with painfully written letters."

If it is difficult to pin down when the last granny midwife delivered a baby in the state, it's equally hard to determine exactly how many babies they delivered over the years. Chuck Bailey, project director for the state health statistics center, says many births were never registered in former times, and of those that were, state records indicate only two categories, "delivered by physician" and "all others." "That 'all other' category would include midwives, fathers, aunts, taxi drivers, you name it," Bailey said.

Still, his records do show a steady rise in the percentage of physician-delivered births over the years and a steady decline in the "all other" category. For instance, in 1920, when Mrs. Freeman was just beginning her career, out of 27,550 live births in the state, 23,119 were by physicians and 4,431 were by others. Ten years later in 1930, there were 41,614 live births, 37,611 of which were registered as by physicians and 4,003 by others. In just those 10 years,the number of midwife or other-assisted births dropped from one in six to one in 10. (By comparison, in 1981, out of 27,810 live births, 27,386 were physician-assisted and 424 were delivered by others, a drop to one in 66.)

The big change, Bailey points out, is not so much in who delivered babies then and now as in where they were delivered. When Mrs. Freeman's practice was booming in the 1920's and 1930's, many babies were still born at home whether the doctor came or the midwife. "Now, more than 99% are born in hospitals and of the other 1%, well over half are born on the way to the hospital," he says.

Even today's nurse-midwife may not go door-to-door as Mrs. Freeman did in her day. Many of them work for birthing centers where the mothers-to-be come for delivery. "The focus is on birthing centers," Ms. Tolliver says. "There's a growing interest in midwifery in the state and there are a number of areas looking for midwives. People are wanting to have birthing centers so they can stay in their own area to have their babies."

She says there are between nine and 15 licensed nurse-midwives now working in the state, down from about 20 last year due to cuts in state and federally-funded health programs.

Despite that decline, the ways of birth may again change in West Virginia, finding some middle ground between the granny midwives of old and today's highly technological hospital deliveries. Nancy Tolliver herself is confident about the future of modern nurse-midwives. "There's a feeling of greater confidence in midwifery now," she reports. "The nurse-midwives have a very good reputation and people are realizing that."

—Judith Gibbs

From Rowtown to Junior

Family History in a Barbour County Town

By Troy R. Brady

Photographs by Robert L. Campbell

It all began because of a mid-19th century flood in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. As tragic as this event was, it had the good effect of sending a strong German family across the mountains into what later became West Virginia. They put down deep roots there, and the story of the Row family has been intertwined with the history of the Barbour County town of Junior ever since.

I learned the early part of the story while searching courthouse records for information about my ancestors. In the town of Woodstock, Virginia, I found the names of Benjamin Row and Sarah Rinehart in marriage records dated March 4, 1830. Information is sketchy about the first years of their marriage, but by 1840 they had acquired four children and about 350 acres of hillside on the South Fork of the Shenandoah River. The place included a mill and mill dam. The Rows seem to have been well settled and might have stayed there, had not disaster struck.

It was sometime in the early 1840's that flood waters swept away the mill and dam. The disheartened Rows sold their land and prepared to move away. Looking for high ground, "Benny" Row set his eyes on the mountains to the westward. He moved his family across to the Tygarts Valley and bought about the same amount of acreage in the extreme southern end of newly created Barbour County.

Benny Row—the old German name was Rau—built a new mill on his new land. Having seen enough high water, this time he chose to construct an undershot mill which did not require a large dam; a low wall and mill race directed the water *under* the wheel. Benny and Sarah's only son, Andrew Jackson Row, and three sisters grew up in a log house not far from the mill. Through some whimsy, the Rows had chosen to name their daughters Julia Ann, Polly Ann, and Mary Ann.

The Rows lived together in the log house they'd built until the children started moving away. Two left on Christmas Day, 1855, when Andrew Jackson and his sister Julia Ann were married in a double wedding ceremony to a brother and sister by the name of Williams. Mary Ann married a Viquesney, from one of three French Huguenot families who had settled in the growing village. (The other Huguenot families, bearing the names Elbon and Shomo—the latter from the French "de Chaumont"—later married into the Row family, as well.) Polly Ann Row married "Uncle Sammy" Latham,

Mary Elizabeth Row Brady presided over the family after her husband's accidental death in 1898. Here she's surrounded by her descendants in the summer of 1913. Photographer unknown.

The town of Junior sits astride U.S. 250 in southern Barbour County.

an immigrant Englishman who was noted for his unusually slow manner of speech.

As the only son, Andrew Jackson inherited his father's land and seems to have been the family leader in the second generation. "A. J." Row was an enterprising man. He started a general store in connection with the mill and soon a post office was opened in the store building. It bore the name "Rowtown," with A. J. Row as first postmaster.

With his father dead and his sisters married, A. J. Row was left to perpetuate the family name. He had no trouble. He and his first wife, Delilah Williams, produced seven children. The oldest was a son, William Alva, and the second a daughter, Mary Elizabeth. She became my grandmother after her marriage to Granville B. Brady of Upshur County. Delilah Row died in childbirth in 1873, and A. J. later remarried, to a Fitzgerald. They had three daughters before Row's death in 1905.

The major property again went to the eldest son, with William Alva Row taking over the family general store upon his father's death. William Alva's brother, James Benjamin, also settled in Rowtown. The mill was sold to William Simon, a cousin by his marriage to one of the Viquesney daughters. Simon moved the mill about a mile up Tygarts Valley River, to the mouth of Beaver Creek. The family had apparently forgotten old Benny Row's fear of high water, and a regular mill dam was constructed. Simon operated the mill at the new site until the 1920's.

Rowtown people were from a mixed religious and ethnic heritage—by the surnames, they were German, Protestant French, Welsh, English, and Scotch-Irish—but one church served them all. Called the Coffman Church, it stood on a high sandstone cliff near the main community. The church was abandoned in the early 1900's and the building destroyed. Only a well-filled graveyard marks the place today.

The cliff at Coffman Church itself became an important site in the community as a major regional quarry. The cliff was an outcropping of the Homewood (locally called "Roaring Creek") sandstone, the hard geologic stratum which makes up most of the canyons and plateaus of the western Allegheny area. Stone was quarried there for the Randolph County courthouse, for U. S. Senator Henry Gassaway Davis' "Graceland" mansion in Elkins, and for the culverts on the Western Maryland Railroad. My grandfather Brady was killed in a rock fall at the quarry in 1898.

Quarrying continued as a local industry until about 1900, but was surpassed in economic importance by the opening of coal mines in the area. Outcroppings of the Middle and Lower Kittanning coal veins were discovered in the early 1890's. Although the coal surfaced just below the Row store and post office the family received no direct gain from mining, for mineral rights had been sold to Senator Davis and associates in old Benny Row's lifetime. The rights reportedly brought from $5 to $15 per acre. This was an excellent price at the time, presumably reflecting the fact that Benny Row also gave up surface land for a coal tipple, coke ovens, and railroad station. He also ceded right-of-way to the new railroad being built down the Tygarts Valley from Elkins to connect with the Baltimore & Ohio line pushing upriv-

er from Grafton to Belington.

Senator Davis and his partner, son-in-law—and eventual successor in the Senate—Stephen B. Elkins, owned the railroad as well as the mines, and Rowtown was pulled closer into the orbit of that powerful industrial family. Davis and Elkins did not own much of the community itself, however, for Benny Row had shrewdly reserved most of the surface land. The land was passed on within the family or sold in small parcels to individuals who would build their own houses and businesses. Thus Rowtown avoided the uniform drabness of a company town, although it did become an important mining center.

Rowtown retained its independence during industrialization, but it did lose its name. It was renamed, in a curious way, for Henry Gassaway Davis, Jr. Young "Harry" Davis, as the Senator's son and presumed heir, had been put in charge of the local mines. According to a 1964 article in the Charleston *Sunday Gazette-Mail*, he seems to have preferred to spend his time elsewhere. "Young Davis did not stay around Row Town very long," the article says. "He liked to travel, and in May, 1896, was swept from a ship and drowned in a storm off the African coast. His body was lost at sea. Row Town was renamed in his honor, incorporated as Junior in 1897." According to current Junior resident Alva Row II, this was at the specific request of the influential elder Davis.

The name change made little practical difference, of course, and the community continued to prosper in a modest way. A clipping from an unidentified magazine, datelined "Elkins, West Virginia, November, Nineteen Hundred Six," describes the local coal operation a little less than a decade after Rowtown became Junior. "The Junior mine is located within three miles of Harding," the unknown author wrote. "There are 51 coke ovens with a daily capacity of 100 tons of coke. The mine capacity is 600 tons daily. 100 men are employed and eleven mules are used."

The company, known in 1906 as the Davis Colliery Company, had earlier been called the Junior Coal Company and—at some intermediate time—the West Virginia Coal & Coke Company. Benny Row's land dealings had kept his village from ever becoming a company town, but there was nothing to prevent the opening of a company store. The mine operators did just that, putting their Junior Mercantile Company store into direct competition with the old Row family general store and other local businesses.

Junior reached its zenith during and immediately after World War I. There were seven grocery and general stores in town at that time, along with two banks. There was also a millinery and clothing store, operated by a maiden lady named Mary Jane Booth. She became a legendary character, noted for her blunt speech. Junior was at its most populous then, and my own earliest memories of the place were formed during these years.

The Viquesney family ran a bowling alley, which was off limits to many of us, and a roller-skating rink. The skating rink doubled as a basketball court, and the town had an excellent team from about 1918 to 1922. Belington High School, some four miles away, also used this court, since they had no gymnasium until much later.

Junior supported two doctors in its heyday, with Dr. Nelson B. Michaels spending most of his active life there. The other physician, a Dr. Davis, was there only during the boom years. My grandmother Mary Elizabeth, the widow of Granville Brady, was the local

J. Spot Williams, great-grandson of Benny Row, keeps the family millstones in his yard. Benny Row built his mill in the 1840's.

midwife, delivering most of the babies in and around town. She called in a doctor only if the birth didn't go well.

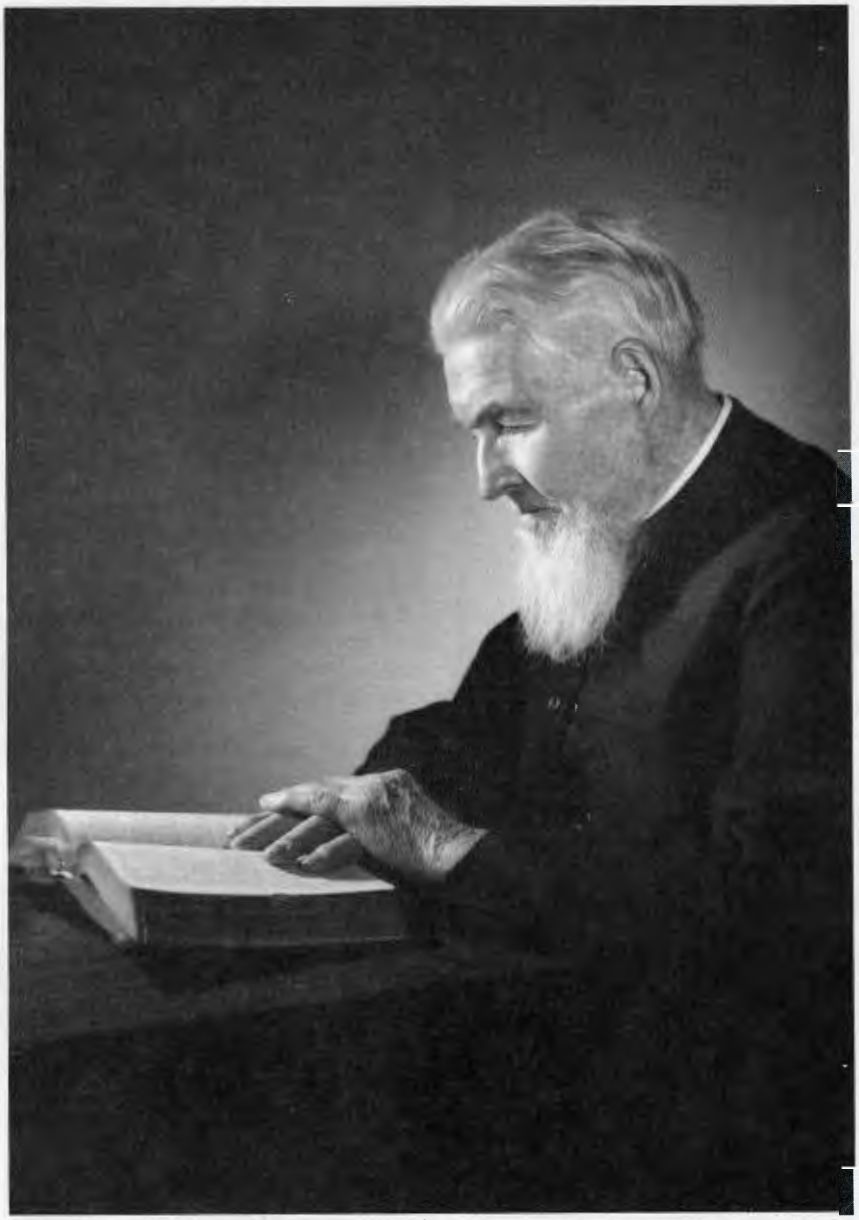
The early families continued to be important in the town's life. For many years all of Grandma Brady's children lived in Junior. A 1913 photograph shows more than 40 of them proudly gathered around her. I can recall my parents going down the list of over 700 residents in 1920, and finding that all but three families were related to us by blood or marriage. In later years those three also intermarried with descendants of Benjamin Row I.

These people enjoyed the prosperity of a boom town, but they paid a price, as well. Some suffered industrial accidents, the same as my Grandfather Brady had a generation before. One of my earliest recollections is of standing above the mine opening as the body of Benny Row III was hauled out on a mule car. He had been killed in a slate fall.

Prosperity brought other problems, fortunately of a less serious nature. We had our petty criminal youth, known as the "Midnight Gang." They enjoyed stealing chickens for roasting over the coke ovens. One member was known as "Cateye," because he could see so well inside dark chicken coops, and "Weasel" could slip through small holes when that skill was called for. Their nighttime work was not always without its pains. One of the gang caught a load of birdshot in his fleshy backside while going over a fence in West Junior one night. Dr. Michaels had the job of picking it all out.

Junior was a "dry" town, even before Prohibition and down to the advent of 3.2 beer in the early 1930's. The thirsty never suffered, however, for the town of Weaver, two miles east, at one time had as many as seven saloons. The imbibers had to climb a high intervening ridge, and sometimes came back across in worse shape than when they had set out.

The drinkers occasionally got into trouble on their way home, and one gang of young fellows provoked an incident still remembered locally as the "war with Italy." About a mile east of Junior they had to pass the home of an Italian immigrant family, a farmhouse surrounded by a waist-high rock wall. Several people inside, doing their own drinking more quietly at home, were aroused when one of the high-spirited young men passing by discharged his revolver. The immigrants imagined they were being attacked and returned fire.



The Reverend W. Jackson Row, a few years before his death in 1975. The Rows were originally all Brethren, the denomination known as "Dunkards."

About dawn the Italian flag was defiantly raised over the farmhouse, and the boys from Junior sent for reinforcements. Up to that time the standoff had been more comical than serious, but events took a tragic turn when one of the besiegers stood up from the back side of the stone wall to receive a shotgun blast in the face. Doc Michaels had another job picking shot that day, and the wounded fellow carried the scars for life. With a casualty on the field, the others sobered up enough to decide they had had enough war and headed for home.

I'll mention no names in connection with these shenanigans, although a few people may still remember who Cateye and Weasel really were. Maybe not, since nicknames were so common in Junior. We generally used them not to conceal identity, but merely to distinguish among the many people bearing

the same or similar names. We had four Charlie Bennets, I remember, and they became Long Charlie, Short Charlie, Mountain Charlie, and Post Office Charlie. There were also Knothole Daniels, Pigtail Corley, Tater-digger McDonald, Shilally Moore, Domineck Row, Gig Moore, Fido Moore, Organ Stool Moore, P. I. Davy Moore, Churnhead Cox, Bevo England, Grinny Cooper, Thistle Thorn, Big Nose Brady, King Brady, and Shakespeare Brady, just to name some of the more colorful ones.

Mostly, Junior was a peaceful place, with life revolving around the familiar institutions of small towns anywhere. The old Coffman Church stood to the south of town, and the first school was a log building on a hill to the east. Its single room was soon overcrowded, and Barbour County was persuaded to build a two-room school inside town. In 1912 this too was replaced, by a six-room building which served all eight grades until junior high students were moved to Belington.

The old names turned up in education as in other areas of community life. Charles Shomo was the first teacher at the log school. When the new two-room building was opened, the Reverend W. J. "Jack" Row was brought on as the second teacher. He was the grandson of patriarch Benny Row.

Today, Junior has still another school. The last frame schoolhouse has been torn down, and a new masonry building erected across the river in West Junior. Technically a separate community until recently, West Junior was once served by its own railroad, but the old Coal & Coke tracks have been abandoned and taken up. Junior proper is still on a rail line, and in more prosperous days as many as seven passenger trains stopped daily at the Western Maryland depot.

Like the schools, the church moved around, too. The original location was inconvenient to some worshippers. Spot Williams, great-grandson of Benny Row and keeper of his old millstones, recounts his own family's experience in this regard.

"My mother's first husband was Grant Williams," Mr. Williams says. "He was a musician and played the organ at the old church. My mother told me that before the bridge was built, he used to have to cross the river in a rowboat to come to church." After Grant Williams died, his widow married his brother, William. They purchased land at the south end of Junior, across the river.

In 1900, the church itself moved north, into town. The new structure was built on Row Avenue, Junior's main street. It was intended for a union church for both the Methodists and United Brethren, but for some reason the deed was registered to the Methodists alone. Years of bitterness ensued, and in 1908 the United Brethren built their own new house of worship across from the school. Even after the national uniting of the two denominations in 1968 the two groups still worship separately in Junior, although both are served by the same pastor.

Nowadays the Valley River Church of the Brethren is located inside Junior, in a church building constructed in 1942. The Row family were all originally Brethren. The denomination bore the nickname "Dunkards" because they practiced "Trine" immersion—baptising by dunking three times, face forward.

In later years, many of the Rows be-

The Methodist and Brethren churches are community centers in Junior. Both churches are now served by one pastor.

came preachers. One of Benny Row's grandsons and five great-grandsons took up the ministry. All of them grew up in and around Junior, an area reputed to have produced more ministers per square mile than any other place in the country. Local people had an explanation for it, according to a popular anecdote. A researcher from West Virignia University asked an area farmer about it, as the story goes. He caught the farmer working the yellow clay of his field, and the oldtimer had a ready answer for him. "Huh," he is supposed to have said, "our soil is so durn poor it won't grow anything but preachers!"

Actually, there were always plenty of others to carry on with more worldly affairs. One of Mary Row Brady's sons built a waterworks for the village just before World War I, constructing a large reservoir and burying water mains along most streets. The G. H. Brady Water Company operated for years before the utility was sold to Frank "Squib" Shomo, a son-in-law of old Andrew Jackson Row, and G. Frank Row, a grandson. The mainline pipes were made of wood, unfortunately, which eventually rotted and permitted pollution of the water supply. For a long time signs at each end of town proclaimed "City Water Unsafe."

In 1950 Junior and West Junior were incorporated as one town. Decline had set in after the mines worked out, in the 1930's. Families had moved away and houses deteriorated, some to be torn down and others boarded up. But things began to look up with the new incorporation. A volunteer fire department was formed in 1961, and later that decade federal funds provided a new water system. The new system was dedicated in June 1970, with an elaborate funeral for the Unsafe Water signs. Senator Randolph, Congressman Staggers, and the Elkins Highlanders band were on hand to assist Mayor Bobby Channell in the procession and burial. Junior was also proud of a new sewer system, and the community generally had a more prosperous air about it.

The real wealth of a community lies in the perserverance of its people, and in these terms Junior is rich. The old names are still there. A. J. Row was the first postmaster; his grandson G. Frank Row held the position for 28 years; and a great-grandson, Eldon Shomo, is now in the job. Alva Row II now has charge of the family store's original sign. It bears the message "Rowtown Store, A. J. Row," and less prominently the name of its sign-painter, "Viquesney." These and other families have invested nearly a century and a half in the town, and as long as they're there the community will survive.

A flood drove the first settlers across the mountains from old Virginia, and it is significant that their descendants have since survived trials by high water. A major test came in March 1913 when Junior, like much of West Virginia, suffered a disastrous flood. It was at the end of winter, and I can recall seeing great chunks of ice coming down Tygarts Valley River. This time there was no selling out and moving on. Anchoring the bridge with steel cables and blasting a threatening ice jam with dynamite, the people stood their ground until the flood waters had passed. Maybe they were tougher than old Benny Row in this regard, but that's doubtful. More likely, they just liked the spot he had picked for them. ♣

Coffman Church has been gone since the turn of the century, but the cemetery remains as one of the oldest landmarks in Junior.

Writer Bruce Crawford was working for himself by 1947, but words were still his line of business. His West Virginia Advertising Company specialized in political work. Photographer unknown.

"In West Virginia I Had More Freedom"

Bruce Crawford's Story

By Arthur C. Prichard

"I thought somebody was exploding firecrackers somewhere," Bruce Crawford recently told me, recalling a period early in his long life. "I looked around and couldn't see anything and suddenly the boards in front of me splintered! They were shooting at me and a friend of mine, Ed Fraly, who was walking ahead. One shot landed right between us, hitting the floor of the footbridge. The bullet splintered the boards, so we realized what was happening.

"We started running across to the other side. Another shot hit the boards and then went through the flesh above the heel of my right leg. I didn't know at the time who shot me, but later I understood it was a man called in from Chicago. Some kind of detective from a firm in Chicago."

Crawford, now 90 and retired to Florida, 40 years ago was an influential political consultant in West Virginia, and, just before that, the editor of the Federal Writers Project's excellent book, *A Guide to the Mountain State*. His father was a Fayette Countian, but Bruce himself had come to West Virginia at age one by way of Oklahoma and his native Virginia. When I interviewed him at his retirement home in Florida he was telling me of his adventures in still another state, specifically in "Bloody Harlan" County, Kentucky, in the early 1930's. This was clearly a formative period in his life and he talked about it at length.

Although born in Virginia in 1893, just before his family set out for a year's stay in the West, Bruce had spent most of his early life in southern West Virginia. The Crawfords later returned to his mother's home country in Southwest Virginia. Bruce went to high school in Norton, Virginia, and then on to West Virginia University. He stayed in Morgantown less than an academic year, before leaving for financial reasons having to do with his father's illness and death. Then "the draft got me," as he reports, and after service in World War I he returned to Norton to edit his outspoken *Crawford's Weekly*. It was as a newspaperman that he became interested in the violent strike in Harlan, just across the Virginia-Kentucky state line. That's how he came to be on that footbridge with a bullet in his leg.

"As a newspaper editor I knew it was going to be important news, so I thought I had better go and print something that nobody was printing," he recalled. "Other papers were not covering everything. Afraid the coal operators would boycott their advertising some way, they were reluctant to cover it." Crawford mentions one Knoxville editor in particular, who gave in and offered to publish "the other side" of the Harlan story after threats

had been relayed through his local business community.

Reporters in the field were more apt to be subject to raw physical intimidation. Mrs. Harvey O'Connor, a Federated Press writer, received a special delivery letter a few hours after arriving in the strike zone, warning her to leave town by sunset. Boris Israel, another FP reporter, was abducted right off the Harlan courthouse steps and taken for a ride to the county line, where he was shot through the leg.

So Bruce Crawford knew very well what he was getting into when he crossed the Kentucky line. The strike there was of the ugliest sort, having been disavowed even by the United Mine Workers of America. The hapless miners, goaded into their walkout by starvation conditions, were backed by the National Miners Union and other Communist organizations. When word of those radical connections got out, the strikers found themselves opposed by most "respectable" elements of the local community. The miners were not without allies of many political persuasions, but their friends were mostly far beyond the mountains. Eventually the U.S. Senate itself investigated their charges, but in Kentucky the strike was crushed.

Crawford himself entered Kentucky with another, private, investigation, led by famous novelist Theodore Dreiser. The group made its visit in the fall of 1931, a year which had seen pitched battles, many fatalities, and repeated bombings of union soup kitchens. Crawford's own stay was a short one, consisting of a couple of days topped off with a bullet wound.

Ironically, Bruce Crawford's return to West Virginia was hastened by the brief Kentucky foray. "I was a little more what the local people called 'radical' after that," he recalls. Convalescing back in Norton, he wrote plainly of the explosive conditions in eastern Kentucky, telling of the miners' suffering and laying the blame on the intransigent operators. He soon discovered that he was not immune to the sort of financial pressure he had seen other editors succumb to. Southwest Virginia was coal country, and the business leaders didn't care to see the industry criticized, even for its actions in a neighboring state. They shifted their support—and advertising dollars—to the other paper in town, and by 1935 *Crawford's Weekly* was forced out of business.

Specifically, Crawford recalls, the other paper bought his out. The competing editor and he were friends, and the transaction seems to have been a cordial one. "I knew that sooner or later I would fail," he says. "There wasn't room for two papers. If I bought the other paper, I knew the coal operators would finance another guy to oppose me, and I still would have competition. My wife wasn't too well, and the Depression was still on. I regretted it, but in West Virginia I had more freedom and more time for writing."

Crawford moved his family to Bluefield, where he became editor of the *Sunset News*, the Democratic afternoon paper owned by the Republican morning daily. It must have been something of a homecoming to him. He had spent ten early years in Fayette County, and Bluefield was close enough to seem familiar. Those boyhood years were fresh in his mind at the time, and he can still recall them today.

The family had come to Fayette County directly after the unsuccessful year in Oklahoma. Bruce himself was an infant at the time, and his first memories are of his grandfather's place at Graydon, just north of the New River gorge, and that his father ran a general store in nearby Lansing. Father Douglas Bruce Crawford also worked at carpentry, and young Bruce grew up building his own miniature fences, pig pens, and once a small boat. He learned from that, and no doubt from helping with larger jobs, and later as a teenager he himself worked as a carpenter during school vacations.

With this family background, it was not surprising that Bruce Crawford should find himself back in West Virginia as a man. Nor was it surprising that he should be there as a writer and editor, for he had taken to writing very early on. He recalls that his writing assignments had been praised by schoolteachers, and by one of his professors during his short stay at Morgantown. "It flattered me a little," he admits now. "First thing I knew, I wanted to be a newspaperman." He was also doing freelance work for national publications by the time he arrived in Bluefield, *Readers Digest* and others, and he hoped to have more time for that kind of work there.

As it happened, he was entering the busiest period of his life. He stayed at the *Sunset News* until 1938, when he left to become the state supervisor of the West Virginia Writers Project. The Project was a part of the national Works Projects Administration writers' pro-

Bruce Crawford still keeps up with West Virginia while living in retirement in Florida. Photo by Arthur Prichard.

Left: Crawford's portrait as a high school student. Photographer unknown.
Above: Bruce Crawford as a handsome young man of 21. This photograph was taken during the interlude between his short stay at West Virginia University and later service in World War I. Photographer unknown.

gram, and the appointment evidently was a political one. "Democrats knew that I was kind of tied by the Republican ownership" of the Bluefield paper, he says, and these friends helped out with a recommendation for the new job. The state Writers Project had the specific responsibility of publishing a guidebook to West Virginia, as a part of the American Guide Series being put out by the Federal Writers Project. It was through this book, *West Virginia: A Guide to the Mountain State*, that Bruce Crawford left his mark on the literary heritage of our state.

The writing project may surprise those who remember the bricks-and-mortar work of the Works Progress Administration. Actually, the WPA was a comprehensive jobs program, hiring the unemployed of all sorts—writers, photographers, and artists, as well as building tradesmen and unskilled laborers. Approved projects required only a local public sponsor and responsible use of the federal money. The West Virginia guidebook was sponsored by the State Conservation Commission.

Crawford moved to his new office in Charleston and set to work putting together a statewide organization. He selected knowledgeable people in each county to gather local information. He had an early appreciation for what we now call "oral history," and he made sure that his contacts in the field collected lore that had previously been passed down by word of mouth. "That way we collected a lot of history that had just been in people's memories," he says. "People had handed it down from person to person, family to family."

A Guide to the Mountain State was to incorporate material on current conditions as well as history, including information on population, government, business, labor, transportation and communications, the arts, and other subjects. Masses of data flowed into Crawford's office, and he remembers that all of it had to be verified. In fact, it had to be checked and double checked. Sometimes conflicting accounts had to be reconciled and the editor had to see through local biases and prejudices. He quickly learned to respect the tricks of memory and the way viewpoint can color perception, but in all he figures his local people served him well. "It was never dishonesty," he observes, "just that people do the best they can."

Crawford worked with teachers, newspaper people, local officials and others to collect and authenticate information for the *Guide*. He also called upon agencies of state government, including what was then called the State Road Commission, the Archives, and the departments of Agriculture, Education, Labor, and Mines. The U.S. Forest Service, which had jurisdiction over much of the state's woodlands, also helped out. Anyone familiar with West Virginia writers and scholars of the period will be impressed with the list of individual contributors Crawford drafted into his project: Among many others, they included P. D. Strausbaugh, A. B. Brooks, Paul H. Price, Maurice Brooks, L. W. Chappell, and Roy Bird Cook.

Bruce Crawford is the first person to acknowledge that he had help, and plenty of it. "*West Virginia: A Guide to the Mountain State* represents the work of many minds over a period of several years," he wrote in his preface to the book. He had a small staff in Charleston, "to do typing and phone calling and some to make trips out into the counties to interview people," and he remembers their assistance as invaluable. Still the responsibility rested at his desk, and he was the person who had to make sense of the mountains of material and put it into shape for publication. After that, he says, "we sent it on to the Washington office, where they made it conform to a national format."

And Crawford was the one who took the political heat when unexpected trouble threatened at the last minute. His reputation from the southern coalfields had evidently followed him north, and some people professed to see a radical slant to the manuscript awaiting publication. "Some politicians opposed the way the *Guide* had been written, as they didn't like my record," Crawford now says.

"I put some things in there I knew the big boys, big business, wouldn't approve," he frankly admits, but mainly he figures it was a matter of historical interpretation—whether the "warts" were to be included in this official portrayal of the state. "Some things they didn't like to see, but it had to be reported whether some people approved or not. Because it was part of the state's history. Various things that happened back during the mine war days, for example. A lot of that they'd have liked to forget. We tried to get it as honest as we could."

Crawford stood his ground and eventually prevailed. Governor Homer A. Holt initially refused to approve the book for publication, apparently because of the political controversy. "He called me in one day, trying to get me

to quit, get out, and not express my views," Crawford recalls. "I took the opportunity to talk plain to him." Maybe the plain talk helped, or maybe it was because Crawford found influential allies at the Statehouse, but Governor Holt did come around. Now Crawford merely says the "governor wouldn't accept the *Guide* at first, but finally accepted it. It got by mainly as we prepared it."

West Virginia: A Guide to the Mountain State was published by Oxford University Press in 1941. The modern reader will have to look hard to find anything "political" about it at all. It does contain frank descriptions of the state's labor history, with the miners' battles at Paint and Cabin creeks and Blair Mountain discussed in some detail. The fiery agitator Mother Jones is called a "heroine," but all of this seems moderate by today's standards. Times have changed, and they were rapidly changing even as the *Guide* was being written during the height of the Roosevelt era. Perhaps that's why he and Governor Holt were able to come to terms.

Certainly, Crawford's views didn't hinder him from entering the mainstream of West Virginia politics when the writing project ended. Right away he was put in charge of the West Virginia Publicity Commission for the incoming Neely administration. This was an all-purpose promotional agency, empowered to publicize the state's natural resources, scenic and historical attractions, and the industrial, educational, and agricultural advantages. His statewide fieldwork for the *Guide* had been good preparation for this job. From the Publicity Commission, Crawford went to work for the State Police as director of the Highway Safety Bureau.

After five years in those two positions, Crawford founded the West Virginia Advertising Company and set out on his own. Now he was into Democratic politics, pure and simple. His firm handled campaigns for people of his party running for governor or for the U.S. Congress or Senate. He wrote speeches for a number of governors and other politicians and edited the *State Papers of Governor Meadows*, the official account of that administration. He continued freelance writing when he had the time, which was mostly between campaigns.

By the time this photograph was made, about 1941, Crawford was successfully settled in West Virginia public life. *A Guide to the Mountain State* was published that year, and he had just begun his service with Governor Neely's administration. Photographer unknown.

Politics was in Bruce Crawford's blood, no doubt of that, and it seems to go way back in his family history. He tells one humorous story of how his Indiana ancestors, distantly related to William Henry Harrison, all trooped off to Washington in search of government jobs when that man was elected president in 1840. Harrison lived only a month in office, unfortunately, and died the day before the Crawfords arrived in the Capital. They'd sold everything they had back home and from Washington they scattered out, with the one branch ending up in what became West Virginia. They seem to have taken the disappointment pretty well, with Bruce's Fayette County grandfather being named William Harrison Crawford.

Crawford, a West Virginian by choice and nearly by birth, left the state in 1961. He and his wife moved to Florida, partly out of consideration for her poor health. Crawford became a widower in 1980, after nearly 58 years of married life, and he continues to live in the couple's retirement home.

I've visited Crawford in St. Petersburg twice, and I talk to him on the phone from time to time. I find him to be a likeable, friendly man, with a good sense of humor. He can put the good and bad times of the past into perspective. When asked about his political reputation, he chuckles as he answers.

"It is true that in my earlier days as a writer I was frank and often outspoken," Bruce Crawford says. "Some even called me a radical. But when Franklin Roosevelt brought forward his ideas, and they were accepted, a lot of my views didn't seem so bad. They were about the same as his New Deal. You know, a lot of the so-called radicalism of the day got into the New Deal. I guess I was just a little ahead of the times."

West Virginia Cut Crystal

By Martha Manning

West Virginia is known for its glass. Attracted by plentiful raw materials—high grade silica sand and natural gas, in particular—glass plants located here late in the 19th century, and from the early 1900's on they produced enough to establish glass as a vital part of the state economy. In doing so, they also made West Virginia a major competitor in the world's glass market.

For the most part, West Virginia glass companies have always turned out practical, workaday products—window glass and inexpensive tableware, to name two. But there is a more refined tradition, as well, with some plants and craftsmen producing items of exquisite artistry. West Virginia stained glass (GOLDENSEAL, Summer 1982) is the best made, and adorns cathedrals throughout the world. An equally well-traveled West Virginia glass product is our handcut lead crystal. Seneca* of Morgantown put fine crystal to the lips of Ladybird Johnson and the president of Liberia, and once, a long time ago, on the table of a Russian Czar.

Seneca settled in West Virginia in 1896, but the tradition goes back much farther than that. Although young when viewed against the 3,000-year history of glassmaking, the art of cutting crystal is itself a venerable one, born in the 1600's. It was then that an Englishman, George Ravenscroft, experimented with a new glass composition. His mixture included manganese decolorizer as already used by Venetian glassmakers, to which he added lead oxide to produce lead crystal. His product, made with remarkably clear silica, required up to 3,000° Fahrenheit to become glass. Known sometimes as "flint" glass, the brilliant crystal was comparatively soft, making it easy to mold and decorate. It was the first glass which could be cut, and ingenious craftsmen set out to do just that.

These men were artists, but economics played an important part in the development of their skills. The prospering glass industry was a good source of government revenue, and in 1690 a new tax, calculated according to weight, was imposed on table glassware. Naturally, the new tax was included in the selling price. To justify the higher prices English manufac-

Cutting crystal requires considerable strength, applied delicately. This 1978 photograph shows Sanford Guthrie at work. Photo by Ron Rittenhouse.

As with any glass product, lead crystal begins on the "hot side" of the plant. The molten glass Larry Austin holds in his right hand will become the foot for the piece in his left. The two pieces (*right*) have their basic shape, but are still hot enough to smoke. Photos by Ron Rittenhouse.

the higher prices English manufacturers, using the new flint glass, started cutting designs on their pieces. Patterns became more and more intricate, until a bowl or goblet might be covered with sunbursts, fans, cross hatching, flowers, and birds. To save on the weight tax, glassmakers began blowing light goblets with air bubbles in the stems. Glass cutting skills kept up with the blower's art, for steady hands were needed to cut this delicate glass in fancy designs.

Styles have changed many times since Ravenscroft's day, but at heart the making of lead crystal remains the same. The finest ingredients are still called for, particularly in the silica used. West Virginia is fortunate in having a vein of fine Oriskany silica which runs throughout the Eastern Panhandle and on into Virginia. This silica is finely

*Seneca Glass Company, the state's leading producer of cut crystal, ceased production unexpectedly while this article was being researched and written in late 1983. The plant's future is at present uncertain.

ground after mining, rid of any metal by a magnetic process, and delivered in 50-pound plastic bags, sealed against impurities. Even so, it was always sieved again before going into a "batch" at the Seneca glassworks.

Nowadays, the crystal batch mix contains 24% lead monosilicate. It cannot be fired in metal tanks, which would make the lead deteriorate. Only specially constructed clay pots are used. These huge pots are imported from Germany, where the best clay for the purpose is found. Each pot has a capacity of 2,600 pounds and is good for 25 melts before being replaced.

In the original Seneca furnace each batch required from 25 to 28 hours to become a refined liquid glass, no longer bubbling and with all impurities consumed. The pots were loaded on alternate days. The batch mixer prepared Tuesday's run on Sunday, while on Monday he loaded other pots for Wednesday's working. In modern plants, with new high pressure burners, the batch is brought to a melt temperature of 2650° F in only 10 hours.

Ruth Huggins holds an uncut champagne glass. Photo by Ron Rittenhouse.

Once fired, the molten glass is allowed to cool to a working temperature of 1,900° to 2,000°. At its refined temperature it is like syrup and would simply run off the gathering rod, but as it cools it becomes thick enough to manage. Glass is something like the taffy we used to make. The sugar mixture boiled to a thin syrup which had to cool before it could be pulled. Then you had to work fast before it set. Imagine glass the same way—only at least 10 times hotter.

The hot work is done by the time the cutter gets the piece, of course, and his work requires skills of a different sort. These skills are not learned overnight. It takes years of practice to handle the equipment and cut a pattern with a steady hand, given only a few guide lines. The cutter must learn to work quickly, for he is paid by the piece.

A mixture of red lead, turpentine, and rosin is used to paint lines on the glass to mark where the pattern repeats and where the borders begin. There is not a lot to go by. The cutter is given a goblet with perhaps three horizontal stripes around the cup and vertical markings indicating whether the design is to be repeated three, four, or five times.

The craftsman has an array of 100 to 150 stone wheels, each of a different size and cutting angle. The stone selected is put on a machine to revolve as it is constantly cooled with a stream of water. (Now run by electricity, in the early days these machines received their power from a water wheel.) With a rubber suction cup attached to the base of the goblet to dampen vibrations and prevent the glass from shattering, the cutter holds and turns the glass against the rim of the revolving stone wheel. "Free hand," he cuts the desired pattern, changing cutting stones as many times as the design requires for each piece. Often he is creating the design in reverse, as he watches it develop from inside the cup.

A cutter works, for efficiency, with a box of 35 goblets at a time. He selects a stone wheel and cuts all the glasses with the part of the design requiring that stone. Then he changes the wheel and goes through the box with another part of the sketch until all is finished. This way the work moves faster and the entire design is copied on each piece by one man. As needed, he cuts across guide lines which are later re-

Nora Weaver prepares goblets for cutting. Crystal cutters work from only a few guide lines, which indicate the general boundaries of a pattern. Photo by Ron Rittenhouse.

moved with lacquer thinner and water, or banana oil.

The friction of the stone cutting wheels as they touch the glass gives it a frosted appearance and the frosting must be polished away. Originally this was done by going over each cut with a wooden wheel. Now the cut pieces are submerged in a bath of hydrochloric and sulphuric acid, then in water at the same temperature, alternating until the glass is clear, an operation that takes about 15 minutes. In some designs it is desirable to leave parts frosted, such as flower petals. These areas are protected by "graying over," or waxing, before the acid bath.

Over 1,000 crystal patterns have been created at Seneca in its 92 years of operation. Certain basic elements of design that work well on glass have been used repeatedly and successfully, each time in a different size and combination, with a more or less elaborate setting. There are starbursts, diamond or vertical hatching, pineapple hatching, birds, flowers and butterflies galore, along with graceful branches.

There is no limit to the way the molten glass can be shaped, as "hot glass" artists have proven with their imaginative creations. But for practical drinking purposes goblets are usually made in three basic shapes: the chalice, the tulip, and the bell. The rim of the bell flares outward, the tulip turns inward, and the chalice rim is straight up. The stem can be drawn as part of the body of the goblet or can be molded and added on, sometimes with a twist or bubble inside. The bases are hand cast on the stems of the goblets.

It takes 13 people to make a goblet. When the melt is ready there are the ones who blow the hot glass, form the stems, and add the feet. After the goblets go through the cooling oven the designers and cutters do their part, followed by the cleaners and polishers. Each worker has his job.

In the glass industry, perhaps more than in any other, there was a breaking away from tradition in 20th-century America. Guild unions with their own traditions developed as early as the 13th century in Venice, where glassworkers carefully concealed their processes. The "tricks of the trade" were kept within families and a man could pass them only to his son or, possibly, to his nephew. This secrecy provided an aura of mystery to glassmaking and also valuable job security. Around 1900 the larger plants in the United States brought in "shops" of skilled workers from Belgium, Germany, and England, who had trained under this system and intended to perpetuate it. These traditional apprenticeships persisted longest in the window glass industry, but died out as that process became automated in the 1920's.

Some larger plants such as Blenko in Cabell County and the Morgantown Glassware Guild set up their own

Cathy Jordan makes early cuts on a large wheel. Photo by Ron Rittenhouse.

Crystal Beauty

Four Seneca Patterns

Photographs by Dennis Tennant

Above: Close-up of the Florence goblet, a repeating flower and branch design supported by heavy vertical hatching below.
Below: Each design detail in Seneca crystal was handcut with an abrasive wheel. This close-up is from the Victorian goblet.

Left: These four examples display the artistry of Seneca cut crystal. At left is a champagne glass in the Moss Rose pattern, 6½″ high; at center (on side) is a chalice-shaped Royal Garden goblet, 8½″; at right is the short-stemmed Florence goblet, 6½″; and at rear is the bell-shaped Victorian goblet, 8¼″. The Moss Rose pattern repeats three times on this piece, the Royal Garden and Victorian repeat four times, and the Florence repeats five times.
Above: The view downward, into the hollow-stemmed Moss Rose champagne glass. The flowers in this relatively simple pattern were left unpolished to give the frosted appearance.
Right: This detail shot of Royal Garden shows the floral design and intricate cross hatching and (at lower left) pineapple hatching. The scallop pattern of the flared lip repeats around the foot of the goblet.

training programs open to anyone who proved he wanted to learn. Young "daubers" made and destroyed their work until they became expert. In smaller plants among the West Virginia hills there was nothing to prevent a man from practicing, experimenting, and learning on his own. Often he bought shares in a worker-owned company to have access to a furnace and cast his fortunes with the firm as he worked. The life and work of Robert Morrison, for many years a cutter of Seneca crystal tableware, is an example of this independence.

Morrison was born on a farm near Berlin in Lewis County. As a young man needing a job he heard that a glass plant in the county was hiring and went there to look for work. He was taken on, learned to handle glass, and began cutting. Robert and his wife, Polly, were married in Weston. In the mid-1930's they moved to Morgantown, where he began his career with Seneca Glass Company. With their three children they made their home near Beechurst Avenue. At that time, except for the glass plant, the neighborhood was like a rural area with narrow paths running up the hill from the one brick street. The glass workers lived as a community bound together by the character of their work. The families adjusted their lives to the plant schedules and shared each other's fortunes.

Morrison became the Seneca cutting manager in 1942, in charge of decorating and shipping. There were 31 cutters in the shop and he knew each one personally. "Especially," he says, "I knew what each one could do best." His friend and neighbor, Joe Buck, was manager on the "hot" side of the plant—that is, the batch, pots, firing, and blowing. The two managers were responsible for seeing that the work was coordinated and the orders filled on time.

Robert Morrison became cutting manager at Seneca in 1942. This picture of him and his wife was from their 15th anniversary, the following year. Photographer unknown.

Robert Morrison, now retired after 44 years at Seneca, was in charge of developing many of their open stock designs. Although he modestly scoffs at the title, he was an artist and his natural talent was apparent. Like any artist, the cut glass designer must consider form, line, rhythm, perspective, balance, and texture as expressed in his medium. His work is like sculpture, in that the accent of light or shadow on the broken surface of the glass is essential to the result. Morrison may not have given names to the effects he wanted, but his innate sensitivity told him what was good and what was not so good.

Familiarity with the characteristics of glass told Morrison how much cut-

other, that too was noted. Then it was time for the other cutters to try the design. Each, taking one of the finished glasses for a model, practiced copying it on "seconds." When all were comfortable with the pattern a new design was ready for production. Samples were given to the sales department and if the pattern sold well, it became part of the open stock.

Once a pattern was developed it was given a number. However beautiful, it was thereafter referred to in the plant as No. 447, No. 568, or whatever. The pattern was conceived in the largest size, the water goblet, then adapted as necessary to the smaller wine and cognac sizes. No matter the size, they are all referred to and priced as "stems." The selling price of a small stem is the

Left: Lonnie Woody makes fine cuts with a small wheel. More than a dozen workers were needed to make each piece of Seneca cut crystal. Photo by Ron Rittenhouse.
Below: Debbie Robbins examines the fine floral detail on a Seneca decorative piece. The cutting guide lines are still visible. Photo by Ron Rittenhouse.

ting, and how deeply, any piece would accept without breaking. His expert hand lifting a goblet and his sensitive finger giving it a "ping" could tell him about the composition of the glass. I once handed him a richly cut goblet from my collection and he said, "That's Number 779. I used to cut a dozen of those in a day. It has only about 25% red lead, made after the war when lead was getting scarce and they had to cut back."

From the possible pattern elements and the choice of shapes how did glass cutters go about creating a design? First someone, usually from the sales department, suggested that there would be a market for a certain design. Then a few cutters, with the manager, talked it over and pooled ideas. Someone cut a glass according to these ideas, they conferred again, and another glass was cut with adjustments made until a practical and aesthetically pleasing pattern was arrived at. A cutter took this perfected model and made a dozen or so like it, checking his time for each to estimate the selling price of the finished product. If his speed increased as he moved from one goblet to an-

same as that of a large one. There is some difference in the amount of material used, but no significant difference in the time and skill required to make the various sizes.

Those prices are expensive, with the best cut lead crystal clearly intended only for the tables of the very rich and the very careful. Good crystal is not beyond the enjoyment of the rest of us, however. We can own a few items for festal occasions, and museum goers can take delight in the very finest pieces in public collections—such as the 15 examples of Robert Morrison's Seneca crystal held by the Cultural Center in Charleston. And perhaps most gratifyingly, all of us can take pride and satisfaction in West Virginia crystal as a further indication of our state's artistry in glass.

The Seneca Glass Company

Among the glass manufacturers who came to West Virginia at the turn of the century was the Seneca Glass Company, one of the oldest in America when it shut down production in 1983. The company was originally established in Fostoria, Ohio, in 1892, with the Seneca name borrowed from the county in which it was founded. Seneca County itself was named for the Indians who had roamed the region in times past.

The company liked the name, but found the location unsatisfactory. In 1896 all the equipment and tools were loaded onto flat cars bound for West Virginia, attracted by an abundance of cheap natural gas. An unscheduled stop along the Monongahela River at Morgantown found the train at the only level terrain around, the story goes, so the Seneca workers unloaded the cars and built their factory. They evidently liked it there, for the Seneca company settled permanently on the site. The original building was destroyed by fire in 1902, but was immediately rebuilt on the same spot.

Over the years Seneca became a Morgantown institution, important in different ways to many of us. It first touched my life in a roundabout but very personal fashion. When I was a bride, back in 1936, a dear old friend decided to bless my marriage with the perfect gift. Wanting my husband and me to live well in our new home, she presented us with the finest wine glasses she could obtain. They were brilliant but delicate crystal goblets, handcut in an intricate floral design—a full dozen of them.

The goblets came from Ovington's in New York City, each one wrapped carefully and packed in straw to withstand the shocks of transportation. Nonetheless, two stems were broken upon arrival. When my friend wrote to report the mishap and ask for replacements, the store replied, "Go to Seneca Glass Company in your town of Morgantown for replacements. That is where the glasses were made." Discovering that my crystal had made the long trip to New York simply to come home again, I began what has become a lifelong interest in the local company.

Ovington's was a prestigious retailer, and I was not surprised to learn that Seneca's cut glass graced the shelves of other fine stores in the major cities. For three consecutive years B. Altman and Company, also of New York, granted the West Virginia firm its top award for tableware. Wanamaker's of Philadelphia, another longtime distributor, supplied the president of Liberia with Seneca crystal. The custom order—for 218 *dozen*—featured his crest on one side of each piece with his initials on the other.

Eleanor Roosevelt acquired her Seneca at Petrie's in Boston. She needed sherbet glasses to complete place settings for a state dinner in honor of George VI, King of England. The delighted Petrie's staff showed the First Lady examples from several world famous glass houses, but she made her selection from a Seneca pattern which was discontinued and on sale. Always a careful shopper, Mrs. Roosevelt reportedly left the store chuckling over her bargain.

Ladybird Johnson bought her Seneca crystal before entering the White House. She chose the "Epicure" pattern, tulip shaped goblets with hand drawn stems. Her husband, then John Kennedy's vice president, had a Stetson hat cut on one side and the famous initials on the other. One of the Johnson daughters later ordered the pattern for her own home, although without the markings.

All this crystal was available to us at the Seneca sales room in Morgantown, to make our selections from or, more often, just to view. The craftsmen who created the patterns knew them by number, but they were displayed for sale with their enchanting names. "Regency," "Old Master," "Celeste," and "Bouquet" were more pleasing to a customer than any mere number. To tell friends you had chosen Seneca "Coronet" for your table meant more than to say "I picked No. 882." And the beauty of the crystal deserves the eloquence.

Seneca crystal will remain in proud use in Morgantown and around the world. Indeed, it may be treasured more than in the past, for it appears that no more will be made. The company's plans are uncertain at present, but they discontinued production of fine crystal on August 22, 1983. Future brides will not be as lucky as I was, unless their Seneca is handed down to them as family heirlooms.

—Martha Manning

Out In The Field

An Interview With Botanist Elizabeth Ann Bartholomew

By Kitty B. Frazier
Photographs by Dennis Tennant

If you were to stop in Morgantown to visit Elizabeth Ann "Betty" Bartholomew at her small apartment, you would know immediately that the woman who lives there has not spent her life confined behind doors. Those three rooms and bath are packed with living and dried plants and with photographs of living and dried plants. Sagging bookshelves support a naturalist's library. Memorabilia record years of botanical study and fieldwork. Crafts made of natural products speak of conservation. The giant sycamore outside the front window also suggests her story.

I recently spoke with Betty about her work in West Virginia. This is her story of how she grew from a girl who loved to pick wildflowers to a natural history guide, a university professor, and a curator of the State Herbarium. While her work collecting and then preserving dried plants in the West Virginia University Herbarium now adds up to nearly 40 years, her principal interest in living things has not waned since she was a girl in Wheeling.

Botanist Elizabeth Bartholomew at work in Morgantown.

Elizabeth Ann Bartholomew. I was born on June 14, 1912, the oldest of three children of Henry and Minnie Bartholomew.

When my brother Harry wanted to play with the boys on Sunday afternoons, and when Pop was off work and wanted to go up Mountwood Road to get out on Nichol's Hill, I'd go with him. I'd also go out in the fields and along the railroad with him and out in the yard with Mama. Too, Granny took us down to the foot of Ninth Street to see the nice yards people had there.

In the small garden in our backyard we planted things that didn't need much sun and would take whatever came out of the sky there in North Wheeling, which wasn't the cleanest part of town. In the yard we'd find a dandelion and other common weeds. Mama would tell us the names of them. She knew several plants, and she always liked plants around the house. So every time I'd go out on the hill with Pop, I'd bring in a jack-in-the-pulpit or some such plant for the yard.

In 1916 or '17 Pop wasn't working. Economically it was like it is now, but toward the end of World War I. He and some friends went down the Ohio River on a train to Parkersburg, and then

Above: Fieldwork for a botanist often means rolling up and wading in. This undated snapshot shows Bartholomew in Cheat River. Photographer unknown.
Right: The nametag in this 1930's WVU class photograph identifies her as "Betty." She was already deeply interested in plant life.

they rented a houseboat to go on up the Little Kanawha River to the mouth of Reedy Creek in Wirt County. There, they were having such good luck with their fishing that he decided he'd love to be down there more often. So he found a place for sale.

He and his friend dug a well and built a camp house. Summers we went down to settle things out and do some more work on the house. We fixed everything up year after year.

When I was 12, I became interested in Girl Scouting, an organization that had started the year I was born. One of my girlfriends stopped one day and said, "Come on and go to a Scout meeting with me." I didn't know what she was talking about. I went, and later I wanted to earn all the badges in the book! I did earn all the nature badges.

The first year I was in Scouts, the Wheeling Council purchased an area for Girl Scouts and started Camp Giscowheco [Gi-sco-whe-co: Girl Scouts Wheeling Council]. They let our troop go out to help get the camp ready. We creosoted all the newly made floors for the tents, all those wooden steps going up the hill, and the porch, the floor of that big porch.

In time I became a summer counselor. In fact, my first job was at Camp Giscowheco where I taught smoke prints. You take paper, rub grease on it with wax, light a candle, and moving the paper over the candle collect the smoke. You place a leaf, vein side down, on the paper. You rub the leaf between two pages. The smoke on the back of the leaf makes a print on the clean paper.

One day Mrs. Addie Harrison, my Girl Scout leader, told me that a prominent man named Nelson Hubbard wanted to see me. He was on the Girl Scout Board in Wheeling. He'd been taking Betts Gardner and me out to Oglebay Park when Oglebay first started Sunday morning birdwalks.

I had no idea what he wanted to see me for. He told me, "You can go to any college you want, and it won't cost you anything. Talk it over with your parents. See what they say." So I got to thinking, "Maybe I can be a naturalist like A. B. Brooks."

I decided to attend West Virginia University because I didn't have to have Latin to get in. (Ironically, I have since learned Latin through my work, at least the scientific names of plants.) Anyway, I told Mr. Hubbard yes. He gave me a check for $80 with which I bought clothes. He told me to tell him how much more I'd need.

I remember taking General Botany as a freshman. Every once in a while, Dr. P. D. Strausbaugh would tell the class, "Now this plant grows just in the mountains." And old wiggly me, I'd have to raise my hand and swing it back and forth, and then he'd let me say what I wanted to report. I'd say, "That grows down in Wirt County." He heard that so many times that he cornered me after class one day and asked, "How do you know those things

grow in Wirt County?" I explained, "Because I've been down there every summer since I was five years old and I've seen them." He told me, "Do you know there's only one other person that ever collected plants in Wirt County, and that was back in 1890," or something like that.

That collector was C. F. Millspaugh. He was hired as first botanist for West Virginia Extension Service, and he identified all the plants for the Department of Agriculture. When it was decided that they didn't need a botanist, he went out to Chicago, and after the Chicago World's Fair he started the Field Museum of Natural History. He was the Father of Botany in West Virginia. Millspaugh is to botany as Audubon is to avian zoology.

Anyway, Millspaugh must have gone over Route 7, to the Ohio River, and then down to Parkersburg, then up the Little Kanawha Valley to Glenville and on. Then he came up the middle of the state and collected plants along the roads in these several places in the different counties.

But no one else had done botanizing down in that area. Most of the collecting that had been done was from over in the mountains, because when folks would take field trips, they never crossed the Monongahela River. They didn't know there was as much there as there was in the mountains.

In 1931 I attended summer school at WVU to go on a Biology Expedition. It was a six-weeks course led by Dr. Strausbaugh. About 30 students went to study plants. We went over to Burlington in Mineral County and to Hermit Island in Smoke Hole, in the valley of the North Fork, Pendleton County. From there we went on to Athens in Monroe County and then up through the middle of the state.

We could make side trips from the camp. We had a big truck, what they call a panel truck. We hauled all our baggage and tents on that truck. One of the boys drove the truck. We also had a truck similar to what they use now for a milk truck. That was the kitchen. It had a gas stove in it.

Also, I remember taking Geology of West Virginia under Dr. Paul Price, who was then head of the Geology Department and later head of the West Virginia Geological Survey. Dr. Price taught about the formation of the Little Kanawha River and the rest of West Virginia. We had to make our own textbook based on field excursions.

But with the Depression, in 1932–33, when I was in my junior year at the University, my benefactor's bank closed. He wrote to tell me that he couldn't send me any more money.

I told my adviser, Dr. Strausbaugh, who simply said, "You can do other things; I'll get you a job." So I was employed to do calculating work for the Agronomy Department because I could use a Burroughs calculating machine and I could type, thanks to my high school courses. I also washed dishes for the Plant Pathology Department, typed papers at 5¢ a page, and Mom and Pop gave me some money. Between it all, we made it.

I pursued my interest in natural history and earned a teacher's certificate and an A.B. in Botany in 1936. In 1938 I worked for the University's Botany Department as secretary. It wasn't until 1947 that I earned a master's degree.

I started participating in nature hikes long ago when our minister told me

Bartholomew's current interest in seeds calls for careful work by steady hands. These are thistle seeds, being separated for storage.

that a Reverend Arnold Belcher wanted to offer a Wildflower Weekend at Spring Heights, an area owned by the United Methodist Church.

"Where is Spring Heights?" someone asked. I explained, "That's almost heaven." You see, Spring Heights is near Spencer in Roane County. It is on Spring Creek. Reedy Creek comes into the river near Palestine, and Spring Creek, draining the Spring Heights area, enters the Little Kanawha at Burning Springs. Both of these latter places are in Wirt County.

I explore on the mountains when I go to be a leader on the Wildflower Pilgrimage and sessions like that. But I wouldn't say one flora area of our state is more interesting than another. It depends on what you want to see. There's just as much in the hills as there is in the mountain areas. Most of the digging I've done has been in the river areas and in the smaller hills, mainly because I like water. I grew up on the Ohio, Little Kanawha, and Monongahela rivers.

The most exciting discovery I've made was the foothill bedstraw, a tiny, insignificant plant that has a stem about like a thin wire. It has half-inch leaves. It just grows straight up and then has tiny, light yellow flowers about the size of a pinhead on the end of it. I was looking for all the plants I could find down there on the Little Kanawha property and found it up on Bonnette's hayfield.

I brought it back to the University, but we couldn't name it. We couldn't find it in the books. Dr. Core sent it off to the New York Botanical Garden, and they sent it back and said that it was a new record for America. It had never before been found in North America, and I found it in a hayfield. Then we found it a couple of years later in the pasture field up Falling Rock from the old WVU stadium.

Then, up the Ohio River right above the Suspension Bridge in Wheeling, I found a species of pond weed that hadn't been discovered this far north. Though it had been found in the Cumberland River, it hadn't been found north of Tennessee. Those are the plants that get hooked to your line when you are fishing, pond weeds. They grow underwater, and they come up to the surface as plants surface. Some plants grow leaves up to the top that float on the water.

That plant could have been brought up from the South by a boat. But it might have been growing on Wheeling Island unnoticed for years. I found it at the dock at the foot of Kentucky Street where we used to have all those boats along Wheeling Island.

Another find was riverweed, a new record. It hadn't been found many places in the state. It looks like moss or algae, and it's one that grows like moss. It looks like it's growing onto the rocks in a riffle. When you walk on it, you think it's going to be slick. But you don't slip. It's got calcium in it. It looks just like some moss hanging on some bare rock, but it's a flowering plant. The small, grasping rootlets help the plants hang on. This plant does not have true roots. It just has to grow on the bare rock.

You can say that some plants have roots and some don't. Mistletoe and orchids, for example, grow on other plants. Now, back here is a picture of

Full concentration is another requirement of the seed classification work.

one of those plants, orchids. Some grow on trees. They don't have to have real roots. They can hang on to other plants and dig in. We always think of roots as something that grow down into the ground. But some plants just have a way of hanging on to get nourishment and water.

I still enjoy participating in and leading hikes. This year, for example, I'll follow my usual schedule, such as the Wildflower Pilgrimage at Blackwater Falls. This pilgrimage is hosted by all the garden clubs of the state and the Department of Natural Resources. Dr. Core originally started working with the garden clubs, and it was just our department and the garden clubs until the DNR jumped in. The hike leaders come from the different colleges—mostly our biology majors—Brooks Bird Club, and so forth. We meet at the lodge and then go out on all-day field trips, some to Dolly Sods and some to shale areas and such.

Two summers ago I went with a nice looking young man. Ours was a half-day trip. He wanted me to go around the rim of Blackwater Canyon. I told him, "Sure, I'll go with you." He said he knew the trees, but he wasn't sure about the other plants. I found out that he is Bill Wylie's son, a fellow from Woodsdale in Wheeling who was interested in plants and birds all his life. He'd go on tours with A. B. Brooks who'd say, "Listen to this bird." Then he'd turn around to little Bill Wylie and say, "Name it, Bill." And he would.

Years ago at WVU we started having Phi Epsilon Phi [the botany honorary society] Wildflower Weekends. And we would offer a Wildflower Day and invite the schools to bring their children. We'd show them the wildflowers we had on display. We would go out and get the plants, pot them, and have them available so the students could examine them in the botany labs of Brooks Hall.

When the University was building the Coliseum or new fieldhouse out on the adjacent campus, some people wanted to dump that soil over the bank where we sometimes collected our specimens, in Seneca Woods, right where the land, the hill drops off on Monongahela Boulevard in Morgantown. But Dr. Core got them talked out of it and talked into letting us have that area for the Arboretum.

Dried seeds for the Herbarium collection are sifted and separated into holding pans prior to labeling and storage.

That whole area used to be a farm. Then the Biology Department brought plants in from other places and planted them there in the Arboretum. It was a beautiful wooded area, and many of the plants were already there, so we labeled them. Some were white trillium, bluebells, spring beauties, bloodroot. There could be new, undiscovered plants there now, too.

You see, birds bring seeds, though they don't plant them. They drop them wherever. If the seeds are undigested, a lot of plants are brought in that way. But most plants there are native to this area, either here already or from over around Cheat Mountain or some nearby place like that.

We still take students from elementary to high school there, and many university students, but there is no such course as Field Botany now. I tell young people to come up to Oglebay camps and we'll teach them about plants there. If they have no money, we can try to get scholarship money for them.

Some West Virginia Wildflowers

A Portfolio for Elizabeth Bartholomew

Photographs by Bill Grafton

While Kitty Frazier was writing the article on botanist Elizabeth Bartholomew, we conspired with Bill Grafton to pick some wildflowers for her. Bill, a WVU naturalist and a friend of Bartholomew's, promised to choose some of her favorites from his extensive photograph collection. He sent so many—about three dozen—that we're not sure whether she has a lot of favorites, or if he simply got carried away. At any rate, we've had to do our own further choosing from among his selection. We hope the ones here will be pleasing to Elizabeth Bartholomew and to all lovers of West Virginia in the springtime.

Above: The celandine poppy (*Stylophorum diphyllum*) produces its beautiful yellow flowers in a damp woodland setting. The plant grows 10 to 16 inches high and blooms from March to May.
Left: The yellow fawn lily (*Erythronium americanum*), also known as adder's tongue, grows four to 10 inches tall in the woods. It blooms from March to May.
Right: Foamflower, or false miterwort, (*Tiarella cordifolia*) prefers rich woods. It grows six to 12 inches tall and produces many small flowers on a single spike. Foamflower blooms from April to May.

Left: Fire pink (*Silene virginica*) may be seen in Kanawha State Forest and many other places in West Virginia. It grows one to two feet high, preferring open woods and rocky slopes, and blooms from April to June.
Right: The large yellow lady's slipper (*Cypripedium pubescens*) is a member of the orchid family. It grows 18 to 24 inches tall in wet woods and shady swamps. The plant begins blooming in late spring.

Below: Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*) grows in the woods throughout West Virginia. A member of the poppy family, it grows six to 12 inches tall. Bloodroot blooms between March and May.
Right: The painted trillium (*Trillium undulatum*) is unique for its white flower with crimson center. It grows eight to 20 inches tall in acid woods and bogs, and blooms from April to June. This one was photographed at Babcock State Park.
Below right: The red trillium (*Trillium erectum*) also goes by the name wakerobin, and less enchantingly is known as ill-scented trillium. Concerning the latter, Bill Grafton says the beautiful flowers "smell like a wet dog on a hot summer day." It grows from seven to 16 inches tall and blooms from April to June.

I go to Brooks Hall everyday. Years ago I told Dr. Core and Dr. Roy Clarkson that I may be too old to teach and too old to identify plants indoors and mount specimens, but I'll stay with the Academy of Science and the Southern Appalachian Botanical Club to continue to do all the mailing. So I'm still working.

Presently, I'm collecting seeds for a seed herbarium. I have found that seeds are just as interesting and fancy as flowers, especially if you look at them under a microscope. If I wanted to make a nice piece of natural art, to put a design on something, I would use a seed as my model. No two species have the same kind of marking. They are like fingerprints. Some seeds look like dust, some are nice reds, some are triangles, others are long. The collection of seeds is in the Herbarium since I no longer have an office.

I became interested in seed collecting when some wildlife men who were working on quail sent in a box of little jars of seeds that they'd taken from quail. They wanted us to identify what the birds had been eating. I was embarrassed; I couldn't identify them! I decided after that I was going to find out about those seeds. If someone sends common, ordinary seeds to a State Herbarium, I feel we ought to be in a coal mine and buried if we can't identify them.

Seed dispersal is also interesting. For example, a violet has a nice pod in it which opens out into three sections. As it does, it gives it a flip, which can send the seeds four or five feet. One day at work, I thought I heard tiny rocks thrown at my window. I looked, and saw that one of the pods was throwing seeds at me!

Another interesting seed is the maple tree's. When a maple throws seeds, they whirl down and never land flat. The seed goes down between grass blades and plants itself.

I didn't start thinking seriously about seeds until I received those to be named. Now I have several hundred common seeds in labeled jars. First, I separate the seed from the fruit. Then I dry the seeds, mostly seeds of wild plants, such as walnut seeds found under the hull, seeds of hickory nuts and dandelions and those thrown out by jewelweed. I arrange the seeds in the same order, by number, by family, as we do plants. I have at least nine drawers full of baby food jars and smaller vials.

Above: Careful recordkeeping is critical to any scientific work. These folders hold dried plant specimens.
Below: Although officially semi-retired, Elizabeth Bartholomew still goes in to work most days. She intends to keep at it for the foreseeable future.

Betty Bartholomew can observe nature on a grander scale in the big sycamore outside her apartment. It may be stretching things to say that she regards it as a symbol of nature's strength and beauty, but she clearly has an appreciation of its endurance. This modest woman will not put it in just these words, but she's aware that that tree, like herself, has survived the storms of many years and still stands strong.

Do you see that sycamore tree outside my window? Two tornadoes crossed last June—a rarity for this area. One came up my hollow, the other up Falling Run. There were just two claps of thunder. I was on the porch watching the weather. One clap told me to get in the house. The next clap sounded and a large branch of the tree was knocked onto the porch where I had been standing. The wind tore tops out of the trees in my neighborhood. The rain blew in a horizontal slope.

But I was inside by then. And that sycamore is still there.

Charlton Cox

"People Call Me The Garbage Man"

Interview and Photographs by Andy Yale

If you make a hard right turn at the Hinton State Police barracks and continue down the road that parallels the New River, you'll quickly enter another world. The border is marked only by a pile of old wooden pallets and an upended shovel cemented into the earth. The blade of the shovel, painted white, bears the neatly lettered inscription: "Please watch out for our little animals." This signpost reminds the visitor that he has crossed an invisible line, leaving the familiar behind and entering the domain of Charlton Cox.

Venturing further down the road, one encounters a three-quarter ton Chevy truck parked between a small, well-kept frame cottage and a huge greenhouse. A sign in the truck's rear window reads, "Hinton Area Garbologist." It's easy to see that the truck belongs where it is parked. All along the sides of the lane and leaning against the greenhouse walls are piles of every conceivable kind of junk.

Old window frames, plastic buckets, display cases, a gas heater, piles of brick and stone, sheets of building material, ceramic tiles, and old chair frames are piled next to things whose original use is now too obscure even to guess at. Dismembered pieces of a washing machine lie next to a cook stove turned on its side. A wooden crate supports huge sheets of glass which glint in the sun.

It's too much for the eye to unravel, so that one ceases to see individual objects and perceives only a huge tangle

Charlton Cox is in the business of giving new life to castoff odds and ends that other people see little value in.

of battered things lying together on the common ground which they've somehow come to share. At first glance the place seems to be a graveyard for the spoiled, the broken, and the utterly useless. But when the master of the domain comes on the scene that impression fades away. In his presence and with the help of his words, the junk is transfigured and shines with the light of new potential. The visitor begins to understand that this is not a graveyard but a rest home for things, where battered stuff can take a deep breath before being sent forth to serve again.

The man who has assembled this diverse collection of useful garbage lives here on the riverbank with his wife, his cats and dogs, his 100 pet geese, his greenhouse full of thriving plants—and, of course, with his stuff. Charlton Cox's stuff is famous through much of Summers County. From Sandstone to Talcott, people say, "Well, I got that from Charlton." It might be a four-burner kitchen stove, the marble over the fireplace, the bevelled glass in the front door, or the panelling in the living room. Whatever people need, they can come here hunting for it. If he has what you're looking for, Charlton will either give it to you free or charge a price so fair that you'll reach for your wallet without even thinking about bargaining.

When the deal is concluded, Charlton will happily retrieve your purchase from some resting place only he can find. He can wade into a mass of intertwined junk and come out with exactly what you're looking for, because he's on a first-name basis with everything on his property.

Not only does Charlton Cox know where he put it and what it's good for, he also knows where it came from and what it means. Like the social scientists who jokingly invented the term "garbology" for their garbage-can analysis of American trash, he believes you can tell a lot about people by what they throw out. The same goes for a community. He can recount the history of Hinton for the past half-century by pointing to this object or that and telling the story that goes with it.

Even the land behind the Cox house is richly imbued with Hinton's past. It is land that Charlton himself created, by filling in the mud of the river channel with bricks taken from a string of local landmarks he helped tear down. The Chesapeake Hotel, the old City Hall, the Pepper Building, and the City Jail are all buried behind Charlton's greenhouse. "When I moved here," he says, "you couldn't even set up a step-ladder back there. Now I've got trees growing and everything. I've got enough brick buried in there to build a good-sized house—if I wanted to dig it up."

On a warm day last December, Charlton gave an inquisitive visitor a tour of his place, talking all the while about local history and his own life and philosophy. He started with his birth and early years, working up to the story of how he became a master junk man.

Charlton Cox. I was born at Sullivan, West Virginia, on November 8, 1917. We left over there and just moved from one working place in the coalfields to another until we come to Hinton in 1926. My father was working on the railroad, and then here come the Depression along so he got cut off. Then we went back to the mines.

I worked with him. I left school when I was 12 years old and started running this big old hoisting engine. Later on, I went in the mines digging coal with a pick, using black powder, squibs, you know—everything was hand labor. We got a dollar a ton and that's all. We had to cut our own timbers, lay our own track, push our own coal out, unload it. About $8 a day was all we could make between the two of us.

I left over there and went to Marfrance—and that was a big mine. We were pulling pillars* over there and you didn't have to cut it out or nothing, because there was enough pressure on the coal to just pop it out to you. You could just hit it with a hammer or a pick or anything—and *boom*! It would just come out to you and you could load it up. I left there and went over to Whitley and worked in the mines there about three years. Then on December 7 in 1939 I joined the Army. I went to Panama. Two years to the day after I enlisted the Japs bombed Pearl Harbor, so I put in for an extension. I came out of the service after five years, six months, and 20 days. Where I'd enlisted for two years.

When I came back, why, I bought me a little farm. I'd saved my money while I was in the service, and I bought me a farm up here to Clayton, what they call Judson. I stayed up there till my mother died, then I left there and went back to the mines. I was working for the New River Company during that period of time, and well, I got married. After I got married, I decided I'm going to leave the mines, so I did.

I went out in Shady Springs out there, in an old swamp, and I built me a bait shop right alongside the road. That's where I got started. When I left I owned five lots, two fish ponds. The reason why I left, was that it just more or less ruined my health. I worked around the clock, really. So I left there and came back over here to Hinton in 1956, bought me a lot here on the river and built my house and went to work for Hinton Block. I worked for them for about seven years. Then in 1962 I got a chance to work for the City of Hinton at the fire department as a fireman and driving the fire engine. I worked 13 years here for the City. Then I kind of lost my health, and had a little disagreement with the Mayor and the Council. So I've been on my own since 1977.

Yeah, I been around here a pretty good while. When we came here in 1926, we lived right beside the police station. I can remember them old cars down there, with red wooden wheels just as pretty as you please. Down on each side there they had them old lights where you could open up and strike a match and light 'em—had kerosene lights on them. They had all kinds of cars then—old Overlands, Hudsons, Model T Fords, A models, just all kinds.

Back then, Summers Street here in Hinton wasn't nothing but just more or less mud, you know. And then they started putting down cinders, the City did, and then later on they bought brick, put brick down.

My goodness alive! At that time, Hinton was a big terminal for the railroad. They had the shops here. They employed I don't know how many men, but I'd say they had 300, 350 men or more on each shift. Just at the roundhouse, the west yard and the east yard.

*"Pulling pillars" refers to the practice of taking the coal from the support columns (pillars) in a mined out section. Roof pressure made the job easier, as Mr. Cox notes, but it was extremely dangerous work. —ed.

The greenhouse, built mostly from salvaged material, provides vegetables and year-round recreation.

Back then, at the C&O shops down there, when the whistle blowed at 3:00, you could see the men coming off from down there at the shop just about everywhere you looked. And men would be going down to go to work, too.

Hinton at one time was really a busy place. They had a bakery; they had two bottling plants; they had two packing houses down there, one for Armour and one for Swift; they had the New River Grocery. The New River Grocery was a great big thing. They brought cars in on the back side, box cars with groceries, ship 'em right in over here and the trucks would be sitting over there. They'd just move that stuff from one side of the building to the other and load it in the trucks. Break down big orders into small orders—like six boxes of pepper, six bottles of vanilla. They didn't turn nobody down.

You see, I was just growing up when Hinton was really booming in 1926, 1927, along through there. I was just a little kid, playing under the house, riding a broomstick. I used to get those old broomsticks and boy, those were the finest horses you could buy.

Back then, on a Saturday night, I can remember this just as good as anything. On Temple Street, on the right-hand side going out towards G.C. Murphy's and Woolworth's, you'd better stay with the flow of the people. That's how thick they were at that time. You went out to the old Citizens Bank building, crossed the street, and you came back by the Catholic Church. It was just a stream—these people walked up this side and they walked back on that side. You didn't try to go back the same way you came. You had to go out and cross the street and go back with the flow of the traffic.

Just about every two hours, they had little dinky trains running up and down the C&O. They would blow the whistle and stop at every wide spot in the road. They'd pick up chickens, they'd pick up milk. They called them the locals. The train coming up the river, he'd stop and pick up anything the people had to send to Hinton. Then the merchants here in Hinton, they'd be down there or have somebody down there to meet the train—to pick up the

milk, pick up the butter, pick up the eggs—same thing coming down the river, you see. So they kept the people here in Hinton pretty well supplied.

And man, people came in here from every place. They used to have four hotels in Hinton. They had the Chesapeake Hotel, the old Miller Hotel, the Allen's Hotel, and the biggest hotel they had in Hinton at the time was McCrory's. They had a little old hack and mule. This colored fellow that drove the hack, he'd meet every train and see if he could get any passengers off the train to come up and stay at the McCrory. 'Course, they knew the McCrory Hotel was the best hotel in town, you know. So a lot of them, the bigwigs, would all get in the hack and come up to the McCrory. Oh, they had a big dining room there and up on the top they had a great big dance hall. That McCrory Hotel was really something, buddy.

Now look at this here. This bottle come out of the old building where we tore down, the old Pepper Building. The Pepper Building was on Third Avenue, right down facing the railroad tracks. Now they have the school lot right there and Jack Holk, he's got a parking lot there where the old Pepper Building and Scrappers' Corner stood. And on over here to the left of that lot, there's still part of the Pepper Building standing, but it belongs to the Board of Education now. The Pepper Building used to come all the way from Front Street to the alley which they call Second Street now.

The Pepper Building housed the Old Home Saloon, and that was really something. It was on the corner there—they called it "Scrappers' Corner." Any time you was looking for a fight all you had to do was go down to the Old Home Saloon and just speak out of turn. Boy, they really had a time in there!

In the upper part of the Pepper Building, they had a lot of apartments. They had a lot of loose women here in town at that time, you know, and they had their rooms upstairs over the old Scrappers' Corner. Yeah, Third Avenue was known all over the country for loose women and fighting. They still get into it every so often. Just drunken brawls, mostly. But it ain't like it used to be, down there at Scrappers' Corner.

But this bottle here, well, this guy that had the saloon at that time, he bottled his own liquor. It was The C.F. Hickey Bottling Company. They bottled up this half pint of liquor and then sold it to the guy that was laying the blocks up, you know, veneering the building. He drunk the liquor, set the bottle down in there, bricked it up. And I come along later, tore down the building, and there set his liquor bottle. Empty. He done drunk all the liquor. Didn't even have a cork in it.

Now here's another bottle. They had

Below: Much history is to be found in the junk of years past. This bottle is one of many Mr. Cox has from local bottling companies.
Opposite page: An old miner's cap, with carbide lamp still attached, offers an opportunity to discuss old ways of mining coal in West Virginia. Mr. Cox entered the mines as a boy, helping his father.

a bottling plant there in the Pepper Building, the dairy part, that was I.C. Pepper Bottling Company. They bottled up the milk, and after they got it bottled they distributed it out over town in half pints, pints, quarts, whatever you needed. Kleins Ice Cream was up there, too. When I was a kid I used to go through that alley. I could smell that ice cream and I'd get so doggone hungry I could hardly stand it.

Now look at this hook. It's a meat hook they used in the old meat packing plants. They were all cement buildings, and they were fixed to take care of the meat that come in on the railroad cars. They had hangers and rollers. They'd just go in there and hook a whole hindquarter—whist—like that, and throw it up there on that trolley hickey and here they'd go all the way in back into the freezer. And here they go with another. Just roll them right on back into the freezer, then they cut them up back there, repack them, ship them out to the coalfields.

Yeah, Hinton used to be a busy place. But when I came back over here in 1956, the railroad didn't really have the shops like they did at one time. They done laid off a lot of people and were running trains right on through into Clifton Forge, you know. The roundhouse down here where they used to do all the work, put the rims on the wheels, they'd done cut them down to where it was more or less a skeleton crew. Then they even went so far as to take the roundhouse down. Just a little piece of it is left down there. And up here on the east yard they do just a little temporary repairs to get it to move somewhere else. If they have to load it on a flat car and take it from here to Huntington or Ashland, Kentucky, some place like that, why, they do it. We don't have no machine shops here no more like we used to have.

When I was a kid, Beckley wasn't no more than a wide spot in the doggone road. Now you go to Beckley and look—they've just sprawled out everywhere. They just took everything from Hinton. And you'd think that Hinton, with the mainline C&O track running up and down this river—that they'd have everything. But we don't have no bakery, don't have no bottling plant, don't have no packing houses—we ain't got nothing left. You look around for yourself.

Now, after I left the fire department,

I was just up here piddling around. I started picking things up, here and there, different places. First thing I knowed, why, people would call me up, say, "Hey, Mr. Cox, I got so-and-so, you can have it if you'll come and pick it up." So I'd say, why, yeah. Just like now, this boy in there called me, he's giving me all kinds of stuff—I mean stuff that was good. The only thing I got invested in it is just my time. So if I get it and I want to give it to you, that's fine—I can do whatever I want with it.

I just go from place to place. A lot of times people say, "Why , how much you give me for this?" I'd say, "Well, I usually don't buy stuff." Next thing you know, why, by cracky, they say, "Well, come on and get it, you can have it." I put this old greenhouse up here just by people giving it to me. See, look at the windows in it, they're all different sizes, and I just thought, well, shoot fire, I'd just take the things and stick 'em all together. The only thing I got in it is the roof, I went ahead and bought that. But all the rest of it people just give to me.

Like these old buckets here. I had a fellow here today say, "Well, how about a few of them buckets?" "Load them up and take them," I told him. "They don't cost me nothing. A fellow give 'em to me."

I mean, I'm here, there, and everywhere. And a lot of times they'll bring stuff up here and just unload it. Say, "You get that stuff I left by there the other day?" I say, "Are you the fellow that brought it?" "Yeah, that's me." Once they find out you'll take stuff, why, they'll just keep you busy. I can find a use for pretty near anything and if I can't use it I'll give it to somebody else. That's the best thing. So that's the way I do. I don't turn nothing down.

Even when I was a kid, I used to look in the trash cans down there at the McCrory Hotel. At that time there was a lot of bootleg liquor going on all over the country. I'd hit them trash cans and I'd get them slim pint bottles—it was only 12 ounces. At that time the old Chesapeake Hotel was still standing. I ain't calling no names but there's a lot of people that had apartments in there, and I'd sell them the liquor bottles for a nickel. Well, if I got 10 liquor bottles after school, you see, that was 50¢. Take 'em down there and sell 'em. They were what they call a short pint—they would sell it for a pint but it was four ounces short.

All the rest of the kids, they'd be outdoors playing—I'd be hitting the trash cans. Getting them liquor bottles. When I couldn't find no liquor bottles, I'd go behind the grocery stores and I'd pick up cardboard boxes. I'd get every one I could get and save them until Saturday. I had a wagon made and that thing was about six feet long and I'd take and set them boxes on there. I'd put a box in a box and maybe I'd go six feet high, tie it from the front to the back with a rope, and here I'd go down to the New River Grocery. Little boxes, I'd sell them three for a penny. Bigger boxes I'd get a half cent for. And the biggest boxes I'd get a penny for. Maybe out of all the wagonload of boxes I might get 45¢ or 50¢. But if you had 50¢ back then you had something.

Yeah, I been around here a pretty good while. And now most people call me the garbage man. I don't care what they call me—long as they call me in time to eat.

Cox keeps geese and ducks, and always has time to watch them enjoy New River.

A recent meeting of the Literary Discussion Group.

Reading and Writing

A Report from Morgantown's Literary Discussion Group

By Sophia B. Blaydes and Philip Bordinat

Photographs by Ron Rittenhouse

On October 27, 1978, the Senior Citizens' Literary Group met for the first time at Morgantown's Senior Center. Since then we've gotten together every Wednesday year-round, and our group has grown from the original five to almost 50, about a fifth of the Center's membership. Each meeting continues the basic format of reading and discussion, including Dr. Earl Core's weekly column of Monongalia County history and such books as Jim Comstock's recent autobiography, *7 Decades*. Members read and discuss their own writing, as well.

The meetings are announced in the newspaper and attract people from diverse backgrounds. We have a retired minister, doctor, miner, mechanic, social worker, and a number of housewives, retired teachers, and nurses, among others. All share a common interest in good reading and conversation.

The Literary Group is open and friendly, encouraging newcomers to read with us. Anyone who attends the Center is welcome to any of our special events, as well. We've attended plays in Pittsburgh, at West Virginia University's Creative Arts Center, at the Monongalia Arts Center, and at Morgantown High School. We usually have a covered-dish dinner before (and dessert after) each event, so that literature has become a social and family affair. In addition to plays, the group has been to the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh, the Pearl Buck House in Pocahontas County, and Comstock's bookstore in Richwood. Of course, we've toured the WVU Library, including the Appalachian and Rare Books rooms and the West Virginia and Regional History Collection.

Through two early grants from the Humanities Foundation of West Vir-

Professors Philip Bordinat and Sophia Blaydes (beside him) organized the Literary Discussion Group.

ginia we purchased multiple copies of large-print books, and sponsored a speakers' program to bring in eminent figures in the state and from the university who are themselves senior citizens. Over the years we've invited Dr. Ruel Foster, Muriel Dressler, Dr. Pat Gainer, Dr. Earl Core, Harry Berman, and Jim Comstock. For each, we had our regular two-hour session in the Literary Group's reading room, where we discussed works the visitor had published or performed. Then we hosted each speaker at the Center's large

A Time Out of Time

By Edith Howell Love

From the Literary Discussion Group's *Selected Works*

Some of our GOLDENSEAL freelancers are people well into their 70's and 80's, drawing upon a life's worth of living in West Virginia to inform those of us who are younger. Consequently, we're not much surprised that it wasn't long before senior citizens in the Morgantown Literary Discussion Group demonstrated their own ability in putting words together. In 1982 the group collected enough material to publish their own 107-page book, Selected Works.

Selected Works *consists about equally of poetry and prose. The following selection, by no means the only good piece of writing in the book, was chosen as one which may be of particular interest to GOLDENSEAL readers. The author says of herself, "I was born at a time when the doctor came and stayed all night." She adds, "I am old enough to know that life can be beautiful." —ed.*

The school bell rang twice each day, five days a week, at 8:45 and 12:45. The teacher stood on the school porch, dressed for the weather and rang the gleaming brass handbell vigorously so that it could be heard over the many dips and swells of the hills of West Virginia.

My brother and I were invariably searching for chestnuts, blueberries, or May apples in their season when it rang. With open coats flying in the wind and dinner buckets and books banging our knees, we ran, flew, skipped, just short of being late. Usually we shed coats, scarves, caps, and galoshes, put our dinner buckets in our favorite places and quietly—on tiptoe, because of the cleats on our shoes—took our assigned seats at once and settled down to the quiet of the schoolroom.

The school consisted of one large classroom, two cloakrooms—one for boys and the other for girls—one entrance door, one raised platform containing the teacher's desk and the blackboard, two privies, and a coal house. It was on a road traveled only by those living on the hillside farms and in the valleys nestled among the woods and streams. There was mud everywhere except on the deep-rutted road where stones and bedrock lay exposed after the mud had been washed away.

Decorum was the order of the day and the teacher had firm hold on the dictates of learning. The greatest annoyance was the scuffling of feet on the wooden floor and the honking and blowing of noses. Classes usually started with the first grade reading, followed by spelling and arithmetic ("sums," as it was called). First and second graders were allowed to sit with older students who silently helped the little ones to read and spell. The older girls particularly chose their little one to teach, watch over, and protect on the playground.

Very few children made distinction between wealth and poverty. My earliest recollection of a difference was the contents of school lunches. Some of us had two-layer tin or aluminum buckets with a tray for dessert while others had tin lard buckets or brown paper bags. Day after day many brought two green-looking biscuit sandwiches containing jelly, home-cured bacon, or salt-side. Sometimes there would be a cookie. Fruit was not a food in the lunch and if added it was usually eaten at the end of the day on the way home.

Wednesday luncheon that attracts from 120 to 350 senior citizens from the county. After the luncheon each visitor gave a brief presentation to the larger audience. That was followed by a reception, enabling others to meet the speaker and become acquainted with our group's activities.

After the grants, we continued to bring in speakers and purchase books. With the help of Annabelle McCrobie, the director of the Senior Center, we still offer programs for the luncheon audiences and encourage more senior citizens to attend our sessions. We have hosted professors from WVU's departments of Drama, Foreign Languages, Biology, and Appalachian Studies. We have introduced our group to Dr. Stacy Groscup of Morgantown, Merle Moore of the Clarksburg Public Library, Jo Walton Eaton of a Charleston law firm, Dr. Jack Brown of Marshall University, and Don West of the Appalachian South Folklife Center at Pipestem. Susan Leffler of West Virginia Public Radio came to tape a session for statewide broadcast.

Our collection of books has grown along with our membership. We have well over 1,000 volumes at present, obtained partly through the Humanities grants and also through the generosity of professors in the WVU English Department. We are now able to read in multiple copies anything from Plato's philosophy to Shakespeare's sonnets to Shaw's plays. Our library of West Virginia history and literature has grown even more, for we have a special interest in our state's heritage.

You can find us in our reading room by 10:00 any Wednesday morning, gathered around the large table that seats 20 people comfortably. There are chairs in the corners, to accommodate the overflow that we have enjoyed in recent years. You will no doubt find us reading aloud, or discussing what we've been reading. We go around the table, taking turns reading as much as we want. If we're reading a play, we take parts. You'll be welcome to join us.

A large potbellied stove stood in the corner of the classroom and if the teacher wanted to make extra money he tended the heating of the room. He would arrive at 7:00 or 7:30 in the morning to kindle or build up the fire and the room would be pleasantly warm by 9:00. Wood and coal were the fuel. Often the water in the bucket used by the pupils during the day would be frozen solid in zero weather.

The stove was connected to a pipe that had a shelf around it of 6 to 8 inches where those who brought food that needed to be warmed could place their mince pies, tea, or soup about half an hour before the noon break. The food came off the shelf piping hot and gave off a wonderful aroma. Lunches were eaten at the desks quietly and with dispatch. Only then could we put on our coats and go out to play in the schoolyard.

At the back of our school lot the land fell away steeply. On the hillside there was a thin stand of trees through which wild grapevines wove their wrist-thick stems. One of these was cut through by the older boys and one could grasp the end, give a run, and swing far out over rocks and fallen logs. We became adept at swinging from a starting place and landing several trees farther along the bank. After one or two not so adept ones had let go halfway out and were badly jolted, the brave ones found one day that our swing had been cut off high in the branches of the tree.

I remember only one teacher being

Edith Love takes a turn reading for the group.

Jim Comstock of Richwood is a popular visitor. Here he holds a copy of *7 Decades*, his recent autobiography.

There are no assignments or grades in our group, but some members do write. From early on, they have brought in their work so that the rest of us may listen or read it together. After that had happened often enough, we hit upon the idea of publishing our own volume of collected writings. Our poets and creative writers contributed their work, and so did everyone else, since we included an autobiographical sketch from each member. Like our weekly meetings—where the project was actually put together—we all took part in producing our book, *Selected Works.* Whether reading or writing, everyone gets a chance in the Senior Citizens' Literary Group. ♣

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discharged, and later I knew that he was a sadist. One day he called a fourth-grade girl to the blackboard where he drew a small circle that was just within reach of her nose if she stretched on tiptoe. He insisted that she stand with her arms behind her back and her nose pressed to the circle. He ordered her to retain that position for 30 minutes and he insisted that she keep her arms away from any support. Soon the muscles throughout the child's body cried out for relief and she put her hands on the eraser trough for a moment. For this she was given 15 more minutes of the penalty. When she could continue no longer, she fell to the floor and one of the older boys picked her up and carried her from the room. The teacher was dismissed and left the school at the end of the week.

There were many teachers, young, pretty girls and handsome men who were loved by all but we were saddened when we learned that they would not be with us the next year. They would go back to school to finish their education, take a better position, or, with the girls, get married.

My first-grade teacher was a beautiful lady adored by me and sent by providence to sustain, encourage, understand, and lead me through the bewildering labyrinth of first grade. For you see, I was very shy, being the third daughter of a father who knew time was running out when he could hope for a son.

Under her tutelage I learned to read from the first-grade reader, "See the bird, I see the bird." Immediately after learning to recognize these few words I was taught to spell, using the sound of syllables as they were put together to make a whole new word. With this learning tool my reading rapidly advanced and my greatest delight from then on was reading.

All of the girls wore homemade dresses, underwear, and hand-me-down coats, caps, and mittens. Long underwear was ordered from a catalog and was worn from October until May by which time wear and tear had taken its toll, leaving us with buttons missing, holes in knees, and ravelling sleeves. Usually union suits, now known as long johns, had a dark stain on the chest, partly because of bouts of croup, colds, or whooping cough. The stain came from the remedies of the day, a concoction of onion poultices, axle grease, or a mixture of turpentine and camphor.

I wore the same gingham dress throughout the week and donned a clean one for Sunday. A pinafore was worn over the dress to school three days and removed for the last two of the school week. This gave me a double chance to look reasonably clean for the entire week.

Shoes were so nearly the same for boys and girls that one child in a household could wear those of another and this indeed happened if one was sick and the other had badly worn or broken shoes. The most rugged shoes were those made by a cobbler and lucky the boy whose father purchased a pair for him. These shoes were of rough leather with heavy soles and metal toe guards. It was necessary to oil them thoroughly when new and frequently during their usefulness. They were waterproof and no stones or rough wear could mar them.

Boys wore knee pants, often made from their fathers' trousers. All wore "hawkbill" caps, perched or drawn low on the head, marking the owners' individuality.

With the beginning of the First World War, my safe, beautiful life ended and with much trepidation I became a pupil in an over-crowded school in the city. I had never "lined up" to go to class nor gone from one room to another for instruction in a particular subject. I found the teachers had no time for personalities and some were actually hostile toward children. All day long I feared I would make some mistake that would bring the wrath of a teacher down on me. The seventh and eighth grades will always be a time that is blotted from my memory.

Last year I had occasion to pass by my old school and I was saddened to see it falling apart, windows gone, no door, weeds and scrub encroaching. But the memories it evoked were worth any physical change to come. I know now that the structure has been hauled away and so many of my schoolmates are either scattered or gone forever. But I think how fortunate I was to have spent my early learning years in a one-room school at a time when all things were beautiful. ♣

The Mountain State Stompers brought clogging to the doors of the State Capitol. Photo by Rick Lee.

Vandalia Gathering

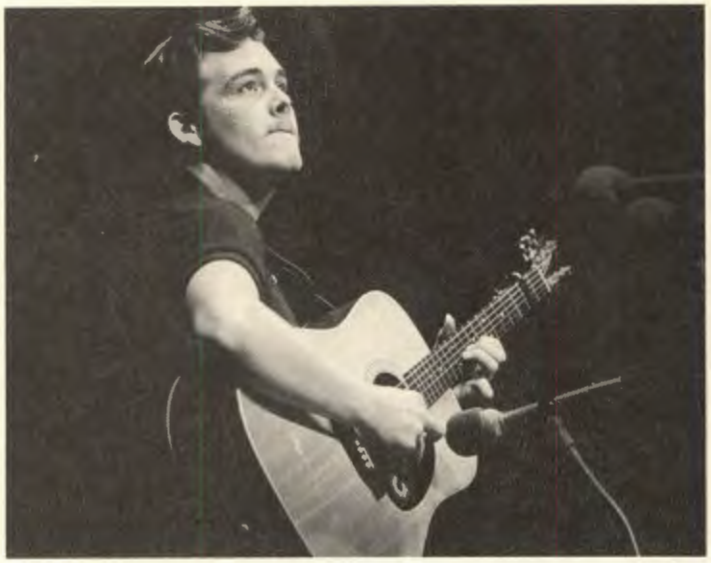
All West Virginians are invited to Charleston over Memorial Day Weekend for Vandalia Gathering, the statewide folklife festival. The Eighth Vandalia will offer music, crafts, dance, food, storytelling, and the spirit of homecoming in the mountains.

Vandalia 1984 is scheduled for May 25–27, at the Cultural Center and on the adjoining grounds of the State Capitol. As in past years, Vandalia will showcase traditional mountain culture as well as our state's black and ethnic heritage. Participants will be invited from all parts of West Virginia.

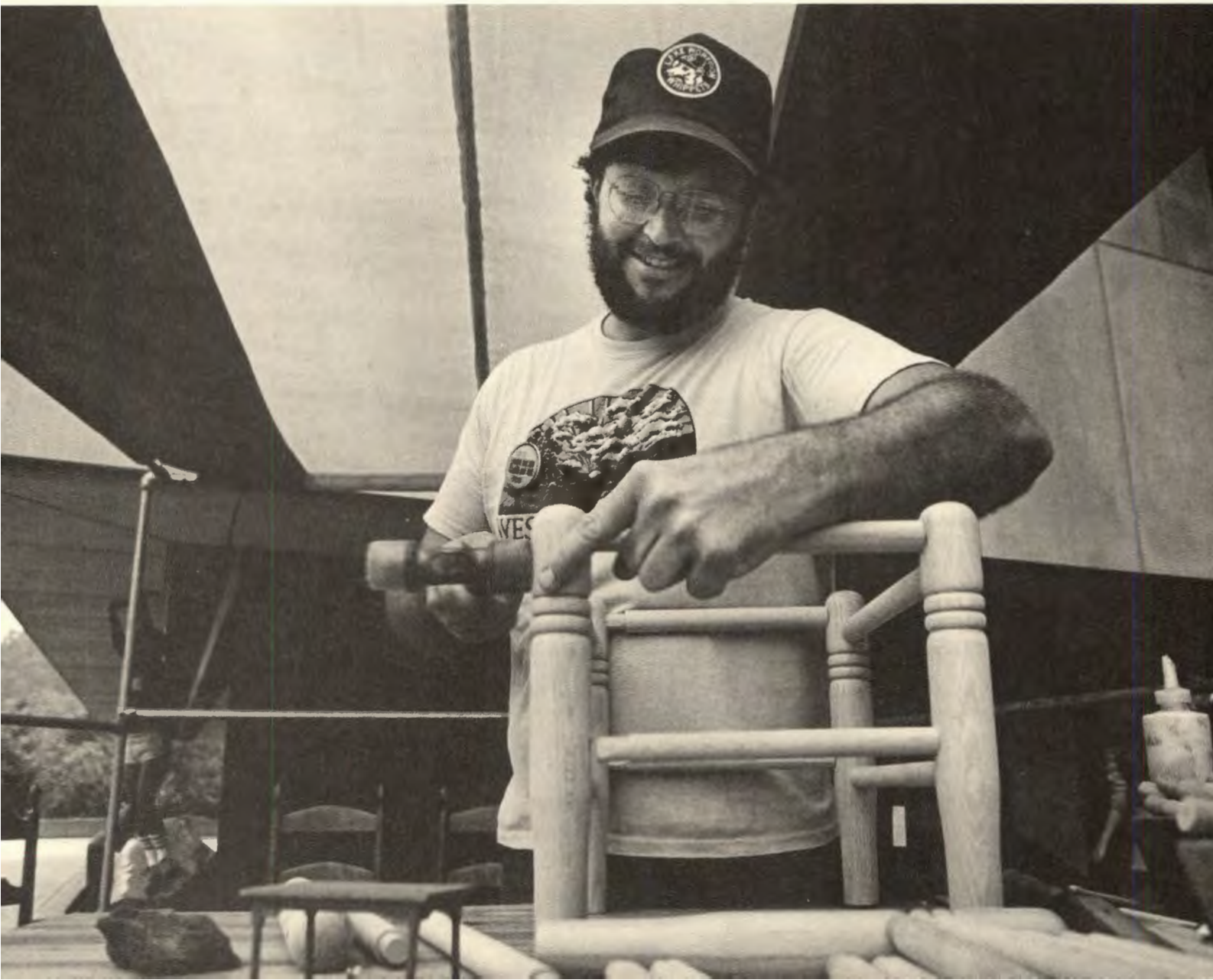
Vandalia will get underway Friday night, May 25, with the traditional opening concert. The following two days will feature stage performances, outdoor fiddle and banjo contests, craft demonstrations, dancing of many sorts, and the impromptu jam sessions that Vandalia is noted for. Booths staffed by civic and church groups will sell regional and ethnic foods.

Open-stage clogging, a popular new event at Vandalia 1983, is expected to return to this year's festival. Storytelling will be back for the third year, and will include the second annual West Virginia Liar's Contest. Vandalia will conclude late Sunday afternoon, with the awards concert.

Vandalia Gathering is sponsored by the West Virginia Department of Culture and History, and is open to the public at no charge. Photographs on these pages are from Vandalia 1983.



Above: Robert Shafer, one of the country's best flat-pickers, is a regular at Vandalia. Photo by Rick Lee.
Below: Fine crafts are an important part of Vandalia. Here is furniture maker David Barrett at work. Photo by Michael Keller.



Above: Ethel Caffie-Austin teaches a gospel music workshop at Vandalia, and then proudly brings her class to the concert stage. Photo by Michael Keller.
Right: Storytelling came to the concert stage at Vandalia 1983. Here Alan Klein tells his prizewinning tale, with fellow storyteller Terry Wimmer behind him. Photo by Rick Lee.

Below: Woody Simmons, one of West Virginia's best fiddlers, was given the Lifetime Achievement Award at Vandalia 1983. Here he relaxes backstage. Photo by Michael Keller.

West Virginia's Champion Liars

Winning Tall Tales From Vandalia 1983

Storytelling was back as a popular feature at the 1983 Vandalia Gathering, drawing large crowds to the outdoor stage on Saturday and Sunday afternoons. The sessions were hosted by professional storytellers George Daugherty of Charleston, Joe McHugh of Beckley, and Bonnie Collins of West Union, three of West Virginia's finest.

The three pros are the first to admit that they're not by any means the only good tale spinners we have, however, and they joined Vandalia organizers in a desire to attract more volunteer storytellers to the microphone. So, with their connivance, a "liar's contest" was introduced as a new event at the storytelling stage. It worked better than anyone expected, drawing about 40 contestants. Each offered his or her best lie, really a short tall tale, with the judges—Daugherty, McHugh, and Collins—left with the unenviable task of picking the three top liars. After much deliberation they settled on Richard Cobb of Huntington, Alan Klein of Ritchie County, and Terry Wimmer of Charleston. The three will reign as West Virginia's champion liars until Vandalia 1984.

We're publishing the three winning tales here, in the order that the judges ranked them.

Richard Cobb. Well, folks, I'm from down in Huntington—that's that other town down the Interstate. I wasn't always a city slicker, though. Actually, I was born in a place called Ward, West Virginia, which is right up the Kanawha River. Up to Cedar Grove and you go under the bridge right there at the old drugstore and you turn up Kelly's Creek and you go all the way up the holler there, right before you get to Mammoth—that's where I was born. That's where this history happened, that I'm gonna tell you.

I was with my daddy and we were coming down off of Church Hill, right there in Ward—we were going down to Cedar Grove just to look around. We got down to the bottom of the hill and started down the road and we looked over 'cross this creek and there's an old farmer over there digging his garden up and he had an old dead mule laying there. My dad said, "Stop, son." Said, "Let's walk over there and talk to that man a second." I said, "Dad, what we doing that for? I want to get on down to Cedar Grove, down to the big city and do something. It's Saturday." He says, "Well, let's go over there just a minute and talk to that man."

So he walked over across the creek and I waded over with him. We walked up to the farmer and my dad said, "Mr. Cochran, I tell you what I'll do. I'll give you $10 for that dead mule." He says, "Well." Said, "Son, I tell you. I'd take your money, but I hate to sell you a dead mule. Why don't you just let me bury it and we'll be through with it." My dad said, "Well, I tell you what I'll do, Mr. Cochran. I'll give you $12 for that mule on one condition. You got to haul it in your wagon back up the hollow back to my house, drag it into the house, drag it upstairs to the second floor bathroom, stick it over in the bathtub and stick all four of its legs straight up in the air."

I looked up at my dad and I said, "What in the world's this man talking about?" And the farmer said, "Charlie, I tell you what I'll do." He said, "I'll give you that mule if you just tell me why in the world you want me to take that mule back up the holler to your house, drag it in, up to the second floor bathroom and stick all four of its legs straight up in the air."

Said, "That's a good deal." Said, "It's real simple. I been married 22 years. My father-in-law, no matter what I does, he says, 'You dumb, dumb, dumb jackass.' No matter what I do. He says,

An unidentified contestant at the Liar's Contest. Photo by Rick Lee.

Richard Cobb will reign as West Virginia's Biggest Liar until Vandalia 1984. His tale was about a dead mule in a bathtub. Photo by Rick Lee.

'You dumb, you stupid jackass. You stupid jackass!' I've heard that for 22 years."

He said, "This Saturday night he's coming to my house. Like he always does he's gonna go up to the second floor bathroom. He's gonna look in the mirror and primp a little bit. And then he's gonna start washing his hands. And he's gonna look over into that bathtub and see that mule, and he's gonna charge back down the stairs and he's gonna walk up to me and say, 'What in the world is that in your bathtub?' And I'm gonna say, 'It's a mule, you stupid jackass!'"

And folks, if I'm lyin', I'm dyin'!

Alan Klein. I come from Ritchie County, though originally I come from up New England way, so I'm gonna tell you all a Down East story.

Now, there's one thing you got to know about Down Easterners—they're sort of like country folk everywhere. They're sparse with the words, if you know what I mean. Understated. But I do recall the time when I was living up in Maine, it was coming on to springtime. It had been a hard winter. My larder, it was just plumb empty. I was living on just the grease from the winter before. And I thought I'd go out hunting. And I thought I'd try to get me a rabbit. Well, I took my two-barreled shotgun and I took two cartridges. And I went on out hunting rabbits.

Well, I hunted all morning and I hunted all afternoon. And I didn't find me not one rabbit. It was a sorry sight to see. And I was just about to head on home when I looked down and there on the ground was a rabbit track. And I started following 'em. And there was another and another. And I kept following them rabbit tracks till I come to a tree—it was somewhat similar to this tree right over here. And I looked up in that tree and there were 12 turkeys just sitting right in a row on a branch.

Well, I only had me them two cartridges in my two-barreled shotgun, and I hadn't got me a rabbit yet, and I didn't want to use both cartridges, so I tried to line it up, you know, so I could get them all with one shot. The branch, it was all twisted and gnarly, you know, and I couldn't do that, so I did the next best thing. I shot at the branch just where it come onto the tree there. That branch, it split right in two. Them turkeys' legs, they dropped right down in that crack, the branch snapped shut, and them 12 turkeys, they was all caught on that branch. So I took that branch and I slung it over my

shoulder. And I continued following them rabbit tracks.

And I followed them rabbit tracks and I followed them till they started to go up a hill. And I was going up that hill when I looked up and there was a mountain lion just coming right down at me! And I thought to myself, rabbit or no rabbit, I'd better get out of there, if you know what I mean.

And I turned around and there was a big black bear coming at me from the other side! Well, that bear, he was close, so I thought I'd take him on first. And I just stood my ground. He came at me, his mouth wide open, the saliva dripping down, and I just held my arm out. And he came in with his mouth wide open and I reached my arm down inside his mouth, down all the way around inside, out the other side, grabbed his tail, and gave a mighty heave! And that bear kept going, only he was going t'other way.

Well, I turned around to face that mountain lion and just as he was about to jump upon me, we looked over to the side and there was a pack of wolves coming at us. Well, I looked at that mountain lion and he looked at me. And we decided whatever our differences were, we'd put 'em aside and take on that pack of wolves first.

Host storyteller Joe McHugh of Beckley makes a point. Photo by Rick Lee.

Well, we built a stockade real quick, and them wolves was upon us. Well, you know, I hadn't gotten me a rabbit yet. And I only had the one cartridge left; I'd used the one cartridge on the tree with the turkeys. So I was hitting on them wolves with the barrel of my gun. That mountain lion, he was snapping and snarling and growling and biting and in about 15 seconds we'd beaten off that pack of wolves.

Bonnie Collins and George Daugherty were among the host storytellers. Daugherty's clothes come from the Elkview Feed and Seed Store, he advises. Photo by Rick Lee.

And I looked at that mountain lion and he looked at me. And we decided whatever our differences were, they was over. And he went back on up his mountain, and I continued following them rabbit tracks.

And I followed them rabbit tracks, and I followed them till I come to a stream. Well, the tracks, they just ended right there at the stream. And you know I couldn't tell whether the rabbit went upstream or downstream. I didn't know what to do. Well, I looked upstream, and there were 12 ducks just swimming away in the water. And I looked downstream and there were 12 geese swimming away in the water. And I looked ahead of me and there was two fox. Well, I thought, rabbit or no rabbit, I ought to shoot something right now.

I was trying to make up my mind which one of them to shoot at when my mind was made up, 'cause there on that rock in front of me was a rattlesnake. Well, I knew what I had to do. I shot at that rattlesnake. And he died. That shot, it hit the rock, split in two, killed both foxes. Well, that gun, it was an old gun. And it exploded. The barrel of that gun, it went upstream, killed all 12 ducks. The butt of that gun went downstream, all 12 geese. And that explosion, it knocked me right into that stream. And when I come to, my left hand was on an otter's head, my right hand was on a beaver's tail, and my trouser pockets was so full of trout that a button popped off my fly and killed a rabbit.

Terry Wimmer. You know, some people might say, by virtue of my work as a newspaperman, I already belong to the biggest pack of liars around. But I wanted to tell you a story about the area where I grew up. It's in Mercer County, it's in between Beeson and Spanishburg.

Now, me and my paw, we grew up down in Moonshine Hollow, about a mile, mile and a half, or two mile. And the other day Paw says to me, "Let's go laugh and path and coonskin hunting, if you care." So I told him I don't care. So we called up all the dogs but Old Shorty, and then we called him up too.

So we went on down that hill till we got on top of that mountain and all them dogs had treed one up this long slim slick hickory black young sapling, about 10 feet above the top out on an old dead chestnut snag. Now Paw says to me, he says, "Bud, you climb out and shake 'em out, if you care." So I told him I didn't care. So I climbed up and I shook and I shook and I shook and I shook and I shook and I heard something hit the ground, looked around and it was *me*! And all them old dogs was on top of me but Old Shorty, and he was on top of me too. So I said, "Paw, take a pine knot and knock 'em off, if you care." He said he didn't care. So he took a pine knot, knocked 'em all off but Old Shorty, then he knocked him off too.

So we went on down that hill, and all them dogs treed one up a huckleberry log about two foot through at the little end. So I asked Paw to take an axe and chop 'em out if he cared. So he asked me, he didn't care. He took an axe and the first lick he hit he liked to cut Old Shorty's long tail off right close behind his ears. Like near to ruint my dog.

So we went on back to the house and I discovered that all the pumpkins were out in the pig patch. And we chased and we chased and we chased and chased and I got so angry I picked up one of them pumpkins and slung his brains out over a pig. And we shucked and shelled a bucket of slop for 'em and laid up the draw bars and fixed up the gate and allowed as how the next day we'd go down to Sal's house.

Now Sal, she lived down Moonshine Hollow about two mile, two mile and a half, or three mile, in a big white house painted green with the doors shut wide open and the winders nailed down. So we got up that morning and went out to the lot, put the bridle on the barn, the horse on the saddle, and the fence up to the gate and the horse got on. And that horse, he got scared of a stump out in the middle of the road, threw me in a gully 10 feet deep, tore the sleeve out of by best Sunday britches. I got up, brushed the dirt off the horse and went on down the road.

We got down to Sal's house and we went in, threw our hat in the fireplace, sit on the bed, plumped down on an old armchair on a stool, and we talked about politics and all other kind of ticks. And Sal says, "Bud, how about going out that apple orchard picking me some peaches so I can fix a huckleberry pie for dinner." So I asked her I didn't care. So I went out and I climbed that pear tree and I was a-shakin' those cherries out and the limb I was standing on gave way. And I landed right a-straddle a barbed wire fence. Both feet on the same side. And I swore then and there that I'd never go back to Moonshine Hollow. And I ain't been back since.

The three judges chipped in $10 for a special "Young Liar" award for Leonard Cumbridge. The idea, they said, was to encourage him in perfecting the art of prevarication. Photo by Rick Lee.

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In This Issue

C. ROBERT BARNETT, a Hancock County native, attended West Liberty State College and Marshall University before taking a Ph.D. at Ohio State. A former contributing editor to *River Cities* magazine, he has published widely on sports and sports history in scholarly journals and sports publications. He teaches in the Department of Health, Physical Education and Recreation at Marshall.

LYSBETH ARNER BARNETT, a native of Chester in Hancock County, attended Duke University and Ohio State University before receiving her MBA from Marshall University. Mrs. Barnett is coordinator of the business management program at Ashland (Kentucky) Community College, and was a contributing editor for *River Cities Monthly.*

TROY R. BRADY is one of several of Benjamin Row's descendants who became ministers. Now living in Virginia, he grew up in the Barbour County community which Row founded. "From Rowtown to Junior" is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

LEONA G. BROWN of Pocahontas County is a retired elementary school teacher. She is the granddaughter of George Loomis Gwinn and her article on the Gwinn homeplace on New River represents her first appearance in GOLDENSEAL.

ROBERT L. CAMPBELL is a native West Virginian who has lived in California, Florida, Europe, and Asia, and now returned to settle in Elkins. A photographer and filmmaker, he attended Marshall University and the University of Miami. His film work includes the PBS series "Unto the Hills," the Department of Culture and History's "West Virginia Renaissance," as well as commercials and freelance work, and he has served as artist-in-residence in Huntington, Petersburg, and Elkins.

DOUG CHADWICK was born in North Carolina and grew up in Maryland. He attended Reed College in Portland, Oregon, Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington, and a school for filmmaking and video in Rome. Chadwick moved to West Virginia in 1970 and has worked as a photographer for the *Fayette Tribune* and the *Raleigh Register.* He has contributed periodically to GOLDENSEAL.

KITTY B. FRAZIER, a Wheeling native, holds a B.A. and M.A. from West Virginia University. She teaches at West Virginia State College and frequently works on projects for the Humanities Foundation of West Virginia and the Women's Commission. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

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

MARTHA MANNING, a West Virginia native, is descended from a long line of glassworkers. She holds a degree in music from West Virginia University, and spent many years as a pianist, organist, and teacher. She and her husband, Walter, a retired history professor, live in Morgantown. She has written previous articles on West Virginia glass for GOLDENSEAL.

ARTHUR C. PRICHARD, born and reared in Mannington, graduated from West Virginia University and McCormick Theological Seminary 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 Presbyterian Synod of West Virginia, and in 1969 received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Davis and Elkins College. Author of the recently published history *An Appalachian Legacy: Mannington Life and Spirit,* he writes frequently for GOLDENSEAL and other publications.

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.

BOB SPENCE was born and raised in Logan, and his people have lived there since 1790. He graduated from Marshall University in 1974 with a B.A. in journalism. He worked for the *Logan News* for 11 years, and for newspapers in Weirton and Welch, and now makes his living as a freelance writer. In 1976 Bob wrote *The Land of the Guyandotte,* a 600-page history of Logan County, and he has contributed several articles to GOLDENSEAL.

DENNIS TENNANT, a seventh-generation Monongalia Countian, graduated *cum laude* from West Virginia University. He served as photo intern at the *Charleston Daily Mail,* worked as staff photographer for the *Morgantown Dominion-Post,* and now does freelance work for the Associated Press and various publications. He and his wife, Diane, are regular contributors to GOLDENSEAL.

ANDY YALE is a New York writer and photographer, with a special interest in southeast West Virginia and folklife subjects generally. He has published articles and photos in *The Village Voice, Memphis* magazine, and other publications. This is his first appearance in GOLDENSEAL.

(continued from inside front cover)

July 30–August 4	
Jackson County Junior Fair	Cottageville
July 30–August 4	
Bramwell Street Fair	Bramwell
August 2–5	
Hughes River Holiday	Harrisville
August 3–5	
Pleasant County Festival	Eureka
August 4	
7th Annual Hillbilly Chili Festival	Snowshoe
August 6–11	
Cherry River Festival	Richwood
August 9–11	
Bluestone Valley Fair	Spanishburg
August 10–11	
Bobby's Riverbend Bluegrass Festival	Crum
August 10–12	
Logan County Arts and Crafts Fair (Memorial Fieldhouse)	Logan
August 10–12	
The Ohio River Festival	Ravenswood
August 12–19	
West Virginia Water Festival	Hinton
August 14	
Town & Country Days	New Martinsville
August 17–19	
Locust Grove Bluegrass Festival (Nevera's Farm)	Hazelton
August 17–19	
Augusta Heritage Arts Festival	Elkins
August 17–25	
State Fair of West Virginia	Lewisburg
August 18–19	
Wool Crafts Weekend (Pricketts Fort)	Fairmont
August 21–26	
Jackson County Gospel Singing Convention	Cottageville
August 24–26	
West Virginia Tobacco Fair	Hamlin
August 24–26	
Appalacian Arts and Crafts Festival (Armory/Civic Center)	Beckley
August 25–27	
Quilt Show (North Bend State Park)	Cairo
August 25–Sept. 3	
14th Annual Sternwheel Regatta Festival	Charleston
August 31–Sept. 1	
Country Roads Festival	Pennsboro
August 31–Sept. 2	
West Virginia Italian Heritage Festival	Clarksburg
August 31–Sept. 3	
Stonewall Jackson Arts and Crafts Jubilee (Jacksons Mill)	Weston
Sept. 1–2	
Hilltop Festival (Huntington Galleries)	Huntington
Sept. 8	
Mt. Grove Potato Festival (Monongahela National Forest)	Silver Lake
Sept. 8	
Nicholas County Potato Festival	Summersville
Sept. 9	
Putnam County Homecoming	Winfield
Sept. 9–15	
Frontier Days	Shinnston
Sept. 9–15	
King Coal Festival	Williamson
Sept. 13–16	
West Virginia Oil & Gas Festival	Sistersville
Sept. 14–16	
West Virginia Railroad Heritage Festival	Grafton
Sept. 14–16	
Treasure Mountain Festival	Franklin
Sept. 14–15	
Country Roads Festival	Ansted
Sept. 15	
Fall Festival (Pearl Buck Birthplace)	Hillsboro
Sept. 15	
Harvest Festival	Shepherdstown
Sept. 15	
Chemical City Arts & Crafts Festival	South Charleston
Sept. 15–16	
Craigsville Fall Festival	Craigsville
Sept. 15–16	
Arts & Crafts Fall Festival	Alderson
Sept. 16	
Octoberfest (Bavarian Inn)	Shepherdstown
Sept. 20–22	
West Virginia Molasses Festival	Arnoldsburg
Sept. 22–23	
First Molasses Weekend (Pricketts Fort)	Fairmont
Sept. 23–25	
Clay County Golden Delicious Festival	Clay
Sept. 27–30	
Preston County Buckwheat Festival	Kingwood
Sept. 28–30	
Oglebayfest and Quadrangle Art & Craft Fair	Wheeling
Sept. 28–30	
Summersville Bluegrass-Country Music Festival	Summersville
Sept. 28–30	
9th Annual Fall Mountain Heritage Arts & Crafts Festival	Charles Town
Sept. 29	
Poca Area Heritage Day	Poca
Sept. 29–30	
West Virginia Honey Festival (City Park)	Parkersburg
Sept. 29–30	
Hardy County Heritage Weekend	Moorefield
Sept. 29–30	
Rupert Country Fling	Rupert
Oct. 3–7	
Mountain State Forest Festival	Elkins
Oct. 6	
Autumn Harvest Festival	Union
Oct. 6–7	
Burlington Old-Fashioned Apple Harvest Festival	Burlington
Oct. 6–7	
Country Festival (Mason County Farm Museum)	Point Pleasant
Oct. 6–7	
11th Annual Apple Butter Festival	Berkeley Springs
Oct. 6–7	
Milton Art & Craft Show	Milton
Oct. 7	
Doc Williams Old Friends & Fans 6th Annual Reunion (Oglebay Park)	Wheeling
Oct. 11–14	
West Virginia Black Walnut Festival	Spencer
Oct. 12–13	
Apple Festival	Wellsburg
Oct. 13	
Bridge Day/Walk	Fayetteville
Oct. 13–14	
Annual Apple Butter Weekend (Pricketts Fort)	Fairmont
Oct. 19–21	
Mountain State Apple Harvest Festival	Martinsburg
Oct. 26–28	
Arts and Crafts Weekend (North Bend State Park)	Cairo

GOLDENSEAL requests its readers' help in preparing this listing. If you would like your festival or event to appear in the 1985 "Folklife Fairs and Festivals," please send us information on the name of the event, dates, location, and the contact person or organization, along with their mailing address and phone number, if possible. We must have this information by February 1, 1985, in order to meet our printing deadline.

GOLDENSEAL regrets that, due to space limitations, county fairs and Fourth of July celebrations are no longer included in the listing.

Department of Culture and History
The Cultural Center
State Capitol
Charleston, West Virginia 25305

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