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West Virginia and Regional History Collection

NEWSLETTER

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BREECE D'J PANCAKE PAPERS PRESERVE LEGACY OF LEADING MODERN REGIONALIST AUTHOR

By Thomas E. Douglass

Editor's Note: The West Virginia and Regional History Collection is pleased to announce in this issue the acquisition of the personal papers and manuscripts of author Breece D'J Pancake. We extend our thanks to Pancake's biographer Thomas E. Douglass for his assistance with this acquisitions process and for sharing his insights regarding Pancake with our readers in the following article.

In 1984, while presenting the West Virginia Literary Award posthumously to Breece D'J Pancake, State Librarian Frederic Glazer prophesied Pancake's literary influence — "Should there be an Appalachian Renaissance in letters," Glazer said, "Breece D'J Pancake could well be the rejuvenated pioneer spirit who turned the trail into a thruway and took us to a new literary frontier."⁽¹⁾ Indeed, *The Stories of Breece D'J Pancake*, published by Little Brown in 1983, attracted an extraordinary amount of attention from reviewers and the reading public. Nominated for a Pulitzer Prize and a Weatherford Award, *The Stories of Breece D'J Pancake*, announced a revival in regional interest, and its publication focused national attention on an unusually large number of emerging writers from Appalachia, including Bobbie Ann Mason, Denise Giardina, Richard Currey, Lisa Koger, Jayne Anne Phillips, Pinckney Benedict, Marsha Norman, Cormac McCarthy, Chris Holbrook, Lee Maynard, and Meredith Sue Willis.

Stylistically, Pancake's tough, bare language, his use of regional idiom, and his simple, direct sentence structures demand comparison with Tom Kromer's Depression-era classic *Waiting for Nothing* and Ernest Hemingway's story collections *Winner Take Nothing*, *Men Without Women*, and *In Our Time*.⁽²⁾ Like Hemingway, Pancake created a realistic surface in relatively few words, where underneath lurks a much larger emotional and psychological reality. Like Kromer, he exploited the dramatic effects of first-person, present-tense terse narration, which created "an atmosphere of extreme tension in his readers as well as in his protagonists."⁽³⁾



Breece D'J Pancake (1952-1979)

Yet, unlike many writers, Pancake was able to capture a part of the texture and mood of the Appalachian experience. He provided American readers with a "sensitive treatment of a region and a social stratum typically ignored in literature,"⁽⁴⁾ and introduced them to a place that was "never quite penetrated and laid bare in American literature as skillfully, honestly, and hopelessly."⁽⁵⁾

Compared to the early work of Hemingway, Joyce, Steinbeck, Anderson, this small book from a young writer not yet 27 spawned a literary legend, due in part to his tragic suicide in 1979 when he stood on the brink of a promising literary career. As a consequence, he is thought of as the tragic artist whose creativity is found in giving way to uncontrolled internal forces which might as easily yield annihilation as transcendence and rebirth. Pancake's literary debut was very similar to John Kennedy Toole's posthumously published *A*

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Confederacy of Dunces, which won a Pulitzer prize in 1980. Little Brown's Peter Davison could not help but push the comparison in a letter seeking support for the book to Barbara Bannon of *Publisher's Weekly*: "I'm writing you because you know how hellishly difficult it is to launch a book like this — no matter how excellent. No author to generate publicity. No glamour to excite adulation. . . . There is something here, Barbara, which makes me think that we may have another *Confederacy of Dunces* on our hands. I wish to God that Breece Pancake were here to see his stories published. I wish I could have met him."⁽⁶⁾

Quickly, Pancake became known as the writer's writer, the stylist to be emulated, the courageous writer from whom emotional strength can be borrowed to stare at the things that most frighten us, and the moral penitent who attempted to exorcise his own demons through his art. Starting out on his own literary career, Lewisburg native Pinckney Benedict leaned heavily on Pancake's legacy. "Pancake's work is not armchair ready," Benedict has said. "It's going to be hard and tough like a good teacher. It's not fluffy. It's not nice or kind. It's not entertainment. It's terrific art. Good art is almost always very hard — is almost always tough to deal with. Beautiful because of its hard form, the toughness of its surface."⁽⁷⁾

Pancake shares with Davis Grubb a heart-rending sympathy for the West Virginia common man, the poor of Appalachia, the confused and disinherited. "If you write about West Virginia and about its people," said Grubb, "you particularly need this instinct for love, I think. For West Virginia is Appalachia — it is a state of poor people . . . And for me at least only poor people, and, in my case only the poor people of West Virginia — are worthy of my efforts as a writer of tales."⁽⁸⁾ That was the subject for Pancake, too, the people of West Virginia, and he approached them with a pathos that enabled him to imagine their experience and give voice to their deepest concerns. British novelist and friend, Richard Jones, observed, ". . . there must be very few people who have got under the skins so well of the ordinary people of this state, the inarticulate, and the enduring, and the long suffering . . . and I think they have to remember when they read these stories that they were a work of a man who was still in his mid-twenties and what he might have done later on is anybody's guess. It's useless to speculate, but you can't help but do so."⁽⁹⁾

At the time of Pancake's death, *The Atlantic Monthly* had already purchased two of his stories and wanted more. He

was working towards a collection of stories for Edward Weeks at the *Atlantic*, planning and beginning to write a novel for Doubleday, and waiting to receive the acceptance he believed would never come, but did come in the few weeks after his suicide. Had he lived, he would have had his choice between a fellowship from the Millay Colony for the Arts or a Provincetown Fine Arts fellowship, where West Virginian Jayne Anne Phillips would also be in residence. He was beginning to be recognized and his talent was in demand.

Pancake's fiction, filtered through his own experience and memory, grappled with the moral perplexities of his generation, a generation that frequently lost its balance trying to keep up with a disorienting pace of change. Edward Fox, writing for the *Charleston Gazette*, observed: "Pancake's career was in many ways like that of many West Virginians who leave country towns like Milton in search of better opportunities in bigger cities in other states. But Pancake, an artist, perhaps felt more acutely the sense of dislocation that transplanted Mountaineers feel in cities like Detroit and Chicago, and which leads some of them to return. At the time of his death, he was by all accounts troubled by somber preoccupations. His imagination was rooted in West Virginia, especially Milton, yet he could not live here and succeed as a writer at the same time."⁽¹⁰⁾

This "sense of dislocation" is and was a part of the predicament of the region, but during the 1960s and 70s, it also applied to the nation as well. Michiko Kakutani, writing for *The New York Times*, noticed that Pancake's fiction "creates a powerful, elegiac portrait of an America reeling from the dislocations of recent history."⁽¹¹⁾ The effect of dislocation and the Appalachian Diaspora is not new to Appalachian literature; from Arnow's *The Dollmaker* to Smith's *Oral History*, the struggle for identity without a sense of place has been the central theme. But since 1952, the year he was born,

Continued on page 4.



Breece D'J Pancake and friend in Charlottesville, Va., 1979.

LOUIS BENNETT, JR. PAPERS ELUCIDATE WEST VIRGINIA'S ONLY WWI FLYING ACE

Louis Bennett, Jr. (1894-1918) fit the mold of the "magnificent man in the flying machine" to a tee. He was handsome, brash and daring. Born into a family of wealth and prominence, he also enjoyed the means to pursue his passion for flight.

Bennett was reportedly only twelve years old when he first began "flying" through the streets of his native Weston in his own automobile. A motorcycle, obtained at the same youthful age, provided additional thrills. But earthbound transportation would not fulfill his lust for mechanized speed for long.

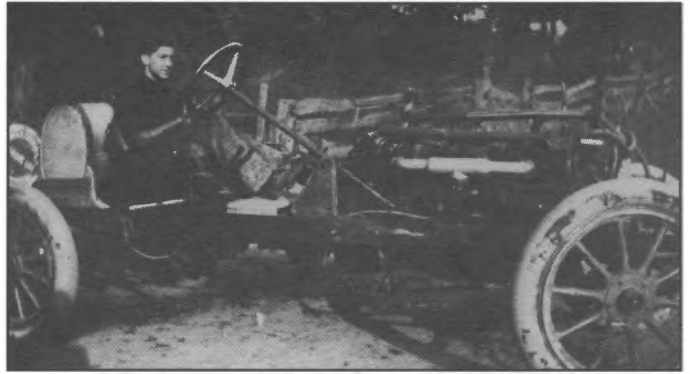
After attending prep school in Pennsylvania, Bennett enrolled at Yale University in 1913. When World War I erupted in Europe the following year, reports of a new type of battle, waged in the clouds, captured his imagination immediately and profoundly.

Determined to join the United States Army's fledgling Air Service, Bennett received pilot training from the Burgess Company in Marblehead, Massachusetts in 1916. Meanwhile, with the approval of Governor John Jacob Cornwell, he set about organizing the West Virginia Flying Corps.

When the Army declined the West Virginia Flying Corps' assistance the following summer and the unit disbanded, Bennett persevered and set his sights on joining the Allies' leading aerial combat unit, England's Royal Air Force. Taking basic training in Toronto in the fall of 1917, Bennett set sail for London with commission in hand on January 21, 1918.



West Virginia's only World War I flying ace, RAF Lt. Louis Bennett, Jr. downed 12 German aircraft in less than a month of offensive service, enough to rank him twelfth in kills among all American WWI aces.



Bennett was reportedly just a boy when he began "flying" through the streets of Weston in this powerful contraption.



The property of the West Virginia Flying Corps, this Curtiss JN-4 was purchased by Bennett in May 1917 in Sheepshead Bay, NY with funds provided by Governor J. J. Cornwell. Unfortunately, the craft was seriously damaged on its way to West Virginia when it crashed during takeoff in a New Jersey field. It ended up making the rest of the journey to the Corps' headquarters in Wheeling by rail.

After completing his training at the RAF Flying School, Bennett was assigned to the Royal Flying Corps' No. 90 Squadron in March. As the squadron was primarily intended as a home defense unit, however, he quickly tired of this assignment and applied for transfer to a fighting unit on the Western Front. His efforts were finally rewarded on July 21 when he was transferred to the RAF No. 40 Squadron.

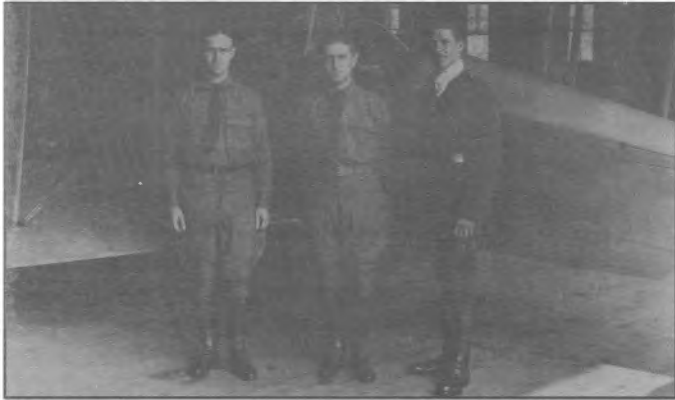
Bennett flew his first offensive patrol on July 30 and quickly developed a reputation for both his daring and his recklessness in breaking formation to pursue the enemy.

Recording his first "kill" on August 15, over the next nine days he went on a "killing" spree which was quite possibly unparalleled in his day, downing eleven more aircraft. According to one colleague, he became afflicted with "balloon fever" after downing a German balloon on the 17th. "He immediately set out to down every captive balloon in the area...we were all talking about it in the squadron...each of us knew he was expendable." With his solo destruction of four balloons on August 19, Louis Bennett achieved the status of "ace" (i.e. a fighter pilot with five or more "kills") in the space of only four days!

Bennett's final sortie on August 24th cost the enemy two more balloons before anti-aircraft fire eventually brought his flying machine down in flames in a French meadow. Apparently his German adversaries so respected his valor that several soldiers burned their hands severely in extricating him from the burning aircraft. Despite their efforts Bennett died in a German field hospital from a head wound, a broken leg and burns from his waist to his neck.

It is thanks to Bennett's mother, Sallie Maxwell Bennett, that the tale of West Virginia's only World War I flying ace has survived in the Regional History Collection's Louis Bennett, Jr. Papers. Mrs. Bennett traveled to Europe immediately at the war's end to investigate her son's death and carefully preserved his personal effects for posterity. Included in

the collection are letters Bennett wrote to home during 1917-18, some describing aerial combat, as well as letters of condolence to Mrs. Bennett that provide testimony to Bennett's character and courage. A note to Mrs. Bennett from William Reid and Charles Dredge, his grounds "rigger" and "fitter," notes that "He was a thorough gentleman and a splendid pilot and one who will be impossible to replace. He was very keen and absolutely fearless, regardless of any danger." Also included in the collection are photographs, early aeronautical publications, and Bennett's RAF wallet and Book of Common Prayer.



Louis Bennett (center) poses with two unidentified fellow cadets of the short-lived West Virginia Flying Corps, ca. 1917.



Bennett died in this German field hospital in Wavrin, France, on August 14, 1918.

PANCAKE
Continued from page 2.

Breece Pancake's America had become even more mobile, more transient, and more fluid than ever before, and because of this, also more disconnected from the America of the past. Post-World War II and post-industrial, technological America experienced massive shifts in employment and population, and a new generation of youth represented the first in their families to attend colleges and universities in record numbers. It was a time when "everybody's going to college to be something better," and it was an uncertain time of confused direction, as Pancake's fictional father in "The Honored Dead" reflects, "Well, when everybody's going this way, it's time

to turn around and go that way, you know?" The Vietnam War, equal rights for women, the Civil Rights movement, and the "generation gap" revealed an America off-balance and in transition. These uncertainties and upheavals, in addition to Pancake's personal anxieties, became conscious reflections in his art, made even more salient because West Virginia in many ways is more transitional than any other state in the nation, both well connected still to America's rural past and painfully industrialized.

Breece Pancake graduated from Milton High School in 1970 and attended West Virginia Wesleyan and Marshall University, where he studied Appalachian history and culture under the tutelage of Norman O. Simpkins. He began reading the work of Howard Burton Lee and Depression-era writers like Michael Gold, Nelson Algren, Jack Conroy, and Grace Lumpkin. In a rough draft of a college essay about the Depression, Pancake noted: "The period of American history from 1929 until 1940 has been a subject of fascination for writers, painters, sociologists and countless nostalgia freaks . . . For my own part, I would like nothing better than to spend two years of my life in a firsthand examination of life in the Depression. I would divide my time, spending one year in Washington among the elite groups of Capitol Hill . . . I would venture off to experiment in misery my final year . . . lose myself in the throng of the unemployed workmen in San Francisco and beg for my meals."⁽¹²⁾

Years later, when he enrolled in the writing program at the University of Virginia, Pancake read, for the first time, the work of Tom Kromer, an author who had experienced the scenario he described. At the time of his discovery, he told his mother, "Please read *Waiting for Nothing* by Tom Kromer. Every word a warning like Pop used to give me."⁽¹³⁾

Kromer was the son of a glass worker in Huntington, and a student at Marshall University, then Marshall College. When he was 18 years old, his father died of cancer, and after two years at Marshall, having exhausted the family resources and disillusioned by the firing of two of his favorite professors, Kromer took leave of college life and eventually hitchhiked west to work the wheat harvest in Kansas, which became his unwitting rendezvous with the Great Depression. For the next five years he experienced the worst of what it was like to be "on the bum," wandering from city to town looking for "three hots and a flop," barely surviving. *Waiting for Nothing* is a thinly veiled autobiographical account of that real life experience during the 1930s when he lived the life of a vagrant and begged for his food in the streets of many western cities including, most likely, San Francisco. Pancake once remarked that Kromer ". . . had the book world by the ass in a down-hill pull. I guess he had a story, told it and quit,"⁽¹⁴⁾ which in retrospect proved to be an eery prognosis of Pancake's career.

Kromer's brief autobiographical sketch describes an understanding of life that could substitute for Pancake's own. "My father never hoped for anything better in this life than a job, and never worried about anything else but losing it," Kromer wrote. "My mother never wanted anything else than that the kids get an education so that they wouldn't have to

worry about the factory closing down.”⁽¹⁵⁾ This same kind of life understanding prompted Pancake’s ambition and search for vocation. Pancake discovered that Kromer’s life justified how he had imagined himself into the role of the starving writer, one who wrote on scraps of anything he could find and who survived in a world of poverty and exclusion, a world which by its circumstance would protect him from commercial compromise and material corruption.

Kromer explained how “Parts of [*Waiting for Nothing*] were scrawled on Bull Durham papers in box cars, margins of religious tracts in a hundred missions, jails, one prison, railroad sand-houses, flop-houses and on a few memorable occasions actually pecked out with two index fingers on an honest-to-God typewriter.”⁽¹⁶⁾ Pancake, too, scribbled notes on Salem and Bull Durham packages, religious programs, store receipts and other bits of loose paper, and the typewriter Pancake used was an antique, a 1920 Underwood No. 5.

Likely, Kromer’s obsession with death and suicide also appealed to Pancake. For the dedication of *Waiting for Nothing*, the 26-year-old Kromer wrote, “To Jolene who turned off the gas,” a phrase that refers to Kromer’s first suicide attempt. In Kromer’s work suicide lurks in the corners of the many missions and flophouses in which his failed characters find themselves. Kromer’s first-person protagonist stoically observes, “After a guy bumps himself off, he don’t have any more troubles. Everything is all right with him.”⁽¹⁷⁾

Taken together, the influence of the Depression era and his understanding of a writer’s vocation confirmed by Kromer held a rugged, ascetic appeal for Pancake. To him, being a writer meant being hardened to the demands of everyday life and sacrificing material comforts for the time and effort required to write. After two difficult years in graduate school at the University of Virginia, he wrote to his mother, “It’s been a rough two years. Due to be rougher, but happier. Thank God for all those stories about the Depression — they made me tough.”⁽¹⁸⁾ A job was just something that enabled him to buy food and to live bare-bones, so he could do the “real work” of writing. In an interview with Carlos Santos of the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, Pancake once remarked, “Sometimes I wonder what’s more important — writing or eating. I don’t know . . . I guess I’ve got the millstone around my neck.”⁽¹⁹⁾ Pancake idealized his vocation as a mission of high order, a single-minded quest dedicated to the perfection of his work. In this way, a writer never compromised himself, never allowed commercial tastes to corrupt or shape his art. And, of course, that is what Pancake wanted to be most of all — an artist. He was once asked in an interview if a writer needed to “cater” to publishers’ interests in order to be successful. He bluntly answered, “I don’t cater at all. If they buy my stories fine. If they don’t buy them — fine, I don’t write to make a living.”⁽²⁰⁾

It was at the University of Virginia that Pancake also became familiar with another fellow West Virginian, Mary Lee Settle. As Settle was already an accomplished author and a member of the University faculty, he was a little embarrassed at not having known of her work beforehand. He even-



Pancake’s 1920-vintage Underwood typewriter.

tually took a part-time job tutoring her grandchildren and helped provide some of the research for her novel *The Scapegoat* (1980) about Mother Jones and the Coal Mine Wars in Mingo and Logan counties. In her book *The Clamshell*, Settle has portrayed the predicament of the West Virginia mountaineer coming to Virginia, which produces a kind of defensive shyness created by a sense of history and cultural perception. In her novel, speaking through character, she suggests that many West Virginians have “a familiarity with Virginia, which means more to us than simply another place. Physically, it is only a barrier of mountains away, across the Allegheny Divide, but to us Virginia is our Europe, hated and loved, before which we are shy, as Americans are shy in Europe.”⁽²¹⁾ Pancake had not only crossed the Allegheny Divide into his sister state, he had come to Jefferson’s University to pursue a career that would make him an anomaly back home. “Wanting to be a writer as a West Virginian is sort of like wanting to be an actor, or an astronaut, or President of the United States,” according to West Virginia writer Lee Maynard. “These were all fantasies and that was okay, but in reality you had to go out and do some real work.”⁽²²⁾ For these reasons, the differences, the feelings of alienation, the unnerving newness Pancake felt were accentuated. He could not always make sense of the University or Charlottesville, and he always felt a misfit there, an outsider, sometimes lonely and afraid.

To Pancake, Charlottesville represented a land of refined manners, wealth, property, bloodlines, and exclusion, and he found himself a stranger in it. From the outset, he rebelled against that feeling. Eleanor Ross Taylor recalls a graduate student party at her home, where her husband, Peter Taylor, served as host. “There was a gathering of writing students at our house,” she remembers, “amid the UVa style of that era — jacket and tie. [Breece] went up to another newcomer in shirtsleeves and said merrily, ‘Jim, you’ll have to buy a jacket!’ As he himself was in shirtsleeves, he had evidently appraised the social scene and made his own decision.”⁽²³⁾

Pancake had rented a small apartment located near Charlottesville's "well-to-do" Farmington Estates, a collection of large manor homes neatly tucked around the tidy, manicured fairways and greens of the Penn Park Golf Course, a few miles from the University. Actually, the apartment was a small room in the east wing of a large home, formerly servant's quarters for the family maid and nanny. The large brick house, painted white, with black roof and black shutters, also had a landscaped circular driveway, swimming pool, and an apple tree in the backyard. About his new home Pancake remarked, "I plan to gig frogs in their pond, and hope to be thrown out about January. Don't worry, by then I'll have friends."⁽²⁴⁾

He called his new home a "phone booth," and told his mother, "You couldn't sleep there — even on the floor!"⁽²⁵⁾ The 12' x 12' room had a small shower and toilet alcove, a stacked stove/refrigerator unit, one door, and one window and it rented for \$55 a month. He slept on a cot and kept his make-shift desk of plywood in front of the window. Pancake observed that "even a fox has his den."

All around this "fox den" in Albemarle County were reminders of what he had grown to abhor. "I am sick to my stomach of people who drive fine cars, live alone in big apts., never worked a day in their lives and bellyache 60% of the time. This county is 2nd in the country for millionaires — L.A. County being first. It do get to be hard to swallow."⁽²⁶⁾ His landlady Mrs. Virginia Meade, too, lived up to Pancake's suspicion of the class exclusion that existed in Charlottesville. He wrote to his mother, ". . . Mrs. Meade is throwing a party for the Eng. dept. and had the gall to ask me to tend bar. Said if I didn't, she'd have to hire a colored, and they don't mix a good drink. That tells me where I stand as a Hillbilly — one notch above the colored — only because I can mix a good drink. If Mrs. Meade forgets herself and invites me, I'll decline on the basis of not having any shoes, and having to tend my still and welfare check."⁽²⁷⁾

"Mrs. Meade absolutely got up his nose," Richard Jones remembers. "She was a very modish, worldly lady. She would give a cocktail party and emerge in silks and satins from New York. She brushed Breece the wrong way . . ."⁽²⁸⁾ In Charlottesville, Pancake seemed to be constantly reminded of the social and economic differences that separated him from the well-to-do. While researching the history of Milton for story background, he wrote, "I kept looking . . . for some mention of the Pancakes, then I realized we were just poor buckra compared to the land owners." He joked, "We had the second flush toilet in town, and that's some kind of fame. If it hadn't been for Rob [his grandfather], we would still be poor buckra. Probably still have an outhouse."⁽²⁹⁾

His suspicions of condescension and exclusion, confirmed in the Charlottesville community, were further heightened at the University. Pancake on campus provided a startling contrast. Among his fellow students Breece stood out because of his cowboy boots, his large "U.S. Army" brass belt buckle and bluejeans, and the hill twang in his voice. Friend and classmate Nancy Ramsey recalls, "He was so different from all these mealy-mouthed little English graduate students.

There was Breece, coming down the hall with his cowboy boots clicking and stomping."⁽³⁰⁾ According to professor Chuck Perdue, Pancake was thought of "as some sort of Appalachian primitive. Some were both attracted and repelled by that perception." Once he told a group of graduate students about how he had stopped along the highway to pick up a freshly killed rabbit and took it home, skinned it out, and cooked it. "They were rather negatively impressed and talked about it with considerable disgust," says Perdue, and adds, ". . . Breece enjoyed their reaction."⁽³¹⁾ Raymond Nelson, who shared an office with him in Wilson Hall, has described Pancake as a physical presence that no one could ignore: "He's a big brash guy, powerful, but he felt very often uneasy in a place like this or felt he should be uneasy. So he asserted himself that way, and of course one of the things he learned here — God knows how well he learned it — is that he could survive. He could function, he could triumph even, in a place like this. But there was always that — I think it's real — that 'I'm just a hillbilly from West Virginia. To hell with you' — that kind of thing as a way of putting his own defenses up, and establishing who he was and his own integrity and so on."⁽³²⁾

In the weeks before Pancake's suicide, his grief for his father, who died in 1975, and his frustrations with life in Virginia deepened his longing for home. For months he had been preparing to leave Charlottesville, setting things in order, giving things away — a normal routine for students preparing to leave a university town. He had always given gifts and tokens of friendship and his gift-giving that spring did not seem out of character. He informed his landlady that he would be leaving at the end of May, visited teachers and friends to tell them of his plans, and gave most of his guns away — except for one, a Savage Arms over-under shotgun. Then on April 8, 1979, Palm Sunday, at his apartment at One Blue Ridge Lane, Pancake ended his life while sitting in a folding chair in the backyard underneath the blooming dogwoods and apple trees.

Thomas E. Douglass is a visiting assistant professor of English at East Carolina University and former librarian at West Virginia University. His book A Room Forever: the Life, Work, and Letters of Breece D'J Pancake is now available from the University of Tennessee Press.

Notes

1. Fred Glazer, "West Virginia Literary Award," paper presented at the annual awards meeting of the West Virginia Library Commission, Science and Cultural Center, Charleston, Feb. 7, 1984, Pancake MSS.
2. Joyce Carol Oates was the first to note the comparison with Hemingway in her influential review "The Stories of Breece D'J Pancake," *New York Times Book Review*, Feb. 13, 1984, 1.
3. *Ibid.*, 24.
4. Albert Wilhelm, "Breece D'J Pancake," *Dictionary of Literary Biography: American Short Story Writers Since World War II* (Oneonta, N.Y.: SUNY, 1993), 254.
5. Bolton Davis, "The Stories of Breece D'J Pancake," *San Francisco Review of Books*, May-June 1983: n.p.
6. Peter Davison to Barbara Bannon, Oct. 22, 1982, Pancake MSS.
7. Pinckney Benedict, interview by Marty Buchsbaum, videotape recording, July 26, 1988, Lewisburg, WV.
8. Cited in Jack Welch, "Davis Grubb: a Vision of Appalachia" (Ph.D. diss., Carnegie-Mellon Univ., Pittsburgh 1980), iv.

9. Richard Jones, interview by Russ Barbour, videotape recording, Nov. 6, 1986, Huntington, WV.
10. Edward Fox, "Pancake's Imagination Rooted in West Virginia Soil," *Charleston Gazette*, April 23, 1984, B 1.
11. Michiko Kakutani, "Books of the Times, Review of The Stories of Breece D'J Pancake," *New York Times*, May 15, 1984, 23.
12. Breece Pancake, Marshall University notebook, 1972, Pancake MSS.
13. Breece Pancake to Helen Pancake, Oct. 29, 1976, Pancake MSS.
14. Breece Pancake to Helen Pancake, Sept. 9, 1977, Pancake MSS.
15. Tom Kromer, *Waiting for Nothing and Other Stories*, ed. Arthur Casciato and James L. West III (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986), 257.
16. *Ibid.*, 259.
17. *Ibid.*, 42.
18. Breece Pancake to Helen Pancake, Jan. 4, 1977, Pancake MSS.
19. Pancake in Carlos Santos, "We Teach Them to Rewrite at U.Va.," *Richmond-Times Dispatch*, Jan. 7, 1979, E1.
20. Pancake in Chuck Hyman, "The Big Break," *The (U.Va.) Declaration*, Dec. 1, 1977, Pancake MSS.
21. Mary Lee Settle, *The Clamshell* (New York: Lawrence/Delacorte, 1971), 27.
22. Lee Maynard, interview by author, tape recording, Jan. 20, 1993, Pancake MSS.
23. Eleanor Ross Taylor, letter to author, Dec. 21, 1995, Pancake MSS.
24. Breece Pancake to Helen Pancake, May 22, 1976, Pancake MSS.
25. *Ibid.*
26. Breece Pancake to Helen Pancake, Oct. 16, 1976, Pancake MSS.
27. Breece Pancake to Helen Pancake, Oct. 24, 1976, Pancake MSS.
28. Jones in Edward Fox, B6.
29. Breece Pancake to Helen Pancake, Sept. 9, 1977, Pancake MSS.
30. Ramsey in Cynthia Kadohata, "Breece D'J Pancake," *Mississippi Review* 18 (1) (1990), 43.
31. Charles Perdue, letter to author, Sept. 21, 1994, Pancake MSS.
32. Nelson in Cynthia Kadohata, "Breece D'J Pancake," 44.

SELECTED RECENT ACCESSIONS:

Beto, Richard. Photocopies, 1861-62. 6 items. Gift, 1997. A&M 3044 Addendum.

Photocopies and facsimiles of Civil War letters and papers of the Confederate Army in West Virginia, 1861-62.

Curtis, J. Montgomery. Papers, 1950-1982. 4 ft. Gift, 1997. A&M 3249.

Papers and photos collected by a historian of journalism, Don E. Carter, about West Virginia native J. Montgomery Curtis, a nationally renowned journalist and newspaperman. Curtis was best known as director of the New York-based American Press Institute, which was associated with Columbia University. The American Press Institute functioned to offer advice and criticism to journalists and news publications. The last part of his career was spent in Miami working for the Knight newspaper chain, later Knight-Ridder newspapers, as a vice-president and in-house critic. Most of the collection comprises correspondence with colleagues, biographical notes about Curtis, and critiques of practices in the newspaper business. There is much correspondence with John S. Knight evaluating the newspapers he owned, correspondence with John Ottaway, a newspaper owner and long-time chairman of the American Press Institute, and with Don E. Carter and Malcolm F. Mallette about the history of the American Press Institute. Also included are assorted studies and articles by Curtis and other writers about the newspaper trade.

Evans, Virginia B. Papers, 1920s-70s. 1/2 ft. Gift, 1997. A&M 3256.

Personal papers and artworks of Moundsville native Virginia Barger Evans. Evans received her artistic training at the Carnegie Institute of Technology, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and the School of Fine Arts in Fontainebleau, France. She exhibited widely during the 1930s, and was hailed as "one of the best trained and most gifted painters" in the Pittsburgh region by one of the nation's leading art columnists. Later a leading designer of Ohio Valley glass, Evans was selected by a national panel as one of West Virginia's five most significant living artists in 1972. Included are programs, clippings, correspondence, notes, photographs, prints and sketches.

Hall, William Henry. Transcript, 1864. 2 items. Gift, 1997. A&M 3270.

Transcripts of and notes about an 1864 Civil War diary of William Henry Hall, a captain in the West Virginia 6th Infantry, Company F. The company was recruited in Preston County and served in north-central West Virginia guarding the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad line and engaging in operations against Confederate raiders.

Peters, Eileen. Archives, 1955-80. 5 ft. Gift, 1997. A&M 3281.

An extensive collection of genealogical information concentrating upon families from Preston County, West Virginia. Included are publications, correspondence and genealogical notebooks compiled ca. 1955-80.

Stockner, Mr. and Mrs. Robert. Archives, 1950-90. 1/2 ft. Gift, 1997. A&M 3253.

Genealogical information on several West Virginia and eastern Ohio families including photographs, clippings, programs, invitations, certificates, lists, correspondence and assorted published genealogical pamphlets and booklets ca. 1950-90. Included among the latter is a bound compilation by A.B. Stickney including genealogies of the Pierpoint, Smell, Jones and Fetty families.

WVU Marching Band. Archives, 1940s-80s. 1.5 ft. Gift, 1997. A&M 3258.

Group of archives from the "Pride of West Virginia," the WVU Mountaineer Marching Band. Included are photographs, scrapbooks, Kappa Kappa Psi honorary records and assorted ephemera dating from the 1940s to 1980s.

West Virginia Highlands Conservancy. Archives, 1966-96. 7.5 ft. Gift, 1997. A&M 3282.

Publications, programs, reports, by-laws, minutes, correspondence, resolutions, news clippings, and financial records of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, an environmentalist political action organization. Included is information regarding the Conservancy's efforts to monitor and improve air and water quality, especially in relation to the use of coal, and the preservation of wilderness areas such as the Canaan Valley, Shaver's Fork, Otter Creek and the Monongahela National Forest.



Virginia B. Evans, *Ohio Valley Landscape*, oil on canvas, 24" x 26,"
ca. 1930.



The 1948 WVU Marching Band.

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*World War I Flying Ace
Louis Bennett, Jr. of Weston,
West Virginia.
See story on page 3.*