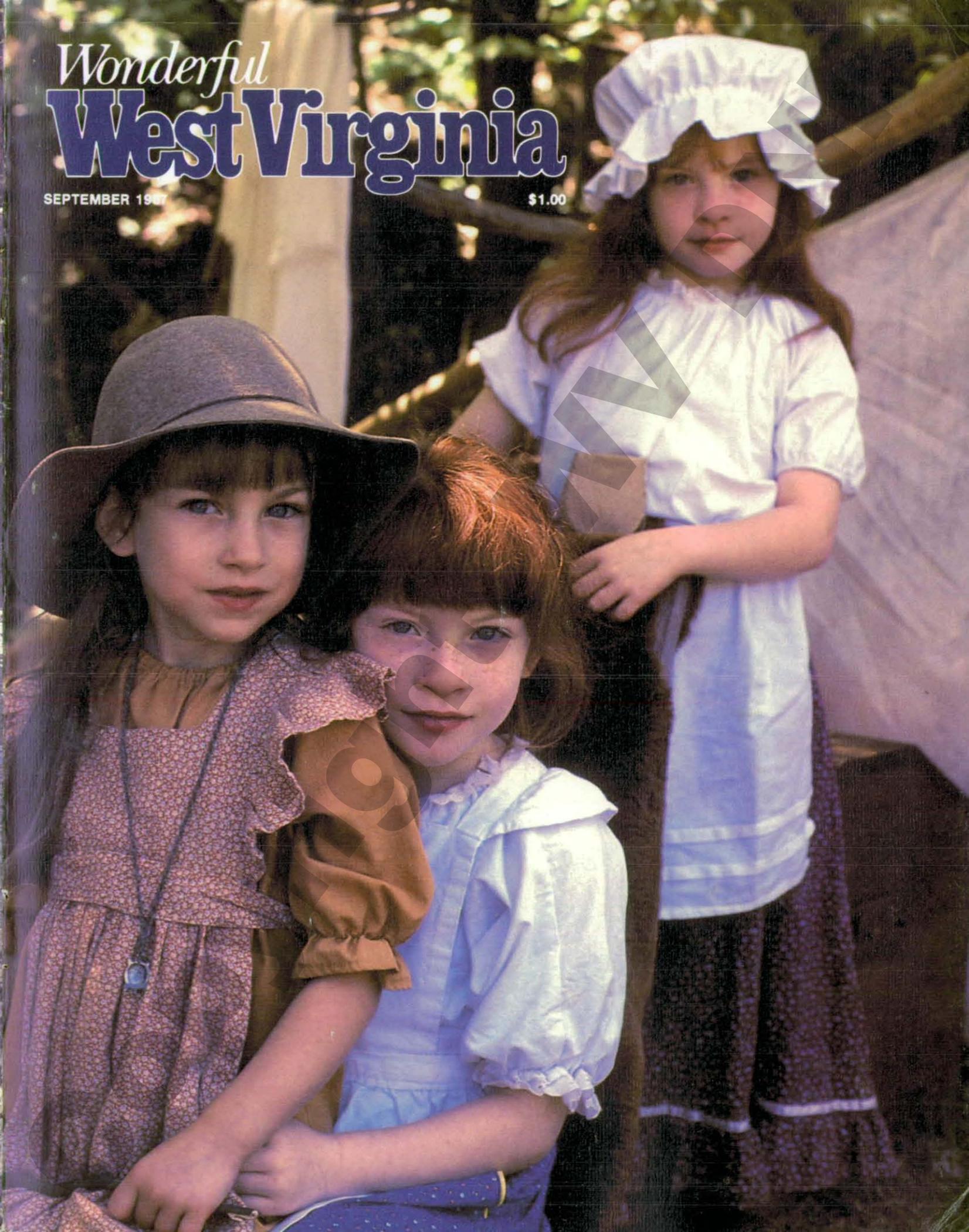
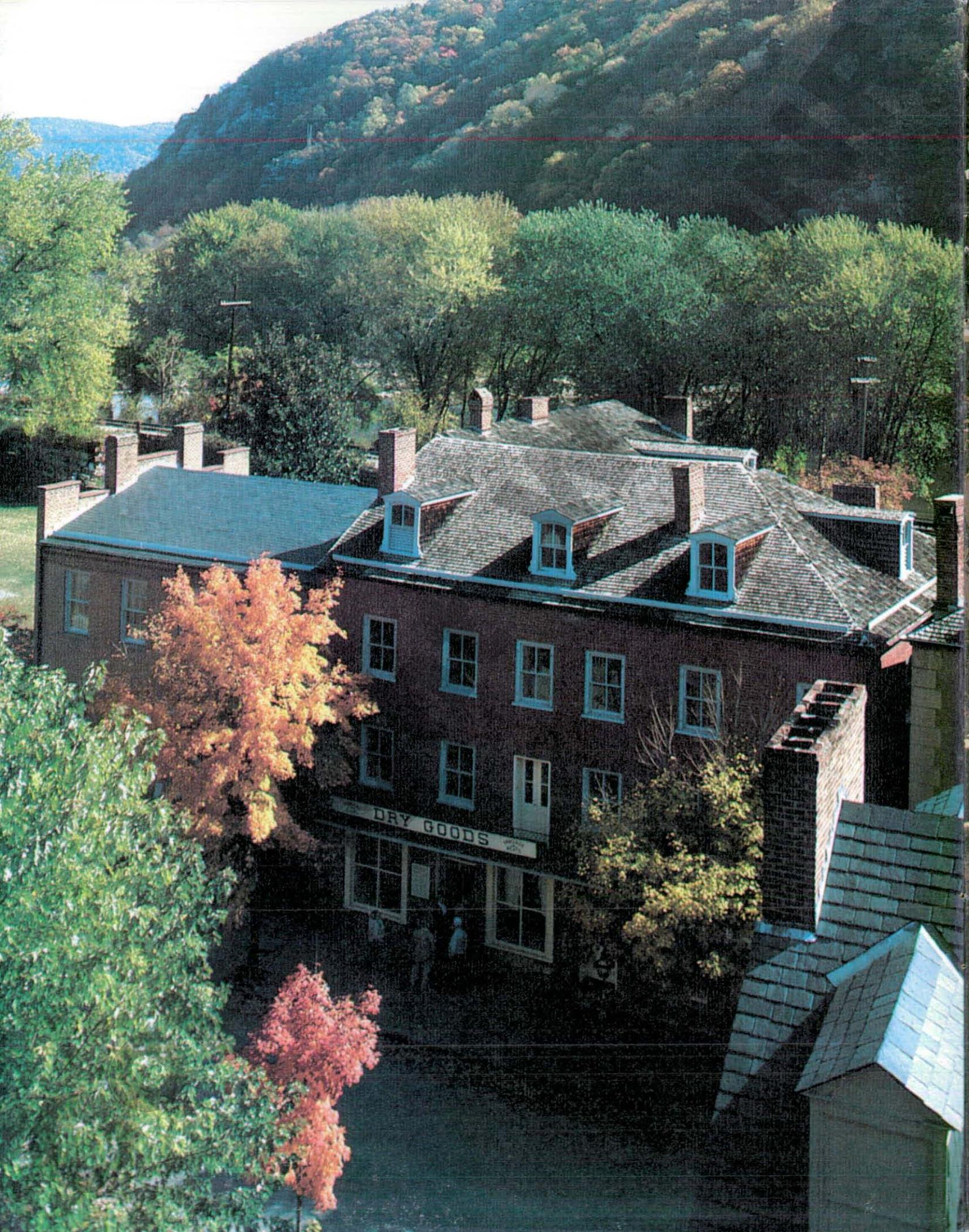


Wonderful
West Virginia

SEPTEMBER 1987

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FRONT COVER—While participating in the rendezvous held last spring in West Virginia, these three sisters and other children learned how different their lives would be if they had been born a century or two earlier. The girls, daughters of Deborah and Timothy Wilson of Fairmont, are: Erin Grace, age 4 (left), and twins Anthea Lea (middle) and Brandy Ranai (right), age 6. (Story begins on page 6.)

Arnout Hyde Jr.

INSIDE FRONT COVER—Early autumn at Harpers Ferry.

Gerald Ratliff.

BACK COVER—A kayaker paddles one of West Virginia's numerous scenic rivers.

Kay Bertrand.

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Handley

By NANCY CLARK

Photographs by GERALD RATLIFF

It was a warm day in early June as I rode along the jeep trail through the roadless, northern section of Handley Public Hunting and Fishing Area with resident superintendent Ralph Sharp. Wild grasses and flowers stood more than four feet high in the several extensive clearings in the forest.

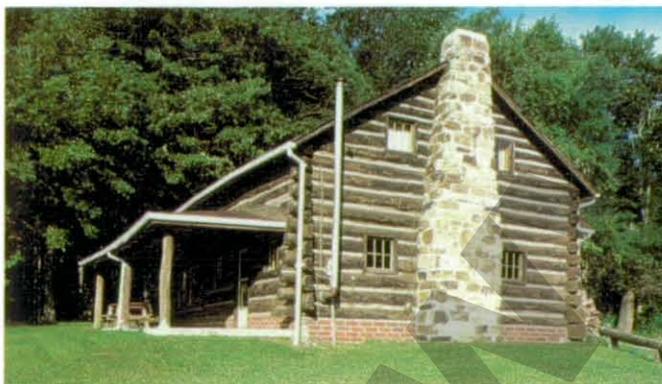
"We don't mow these meadows until after June 15 to protect the deer," Ralph said. As he drove the jeep slowly and watchfully, he explained that mothers leave their fawns hidden in the overgrown fields, and the newborn deer won't move out of the way of a vehicle or mowing machine. At that moment, I noticed a doe standing motionless at the edge of the woods staring at the humans who had invaded her peaceful domain. Did she, I wondered, have a fawn or two hidden in the tall grass?

"Handley is a deer hunter's paradise," the superintendent stated, adding that bow-and-arrow hunting is popular. "We have some turkeys and bears, too, but not many rabbits or squirrels," he said. Other wildlife on the area include: beavers, foxes, bobcats, minks, raccoons, muskrats, wood ducks, Canada geese, woodcocks, ruffed grouse, and numerous species of songbirds and insects.

Ralph said that during the several years he has been superintendent at Handley, he has never seen a deer die of starvation there. This is largely because of the efforts of the wildlife resources division of the Department of Natural Resources in planting and managing the area to attract and sustain wildlife by providing essential food and cover. As an example, he called my attention to the lush growth of ferns on the forest floor, which provide a large portion of the wintertime diet of the deer herd. He also pointed out an apple orchard in one of the meadows which had been planted by his predecessor, Joe Roy, who was the long-time resident manager of the area before his retirement a few years ago.

After newborn fawns become more mobile each spring, about the middle of June, farmers in the vicinity mow the upper meadows at Handley and use the fodder to feed their livestock.

The 778 scenic acres of rolling hills and bottom lands in



A log lodge (above) at this public hunting and fishing area provides accommodations for Department of Natural Resources staff meetings. The six-acre pond (left) and two smaller ones at Handley offer good fishing for largemouth bass, bluegill, and channel catfish.

Pocahontas County near Marlinton which are now Handley Public Hunting and Fishing Area were a privately owned sheep and cattle farm until 1959 when this land was acquired by the Department of Natural Resources.

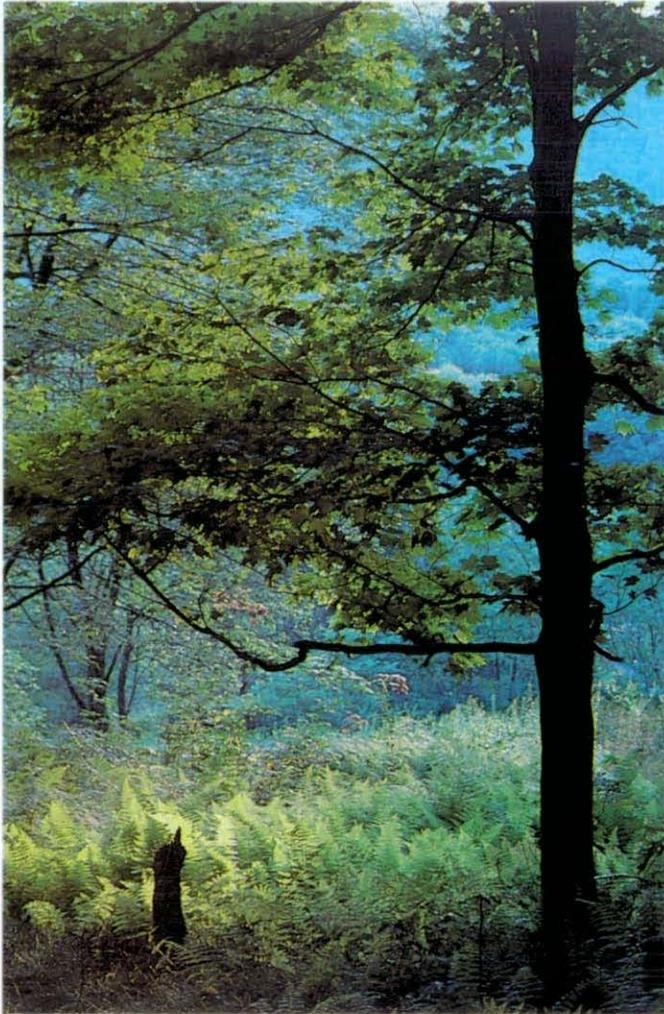
Intending to establish a commercial hunting and fishing business, the farmer-owner had already planted some food plots for wildlife, constructed some cabins, and built three small fishing ponds on the property. The largest of these impoundments covers six acres within a few yards of the superintendent's residence and just below

a nearby log lodge. The two smaller ones are up the hill in the northern roadless section. All three ponds contain catchable-size fish, including largemouth bass, bluegill, and channel catfish. The Williams River, which borders Handley for a short distance on the west, offers additional opportunities for anglers; it is stocked with trout several times a year. Good hunting and fishing places can also be found in the vast Monongahela National Forest which surrounds Handley. In addition to Williams River, Tea Creek and Cranberry River provide prime trout fishing on nearby national forest land.

The Department of Natural Resources maintains the old two-story, log lodge at Handley for use as a facility for DNR and Forest Service staff meetings. Downstairs, a large conference room/lounge with several long tables, chairs, and couches accommodates 25-30 people for meetings and meals. There is a fully equipped kitchen off the meeting room. The second story contains a bathroom and also a dormitory which sleeps ten. State college and university groups also stay at the lodge while conducting nature study programs in the area. During some of these excursions, biologists have discovered unusual plant and animal life at Handley including rare species of dragonflies and other insects. According to rumors, the old lodge once harbored an illegal gambling operation.

The aesthetically pleasing, rustic campground at Handley consists of 13 tent-or-trailer sites offering privacy without isolation. The sites are small clearings in the woods spaced a few feet apart along the outside of a circular drive. Each contains a picnic table, grill, and trash can. The only other facilities, a

(below) Ferns, which grow abundantly on the forest floor at Handley, provide one of the main sources of food for deer in the winter. (right) Autumn at the largest of two fishing ponds in the northern section, which is off-limits to motor vehicles.



pump house with well water and vault toilets, are centrally located. There are no hookups. A large field for sports or wildlife watching is enclosed by the circular drive. The camping fee is \$3.50 per night and sites are offered on a first-come, first-served basis with no reservations accepted.

In response to my questions, Superintendent Sharp said that he has experienced no problems with campers and that the campground is seldom full except on holiday weekends and during hunting seasons. It is open year-round except in times of heavy snowfall.

Handley is a good choice for a camping vacation. In addition to spending some time in a delightful spot—enjoying nature, hunting (in season), or fishing—the camper will find some interesting places and additional recreational opportunities in the vicinity, which is one of the most scenic regions of West Virginia. Anglers will be particularly interested in visiting Edray Trout Hatchery, and everyone will enjoy the natural beauty along the

Highland Scenic Highway and other roads in the area.

Other interesting nearby places to visit include: The Cranberry Visitors Center, which will acquaint you with what to see and do in the Monongahela National Forest; Cranberry Glades botanical area; Hills Creek Falls; Cass Scenic Railroad and restored historic lumber town; the National Radio Astronomy Observatory (guided tours) at Green Bank; Seneca State Forest; Watoga State Park, which offers numerous recreational facilities including a swimming pool, game courts, and rental horses and riding trails; Bear Town State Park, which features interesting rock formations; Droop Mountain State Park and Civil War battlefield; Sherwood Lake, which has a sand swimming beach; and Pearl Buck's restored birthplace and museum. All of these places are shown on the official West Virginia highway map.

I would also like to personally recommend a little, unpretentious log cabin beside U.S. route 219/state route 55, between Edray and Marlinton, named the Frontier Restaurant which



serves some of the best homemade food I have ever eaten.

Approximately 80 percent of Handley Public Hunting and Fishing area remains forested—primarily with maples, beeches, and birches, with some conifers, oaks, and yellow poplars. Although this land is simply beautiful in all seasons, autumn brings the most colorful spectacle imaginable when the vivid golds, reds, and oranges, of the trees contrast against bright blue skies above and rich green meadowland below.

Even those who take no fish or game from Handley do not leave the area without carrying away something valuable with them. This beautiful land is among West Virginia's finest, and all who spend some time here cannot help but leave a little richer for having experienced its charms.

Nancy Clark was born and reared in West Virginia and has done a great deal of traveling throughout the state from the 1940s to the present time. She has been managing editor of this magazine since 1978.



HANDLEY PUBLIC HUNTING AND FISHING AREA is located 13 miles northwest of Marlinton. From I-79 take U.S. route 19 south to Muddlety and turn east onto W. Va. route 55. Follow route 55 until it joins with U.S. route 219. Just south of Edray turn left (west) onto secondary route 17 and follow signs to Handley. From I-81 and other points to the northeast, follow route 55 west to Edray. From I-81 and other points southeast, take I-64 west to U.S. route 219. Take route 219 north to just south of Edray.

Rendezvous

a trip back in time to the
fur trade era, 1740–1840

By CHARLENE "CHAZ" POYNER

Photographs by ARNOUT HYDE, JR.



All participants are to be dressed pre-1840. Keep non-period items covered or out of sight.

Don't call a tent anything but a lodge and don't enter one uninvited.

No loaded rifles in camp.

These were a few of the rules when more than 175 men, women, and children met for the second annual West Augusta Territorial Primitive Rendezvous in May.

The rendezvous (pronounced "roin-da-voov") was held in a grassy meadow, next to a fossil-filled meandering creek, one mile east of the Nancy Hanks Memorial and just south of Antioch on the boundary between Grant and Mineral counties. Landowner Gene Hughes opened 200 acres to the group for a week.

"Getting ready for the rendezvous was a labor of love," said James H. "Ike" Skidmore, 27, a Clarksburg glass factory supervisor who served as "Booshway" (leader, captain) for the event. "This meadow was totally inaccessible," he said. "We had to cut in a road, and we've been here several weekends setting up the site."

The generic name for those who participate in rendezvousing is "buckskinner." Anyone who saw Robert Redford in the movie "Jeremiah Johnson" or Brian Keith in "The Mountain Men" or who is familiar with Bill Golden (formerly of the The Oakridge Boys) has some idea of what this buckskinning business is all about. It's about time-tripping to the North American fur trade era (1740-1840). It's about re-living history, not to be confused with re-enacting in the military sense. There's definitely no regimentation at a rendezvous. Buckskinners take on a Fur Trade Era persona, portraying Colonial townsmen or farmers, Canadian voyagers or—most often—rugged mountain men.

The game of living history is a lot more expensive today than the real thing was 200 years ago. Duplicating the fur trade era life-style means acquiring what were considered necessities in those days.

A lodge averages about \$300 and can be anything from a military "wedge" to a Plains Indian tepee. Some are small, accommodating only one person, while others, like the Revolutionary War "marquee" (officer's field quarters), can easily house a family of five for the weekend.

Clothing is another matter. Plain buckskin pants and shirt start at \$200. A woman's cloak costs \$150. A black felt rifleman's hat is \$40. Many buckskinners make their own clothes,

but the majority get them from mail order specialty houses that cater to living history buffs.

Although many items can be made or obtained through trading at rendezvous, few buckskinners have the ability to make a reproduction 18th or 19th century flint-lock rifle. Since competitive black powder shooting is the focus of most gatherings, those involved will usually find a way to purchase a rifle. Many start off with a mass-produced, imported weapon, graduating to one that is custom made when they are able to come up with the minimum \$500 price tag.

Begun two centuries ago as a way to reunite isolated trappers and traders in the spring after a long winter in the Rocky Mountains, the western rendezvous could last anywhere from a week to a month. There were contests in shooting, blade throwing, and drinking. Music and merriment abounded. To replenish supplies, the buying, selling, and trading of goods were paramount. Today the million-plus members of various buckskinning groups throughout America include these activities at their rendezvous.

The West Augusta Territorial Primitive Rendezvous is not a club. It is a corporation dedicated to preserving the concept of rendezvousing in West Virginia.

Patrick A. Davis, 27, is a Bridgeport native who is "scribe" (secretary) for the

corporation. His persona is that of a Revolutionary War innkeeper, and he would like to see the emphasis at rendezvous on the 18th century rather than the 19th.

Davis worked with Skidmore clearing the land, building a road, and setting up for the event in May. When it was all over and determined a success, the exhausted Davis was able to make an evaluation: "It was a lot of work and at times it was questionable as to whether or not it was worth it. But there's no question now; I'd definitely do it again."

Not every buckskinners' get-together is a primitive rendezvous. Some are simply "shoots," which allow 20th-century camping and clothing. But the West Augusta celebration incorporated nearly every aspect of the traditional rendezvous.

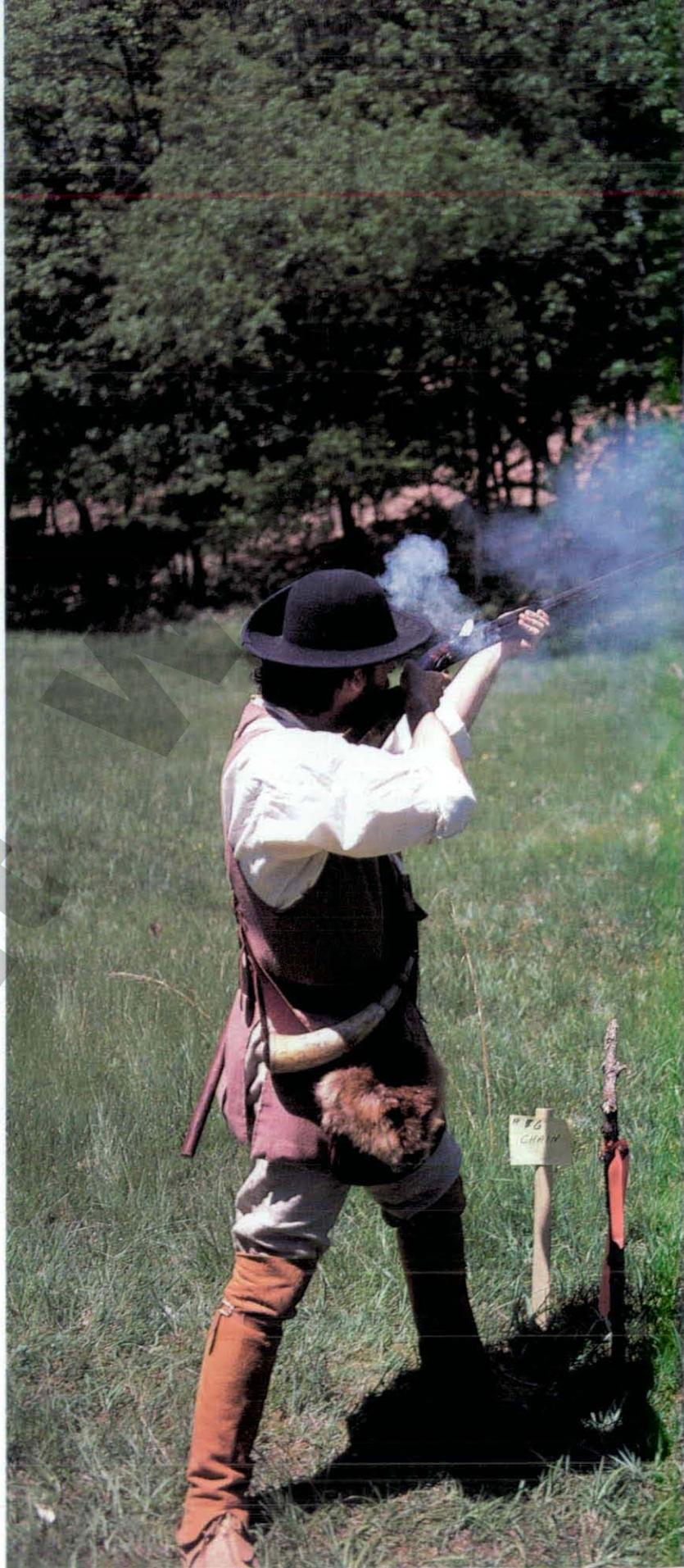
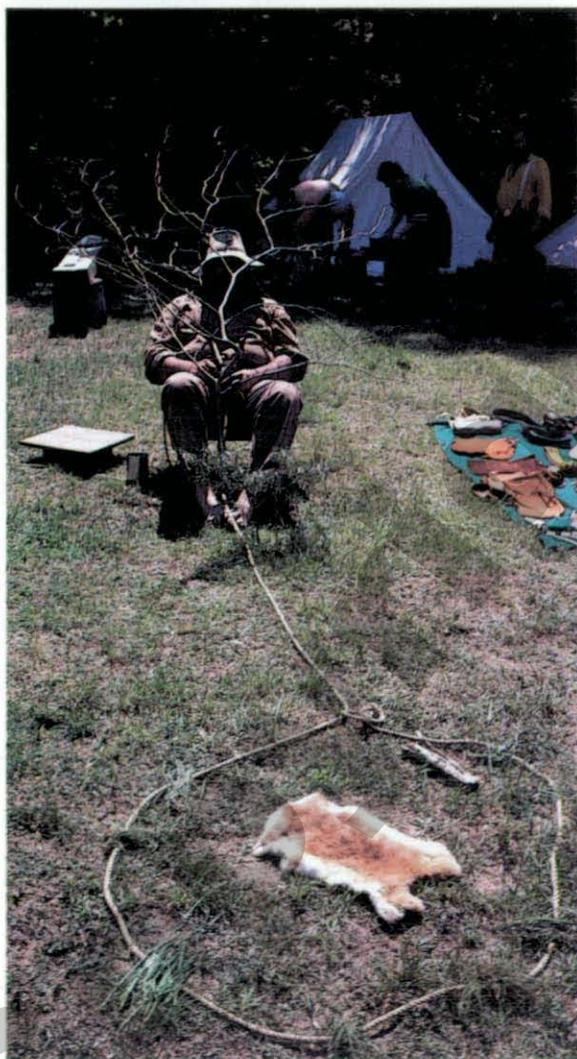
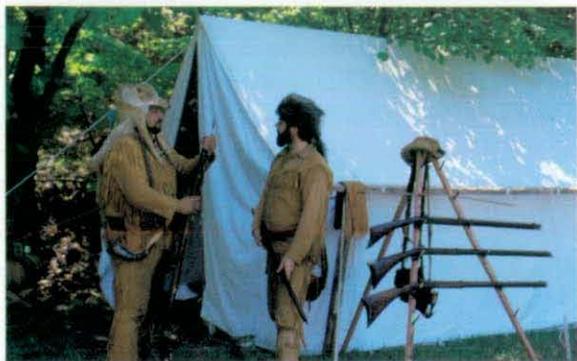
Ten states were represented, with people coming from as far away as New Hampshire and eastern North Carolina.

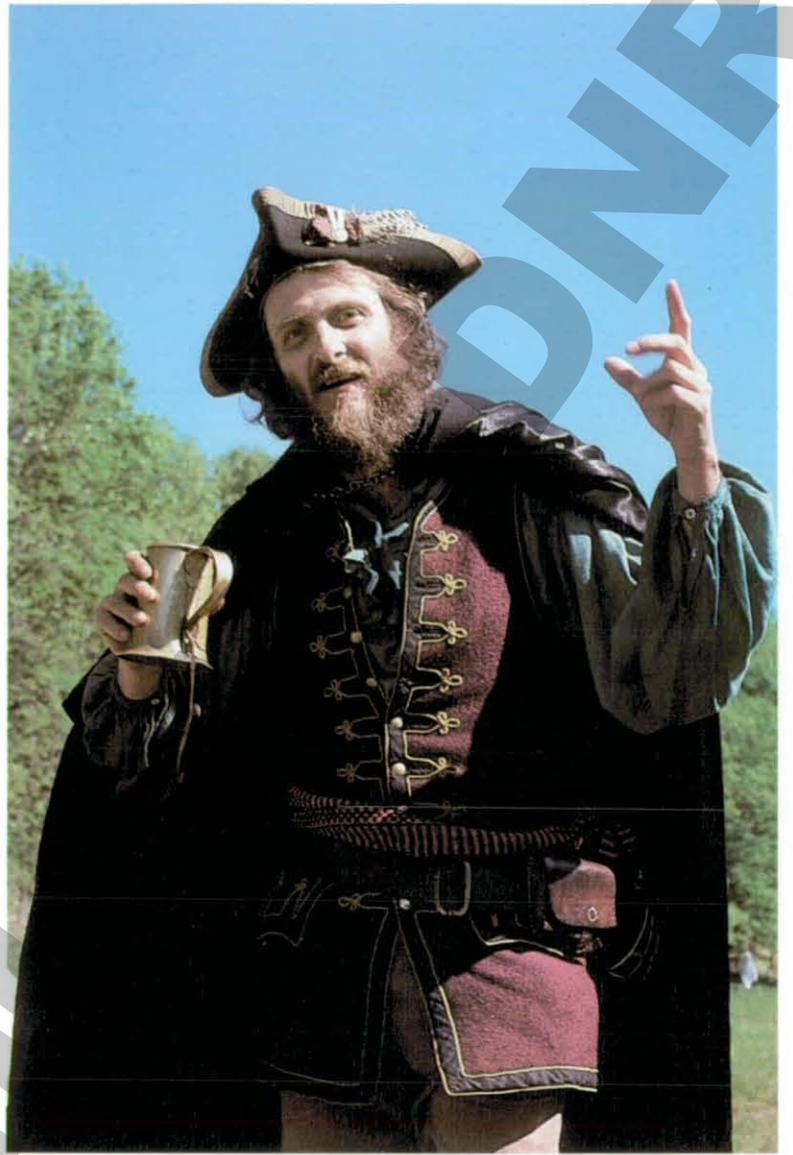
Although campers began to drift in the Saturday before, the rendezvous didn't officially begin until Wednesday, May 13. By Friday morning the majority of participants had established primitive camps and were dressed as the characters they would



Old-time activities prevailed at the West Augusta Territorial Primitive Rendezvous. Dale Harrison, who is called the "Blanket Man" (left), offers a variety of goods for sale or trade, while the author, "Chaz" Poyner (above), spins some thread.

(near below) Preparing for black powder shooting competition. (far below) Ye ole trapper acts out a buckskinners' joke, setting a trap to snare a woman as she tries to pick up a fur. (right) A marksman in the black powder shoot. (far right, top) Clad in an elaborate 18th century outfit, this buckskinner exchanges tales with his comrades. (far right, bottom) Some of the many children at the rendezvous, who enjoyed it as much as their parents.







portray for the next three days.

The scent of woodsmoke permeated everything, swaddling the camp in gauzelike softness.

Everything and everyone moved slowly. It was unseasonably hot and dry. There were no clocks, no schedules to meet, no pressures. The morning was taken up in starting campfires, cooking hearty breakfasts and doing camp chores, such as bringing water from the creek, washing cast iron pans, shaking bedrolls, and splitting wood for cooking the next meal.

There was a strong sense of family. The bottom line seemed to be bonding, a sense of oneness with each other and the outdoors. Children wandered from camp to camp, making new friends and gathering energy for a weekend of running, playing, and enjoying freedom.

Andy and Patti Liller, both in their 30's, have been involved in buckskinning for 10 years. Andy is an iron worker and a musician; Patti is a homemaker. They live in Ft. Ashby, "just over the hill" from the rendezvous site. The Liller children, Joshua, 9, and Zachary, 7, have always accompanied their parents to living history events.

"This stuff revolves around the kids," Andy said. "Parents are the influence on what their kids learn here."

Patti added, "What they're learning is history, but they just don't know it yet."

Andy, who portrays an eastern longhunter of Scottish heritage, feels that the family's hobby is "a great escape. This is what camping was like 'way back when. This is the real world—that other junk (the 20th century) is the make-believe."

When the sun went down behind the mountains on Friday night, the temperature dropped into the 40's. But the buckskinners were warmed by wool blanket coats and cloaks, well-tended fires, coffee, comradery, and revelry that lasted past midnight.

Patrick Davis had an "open house" at his large marquee, serving up refreshments, old-time mountain music, and a few tall tales.

Everyone awoke to a glorious Saturday, filled with the sounds of children's laughter, creek water on its march to the sea, and bacon sizzling in a dozen cast-iron skillets.

Completion of frontier games and contests which had begun on Friday was the priority on Saturday. Most of the men had competed or were about to compete in the "Seneca Walk," or one of a half-dozen other shooting matches. Named for the Seneca Indians, the walk was a well-planned obstacle course that wandered up and down hills and through woods, taking about two hours to complete. Along the way, the marksmen tried their luck at hitting 20 novelty targets, such as a string tied between two trees and a matchstick stuck in a fallen log. The walk also included competition in knife and tomahawk-throwing and fire-making with flint and steel.

There was a subtle boastfulness and bravado passed around among the buckskinners, a playful one-up-manship of talents. There was also much attention to accuracy and detail and strong admiration for those who had honed their "woods ways."

In addition to competitions, there was much buying, selling, and trading on Saturday. The display of merchandise ranged

from simple "blanket trading" (wares arranged on a blanket in front of a lodge) to elaborate "stores," complete with shelves, tables, and clothing racks. The rendezvous site looked like an 18th-century marketplace.

Anyone who was a craftsman and made his own trade goods tried to find time to demonstrate his art for the buckskinners and for the visitors who stopped in for the day. Riflemakers answered questions; seamstresses took measurements; spinners spun wool; and those who did beadwork patiently stitched.

Deborah "Deb" Wilson is a seamstress who makes costumes for Pricketts Fort near Fairmont, her hometown. She was busy Saturday measuring men and women who wanted her to make them an item or two of period clothing.

Deb and her husband Tim have been involved in living history for six years. Twin daughters Brandy and Anthea, age six, and four-year-old Erin accompany their parents to rendezvous.

"This is close to home and is organized by friends," Deb said in her distinctly British accent. She was born in West Virginia but left to live in England when she was a young child. Nineteen years later she "came back to see where she was born, fell in love with the state and stayed. This is very good for my business; in fact, I think it'll be my biggest year ever for Colonial dress," she said. "It's peaceful and safe for the children here. I like the idea of peacefully re-enacting the past."

Tim elaborated: "When people think of re-enactments, they only think about wars, not ordinary life. We like trying to duplicate the everyday lifestyle."

In the early evening on Saturday, the entire camp gathered for an awards ceremony. Prizes for the previous days' competitions were donated by participants and perpetuated the primitive theme. Handmade trade chests, knives, beadwork, and clothing were added to cooking utensils and books spread out on blankets.

First-place winners in shooting and blade-throwing made their choices first from the blankets. Second-place winners chose next, and so on, until all prizes were awarded. Everyone who



(left) An "Indian" comes to trade goods with the "pale-faces" at the rendezvous.

(above) A couple cooks dinner outside their covered wagon lodge.

had competed won something.

A feast of venison stew, cooked all day in a 20-gallon black iron pot over a fire pit, followed the awards ceremony.

After the feast, a few musicians and merry-makers gathered again in front of Davis's lodge. Several buckskinners did last-minute trading. But most of the campers drifted back to their own campsites or those of friends, where they talked of the days' events, joked, exaggerated, and "passed the jug." The sky glowed with white stars and the amber of 50 campfires.

Like the loving arms of a grandparent, a gentle easiness and sense of contentment encircled the meadow.

"When you go to rendezvous, it's not just where you're going but what you're leaving behind," said Denny Ross from Bridgeport. He and wife Kathy have been attending rendezvous for 8-10 years, bringing along sons Matt, 15, and Brian, 10.

"What keeps me coming back is the attitude of the people. They look after each other's kids and there's a general attitude of helpfulness."

The buckskinners began breaking camp early Sunday morning and most were headed back to their modern lives by noon. Many agreed that re-entry to the 20th century meant "cultural shock" for a couple of days.

"You can, literally, leave your worries at home when you come here," said Ross. "There's a creeping stress at work and in modern life that you'll never find at rendezvous." 

Charlene "Chaz" Poyner is a free-lance journalist living in the Tidewater, Virginia, area. She says she is a spinner and a leftover 60's Earth Mother who is convinced she was born 250 years too late. She attends rendezvous in the West Virginia-Virginia-Maryland area regularly.

A Historic Note:

West Augusta

When Orange County was formed in 1734, it included the section of present-day Virginia west of the Blue Ridge Mountains and all of present-day West Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin. By 1745 the portion of Orange County east of the Allegheny Mountains had become Frederick and Augusta counties. The remaining portion of Orange County, the vast frontier lands west of the Alleghenies, became known as the District of West Augusta.



You, Too, Can Be A Buckskinner

The third annual West Augusta Territorial Primitive Rendezvous is already in the planning stages. It will be held in the same location in mid-May 1988. If you are interested in attending, or in finding out more about living history as a hobby, write: Steve Fanok, Scribe, West Augusta Rendezvous, C/O WONDERFUL WEST VIRGINIA magazine, Department of Natural Resources, 1800 Washington Street East, Charleston, WV 25305.



Acres of forestland dressed in colorful autumn attire as seen from the Olson Fire Tower in Tucker County.

Gerald S. Ratliff

**W. Va. Nature Note:*

Fall Color Timetable

*W. Va. Nature Notes are aired on Public Radio on Mondays and Thursdays shortly after 7 P.M.

West Virginia's extensive hardwood forests blanket the mountains with brilliant fall colors from late September through the end of October. The various regions of the state take their turn in the autumn spotlight, making it possible to view the fall colors in different areas throughout the season.

Leaf colors change in the higher elevations first. From late September through mid-October, the mountains in the Monongahela National Forest area have the most vivid colors. Prime viewing areas include Canaan Valley, Kumbrow State Forest, and the Highland Scenic Highway.

The state's lower elevations reach peak coloration in mid-to-late October. West Virginia's far eastern counties, northern panhandle, and southern mountains don their coats-of-many-colors at this time. A visit to Harpers Ferry or a drive through the Ohio River Valley is a great way to see the later leaves.

Travel West Virginia this fall and enjoy the many recreational opportunities available while surrounded by one of nature's most colorful displays.

This has been a West Virginia Nature Note, and I'm Shelley Moore.

Why Do I Hunt?

By ANDY HANSROTH
Charleston Daily Mail
Outdoors Writer

Im frequently asked, by people from all walks of life, what I really get out of hunting.

People often want to know if I truly enjoy killing animals. The actual killing is only a part of the overall picture, both resulting in acquired game for table-fare and the excitement and thrill of having done the hunt correctly.

No, I don't get a big charge out of killing. The kill is anticlimactic. Events leading up to a success are what make the hunt most enjoyable.

With this in mind you must be wondering, well, if he doesn't get a thrill from killing then why does he hunt? The answer to that is very complex. I love being outdoors, and hunting puts me there. Even when I'm not hunting I spend as much time as possible in the woods.

Most hunters are not game hogs out to murder animals. They're out there because they've looked forward to getting away from their jobs. Some go year after year and never shoot anything. They still get lots of enjoyment out of being in the outdoors.

I've experienced the outdoors world since I was barely big enough to follow somebody through the woods. I used to be a hard-core bird watcher, taking jaunts every weekend just for the pure pleasure of being out there, identifying different species, and seeing what I could see.

When I was bird watching my acquired life-list of identified birds was (and still is) greater than most typical bird watchers who don't hunt. It stands now at more than 200. While hunting, I'm constantly bird-watching, trying to identify anything and everything that flickers from tree to tree.

All hunters aren't naturalists, but most of them know a lot about the outdoors. Most can tell a white oak from a red oak, even when the leaves are down. I'd bet a majority of non-hunters can't tell the difference between a hickory and a birch.

If you've never hunted then you've probably never had the opportunity to see wild turkey gobblers in full strut during mating season, young whitetail deer chasing each other and frolicking through the woods, great horned owls hunting squirrels, rabbits, or chipmunks.

You've never stayed on a remote mountain, alone and miles from the nearest road, just to see a sunrise or sunset. You've more than likely never seen a bobcat or a bear.

You've probably never had to experience the eerie loneliness of walking miles through wilderness in a dense fog or snow-storm. Without roads or trails, navigating in a forest is something most non-hunters know nothing about.

You've never had the opportunity to watch 40 or 50 deer in



Gerald S. Rattiff

Closed to motorized travel with more than 40 miles of hiking trails, the Cranberry Backcountry in the Monongahela National Forest offers prime hunting opportunities, primarily for deer and turkey. This 27,000-acre area is a black bear sanctuary.



A trio of wild turkeys strolls through the forest in Mineral County.

Glenn C. Smith

a single day, all close enough to photograph. You've never had them walk up to you in the wild, so close you could touch them. You've probably never had your heart pounding as fast as a turkey hunter who's just missed stepping on a five-foot timber rattler.

You've never experienced the horror of seeing a deer pulled down and murdered (I use that term because it fits) by a pack of so-called domestic dogs.

You've probably never had a field mouse crawl up your pants leg and sit on your knee. And I know you've never seen an expression like that of the mouse when he looks at you and realizes you're not just another fallen tree.

And if you've never hunted I know you've never experienced the heart-thumping excitement of success.

For example, as a youngster I hunted wild turkeys with my grandfather. We call him Pappy.

Pappy knew what hunting was. He lived through the days of a depression when jobs were scarce, money was tight, and hunting was an absolute necessity of life in a time when game populations were at their lowest.

I followed that old man through the woods for weeks-on-end as a youngster, during which there were long periods where neither of us fired a single shot. When success did come it was sweet. We'd worked hard for it and by golly we deserved it.

And yes, we enjoyed it very much.

Well, Pappy had his reasons for enjoying the outdoors and I have mine. And 400,000 other hunters in this state have theirs as well. Let's forget that hunting is totally necessary for the growth and continual health of wild game populations. That's fact, not speculation.

I hunt for thousands of reasons. This magazine doesn't have enough space to print the book I could write on the subject. I admit that hunters, throughout history, have acquired bad names for horrors that occurred before modern-day wildlife management became a science.

What I absolutely will never listen to, though, is a person who would call us a race of murderous villains. The dollars generated by hunters are responsible for saving more wildlife than any contributions anti-hunting groups might make.

If a non-hunter hasn't experienced the thrills of the true outdoor world, well, I sympathize with him for what he's missed. And I am angered with him when he chastises me for doing what I live for.

I've met an awful lot of people in my short lifetime. And every one of the best of them was an outdoorsman. Should I ever have children I hope that they too will have an opportunity to know the same class of people I've always known—outdoorsmen.

(following pages) Autumn in the West Virginia Hills as seen from the old Parkersburg-Staunton Turnpike, five miles east of Bartow looking toward Green Bank.

Michael Meador





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Forging West: *The*



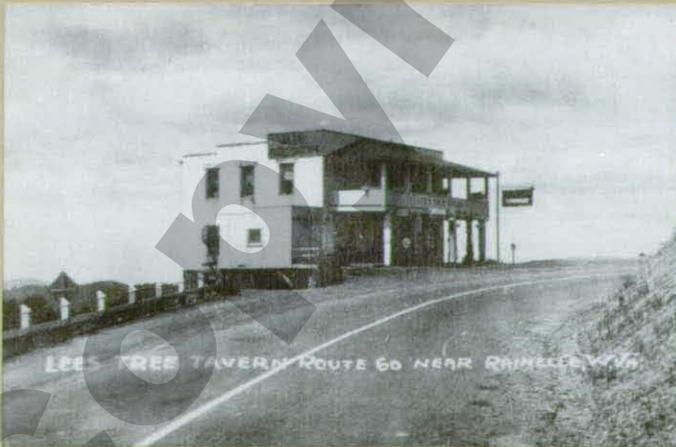
Courtesy of the W. Va. Dept. of Culture & History



Courtesy of the W. Va. Dept. of Culture & History



Arnout Hyde Jr.



Courtesy of the W. Va. Dept. of Culture & History

Allegheny Link

By AVA ZEITZ



Some landmarks along the James River and Kanawha Turnpike (the Old State Road), which followed approximately the same course as present-day U.S. route 60: (opposite, top) Halfway House on Gauley Mountain at Ansted. Built before the Civil War, this early tavern was named for its midway location between Lewisburg and Charleston. (opposite, middle) The Old Stone Tavern near Clifftop, built in 1824, which hosted such prominent travelers as Andrew Jackson and Henry Clay. (opposite, bottom) At the summit of Big Sewell Mountain just west of Rainelle, Lee's Tree Tavern overlooks the scenic Meadow River Valley. (above) Virginia's Chapel at Kelleys Creek just east of Cedar Grove was built in 1853 and restored about 1980.



Arnout Hyde Jr.

Although historical accounts credit Governor Alexander Spotswood of Virginia with perceiving, as early as 1716, the desirability of creating a transportation route from the eastern seaboard to the western side of the Allegheny Mountains, the man who most vigorously campaigned for this project was George Washington, who had in his youth explored and surveyed much of the Kanawha and Ohio river valleys. Amid rumblings preceding the American Revolution, Washington seized every opportunity he could for promoting the concept of an east-west artery. His appeals drew little support. Objections centered on the expense involved and the extreme difficulty of building a road across the rugged Allegheny Mountains.

After the Revolutionary War, Washington toured the lands beyond the Allegheny Mountains to view the changes which had occurred and to determine if his proposed east-west connection should again be pursued. Seeing the increase in settlements there, he was even more convinced of the economic and political advantages of connecting this area by a transportation link to the east.

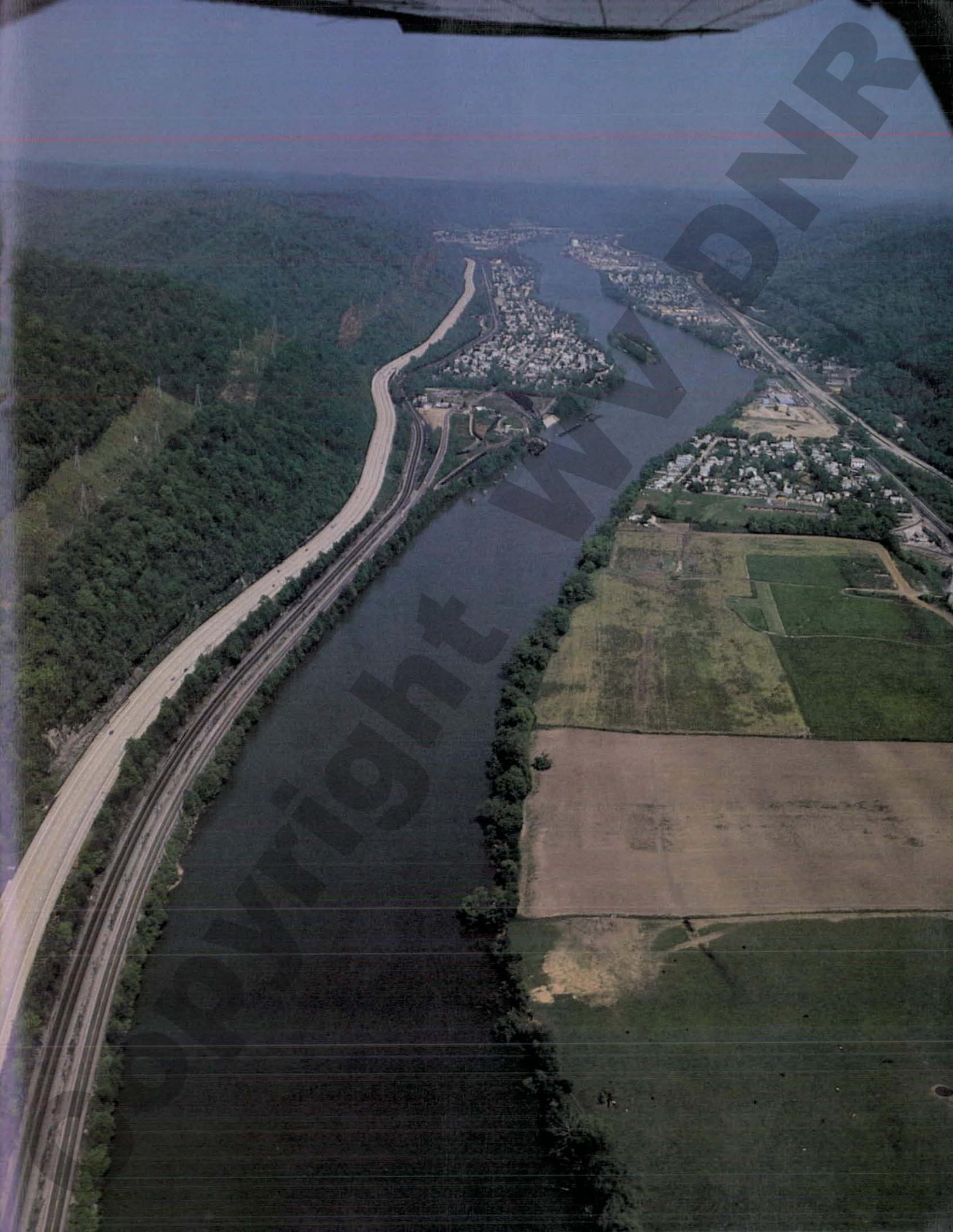
After a recommendation by Governor Harrison, the Virginia Assembly ordered a survey to be done on the feasibility and profitability of improving navigation on the James and Potomac rivers with the ultimate goal of connecting their headwaters via public highways to the rivers flowing to the Mississippi. Thus, out of the October 1784 Virginia Assembly, there was formed the James River Company which was authorized to sell shares in order to obtain the capital necessary for work on the canals. The job given the company was to connect the James River with the New and Great

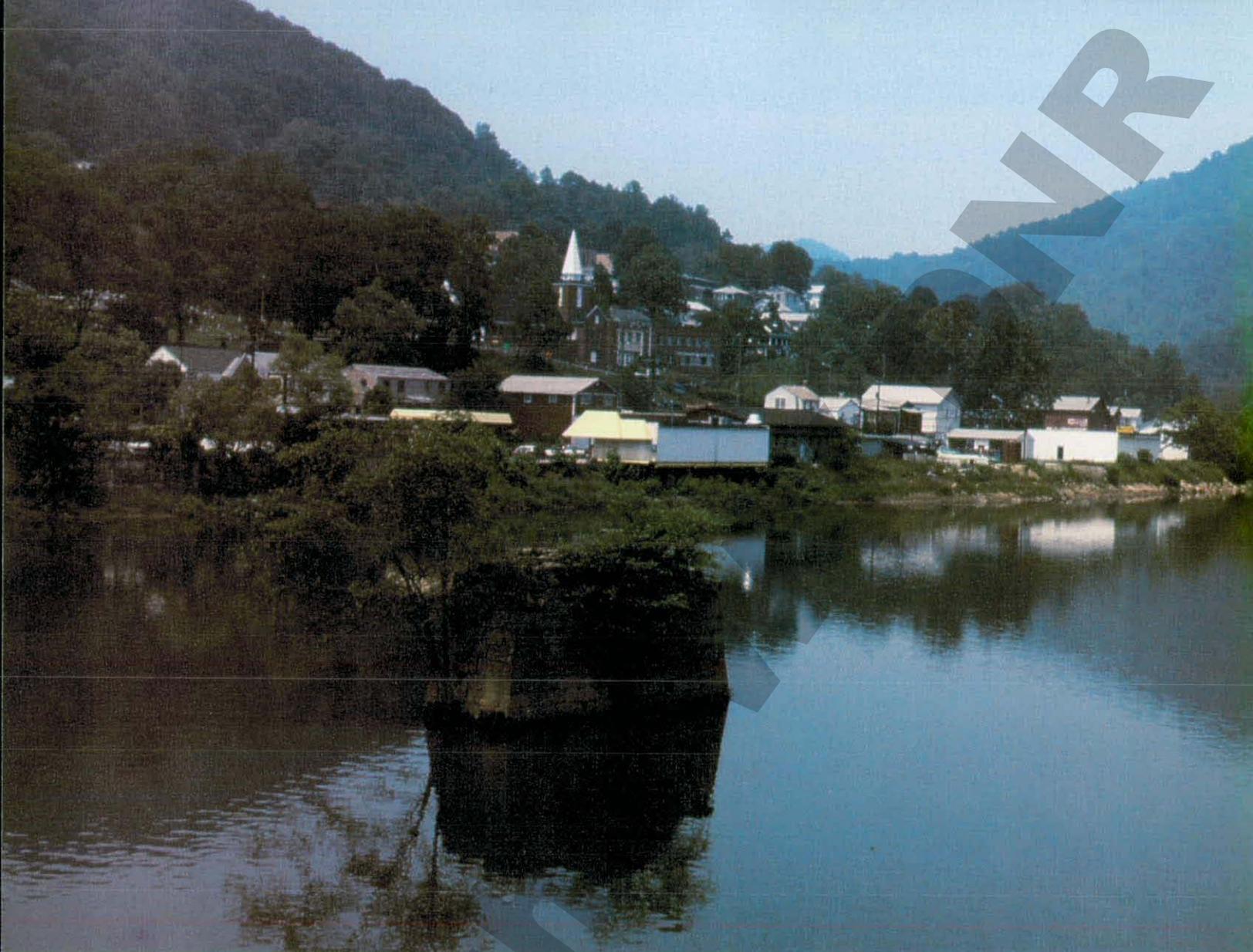
Kanawha rivers and to construct a road over the Allegheny Mountains to the falls of the Great Kanawha River.

Specifically, the plans of 1784 were to improve navigation on the eastward flowing James River from Richmond to its headwaters and to construct a "state road" across the Alleghenies to the headwaters of the Great Kanawha River, a westward flowing river, with the ultimate goal of providing direct access from Richmond to the Ohio and Mississippi river valleys.

Thus began Washington's dream of constructing a canal and highway link of east and west Virginia. Emphasis was placed on completing the canal in the central part of Virginia in order to improve commerce and trade. The James River Company was chartered to clear and extend navigation on the James River from its tidewaters to the highest point practicable in order to establish an efficient and economical means of getting produce and goods from the central counties to the eastern seaboard markets and, if possible, to open up trade with the west in hopes of obtaining a direct link with the Mississippi River valley. A 30-foot-wide wagon road from Lewisburg to the lower falls of the Kanawha was to be completed by 1790 with it being further extended to the Ohio

(above) One of the most popular of the old inns on the Midland Trail, the Stockton Tavern (now the Glen Ferris Inn) overlooks spectacular Kanawha Falls. It still offers food and lodging to route 60 travelers. (right) Aerial view of the Kanawha River valley east of Charleston. Route 60, on the right, follows the approximate course of the Old State Road.





River by 1800. This wagon road, with a width considerably less than the 30 feet specified, was known as the "Old State Road" and was the first wagon trail from the east to the navigable waters of the Kanawha.

In 1808 a report delivered to the United States Senate on roads and canals regarded the canal and associated road improvements as one of the most successful undertakings in the state. Since beginning work on the canal in 1786, 220 miles of river had been widened and made navigable from Richmond to Crows Ferry, Virginia; however, only a narrow and partially completed wagon road had been completed across the Alleghenies. Used by many livestock drovers from Ohio and Kentucky to reach the market areas of the East, this portion of the James River and Kanawha Turnpike, later known as "the Midland Trail," extended along the banks of the Great Kanawha to Charleston where it branched, with one route following the river to Point Pleasant and the other veering southwestward through Teays Valley, ending at the mouth of the Big Sandy River at Huntington. Until 1800, the mode of westward travel from the James River canal in

central Virginia was via the narrow trail across the mountains to about 20 miles above the mouth of Elk River (Cedar Grove) at Kelleys Creek. From that point, travel was by flatboats down the Kanawha and on to the Ohio River.

By 1808, the James River Company had expended nearly \$231,000. It had received approximately \$17,000 in yearly tolls and repairs amounted to \$5,000. Additional revenue was gained from the rent of water at mills and other waterworks which had sprung up along the canal until the venture was gaining in dividends of 12 percent on the original capital.

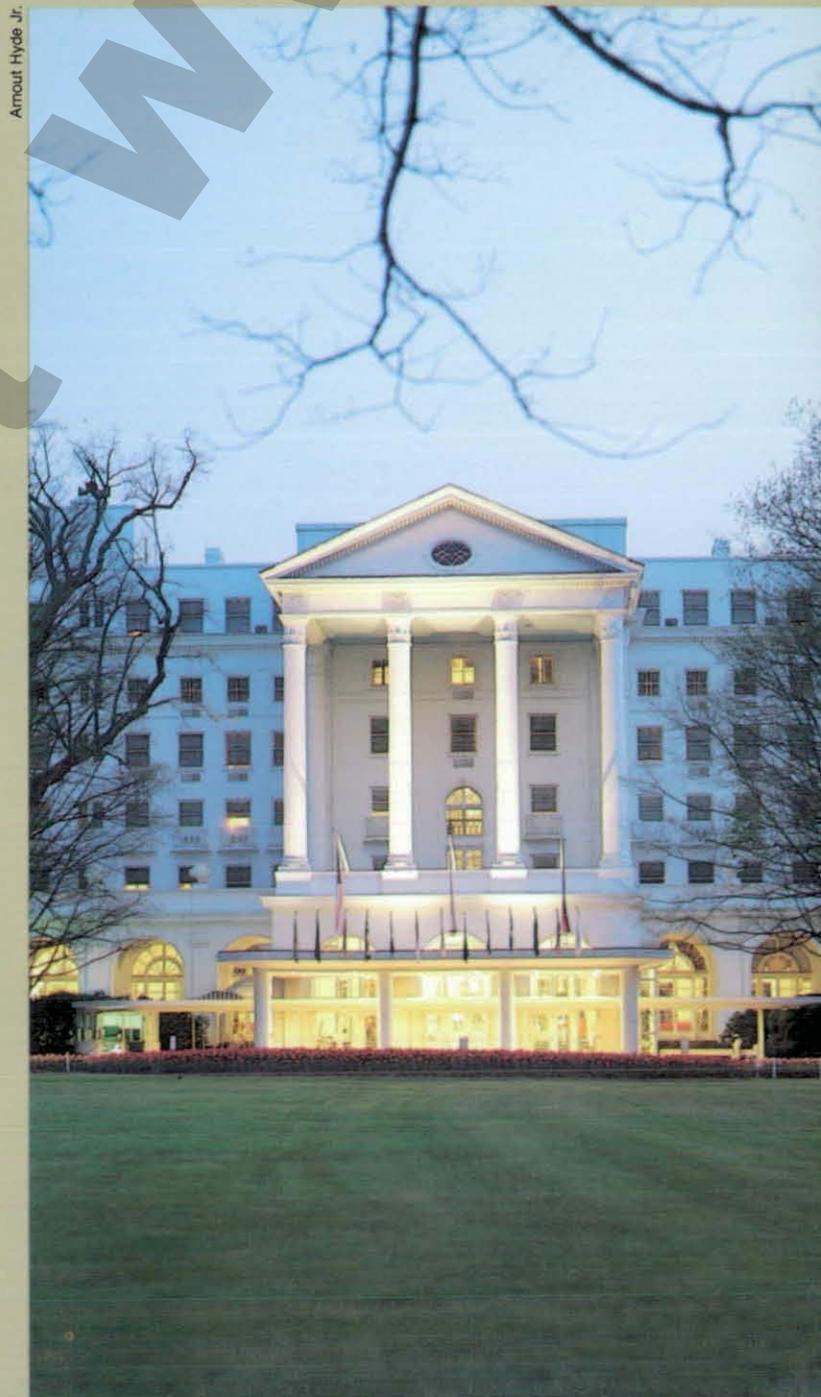
While the stockholders enjoyed a time of prosperity, many complaints arose against the James River Company about lack of maintenance and high tolls. Also, the idea of improvements to the state road across the mountains to the west was put on the back burner, since the margin of profitability was so great at the current level of improvements. To modernize the wagon trail across the mountains to the Great Kanawha River would mean heavy capital expenditures. Following several reviews and testimonies, the attorney general, in 1818, obtained a court order to have the officers of the



Gary Scott

(left and above) Remains of two of the numerous bridges built along the James River and Kanawha Turnpike. (below) The Greenbrier on route 60 at White Sulphur Springs still offers luxurious accommodations and the finest cuisine. As early as 1778, people traveled the crude wagon road across the Alleghenies to bathe in the mineral water at this early health spa.

Arnout Hyde Jr.



Arnout Hyde Jr.

company appear before court to answer charges that had been brought against the company concerning canal maintenance and water flow during low or dry seasons. Before any prosecution of the charges could be rendered, however, the state of Virginia purchased the James River Company and assumed control of its functions. Thus, the James River Company formed in 1785 ceased to exist as a private corporation in 1820.

In 1820, the General Assembly acted to proceed with a transportation route to the Great Kanawha River. After additional surveys, recommendations, and debates, the General Assembly passed an act which again provided for improvements in navigation to the Great Kanawha River by the James River Company, but should the company fail in terms of compliance with the contract, then the commonwealth of Virginia would complete the work.

In 1821, the road along the Kanawha had extended from the Greenbrier to the falls of the Great Kanawha. By 1822, bridges had been built on the road from Lewisburg to Gauley with the road completed to the falls by 1824. By 1827, the

road had extended farther westward to within 26 miles of Charleston at Montgomery's Ferry. In addition to being used by cattle and hog drovers, the route was an important segment in transporting salt from the Kanawha Valley to Lewisburg, where it was further distributed to the central and eastern counties. Beginning about 1824, the large shipment of Kanawha Valley salt had greatly reduced the dependence on foreign salt being shipped to the eastern seaboard.

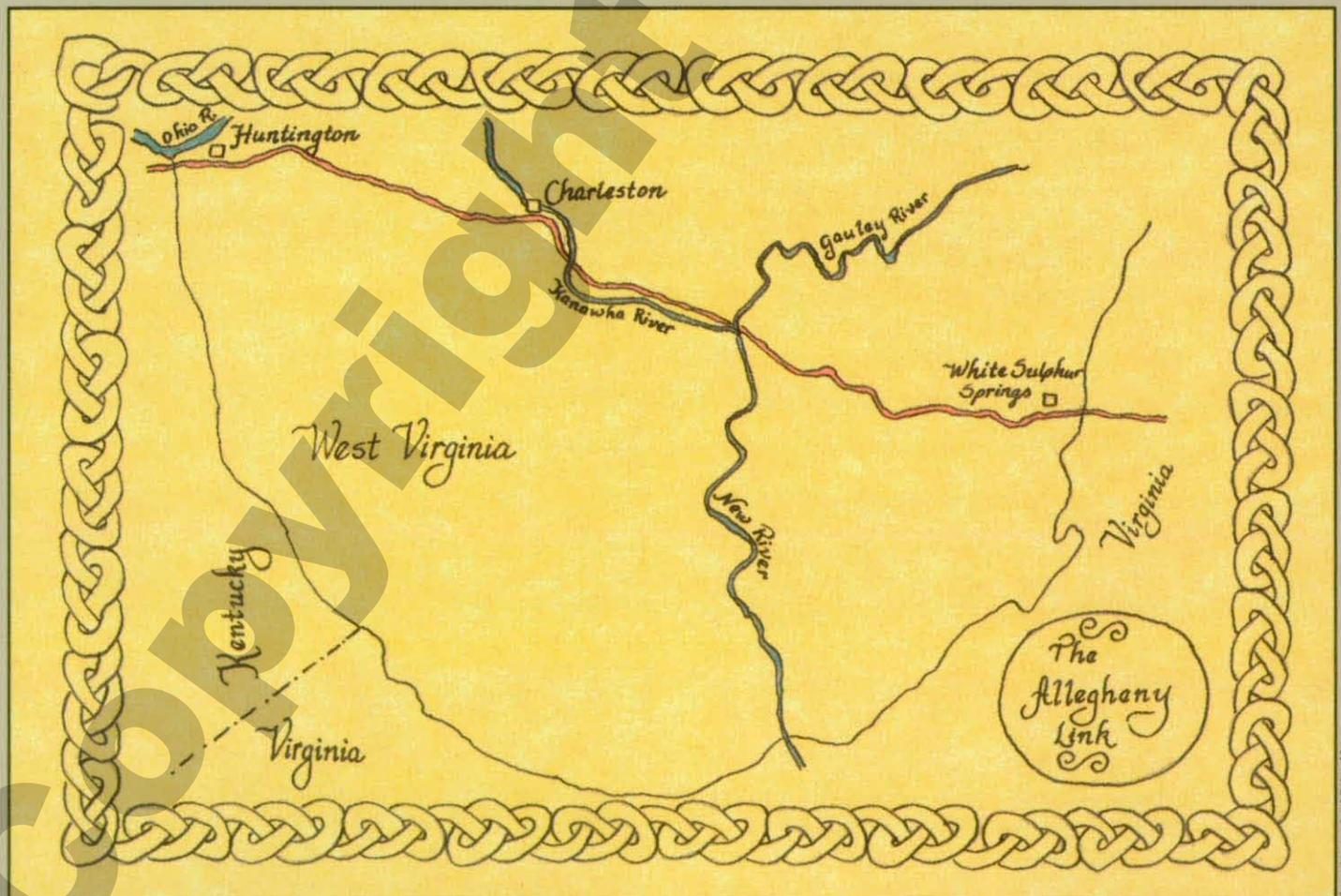
For the following decade, however, much embitterment, debate and controversy surrounded the improvements on this transportation route. Underestimated costs for the project led to increased borrowing and work progressed slowly. By 1827, there were only 34 additional miles of canal, 100 miles of imperfect road, and contracts let for work on the Great Kanawha. Expenditures had reached \$1,230,000, all of which were loans against the state of Virginia with an annual interest payment of nearly \$72,000. Thus, the legislature, in its session of 1826, refused to act for completion of the canal, and only in 1829 did it appropriate \$40,000 to allow for extension of the road along the Kanawha to Big Sandy River. Thus, as completed in 1829, the road was 200 miles long, extending from Covington, Virginia to the mouth of the Big Sandy on the Ohio. The cost of the 22-foot-wide Kanawha Turnpike, as completed, was \$192,874, which included covered bridges over the Greenbrier and Gauley rivers at a cost of \$1,800 each.

By this time there was a separation of public views in the state of Virginia; eastern representatives favored the status quo and no additional work, while western representatives pressed for completion of the thoroughfare. Since the western region of the commonwealth had lesser representation, the eastern conservative block maintained the status quo and withheld funding. Thus, sectionalism proved to be an element in not completing the entire James River to Ohio River transportation link as originally envisioned by Washington.

Stage lines were established between Charleston and Lewisburg by 1827. The weekly trips had a fare of \$7.00 and later, when lines were extended from Lewisburg to Big Sandy, the fare increased to \$11.00. By 1832 connections could be made at Big Sandy to Lexington, Kentucky, and in Lewisburg one could make connections to White Sulphur, Salt Sulphur and Sweet Springs, and on to Fincastle.

Originally commissioned to build a canal from Richmond to Covington, the James River Company never realized the completion of the project. Except for work on the Kanawha road, by the mid-1820s practically all other work of the original line had ceased and interest in completing the project had waned in the legislature.

Unsuccessful attempts to revive the project by leaders of the western area brought about measures which led to dissolving the James River Company and forming the James River and Kanawha Company with funds to be a joint-stock





Gary Scott

(above and below) More remnants of handiwork of builders of "The Allegheny Link."

adventure and, again, the company was to connect the headwaters of the James River with those flowing to the Ohio. From its beginning, however, the company experienced one financial crisis after another and was faced with the same lack of interest and divisiveness as experienced by the James River Company. The primary purpose of the new company was canals, not roads, and, although under considerable financial stress, the company was able to build and maintain canals in the Lynchburg-Buchanan area and along the Kanawha River to Point Pleasant.

Although financially stressed, the James River and Kanawha Company was nevertheless regarded as one of the most powerful corporations in Virginia in the 1860s. Its canals were by far the greatest freight and goods carriers and Virginia's internal improvements because of the canals were impressive.

Increased travel from east to west spurred growth in stage lines as well as the establishment of additional mail routes. Many families emigrated to the promise of prosperity and new life in the West after the road across the Alleghenies improved and, up until about 1852, the turnpike (road and canal) served as the major artery between the Ohio River valley and the eastern seaboard. From the James and Kanawha River Turnpike, several branches of minor routes and turnpikes were created. These included the Giles, Fayette and Kanawha turnpikes, Charleston and Point Pleasant Turnpike, Lewisburg and Blue Sulphur Turnpike, White and Salt Sulphur Springs Turnpike, and Kanawha and Logan Road, to name a few. Railroads, however, soon became established in the river valleys and, by tunneling, were able to overcome

the barriers that the mountains had presented to the canals. Thus, after the Civil War, freight increased on the railroads and declined on the canals. Roadways served mostly as feeders for the railroads, and during the railroad boom roads fell into great disrepair and were practically impassable as mail, goods, and people relied on the railroads for faster and more efficient travel.

Today, the James and Kanawha River Turnpike is largely the routing of U.S. route 60 from Richmond, Virginia, to Huntington, West Virginia. Scattered remnants of the canals, wagon trails, and bridges can be found in parts of Virginia and West Virginia. For the most part, though, the fruits of the laborers on the James and Kanawha Turnpike have been reshaped into paved highways, parking lots, and building sites. The remnants, which exist are secluded or overgrown and linger as ghosts along the formidable interior barrier, the Allegheny Mountains.

Ava Zeitz is administrator, hazardous waste unit, waste management division, Department of Natural Resources. Until recently, she was director of the environmental services division, Department of Highways.

Gary Scott





A Rainy Day at Bear Rocks Lakes

Bear Rocks Lakes Public Hunting and Fishing Area is located 3 miles northeast of Dallas Pike in Ohio County. It is accessible from I-70 by using the Dallas Pike exit north to County Route 41/3, then County Routes 39/4 to 41/6.

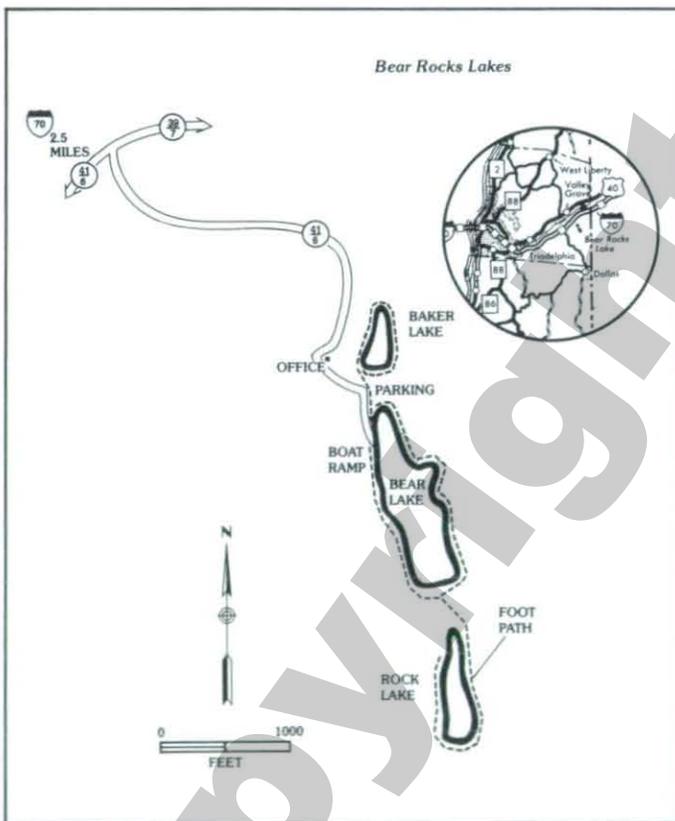
This three-lake complex (Baker Lake, 3.4 acres; Bear Lake, 8.0 acres; Rock Lake, 4.1 acres) was constructed at an elevation of 1,080 feet during 1949 by the former West Virginia Conservation Commission. Baker Lake has a maximum depth of 7 feet, an average depth of 4 feet, and a watershed to lake surface ratio of 84:1; Bear Lake has a maximum depth of 20 feet, an average depth of 6 feet, and a lake surface to watershed ratio of 52:1; and Rock Lake has a maximum depth of 14 feet, an average depth of 6 feet, and a lake surface to watershed ratio of 113:1.

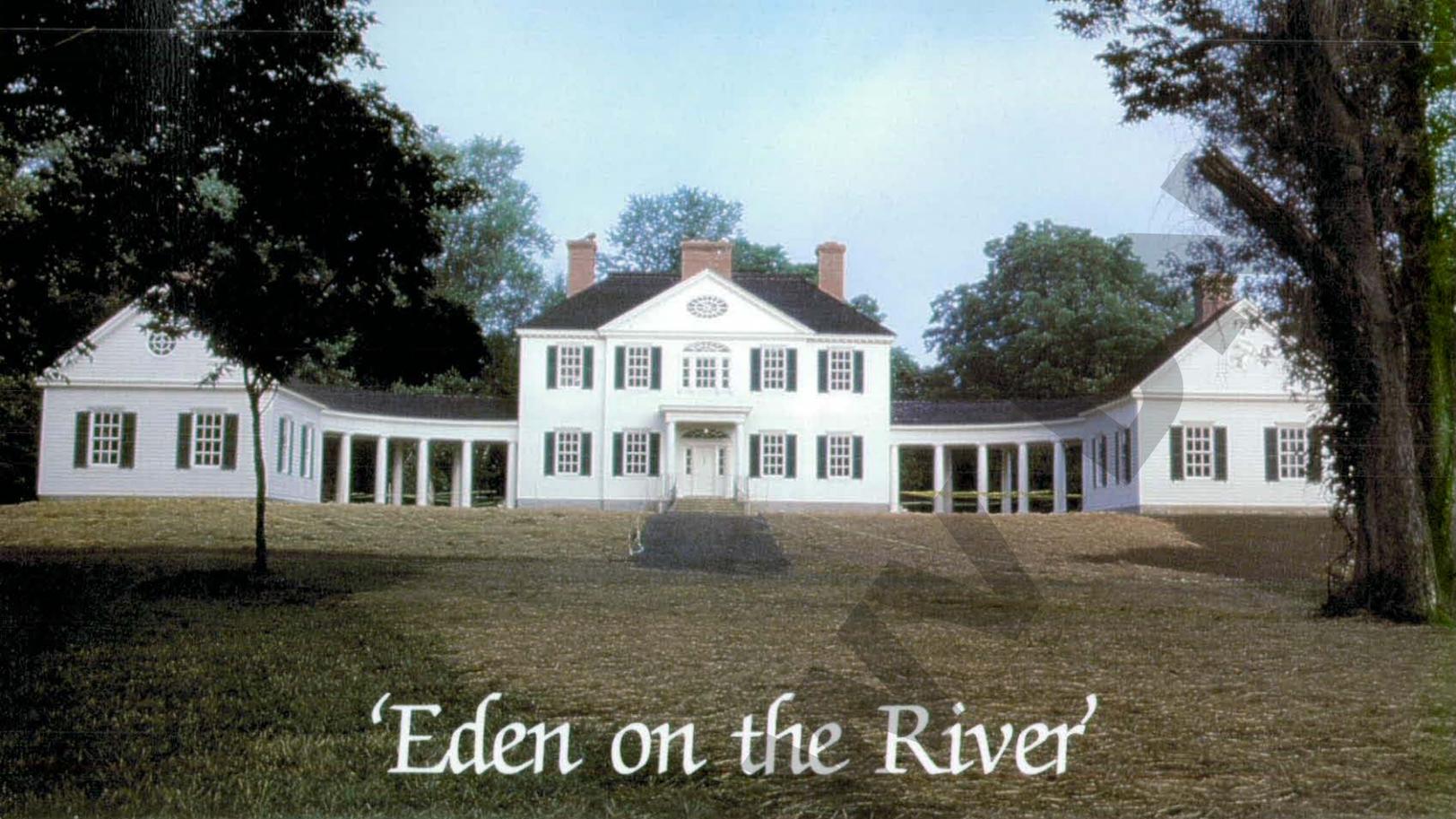
Access for car-top boats is available only at Bear Lake. Electric motors only are allowed and fishing with live minnows as bait is prohibited. Toilet facilities, drinking water, and picnic tables with one shelter are available. Swimming and camping are prohibited. Foot paths surround the majority of each lake, providing bank fishing access, and connect each lake. Excessive growth of aquatic vegetation at certain times during summer can interfere with bank fishing.

Bear and Baker lakes are stocked with catchable-size trout once a month February through May. Cheese and salmon eggs are the most popular baits. Largemouth bass and bluegills are present in all three lakes. Fishing for these species is best in Bear and Rock lakes. Artificial lures used for bass should be weedless. Muskies have been stocked intermittently from 1963-1975 and annually since 1978, and muskies larger than 40 inches have been caught. Channel catfish angling is very good during the summer months in Baker and Bear lakes after catchable-size fish are stocked during June.



A few showers didn't drive off Marissa Young, 5, and Elizabeth McClelland, 7, (above) or the other angler pictured (bottom) at the Bear Rocks Lakes Public Hunting and Fishing Area (left), a few miles east of Wheeling in the state's northern panhandle.





'Eden on the River'

Blennerhassett Mansion, the backdrop for "Eden on the River." Performance dates: August 20, 21, 22, 23 & 26, 27, 28, 29, 30. Also September 2, 3, 4, 5 with raindates, August 24, 31 & September 6.

Joyce Ancrile

a new musical presented on Blennerhassett Island

By JOYCE ANCRILE

An exciting new historical musical premieres in late August on the site where the events portrayed actually happened. Staged outdoors, "Eden on the River" is heroic in scope, examining the motives and emotions of the historical figures featured in the plot.

The elements of this theatrical production are found in the interesting and unusual history of Blennerhassett Island, located in the Ohio River near Parkersburg. At the end of the 18th century, Harman Blennerhassett built a mansion there of lavish proportions for his beautiful young wife, Margaret. Secluded in the wilderness, this idyllic setting became the focal point for a political struggle that ended in charges of treason.

"Eden on the River" carries the modern visitor back to the domain of his forefathers, erasing nearly two centuries. The audience is transported from Point Park in Parkersburg to Blennerhassett Island aboard either of two authentic sternwheelers, owned and operated by the Ruble family. During the 20-minute

excursion, costumed guides begin the journey back in time by describing conditions faced by travelers in 1806 when the area was a vast wilderness broken only by log cabins with dirt floors.

As the sternwheelers approach the island, those aboard glimpse—through a stand of trees—the splendor of the reconstructed mansion, the backdrop for "Eden on the River."

Early arrivals may bring a picnic supper and enjoy the serenity of the island's many groves before the performance.

At dusk, the audience assembles on chairs provided on the spacious lawn in front of the mansion. Music signals the opening of the show. Two film screens reveal a mounted horseman spreading the word throughout the countryside that Aaron Burr, former vice president of the United States, will soon arrive on Blennerhassett Island. In a flurry of anticipation, settlers from miles around journey to meet the great man.

The screens disappear from view and the front door of the mansion opens. Its owners, Harman and Margaret Blennerhas-

sett, stroll forward across the lawn as they did nearly 200 years ago. They are joined by friends and neighbors singing "Great Man's A-Comin'" as Colonel Aaron Burr and party arrive in a horse-drawn carriage.

With great hopes for the future, the Blennerhassetts and their illustrious guest plan an exciting venture in the West, totally unaware of the political forces closing in on their island paradise.

"Eden on the River" combines a large cast, period costumes, songs, dances, and film to tell the story of these fascinating people whose personal dreams conflict with the political ambitions of their enemies. It is this combination of historical accuracy, heroic proportions, live performance, music, dance, spectacle, and film—all presented on the actual site where it really happened—that makes "Eden on the River" a unique theatrical experience.

"Eden on the River" opens August 20 for 13 performances over a three-week period. This pilot production is sponsored by the Blennerhassett Drama Association with the support of the Blennerhassett Historical Park Commission and Artsbridge. The project is funded in part by the C. W. Benedum Foundation, the West Virginia Arts and Humanities Council, the Ohio Arts Council/Ohio Humanities Council Joint Program, Artsbridge, the Parkersburg Community Foundation, the Fenton Foundation and private contributions. For reservations for "Eden on the River," call 304/422-0611.

Joyce Ancrile is creative services director and copywriter for WTAP-TV in Parkersburg. She also did research and wrote the lyrics for "Eden on the River."

Readers Response

Since three years I obtain Wonderful West Virginia as a gift from my sister and my brother-in-law. They live in Gallipolis Ferry.

Every month I read the interesting articles and enjoy the beautiful photographs from West Virginia. Once a year my mother and I visit my sister for four weeks and every year we are mad when we must leave West Virginia, because we both would like to live there. Congratulations to your West Virginia Day.

Keep up the good work.

*Sincerely yours,
Peter Sauer
Heilbrann
West Germany*

The photo on page 10 of your July issue is of U.S. Route 33 at the Pendleton/Randolph county line approximately 3 miles West of Harman in Randolph Co.

*The property on the right side of the road is owned by us.
Keep up the good work. You have a fantastic magazine.*

*Carole Hartman
Franklin, WV*

EDITOR'S NOTE: Our thanks to Carole Hartman and the many other readers who wrote to tell us where this photograph was taken.

Just a few lines to say I love your magazine! I have enjoyed the breathtaking pictures for years.

I am an Act Director at Americare Salem Nursing & Rehab Center and I use your magazine in my activities. The residents love it! They can relate to the articles and pictures because most of them have been to the places featured.

It's great to see their faces light up as they recall weekends or vacations spent with family and/or friends. Keep up the excellent work!

*God Bless you!
Lucinda Davis
Salem, WV*

I am writing in regards to your wonderful article and picture in the July issue. Litter has been a problem in our state for years and I'm glad your magazine has addressed it.

In Randolph County we had organized a county-wide organization named PAL (Pride Against Litter) back in January, which has done a splendid job in our fight against litter here.

Thanks again for your picture and article; it reached the right people.

*Frederick R. Clark
Elkins, WV*

Sandra K. Bennett

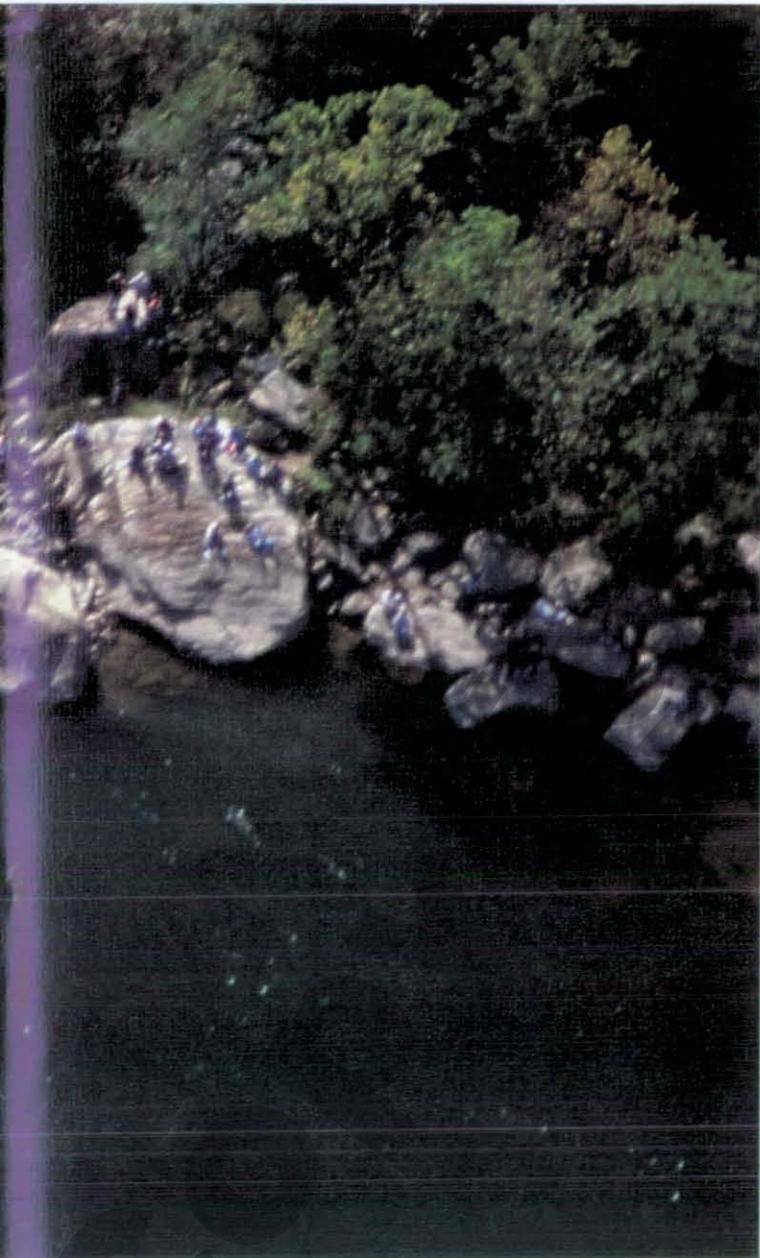


Held every year on the second Saturday in October, New River Gorge Bridge Day festivities focus on this engineering wonder (above) on U.S. route 19 just north of Fayetteville. It has the world's longest steel arch span at 1,700 feet with a rise of 360 feet. Among the Bridge Day events are parachute jumps from the 876-foot structure with chutists landing (below) on or near a sandbar in the river beneath the bridge.



Bridge Day

By NANCY CLARK



Trisha Harris

Throughout West Virginia, scores of communities host annual fairs and festivals based on a variety of themes. These are usually held on town streets, fairgrounds, riverbanks, or in parks.

If a prize were to be awarded to the annual celebration with the most unusual setting, it would likely be won by Fayette County's Bridge Day. Held every year on the second Tuesday of October, this festival takes place 876 feet above the rocky depths of rugged New River Gorge on the famous bridge near Fayetteville on U.S. route 19.

As the New River Gorge Bridge—which is considered an engineering wonder—was completed in October 1977, this year's festival on October 10 will celebrate the huge steel structure's 10th anniversary. Between the hours of 10 A.M. and 4 P.M., the northbound lanes of the bridge will be closed to motorized traffic. Nearly 300 vendors will set up shop on the span, their offerings, ranging from food and drinks to arts, crafts, and souvenir items. Festival hours are the only time during the year when it is legal to walk across this bridge. Various musicians, gymnasts, jugglers, and other entertainers will perform continuously.

In past years, Bridge Day has attracted national coverage by the news media and many out-of-staters have attended, because of the unusual setting and events. Bridge Day attracts hundreds of splunkers who explore caves in the gorge area and rappellers who climb on ropes around the steelwork of the bridge. In addition, hundreds of other daredevils from across the nation and some other countries come to parachute from the bridge. They are called BASE jumpers. The initials stand for structures from which they leap: B=building, A=antenna tower, S=span (such as a bridge), E=earth formation (such as a cliff).

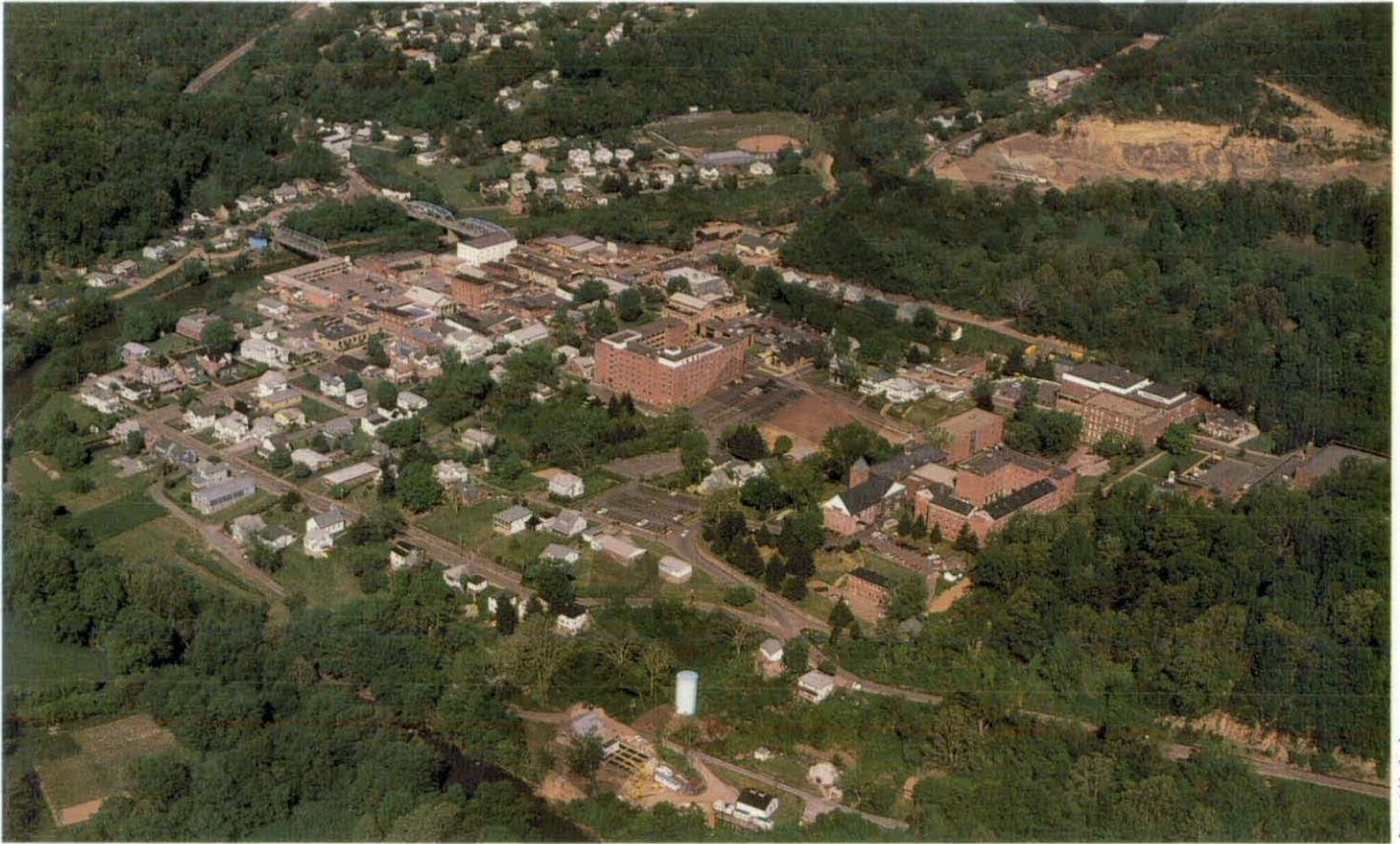
A deep, narrow, mostly uninhabited canyon carved by the New River, the magnificent gorge appears particularly scenic in autumn when its steep, forested banks display spectacular shades of red, orange, and yellow. The many rapids and huge boulders here make it one of the best whitewater rivers in the nation, and many commercial rafting companies operate in the area. On Bridge Day, these companies offer mini-raft trips.

Police officers, ambulances, and boat patrols stationed around the bridge area stand ready to aid visitors and participants.

For additional information about Bridge Day, call the Fayette County Chamber of Commerce in Oak Hill: (304) 465-5617.

GLENVILLE

By NANCY CLARK



(above and right) Present-day Glenville as seen from the air.

On the banks of the Little Kanawha River near the mouth of Stewarts Creek in central West Virginia, Glenville is the county seat and principal town of Gilmer County. This community serves as the business center for farmers and others who work in the surrounding rural region. In addition to agricultural products, leading industries in the area include oil, natural gas, lumber, and coal. The town is also home to Glenville State College, which was founded by the legislature in 1872.

Before the town was built, because the old state road from Weston to Charleston crossed the Little Kanawha River there, the present site of Glenville was called "the ford." The first known white settlers arrived in the area between 1808–13. They included George Collins, the Beasleys, Schoonovers, Stouts, Goffs, Burks, Thomsons, and William Howell who built the first

gristmill there. The town was laid out by S. L. Hays on lands belonging to William H. Ball in 1845, and it became the county seat the same year.

Named for the glen in which it is situated, Glenville was incorporated in 1871. It had formerly been called Stewarts Creek and Hartford. In 1920, the population was 327.

Today, Glenville has approximately 2,200 permanent residents plus about 1,900 college students. Gilmer County, which covers 340 square miles, remains almost totally rural with a population of only 8,334.

The West Virginia State Folk Festival is held annually in Glenville in June. The song, "The West Virginia Hills," was created in Glenville by Ellen King, who wrote the words, and H. A. Engle, who composed the music.



