

West Virginia Books Available

By Stan Bumgardner

Death in Mud Lick

By Eric Eyre

In a sentence, this is one of the best exposés I've ever read about West Virginia on any topic. And it's no surprise since Eric Eyre earned a Pulitzer Prize (the second ever awarded to a West Virginian in journalism) for his work on our state's opioid crisis.

Even though many of us already know the basic story, Eyre unravels a mystery that leads from one overdose in Mud Lick (Mingo County), to a pill-pushing doctor, to pill-pushing pharmacies, to the pharmaceutical industry, to the federal government—all of whom knew what was happening in real-time. Thanks to Eyre's writing and investigative skills, this book reads like a cross between *The Maltese Falcon* and *All the President's Men*. Like Woodward and Bernstein, he kept following the money, which led him to a shadow web that could've been called a black market, except much of it was technically legal. Pair that with prominent state and local politicians who were conflicted six ways to Sunday, and you have a scheme that would make Lucky Luciano proud.

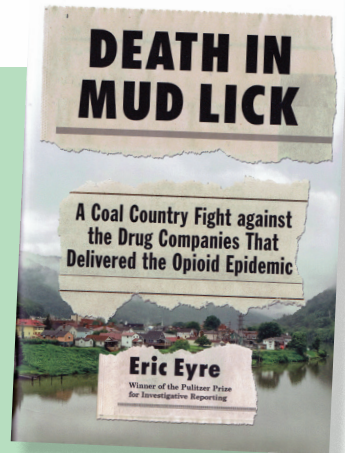
By now, the tragic story is all too familiar. Painkillers flooded West Virginia in the late '90s and early 21st century. The Mingo County town of Kermit, with 382 people, received nearly 9 million opioid pain pills in just two years. Thousands of West Virginians have died from their addictions over the last 25 years, and West Virginia leads the nation in most overdose deaths and opioid prescriptions per capita.

Many of the cases began innocently enough, often with coal miners or other laborers injured on the job. But painkillers are highly addictive and, over time, can be debilitating—physically, socially, and emotionally. In this illicit gray market, where life walks a tightrope between legal and criminal, those opioids were worth a lot of money on the street—or, in southern West Virginia, in the pharmacy parking lot. One Kermit pharmacy even sold hot dogs and refreshments in the lot, like it was a ballgame.

Eyre tracked down many instances in which the pharmaceutical industry and federal government looked the other way in the name of the almighty dollar. We've been taught to "follow doctor's orders!" from day one, and the recent COVID pandemic has reinforced it. But what many doctors and pharmacies failed to tell their patients was that painkillers are a never-ending cycle. You build up a tolerance to them, which means you continually have to take more to dull the pain. It doesn't take long before you start feeling pain in places that shouldn't even be hurting. So, you take a pill, prescribed by your doctor.

After the scope of the crisis became apparent—and guilty doctors and pharmacists began serving jail time—the supply of painkillers started drying up. Those addicted to the pills turned to ever more dangerous mixtures of synthetic opioids or heroin and fentanyl to numb the pain. The result is a slow-moving economic and healthcare disaster in southern West Virginia, where some of our nation's poorest counties exist.

Eric Eyre has directed the national spotlight on our opioid epidemic like no one else. This is a must-read to understand how and why we can't look away anymore. *Death in Mud Lick*, published by Scribner, is available from local and online sellers.

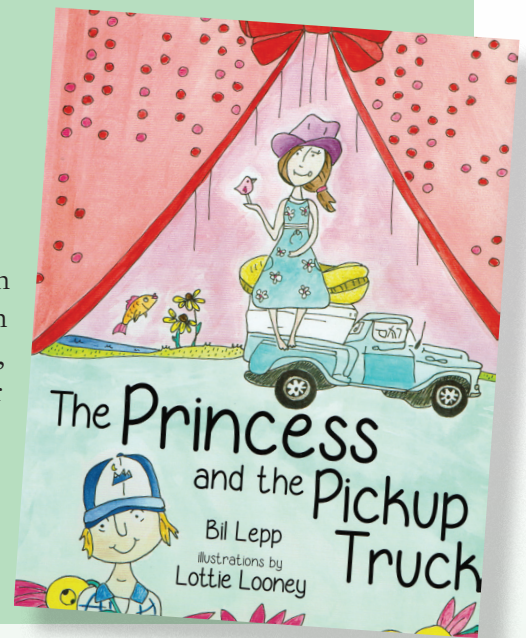


The Princess and the Pickup Truck

By Bil Lepp, illustrations by Lottie Looney

Vandalia Award recipient Bil Lepp has written a modern Appalachian adaptation of *The Princess and the Pea* fairy tale. In Lepp's version, the prince searches the mountains of the world, looking for his mountain princess. He then returns home to discover his real princess, who doesn't talk, dress, or act quite the way he imagined. This is an absolutely delightful children's book, with fun illustrations and humorous life lessons, such as, "Nobody but real mountain royalty can sleep on a pickup like that."

The book's available from local and online sellers.

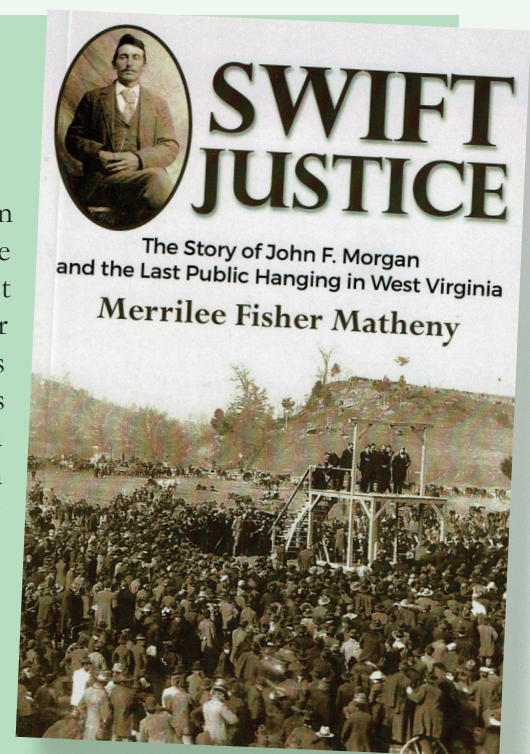


Swift Justice

By Merrilee Fisher Matheny

The hanging of John F. Morgan has fascinated everyone from historians, to genealogists, to even Flatt & Scruggs, who made one of the best-known recordings of "The Last Public Hanging in West Virginia." GOLDENSEAL ran an article about the event in our Spring 1990 issue. But it's never been covered in as much detail as Matheny does in this 235-page paperback. It delves into the actions and possible motives involved in a vicious 1897 triple murder in Jackson County. Matheny covers Morgan's brief trial and then focuses on the spectacle of a public hanging in Ripley attended by thousands. The circus-like atmosphere led the legislature to move all future executions to the private confines of the West Virginia Penitentiary in Moundsville. She concludes with an interesting look at how the nation's press historically has often depicted West Virginians as little more than barbarians, spurred largely by the Hatfield-McCoy Feud, which was relatively recent news. With the triple murder and Morgan's hanging, national newspapers, namely the New York *Sun*, sensationalized the whole affair, again depicting West Virginians as some barbarous group of people from another time rather than acknowledging public displays of capital punishment as a brutish national phenomenon.

The book's available from local and online sellers.

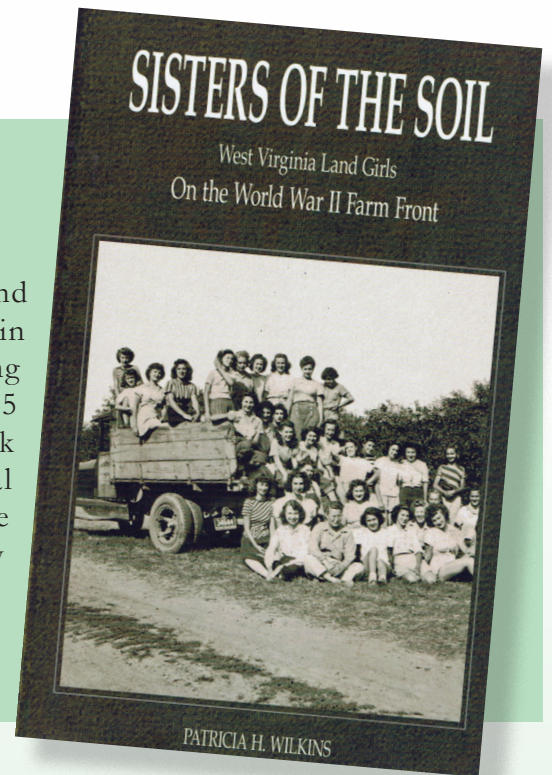


Sisters of the Soul

By Patricia H. Wilkins

This 185-page paperback emerged from Wilkins' research and an article she wrote for GOLDENSEAL [see "Farmerettes in the Field," Summer 2015]. It's the true story of how young women were recruited to be farmers from 1943 to 1945 during World War II. Wilkins talks about the culture shock for those from the city who'd never farmed a lick and rural West Virginia women who got their first trips outside the Mountain State. The book is beautifully written with many never-before-seen photos.

The book, published by McClain, is available from local and online sellers.

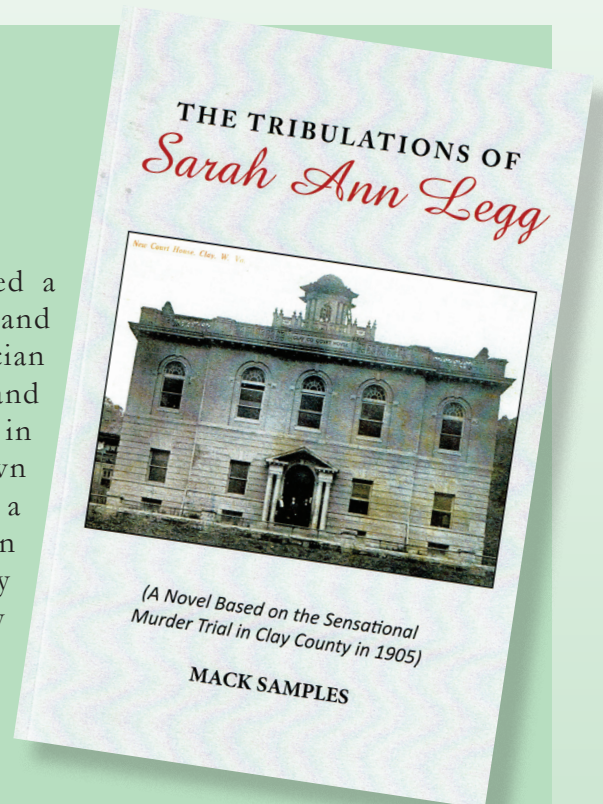


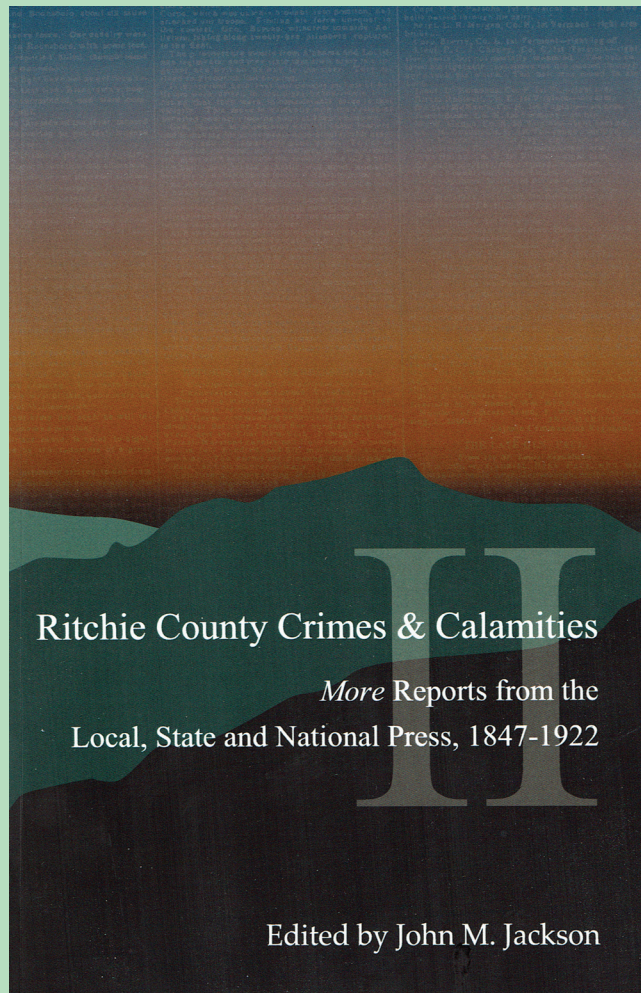
The Tribulations of Sarah Ann Legg

By Mack Samples

Samples, another Vandalia Award recipient, has penned a 143-page fictionalized account of the murder of Jay Legg and his accused murderer, his wife, Sarah Ann. A master musician and author, Samples takes a closer look at Legg's life and murder and the much ballyhooed trial of Sarah Ann Legg in Clay (Clay County). The story became somewhat well-known because it was the first time West Virginia had ever tried a woman for first-degree murder, which could have resulted in her hanging. A fairly popular folk song, "The Ballad of Jay Legg," emerged from the incident, but that tale, like many others, wavers from the truth. Fortunately, Samples has set the record straight through research, adding just enough fiction to make the book very readable.

The book, published by McClain, is available from local and online sellers.





Ritchie County Crimes & Calamities

Edited by John M. Jackson

Jackson builds upon his first book with *more* newspaper accounts of life in Ritchie County from 1847 to 1922. This 720-page paperback draws from local newspapers (*Pennsboro News*, *Ritchie Gazette*, *Ritchie Standard*, and *Cairo Enterprise*) to recount fascinating stories from a bustling time. Since it's based on newspapers, the stories lean heavily toward criminal activities, such as bootlegging; assaults; counterfeiting and swindling; robberies and murders; and fugitives from justice. It also includes topics such as fires, explosions, floods, and other disasters; railroad and other accidents; Ritchie County in the Civil War; "love and marriage and related catastrophes"; and illnesses. Within each chapter, he presents the events chronologically, so it reads like a history of the county from 1847 to 1922, and it's chocked-full of amusing anecdotes, such as this one from 1897: "The authorities of Ritchie County raided the 'speakeasies' of Cornwallis and Cairo. At Cornwallis five wagon loads of illicit sellers and the contents of their resorts were taken and started for Harrisville. Enroute, it is reported, everybody got full and every prisoner escaped." And to the delight of every historian and genealogist, Jackson includes an extensive index.

The book is available from online sellers.



Antietam Shadows

By Dennis E. Frye

This is one of the more fascinating accounts of Confederate General Robert E. Lee's 1862 Maryland Campaign during the Civil War. While the Battle of Antietam—located in Maryland a few miles from Shepherdstown (Jefferson County)—is the focal point, much of Lee's campaign took place in what would soon become West Virginia's Eastern Panhandle. Namely, he examines "Stonewall" Jackson's seizure of the important Baltimore & Ohio Railroad line at Martinsburg before the battle and subsequent capture of a U.S. Army stationed at Harpers Ferry—the largest surrender of an American force during the war. Frye, who recently retired as the longtime park historian at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, knows all the ins and outs of that key battle, which cleared the way for Lee to take a stand at Antietam—the bloodiest day of the war. In this book, however, Frye, through extensive research, has challenged some of the conventional thinking about the campaign. For instance, Union commander George B. McClellan has been oft criticized for his hesitation in launching attacks on Lee. Frye, while not apologizing for McClellan's well-known indecisiveness, suggests that some of his hesitation at Antietam may have been warranted due to the potential threats against Northern cities, especially our nation's capital. But the 273-page paperback's stories about the Harpers Ferry battle and a series of significant conflicts at Shepherdstown after Antietam will likely interest our readers the most. It's also one of the more readable history books you'll ever find.

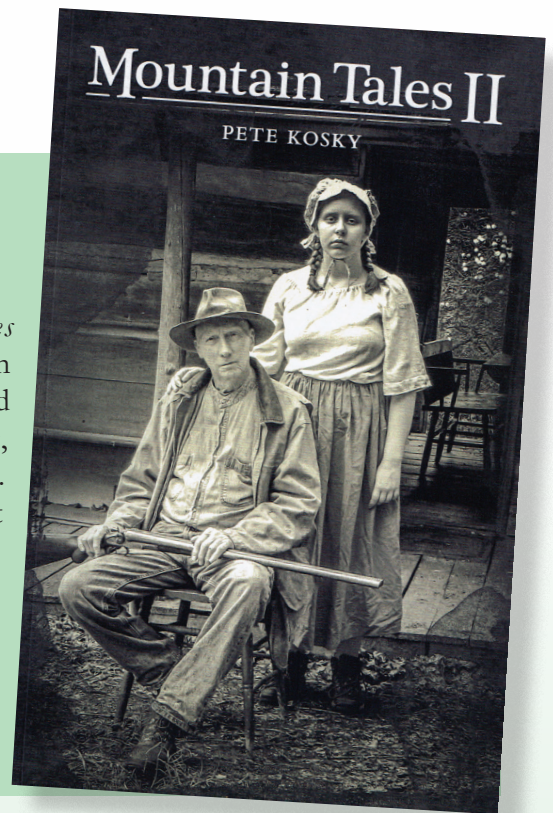
It's available from the Harpers Ferry Park Association and from online sellers.

Mountain Tales II

By Pete Kosky

Kosky follows up his original *Mountain Tales & River Stories* with a sequel that's every bit as good. Kosky is a natural-born storyteller—some true, some tall tales, and some you just kind of wonder about. Like the one about fisherman Charlie Hamer, who'd collect treasures from the bellies of the fish he'd caught. Or his chapter on outrageous bar fights. And some just about falling in love. Kosky is such a great storyteller that you're guaranteed to laugh almost all the way through the book. Fish stories, bar stories, and love stories make for the best stories—tall, short, or not.

His book is available from Mountain State Press (mountainstatepress.org) or other online sellers.

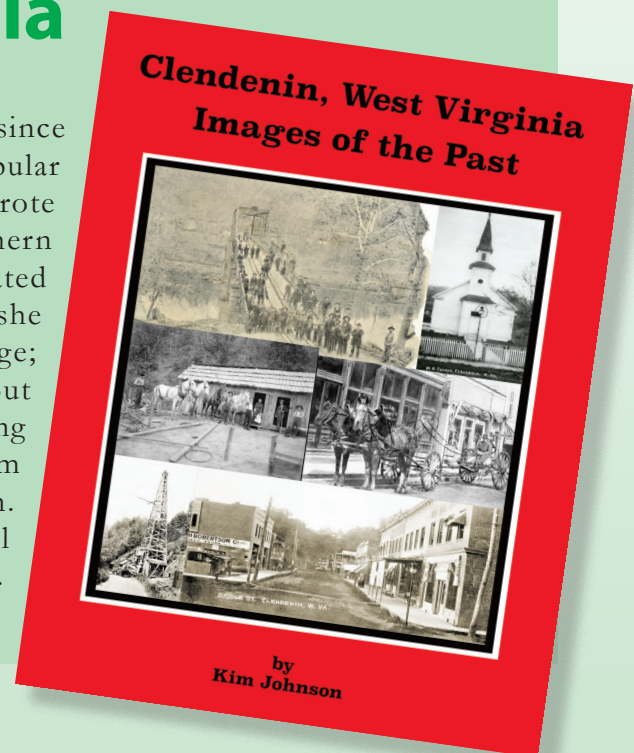


Clendenin, West Virginia

By Kim Johnson

GOLDENSEAL's former assistant editor has been busy since retiring in 2018. While playing in one of our state's most popular old-time string bands, The Modock Rounders, she also wrote this 220-page pictorial of her native Clendenin, in northern Kanawha County. She's collected hundreds of images related to Clendenin (many never before published). In the book, she looks at historic floods, including the deadly 2016 deluge; churches; businesses; and industry—namely oil and gas. But perhaps most fascinating is her 16-page chapter on the founding of Union Carbide, which relocated its headquarters from Clendenin to South Charleston a few years after its creation.

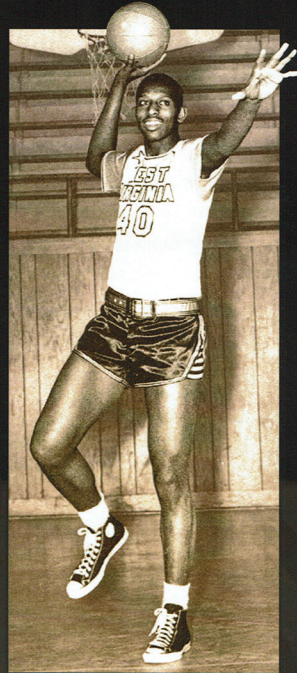
The book is available at local bookstores and other retail outlets. Or you can order directly from Kim Johnson at P.O. Box 333, Dunbar, WV 25064. The cost is \$20 + \$5 postage.



The Black Athlete in West Virginia

High School
and College
Sports from
1900
Through
the End of
Segregation

Bob Barnett,
Dana Brooks
and Ronald
Althouse

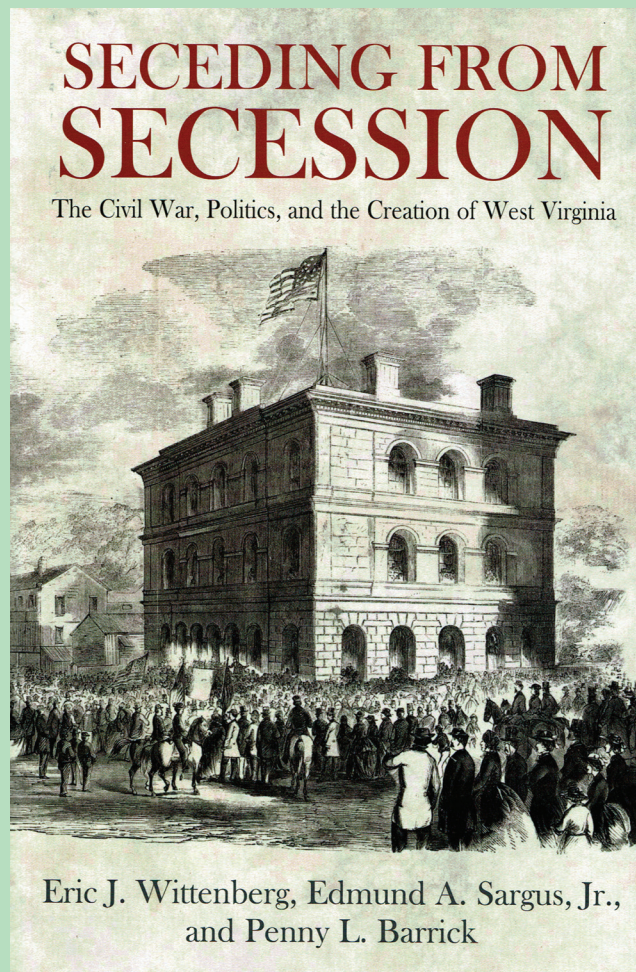


The Black Athlete in West Virginia

By Bob Barnett, Dana Brooks, and Ronald Althouse

Based on his many books and articles for GOLDENSEAL and other publications, Bob Barnett has established himself as West Virginia's foremost sports historian. His cowriters here are longtime WVU professors. This book examines our state's 40 Black high schools and three historically Black colleges during segregation—from sports and historical standpoints. There are fascinating looks at individual players, games, and tournaments, but this book really shines in talking about the challenges—racially and legally—of integrating schools and sports in West Virginia. The authors also highlight West Virginians who broke major color barriers, including West Virginia State's Earl Lloyd (first Black player in the NBA), Hal Greer at Marshall, and Dick Leftridge at WVU.

The 225-page paperback is published by McFarland and is available from online sellers.



Seceding from Secession

By Eric J. Wittenberg, Edmund A. Sargus, Jr., and Penny L. Barrick

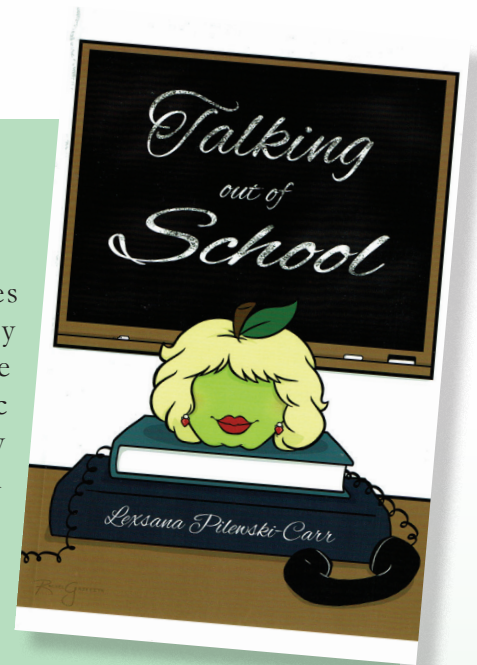
Surprisingly, relatively few books have been dedicated solely to the founding of West Virginia. This may be due to how incomprehensible the political and constitutional maneuverings were. It certainly couldn't have transpired at any other point in U.S. history. This 268-page hardback tackles the legal wranglings that made West Virginia the 35th state. Since the constitutionality of our statehood was never tried before the Supreme Court, historians often point to the 1871 case of *Virginia v. West Virginia*, in which Virginia sued to, in a sense, get Jefferson and Berkeley counties back. The Supreme Court's ruling in West Virginia's favor became an after-the-fact stamp of approval on statehood. The authors look closely at this case and conclude, as their final chapter title suggests, that "The Supreme Court Settles the Issue."

The book, published by Savas Beatie, is available from online sellers.

Talking out of School

By Lexsana Pilewski-Carr

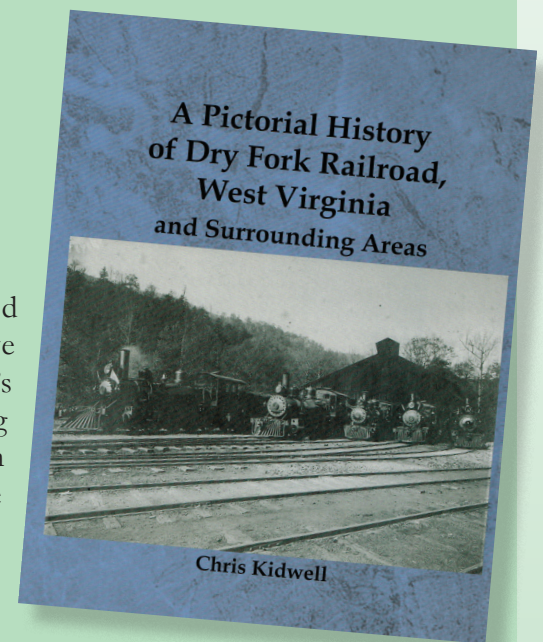
In this delightful 303-page memoir, the author shares amusing stories from her career as a Harrison County classroom teacher. First, for any fellow editors out there, you have to love a book where the “About the Author” section begins, “Lexsana Kay Pilewski-Carr has eight pedantic syllables in her name.” I was going to quote one of the book’s many witty passages, but the Twain-like blurb on the back says it better and far funnier than I could summarize: “[The author] has broken through the mystique of a teacher’s life. She retells decades of raucous woe and hilarity (in her own mind) and will take a lie detector test to validate most of what she reports. . . . At the very least, you’ll fall on your knees in gratitude for either having a normal teaching career or not EVER becoming a teacher.” But she also writes about very touching moments, including the day John F. Kennedy was assassinated, the loss of beloved family members, and a moving tribute to a dying neighbor: “Warner [Matthey] was the kind of next-door emergency kit you always reached for, like a kitchen fire extinguisher. He didn’t wait until you were out of town to bring your paper over on a rainy day when it might get soaked. He didn’t need you to be gone on a trip to keep a watchful eye on your property, his presence a little bit like the billboard eyes of Dr. T. J. Eckleburg in *The Great Gatsby*. He was a fixer, a sharp gardener, a homemade soup deliverer.” The book, published by McClain, is available from local and online sellers.

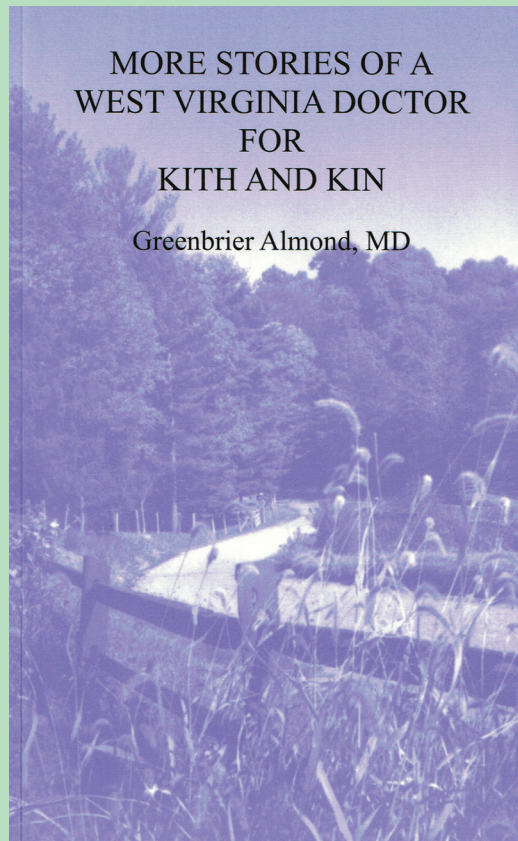


A Pictorial History of Dry Fork Railroad and Surrounding Areas

By Chris Kidwell

It isn’t often I pick up a new book about West Virginia and find two photos of my grandmother (Leslie May Thompson) I’ve never seen before, but that was the case with Chris Kidwell’s photographic history of the Dry Fork, mostly a timbering railroad, in Randolph and Pendleton counties around the turn of the 20th century. While Kidwell covers the history of the railroad, it’s his photos of the towns along that line that make this book so special since many, like Osceola, are now ghost towns. It primarily covers the communities from just east of Elkins over to Riverton and Circleville—the two towns where my grandparents were born. As an added plus, he provides a short history of many of these towns. This 436-page paperback is a treasure trove of lost photos from a lost era. The book, published by McClain, is available from local and online sellers.





More Stories of a West Virginia Doctor for Kith and Kin

By Greenbrier Almond, MD

This 221-page paperback is another volume in a series about a father-son doctor team back when “house calls” were an everyday part of life. Almond’s book is laid out in a series of short vignettes that include entertaining tales about family, world travel, and stories of faith, but the heart of the book is in the ways of old-time medicine—not just through “house calls” but by knowing and caring for each patient on a very personal basis. At one point, the author's father, Dr. Harold Almond, is taking his 18-year-old son, Greenbrier (the author), on a house call. Along the way, they sing the hymn “There Is a Balm in Gilead.” The father then explains, “Balm can be made from honey. . . . Germs do not grow in honey. Balm can keep the air off a wound or a burn, so lessening the pain. Balm can aid healing by giving cover while the skin grows together by secondary intention.” Minutes later, Dr. Harold Almond makes a house call on an Upshur County vet who’d lost a limb in Vietnam. Dr. Almond’s balm had worked wonders. It’s stories like this that make this such a delightful read. Dr. Greenbrier Almond saves his most touching words for his last chapter, wishing his father a happy 100th birthday in heaven: “Being a healer of wounds—those that can be seen and those that cannot—is a gift you passed on to me.”

The book, published by McClain, is available from local and online sellers.

Back Issues Available



- ___ Fall 2015/Traditional Dance
- ___ Winter 2015/Fiddler Ed Haley
- ___ Spring 2016/The Hatfields
- ___ Summer 2016/Billy Edd Wheeler
- ___ Winter 2016/Pearl Harbor
- ___ Spring 2017/40 Years of Vandalia!
- ___ Summer 2017/Reminiscing about Richwood
- ___ Fall 2017/WVU 150 Years
- ___ Summer 2018/Jane George
- ___ Fall 2018/Farmington
- ___ Winter 2018/Kim Johnson
- ___ Spring 2019/Wolfgang Flor
- ___ Summer 2019/State Police
- ___ Fall 2019/Wheeling 250
- ___ Winter 2019/Mike Morningstar
- ___ Spring 2020/The Matewan Massacre
- ___ Summer 2020/The 1960 Primary

Stock up on GOLDENSEAL back issues! Purchase any of the magazines listed above for just \$3.95 each, plus \$1 shipping, while supplies last. Pay just \$3 each, plus \$3 shipping, on orders of 10 or more.

Please make check or money order payable to GOLDENSEAL. Send to:

GOLDENSEAL
The Culture Center
1900 Kanawha Blvd. East
Charleston, WV 25305-0300

Please provide a complete mailing address.



You can follow us on Facebook and Instagram.

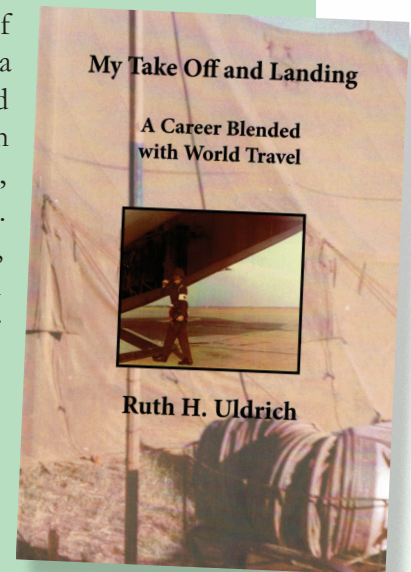
You may also order GOLDENSEAL with a Visa, MasterCard, or Discover by calling the GOLDENSEAL office at **304-558-0220**.

My Take Off and Landing

By Ruth H. Uldrich

In this 124-page paperback, the author spins an absorbing autobiographical tale of growing up in Braxton County, becoming a nurse in Charleston, and traveling around the world. The first section is filled with stories of play, work (gardening), fishing, building fires, and celebrating Christmas. Uldrich has an innate love of West Virginia, which she compares to the mythical Elysian Fields, where “souls of the good went after death.” She began training to be a nurse in 1953 and writes vividly about caring for those stricken with polio, at epidemic levels at the time. Much of the rest is about her interesting world travels in the Air Force—but never with West Virginia too far behind.

The book, published by McClain, is available from local and online sellers.



Down on the Farm

By Dorothy E. Duty

This 314-page autobiography reads almost like a GOLDENSEAL article. The author recounts her memories of growing up in Wetzel County and the family that surrounded her with love. She shares nostalgic memories related to farming and gardening, canning and butchering, cooking, church, 4-H, holidays, and what look like delicious recipes for strawberry pie and holiday soda cookies.

The book, published by McClain, is available from local and online sellers.

