Second Annual West Virginia Day Celebration Honors State’s 125 Years

In recognition of West Virginia’s 125th birthday, members of the West Virginia University community and the general public joined the Regional History Association on 20-21 June 1988 for the Collection’s 2nd annual West Virginia Day celebration. Co-sponsored by West Virginia University and the West Virginia University Libraries, the goal of this year’s meeting was to both explore the roots and essence of the Mountain State and to commemorate an important benchmark in its history.

The affair got off to a lively start on the morning of 20 June with a public forum entitled “One Hundred Twenty-Five Years of West Virginia History: Past, Present and Future.” With Visiting Committee member Vaughn Kiger serving as moderator, seven speakers proffered their personal perspectives on West Virginia events, people, attitudes, and circumstances. “Optimism,” “frustration,” “pride,” “irony,” and “hope” are just a few adjectives that might be used to describe the range of feelings expressed.

Following a library appreciation luncheon in the Erickson Alumni Center, a fine crowd of attendees enjoyed a birthday party and exhibition of Civil War and “Early Statehood Treasures from the West Virginia and Regional History Collection” in Elizabeth Moore Hall from 2:00-5:00 pm. No doubt the offer of a complimentary copy of this year’s West Virginia Day poster (see illustration on back cover) to the first 125 visitors stimulated attendance!

The program concluded on the morning of the 21st with a presentation on “Music Research Resources in the West Virginia Collection” by associate curator John A. Cuthbert and library technical assistant Scott Schwartz in Colson Hall.

For the benefit of members and other readers who were unable to attend, key extracts from the stimulating forum follow.

Otis Rice, Emeritus Professor of History, West Virginia Institute of Technology

As I review a few of the salient features of our 125 years of statehood, and another 125 years of West Virginia history during the time we were a part of Virginia, it seems to me that one of the most enduring influences, often in subtle forms, has been an unusually long frontier experience. The frontier began to expand into West Virginia around 1730—into the Eastern Panhandle. When Joseph Doddridge published his famous notes, which are a classic account of the frontier experience in the United States, in 1824, Doddridge could still write of the frontier from his own first-hand experience. Frontier modes of life very subtly blended into rural qualities that were distinguishable in West Virginia even in the early 20th century. I look back on my childhood and I can see threads that are very definitely related to the frontier era. I still remember that bunch of switches sitting up in the corner, cut at the beginning of the school term, and they served as a constant reminder to us for the remainder of the year. I can also remember very vividly that in the village where I lived, on winter evenings in an old country store around a potbelly stove, the men would gather and...
singing old hymns and old songs that... came from the Civil War.

Had the nation not gone into a civil war, I don't know quite what the result would have been. We may still have been a part of Virginia, but that provided an opportunity... to achieve goals that many West Virginians had been dreaming of for 60 years... When we had our bi-centennial celebration in 1913 these things were in full swing and I have a feeling that the mood of West Virginia in 1913 was perhaps a bit more upbeat than it is in nineteen and eighty-eight.

Now it's very easy for us... to make harsh judgements of the past and to lay our own problems at the doorstep of past generations. In truth, the people who were managing the affairs of our state in the past, had to work within certain constraints, they had limited options in many cases, and most of them were attempting to do what they thought was best for the state. I'm not going to try to excite the genuine rascals, because we have had some in our history, but at the same time I don't think we can attribute our misfortunes to some sort of demons who have been in control. As [John F.] Kennedy observed, ... "while we are judging the past, the past is also judging us and the future will also judge us."

Joe Trotter,
Professor of History,
Carnegie-Mellon University

I have titled this talk, "Perspectives on 125 Years of West Virginia Black History: Past, Present and Future from the Perspective of an Afro-American"... The meaning of 125 years of West Virginia history must be judged by basic criteria:... to what extent did blacks find opportunities—economic, social, and political—in West Virginia? More specifically, to what extent did blacks face a system of equality rather than inequality? Unfortunately, judging West Virginia on this basis, as elsewhere in America, blacks in the Mountain State faced recurring patterns of class, caste, and racial inequality... looking at black history in the Mountain State from a certain perspective, we will have little to celebrate.

But this is, after all, a celebration and so, on the other hand, I want to suggest that more importantly over the past 125 years of Mountain State history the Afro-American experience... has, indeed, changed over time. Since West Virginia voted against secession... it became something of a haven for blacks who had escaped from slavery. During the Civil War, for example, Booker T. Washington's step-father escaped from slavery and followed the Union soldiers into the Kanawha Valley. Following the general emancipation of slaves, Washington sent for his wife and her children, including the young Booker T. Washington to join him in West Virginia. The young Booker T. Washington later recalled that they made the trip overland in a wagon, there being no railroad connections, as yet, with old Virginia.

Indeed, the anti-slavery sentiment that the Civil War unleashed enhanced the attractiveness of West Virginia for blacks. However, it was not the Civil War, but the dramatic expansion by the bituminous coal industry during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that brought West Virginia into focus as a favorable place for black migration... from other southern rural areas. Indeed the rail connections... as well as the rise of the bituminous coal industry, provided a magnet for blacks who sought a better life in America. By 1900, for example, the number of black coal miners in West Virginia reached over 4,600 and by 1930 the number had increased to over 22,000, representing over 20% of the total labor force. West Virginia was indeed a place where blacks, numbers of them, could make a living.

Not only as a historian, but as a person who was born in West Virginia and raised in West Virginia,... I would like to make a plea... that the state of West Virginia make a greater commitment to uncovering the Afro-American dimension of the Mountain State experience. There is a tremendous richness in the black experience...; only by carefully charting the past of the various parts, like blacks and women and some other neglected groups, will we be able to fully comprehend the meaning of 125 years of West Virginia history.

Merle Moore,
Director, Clarksburg-Harrison County Public Library

We are very fortunate in Clarksburg [Public Library] to have a historic building to house our local history collection... I think we are one of the few public libraries in the state of West Virginia who [employs] a historian... We celebrate history every day.

(Continued on page 9)
WVU Sixty Years Ago and Memories of Louis Watson Chappell
by Kenneth Walter Cameron, '30 and '31G

[Editor's Note: One of the pioneers of West Virginia folklore research, Louis Watson Chappell earned international fame with the publication of John Henry: A Folklore Study (Jena: Frommnsche Verlag) in 1933. Hailed as "the most scholarly study of a single ballad" by the London Times, the book decisively established the factual basis and West Virginia roots of the John Henry legend. Chappell's subsequent research efforts included the collection of over 2,000 field recordings of songs and fiddle tunes gathered in West Virginia from 1937 to 1947. Donated by the folklorist to the Regional History Collection during the mid-1970s, these recordings now form the foundation of the Collection's Sound Archives. They are also the source from which the Collection's recent Edden Hammons Collection album was drawn.

While the contributions of Chappell the folklorist are now well-known, Chappell the man is somewhat of an enigma owing to his increasingly withdrawn lifestyle, and apprehension of all who invaded his private world, during the later years of his life.

The following, the first of two installments of an article by a student and colleague of Chappell, sheds considerable light upon the achievements as well as the trials and tribulations of his career.

Born in Martins Ferry, Ohio in 1908, Kenneth Walter Cameron attended West Virginia University from 1926-1931. While pursuing bachelors and masters degrees, he worked part-time as secretary for the Department of English. In the dual capacity of student and secretary, he knew Chappell well.

Cameron subsequently attended General Theological Seminary (STB 1935) and Yale University (Ph.D. 1940). Following brief teaching stints at North Carolina State and Temple University, he settled at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1946 and has held a professorship there ever since. A prolific writer on American literature, he is recognized as a leading authority in the study of the American transcendental movement.

My excuse for writing about a teacher who greatly influenced my life is not to prevent his being forgotten. His published works will remain in the bibliographies, and his remarkable gathering of West Virginia folklore—now housed in the Regional History Collection—will doubtless, postpone oblivion. I should like to bypass the academic exuviae, however, and portray the man himself, but to do so I shall be obliged to employ more of the first person than usual, imitating James Boswell in his biography of Samuel Johnson. One cannot be coy when drawing upon personal memories!

I entered WVU from Wheeling High School in September, 1926, determined to pursue the then-available five-year route to a law degree, following the bestowal of which I planned to enter local politics and lead an active life. My father, who was financially overburdened on the verge of the Great Depression, had two other children to educate and desired me to step briskly, but he eventually consented to my embracing the six-year route—three years for the arts and three for law, the reason being my excitement over a half dozen of my courses. Philosophy with Holly Estil Cunningham upset my religion, introduced me to ancient thinkers and outlined three channels to the truth. The American history survey with Oliver Chitwood gave me a methodology for study and teaching that I was later to employ for thirty-five years in my own classroom. It involved a short daily quiz and an inescapable focusing on facts. With penetrating humor he would say, "This paper gives a perfectly good answer but to an entirely different question!" Tilton's course in historical geology sent me fascinated to Cheat Mountain with an archaeologist's hammer to dig out the roots of prehistoric forms and to find in a limestone quarry east of Morgantown trilobites and crinid stems. (My landlady that year did not like the freight I spread out on her clean floor!) Reese, in the biological survey, gave personality to all animals, enlarging my relatedness to them. Leaning on his blackboard pointer, as was his custom, he would say of the earthworm on the table before us, "In bad weather I find it difficult to stand on two feet, but this little fellow, who has 132 pairs of them, can manage perfectly well whatever the season! Whenever I pass him on the walk I tip my hat!" That year I annoyed my landlady with bottles of green scum and swimming rotifers. All these experiences were compounded when I joined the summer Biological Expedition under Perry D. Strasbaugh and the young Earl Core—not as an enrolled student but as manager and cook, with the privilege of learning much about West Virginia fauna, flora and fossils on the New River, in Gauley (Continued)
Canyon, along the Greenbrier and, finally, in Pendleton County on Spruce Knob. I met important rural folk like "Parson" Gray, a clergyman who knew more about lichens than the so-called experts. As for the English courses required by the curriculum, they were dull and pedestrian. Dad finally consented to my adding a fourth undergraduate year and to my forgetting about the law. Then, in the late spring of 1929, in order to raise standards in the Department of English, Dean W.P. Shortridge surprised the "old guard" by announcing that Dr. John William Draper of the University of Maine would succeed Dr. Armstrong as chairman, encouraging me to write to Orono about the possibility of becoming the part-time departmental secretary. Having heard that Draper was an Episcopalian, I let him know that I had similar connections and secured the post sight unseen! That September I was on the payroll with sixty dollars a month. Upon his arrival in Morgantown, Draper chose Louis Watson Chappell as his confidant and helper in developing the department, and I was privileged to work closely with them both. That experience, as I shall indicate, changed the direction of my life.

The Draper-Chappell Experiment

First, a word about both men and how they complemented each other. Draper had been trained at New York University under the brilliant Arthur Huntington Nason and at Harvard under George Lyman Kittredge. Chappell had studied at the University of Virginia under James Southall Wilson and at the University of Chicago under John Matthews Manly. Draper had a sound doctoral degree; Chappell had taken enough first-rate graduate courses to qualify intellectually for a least two of them, but for reasons that will surface later, was still in the "dissertation stage" of the process. By 1929, Draper had published three significant books and about thirty learned articles in his fields of specialization. Chappell was gathering evidence for three monographs—and observing the Spanish proverb, "Long-lived trees make roots first." Draper's concentration was in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries; Chappell's, in the Anglo-Saxon and medieval worlds. Draper was outwardly brilliant, articulate and possessing (as Samuel Johnson said of Edmund Burke) "a stream of mind" that was "perpetual." Chappell was of slower metabolism, better able to judge character, more cautious in dealing with institutions, and more aware of the complexities of human nature. His motto was, "Make haste slowly." Despite their seeming polarities, both men were strong, wise, out-going and devoted to teaching, capable of attracting good minds. To be exposed to their combined endowments was a maturing experience not easily to be found in any other school in America!

Both men set high standards for the teacher: (1) He ought to have the best possible training in the best schools and to know his subject thoroughly. (2) He should be dedicated to the task of teaching and emphasize quality. (3) He should not appear to be wise by passing off as his own the scholarship of better teachers but engage in creative scholarship himself, allowing it to be tested and evaluated by his peers. (4) He should raise up from among his students those who would carry on this tradition and replace him in the profession in a kind of "apostolic succession." Chappell added another touch of academic idealism, based on the hard road he had travelled in preparing himself for this post: Although the classroom must not become an ivy tower separated from the totality of life, to protect the "speculative" nature of his task from being cluttered up by the demands of the "active" world, the scholar-teacher must be prepared, sometimes with great sacrifice, to go it alone. What he meant will soon become apparent.

The high point in my introduction to the two men in my senior year came during the second semester when they jointly offered "Sixteenth-Century English Culture: An Honors Course for Superior Seniors in English and Related Departments" which promised to deal with the "Reformation and Renaissance as expressed in English Literature, with special attention to Spenser." This seminar admitted twelve or thirteen—only six from the English Department and two or three from Modern Language. I was one of those selected from History. Draper sat at one end of a large rectangular table; Chappell, at the other. Heavy reading assignments were supplemented by special lectures, regular student reports and active discussions on the influence of the Greek and Latin Classics, medieval elements in the Renaissance spectrum (e.g., the troubador tradition of Courtly Love, the Roman de la Rose, linguistics, poetics and the like), continental influences, the breaking up of Christendom and Anglo-Saxon elements affecting ecclesiastical thinking, ownership of land, evolution of the kingship and language. Chappell was brilliant on these periods, introducing us...
early in the course to the resources offered by the unabridged edition of Sir James G. Frazer's *The Golden Bough* and motif indexes to a vast folk literature. Draper looked back from the Eighteenth Century upon the chaos, grandeur, esthetics and Romanticism of the English Renaissance. Never again—not even in the graduate school at Yale—was I to experience a course so well planned, so seminal, so fascinating in its complexity and so unforgettable in its scope and details! When it was over, I imporntuned my father for a fifth year at WVU leading to the A.M. He consented.

**New Emphases in the English Department**

From the start of his chairmanship, Draper was indefatigable in his efforts to establish a first-rate A.M. degree. Up to that time, graduate credit was customarily granted for undergraduate courses with a short term paper! (1) Draper sought to make the graduate level as independent as possible of the lower and to have its courses taught by demonstrable specialists, Chappell, of course, being his nominee for Anglo-Saxon, Beowulf and Chaucer as soon as the aging and ailing John Harrington Cox should relinquish them. He chose for himself the Eighteenth Century and the advanced courses in Shakespeare. (2) To complete the schedule of offerings he invited three well-known scholars to offer graduate courses in the summer school of 1930: Carleton Brown of New York University, Mary Isabel O'Sullivan of Bryn Mawr and Harold Watson of Iowa, urging them to send lists of books our library should have available for their use. (3) Then he gave much time to bringing the library up to date. It had been sadly neglected, the "old guard" having been content to allow students to plunder for term papers "old stuff" from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and the outmoded Cambridge histories of English and American Literature. Draper gave much time to compiling (and I, to typing) lists of hundreds of books to be ordered new from the university presses at home and abroad and one or two pages of those that might still be obtained on the second-hand market. (Many arrived in time for my thesis on Shakespeare's *Othello*.) (4) He then established a new seminar as a prerequisite to all thesis writing—entitled "Methods and Problems of Research in English Literature"—one of the most valuable and useful courses I have ever taken. (5) Finally, looking ahead to the day when WVU might offer a good doctorate in English, he proposed an oral examination for A.M. candidates—a foreshadowing of what might become "doctoral"—but voluntary and not obligatory. (To the best of my knowledge I was the only one who submitted to it, but I am getting ahead of my story.)

**Trouble in Eden and the Outcome**

The truth of an Arabian proverb ("Only the fruitful tree is stoned") soon manifested itself. For many years the "old guard" had been "kind" to engineering and agriculture majors by assigning them to special sections of Freshman English in which lower standards were maintained. These Draper abolished, remarking that he had never heard of "agriculturizing" the English language! Other departments were beginning to wonder what he or Dean Shortridge might do next, but criticism was muted and, being based on fear, was understandable. In time, it would have ceased had not an insecure member of the English staff decided to disturb the peace—first by complaining at departmental meetings and then subtly by anonymous letters threatening the lives of Draper, his wife Lulu and three children! Draper suspected the source but without concrete evidence could not invoke police protection. When, one day, I called his attention to an information card "M" had submitted for the department file, indicating that he earned two A.M. degrees—one from Clark University and the other from the University of Oxford, Draper immediately sent off an airmail to England for confirmation. When it became apparent that "M" had been promoted to an Associate Professorship on the basis of a lie he was quietly asked to resign, but since he had many friends on the hill and in the community who immediately began to blame Draper for the dismissal, Shortridge thought it expedient to remove him from the chairmanship without reducing his rank or salary. Expediency of this kind is well known in academic circles. Thereafter, Draper and Chappell became politically unimportant on the campus, the old standards were revived, and I served my second year as departmental secretary under a Christian gentleman whose doctorate was honorary, his chief claim to fame being that he had written the longest A.M. thesis ever accepted at WVU! I am wicked to add that during the year I assisted him (and, I suppose, to the end of his life) he spelled *Britannica* with two ts. He kindly allowed Draper to keep his curricular commitments, including eighteenth century and the advanced courses in Shakespeare. (2) To complete the schedule of offerings he invited three well-known scholars to offer graduate courses in the summer school of 1930: Carleton Brown of New York University, Mary Isabel O'Sullivan of Bryn Mawr and Harold Watson of Iowa, urging them to send lists of books our library should have available for their use. (3) Then he gave much time to bringing the library up to date. It had been sadly neglected, the "old guard" having been content to allow students to plunder for term papers "old stuff" from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and the outmoded Cambridge histories of English and American Literature. Draper gave much time to compiling (and I, to typing) lists of hundreds of books to be ordered new from the university presses at home and abroad and one or two pages of those that might still be obtained on the second-hand market. (Many arrived in time for my thesis on Shakespeare's *Othello*.) (4) He then established a new seminar as a prerequisite to all thesis writing—entitled "Methods and Problems of Research in English Literature"—one of the most valuable and useful courses I have ever taken. (5) Finally, looking ahead to the day when WVU might offer a good doctorate in English, he proposed an oral examination for A.M. candidates—a foreshadowing of what might become "doctoral"—but voluntary and not obligatory. (To the best of my knowledge I was the only one who submitted to it, but I am getting ahead of my story.)

**Trouble in Eden and the Outcome**

The truth of an Arabian proverb ("Only the fruitful tree is stoned") soon manifested itself. For many years the "old guard" had been "kind" to engineering and agriculture majors by assigning them to special sections of Freshman English in which lower standards were maintained. These Draper abolished, remarking that he had never heard of "agriculturizing" the English language! Other departments were beginning to wonder what he or Dean Shortridge might do next, but criticism was muted and, being based on fear, was understandable. In time, it would have ceased had not an insecure member of the English staff decided to disturb the peace—first by complaining at departmental meetings and then subtly by anonymous letters threatening the lives of Draper, his wife Lulu and three children! Draper suspected the source but without concrete evidence could not invoke police protection. When, one day, I called his attention to an information card "M" had submitted for the department file, indicating that he earned two A.M. degrees—one from Clark University and the other from the University of Oxford, Draper immediately sent off an airmail to England for confirmation. When it became apparent that "M" had been promoted to an Associate Professorship on the basis of a lie he was quietly asked to resign, but since he had many friends on the hill and in the community who immediately began to blame Draper for the dismissal, Shortridge thought it expedient to remove him from the chairmanship without reducing his rank or salary. Expediency of this kind is well known in academic circles. Thereafter, Draper and Chappell became politically unimportant on the campus, the old standards were revived, and I served my second year as departmental secretary under a Christian gentleman whose doctorate was honorary, his chief claim to fame being that he had written the longest A.M. thesis ever accepted at WVU! I am wicked to add that during the year I assisted him (and, I suppose, to the end of his life) he spelled *Britannica* with two ts. He kindly allowed Draper to keep his curricular commitments, including eighteenth century and the advanced courses in Shakespeare. (2) To complete the schedule of offerings he invited three well-known scholars to offer graduate courses in the summer school of 1930: Carleton Brown of New York University, Mary Isabel O'Sullivan of Bryn Mawr and Harold Watson of Iowa, urging them to send lists of books our library should have available for their use. (3) Then he gave much time to bringing the library up to date. It had been sadly neglected, the "old guard" having been content to allow students to plunder for term papers "old stuff" from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and the outmoded Cambridge histories of English and American Literature. Draper gave much time to compiling (and I, to typing) lists of hundreds of books to be ordered new from the university presses at home and abroad and one or two pages of those that might still be obtained on the second-hand market. (Many arrived in time for my thesis on Shakespeare's *Othello*.) (4) He then established a new seminar as a prerequisite to all thesis writing—entitled "Methods and Problems of Research in English Literature"—one of the most valuable and useful courses I have ever taken. (5) Finally, looking ahead to the day when WVU might offer a good doctorate in English, he proposed an oral examination for A.M. candidates—a foreshadowing of what might become "doctoral"—but voluntary and not obligatory. (To the best of my knowledge I was the only one who submitted to it, but I am getting ahead of my story.)
Draper and Chappell encouraged all their better graduate students to join the Modern Language Association because of the many professional benefits it provided. Before leaving Morgantown I raised enough money to become a life member and accompanied both mentors to the annual meeting in Washington, D.C., the following December. Draper participated brilliantly in one of the groups, and Lou and I sat together during the principal banquet at a table where we were joined by Dean Grace Landrum of the College of William and Mary and Dr. Emma M. Denkinger, a specialist in Sir Philip Sidney. Before leaving Morgantown I raised enough money to be ripe tomatoes which he served covered with vinegar and doused with sugar. His best escape from academic pressures was always a visit to some area of cultivation on the outskirts of Morgantown, either at spring planting or at harvest, once taking me with him at apple time. As we drove up to the outdoor cider press in which the chopped fruit had been stacked layer upon layer, the juice dripping slowly into catch-basins at the bottom I saw the flies buzzing around it and thought it unsanitary. He replied, as he often did when I was naive, with only a chuckle. He always wore his hat in the house, a habit that I assumed to be Quakerish until a North Carolina guidebook described the tradition as “the languid, rakish habit of an ante-bellum Southern planter.” (Lou’s father must have followed the custom and his grandfathers also.) On the campus Lou generously gave hours of time to any of his students who desired his counsel, and many troubled with purposelessness in those Depression years turned to him. I remember one much-loved son of a worried member of the “old guard” who was almost at the end of his wits over the problem. Lou talked with the boy frequently without seeming to give advice, opened several doors of interest, clarified his objectives, set him to work and gained the gratitude of his parents. Lou’s sympathy went out especially to the unemployed and those standing in breadlines, expressed one afternoon in a single sentence: “Cam, when I see all this suffering I know we teachers are overpaid!” (He was then earning $2,500 a year!) Questionnaires bothered him, especially those that pried into his personal charities. One from the Dean’s Office asked: “What work have you done, outside strictly professional lines, to advance education and public welfare?” (He had, through the years, financially aided most of his brothers and sisters and lightened the burdens of many of his students.) What the Dean wanted, I suppose, was answers upon the basis of which he might recommend promotions, such as: “I was faculty advisor to Eata Peesa Pie” or “I chaperoned the Sophomore Hop” or “I gathered old clothes for campus janitors” or “I helped send the football team to Parkersburg” or “I contributed to Campus Republicans for Hoover.” Lou’s reply was noncommittal indeed: “I have donated about $10,000 (over the past twenty years) and worked without salary about two months a year, but can’t say whether for education or for public welfare.” When, during my days in the Yale Graduate School I badly needed $500 which my parents could not supply, Lou promptly lent me that sum without interest. I did not know until Draper wrote me that he was working hard to pay off a mortgage on his new home!

Lou Chappell Characterized

Descended from a long line of farmers, Lou maintained a vegetable garden wherever he lived. I remember the one in the backyard at 395 Stewart Street, his specialty there being ripe tomatoes which he served covered with vinegar and doused with sugar. His best escape from academic pressures was always a visit to some area of cultivation on the outskirts of Morgantown, either at spring planting or at harvest, once taking me with him at apple time. As we drove up to the outdoor cider press in which the chopped fruit had been stacked layer upon layer, the juice dripping slowly into catch-basins at the bottom I saw the flies buzzing around it and thought it unsanitary. He replied, as he often did when I was naive, with only a chuckle. He always wore his hat in the house, a habit that I assumed to be Quakerish until a North Carolina guidebook described the tradition as “the languid, rakish habit of an ante-bellum Southern planter.” (Lou’s father must have followed the custom and his grandfathers also.) On the campus Lou generously gave hours of time to any of his students who desired his counsel, and many troubled with purposelessness in those Depression years turned to him. I remember one much-loved son of a worried member of the “old guard” who was almost at the end of his wits over the problem. Lou talked with the boy frequently without seeming to give advice, opened several doors of interest, clarified his objectives, set him to work and gained the gratitude of his parents. Lou’s sympathy went out especially to the unemployed and those standing in breadlines, expressed one afternoon in a single sentence: “Cam, when I see all this suffering I know we teachers are overpaid!” (He was then earning $2,500 a year!) Questionnaires bothered him, especially those that pried into his personal charities. One from the Dean’s Office asked: “What work have you done, outside strictly professional lines, to advance education and public welfare?” (He had, through the years, financially aided most of his brothers and sisters and lightened the burdens of many of his students.) What the Dean wanted, I suppose, was answers upon the basis of which he might recommend promotions, such as: “I was faculty advisor to Eata Peesa Pie” or “I chaperoned the Sophomore Hop” or “I gathered old clothes for campus janitors” or “I helped send the football team to Parkersburg” or “I contributed to Campus Republicans for Hoover.” Lou’s reply was noncommittal indeed: “I have donated about $10,000 (over the past twenty years) and worked without salary about two months a year, but can’t say whether for education or for public welfare.” When, during my days in the Yale Graduate School I badly needed $500 which my parents could not supply, Lou promptly lent me that sum without interest. I did not know until Draper wrote me that he was working hard to pay off a mortgage on his new home!

When I first knew him, Lou was entering his forties. I have no good photograph of him because he resented being “fussed over.” One surviving picture, taken when he was twenty-five, if doctored a little, will reveal the salient features of the middle-aged face. The thick, dark hair should be thinned and flattened, a small bald spot being allowed on the back of the head and a small Charlie Chaplin mustache added to the upper lip. The large, laughing eyes of the youthful portrait should remain unchanged. His pronunciation of certain words seemed unique to me until I noted in a North Carolina guidebook that the “coast people” had a “distinct flavor” in their speech and an “intonation, drawl and rhythm of utterance” not possible to print phonetically. Lou
frequently said, "Wall, I declah!" He pronounced literature as "litrachah" and the word that as it if were not. His voice was high pitched and nasal when he was enthusiastic or emphatic, as it was one day on the door-step of a one-room historical society somewhere in the foothills. Summoned to meet "the professor from Morgantown" out of season or on the wrong day of the week, the curator was reluctant to allow him to enter. Tired after a long journey, Lou drew himself up to his full height, raised his voice and exclaimed: "Am I given to understand that Podunk is denying access to a representative of the REPUBLIC OF LETTERS?" The overawed curator blinked his eyes, stuttered for a moment and capitulated.

In all my dealings with Lou over three decades, I never knew him to express hatred for anyone, not even for those who blocked his many attempts to present John Henry to the world. For example, ten years after I had left Morgantown, when "M" wrote me of his continuing hatred for Draper and his departmental "new deal," I passed the the news on to Lou, whose only reply was, "Well, 'M' may have his points!" That was understatement for, "One must give even the Devil his due." He would have said as much, doubtless, about the Borgia popes, Casanova, Nero, Caligula, Chaucer's pardoner, the murderer of Lord Randall, Jack the Ripper or the nice old ladies in Lavender and Old Lace. (He would avoid judging by remarking, "He's quite a character!"") Upon hearing that someone had left a fetus on the doorstep of one of the professors of German, I exclaimed: "Lou, I'm sick of the criminality of this little town—the death threats, anonymous letters, forged degrees, pulling down of standards and destroyed infants! I'm looking forward to entering a theological seminary next September where such things cannot happen." His reply, as always, was subdued: "Cam, I wouldn't be so sure." He had an interested way of consoling the disappointed. To mollify Draper at the loss of his chairmanship, he employed bravado, saying with a twinkle in his eye as he emphasized the words: "I'M THE ONLY ONE who ought to be head of department here—and I wouldn't touch the job with a ten-foot pole."

A Glance at Lou Chappell's Earlier Years

I cannot emphasize the compelling goals of his life without some attention to the road-blocks of his early years, necessitating an energy, a resilience, and a self-discipline unsuspected by the world. Those goals caused him to undergo privations, to accept a low profile, to be misunderstood even by his charming wife Helen, and to carry on his dedicated service to the literary profession and to the mountain people (to whom he was akin and whom he loved) without support or encouragement from others. His first major effort was to distance himself from the folkway in which he had been born in order to see and interpret the great elements of worth in it. The second was to secure a professional education much later in life than most people dared pursue it. The third was to gather, record and edit the literary relics of the folk, probing to their spiritual and psychological depths at a time when Victorians still dominated the universities and State organizations from the hills coal and iron to feed stomachs without giving thought to the songs that made life bearable!

Lou was born at Belvidere, Perquimans County, North Carolina, not far from the Albemarle Sound, on Oct. 29, 1890, on a farm of 206 acres in a community of about 101 persons, his parents being George Alder Chappell and Harriett Ann Copeland. He has two tombstone records—one military; the other giving the year of birth in "1889", taken from a faulty entry in the family bible. The Census of 1900 correctly removes the implication that his mother gave birth to her first two sons within the span of ten months! Lou was the second in a family of seven children, all but himself and Sidney following the agrarian pattern of life. In 1890, the community had no public schools, no town library, no central post office, no newspaper, no courthouse, no electricity and probably no paved streets. The Chappells along with the other Quaker families (Winslow, White, Perry, Stallings and Riddick) had settled on the land as early as 1750, all of English yeoman stock and belonging to a great wave of immigrants only some of whom lingered at the coast. The others were attracted by the everlasting hills. Originally known as "Newby's Crossing" or "Newby's Bridge," Belvidere was watered by the Perquimans River, once navigable all the way to the Sound. Cultural influences were provided by the former maintained a one-room elementary school; the latter a small "academy" which, in its earliest history, catered to holy living and to "readin', writin' and 'rithmatic:" The town had no hospital, no town library, no central post office, no newspaper, no courthouse, no electricity and probably no paved streets. The Chappells along with the other Quaker families (Winslow, White, Perry, Stallings and Riddick) had settled on the land as early as 1750, all of English yeoman stock and belonging to a great wave of immigrants only some of whom lingered at the coast. The others were attracted by the everlasting hills. Originally known as "Newby's Crossing" or "Newby's Bridge," Belvidere was watered by the Perquimans River, once navigable all the way to the Sound. Cultural influences were provided by two organizations of Friends—the Piney Woods Monthly Meeting and the Eastern Quarterly Meeting—both dedicated to holy living and to "readin', writin' and 'rithmatic." The former maintained a one-room elementary school; the latter a small "academy" which, in its earliest history, emphasized only what we call the high-school subjects. Enrollments were small and fluctuating, requiring a teaching staff of no more than three women. Lou avoided the

Like Mark Twain, Chappell did his best to avoid the camera. This rare photograph of Chappell in uniform was taken about 1918.
first by attending the one-room Lamb's Fork School, neces-
sitating a daily walk of four miles—two each way. He did
not begin his high school work at the Belvidere Academy
until he was eighteen and then gave to it only three years
(1909-1912), farming chores having always the priority!
According to the Census, Lou's father could read and
write, but he deemed "book larnin'" completely unneces-
sary to succeed with the fertile farmland which, for
decades, had invariably passed from fathers to children.
Because of his thirst for knowledge, I suspect that Lou
was more a Copeland than a Chappell, for curiosity and
imagination were more pronounced in him than in the
others when the family gathered in the evenings around
the blazing hearth to read the Bible, hear stories of the
outer world, sing ballads beloved by their forefathers and
discuss the gossip of the community. He enjoyed and
remembered the trips by wagon over dirt roads to the
county seat at Hartford. I know not how much the Quaker
religion and its often silent meetings affected his youth,
but in his riper years he was a good listener, moderate
in his use of words and remarkably self-reliant in
Emerson's definition of the term—that is, loyal to his
"inner music;" never hesitating to "march to the beat of a
different drummer" from that of others. (His paternal
grandfather had had many of these characteristics, in 1851
being disowned for marrying "contrary to church
principles," as he put it.) After graduating from the
Academy in the late spring of 1912 he took to
the roads, selling fruit trees and Bibles to raise money for
tuition at Wake Forest College, which he entered in
September of the following year. (He actually worked his
way through that institution, perhaps selling more Bibles
than fruit trees in a predominantly Baptist community!) When he received his A.B. in 1917 at the age of 26, the
yearbook (The Howler) described him as being five feet,
eight inches high and weighing 135 pounds. (He was actu-
al only 5'6"—his bushy hair making him seem taller.)
His classmates described him as having "high finger
effects seated in a heart of courtesy"—a good descrip-
tion of him throughout life. His extracurriculars included
debating, the Allen Club, Student Senate and Euzelian
Literary Society. When World War I reached its climax,
the two years (actually one and a half plus two
summers) spent in Chicago deepened his knowledge of
Anglo-Saxon, Middle English and Chaucer, John
Matthews Manly being his chief mentor, but he had
difficulty convincing other faculty members of the
appropriateness of West Virginia folklore as a subject for
a dissertation. It was the old cry, "Can any good come
out of Nazareth?" One instructor in American Literature
berated him for finding folk elements in the journals and
works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, asserting that the
Concord writer was a gentleman of "great cultivation and
remote from anything vulgar, folkish or plebeian." One
staff member was impressed, however, making arrange-
ments to direct the dissertation as Lou worked on it back
in Morgantown, whereupon he resigned from the faculty.
Lou never hearing from him again. He was now 35! To
meet the residence requirements in yet another institu-
tion and take another year or two of graduate courses
followed by another oral examination and another search
for a dissertation director—all this was alarming. It then
occurred to him that he should approach the University of
North Carolina in his native state, outlining his prepa-
ration and his plan. Unaware that a Guy B. Johnson was
then teaching English at WVU, con-
tinuing in that rank until 1925. Those first three years on
our campus were outwardly quiet and indistinguished,
but inwardly they were important, for he arrived at the
conviction that the pursuit of balladry and the lore of the
folk were to be his primary vocation. That seemed to
necessitate the completion of the Ph.D. but in a school
in which folklore was held in esteem. Where, outside of
Harvard (where Francis James Child had gathered The
Summer and Scottish Popular Ballads) might one find
such a place? The summer of 1924 he spent hopefully at
Columbia, whether taking courses or auditing them I can-
not discover, but certainly exploring all possibilities for
a dissertation in the area of his interest. Disappointed
there, he accepted a two-year tuition scholarship, effective
in the fall of 1925, at the University of Chicago, having
by this time discovered that his colleague, John Harrington
Cox, had confused John Henry with John Hardy and that
the solution to the problem was still unattained. We have
just a glimpse of him when about to leave for the "windy
city." Having read in the Bluefield (Va.) News of Sunday,
Aug. 30, 1925, an account of the hanging of Ben Hardin
at Tazewell, Virginia, in 1866, he set out for the Big Bend
Tunnel of the C&O Railroad to interview L. W. Hill and
others in the Hinton area. A garbled account of his con-
versation with a reporter of the Daily Dispatch
of Bluefield, West Virginia, survives: A "learned professor
was here in pursuit of research work," implying that the
"crime committed by Hardin" may have influenced the
so-called Hardy song and desiring information from any
who might know the particulars. (Lou's name was not
mentioned, the reporter volunteering that the professor
"will have occasion to address the students of the Univer-
sity of Chicago along these lines . . . ") From this point
onward, Lou would follow John Henry until he had all
the answers and would become—posthumously,
perhaps—the greatest collector of West Virginia folklore.
The two years (actually one and a half plus two
summers) spent in Chicago deepened his knowledge of
Anglo-Saxon, Middle English and Chaucer, John
Matthews Manly being his chief mentor, but he had
difficulty convincing other faculty members of the
appropriateness of West Virginia folklore as a subject for
a dissertation. It was the old cry, "Can any good come
out of Nazareth?" One instructor in American Literature
berated him for finding folk elements in the journals and
works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, asserting that the
Concord writer was a gentleman of "great cultivation and
remote from anything vulgar, folkish or plebeian." One
staff member was impressed, however, making arrange-
ments to direct the dissertation as Lou worked on it back
in Morgantown, whereupon he resigned from the faculty.
Lou never hearing from him again. He was now 35! To
meet the residence requirements in yet another institu-
tion and take another year or two of graduate courses
followed by another oral examination and another search
for a dissertation director—all this was alarming. It then
occurred to him that he should approach the University of
North Carolina in his native state, outlining his prepa-
ration and his plan. Unaware that a Guy B. Johnson was
then teaching English at WVU, con-
man passed it on to the director of Johnson’s dissertation and that he in turn shared the contents with Johnson who, without any acknowledgement, incorporated some of Lou’s ideas in a book that was eventually published by the University of North Carolina Press!!! WVU promoted Lou to Associate Professor in 1927.

Second Annual West Virginia Day
(Continued from page 2)

We just celebrated our bi-centennial of the city of Clarksburg and the bi-centennial of Harrison County . . . . One of the projects for the bi-centennial program was to re-enact the Harry Powers murder trial . . . . The story that Davis Grubb based his book, Night of the Hunter on . . . . Now that happened in 1930, but every person that I’ve talked with has their own Harry Powers story . . . . We re-enacted the trial as part of the bi-centennial in cooperation with the Clarksburg Art Center. We were going to do five performances, which were sold out before we opened, and we did six additional performances which were [also] sold out . . . . [The point is] that people are interested in the local history. They’re not necessarily all interested in Stonewall Jackson and Amy Vance. They’re also interested in what really happened in their town and in their little part of history.

John Stealey, III
Professor of History
and Chairman,
Division of Social Sciences,
Shepherd College

Years ago, in an attempt to stimulate thinking and consideration, I challenged a West Virginia audience that one of the problems is that West Virginians have no heroes . . . . Of course, the participants became upset as West Virginians are prone to do and many later wrote less-than cordial letters to me . . . . The group was requested to name people who performed within a state context, heroic selfless tasks, deeds, in any pursuit of human or societal betterment. A remarkable silence prevailed that was broken with the usual mentioning of Thomas Jonathan Jackson, Chuck Yeager, and Pearl S. Buck. Of course none of these distinguished people performed their contributions while residing in the state. Most left. The fact is, if we take Jackson, there wouldn’t have been a state if he had his way . . . . Perhaps one of the unresolved historical mysteries is why native West Virginians frequently distinguish themselves in various pursuits outside the Appalachian context. Residency within the context probably would have inhibited these contributions. Is there something repressive in the cultural and intellectual environment? Or is it because the intelligent and aggressive migrate elsewhere? These are things West Virginians don’t like to hear . . . .

The last heroes emerged in western Virginia in 1861 when Virginia’s political exigency became West Virginia’s opportunity. If one wants to discover the heroes of the Mountain State, one can hardly do better than look at the founding fathers, the ultimate rejectors of eastern Virginia domination and . . . ultimate rejectors of secession. The decisions and the political actions of people like Waitman T. Willey, Francis H. Pierpont, William G. Brown, Archibald W. Campbell, Benjamin F. Kelley, and others . . . . were never easy and were fraught with personal and political danger. No political or constitutional precedent existed for the creative and resourceful actions that the founders undertook during the Civil War . . . .

I submit that this was West Virginia’s finest hour. Finest hour . . . .

What we as devoted citizens and as West Virginians must discover and understand is what, where and why the promise of 1863 went wrong, build upon the inherent strengths that the state possesses, and strike the blows, politically and culturally if not physically, when the opportunities present themselves.

Dan Gooding,
President,
Highland Financial Group

I remember the centennial [1963] of West Virginia very well . . . . My father and I took a walk . . . . and something came over me. This particular day sort of brought into focus the grandeur and glory of this state that we’re all lucky enough to live in and certainly at least be in today if you’re visiting. We had, what has to be, certainly in my memory, the largest dogwood that I’ve ever seen as part of this group of dogwoods on the top of the highest point on the farm. This was an April day, an absolutely flawless day, with a perfect blue sky without a cloud in it. We went all the way to the top of this hill, probably got there about 10:30 in the morning, and here dad and I were just drinking in the verdant landscape, all easing into the green of summer. And we were sitting beneath this majestic dogwood tree and dad said to me, he said “Danny,” he said, “look straight up . . . .” . . . . We looked up through the dogwood tree and the branches all criss-crossed and here were these big white flowers against this perfect blue background. And I never forgot that day. My dad and I stood up, walked out and looked out over the landscape. You could see nothing out there except rolling hills and beautiful green countryside and our farm which was completely the center of our lives at that point.

And I remember my dad saying to me, “Danny,” he said, “there’s nobody,” he said, “I don’t care who it is or where they are,” he said, “there’s nobody that cares more
...Wheeling was a bumbling little town in 1798...and it probably would not have amounted to a whole lot had it not been for the efforts primarily of Henry Clay and some other folks to push the national road on to the Ohio River. They elected to push it into Wheeling, West Virginia, Wheeling, Virginia at that time. And there was a tremendous transition in that town and by the time the Civil War broke out the white population of Wheeling brought it to the second largest city in Virginia, in the way Virginians of that time looked at their cities, the second largest city, behind Richmond. It’s a remarkable thing. All of a sudden we had a customs house in Wheeling in the 1850s. It became a port of entry to the United States. Things were coming up, goods were coming up the river and going on across into various parts of the United States, across the national road.

The point is that all this growth was made possible because of transportation. We must, as a state, get the rest of these highways done, to open our state up so that we can continue to develop. You can see what the highway system coupled up with the education system here in this [the Morgantown] area has done for our business environment. That “Corridor H” [interstate highway] that would connect that great wealth of northern Virginia and Maryland and the eastern seaboard...[and] the middle of West Virginia, making easy access to our state, it’s imperative that be done. It’s a tragedy to me, as a citizen of the state, that it’s not already been built. The highway that’s proposed that would connect Morgantown on up with Wheeling needs to be built. The southwestern, very poor quadrant of West Virginia, the highway that’s proposed, connecting them over with the Kanawha Valley in Charleston needs to be built. Thank goodness we’re finally getting 64 done the rest of the way so that the lower end of Interstate 81 and the lower end of the valley of Virginia is connecting now easily to Charleston.

When I think about 125 years of West Virginia history, I realize that 125 years is really not that long of a time. My great-grandmother, Virginia Highsley Hager, was born in 1874 and she lived to be a hundred years old...so I remember her very well...That the state was only 11 years old when she was born, puts it into a context of a lifetime for me...

Appalachian heritage in our area has not been seen in

about West Virginia than I do.” And I think that whole day, and the fact that it was 1963 and the state was almost 100 years old, had a profound lasting effect on me.

To me, it's so exciting to think about industrialization coming to our state and meeting with Appalachia, and this has created a very colorful history, one that needs to be interpreted. I hope that the tide is turning for this...recently government officials and civic leaders are recognizing the potential of history and tourism...The governor, (Arch Moore), of course, has made a commitment to the “main-street” program which is a program for preserving some of our smaller and middle-sized downtowns in the state. And part of our congressional delegation is extremely interested in a project called “Coal Ways,” which is a plan to develop a road in southern West Virginia to knit coal communities together and to use that as a focal point for tourism.

Now how do we fit in as West Virginia historians?...We have the opportunity to share what we have learned...To try to promote history...We can help our fellow West Virginians learn about their past, raise self-esteem...and be proud of our past 125 years.

Ron Lewis,
Professor of History,
West Virginia University

Traditional customs are more resilient in West Virginia than most other states because the population has remained so over-whelmingly rural; In 1870 nearly all of the population was defined as rural and even after the state’s economy had gone through an industrial transformation, by 1950, three-fourths of the population remained rural. The proportion diminished only slightly since then, for according to the 1980 census about two-thirds of the people in the state are still categorized that way. Herein lies a primary source for the conflicting images of the state. West Virginia is and for a long time has been a rural-industrial rather than rural-agricultural society. As early as 1920 only one third of the population lived on farms and that figure continued a long decline until by 1980 only 2.3 percent of the people...lived on farms. Seen from another perspective, the number of people who gave agriculture as their occupation fell from 125,000 in 1920
to a mere 11,000 in 1980. Industrialization is closely linked with urbanization, both in reality and in the popular mind. An urban life is antithetical to rural customs, but because West Virginia is a rural-industrialized state, the neat dichotomies that we create in order to understand the social complexities really don't fit.

In my view, the emphasis on tradition, is not unique simply because it seems paradoxical in an industrialized state, but because traditions have been so naturally fused into modern life. Therefore cooperation abides with competition, human relationships are as important as contractual ones, and "whose boy are you" really does still mean something. The tradition of sons following their fathers into the pits as they did when coal was king and mining was still a craft coexist with sophisticated technology which has reduced the number of miners in West Virginia from 150,000 to 23,000 in the last three decades alone.

Most of us have observed also, at one time or another, the paradox of mountaineers who can't receive the signal from a TV station on the other side of the mountain, but are directly linked into a worldwide communication system when they purchase satellite dishes for the backyard. In effect you can know more about Moscow Politburo than you can know about the county seat.

The rugged unpopulated landscape in West Virginia remains the overriding physical reality that has controlled the imagination from the beginning. Thus we are attracted by the beautiful mountains, clean air, and rushing streams. And yet, because we are as dependent as any people must be in an industrial society we are appalled by the poor roads, almost hopelessly inadequate educational system, and petty, cynical politics. As one demoralized WVU faculty member remarked to me before he retired, "West Virginia is a marvelous place as long as you look up at the mountains and not down in the hollows."

In order to reduce all of this into workable, everyday shorthand, these paradoxes are distilled into nuances such as that so aptly captured in a poem which appeared a few years ago in Wonderful West Virginia. And I'll close with that. "Federal statistics indicate that West Virginia has the highest percentage of road fatalities and lowest crime rate. I take this to mean that the roads are crooked and the people are straight."
Selected Accessions List

A survey of property of the Blue Sulphur Springs resort of Greenbrier County, including land (24 acres), cabins, dining house, and stables. Conducted by David Hanna, the survey was ordered by the Greenbrier County Superior Court in order to settle a transaction dispute regarding the sale of the property by Nancy Patterson and the heirs of James Patterson to Joseph Martin and Charles Carraway.

Transcription of an oral history interview by Neil M. Johnson of the Harry S. Truman Library with Ken Hechler. Hechler, born in 1914 in Roslyn, New York, received an A.B., Swarthmore 1935; M.A., Columbia 1936; Ph.D., Columbia 1940 in political science which he later taught at Columbia, Princeton, and Marshall universities. He served as a U.S. Army combat historian in Europe during World War II. Hechler was a research assistant to President Franklin D. Roosevelt and was special assistant to President Harry S. Truman. He was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives as a Democrat from the Fourth Congressional District of West Virginia, 1958-77.

A letter from Capt. John Pomroy of Clark’s Station, Crooked Creek, Pennsylvania, to Gen. Anthony Wayne, commander of the U.S. Army’s Western Department, written during the height of the final Indian War in the Ohio Valley. Capt. Pomroy reports upon the recent activities of his command and requests further instructions, asking specifically whether or not a militia should be drafted for a future campaign. Pomroy estimates that he could raise “between two and three hundred men for a volunteer expedition . . . if peace is not concluded with the Indians.”