Building Eden

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BUILDING EDEN

PHIL ANTHROPOD
I got to know Phil Anthropod in a creative writing class at St. Cloud State (at the time College, previously Normal School, now University). I was a student of English literature and Journalism. Phil was a campus free spirit; a party animal and wannabe hippy before that term was invented. Although we became life-long friends, Phil would always be many things I never was.

I first met Phil the year before in my freshman communications course. I had come to college—this college in particular—to study theater and literature with a plan to become a high school English teacher and direct school plays like my high school mentor. In that seminal Fall Quarter, I came to realize that I would never be the college actor I had hoped. Phil was in the same communications course and working together on our assignments, I saw that while I wasn’t meant to be an actor, I did have a penchant for writing. This first manifested itself in a series of metaphysical essays I wrote in that course. Phil also encouraged me to volunteer for the college newspaper, *The College Chronicle*, where I spent the next four college years. I did a variety of feature articles as a Freshman, wrote more and served as Features Editor my sophomore year, Editorial Editor my junior year and Editor in Chief my senior year in college, all the while writing pieces for most issues. Meanwhile, Phil started on the first of many unsuccessful projects—a musical about college life in the 1960s, and some intense, undergraduate poetry.

Since college, Phil has drifted in and out of my life, most times making the briefest of visits, and occasionally staying for days at a time. One night while my wife was out of town on an accreditation visit, there was a knock at the door. It was Phil stopping by to show me one of the many comedy sketches he wrote over the years. It was a radio drama satirizing the Reagan Presidency. I was able to talk him into letting me produce this, which I did after recruiting three other actors to join me. We opened and closed in one night on the main stage of a local settlement house gym. Phil’s radio play—which of course I took credit for—was a great hit and he was invited to write a sequel for the annual meeting of a women’s club, which he did without complaint.
Recently, Phil stopped by briefly to tell me that he was making real progress on his novel about Appalachian architecture and the changing nature of rural community. I had first learned that Phil was thinking about this project nearly two decades ago. For most of that time, Phil was occupied with other things but apparently, he found time to make notes somewhat regularly. For most of this time, I only saw him annually as he stopped by after Thanksgiving every year to ghost write a Christmas Letter for our family in semi-free verse. In all, Phil wrote more than 25 of these annual Christmas letters. After finishing the last one, he told me in his distinctive, laconic manner, “My friend, I’ve said everything I have to say about Christmas in your family. My well has run dry.” I always took credit for these annual contributions by Phil, since I knew he was embarrassed by them and considered this kind of work-for-hire to be on a level with writing greeting card captions.

Throughout my career as a journalist, nonprofit administrator, editor and college professor, I wrote a great many things. Writing in each of these fields is generally viewed in very utilitarian terms—communicate your message in the clearest, most efficient manner possible, and don’t sweat the language or the quality of the writing. Unfortunately, every time I would attempt to do this, Phil would show up and sit just behind me reading over my shoulder and offering critiques on the internal rhymes, metaphors, vocabulary, and a seemingly unlimited number of literary minutia.

Once Phil’s literary advice even had a major impact on my career. I had written an abstract for a conference paper to be called If Not For Profit, For What? Between the time I submitted the abstract and the date of the conference, the conference chairman called to inform me that he liked the idea of the paper, but the title would not work because it was already the title of a book authored by one of the other conference participants. Since I was not then active in the field of nonprofit studies, I was not aware of this new book. As I got off the phone, I asked Phil, who had just wandered in as if on cue, what I should do. Over the next half hour, he sketched out an idea as I listened. The new title would be one of my best known and most cited article, . . . And Lettuce is Nonanimal. It was to be the same paper, about the meaninglessness of the negative term nonprofit, but Phil’s idea for the title made all the difference. It also led to a new introduction in which I laid out, in mock seriousness, the case for why, in the same vein, lettuce should be characterized not as a vegetable but as non-animal.

Phil often helped me, but he was always pretty self-sufficient in his own writing. I cannot take credit for any of the characters Phil has invented here. Phil told me the last time we talked that he had gradually gotten to know, and become good friends with Ralph, Rosemary, Adam and the others. “You know,” he mused, “It’s really true what they tell you in creative writing workshops. At first it was a real effort just to try to name and flesh out these characters. For the longest time, I couldn’t
even remember their names and I didn’t really understand how they related to one another. Then, in the quiet hours late at night and early in the morning I started to hear them talking to one another and I just wrote down what they said. After that, things just sort of fell into place. Each time a new character appeared, I just listened to what the others had to say about them.”

That last statement sort of sums up Phil’s writing philosophy in a nutshell. We both hope you enjoy what he has written here.

Roger A. Lohmann
Morgantown WV
Rosemary turned the letter over and over as she asked her deceased husband how many more surprises he would have for her? Then she laughed to herself softly. June looked up from the news magazine she was reading and asked “What’s so funny, Rose? Anything you care to tell me about?”

“No, I was just thinking about my visit this afternoon with Sister Elizabeth. I haven’t talked to that many nuns, but she seemed to be one of a kind!”

“I wish I’d been here to meet her.”

“You would have liked her, I think. She’s very fond of Glenlivet.”

June smiled and turned back to her magazine. As she did so, Rosemary recalled Linda Sue’s hesitation that morning as she said, “Aunt Rose, there’s a call for you. A woman who says her name is Sister Elizabeth. I thought it must be a charity call, so I told her to write down her request and send it to you, but she said it wasn’t that. She said she needs to see you as soon as possible. Something about Uncle Harry and a private investigator he hired. Two years ago. She says she has a letter for you.”

After the business with Claire, it seemed like Harry relied on private detectives a lot. “Okay, yes. Ask her to drop by this afternoon about two. Jane will be at her doctor’s appointment, but you and I can meet with her. She can tell us what this is all about.”

“I will.” Linda Sue said, and then she added, “I don’t know that many nuns. Do we need to do anything special for her?”

“Don’t worry, dear. She wants to see us. We’ll just be polite and listen.”

At five minutes to two that afternoon, the doorbell rang, and Rosemary heard Linda Sue’s footsteps, then the door opening. Linda Sue said something, and a loud voice announced, “I am Sister Elizabeth Sylvester. I have an appointment with Mrs. Mueller.” Linda Sue said something in reply and a few moments later the two of them appeared at the entry to the parlor where Rosemary received visitors.

“Aunt Rose? Sister Elizabeth is here.”
“Thank you, Linda Sue.” Her niece excused herself and left quickly. “Won’t you sit down, Sister? Would you like some coffee or tea?”

“No thank you,” she replied, “but I wouldn’t refuse a shot of scotch, if you have one. Neat.”

“Yes, of course.” Rosemary replied and walked over to the credenza where Harry had long kept the liquor. Sister Elizabeth said, “I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have asked that, but it’s been a hard couple of days. You see, my father—my biological father, that is—died recently and I’m trying to clear up his affairs. Normally, mother—mother superior that is—doesn’t like to let sisters go out alone for personal matters, but I’m his only surviving relation, and there really wasn’t an option.”

“Oh, I’m sorry to hear that. About your father, I mean. I guess we have that in common. My husband died recently as well.”

“Yes. I know. May God grant you peace.” Then, after a brief pause, “That’s why I’m here.”

Rosemary handed her the glass of scotch. “Thank you, Mrs. Mueller.”

“Please. Call me Rosemary. Or Rose.”

“Thank you, Rose. That’s a lovely name.” She gulped down the entire shot of Scotch before continuing, “As I was saying, my father died last month and I’m his only survivor. He was a private investigator, and he left way too many loose ends to clean up. Way too many. I guess that’s why I need a drink! Dad had a lot of cases over the years. Mostly divorce and infidelity. I’ve spent most of the last three days looking through files with countless black and white pictures of unfaithful spouses in seedy motel rooms shot through telephoto lenses. . .”

“Oh dear,” Rosemary said, “That must have been very difficult for you.”

Sister Elizabeth laughed, “Yes, but not quite in the way you might think. I came later to my vocation than most sisters, and I lived through the sexual revolution. I had done plenty of living before taking my vows of celibacy. You might call it an informed choice. I’m not bothered by what my Dad did. It paid for my college and he always saw that my mom and I lived well even after their divorce. It’s mostly the prospect of him standing outside at night in the cold and rain just to take those awful pictures that troubles me.”

“I understand. . . By the way, would you have another drink?”

“Yes, if you don’t mind.” Rosemary got up and moved to the bar and poured out another shot of scotch for the nun. She already felt surprisingly comfortable with this large, plain spoken, somewhat ungainly nun with her loud voice and candid manner. “Were you very close to your father?”
“Not really. But now that he’s gone, I feel that I owe him this. Clearing up his affairs and cleaning out his office.”

Over the next half hour, their conversation ranged widely across Sister Elizabeth’s sometimes strained relations with her father, Rosemary’s feelings for Harry, and assorted other commonalities of two women who found unexpected solace in one another’s company. At some point, Linda Sue rejoined them, bringing a tray of Earl Gray tea and a plate of shortbread cookies with her. Rosemary and Linda Sue both had a cup, but their guest declined, her thirst apparently quenched by four fingers of scotch. Finally, Sister Elizabeth said, “Forgive me, but I still haven’t told you why I came here today. Were you aware that your husband hired my father on several cases over the years?”

Seeing the pained expression that came across Rosemary’s face, she continued “Oh, no. Don’t worry. This wasn’t that kind of case! As nearly as I can tell from the notes Dad left, it was some sort of question about land surveys. There doesn’t seem to be any kind of formal report, but I’ve brought you a copy of Dad’s notes on the case. Also, there was a sealed envelope for you in the file, along with a note from your husband to my dad. I brought them both here for you.”

Rosemary opened and read the note, “Marvin, In the event of my death, please deliver the enclosed envelope to my wife, Rosemary.” It was signed Harry Mueller in the familiar handwriting that Rosemary immediately recognized. Thus prompted, she recalled Harry telling her once that Marvin Gardiner had originally been recommended by his attorney, Ed Graham, and had become his favorite “go to” private investigator. She just wondered what this particular case was about.

“I know your husband died a few months back. I guess my dad died before he had a chance to deliver this to you, although I don’t know why that should be. Anyway, I wanted to complete the job for him. Another case closed.” This comment might be apt from Sister Elizabeth’s perspective, Rosemary thought, but this is all very curious. It may just be opening for me.

After a few more minutes of rambling, casual conversation, Sister Elizabeth thanked Rosemary again for the scotch and said she had to go. “The Mueller case is now closed as far as I’m concerned. I didn’t see anything else in the file, but if I run across anything else, I’ll let you know. I still have a few more file drawers to go through,” she offered on her way out. “Yes, of course.” Rosemary replied at the door. “Please come and see me again” she added. “Perhaps after I’ve read whatever is in here, I may be able to tell you more about what your father was doing for my husband.” Even as she said it, however, she had a sense that it was not true, and that she would never again see the large nun with a taste for life and scotch.
As she thought back over the afternoon, Rosemary continued to fumble with the sealed envelope that seemed to smell of cheap cigars and tacos. “I think I want to be alone when I read this,” she said to June, who smiled in acknowledgment without looking up from the magazine she was reading. “I’m going up to my room for a while. Please tell Linda Sue that I’ll be down for dinner.”

“Okay” was all that June said as Rosemary rose from her chair and left the room. Although she never looked up, June had lost interest in the article on page 57 of the magazine she had been reading. Her thoughts were for her friend and the conversation she had had earlier that day with John Graham. She was only vaguely aware that Rose seemed very concerned about the unopened letter she had received from her afternoon visitor.
Dearest Rosemary,

Funny, she thought, Harry hasn’t called me Rosemary for years. Not since that time . . . Her thoughts were lost momentarily in the sights and sounds and smells of a vacation they had taken to New Zealand years ago. Then abruptly her reverie ended, and she looked back at the paper in front of her. She noticed that the letter in Harry’s familiar handwriting didn’t have a date.

The note continued:

I have learned some things that I don’t fully understand but that I must tell you about because they may affect you at some point now that I’m gone.
I hired Marvin Gardener to check this out, and he just sent me the enclosed report. I don’t know yet what any of it means, but since Mueller Mining bought all of the land in this area years ago before the coal economy went bust, some tricky legal and property questions could come up at some point. I hope that in this case forewarned is forearmed. If it comes to that, Edward will need to be consulted. I’ve found that on property matters, he’s a real wiz, and should be able to take care of whatever this turns out to be. He has all of this information already but claims to know even less about it than I do.

Meanwhile, I will continue to try to work out whatever this is all about and I hope I can put the whole business to rest so you never have to see this.

Love, Harry

Harry apparently never cleared up whatever he was referring to, or he would have told her rather than leaving this curious note in the files of this private investigator to be found and delivered by his daughter the nun. He was nothing if not meticulous in his business affairs, Rosemary thought as she tore open the smaller envelope that was also inside the larger envelope and read the detective’s report:

Mr. Mueller:

I did as you suggested and checked out the property records you were concerned about over in the Clerk’s office in Dare County. There is definitely something fishy going on out there! The County Clerk, named Adam Sennett, tried very hard to distract me from what I was looking for, and even pretended at one point to be unable to find the records I requested. As you suspected, the survey measurements don’t add up right, and there is no record of any separate deed for that particular parcel of land. In short, it appears that a large chunk of property, right smack in the middle of your holdings there, simply doesn’t exist. No survey. No deeds. Nothing. Amazing as that seems, there are about six square miles of Dare County, West Virginia that apparently don’t exist as far as the records are concerned. In the entire history of the county reaching back before the original survey map attributed to George Washington no one seems to have ever owned this property! I say “attributed to” because Washington’s signature on the survey report looks pretty fishy to me. The signature is smudged so badly you can’t really tell, but I got a few samples of Washington’s signature from various places, and it definitely doesn’t look at all like this document was actually signed by George Washington. I compared it with other copies of Washington’s signature, and although they come from much later when he was a general and then President, they don’t look anything like this one. We could get a handwriting expert to take a look if you’d like.
In the meantime, I also send one of my guys out there to check things out on the ground. Near where the missing property is supposed to be, he encountered a woven wire fence. He said it must have been eight feet tall with barbed wire at the top, with those red, white and blue signs saying this was federal property and No Trespassing. I checked with some guys I know at the Pentagon and they say there are no records of the feds having anything there. I suppose it could be some kind of secret facility. Area 52 maybe? But there isn’t much else I can do for you.

Harry apparently had requested further verification of Washington’s signature and there was another single page report in the file. Behind Harry’s letter was a report on official-looking letterhead with a Richmond, Virginia address from Hans Belson, certified graphologist. Rosemary noted that it was addressed to Marvin Martin, Private Investigator. Harry had said the detective’s name was Gardiner, not Martin, Rosemary noted. I wonder why the graphologist got that wrong. It’s probably just a simple mistake.

The letter was very brief but unequivocal. Mr. Belson indicated that he was familiar with nearly all of the surviving signatures of George Washington, and it was his opinion that the signature in question, was definitely not authentic; it was not even a particularly good forgery. In the second paragraph, Belson offered a detailed critique of the signature noting that while it was definitely old, probably late 18th century, there were eight specific ways in which it did not correspond with Washington’s penmanship.

Rosemary carefully placed Harry’s note, Belson’s letter and Marvin Gardiner’s report back in the large envelope and placed the entire file in the lower left-hand drawer of her desk, locking it after she did so and placing the key in the large covered pottery jar, she kept on the fireplace mantel. She didn’t lock that drawer often, but in this case it seemed appropriate. What on earth could this be about? She asked herself. A George Washington impostor? And where precisely was Dare County, West Virginia? Miles of unowned land completely surrounded by land Mueller Mining—she—now owned? What on earth was going on?

She picked up her cell phone to call John Graham to tell him about the note, but then carefully placed the phone back on her desk before dialing. No, she said to herself, I need to think about this a bit before I tell anyone. Harry said Edward already knew all about this, and if John needed to know about it, Edward would have already told him.

She continued to muse on this strange turn of events as she straightened her hair, changed her dress and got ready to go down to dinner.
Rosemary’s home, the house that Harry had built for her so many years ago, where she had come to live after they were married, was relatively modest in proportion to Harry’s wealth but it was, nonetheless, the crown jewel in the wealthiest suburb of the small Ohio city where they had spent their married lives together. Rosemary loved the house for the many happy memories that it held for her and had seldom left the house and surrounding grounds since Harry’s death.

One major exception was her trip, on the advice of her lawyers, Ed and John Graham, to Landover, West Virginia when she was called for jury duty there. She was certain that Madeline and her lawyers saw it as a good public relations move in light of the large parcel of property the Mueller Mining Company owned in Dare County, but she saw it somewhat differently. Her visit there might, she
thought, shed some light on the letter that Harry had left her and the mysterious large parcel of property that seemed to be missing in plain sight that Harry’s private detective had apparently uncovered and that she had first heard of during that visit from Sister Elizabeth.

The house that Harry built had a total of 14 bedroom suites, arranged in four clusters. Foremost, with views out over the grounds were a pair of “his and hers” bedrooms, adjoining sitting rooms with large walk-in closets and Harry’s private office that made up the master bedroom suite. Altogether, this suite took up a major portion of the entire second floor of the house. The entire third floor of the house was divided into three four-room clusters, two rooms on each side of a short hallway, each with its own separate stairway and elevator accesses. The entire interior of the house was designed and decorated in the modified arts and crafts style by a follower of Charles and Henry Greene, using a range of native Appalachian hardwoods. It gave her living space a softness and patina that made it a pleasure just to walk around in.

Her friend June, her niece Linda Sue, and Harry’s marketing guru Madeline each occupied suites on the third floor of the house. The fourth suite was reserved for any guests they might bring into the house. The other third floor cluster was used only infrequently since Harry’s death. It had in Rosemary’s opinion an oppressively male ambience she had never cared for with heavy furniture, dark woods and a kind of hunting lodge feel about it. It was mostly reserved for visits from shirt-tail relatives who occasionally appeared at their doorstep; an annoyingly common occurrence since Harry died. The final suite, rooms of which were sometimes still used for visits from Rosemary’s female friends and relatives she felt more fondly about, had a more feminine design themes, with lots of light and pastel colors, flower patterns, and other features.

Rosemary employed a small staff of cooks, housekeepers, gardeners and maintenance staff, all of whom lived off the property in their own homes. There were only two exceptions. A young black man, Alec James, who lived with his wife and son in what was designated the old carriage house at the far end of the property. Alec did double duty, overseeing maintenance activities on the property and monitoring the security cameras which had been set up in one of the double garages attached to the caretaker’s cottage. The other exception was Jerry Eliot, who lived with his wife, Doris, in the caretaker’s cottage.

Although a young Harry had talked of building a house especially for Claire, his first wife was gone before he could do so. After Rosemary met Harry but before they were married, he began construction on the house, and in those months, he would often consult her as the project unfolded. “You have such good ideas.” he would tell her, “You must help me get this right.” The house itself had been an ongoing project they worked on together over many years. Even after they were
married, there were several modifications and renovations and she had had ample opportunities over many years to correct the flaws that she saw in the original design.

After he died, Linda Sue had closed up Harry’s bedroom and no one in the household had any occasion to go in there. After his death only Rosemary felt comfortable entering Harry’s private office in the master suite off his bedroom. Everyone else stayed out, almost as if they were afraid they might encounter his ghost there. Rosemary’s own private suite included a lovely large balcony, a patio really, overlooking her garden and the glass conservatory Harry had insisted on. She had grown to love the conservatory, which was heated to an even temperature all year and contained a variety of plants blooming more or less year-round as well as some interesting sculptures. It had become a highly personal space, complete with comfortable seating where she could sit and study the plants or read, depending on her mood. Her balcony took the morning sun at just the right angle and Rosemary had spent many mornings—perhaps the majority of the mornings of her adult life by now—sunning herself there. In the first months following Harry’s death, it was just about the only place she felt at peace, and she still spent every sunny morning that she could out there. June, Linda Sue and Madeline all reminded one another from time to time not to disturb Rosemary when she was on her patio.

The Mueller house is not visible from the road, located at the end of a curving driveway on the brow of a hill. The site on which the house is built is 25 hectares (about 62 acres), with a paved pathway down to the caretaker’s cottage, a driveway down to the carriage house, and a variety of paved walking trails through the woods. A short walk through the woods in a trail along the brow of the hill brings the walker to an open vista of several miles across rolling farmlands and portions of two small villages.

All in all, Rosemary loved this house and cherished her life here and would be very sad if she ever had to leave it.
Rosemary’s driver, Jerry Eliot, slowed down as they entered the town of Barley Mill on the way to the federal court house in Landover, West Virginia. For much of its history, Barley Mill has been a nondescript little Appalachian country town in Dare County, West Virginia resting effortlessly in a set of green and rolling hills just a few kilometers west of one of the smaller and least impressive ranges of the Appalachian mountains. It is near the northern end of the Adena National Forest. County Road 26 runs southwest out of Barley Mill for about two kilometers and then curves south for another three kilometers to the smaller village of Gaine’s Crossing on the shores of the Green Reservoir which twists through the coves and valleys for ten kilometers west to the dam at Buckland. Sheepshank Bay, which
was originally only a creek which ran through Sheepshank Cove, was linked by the Army Corps of Engineers to the artificial reservoir five decades ago to provide the principal water supply for the city of Huttonsville twelve kilometers to the north just outside the national forest.

Huttonsville had originally been a small town much like Barley Mill, even founded the same year, but in the early decades of the 20th century it had grown into a mining and manufacturing center of regional importance. There were two or three small neighborhoods (blocks, actually) near the original factories in Huttonsville where European immigrants and African Americans in roughly equal measure had come to work in those early decades. Later, the town expanded to absorb three smaller company towns originally established by one of the local mining companies that were eventually bought out by Mueller Mining and its chief competitor in the region run by Enoch “Digger” Profitt.

Barley Mill was founded in colonial Appalachia, more than a century before the forestry and mining industries wreaked havoc on the region. In the early 1790s farmers moved south from western Pennsylvania hoping to escape the “whiskey tax” imposed by the administration of George Washington. Thus, its somewhat anomalous name: They came as a group, approximately two dozen German and Scots-Irish families most three generations strong, with the original intention to establish fields of barley and a mill for processing their crops into hops, for commercial use in what are today called micro-breweries.

In the colonial era, the area had seemingly unlimited supplies of clear, fresh water and so fields were cleared on the hillsides. Unfortunately, the soil was not very conducive to grain farming of any kind and the brewing industry in the region disappeared completely with a few years. Even so, illegal production of beer, a variety of whiskeys and assorted other alcoholic beverages—“moonshining”—continues to the present day as it does in many parts of rural America. As the commercialization of farming in the rest of the new nation accelerated later in the 19th century, the farmers of Barley Mill remained in “family farm” subsistence mode until their timber rights were purchased and their beautiful, tree-clad hills of virgin forest were denuded by clear-cutting during the first decades of the 20th century. Shortly thereafter, men and boys all over Dare County began disappearing into the mines and factories that appeared across the countryside.

Decades later Huttonsville and Barley Mill both succumbed to the deindustrialization of the region that occurred just as suddenly as they had been previously deforested and industrialized. The entire county had since settled into its present respectable, if less affluent, condition as a network of service centers for the backpackers, canoeists, whitewater rafters, campers and the other tourists attracted to the national forest in all seasons. Drivers on State Highway 58 could if they wished drive through the center of Barley Mill on their way between
Huttonsville to the northwest and the county seat of Landover to the east, stopping for the single stop light at the intersection with County Road 26. Most, however, elect to skirt around Barley Mill completely on the by-pass that runs part way up the north side of the ridge the formed the northern border of the town. In doing so, the sole impression the outside world gained of Barley Mill was a quick glimpse of the roof and part of the back fence of Gordon’s Auto Body shop.

Anton Gordon, father of Jim who currently runs the family business, painted an elaborate sign on the north side of the fence when the north bypass first opened in the 1960s, but as far as anyone knew the sign had never brought in any business off the highway and Jim had been content to let it fade so that now only the letter A and a small part of the company logo were visible from the road. The occasional child passing by in the family car was left to ask, “Daddy, what does that A on the fence over there mean?”

After a brief population explosion in the decade following its founding and before its eventual destruction, Barley Mill had settled into a long period of slow but steady population growth. It least we aren’t shrinking, locals would say to one another, the way that Huttonsville, Landover and all of the other towns in the county are. In fact, the population of Barley Mill had reached 1,900 in the first year of the twentieth century and had continued to expand ever since at the remarkable average growth rate of one new resident for each new year. For every four people who die, the locals would say, six young people move away, and eleven babies are born. For a few years in the middle of the previous century, the population had fallen one or two behind the calendar year while right after the war it had gone several ahead, but during the period of the events reported here the population and year continued to be one and the same.

Jerry Eliot like to think about such things as he drove through the Appalachian countryside. Rural communities in the U.S. are mostly crossroads towns, built on or near highway intersections. For Jerry, there are only a few basic types of intersections around which towns have been built. The most fundamental of these is the classic Midwestern crossroads town in which a North-South highway crosses an East-West highway and the town grows up around the junction; first a few scattered houses, then some businesses and storefronts, followed by a central business district and eventually a complete town including churches, schools and whatever else.

Jerry had been a cartographer’s assistant in the Army. He knew that one important variant of this “four square” town plan occurs east of the Ohio River, where towns were laid out before the Mercator projection and the famous “metes and bounds” surveying system took hold; especially in mountainous regions of the Appalachian chain. In cases like Barley Mill a crossroads town may have sprung up earlier around the crossing of any two major routes, an overland trail and a river, for
example. Earlier native American trails are often cited as the sources of many such routes, which wind and curl up and down among the hills. In some places, a crossroads junction may take the form of a St. Andrews Cross (X), a fork (Y) or some other geometric permutation, but the point remains the same: Two roads that cross enter and just as quickly leave this place, our town, and lead us away to other towns or cities. Whether the other places are lesser or greater in the general hierarchy of place is less important than the fact that they are somewhere else. They are not here.

One important variant on road designs and their influence on towns, Jerry mused this clear morning, occurs at the crossing of greater and lesser highways (e.g., a state highway crossing a federal highway, a county road crossing a state highway, or even a country lane crossing a county road). In such cases, it is important to remember one’s place in the pecking order of roads and act accordingly. As Huttonsville grew into an industrial center, Highway 53 on the outskirts of Barley Mill became a state and later still a federal highway while the road to Gaine’s Crossing which formed the Main Street of Barley Mill remained a simple county road.

A variant particularly common in the mountains is the Y, where two roads converge and flow directly into the third, usually flowing out of three or more converging valleys. Or, when coming from the other direction, a single road splits in two and the traveler is forced into the famous Frostian choice of which road to follow. This pattern is also found in nature, as with the famous Three Rivers intersection in Pittsburgh. First, the Youghiogheny flows into the Monongahelia and then the combined river flow joins the Allegheny at Point Park to form the Ohio River in what is, from this vantage point, a serial pair of Y’s. In small towns, there are any number of permutations of the Y including two equal roads joining to form a single new road, a lesser road flowing into a major one, etc. Topologically speaking, such Ys are identical with the simple T intersection, but in small towns, when the angle is other than perpendicular (or very close thereto) the look and feel is different.

Along with the various X and Y intersections is the T where a lesser road simply terminates at a greater one. This may be due to some impediment beyond the termination point like a cliff, or an unbridged river or even railroad tracks. In such cases, the town is likely to have sprung up along the major highway on both sides of the minor road in which town folk seldom show much interest, with the High Street or Main Street of the town distributed along the major road and spilling onto the other and lesser side streets and avenues, without any evident enthusiasm.

The final pattern among crossroads in Jerry’s considered opinion is the convergence (or close proximity) of several roadways, in what he called the cocklebur intersection. Although he had seen only a few of these in mostly square
Ohio, he was seeing more and more here in West Virginia. On the way to Landover, Jerry noted with some amusement that one intersection had a sign below the stop signs that read “Four Way Stop”, but as he looked around, he noted that there were six roads converging at the intersection, and three or four more had already converged a few hundred feet further back. These types of intersections often have local names which represent some variant on the functional theme like “five corners”, “seven corners”, or else some more colorful name like Dixie Crossroads. The major example of such a cocklebur intersection in Dare County was in nearby Huttonsville, where no less than five roads down from the mountains converged into a single intersection in separate pairs all within 50 yards of one another. Unbeknownst to Jerry, there had been talk from time to time of putting in a traffic rotary to sort out the mess at that intersection, but most people agreed with the County Commissioners who had concluded that there wasn’t enough traffic on those particular roads to justify the necessary bother and expense.

Barley Mill still has one grocery store, a member of a minor regional chain of such stores that does home deliveries to elderly and shut-in customers, although they were forced to start charging for home deliveries a number of years ago. There was also still a small, local dairy that made home deliveries of milk, cream and butter until it was bought out by the largest dairy cooperative in Ohio. There is a five-lane bowling alley built in the 1950s, and in the summer, there is a roller-skating rink operating in a circus tent with open sides, and drop-down flaps that allow for rainy day skating. They set up in a large vacant lot near the edge of town and rent skates to those who don’t own their own. There is also a locally owned drug store, complete with surviving soda fountain and a small cable, internet and security business that sells cable tv, internet and cell phone services and a range of little-used security services. Few people in town feel any need for fire monitors and even fewer for burglar alarms. Most people don’t even lock their doors when they go out or at night, except around the time of the annual county fair. The cable and internet services are mostly old and slow, and the owner may be ready to retire any year now. No one in town is quite certain when that will happen or where that will leave their services.

City planners might say there is a government/public service core in Barley Mill, with a small police force (actually, county sheriff’s deputies), a volunteer fire department, public water and sewer services with a small two-man crew assigned to maintain them, and a public library with a community room in the basement, available to any club or association willing to contact the librarian for a reservation. There is also a part-time human service system, including a branch clinic open three days a week, providing family practice, dentistry, mental health services and a senior center operated by volunteers five days a month. Ambulance services are on call through the rural hospital in Huttonsville, although it can sometimes take the ambulance more than an hour to arrive.
Without thinking very much about any of this, Rosemary and Jerry continued on through town and out on Highway 58 on their way to Landover, not noticing the faded sign at Gordon’s Auto Service. This was just an uneventful part of their trip from Ohio which would still take another 35 minutes or so on the winding highway. On their way out of town, they passed a farmhouse with an obviously new sign for Amy’s Doll House, with several outbuildings including a barn behind, although neither meant anything to the occupants of the car. Nor did either driver or passenger note the renovations underway there. When they reached the front of the federal courthouse in Landover half an hour later, Jerry stopped in front and came around to open Rosemary’s door for her.

“Do you have your cell phone?” she asked.

“Yes, madam.”

“I’ll call you when I’m finished here” she said and walked toward the front door.

“Very good, madam.”

Rosemary laughed at this exchanged and Jerry winked at her. He was someone who had done occasional odd jobs around the Mueller properties and for the various Mueller business interests ever since he retired from his 30-year stint in the military. He was actually very close to normal retirement age, if not a bit beyond. Some time back, several years ago really, she and Harry had set up a pension fund for Jerry. It made for a comfortable living for him, and in return he still liked to help Rosemary out whenever he could. After he came to work for Harry, she had seen him occasionally, but since Harry’s death she had come increasingly to rely on him for a great many things, including driving her various places. She knew how to drive, and was still able to, but she had never liked driving. She thought of Jerry more as a friend than an employee, really. He was also a great fan of British comedies on public television, she knew, and sometimes when she would say something to him, like just now, he would do his imitation of an English butler that was as he would say “spot on.”

She laughed again at his antics and said over her shoulder, “I need to get into the courthouse so I’m not late. I’ll call your cell when I’m ready to go home.”

“Very good Madam.” He replied, and they parted smiling as old friends do.
Rosemary and Adam

Adam Sennett hurried up the steps of the federal courts building in Landover and pulled out his keys, wallet and the other contents of his pocket and placed them in the small, plastic tray for the security guards at the metal detector just inside the entrance. He had been called for jury duty several times before, so he was aware that it did not pay to arrive late, after the judge had entered the chamber. He had witnessed one judge hold a jury panelist who was 20 minutes late in contempt and fine the woman $300, or a day in jail. Adam took the elevator to the third-floor courtroom where the jury panel was already beginning to assemble in the audience seats behind the railing separating them from the lawyers and court officials. He nodded his thanks to the bailiff who opened the courtroom door for him. As he
stepped inside, he noted that many of the jury candidates were already present, even though there was still 20 minutes before the 10 AM time specified on the call letter. The audience section began to fill up as others continued to arrive in batches of five or six as the elevators discharged them on the third floor. As the long-time Clerk of Dare County, Adam knew several people in the room, but the federal court district also included other nearby counties and most of the assembled juror candidates were strangers. Always open to meeting new people, Adam took a seat next to a pleasant looking, well-dressed older woman who turned toward him as he took his seat and smiled abstractly.

“Good morning,” she offered. “Have you been called before?”

“Yes,” he responded, “But I’m usually dismissed in the early rounds because of my position.”

“Oh?”

“I’m the County Clerk in Dare County.” Adam chuckled. “The lawyers for one side or the other usually want to get rid of me as quickly as they can; especially in property cases involving Dare County. They think I may know too much about the back stories associated with the real estate and they don’t want to risk keeping me around.”

“How interesting,” the woman replied. “I’m sorry I didn’t know you, but I don’t live here. I’m Rosemary Mueller. I live in Ohio, but my late husband’s company—my company now, really—owns property in Dare County. He died a few months ago. . . .”

“Oh. I’m sorry for your loss.”

“Thank you. I miss him a great deal.” Then after a pause, “If you deal with property records in Dare County, I would very much like to talk with you some time. Since my husband died, I’ve learned some very strange things, Mr. . . . I’m sorry but I don’t know your name.”

Adam was so used to people in Dare County knowing who he was that the question unsettled him momentarily, but he was even more shaken by the possibility of answers to the questions buried in this kindly older woman’s last remark. Avoiding any such mystery was the exact reason he had held the position of County Clerk just as so many of his ancestors had before him.

“Sorry. Let me introduce myself. My name is Adam Sennett . . .”

“How do you do, Mr. Sennett. I’m very pleased to meet you.” As she said this, the court clerk stood and in a loud voice announced, “Oyez, oyez. All rise for the Honorable Justice Ellen Wilson.” At this, the door opened and a slender, very petite, attractive woman in her late 50s entered the courtroom accompanied by a
much taller male aide. While the judge took her seat at the center of the bench, the aide moved to the far right corner and took a seat alongside two other court staff members already seated there. Five tall, burley but somewhat elderly bailiffs in dark blue uniforms were stationed at both doorways and elsewhere around the room. Each was armed with a large, sinister-looking pistol in a black holster. The judge’s entrance behind the bench remained unguarded. The court reporter was seated below the judge and slightly to the left. The jury box on the far left contained 12 empty chairs. Lawyers for both the accused and the prosecution sat at their accustomed tables. The accused sat at the left table, closest to the jury box with his attorneys. He fidgeted periodically throughout the morning proceedings.

“Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. . .” the judge began in a calm, confident authoritative voice. She continued with a brief, well-rehearsed and smoothly delivered introduction to the jury system and a review of selection procedures that explained to those who did not already know how they had come to be in this position at this particular time in their lives. She followed this with the briefest introduction to the case which the jury would be hearing. Adam paid scant attention as she spoke. He had been through this already numerous times and was confident that he would be dismissed from the panel in the early rounds.

He was more concerned with the woman seated next to him—Rosemary Mueller—had just told him. He knew that several years ago an attorney for a company named Mueller Capital had registered the deed for the purchase of a large, U-shaped tract of land in Dare County, including all the mineral rights. He wondered if there was a connection. Most troubling to him was the fact that this particular tract surrounded another site on three sides, even though the site was enclosed in a box canyon virtually inaccessible from any of those sides. In addition, there was a high wire fence with ample No Trespassing signs running along the ridge tops completely around the property. His family had owned the land fronting on the fourth side for generations, indeed, all the way back to the original sixteenth century Spanish land claim. From there, they controlled (and protected) the only real entrance to the fenced site. Even more troubling than Ms. Mueller’s professed perplexity, however, was its possible connection to the private investigator who had been in his office about six months before asking about the land surveys for this township, examining the maps closely, and even suggesting that there might be a discrepancy in the records. Two such events occurring in the same decade would be strange enough, Adam thought, but two in the same year could not be coincidence.

Even more troubling than Ms. Mueller’s professed perplexity, however, was its possible connection to the private investigator who had been in his office about six months before asking about the land surveys for this township, examining the maps closely, and even suggesting that there might be a discrepancy in the records. Two
such events occurring in the same decade would be strange enough, Adam thought, but two in the same year. This could not be coincidence.

In the course of the morning, both Adam and Rosemary were, as they expected, dismissed from the jury panel. He was released as always because of his county office, and she because although she was a landowner in the area she did not actually reside anywhere within the court’s jurisdiction. As they walked out with others who had been similarly dismissed, Rosemary said “It was a pleasure to meet you, Mr. Sennett. I hope that I may call on you sometime soon. Perhaps we might have lunch together so that I can ask you about the little mystery that I mentioned earlier.”

“Yes, certainly,” he replied, projecting far more enthusiasm than he was feeling at the moment. “Here is my card, please call anytime and we’ll set something up.” He tried hard as he said that to keep any hint of the anxiety the prospect such a conversation aroused out of his voice.
Almost a year earlier Rosemary Winslow Mueller stood at the window of her bedroom suite looking out across the green lawns of the Mueller estate. The entire wall was windows, including several sliding glass doors that opened onto a wide, stone patio. The view from Rosemary’s suite was the best in the entire house and looked out over the woods and fields to the mountains in the distance.

The truth of what they had told her earlier this morning was beginning to become real, a little bit at a time, like a slow drip oozing into her consciousness gradually like fresh brewed coffee from a drip coffee maker. But the taste of today was nothing like fresh, invigorating coffee. It was more the bitterness of a poison threatening everything it touched. Her beloved Harry was dead. That huge elephant
of fact pressed hard against her conscious being making it hard to simply go on
breathing. What made things worse was that ridiculously vast fortune of Harry’s;
the obscenity from which he had always protected her. She realized that it was now
all hers to deal with, and just the thought of that brought chills to her. Harry
seemed just fine when he went to his room last night. He must have died sometime
in the night just the way he would have wished; peacefully in his sleep, and now
the thoughts flashed through her mind over and over. I have to accept his death,
she kept repeating to herself, but it can’t be real. It just can’t be. It can’t possibly
be true! Harry where are you when I need you? You can’t be gone. I have to deal
with everything now. But I can’t. Everything will be up to me now. Harry, how
could you do this to me? Maybe it’s all a dream. That’s it. I’m just dreaming. I’ll
wake up in a moment and Harry will walk in; he’ll be right here, and the nightmare
will be over. It must be a nightmare; a bad dream. I can’t deal with this. I’ll wake
up and Harry will be coming back from his morning walk.

Rosemary shivered and folded her arms close around herself without looking away
from the window. She cared nothing about Harry’s money. She loved the man, not
his bank account. She didn’t even know of any way of even finding out how much
Harry was actually worth. God, how did anyone go about keeping track of what
must be billions? Harry had never told her how much he was worth—how much
she was worth now—but she knew from what she had read that it must be many
billions. And how much was a billion dollars anyway? It was in dollars wasn’t it?
Or pounds? Euros? Yen? And, where was it all? Where do you keep that much
money? Surely it wasn’t all in his checking account.

Harry’s grandfather had made a small fortune in the last quarter of the 19th century
in the years after the Chicago Fire, buying horses in states west of the Mississippi,
transporting them to the city and reselling them, often at inflated prices. Horses
were in great demand after the fire, but supplies were limited, construction was
booming, and Grandfather Mueller made a financial killing. In the decades that
followed Harry’s father had vastly expanded his father’s fortune, especially during
the Roaring Twenties, only to lost most of it in the crash of 1929 and the Great
Depression. However, Karl August Mueller proved to be a financial wizard who
was able to impart much of his considerable financial wisdom to his son, with the
result that by the time Harry married Rosemary, the son had inherited his father’s
knowledge and accumulated his own fortune of many millions. By the time Harry
died she knew only that his financial worth was numbered somewhere in the
billions. Only she didn’t have a clue where all that money was.

It had to be somewhere, but she had no idea of what you did with that much
money. She would have to ask Edward about that. In addition to being his best
friend, Edward was Harry’s lawyer. He would know. Knowing Harry, she thought
with the briefest of smiles before she began to weep again, he may have buried part
of it in the backyard beneath the rose bushes which, other than her, were about the only things he ever truly loved. The thought made her laugh which in turn made her immediately feel guilty and so she started to cry. Shouldn’t I be crying all the time? Wailing and ranting and Shouldn’t I dissolve into tears at the very mention of his name? But the truth is, I feel nothing. I just feel numb; like I’m walking around in someone else’s mind. Suddenly, she realized that thinking about Harry’s money—she had always thought of it as his money—was part of her way of avoiding thinking about the harsh, painful reality that he was gone. Despite his reputation as a financial titan and even a miser, she knew that Harry never really loved the money. He certainly enjoyed the game of business, and he was obviously very good at it. But she always knew that he did it mostly for the sport and, as he said, money was just a way of keeping score in the great games.

She turned away from the window and sat down at her vanity. Did anyone use that word anymore? Vanity? She thought not. “Lord, I look awful!” she said to herself quietly as she began to brush her hair, grayish white and more brittle than it used to be. In that moment, it felt good to set everything else aside and concentrate only on each slow, careful brush stroke one after another.

Earlier this morning, she had called Harry’s oldest friend and attorney, Edward Graham. She knew some people said Ed was Harry’s only friend in the world, but that wasn’t true. “Edward? Harry’s gone.” She began without prelude. “He died sometime early this morning. The doctor thinks about five a.m. . . . I know. It’s true. I saw his body before the undertakers took him away, but I just can’t bring myself to believe he’s gone. I just feel numb. Dr. Alvarez has given me a tranquilizer and Linda Sue says she’ll take care of things around here if I sleep for a few hours. I’m just so tired but I can’t fall sleep. Could you tell John for me, please? I just can’t make another phone call right now.”

She listened quietly as Ed repeated his condolences in an unusually shaky voice. Then she said, “What are we going to do without him, Ed?” Edward said he didn’t know but would stop by later in the day. “Thank you, Ed. That will be fine. See you then.”

Rosemary would have to begin to face the new realities that were her life now, but she just couldn’t seem to grasp what that meant at the moment. Harry was dead, and she was the sole owner of one of the largest fortunes in the Midwest; maybe even in the entire country. At least that’s what people said. The thought spawned a nervous laugh. For many years, Harry had been listed on the Forbes list of the Five Hundred Richest Americans. He was somewhere down in the lower half, but he was always on the list. One of the minor billionaires of America. It just didn’t seem possible; she was now among the richest women—maybe the richest woman, for all she knew—in the country. The sheer absurdity of that thought made her laugh again. That would take some getting used to! She suddenly felt a strong flash of
guilt. She had to stop thinking about money. She knew she wasn’t that interested, really. It was just a way to postpone facing the harshest reality she had ever known. Her beloved Harry was gone.

First, she had to give herself time to properly grieve for her husband; the only man she had ever truly loved. She must also face the fact that she wasn’t as young as she used to be. At 76, with hearing problems and arthritis in her back and knees, it wasn’t as easy to get around as it used to be. She couldn’t walk in the beautiful woods behind her house any more. The ground was just too rough and uneven.

And, she didn’t really know much at all about computers, even though Harry kept an entire room full of them in his office and another in the home office he used for business. She would definitely need help from someone.

John Graham said to himself at exactly that same moment, who better for Rosemary to trust than Harry’s trusted law firm, Edward B. And John M. Graham, Attorneys at Law? At least that’s what I hope she’s thinking, he said to himself just as his paralegal entered his office and interrupted her boss’s reverie.

“Mr. Graham? Sir”, Marilyn Archer said, “You have a phone call on line two.” She paused a moment and then added “I’ve been trying to buzz you but when you didn’t answer I came in to tell you. Sorry for interrupting. I know this is a very difficult day for you and Mr. Edward.” John grimaced at those last words. Marilyn was a wonderful staffer although she was getting along in years. For some reason, she insisted on calling his brother “Mr. Edward”, even though it sounded like a phrase that had fallen out of some high Victorian attic of words. It was probably something she picked up from Downtown Abbey. Or, Upstairs-Downstairs. Was she old enough to have seen that? He guessed she was.

John had tried several times to suggest other alternative ways for Marilyn to reference his brother as Ed, but she always responded the same way to his suggestions: “It just doesn’t seem right to call him that. Why can’t I call him ‘Mr. Edward? I certainly don’t ever want to call him ‘Mr. Ed’!” she would say with a laugh.

“That’s all right, Marilyn. Line two, you say?” As his assistant turned to leave the office, John Graham, now fully back in the here and now added, “Who is it?”

“I don’t know. She didn’t say.”

“That’s all right. When I finish this call will you get Mrs. Mueller on the phone for me?”

Picking up the phone sitting on the right side of his carefully arranged desk, he said, “This is John Graham” and paused. And after a moment or two he said, “Well, thank you, Louise. I’ll tell Ed. Harry will be missed, as you say. I haven’t spoken to Rosemary since we got the news, but I’m sure she’s devastated. He may
have been a bastard in the eyes of most of the world, but they were truly very fond of each other. Yes, thank you again, I’ll tell her.”

Another long pause, and then, “We’ll keep that in mind. You’re certainly correct, she will be needing a great deal of professional accounting advice. Goodbye.”

“But not from you,” John said after he hung up the phone.

Just as he begun to reflect again on the grieving widow, the voice of Ms. Archer came over the intercom. “Mrs. Rosemary isn’t taking any calls, sir. I spoke to a young woman named Madeline at the house who says she’s a friend. I told her you were Mrs. Mueller’s attorney and that Mr. Edward was his best friend, but it didn’t make any difference. She said she had made a note and would tell Mrs. Rosemary that you called. She said the phone has apparently been ringing all morning, and she was quite definite.”

“That’s okay. Just see if you can schedule Rosemary for an appointment. I’d like to see her as soon as possible. Tell her I’ll come by the house.”

“I tried that, Sir.” The woman said, “Ms. Rosemary left instructions that she will see you at the wake.”

This is going to take some doing, John thought.
June Averill rang the doorbell and was greeted by an attractive, slightly overweight, brunette in her mid-20s, who said simply but not unkindly, “Yes? May I help you?” June could see from the traces of smudged mascara that the young woman had been crying. In the case of an ordinary death that would not be unusual, June thought, but why would anyone other than Rosemary cry over Harry? The man was such a bastard!

“Oh, hello. I’m June Averill. Would you please tell Ms. Mueller I’m here? She’s expecting me.” Then she added, “You must be new. I’ve never met a woman butler before.”
The young woman laughed softly and easily. “Of course. You are Aunt Rosemary’s friend June! She said you would be coming today. I’m sorry to disappoint you, Ms. Averill, but I’m not the butler. I’m her niece Linda Sue.” She had been living with Rosemary and Harry for a few months now, and she had talked with June on the phone several times, but they had never met in person and Linda Sue wasn’t quite what June expected. “It’s nice to finally meet you in person.” As she said this, a mist of tears formed again in Linda Sue’s eyes and the young woman dabbed at them with her hand. “As far as I know, Aunt Rosemary and Uncle Harry never had a butler. Or any other real servants. You’d think with all their money. . .”

That cheap bastard, June thought, all those billions and he drafted Rosemary’s niece as household help! She knew Rosemary had only had a cook in the last few years, since meal preparation had become too difficult for her. Before that, Rosemary always claimed that she did all the cooking because she liked to cook, but June believed that was only partially true. The real reason was that Harry was too cheap to pay someone to prepare their meals, even though he could afford to hire a kitchen staff of dozens, if he had wanted.

Linda Sue, recognizing the look of disgust on June’s face, went on, “Oh no. It’s not like that at all! They only did it to help me out. I was coming out of a really horrible relationship when Aunt Rosemary invited me to come live with them. I really needed to get out of Omaha. I don’t think Uncle Harry was too keen on the idea at first.” She laughed. “He thought I must be just another gold-digging relative. I heard him tell Aunt Rosemary that one night, but she insisted that wasn’t it at all. For the first six weeks or so, he never called me by my name. Referred to me only as “that girl” whenever he talked about me. But I think Aunt Rosemary finally convinced him that I was family and that he was more than up to the task of protecting his bank account from me!” Linda Sue laughed at the thought.

“Are you here all alone?” June asked, “Things must be very hectic here today.”

“Madeline stayed in today.” Madeline handled public relations for Harry’s company, usually from her own office in the city. Talk about a challenge, June thought. The phrase like putting lipstick on a pig comes to mind! “She’s been covering the phone while I handle the door. She’s been a lot busier than me. I told her to just let it go to voicemail. I even found time to make lunch for us and Aunt Rosemary. Would you like something to eat?”

As they were talking Jane could hear the phone in the other room. “The phone just goes on ringing.” Madeline had been on Harry’s staff for more than a decade, and, like other of the small number of loyal employees, she seemed to have little trouble working with him. Madeline was the daughter of another of June’s childhood friends. June had actually been the one who introduced her to Rosemary and Harry
years ago. At that time Madeline had been working for a local newspaper in northwest Ohio. What was that rag called? The Daily Eagle and Something. Even though Harry paid her a smaller salary than she might have made elsewhere, it was more than she had made at the newspaper and Madeline always told June and others that she was glad to be working for Harry. Madeline had been very attractive then, glamorous even, and there had been rumors shortly after she came to work for him that Harry was having an affair with Madeline. This had made June feel disloyal to Rosemary for bringing them together. Rosemary had raised the issue with June once, assuring her that there was nothing to worry about. Rosemary just laughed. “The wife is always the last to know,” June told her, and Rosemary replied, “Not in this case, sweetie. Not in this case.”

“How is Maddie?” June asked.

“She’s fine. I mean, like the rest of us, she’s pretty shaken up today with Uncle Harry dying like that last night. So suddenly I mean. I think she was really fond of him.”

At that, June smiled. Linda Sue went on, “When my Dad said that Aunt Rosemary felt bad about my breakup and wanted me to come and live with them, I thought, What the heck? So, they’ve got a few million dollars. So what? Money really doesn’t interest me.” She laughed again.

“It’s actually really awkward. All that money. At first, I admit, I was rather in awe of the whole thing. Aunt Rosemary is my Dad’s sister, you know, but they weren’t at all close. Dad was quite a bit younger and then he moved to Iowa a long time ago, and that’s where he married my Mom. When I first moved in, I was really scared of Uncle Harry. He had such a terrible reputation! I thought he resented me being here. Since they never had any kids, you know, I think he really didn’t know how to act around me. . .” Her voice trailed off

“I’m sorry.” She continued after an awkward pause. “I know you were Aunt Rosemary’s best friend, and you know all this already. Were? Are? Oh, I’m sorry. This has been a very awful day and it’s hard to know what to say. She’s upstairs and she’s expecting you. Let’s just go up.”
Rosemary had been lying down, she had no idea for how long. She sat up in bed and then stood and smoothed her clothes as she heard the knock on the door. “Come in, please” she called. As the door opened and she saw the familiar figures of her niece and her oldest friend, she heard Linda Sue say, “Aunt Rosemary? Are you awake? Ms. Averill is here.” “Come in June! I’m so glad you could come. Thank you, Linda Sue. Has it been rough for you downstairs?”
“It hasn’t been bad for me, but Madeline is really having a tough time keeping up with the phone. Every time she puts it down it rings again. I’ve told her to just leave it off and take a break, but she seems to be holding up.”

“Tell her I’m very grateful, dear.”

“She knows. But I’ll tell her again. Can I get you anything right now, Aunt Rosemary?”

“No dear. I’m fine.”

Then, turning to her newly arrived friend:

“Kitty! Thank you for coming. I felt I just had to see you today. I keep telling myself Harry is gone but I still can’t believe it. I expect him to come walking through that door at any moment, sputtering and carrying on and ask if I’ve seen his cell phone.”

“I was absolutely devastated when I got the news, Plum. I’m so very sorry for your loss. I know that you really loved that old bugger.”

“Yes. Well. . . Would you like some coffee or something, Kitty?”

“No thanks. I’m fine. Tell me what happened.”

“There’s not much to tell, really. He seemed perfectly fine when he went to bed last night. In fact, he told me he was planning to work on his stamp collection today. . .

“Stamps? Harry collected stamps? I didn’t know that.”

“Oh, yes. Had ever since he was a small boy, I believe. He really got into it in a serious way when Betty died. He was just a boy then, you know. He used to have one of his secretaries place orders for him and somebody on Ed Graham’s staff would go around to the stamp stores and pick things up for him. I think he didn’t want anybody to know. Swore Ed and all the various helpers to secrecy.”

“What was she like. Betty, I mean. Did Harry ever talk about her?”

“I know you’re trying to help me get through this, Kitty, but I really don’t want to go there just now.”

“Okay. Let’s talk about something else, then. Did you see that Ellen Greenberg . . .”

“He is really a very sensitive man, you know. Was, I mean. Harry.”

That’s what you’ve always told me, June thought, but I’ve never seen much evidence of it. After a moment, she asked “Why is that, Plum?”

“Not at all like the media portrayed him. He loved his work more than anything, of course. And, since his work was making money that made him an easy target.”
“Yes. Well . . .” June paused, not knowing what to say next.
The rest of the afternoon passed in quiet conversation and Linda Sue eventually came back to accompany June to her usual room in the northwest wing where her luggage was waiting for her.
The obituary that appeared the following day in the *Daily Eagle & Advertiser* had been supervised by the editor, Jason Browning himself:

*Harry Gordon Bertram Mueller, 94, one of the 500 wealthiest men in the country, died in his sleep Tuesday night at his home on Eustice Avenue in Spring Hill.*

*Mr. Mueller made and lost several fortunes during his long life, mostly in the commodities futures market. He was also the owner of Rutherford’s Department Store for a period of years. He was currently listed on the Forbes Index of the 500 Richest Americans, with a personal fortune estimated at 38 billion dollars. Mr. Mueller, known locally as Duke Mueller or sometimes as The Count of Eustice Avenue,*

*Mr. Mueller was widely known for his sharp, sometimes ruthless, business practices, which were often said to edge right up to the limits of the law, but never passed over into actual illegality. Even more he was noted for his virulently anti-philanthropic attitude.*

“Every American wants to be rich.” He told a Daily Eagle reporter in 1980. “It’s not my fault that only some people actually are.”

*He is survived by his wife of 38 years, Rosemary Winslow Mueller. He was preceded in death by his parents, Harry Wilson Mueller, 1839–1918, and Margaret Bertram Mueller, 1841–1942, as well as his first wife, Eloise, known to her friends as Amy, who died in 1945. The Muellers had no children.*

The article went on for many more paragraphs detailing Harry’s involvements in various business ventures. It also quoted several local business and civic leaders obviously striving to be as civil and comparative as they could. As he finished reading, Ed Graham looked up from his paper and spoke aloud to his empty office. “That old bastard! He probably faked his own death just to get quoted one more time sounding like Ebenezer Scrooge!” He laughed heartily until he began to cough.
A modern wake is a richly choreographed ritual of comings, goings, greetings, remembrances and condolences. Depending on your relation to the deceased, it is important to show up at the right time, say all the right things to the survivors, not make a spectacle or a scene and leave. Harry G.B. Mueller’s funeral was no exception, but made additionally difficult for many of those present, by Harry’s loathsome reputation in life and their genuine affection for Rosemary. Not yet the last stop at the cemetery but with all the finality of death hovering in the room nevertheless. Harry Mueller had left general instructions about his funeral, noting in particular that his wife was not to put herself out and that she was definitely not to attempt to justify, explain or apologize for him in any way.
“People wouldn’t believe you anyway, Rose,” he told her on numerous occasions in his final years. “Let them go on thinking I was a terrible scoundrel. It will help Justin and the staff make it through the transition with a minimum of disturbances to the business.” Justin Bielk had been Harry’s deputy for more than 20 years, and clearly had taken up the mantle since Harry’s death. He was currently surrounded by the very capable staff that Harry had assembled over his career.

“I feel like Harry is going to walk through that door at any moment and give us all a good swift kick in the butt!” Justin said to his long-time assistant Harvey H. Flinders as he observed all of the people gathered at the wake. “Harry is here today in spirit, disapproving of all of us wasting our time remembering him.”

“Do we have to continue with that?” Harvey said archly, “You and I both know that’s a load of bull. Harry was one of the nicest guys I ever knew, and I already miss him awfully. We both do, and you know it!” As he said this, he reached for his handkerchief and wiped his eyes.

“Quiet!” Justin whispered. “If you’re not careful someone will hear you, and you know what Harry would have thought about an effort to blow his myth. I saw Jason Browning come in before. He’s probably even more responsible than Harry himself for Harry’s image as the arch curmudgeon of this town. I don’t think he talked to anyone other than Rosemary and Madeline and I think he’s already gone. As far as we’re concerned we go on as usual with Harry’s cover story until we hear otherwise from Rosemary.”

“As far as this town is concerned, we’re saying goodbye to one of the world’s great scoundrels today.”

While this conversation was going on, across the room, two brokers from a local brokerage office - Advantage Capital or some such meaningless name - were talking. “I can’t believe the number of people who showed up for this ... this ... whatever this is” one of them said. The other nodded and said, “I guess it’s a tribute to the power of money.”

“I never actually met Harry Mueller,” said the first. “But I sure heard a lot about him. Did you?”

“No” said the other. “I once did some incidental work for him on his IBM investments. Mostly research, but the entire time I only dealt with Edward Graham. I was always glad for that. I heard Harry could be a real nasty piece of shit.”

“Yeah. Me too. I mean that’s what I heard.”

Just behind them, June Averill and Linda Sue were standing close, facing away and listening intently. As Linda Sue appeared to start toward this pair, clearly intent to set them straight, or perhaps lecture them on their manners at a wake, June grabbed her arm firmly and shook her head. After a few minutes, Linda Sue had settled
down and they moved away and as they did, Linda Sue said, “Did you hear that? That’s dreadful way to talk like that about someone at his funeral. What ever happened to not speaking ill of the dead? Uncle Harry wasn’t like that at all!”

“Wasn’t he?” June replied, as much to herself as to her companion. That’s exactly the way I remember him. With this she walked towards Rosemary intending to relieve Madeline.

Throughout the two hours scheduled for the wake, Rosemary remained seated facing the open casket, with Linda Sue, June and Madeline taking turns sitting beside her as people drifted in, lined up to offer their condolences to Rosemary and a nephew of Harry’s who was seated on the other side of Rosemary. After each of them spoke briefly with her, they would walk toward the casket, take a brief look at Harry’s corpse laid out in a plain, black business suit and tie and drift away into one of the many conversations taking place around the room. After what each individual or small group deemed to be a suitable time offering respect, they would drift slowly toward the exit and leave, replaced by other, similar individuals and groups following the same course.

When it was over, Rosemary spent many minutes by herself in front of the casket speaking quietly to Harry’s remains, as Linda Sue, June, Madeline, Jerry Eliot and his wife, Doris, and three representatives of the funeral home staff talked quietly near the exit, not wishing to disturb her. Finally, she turned away from the casket and said in an unsteady voice, “I’m ready to go back.” Without saying anything, the group broke into two, with the staff busying themselves with various minor tasks while the others, minus Jerry, reaching out to include Rosemary as they walked toward the door. Madeline had made arrangements to rent a large, comfortable limo for the trip to and from Rosemary’s house and when Rosemary announced she was ready to leave, Jerry had headed for the exit to ready the car for the short trip back to the house.

There was no conversation in the car on the short trip back. Everyone already knew that there would be a private burial of Harry’s body tomorrow morning which only those in the limo, plus Edward and John Graham, their wives, Justin, and Harvey and a few others from the office were invited to attend. Rosemary’s instructions to Madeline and June had been very explicit. There was not much else that anyone thought it important to say. At one point, Doris riding in the front passenger seat asked if anyone needed to stop at the Kroger’s they were just passing to get anything. No one replied and finally Rosemary said, “No, thank you, dear. We’ve got everything we will need for now.”

When they arrived back at the house, everyone thanked Jerry for driving them, and they all got out of the limo and made their way into the house, alone with their thoughts. After they had gone, Jerry said to Doris, “I’ll drop you by the house. I
need to gas up this buggy for tomorrow.” Doris didn’t say anything at all as they drove down the long driveway.
GRIEVING
Rosemary Mueller had grown up in a small rural community in central Ohio. It was a midwestern farming community only a hundred miles or so west of the Appalachian coal fields but another world entirely. She was an excellent student and aspired to become a teacher, a vocation she pursued for half a dozen years before meeting and marrying the already extraordinarily wealthy J.B. (Harry) Mueller. She still wondered sometimes if she should have continued teaching after they were married. Now, here she was almost half a century later, a widow with an extraordinary fortune that seemed to hang around her neck like an albatross.

“I hate this city!” Rosemary said to her best friend, June, one morning a few weeks after the funeral. “I hate it for the way it treated Harry all those years. I hate the newspaper, and that wretched Jason Browning. I hate all those la-de-da fare-thee-well Chamber of Commerce types who never once tried to get behind the myth and get to know the real Harry. Every story about Harry ever published by Browning and his predecessor - who was, by the way, even worse - painted Harry as cheap, mean and vile.”

“But Plum, isn’t that just an indication of how successful you lot were at creating his public image as a miserable bastard? You certainly had me fooled all those years! And apparently everyone else in town, and half the country also. You can’t really blame the newspaper or local businessmen for believing what Harry asked them to believe.” Then after a moment, she added hesitantly, “He certainly had me convinced.”

June saw the momentary anger flash across Rosemary’s face and quickly disappear, and then Rosemary continued. “Oh, Harry, how could you leave me with all this? And why did you make such a ridiculous amount of money in the first place. I’d like to kill you!”

At this, Rosemary looked shocked for an instant and then she began to laugh as she added “If you weren’t already dead.” At this, June joined her, and their laughter filled the room where they were sitting. Their laughter was so raucous that both Linda Sue and Madeline came to the doorway to see what was going on. Since neither had heard Rosemary laugh for many weeks, they chose not to interrupt and instead walked quietly away to the continuing sounds of laughter echoing down the recently quiet halls of the house.

Finally, the laughter subsided and Rosemary and June both began to cry, in Rosemary’s case, no longer the uncontrollable sobbing of recent weeks, but softly and gently in gratitude for the anger which they both felt passing out of the room just then. Rosemary no longer felt the silent rage she had periodically felt toward Harry ever since the first morning after he had died. And for the first time in many years - decades really - June felt as if she knew and understood a different Harry.
Mueller, someone Rosemary recognized and someone June just knew now she could have liked if she had only just seen behind the mask.

Sometime later, they wiped away their tears as June said “You really loved him, didn’t you? And I know he really loved you.”

“Yes,” Rosemary replied. “And now I need to do something to make him proud.”

She became very quiet and June excused herself and went to her room.

At lunch that day, Rosemary sat down without speaking or even acknowledging anyone else. Since Harry’s death, the whole household had become accustomed to gathering together for these noon rituals and trying - always unsuccessfully it seemed - to cheer Rosemary up. But they all sensed that today was somehow different from the previous days all the way back to the day Harry died. June, Madeline, Linda Sue talked quietly among themselves about the weather, local news and gossip and assorted other matters, all the while aware that Rosemary would join them when she was ready. Meanwhile, she ate her lunch quietly, staring straight ahead and not really seeming to notice any of them.

Suddenly, she said simply, “Yes.” Looking at her niece she said, “Linda Sue. I want you to call Edward Graham and tell him I would like to meet with him and John tomorrow, or as soon as they can arrange it.” Looking toward Madeline, she said, “I’d like you to call Jason Browning and tell him I’d like to have an interview with him or his best reporter. Next Monday or Tuesday would probably be best. That will give me a few extra days to arrange things. Whet Browning’s appetite a bit, tease him with something like I’m going to give him the best story he’s had all year . . . Something like that. You know how to dangle some bright shiny object in front of his beady little snake eyes!”

Finally, “June. I want you to start digging out some information for me from Harry’s private files. I know it’s all in there - chapter and verse - but I just can’t face going through all those files by myself yet.”

“Now finish your lunch everyone.” Rosemary said resolutely, “there is work to be done.” Her three companions all finished eating in astonished silence at the change that had come over Rosemary so suddenly this morning and wondering what she was getting them into. When they all started to get up to leave a short time later, she said, “June? Would you please stay for a few moments, I have to give you a clearer idea of what you are looking for.”

After they left, Rosemary said, “I’ve just made a bargain with God” and hesitated. “I know,” she said. “That sounds very pretentious, even blasphemous, perhaps, but that’s really how I feel right now. Anyway, I’ve resolved to not only tell the world about the kind, generous, modest person that Harry was; the man that only a few of
us really knew for all those years. And I want to give them the evidence, chapter and verse. That’s what I want you to do. I know Harry had a private, secret really, set of files where he kept all the correspondence with Edward and others detailing his anonymous gifts over many years. It’s all upstairs in his private office. I need you now, starting this afternoon really, to start digging through those files and finding everything that you can. I’m going to give that smug so-and-so Jason Browning the biggest story of his life! Could you help me with this?”

“Of course. I’ll get right at it.” Then, after a pause, “I’ll probably have a few questions for you as I go along.”

“Certainly. I’ll be here when you need me, except I’ll have to go out for a while tomorrow or the next day to meet with Edward and John.”

“Well then,” June said as she rose to leave, “I’d better get on with it. Can I get you anything before I go?”
June had been sitting in the comfortable chair behind the big desk in front of the long rows of books in Harry Mueller’s office for two long days that had been among the most educational of her entire life. She had read through literally hundreds of letters, memos and reports—possibly thousands, she had lost count—over the course of many hours during which her view of the man she had long thought of as that old bastard had changed almost completely.

Rosemary had been entirely correct about Harry, and why after all shouldn’t she be? She had been an active part of what was, in effect, a secret cabal to make Harry Mueller out to be the son of a bitch that June had always thought him to be. Why
they had done it was still not entirely clear to her, but the how and the who, when and where were all laid out in the files, she was currently immersed in. It was a carefully concealed and closely held effort to manipulate the public image of a very rich man who was also, in fact, extremely and altogether anonymously generous. The whole thing was quite amazing not only in its detail but also in the truly international extent of its scope.

The most amazing aspect of it all was the total separation of the anonymous philanthropies—which in some years consisted of upwards of 25 percent of his very considerable annual income, from his reputation of an anti-philanthropic cheapskate, curmudgeon and misanthrope that was the Harry Mueller much of the world knew. One story that June had been aware of for a very long time that was in fact false, although she now had a completely different slant on it, was the widely circulated rumor that each morning at breakfast, Harry would remind Rosemary that she wasn’t as beautiful as his first wife, Amy, who had died after a heroic battle with cancer two years before he met Rosemary. Rosemary had for many years vehemently denied this story, not only to June but to all of her other close friends, but June had assumed that these were merely the denials of a resolute and faithful wife. June had also pieced together at least part of the strange story of Amy’s many infidelities but there were still many unanswered questions about how she died. June was embarrassed by the realization that she hadn’t been immune to the rumors that circulated for a while that Harry had had Amy killed. But the secret story of Harry and his associates, philanthropies came now as a complete surprise.

The mechanics of the scheme were remarkably simple: Harry and his attorney Edward had apparently worked up the original scenario about the time that Amy left, and Harry was becoming well known enough in the city that her disappearance began to cause comment and speculation. Not even Edward’s brother and law partner John was brought into it as the two together hatched a plan. For years after, John approached Harry with a mixture of apprehension and fear. With their many contacts, it became easy to start rumors, plant gossip, and once this bizarre image management plan was underway, it only took a little effort to keep it going. It was surprising how easy it was to get people to believe the worst about someone. Later, a small group, including Harry, Edward Graham, Madeline Klein’s mother Jean, and eventually Rosemary when she entered the picture, conspired for years to manipulate Harry’s public image.

“I always felt that we were being quite dishonest with the public, but by the time I met Harry it was already well established.” Rosemary told June the evening after her first day of reading had revealed the full scale of the conspiracy. “Edward and Harry set it all in motion, and it seemed to be working for its intended purpose, whatever that was. It was all really so easy. Most of the time I didn’t think about it at all.”
“But, why?” June asked. “What was the point of such an elaborate charade?”

“Well,” Rosemary said, “Harry was beginning to pile up a lot of money. Gobs of it, in fact. So much that we couldn’t possibly spend it all. Harry was always a very generous person, even as a child, but he was also quite modest and painfully shy, and he knew that if people knew how generous he could be, he—or all of us, really—would be besieged with requests and demands for money from all quarters. Just as important, people would be constantly asking his opinions on things he knew nothing about and asking him to make speeches and giving him awards. One man we knew used to get more than 200 letters a day from complete strangers asking for money. He had to spend a fortune over the years just to hire an office staff to keep up with answering the mail. And Harry and Edward both realized that if they didn’t answer such requests, people would think ill of him anyway, so this was just sort of what Edward always called ‘preventative maintenance.’ Harry used to say that all the money we didn’t have to spend on answering correspondence can go to better things.”

“I still feel bad that people had to think so poorly of Harry in order for this to work. That’s why I am doing this. But it never seemed to bother him.”

“And, what, exactly, is ‘this’?” June asked, feeling rather impertinent even as she asked.

“It’s quite simple, really. I’m meeting with Edward and John tomorrow to instruct them to create a foundation in Harry’s name. It will include a provision providing me with a reasonable income for the rest of my life. I forget what they call that. Lifetime something. Then, there’ll be a few gifts to friends and family.” She smiled as she said this. “And all of the rest of the money—all of it after I die—is to be spent on worthwhile projects. I am to have final say on all funded projects during my lifetime. John will, of course, try to get control of the whole thing. He’s very public spirited, but also incredibly selfish.

“It’s unfortunate that this will set off exactly the kinds of nasty things that Harry’s image kept at bay all these years, including all those request letters that are going to start coming in. But I can’t stand it any longer. Justin will get a full partnership in the business and 49% of the preferred stock will be divided among him and the staff.” After a brief dip the day after the announcement of Harry’s death, the stock price had recovered and even grown slightly.

“I’m hoping they can work it so that foundation earnings at least offset the expense of answering all those letters.” This was followed by another long pause, and then: “And that’s the second part of my little plan. Madeline has set up an interview for me on Tuesday with Jason Browning and I’m going to tell him the whole story. I think it will knock his socks off. Harry always disliked Jason even before he
became editor. Used to call him an arrogant little. . . Oh, my, I don’t like to even say it.” Rosemary paused, gathering her thoughts and then continued.

“So, I’ll need the best examples you’ve come up with and lists of projects that Harry made possible over the years. I want to respect Harry’s wish for anonymity as much as possible, so I’d like it if the lists we give Jason would be stated generally with amounts but not names. ‘Two hundred thousand dollars for a scholarship fund at a private liberal arts college; One point three million for a community theater. That sort of thing. Will you do it?’

“I’ll try to have everything pulled together by Monday afternoon,” June replied. “Oh, and there’s one other thing. I won’t be here on Monday. I have been called for jury duty in Dare County, West Virginia. Edward says it’s just a technicality. Harry owned property out there. Edward says they will almost certainly dismiss me, and I don’t even really have to go, but after that nun came to see me last month, I’ve found out some very strange things—or rather I haven’t found out much, which makes them seem strange.” She paused again. “I know that doesn’t make much sense. I really don’t know what I’m saying, but I just have a feeling I ought to go there and see the area.”

“I’ve been cooped up here ever since Harry died and it will be good to get out. Jerry said he will drive me over and we’ll be back in time for dinner Monday night. We’re leaving about eight in the morning. A long drive will do me good and give me a chance to think about my interview with Jason on Tuesday as well.”

June could see that Rosemary had clearly spent a lot of time thinking about this and seem to have everything worked out in her own mind and there was nothing further to say. “Well, I think I’ll go work on those lists for you” she said as she got up to leave the room.
Visitors
It was nearly a year since Harry’s death and Rosemary was beginning to put the recent events in her life into place when she first met Adam Sennett in the Dare County courtroom. Since then she had been trying to arrange an appointment with him to discuss the information Harry had sent her through Marvin Gardiner, and perhaps close another chapter in her new life. However, the county clerk always seemed to be too busy to see her.

After her announcements and directives at lunch, Rosemary’s household sprang into action. Madeline found out that same afternoon that Jason Browning would have been able to meet with her on Monday afternoon, but she would be returning from Dare County at that time. He was not available to see her on Tuesday or Wednesday, but they could get together late Thursday afternoon. Rosemary really did not like anything about Jason and she had the sense that he was probably being difficult just to annoy her, but she agreed reluctantly to meet him at 4 p.m. on Thursday. When Madeline told her the arrangements for the interview were complete, she asked also if Rosemary would like her to sit in for the interview. This served as a gentle reminder for Rosemary that, as Harry’s marketing person, Madeline had been in on the management of Harry’s image for years and was probably familiar with a great many details that Harry had not shared with his wife.

“Yes, dear.” Rosemary said. “I think that would be wonderful. And please feel free to add any information you think useful.”

When Jason arrived at 10 minutes to four that Thursday, Rosemary greeted him as warmly as she could manage before Madeline and Jason launched into an extended discussion of the fine points of an editorial he had written a few days earlier on traffic patterns in the city. Madeline was obviously flattering him shamelessly, but, large ego that he was, the emotionally needy editor appeared not to notice. He just accepted her ingratiating comments as the simple truth. Finally, his ego seemingly satiated for the moment, he turned to Rosemary and said, “I understand you have a story for me.”

“Yes” Rosemary said and began to lay out the details of the carefully orchestrated plot to create and manage the public image of Harry Mueller, miser, misanthrope and anti-philanthropist. As she spoke, Madeline would occasionally interrupt to add a detail here and a nuance there. But after they had been speaking for about ten minutes, sharing copies of memos and cancelled checks and other evidence with him, she began to get the impression that the story was not having the intended effect on the jaded journalist. In fact, he seemed to become increasingly annoyed. Finally, he held up his hand and said in what Rosemary thought a rather too harsh tone, “I appreciate what you’re trying to do here, Mrs. Mueller, but what do you expect me to do with this information?”
“Well. I was hoping you might want to do a story - a kind of expose about ‘the real Harry Mueller.’ The man behind the mask, that sort of thing. It’s an exclusive, We haven’t discussed this with anyone else. . .”

Jason’s loud guffaw could only be described as sarcastic and mean, and Rosemary thought, revealed the full measure of the cruelty of the man. “Listen. I appreciate what you are trying to do and why you want to do this. I really do. Grieving widow stands by her man. That sort of thing. But you’re forgetting. I knew Harry Mueller.”

He paused briefly, measuring his words very carefully.

“So you think I ought to write a story celebrating how I and the rest of the news media in Ohio and more than a few national reporters as well were hoodwinked for years by someone who most of my readers think of as two steps short of Satan himself? You think I ought to tell them now that he was actually a fine man, and upstanding citizen and maybe even a closeted saint? You think anyone really want to read how the biggest local scoundrel was actually a decent human being, a credit to his community, and a generous but totally anonymous philanthropist?”

“Is that what you really think?”

“Even if I wrote that story - which I’m not about to, believe me - do you think any of our readers would believe it? Don’t you have any idea how jaded our readers are? What do you think the phrase ‘if it bleeds, it leads’ is all about?. Do you really think a few photocopies of what you claim are original letters to recipients of his supposed largess, most of whom nobody’s ever heard of, are going to convince anybody of anything? Do you really think that if I assigned one of my reporters to write this, it wouldn’t mean the end of their careers? That they wouldn’t be laughed out of town?”

“But,” Madeline interjected, “We can show you the originals. There is much more evidence like this than you could possibly . . .”

“Forget it!” Jason snapped. “If you think I’m going to swallow this story and in the process reveal that I and every other reporter in this town were played for fools by this . . . this . . . this scoundrel . . . this S.O.B. It isn’t going to happen. Harry Mueller as a stock local character is one thing, but a story about Harry Mueller playing the entire leadership of this town for suckers is just not in the cards!”

“Now, unless you’ve got something else more substantial for me, Mrs. Mueller, I need to be somewhere.” And turning to Madeline, he said, “I really thought you were better than this.” With that he turned and headed for the door, leaving both women in stunned silence. Madeline broke the silence first.

“I don’t know what to say, Rosemary. This is not at all what I was expecting. I thought he would eat this story up.”
Finally, Rosemary regained a measure of composure and said with perhaps too much vigor, “He is such a vulgarian. A truly vile human being!” Then, after another long pause. “I think we need to let him stew on this for a few days and see if he doesn’t change his mind.”

In the weeks and months that followed the fateful conversation with Jason Browning it became clear that there would be no apologies or change of heart from him. Nor would The Daily Eagle and Advertiser be printing any exposés or post-mortem profiles of the life and times of the real Harry Mueller. Less than a week after his meeting with Rosemary and Madeline, a prominent, well-known philanthropist in Los Angeles died. Tacked onto the end of the standard obituary that the Associated Press distributed to newspapers across the country, The Daily Eagle article added a paragraph detailing how different this man had been from that local scoundrel who had also just died, Harry Mueller.

From that point on whenever the newspaper printed a story about rich men, philanthropy or even business practices, Jason and his editors would add one or more sentences casting Harry Mueller in a bad light. The lesson that Rosemary drew from this was simple: Never get between a newspaper man and the journalistic myths he upholds. Once the story of Harry Mueller was created it was set in stone and there was nothing to do but continue embellishing it. No amount of evidence, argument or complaining would be sufficient to dislodge it. ‘Harry the rich miser’ was simply too good a story for that. She could only move on with her plans to create a foundation in his name, and hope that if she made enough evidence accessible in as many ways as possible, at some point in the future some enterprising reporter might discover the truth for herself, or some historical researcher might hit upon the truth and, as a byproduct of a dry, scholarly monograph issue a news release or do a press conference unveiling the truth behind the myth of the man.

Two days after that fateful interview, Madeline looked up from the newspaper article she had just started reading as her cell phone chimed. The fleeting thought crossed her mind that perhaps it was Jason Browning calling to apologize or, as Rosemary had suggested, to discuss the story further or even continue the interview. But it was a number she didn’t recognize. When she answered, it was an unfamiliar voice.

“This is Detective Tom Horton. I’m with the Michigan Bureau of Criminal Investigation,” the voice said. At that point, she fully expected him to ask her for a donation for some policemen’s charity. Instead, she heard, “Have I reached Madeline Klein?” After her rather curt yes, he continued “I need to arrange a time when I can come and speak with Mrs. Rosemary Mueller. I was told you might be able to help me arrange that?”
“What about?”

“I would prefer not to discuss it over the phone, Ms. Klein. Let me just say it is in connection with an on-going investigation.” he said. “Is Mrs. Mueller there?” Madeline said that she was not, but she agreed to check with Rosemary when she returned and to get back to him.

“The police? I wonder what they want to talk to me about.” Rosemary replied to Madeline’s report of the conversation. “Please tell him that anytime tomorrow would be fine. Have we heard anything further from Jason Browning?”

“No.” At this, Rosemary turned and said, “I’ll be in my room until dinner.”

Rosemary turned the problem over in her mind, but she could not figure out why a police officer - a homicide detective from Michigan, no less - might wish to talk with her. She kept coming back to the ‘mystery’ of Amy. She didn’t see how it could be anything else. Harry’s first wife, Amy Mueller, had been deeply unhappy during her brief marriage to Harry, Rosemary knew, and quite possibly mentally ill before and after the marriage which had ended with her widely reported ‘death’ from a mysterious illness. In all likelihood, she was what was then called manic-depressive, and what today is called bi-polar.

Harry and Amy had been a perfect mismatch from the start. Amy was a party girl; a real gold-digger in Rosemary’s view, who made no secret that she was out to marry a rich man. Harry, on the other hand, even though he was already well on his way to making his enormous fortune, was anything but a sophisticated, dashing man about town. Quite the opposite. In fact, to her parents’ generation, he would have been called a “stick in the mud.” It took Harry more than a year of dinners, dances and movies, to be coaxed by her and others to propose to Amy, and she had, no doubt, been more than willing to do the coaxing.

Even at the start, people said, Amy wasn’t actually unhappy married to Harry. She was just bored. She was a free spirit, who genuinely loved night life, while Harry liked to be asleep by 10 PM. At first Harry appeared really smitten by Amy, and the long nights of drinking and dancing and partying with her friends were an interesting departure for him from his normal, staid, life. When her behavior would become more and more manic, he would turn away from her to his business affairs, while Amy spent more and more nights away from what was supposed to have been their happy home. Years later, he told Rosemary, “I was too young and naive when I married Amy. The marriage didn’t work mostly because of me, and I’m not going to make that mistake again by neglecting you.”

Rosemary never learned for certain whether Harry knew the full extent of Amy’s ‘adventures’ as she called them. If he was, he never discussed them. She also didn’t know the details of what had actually happened to Amy. After about eighteen months of marriage, Amy had been diagnosed with a malignant and
rapidly advancing tumor and three months later she was dead. The funeral received saturation local coverage from Jason Browning’s newspaper and all the various radio and television stations in town. The story was simply too good to ignore: Beautiful young wife of rich financial wizard and all-around anti-hero dies of a broken heart.

What none of the media knew, and Rosemary had only learned recently from June’s continuing explorations of Harry’s files, was that, like the story of the disreputable Harry, all of this had been simply another ruse. “Oh, Harry!” Rosemary had said when June told her, “Why did you have to create all these mysteries? I don’t know how much more of this I can stand.” Harry had been understandably furious when he learned of Amy’s infidelities, especially when his private detective Marvin Gardiner showed him the photos and gave him the report of Amy with his own attorney, Edward Graham. There had been an angry confrontation between the two old friends, but Edward had been very contrite, apologized profusely and they had eventually reconciled by the time Rosemary entered the picture. Ever the shrew businessman, Harry had decided that the news gave him a hold over Edward, who was really a very good lawyer - too good to lose - and so things had continued until Harry’s death.

Edward was the rainmaker of the Graham & Graham law firm while John was the firm’s civic presence. They were both very eager to retain Harry as a client, even though the friendship of Edward and Harry remained somewhat strained for several years after. His account was responsible for several million dollars in billings each year. Edward was also willing, perhaps too willing he now thought, to help Harry work out the details of a completely fictional story of Amy’s ‘death’. Like Rosemary, he too had been contacted by Lt. Horton and he too wondered why the Michigan State Police had apparently taken an interest in any of this.

In exchange for a generous financial settlement, Amy had agreed to disappear permanently; to change her name and appearance, move out of Ohio and never again approach or have any contact with Harry, Edward or any of her other male friends around town, or with anyone else connected with her brief married life as Mrs. Harry Mueller. She was never to refer to the marriage, under threat that the generous financial support would cease. Edward knew that she had first moved to Denver and then to Las Vegas, living a completely fictional life as the widow of a war hero, and eventually married a high-living Michigan real estate operator. The couple settled in a large mansion in the wealthy suburbs of Detroit, where Edward continued to mail the substantial monthly checks from the trust fund established for her that Harry had set up as part of the arrangement.

Meanwhile after her departure Harry and Edward had arranged a lavish funeral and burial for “Amy Mueller, beloved wife” which was attended by all of the leading figures of the city. Ever the philanthropist, Harry had even arranged with the local
coroner to substitute the body of an unidentified female corpse from the County Morgue, thus saving him from burying a casket of rocks, and relieving the county of the expense of another burial in the local potters’ field. The coroner was willing, even eager, to cooperate, not only to get an unclaimed body off his hands, but also in grateful acknowledgement of the gift of two very expensive pieces of laboratory equipment that Harry agreed to pay for. “What’s the harm?” the coroner told his wife. “That poor woman gets a decent burial, and the county gets a much-needed electron microscope and spectrometer.”

But for both Rosemary and Edward, who had not discussed the recent contacts with one another, there was still the question of why, after all these years, the Michigan state police had an interest in any of this.
Daniel Reasoner sat on the rock overlook on Colburn Hill looking down on the town where he grew up. The hill had been named for Sergeant Aubrey Colburn III of the 7th Virginia Cavalry, killed at the Battle of Antietam. The Colburns were among the original settlers of Barley Mill, but Aubrey had been the only male child of his generation and the surname had died with him.

As he sat there, Daniel thought of his friends and whether they would still be his friends now that he had returned. They had once been his best friends when he was growing up in Barley Mill, even though all five of them were older than him; a fact that had unsettled his mother at the time. The two young men were in their mid-twenties while he was still in high school. They had married two sisters from
Pittsburgh and settled down in Barley Mill. Thomas Reasoner, their younger brother was almost a year older than Daniel, although they had been in the same grade in school. From middle school Thomas had been considered something of an outcast and isolate, while Daniel had been friendly with nearly everyone in the school. Thomas’ brother-in-law Arthur Payne was born and raised locally and was now an art teacher at Barley Mill High School, seemingly with enough money to make the world—or at least their part of it, a better place. Art’s family had been in Barley Mill as long as anyone could remember, although Daniel didn’t know if they were among the original farmers who settled the county. He married Gloria, the older of the two sisters. She had a masters’ degree in urban planning from the University of Pittsburgh. Gloria retired from professional life when she married Art and they moved to Barley Mill. She made no secret of the fact that she had been bored with small town life for the first years.

Her younger sister Joy had soon followed Art and Gloria to town and taken a job as a social work supervisor in the local Department of Welfare office. She met and married Virgil Hart only a year or two before he, a veteran fighter pilot, was shot down in one or another of the seemingly endless land wars in Asia. When they returned to Barley Mill after a long convalescence, everyone said, Virgil was not the same man, but Daniel couldn’t say because he hadn’t known him before. Virgil loved to fly and as these things often do in small towns, he was eventually offered a job as manager of the local airport. It wasn’t actually much of an airport; just a long, narrow grassy field with a few small planes parked along the sides of the runway. Neither Gloria nor Joy had any children of their own, but Thomas came to live with them when he was twelve.

While they were still adolescents, Thomas Reasoner had told Daniel that he had been in and out of trouble in the neighborhood where he grew up in Pittsburgh, and his parents were more than relieved when he announced that he was “running away” to live with his sisters in Barley Mill. Once there, he knew it was a mistake and spent the rest of his time there plotting how to get out. The two couples had promised the girls’ parents they would look out for Thomas, and they had also taken Thomas’ friend Daniel under their wing when he was in his first year of high school and as they said tried to show him that there was a wider world out there. It appeared to have worked. Daniel’s high school years were pleasant and mostly successful. But immediately after Daniel and he graduated from Barley Mill High School, Thomas made good on his escape plans and left for San Francisco. He asked Daniel to go with him, but they were already growing distant from one another and this was more courtesy than conviction. His parents and his sisters still heard from Thomas occasionally, but to the rest of Barley Mill, Thomas Reasoner was little more than a distant memory of someone who once passed through town. When Thomas left, Daniel had felt rather awkward around the others; a sort of ugly step-brother.
Daniel had done well enough in high school to earn a scholarship to college and left town in early fall a few months after Thomas. After college, he went on for a master’s degree in journalism and spent several years on the city desk of a large metropolitan daily newspaper, not to mention a short marriage, some painful memories and a nasty divorce. Daniel returned to Barley Mill when he was able to purchase the weekly Barley Mill Forum after deciding to take up the quiet life of the country editor.

Anyone who came along the ridge that morning would have seen Daniel sitting there alone overlooking what appeared to be a reclaimed strip mine. But there was no one about on this particular morning to disturb his reverie. He was thinking about his life growing up in Barley Mill. He had been a boy delivering newspapers along the familiar streets, avenues and highways below when he had first met and gotten to know the Paynes, Harts and Reasoners. Daniel’s family all knew Art Payne. After they came to town, people had also gotten to know and generally liked his wife Gloria, and her sister Joy Messenger Hart, who was now a widow but at the time had only recently married Virgil Hart, local war hero. Since Daniel had been back in town, no one spoke to him of Thomas, who it was more or less assumed, would die of a drug overdose or some sexually transmitted disease in San Francisco where he now lived.

Years before, Art had returned to what he called The Mill to take a position as the local art teacher in the county public schools. Daniel knew that Art really enjoyed teaching and considered it not just a job but a calling. As a student, Daniel had first-hand experience with Art’s desire to bring an appreciation for beauty and a sense of the sublime to Dare County, West Virginia. But Art was now also a large land owner in the county. Daniel had just learned yesterday that Art’s father, Arthur Payne Sr., who died last year, leaving him a tract of land in Dare County and a portfolio of stocks and investments.

Gloria and her sister Joy had grown up in Pittsburgh, and were students at West Virginia University when she met Art. She had fallen in love with him almost immediately, although she went on to complete her master’s degree at Ohio State before his affection caught up to hers. Joy had loved Virgil, but also knew the limits and challenges of being married to a genuine war hero. The offer for Virgil to manage the local airport came, somewhat mysteriously, from a man associated with the Sennett clan, which also was said to control the county school board, several county offices and, it was said by some, everything else in Dare County. Daniel had not known any of the Sennetts personally when growing up. It wasn’t anything specific, he told himself; His family just didn’t move in the same social circles as they did.

When Gloria and Joy first moved to town, they had been filled with romantic and idealistic notions of idyllic rural life. Art had made Barley Mill sound like some
idyllic rural paradise. The sisters had both read of the Country Life Movement and Gloria had done a study of the Greenbelt Towns in England as part of her graduate work in urban planning. She visited Greenbelt, Maryland once when she had been working with the Public Housing Authority in Cleveland but came away disappointed. It had just looked to her like another suburb in the great conurbation stretching from Boston to the southern reaches of the Washington DC area.

The girls soon concluded that the town where they were living was a dreary Appalachian mining community with more than its share of private troubles and secrets. More than 50% of local youth never finished high school. Health care locally was restricted to one general practitioner and the nearest hospital was more than an hour away over twisty mountain roads. There was no municipal water or sewer system, and most wells and septic systems were inadequate, leaving even those creeks and small streams not corrupted by mine drainage seriously polluted from human effluent. Genuinely fresh water was always in short supply. This appeared not to trouble most locals at all. They got their water supplies upstream from spring-fed creeks and artesian wells and, well, the folks downstream would just have to look out for themselves, wouldn’t they?

When Daniel first got to know his friends, they invited him to join a loose group of kin, peers and newly-weds who gathered on Thursday evening each week at Art and Gloria’s house to tamp down the boredom of small-town life. He wondered now at how easily they had taken him in—a very ordinary local teenager from an ordinary family. They had adopted him really. He in turn was enthralled by their education, sophistication and social grace. Although roughly his age peer, Thomas, knew about and had visited places and things Daniel had never heard of before. Thomas enchanted him with stories of exotic, far-off urban locales: Harlem before World War I, Paris in the Twenties, Lafcadio Hearn’s accounts of 19th century New Orleans, the Gay Nineties in New York, San Francisco, London, and all manner of other assorted bohemias of the world. In their last year of high school, Daniel, too, had become increasingly bored with small town life and wanted to get as far away from Barley Mill as quickly as possible. Yet, this feeling went away temporarily whenever he spent time with his friends at Art and Gloria’s house. Their conversations were like nothing Daniel had ever experienced before: They talked easily of art and politics and culture; they spoke of grand lofty ideas seldom ever spoken anywhere else in Barley Mill; ideas like artistic freedom and social justice, man and nature, and racial and gender equality. When the time came to go off to college, he was genuinely sad to leave this all behind. But after a few months at college, he put all of this behind him and much of it was only now coming back to him on this ridge this sunny morning.

As he sat alone on the ridge on this crisp morning in late spring, Daniel recalled one evening in particular when the talk had been about modern literature. “I don’t
feel anything like the kind of seething, passionate creatures one reads in modern novels.” Joy had said. “Sometimes, I don’t feel like I have any interiority.” Daniel had never before heard the word interiority, and he made a mental note that night to check on its meaning. He wasn’t certain if he had ever actually looked it up, but he knew now what Joy must have been feeling. Everyone else present had seemed to appreciate what she was saying, and an uneasy silence had descended upon the room. A few minutes later the conversation had moved on as Daniel had looked at his watch and decided he’d better get home. His mother was not at all happy at the time about his choice of friends, and he didn’t want to cause any more strife at home than already existed. From that evening to today, he never heard anything more about the interiority of the Paynes, Harts or their friends.

A few nights later Daniel had finished work at the local weekly newspaper, where after he had delivered the afternoon daily papers, he had a job cleaning up the newsroom and typing up some of the local news. He was walking home, his head filled with thoughts of fleeing Barley Mill to become a writer, perhaps even moving to Greenwich Village or Paris. Now, he found himself wondering why so many disenchanted small-town boys want to be journalists or poets and thought of themselves as apprentice misunderstood artists. No young man at that time ever seemed to want to escape from Barley Mill to become a corporate lawyer or a civil engineer or an audiologist, much less a truck driver or a jet mechanic.

Daniel had been back in his hometown for less than 36 hours and he saw now how unprepared he was for the flood of memories and emotions that had overtaken him in that time. Last evening, as he had passed the Paine house on River Street, he saw a light in the parlor window and at first felt the urge to stop in as he so often had in the past, for what he had learned to call, only slightly self-consciously, one of their “salons.” Those soirees, as Gloria sometimes called them, often ran late into the night and had been the talk of the town during Daniel’s high school years. There were rumors of drinking, drugs, debauchery and general excess among the religiously upright citizens of the town, who all knew of best-selling novels like Peyton Place but nothing of Main Street or Hedda Gabler.

Daniel chuckled to himself now at the thought that few in Barley Mill probably had ever actually read Peyton Place or any other modern novel, but he was pretty sure that more than a few had seen the movie with Lana Turner, Hope Lang and Lloyd Nolan. The good citizens of Barley Mill didn’t tend to read novels, even novels like Peyton Place. Instead, they relied upon the local preachers to bring them news of sin in the outside world, and the local gossips to report on the home front. Thus, what knowledge there was of literary events in town came largely second-hand from the pulpits on Sunday mornings and the sewing circles on Tuesday afternoons. Few warnings of sin and vice were ever issued against other,
more subtle evils like xenophobia, racism, sexism or misogyny. Concern about such matters fell entirely outside the local imagination.

Had he stopped in last night, Daniel imagined that he would have discovered that his friends were still talking about life in various artist’s colonies. He recalled another time they had discussed the Morgantown-area artists Blanche Lazelle and her younger cousin Grace Martin Taylor, and their annual escapes to the Provincetown artist’s colony. And another conversation all those years earlier when Thomas held forth to Daniel on his wish to have been part of the Taos painter’s colony and attended the salons at Mabel Dodge Luhan’s house. Thomas had visited Taos, New Mexico with his parents several years earlier, and had toured the Mable Dodge house outside Taos. Later that same day he and his parents had dinner with a close friend of Georgia O’Keefe. Yet, last night Daniel couldn’t find any enthusiasm for such discussions and rather than going in, he went back to his old room at his mother’s house, which was now his house since his mother’s death a few months ago.

As she was seeing Daniel out another evening years ago, Gloria had told Daniel that they are planning to visit two houses built by Frank Lloyd Wright near the Youghiogheny River in Western Pennsylvania. Even though he was only a high school senior at the time, and his mother was terribly concerned about his safety (having heard the salacious rumors about the group of adults he was hanging around with), Daniel was allowed to go on the trip with them after much pleading, begging and promises of good behavior. “Thomas will be there! They are like my sisters, too!”, he told his mother, “they’ll watch out for me.”

The experience had been a profound one for all concerned. “I know Wright was from Chicago and the Kaufmans were wealthy Pittburghers.” Art had said as they were driving up to Ohiopyle, Pennsylvania a few days later. “I know he is credited with the “Prairie School style” but that doesn’t matter. Wright gave us something we haven’t been able to get by ourselves; an authentic Appalachian architecture—a mountain architecture. Falling Water may be internationally known, but it is as true to these mountains as quilts, whammy diddles, and fiddling and all the old-fashioned crafts that Allen Eaton, Alan Lomax, Edith Dame Campbell and others ‘discovered’ and chronicled. What they saw was more than anything folk arts and crafts. What Wright did was something far more profound than that; he transformed the spirit of the mountains into enduring art.”

From the moment they had arrived at the house at Falling Water, Daniel had shouted, “Art was right! This is truly Appalachian architecture!” He didn’t know now whether he had actually shouted that or had simply been overwhelmed by the thought. Experiencing the actual house had led Art to even higher expression. “I have nothing against craft guilds, but true art in the mountains ought to be more than just trees, log cabins and babbling brooks. It’s also this splendid house! This
ought to be a symbol and an inspiration to the region.” But they all knew that although considered by many to be the single most important architect-designed modern house in the world, in the decades since its construction it had only a very minimal impact on home building in the mountains. For a mixture of reasons, conventional prairie-style ranch houses, “custom built log homes” and the ubiquitous mobile home increasingly defined the design standards for modernism in the Appalachian region, even as the two-story wood frame house with attached porch and various lean-to add-ons made up the bulk of the aging housing stock of the region.

When they returned from Falling Water, they had all been filled with awe and wonder about Wright’s amazing house and convinced that it signaled the beginnings of an Appalachian renaissance that had yet to advance any further. When that fluorescence came, they were certain, Appalachia would no longer symbolize the past in American arts and poverty and degradation in culture. It would, instead, point the way to the future. After their time at Falling Water, Gloria led them to a second Wright house just a half dozen miles away. She knew the Hagen family through her contacts in Pittsburgh and had a standing invitation from them to drop by and see “their little Wright house”. However, as Joy said, Gloria was never big on appointments or arrangements and so they were disappointed when they found that no one was at home and, after driving up the long driveway they could only see the low brow of one of the least known of Wright’s Usonian houses sitting atop the ridge. They were, however, intrigued by the Hagen’s sculpture collection scattered about the woods and fields around the property.

Daniel was truly shocked by the vivid nature of his memories of that trip. Later that same year, Art had also come across a Life magazine article on Wright’s depression-era project Broadacre Village and Joy had reported to the group on her understanding of “organic architecture.” This sent Daniel to the school library where he had even come across a newspaper clipping on the annual pilgrimage of the Taliesin Fellowship from Spring Green, Wisconsin to Arizona and a great many other details that were welling up now from his long-term memory.

The trip to Fallingwater seemed to give a new urgency and verve to their Thursday evening salons. In their discussions, the group gradually came to believe that it was not the narrow, provincial small-town life per se portrayed by Sinclair Lewis that was driving young people out of rural areas into the cities. In Appalachia, the wish to leave was spurred not only by the absence of jobs but also by the alienation from nature and the absence of beauty and a sense of the sublime in their lives. Daniel had to agree that, even though he couldn’t have put it into words at the time, that was the primary reason he had left. That, and to get away from the small-town scourges who seemed to disapprove of everything he did and was. Thomas, the
high school senior, for whom this was both more personal and more undigested, left Barley Mill filled with disgust and rage for California. Meanwhile, the others who stayed agreed to devote their remaining lives to creating an organic community in Barley Mill. They just weren’t sure where to start.

At first when he decided to return to Barley Mill Daniel had wondered whether he would take up the threads of this challenge to conventional small-time life where he had left it, but even as he had talked with them about coming back, he had determined very quickly that the rest of the group had long ago lost interest in such things; in fact shortly after he and Thomas left town. They were now preoccupied with other matters. “Oh, yes. Organic architecture!” Joy said, “Yes. That was a wonderful time in our lives. Why didn’t we ever do anything with that?” They had, of course, even though their various efforts were really quite comic. In Daniel’s second year in college Virgil, who was a heavy smoker, was diagnosed with terminal lung cancer and Joy devoted the remaining months of his life to his personal care. Yet she managed to make a seminal contribution to the project in her observations—sometimes exquisitely detailed observations—about how small towns were not just places for living, they were also places for dying. Virgil had been far too ill during this period to add much to the discussions, but he seemed pleased just to sit among the living and listen even as he grew weaker by the day. “Sometimes I feel like I might be a character in Thornton Wilder’s Our Town, looking down on all of you from my cemetery plot” he said one evening. The others all cried at that and hugged one another. He died a few days later, and whenever the group got together, someone would inevitably remind them that Virgil was looking down on them from his gravesite on the hillside and the group would lapse into a few moments of quiet introspection.

Gradually, others in the community had learned fragments of these discussions. Some of the gossips were seriously disappointed by this news; they were certain that these “salons” at the Sennett house had been devoted to drugs and wife-swapping at the least. Others of more charitable mind were pleased to aid in dispelling the rumors, even as they were somewhat mystified that anyone would rather discuss rural community design than watch Jeopardy and World-Wide Wrestling.

The local clergy had pick up on the idea and—ironically for some—labeled the initiative to redesigned rural communities the “New Canaan Project”. Gloria was asked to chair an ecumenical committee of local women to plan the new rural community. Joy, having heard around the local welfare office of community organization tried to act upon what she had heard. Yet, gradually, almost imperceptibly in the way that these things do in small towns the community redesign initiative took a back seat to the practical tasks: finding meeting dates and
times acceptable to all; planning luncheon menus and organizing fundraising bake sales.

Unbeknownst to Daniel, another resident of Dare County who was then serving in the military in Afghanistan learned of the conversations in far-off Barley Mill from his cousin Mildred, who tried to write to him weekly while he was away but was often hard pressed to find something to say. Ralph Deigh had also visited Fallingwater and had developed a small but growing collection of sketches of modern houses and other buildings suitable for construction sites in the mountains. Worried about the unstable conditions in Kandahar where he was stationed, Ralph regularly mailed his sketches to Mildred and asked her to keep them safe until he got back. These sketches were the beginning of a growing collection of notebooks on rural redesign that Ralph compiled over a number of years.

It must have been the death of Art Payne’s mother Phyllis that marked the official end of the salons in the Payne front room. After that, people said, Art had changed. He was no longer the laughing, idealistic, high school art teacher he had been. As they knew he must, he traded his teaching position for the equally-full time (and far better paying) position as county executive of the Republican Party previously held by his mother. But it wasn’t just his job that changed. His whole demeanor seemed to change as well. Art became more serious, even quite dark and moody at times. Had anyone in Barley Mill known of the life of Cosimo who became the titular head of the Medici family in renaissance Florence, they might have even been tempted to draw a comparison. “Yes! Art is like Cosimo!” They would have said. “His head was once filled only with thoughts of art and beauty and the sublime, until it became necessary for him to take up his responsibilities to his family and the community. Now he spends his days thinking about road grading, water quality, and tax easements and raising money for the volunteer fire department.”

This new more serious and infinitely less interesting Art, who seemed increasingly weighed down by the world was the man Daniel encountered when he returned to Barley Mill. Gloria and Joy had changed also, but Art seemed to be carrying the weight of the world on his shoulders and was struggling to hold up the load. It was this, more than anything else that occupied Daniel’s thoughts as he sat on the ridge top and looked down over the town on this beautiful morning.
After Harry died, around the time that Daniel Messenger came back to Dare County, Frederika (Freddie) Watson decided that her research had progressed far enough for her to take the next steps in her carefully planned life. Freddie was an independent researcher in Washington DC who had picked up the trail of the mysterious career of an obscure federal bureaucrat named Arthur Sennett, whose work life she had been systematically reconstructing over a period of years. Now, it was time for her to go to the place she thought of as “the scene of the crime” and see if she could pick up the threads of the story there.

Thus, began the strange tale of the myth of Cibola in Appalachia and the spreading awareness of a possible explanation for a strange set of ruins that had recently
come to light deep in the forest a few miles outside of Barley Mills, West Virginia. After a few weeks of preparations, Freddie sold the townhouse in Northeast Washington where she and her ex-husband, Richard, had started and ended their married life perhaps a bit too impulsively. Freddie had always thought of herself as a spontaneous person, although looking back now she saw that this move had been inevitable ever since she had discovered Richard’s infidelities nearly eighteen months before. Freddie had a substantial trust fund that she had been living on since her parents were killed in an auto accident near Burlington, Vermont a dozen years ago. When the proceeds from the sale of her townhouse were added to the fund Freddie would have enough to live comfortably for the rest of her life, or as long as the bond market held up.

When she got to Barley Mill, she was able to rent a small house from the local newspaper editor, Daniel Messenger. It had been his mother’s, he said, but she had died some time ago and since he had come back, he preferred to live elsewhere in town. She thought at first that she and Daniel might be interested in one another, but it was soon clear that wouldn’t work and within a few weeks she had met Cane Sennett, who held a dual interest for her. She was interested in Cane for himself, of course, who would not be? He was handsome, charming, a member of the younger generation of a prominent local family, had been a high school sports hero, and he was very interested in her. He was also the great grandson of Arthur Sennett, the mystery man who had brought her to town.

In high school, Gordon Alexander Sennett had picked up the nickname “Hurricane” because of his prowess as the star running back of the Barley Mill high school football team. Over the years, that name has been shortened to the single mono-syllabic “Cane”. Cane went away to play college ball but failed to make the starting lineup, and after failing most of his courses as well, dropped out of college and came back to town where he still lived with his parents. His brother and sister also lived in Barley Mill at least part of every year.

To many people in Barley Mill, Cane had grown up to be a reckless and wonton young man who failed not only at football and college but also at just about everything else he did. He had been in and out of drug rehabilitation several times in recent years. As the oldest child, if the information Freddie had compiled was correct, he would be in line to inherit the role of Guardian of Cibola (and the job of Dare County Clerk) from his father but she suspected that his reckless behavior has done great damage to that possibility. That knowledge, together with Cane’s frequently expressed fear that he was a great disappointment to his parents and that they loved his younger brother, Abby, more than him seemed to drive him toward periodic bouts of rage and reckless behavior.

Doctors had told his parents that many of Cane’s problems could stem from injuries sustained in high school football, and he knew that he had been Exhibit A
in the controversial decision by the Dare County School Board to ban tackle football in high schools in the county. Many of Cane’s most serious problems had been legal, stemming from his drug addiction. He has been arrested numerous times and convicted at least twice of drunk driving, and accused of reckless endangerment, assault with a deadly weapon, sexual assault and several other charges. Cane Sennett was trying hard to put his past behind him. He had been sober and drug free for a little over a year at the time Freddie met him, and he had found a new group of friends to whom he introduced her at the first opportunity.

The gatherings that they called their Thursday night salons had been going on for years now, and Cane and Freddie fit right into the routine of their regular meetings, along with a few other ‘newbies’, the old stalwarts Gloria and Art Payne, and Gloria’s sister Joy Reasoner Hart. After Daniel left for college and his friend Tom Reasoner moved to San Francisco, the Thursday evening group had struggled for a while. They thought perhaps a regular, weekly date and time would help. Sundays were out for obvious reasons. They could not get together on Wednesday nights either because both the Baptists and Disciples had church that evening, and the Methodists and Lutherans had choir practice. And Friday nights were out because of high school sports and activities. Even without football, the school calendar was generally full on Fridays. Monday evenings just didn’t seem right, and Tuesday night was Joy’s favorite TV night, so they had settled on Thursdays as the only choice available.

They had come to call it, more or less in jest, their Thursday evening soiree or the Payne Salon, although many locals still spoke of it as the orgies at the Paynes’ house. Some locals would even arrange their Thursday evening walks after supper to take them up Forest Street past the Payne house where they would try to see in while remaining moving on the sidewalk. Gloria, aware of the rumors, always left the drapes in the front room open on Thursday evenings. These local voyeurs were inevitably disappointed to see only weekly groups of people in the Paynes’ living room engaged in rather sedate-looking conversations, with no wild dancing or gesturing, junkies shooting up, writhing bodies or whatever else it was they believed to be typical of small-town orgiastic behavior.

Sometime after Freddie moved to town and met Cane, one after another the Thursday evening regulars had met and gotten to know Freddie Watson, the young woman who had moved to Barley Mill from Washington DC. What everyone saw at first was a mild-mannered young woman who dressed like a librarian, preferring dark, tweedy skirts and black sweaters. Someone said she told them she had spent her free time reading documents in the National Archives in Washington. Joy soon learned that Freddie was an art history graduate from a liberal arts college somewhere in Indiana. Art, who liked to categorize people, said that she was a thorough-going romantic living in a Carlyle-inspired world of hero worship, a
bland, ordinary bureaucratic anti-hero. Although she seemed to be fully aware that she was taking an extraordinary risk with Cane Sennett, the members of the Thursday salon really grew to like her.

None of them knew anything about how Freddie had first stumbled upon the initial details of what she called “the Cibola Society”. However, after she had been attending on Thursday nights for about a month, she told them the tale of Arthur Sennett.
Virgil died sometime after their trip to Falling Water, shortly after Daniel’s departure for school and Thomas’ move to San Francisco. The Thursday evening Arts and Letters Club did not meet that week, or the next or for several weeks thereafter. Finally, they got together again one Thursday evening at Joy’s insistence and after a few awkward expressions of remorse and Joy’s insistence that she needed to set aside her loss at least for a few moments and think of something else, the surviving members of the weekly Thursday evening Arts and Letters Club were able to regroup and recapture some of the old spirit. In the following weeks, they became increasingly interested in the work of Joseph Campbell on mythology, and in particular by Campbell’s idea of the monomyth, which he described as a myth in which a hero ventures forth from the world of common, everyday life into a region of supernatural wonder: “Fabulous forces are there encountered” he wrote “and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back
from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man.”

At one weekly session, Gloria observed that for people from Pittsburgh and much of the rest of the country, “deepest, darkest Appalachia” was just such a region of supernatural wonder, although she doubted that anyone in their old neighborhood would thing that she or Joy might be able to confer boons on anyone should they return. Art added that even among those who had seen a bit of the natural beauty of the state passing through at 75 miles an hour on I-79, I-64 or the West Virginia Turnpike, the vast majority had never gotten off and wound for a few hours along Highway 33 into Virginia, or Highway 52 into Kentucky. “While thousands of people pass over the New River Bridge every year,” he said, “How many do you suppose have driven under it? Or been there for Bridge Day?” For some of these people, the bumper sticker and T-shirt slogan, “Keep paddling! I hear banjos.” was shorthand for fears of rural people and mountain people in particular, stroked by movies like Deliverance.

“In the 19th century,” Gloria noted warming to the topic, “it was even customary among some New York newspapers to refer to the people of Appalachia as ‘our contemporary ancestors.’

“That’s the key problem for economic development in the Appalachian region,” Cane noted. “It always has a reactionary tone, looking backward trying to reconstruct the past, rebuild the log cabins, reopen the coal mines, the whole bit, when the underlying conditions that created that past are long gone and weren’t that great for most of the residents to begin with. . . “

“. . . And they aren’t about to come back.” Art added. “Meanwhile, concerns with artistry and beauty and music and such are always held up as components of Appalachian culture, but let’s face it. The grinding daily life world created by coal mining is butt-ugly and soul destroying. There is nothing uplifting about it.”

Everyone there that night knew that Art had read a bit of phenomenology and was very taken with terms like “daily life worlds” and “socially constructed realities”.

He continued, “Gashes and scars on the landscape, cheaply built houses in company towns that people have had to make do with for over a hundred years, mine drainage and untreated sewage in our creeks, foul air in our lungs. There really isn’t all that much to be nostalgic about other than steady jobs and good pay, and that was really only for a couple of decades in the late 20th century before it all started to fall apart.”

After that evening, the topic of Appalachian renewal became the central focus of most Thursday evening gatherings, and over time a course of action gradually emerged. Story telling was one of the oldest and most venerated of Appalachian traditions, and so they set out to tell one another stories; to create their own myth
of rural Appalachia as a garden of Eden, a place of beauty, peace and well-being. The epic that members of the Thursday evening Arts and Letters Club constructed with the aid of their new friends Freddie Watson and Cane Sennett is reproduced below. It was immediately dismissed as a fabrication by many with whom it was shared and very soon set aside. Adam Sennett and his wife Evie, and their son Cane were among the few in Barley Mills to realize how close the group was coming to some real truths. It would have been very easy for Freddie Watson to have claimed credit - at least to herself - for this fortuitous turn of events, but she knew that the truth was more complicated - much more complicated. She told herself that she had come to Dare County and to the Thursday evening salons with Cane not to further the project that brought her to Barley Mill, but simply in search of a social life in her new home, getting together with people she enjoyed. Even so, she found this new focus of the Club very encouraging, and it gave her a chance to spend another evening each week with Cane Sennett, something she also found most enjoyable.

What the members of the club constructed over the next few months until the bottom fell out of their world was their own myth of a plausible Appalachian past that was much deeper and broader than anything previously suggested; it is a winter’s tale of lost traditions and unknown utopias, of a past and future life in Appalachia as it should be and could be led. The story begins with a series of tablets discovered at the Cibola site some decades ago but only recently decoded. It is the story of a deeply multi-racial and multi-cultural society, fragments of which originated at the time of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, and which was until very recently, hidden in plain sight among the green mountains of Appalachia. Cibola, the mythical 'seven cities of gold' (siete ciudades de oro) actually existed for more than 500 years as a closed society of seven villages deep in Central Appalachia until it was destroyed by flood and its residents scattered near and far.

Because of the ignorance and superstitions of Europeans about race and ‘primitive’ peoples, the Cibola society was for most of its history really only hidden from them. The existence and location of Cibola were well known for centuries by many of the native people of post-Columbian America, through the time of the European immigrations to America and the efforts of the newest Americans at segregation, homogenization and ultimately extinction. The seven cities of Cibola were for many native peoples a favorite pilgrimage site, full of wonder and weighted down with nearly overwhelming significance. However, it seems that numerous attempts throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to tell the latest European newcomers from the East of this shining place invariably resulted in misunderstanding and recriminations. While the various indigenous informers had sought to tell the Europeans of these cities filled with an amazing quality of life and precious knowledge, where many languages were spoken, with streets and
houses built with rare and wondrous technologies, the Europeans invariably misunderstood their meaning and thought only of gold. “Where are these famous cities with their streets paved with gold?” they would ask with voices filled with avarice.

For the more lustful among the English, Dutch, French, and Spanish explorers, references in the Cibola stories to “amazing” and “bright” eventually evolved into the hackneyed story of the Seven Cities where the streets were paved with gold and precious metals and buildings had gems in their walls. Early attempts got nowhere in trying to explain to the newcomers that such places did, in fact, exist in America and others like it were to be found elsewhere in the world; that there were, in fact, many more than seven, but none were built of actual gold.

The misunderstanding of the legend by the avaricious Spanish Conquistadors as the story of the "Seven Cities of Gold" and its relocation to the American Southwest is a well-known part of American folklore. As members of the Thursday evening Arts and Letters Club understood it, this was also part of the deliberate misdirection practiced by the leaders of the Cibola community as means of self-protection. The seemingly fantastic tales of a region possessed of “shining truths” were treated by the pious Puritans in New England as sinful and malodorous deceits of the Devil, and all references to Cibola were stricken from the early Puritan literature. This may even have been one of the heresies at issue in Salem, Massachusetts in 1692. The French and the Spanish, or at least some of them, came much closer to fully understanding the import of the legend than the English colonists, but most of the French who did understand were voyageurs and frontier priests a number of whom readily joined the Cibola world. Conveying the truth back to other French colonials was the last thing on their minds. Some of these would emerge from the forests periodically, but most simply vanished from history entirely.

Like the traders and trappers, numerous members of English, Spanish, German, Polish, Irish, Chinese and other European and Asian ethnic groups were absorbed into Cibola society over the four centuries since Columbus’ voyage. Their disappearances, when anyone noticed, were usually misreported as death on the frontier, ‘capture by savages’, bizarre accidents, disease or other unobserved but presumed deaths.

One of the unfortunate by-products of all this was the founding myth of the United States as a homogeneous, white, Protestant English-speaking nation into which even French Protestants (Huguenots) and Spanish, Irish, and Germans whether Catholic or Protestant, and other non-English speaking Europeans and Asians of all varieties were seen as unwelcome ‘foreign’ elements. The historical reality is that Spanish colonies in Florida and Nuevo Mexico preceded the New England and Virginia colonies by more than 100 years. In this Anglo-centric world view, the
fact that the first European communities in the North American land mass (St. Augustine, and the Florida, California and New Mexico missions) were Spanish, and a variety of other pluralistic and multi-cultural realities were ignored or suppressed. In this context, the myth of the existence of a pluralistic, multicultural civil society existing in Appalachia for nearly 500 years was dismissed and ignored.

The most essential characteristic of the Cibola community in Appalachia was its pluralistic, multi-cultural nature. This circumstance had many points of origin, although the actual origins are lost in the mists of history. Such multiculturalism was certainly not unique in world history. At the time that Cibola was established there were numerous cities in central Asia along the Silk Road that were fully as multi-cultural and polyglot as Cibola. Among the native Americans, Cibola was merely a continuation and extension of the settled, village life of Algonquin, Seminole, Pueblos and many other native village peoples, albeit with the addition of some strangers. Among those peoples who practiced bifurcated political leadership with powers divided between peacetime leaders and war leaders, Cibola was regarded as the triumph of the former. Among the European immigrants in Cibola, it was a principled alternative to the kind of avaricious, rapacious European colonialism of which they were all too well aware. There were those among the Spanish, for example, who not only supported the spirit as well as the letter of the Laws of the Indies but were also highly agitated and disturbed by the cavalier implementation those humane rules received. Cibola was for them, a powerful counter-example.

By the mid-twentieth century, the Cibolans in their redoubt in the Appalachian mountains were not a particularly practical or pragmatic people in modern scientific-technical terms, and not possessed of great wealth as that notion is understood in affluent post-industrial society. They were heavily invested in the arts of social living, however, and a number of the strictly social advances of American society can be traced to Cibolan origins - or could be - if the Cibolans had not been so fiendishly clever in disguising their influence, and as many a frontier scout was inclined to term it, “covering their tracks”.

The people of Cibola were masters of social and psychological camouflage. In the early 20th century, the invention of the airplane gave them particular concerns. However, with careful management of the forest cover, their mountain city was never successfully spotted from the air despite its proximity to the flight paths to and from at least three major airports (Pittsburgh, Baltimore and Washington) and the presence of several great buildings - cathedrals, shrines and public buildings - in the community. In part, this is also due to an accident of nature--a peculiar magnetic field which results in faulty compass readings over the Cibola territory. (This was a key part of the supernatural aspect of the myth.) It was also due to the
arts of camouflage at which the Cibolans were masters. Actually, it isn't really
camouflage so much as an outgrowth of Cibolan naturalist philosophy, in which
harmony with nature is raised to such heights that ordinary modern Americans
simply fail to perceive. The Cibolans themselves attribute all of this to the grace of
God who magically protects them from interference by an outside world of which
they are fully--but sadly--aware.

One of the surprising aspects of the myth of Cibola is the number of American
leaders who were aware of the existence of the community. Sequoyah, Thomas
Jefferson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Abraham Lincoln, and
before them, George Wakefield and Jonathan Edwards' were all familiar to and
familiar with the Cibolans. A Cibolan emissary to President Lincoln was tragically
cought up in the assassination and died later of his wounds near Wheeling, West
Virginia. Benjamin Franklin's voluntarism and Frank Lloyd Wright's organic
naturalism were both more fully developed after discussions with Cibolan sages.
A close analysis of Cibolan culture reveals a unified and harmonious blending of
the European and many other elements into a unified whole.

As the United States of America coalesced into a nation and grew and expanded
westward, it became critical for the Cibola community to establish some
intermediate institutions between their community and the outside world (Or,
perhaps between the myth of Cibola and the realities of day to day life in
Appalachia.) This was especially true as the new nation of the United States began
to spread westward. By the early decades of the 19th century, it was clear to the
leadership council of Cibola that the local government office of the County Clerk
in the new state of Virginia was nearly ideal for this purpose. In most of the 3,000
counties in the United States, the Clerk is an elected position charged with the
recording of deeds. Officially responsible for maintaining such official records of
property ownership and a range of related legal details, the office of county clerk
can often appear to be a dull, lackluster, small-town bureaucratic office of no
particular intrinsic interest to anyone. An individual Clerk may, indeed, be a
fascinating person treasured by friend and acquaintance for their dynamic
personality and charisma. Or, a dull and uninteresting cipher who goes through life
attracting the interests and suspicions of no one. In either case, the office itself
inspires little in the way of intrinsic interest except of a particularly utilitarian sort.
Likewise, the position of County Clerk may be the launch pad for further elective
office; a beginning point for politicians destined to become commissioners and
counselors, legislators, mayors and perhaps even governors. Or, as in the case of
Barley Mill and Locus County, it can be a nearly perfect place to remain invisible
in plain sight, even over many successive generations. For key members of the
deGrazia family of Barley Mill at the time of the Thursday evening Arts and
Letters Club, it had been the latter for more than a century.
At another of the weekly salons, Cane Sennett added the following to the myths of Cibola:

In the spring of 1584, a group of 49 men led by Don Fernando de la Pacifica, youngest son of Emilio de Varga and his wife, set out from the garrison at Santa Augustin. Their official assignment was to travel north and collect intelligence on the movements of the French and English. The latter had recently set down a colony of settlers on Roanoke Island, while the French were establishing a garrison at Fort Caroline and seeking fur trade with the friendly Tuscarora.

The men in Don Fernando’s troop were not actually soldiers; nor were they explorers or spies. They had come over from Spain together as a company the
previous Fall and spent a hard winter at the Santa Augustin garrison. It had not been too difficult for Don Fernando to convince the garrison commander, a drunken and dissolute colonial official, to send his company of men out on a mission in the Spring. Although none of them had ever been to the Americas, the members of the troop were all sons, grandsons, or nephews of conquistadors who had been in the western hemisphere with the earlier expeditions of Cortez, DeSoto and others. They were also all members of a secret religious confraternity dedicated to friendly relations with el Indios.

Although they would, indeed, return intelligence on the British or French if they learned anything, their real mission was to encounter and befriend tribes of the confederation, of which they had learned a great deal from other members of the society. All of the members of the society were unmarried, and their ultimate goal was to meld into the forest, disappear completely from the Spanish colonial command, intermarry and join the Tuscarora or if need be some other tribe and to remain with them for at least 27 years until the beginning of the 17th century. At that point, they would return temporarily to Spain with members of their families to show the Spanish authorities the desirability of this approach, over the harsh, often bloody conquer and vanquish (the cross or the sword) approach generally preferred by the Spanish.

Some members of the company were also enamored of the myth of el Cibola, the supposed seven cities of gold, although unlike the earlier Conquistadores they were more interested in seeing and learning from such curiosities than plundering them. None of the men knew at this point that they would never return to Spain; that they, along with some of the Anglo survivors of the Roanoke colony and a few members of the Croatoan tribe and would be adopted into a branch of the Cherokee nation. They would live out their lives, and the lives of several succeeding generations, in an isolated settlement deep in the Appalachian woods of what was to become the English colony of Virginia and later the state of West Virginia. At least three members of the Spanish company were actually daughters, not sons, of their fathers, although this fact was carefully concealed from the garrison commander at Santa Augustin.

Mindful of the generally conflictual and bloody history of Euro-Indian relations in North America during the colonial centuries, historians have generally believed that the Roanoke colony was most likely either killed by de la Pacifica’s or some other Spanish company or lost at sea attempting to return to England. The story of what actually happened seems almost too fanciful to believe. This tale seems fanciful, however, only if you believe as most of de la Pacifica’s Catholic French and Spanish contemporaries and most of their protestant English contemporaries did, that the indios they had encountered were more ‘primitive’, simple savages lacking in culture, and spiritually lost and needing to be converted to their
respective forms of Christianity. As these Europeans were to learn, reality was much more complex.

Members of the Spanish company together with several dozen additional English and Croatoan, Catawban and other additions and a half-dozen French voyageurs they had encountered along the way eventually became life-long residents of Cibola, the seven cities of gold, which were not in fact made of gold but of a light-colored adobe made from a yellowish clay which under bright sunlight did in fact have a gold appearance. One of the additions along the way, Francisco de Chicora was the baptized name given to a native Catawban who had been captured and kidnapped by a Spanish explorer and slave trader in 1521 in the area of the Pee Dee River in Carolina. In captivity he was baptized, took the name Francisco de Chicora, became a Catholic, learned Spanish, and traveled to Spain at least once. When he returned with a Spanish expedition of 600 colonists in 1526 he escaped. It was believed that he returned to a nearby Catawan town in Carolina. After living there for a few months, he grew increasingly restless, and de Chicora was one of those who joined the de Varga expedition and traveled west with them. By the late 20th century, the Chicora family is one of several long-standing lineages in Cibola and has been among the leadership of the community for many years.

Adobe (known to English-speaking archeologists as “daub and wattle”) was completely impractical as a building material this far east of the Rio Grande because the greater frequency of rains in the woodlands tended to dissolve the adobe and, in effect, wash away the buildings nearly as quickly as they could be built. Also, the sun was not really hot enough in this climate to properly bake the adobe bricks. Decades before de la Pacifica’s band with their recruits, however, fellow townsmen of the Spanish indigeneos had learned of the Roman technique of firing the adobe bricks, and the company brought this skill with them. The fired bricks were more weather resistant yet maintained the original golden color.

Another group of these indigeneos were an interesting story themselves, being descendants of the Cinco Maya of Central America who had been fortunate enough to learn of the Spanish conquistadores advancing on their communities and were able to flee into the jungle surrounding the ceremonial city of Rancun. With a flotilla of purpose-built boats, the intelligence and other resources gathered from friendly peoples they encountered along the way, and the guidance of their monotheistic god, also named Rancun, they were able to traverse the western coasts of what we know as the Gulf of Mexico to the mouth of the Mississippi, then quite a few miles further north than its present location. After making their way northeast through a maze of rivers, they finally arrived at a region of green mountains, covered by a strange jungle of lofty trees with a high canopy. It was here that they settled, eventually building a dozen adobe and later fired-brick towns.
That de la Pacifica’s original company were officially all male should have been relatively self-evident. The French trappers, too, were an all-male group. For reasons that were not clear to later generations, most of the English survivors of Roanoke Island were women and female children. Both the Croatoans and the Rancuns were nearly equal mixtures of men and women. Over the course of several generations, this polyglot collection, by then numbering several hundred souls, formed the original Melungeon, or tri-racial, population of the southern mountain region. Whether or not they are related to other, contemporary Melungeons in the southern Appalachian region cannot presently be determined. In addition to Spanish, English and French Europeans, Croatoan and Mayan indios, there were also black Africans in each generation of Cibola. Initially, it is believed that at least some of de la Pacifica’s original company were Moors and following the official expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492, at least some may also of Jewish ancestry. Later, in each subsequent generation, a few African slaves escaping from the plantation system that grew up in the Southern United States made their way into the Cibola territories, disappearing forever from the world of Dixie.
The following week, Daniel Messenger read this contribution to the Thursday Evening Salon:

On September 23, 1585 the commandant of the garrison at Santa Augustin send a message by letter to Admiral Ponce de Leon, supreme comandante of the Americas. A copy of the letter resides in a medieval archive in Madrid, Spain. Here, in translation is a copy of that letter. Locations and other words shown in brackets have been modernized to make it easier for readers to understand.

Exalted Admiral and Dearest Uncle Leon,
I write to inform you of the apparent loss of the entire [company] of your nephew and my cousin, Don Fernando de la Pacifica. Don Fernando and his select band of 49 brave soldiers left the garrison at Santa Augustin nearly 18 months ago to explore the territory north and west of here and establish peaceful relations with the savages in accord with the dictates of the Laws of the Indies. Don Fernando was under orders to send messengers back at least every three months to tell us of their progress. Since that time, there has been no word from them and we can only conclude that they were unsuccessful in their efforts to establish peaceful relations with the savages.

In July last year we began receiving scattered reports of a large battle between Indios and some unidentified enemies equipped with ‘fire sticks’ (the Indios’ term for our harquebuses) in the vicinity of where the de la Pacifica company may have been, although these reports vary widely. Some reports suggested this battle took place somewhere northwest of [Pensacola]. Other said it was north of [Mobile], or even northeast of [New Orleans] or [Natchez]. As you will see from your maps, all of those reports point to approximately a similar (but very large) region. It is also the general area in which Don Fernando’s company was to explore. Our sources also tell us that there are large concentrations of savages living in this area, most of them in the makeshift collections of sticks and palm fronds that they call towns.

At about that same time, we began to receive reports from the North of a party of English landing near the place they call Hatterask Island, near several inland seas the largest of which is [the Chesapeake Bay], and also including [Albemarle Sound] and [Pamlico Sound]. They then moved several leagues north to a place the natives call Manteo on [Roanoke Island]. It appears that they are a company of farmers, with no military support or capability and no indication of plans for exploration of the lands to the west. There is no evidence at last report that they have begun to lay out a pueblo [colonial city], although they have built a small, walled village of log shacks after the manner of the Indios living in that vicinity.

While it is possible that those who fought the Indios in that major battle may have been other Indios, or these English or even some French, or Swedish or other explorers, we have received no other reports here at San Augustin of English venturing this far south. Because we have heard nothing from Don Fernando or any of his party, we can only assume that they engaged the savages and either did not survive or were captured. We also have no reason to believe that the small upstart colony of English farmers at Manteo, or the Macedonian farmers on the sugar plantation south of us at [New Smyrna] have sent out any explorations into the interior. Be assured, our
military force here is vastly superior to anything any enemy might confront us with and it will be many years before they represent a challenge to superior Spanish might!

I am sorry to have to report this, uncle, but it must be said. If there is any news of Don Fernando or his party, I will write you the very same day.

(Signed) Alfredo Melendez, Commandant, Their Majesties’ Garrison at Santa Augustin.

It is unclear from this letter whether Melendez, or for that matter Ponce de Leon, had any awareness of the true nature of the de la Pacifica company’s mission, or who (if anyone) was involved in the reported battle. It is entirely possible that the reports of the battle were fabricated by de la Pacifica and reported back to the comandante at San Augustin by collaborating native scouts. There is no hint of any of this in the sole surviving letter. It is, in fact, quite likely that there never was a battle; that this was simply a false rumor started by the de la Pacifica company or their confederates and spread along the various trails which connected most of the settled native peoples of the region, eventually reaching the Spanish through their networks of spies and collaborators.

We do know from pueblo records at Cibola that an advance party of the company, which had grown to several times its original size, had already reached their destination in the Appalachian mountains by the time Melendez sent this letter. The rest of the de la Pacifica company, together with most of the English farmers rescued from starvation at the Roanoke colony, and numerous Indians from the island villages of Hatteras and Roanoke Island, who feared being blamed for the disappearance of the English or taken into slavery as some of their peers already had been, when other English returned from across the sea. Of the original 90 men, 17 women and 11 children left behind at Roanoke Island, 55 men, 12 women and all of the children eventually made it to Cibola.
Some months after returning to Barley Mill and a few weeks after he rejoined the Thursday Evening Salon, Daniel Messenger decided to try his hand at fashioning a contribution to the rapidly growing Myth of Cibola. This is his contribution.

The Treaty of Paris (1763), which ended the French and Indian War, was an important event for the community of Cibola, with implications unfolding over several decades. The French and the Spanish were effectively kicked out of what was to become the United States and virtually all of the territory east of the Mississippi was cleared of their influence and the English sense of racial superiority began to make itself felt in ways that would culminate in the 19th century U.S. policies of extermination practiced against native peoples. This was a
blow to the cosmopolitan nature of Cibola and firmly established the modern practice of the community “hiding in plain sight.”

Sometime after the Treaty was signed, a black Freedman from Philadelphia joined a team of explorers for a trek southwest into the mountains of western Virginia. The team became lost somewhere between the Blue Ridge mountains and the Ohio River and were not heard from for many months. In their travels, they had entered a natural cove completely surrounded by a high rock ledge, that contained within it another cove which the surveyors estimated to be at least 10 miles long and varying from 500 yards to a quarter mile wide with only a narrow-slit entrance at the southern end. As they passed through into the inner cove, expecting to find the Ohio River just beyond, they entered instead into the world of Cibola. There they found an established community of six small towns that were obviously already very old and included members of all known races. These strange, isolated people were living together on principles of local democracy learned from the Five Civilized Tribes and the Iroquois Federation. Each community had two elected leaders-a war chief and a peace chief-although the communities were so isolated and had so successfully mastered peaceful relations with their neighbors that the war chief seldom had any leadership responsibilities and had assumed responsibility for leading hunting and fishing parties.

Regarding their discovery as a major curiosity, each member of the team told their stories to friends upon their return to Philadelphia but were generally disregarded or ignored. Everyone they spoke to about this strange experience understood that there were colonial Europeans along the seaboard and “red Indians” everywhere, but the prospect of Englishmen, Spaniards, Frenchmen, living together with black Africans, Arabs, Jews, and people from Cathay was simply more than most could fathom. One of those who did believe the black Freedman was a young man of mixed race (part Seneca and part English) whose name is lost to us, who was hungry for adventure and signed on to the surveying crew led by George Washington which surveyed the frontier lands which included Cibola several years later. He was able to rediscover the cove within a cove and see for himself the mysteries that Freedman had told him about. At this point, the leaders of Cibola were deeply worried about discovery and destruction of their community by rapacious European adventurers, and the young surveyor was sympathetic to their plight. He was anxious to return to Cibola to live, having fallen in love with one of its young female residents. A man of considerable intelligence and ingenuity, he devised a plan whereby simply falsifying two key measurements, he set in motion a complex process in which the exact longitude and latitude of the interior cove of Cibola quite literally do not exist. What shows up to this day as a single 360-acre plot of land between two mountain ridges is actually a hollow within a hollow that is narrow and more than 10 miles long. In this way, the property records of this part of western Virginia contained approximately 30 square miles fewer than the
actual reality, and Cibola was safely hidden from colonial America as long as the fiction could be maintained. After satisfying himself that the ruse worked, the young man returned to Cibola, married his sweetheart and his descendants continue to live there today.

The Freedman and the others who had tried to spread word of Cibola in colonial Philadelphia all died in the Revolutionary War. After the initial skeptical responses, they had mostly kept the secret of the towns in the hidden cove to themselves. Several hoped to return there after the War and join the community. Before he died, one of them (who feared for his soul) shared the secret with another soldier, who claimed to be an illegitimate son of Ben Franklin. Meanwhile, Franklin, Jefferson and John Adams together with a renegade South Carolinian Freedman, the Frenchman Lafayette and a Spaniard who had spent two decades in Mexico were invited to join a secret society to find asylum for escaped slaves. For several decades in the mid-19th century, runaway black slaves were the only new immigrants to the Cibola community. But at the time of the "Trail of Tears" a new wave of Cherokee immigrants were taken in--including the young Sequoia, who studied in Cibola for several years before rejoining his family in Oklahoma territory. Entry of the Cherokee into Cibola was nearly revealed later in the 19th century with the myth of the "Malungeons" which is still alive today in East Tennessee, western North Carolina and southern West Virginia.

The entire community was discovered by the Secret Service during Reconstruction. They informed President Grant who suppressed the story, ordering his clerks to bury the records deep in the archives of the Bureau of Land Management where Arthur Sennett and his predecessors dealt with them in the following two centuries. Since that time, one desk-bound agent of the Secret Service is assigned lifetime responsibility for keeping the details surrounding such matters secret for a period of 500 years, after which time it will be revealed. Even as the federal government grew in size and scope, this position remained unfilled for several decades, and thus Arthur Sennett in his post at the Department of the Interior became the only federal official actively dealing with Cibola.
The original story which Freddie Watson had been able to piece together, and which brought her to Barley Mill was the following.

Arthur Bentley, as he was known to all those who worked with him, had secretly managed the Cibola Project from his Fourth-Floor office in the Department of the Interior in Washington DC for 38 years. The man known as Bentley had grown up in Dare County, West Virginia, and his real name was Arthur Sennett, great-uncle of Adam, and one of the numerous Sennett men to leave Barley Mill after high school on assignments for the community. Arthur completed high school in Barley Mill and left shortly thereafter, destination unknown. His younger brother Cyril remained behind and eventually took his turn as County Clerk of Dare County and
he was replaced in turn by his son, Adam. After college, Arthur did a tour of military service in Europe, where his actual assignment was never altogether clear to his fellow soldiers.

His federal civil service record showed him to be Arthur Bentley, who grew up on a ranch in Lincoln County, New Mexico and whose Chicana mother had died in childbirth. Bereft and unable to cope, his Anglo father sent young Arthur away to a Catholic boarding school in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia at the age of nine. Anyone who chose to doggedly pursue the existing paper trail would find vital records which showed that Arthur’s father, the elderly Comstock Bentley, died two years later in a ranch accident and was buried in the cemetery in Lincoln. The ranch was sold to a religious order from somewhere in the East as part of probating the estate and turned into a spiritual retreat and dude ranch for inner city kids.

The dude ranch proved to be a boon to the local economy, and few of the locals around Lincoln County thought anything unusual when one March and numerous times thereafter two FBI agents out of the El Paso office engaged in a routine security check showed them pictures of the dark-eyed, dark-haired deGrazia/Sennett on their regular, periodic security clearance checks of Arthur Bentley. The oldest local women noted what a handsome man the Sennett boy had grown into. One or two recalled briefly what a beautiful woman his mother had been, and wasn’t it a pity she died so young, but it was good that members of her family still tended the graves of the Bentley couple in the cemetery beside the parish church. No one thought it at all noteworthy that the boy who had grown up at eastern boarding schools had never visited Lincoln County or his parents’ graves. Indeed, no one in Lincoln County ever thought much about Arthur Bentley at all, except during those occasional visits by the FBI.

The real Arthur Bentley had died at age 18 in a freak accident two weeks after his graduation from the boarding school. He and a group of friends from the school were on a Spring rafting trip on the New River in West Virginia when Arthur fell out of the boat into the roiling waters and was presumably drowned. His body was never found, and after the appropriate time he was officially declared dead by the local coroner. The story made the front page of the Madison, West Virginia Courier one week that summer, but there had been little more public notoriety for the orphan boy. Crazy young kids were falling out of boats on the New River all the time, and not all of them survived. There wasn’t much to be done about it except to let the authorities collect the remains and send them back to their families. Like his body, news of Arthur’s untimely death never reached Lincoln County, New Mexico. If it had, more than a few of the older locals might have remembered and wondered aloud who it was exactly that those FBI agents were asking about in the years that followed.
Within the Bureau of Land Management, the Cibola Project had a “top secret” classification from the very beginning. Although this was highly unusual for a Department of the Interior project, it was not entirely unheard of. Not in the Reconstruction after the Civil War, and not during the period of Senator McCarthy’s exploits in the 1950s. Arthur Bentley’s colleagues on the fourth floor of their obscure federal building far from the glorious monuments arranged along the Washington Mall were long beyond caring what exact piece of arid Southwestern public land Arthur was responsible for managing. Arthur had maintained an office in the Office of Federal Land Management in the Southwest Division longer than anyone could remember. Most of his colleagues in that division worked in teams composed of several specialists working together to manage large tracts of land. Only a few, like Bentley, had sole responsibility for a single tract. In recent years, new staff members in the Office tended to be graduates with business degrees and a year or two of experience in real estate managing apartment blocks or shopping centers. They were for the most part, a hopelessly unimaginative group of “nine-to-fivers” who put in their time at work, expected to live well on their federal salaries and live long enough to collect their federal pensions. Those who were married had spouses who were absorbed in the lively social life of middle-class, suburban Washington, while no one knew for sure or cared what the ones who were single did in their off hours.

As each new cohort of employees joined the unit, they were cautioned about the “cranks” in the office—old-timers like “Mr. Bentley”—no one in the entire 38 years that he had been there had ever called him Arthur. Most would say that he took his responsibilities way too seriously and had long ago gone around the bend. Thus, for most of his career as a federal employee, Arthur was simply left alone by successive cohorts of these “new kids” and the one or two surviving experienced staff who had never transferred out to other units in the federal system. This unit was something of a training ground for federal property managers, and no one who had begun with Arthur was still around and few cared to exhibit any curiosity about him during their brief stints there. Occasionally, a new employee might make some tentative efforts to befriend the aloof Mr. Bentley, inviting him to lunch or something, but they inevitably grew weary of the formidable veil of indifference in which he wrapped himself. To all the world, Arthur Bentley was an aloof, anti-social, unapproachable federal bureaucrat who kept himself to himself and was interested only in his own affairs.

Arthur had long ago become comfortable with all aspects of his bureaucratic cover story. To higher level supervisors in the department with a “need to know” the reason for the “top secret” classification of his land management project was reportedly a legacy from the Indian wars of the late 19th century which the department respected today only because of the wishes of the tribal leaders involved. He was, so the story went, custodian of files with records and
information regarding confidential religious practices of various tribes that tribal leaders were still anxious to protect. At least one of his past supervisors, Patrick Sullivan, a product of Irish South Boston, had for some reason known only to him come to believe that Arthur’s project remained secret in order to cover up details of the botched handling of the homicide of a well-known Indian chief in a western state. Not a famous chief like Geronimo or Cochise or even Tecumseh or Chief Joseph, but down several notches in notoriety, Sullivan believed.

Since the end of the war new supervisors assigned to oversee Arthur’s unit invariably accepted whatever threads of Arthur’s cover story they learned with a wink and a nod, and confirmation of departmental rumors that Sennett really managed a property somewhere in the Southwest containing a secret Defense Department project—a missile base, or desert commando training center or something of the sort. Young secretaries would shiver with delight as they told one another that it might even be Area 51. The department managed several such bases for the Pentagon—a piece of bureaucratic “turf” which Interior had managed to salvage from the empire building of the Defense Department during and after World War II. Interior had, in fact, come into being after the Mexican War in 1846, when it became evident that the State Department could no longer handle all of the public business. And the project now managed by Arthur had been around for much of that time.

Even those few who thought they were among the enlightened members of Interior failed to pay any attention to the historical meaning of ‘Cibola’ in the Spanish conquest of America disregarded its possible significance in this case and considered it merely as one further expression of Anglo imperialism or one more profanity of a defense establishment prone to abusing all manner of classical references in naming its submarines, missiles, bases and missions.

The real, career-length mission of Arthur Bentley, whose 38-year tenure in the bureaucracy of the Interior Department had never raised even the mildest curiosity of anyone higher than the Section Chief for the Office of Occupied Territories in the Bureau of Land Management. No General Accounting Office inquiries had ever been posted, and no Congressional investigation staff had ever come by for preliminary conversations. No reports from anywhere in the Executive Branch had ever gone to the White House about Cibola. No one from the GAO, or BoB or any other alphabetical federal watchdog agency had ever expressed even a passing interest in Arthur Sennett and the activities of his secret unit.

Thus, Arthur had been allowed to work in peace for all those years on what all of the watchdogs would have seen as a highly suspect activity if only it had ever come to their attention. For nearly four decades, Arthur’s mission had been to scrub the federal archives of all references to the written languages of the Yucatan Mayan dialect whose hieroglyphs had once been translated literally into English by
a language specialist at the University of Minnesota as “a difference that makes a difference”. It may have been merely a coincidence that this exact phrase was used by the anthropologist Gregory Bateson in the late 1950s to define information. It had been Arthur’s responsibility to find out.

This particular mystery began in the early decades of the 20th century. In October, 1939, near Grady Fork, West Virginia when a group of amateur archeologists had unearthed a parchment document of seemingly recent origin written in a rare and seldom encountered dialect of Mayan. At least that’s what they were told. A local archeologist on the faculty at West Virginia Wesleyan College had been able to identify it as probably Mayan but was unable to translate anything more than the symbols for “mountain” and “sanctuary”.

The story received a good deal of local attention in area newspapers around Grady Fork for a week or two. There were even a few local proposals to the chamber of commerce and town council to create a shrine or a festival centered around the mysterious object. This was the time when the Kensington Rune Stone in northern Minnesota was still a matter of some notoriety and the Roswell Alien Incident had not yet occurred, and the business community of Grady Fork hoped to cash in on their good fortune. After a time, however, with the outbreak of war in Europe, and the buildup of mining employment just getting underway in a series of new mines in the region, the document was set aside and eventually forgotten in Grady Fork while the rest of the outside world never learned of its existence. However, that document had come to the attention of the County Clerk of Dare County and it was to become the key to Arthur’s life-work.

The archeologist at Wesleyan sent the tablet to a colleague in the Interior Department in late November of 1941, but after Pearl Harbor, the recipient was reassigned to war-time duties elsewhere before he had a chance to look more than casually at the text, and it was early 1946 before a chance meeting with his colleague from Wesleyan reminded him of the existences of the document safely resting in the Departmental archives, and he returned to the task of translating it.

By this time, of course, Arthur Bentley had been on the job at Interior for more than a year and had long since replaced the original Mayan text with a forged look-alike which actually contained the text of an 8th Century Mongolian children’s tale translated into the same Mayan dialect. If the kid’s story in the substitute translation had ever been published, it would have caused a minor uproar in archeological circles as further (false) evidence of the cultural links between Northeast Asia and North American Indian cultures. Before it could be published, however, there remained the formidable obstacle of cracking the Mayan code; something that linguists have so far not succeeded in doing. Arthur was able to accomplish this only because of the unique resources available to him in the records of the Cibola library.
The fact is, Arthur Bentley was fluent in both reading and speaking this allegedly extinct Mayan dialect, as were several other members of his family in Cibola. The actual translation of the fairy tale text had been done by his sister-in-law, Gladys Hillsborough, during a single marathon weekend in 1942. Family members who were in on the ruse, had laughed at the wry humor of using a Mongolian fairy tale rendered into Mayan and the fuel it would add to the various “Pacific Crossing” hypotheses if the code were ever broken. It was solely Arthur’s mission at Interior, however, to see that translation of the original document did not occur. Indeed, the very best state of affairs would be to keep it forever out of sight.

Arthur’s first task at Interior had been to locate the original text in the archives. Once this was done, he had to put the substitute in its place without being discovered. Since then, he had stayed on in the department under orders from the High Council of Cibola, to monitor progress on the “cracking” of the dialect. That proved remarkably simple. His office was located on the same floor as the Office of Cultural Affairs, where two or three archeologists whose primary interests were pre-Columbian languages had been on staff since the mid-1930’s. One of them, Jeffrey Hausig, had quit his doctoral program prior to completing a dissertation, and had been, therefore, unable to obtain a suitable academic appointment.

He had come to Interior two decades before as a liaison to the WPA, and was later transferred to Cultural Affairs in Land Management at a time when the Bureau still maintained a high interest in the archeological work being conducted under its auspices in the American Southwest. Arthur befriended him early in his tenure, and the two met for dinner once a month to talk about their mutual interest in Central American ‘Indians’. Hausig, loved good wines and after a glass or two was as loquacious as Arthur was attentive and through this simple avenue, and many rather boring evenings, Arthur was able for more than 30 years to keep in touch with developments in the entire American archeological community, although his consistent interest was still in the Mayan dialect. Jeffrey finally retired in 1984 with his rather large ego and his love of wine intact. Upon his retirement, his position was “rifled” into oblivion as part of the department’s contribution to deficit reduction. He died of cancer in 1991, without ever realizing that in that entire time he had known and dined with Arthur, the man had told him almost nothing about himself.

Jeffrey and his fellow workers in the Office of Land Management likewise knew very little about Arthur aside from the barest and most prosaic details. Arthur would come into his office just before nine each morning to check the office mail, leave again shortly before 10 and reappear promptly at 3 p.m., to work at his desk until the others had left by 6 p.m. Some of the secretaries in the office said that you could set your watch by these arrivals and departures, so predictable were his habits. But no one ever seemed to notice where he was coming from or where he
was going to. Moreover, his demands on the department were minimal; Arthur never once applied for or received as much as a single luncheon allowance. He never submitted any travel requests and was never reimbursed for any local or out of town travel. The budget officers in his division at Interior, who knew him only through the records, found him to be a model employee and several time submitted notes of commendation to his personnel file.

In the late 1960’s, a pair of student interns from the University of Michigan tried to try to spy on Arthur for a couple of weeks, tailing him daily whenever he left the office. They found only that he spent his days at the National Archives—sitting at the same desk every day. They finally got bored with the adventure and assumed that he was engaged in research somehow related to the “top secret” project land it was said that he managed. Everyone else in the office had long ago lost interest in Arthur’s comings and goings entirely and greeted their verbal reports with indifference.

In fact, Arthur did spend much of his working career in the National Archive, in a remote corner where the staff archivists believed him to be an independent genealogist. In reality, he spent his working life for 38 years scouring federal archeological records for information related to the translation of various Mayan dialects—and it must be admitted, falsifying the record where ever possible by planting false clues and dead-ends wherever it seemed necessary and feasible.

His clandestine routine went on year in and year out, except for two months each summer when Arthur Bentley took what he described as his “annual sabbatical”—a month of field work, supposedly inspecting the land associated with the secret defense installation or whatever it was that he managed. This was followed, it was believed, by a month camping in the mountains of his supposedly native New Mexico. No one really knew where the camping rumor came from, but everyone in the office had long since taken it as true. Because he used vacation time, and never submitted any reimbursement requests for either month, budget officials in Interior also believed Arthur to be independently wealthy. More importantly from his perspective, there were no official records of any kind of Arthur’s actual travels. For most of this time each year, he was incommunicado, only calling in occasionally to inquire about messages for him. (There were never any). People around the office seldom noticed Arthur’s coming and going even when he was there, and during these annual hiatuses the stack of mail and phone messages accumulating on Arthur’s desk was never very great. No one in official Washington had any reason to contact him and few people in Washington were actually even aware of his existence.

It was near the end of his annual “sabbatical” one summer, and time for Arthur’s return that workmen came with an order to remove his office furniture and return it to a GSA warehouse somewhere outside the city in Virginia. One of the younger
employees whose office was nearest to Arthur’s, protested that he was expected back from his sabbatical soon. When the workmen persisted, this employee discovered that all the drawers in Arthur’s desk and file cabinets were empty, and that the papers left on the desktop were actually decades-old interoffice memos sent to everyone in the division during a previous administration. The rumor quickly spread around the office and just as quickly died that Arthur must have gone undercover for the Interior Department—a prospect that caused no small amount of snickering. Thus, it was that the quiet bureaucrat, whose 38-year tenure in the Bureau of Land Management had rendered him virtually anonymous, suddenly achieved a degree of notoriety by his disappearance that his presence had never engendered. However, office gossip ceased entirely when official word was received by Arthur’s supervisor from the Civil Service Commission that Arthur Bentley had been killed in a rock slide near Red Rim Canyon, Utah on August 18, and was buried nearby two days later. Few in the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management ever saw an obituary or thought of Arthur again, and no one ever learned where, or to whom, they might send flowers. Thus, it was that the strange career of someone who had actually died several years before it began came to a quiet and unremarkable end.

If it were possible to estimate such things, he would estimate that Arthur Bentley’s planting of false leads and deliberate misdirections set the task of breaking the code of that particular Mayan dialect back a hundred years. Arthur, of course, had come to no such end, and lived out the remainder of his days, as he had all of his annual sabbaticals, in the comfort and seclusion of the Sennett enclave in Cibola, high in the valley within a valley in the West Virginia mountains.
The Emerson Incident

Before she moved to Barley Mill, Frederika Watson had discovered a very curious handwritten report among the Emerson papers in the National Archives. Freddie Watson decided to read it in its entirety to the Thursday Evening Salon:

Early in the nineteenth century, the elders of the community at Cibola learned of the work on hypnotism by the French Franz Mesmer. Two of the members of the Sandoval—the same peace clan of which Arthur Sennett was a member half a century later—were dispatched to Paris for a five-year assignment. They were able to book passage on a fast clipper ship, and once there, they were able to join the Mesmer entourage within the year, and by the end of the five years each had
achieved full-fledged mastery of Mesmerism. Few among Mesmer’s other followers and acolytes in Paris noticed as first one and then the other slipped away and returned to the community. Mesmer’s disciples were always departing to set up shop on their own.

Thus began the practice of the Mesmoriah.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, the Transcendental Philosopher of Concord Massachusetts, was to become the first Mesmorahian, more through accident than by design. While on a nationwide lecture tour, Emerson was to present a series of lectures in Columbus, Ohio. Because of travel arrangements and the strain of the lecture tour up to that point, Emerson was to rest in Columbus, Ohio for three weeks. Records of the Columbus lecture hall for that year record only that Mr. Emerson missed the last of his three lectures in Columbus, and a subsequent appearance in Indianapolis three days later was cancelled entirely. The Indiana community never learned of the rumors surrounding Emerson’s sudden disappearance for 10 full days, and a cooperative editor of the Columbus Times Democrat who had learned some of the details of the story agreed not to publish anything, on the (false) understanding that Emerson had been closeted with a local female acolyte for the entire time. Instead, the story was circulated that Mr. Emerson was overtaken with a severe case of dyspepsia. Local community leaders who knew of the incident (one of whom recorded it in a private diary still held by his family) simply assumed that the Great Man, like so many others had fallen victim to the sins of the flesh and was cloistered in one of the private homes of the region with a particularly alluring female enthusiast. Thus, nothing was said when, on the 12th day after his disappearance the Times Democrat carried a small story on page 3 that Emerson had appeared on time for a scheduled public lecture in Pittsburgh and would be cancelling the rest of his lecture tour for that year. For his part, Emerson was more than willing to concur in the story of his bout with dyspepsia, for the truth is he had no idea whatsoever where he had been for 10 days.

On the morning of the first day at about 10 a.m., he had received a message brought by a local youth who had come to the house at which he was staying while the family was out. The message invited the eminent philosopher to dinner that evening at the home of a prominent Columbus physician, but asked that, for reasons which would be made known to him when he arrived, he not reveal his plans or his destination to the family.

When the coach arrived for him that evening, Emerson began his experience with the Mesmoriah; an episode of which he would have no conscious recollection. As he stepped inside the coach, the philosopher was greeted by a gentleman who introduced himself as Mr. Nathaniel deGrasia Sennett, and his companion as Mr. Vincent Carmichael and that they were sent by his hosts to accompany Emerson to the dinner. Emerson was able to later recall only that as soon as he was seated in
the coach Mr. Carmichael removed a large gold watch from his vest pocket and held it up by the fob for Emerson to see, as he explained in a flat monotone the origins of the watch. Within a minute, Emerson was under a deep hypnotic spell and all further memories of the next ten days of his life were gone forever. In the first hour of his trance, DeGrasia and Carmichael assured Emerson that no harm would come to him; that they were representatives of a community which they called Cibola and wished only to know more of his views.

There was already a large collection of newspaper clippings, printed essays and sermons and other expression of Emerson’s philosophical thought in the archives at Cibola, and the two interrogators were already thoroughly familiar with their contents when their mission was undertaken. As the carriage traveled out of Columbus southeast towards Chillicothe and a farm house a few miles south of the city, they explained to the great man that for the next few days he would be their guest and that they wished to learn everything possible about Transcendentalism. Since they were obviously educated men, and Emerson was completely unaware of his own hypnotic condition, he—like all of the others who were to follow him in this procedure—had no sensation of fear or anxiety, and no long-term recall of the entire experience, although his short-term memory over the course of the week and a half functioned normally. Thus, he lived for the next ten days in a complete state of present consciousness. He was pleased that simple but delicious meals were served at the farmhouse, and he was accompanied on regular walks around the grounds by either deGrazia or Carmichael. He was fully aware of each present moment, but as each experience passed it was lost forever from his memory. Thus, Emerson entered the lecture hall in Pittsburgh more than a fortnight later with an unparalleled sense of euphoria growing out of the most intense intellectual experience of his career, but no idea whatsoever why he felt that way.

Emerson spent the following nine days in the Ohio farmhouse engaged in intense dialogue of an altogether extraordinarily nature on his doctrine of the oversoul, detailing the theological objections which caused him to abandon the pulpit of the Church in Boston. DeGrazia and Carmichael and the dozen or so other men and women with whom he met in the informal surroundings of that comfortable Ohio farmhouse were polite, genteel and impressed him repeatedly with their detailed knowledge of his work and writings, even though he would begin each day anew with no memory of the day which preceded it. Because of this peculiar induced aphasia, Emerson was temporarily unable to form extended or continuous impressions of the company with whom he shared what they called a “mere nonce”. However, because accurately conveying his actual mental states would prove excessively confusing to the reader, what follows is a partial reconstruction of some of Emerson’s immediate impressions of the company in the familiar language of recollection.
Emerson had heard in passing of the efforts of the English novelist Thomas Hardy to found a colony for the younger sons of English gentry in the wilderness of eastern Tennessee somewhere, and he had the vague impression that these pleasant folk must somehow be associated with that colony. In the past, Emerson had been suspicious of such “new society” experiments—particularly after the experiences of his own friends and neighbors in Concord with the unfortunate Brook Farm adventure. However, these folks seemed altogether obsessed by stimulating ideas and the great man found the appeal to his vanity implicit in their knowledge of his ideas and persistent questioning irresistible.

True, throughout the nine days during which the dialogue lasted, he felt a continuous sense of wonder at the company: Not only were the five men—one white, one oriental, a swarthy Mediterranean, a red Indian, and a Negro—intellectual gentlemen of the first order, although none of their names were familiar to him. What struck him with a genuine sense of new wonder in each passing moment, however, were the seven others—two white women, two tawny red Indians, one of them a woman, and three Negroes, two men and a woman. The intellectual and social equals of the white males—one of whom looked distinctly like a Jew, as did one of the women, they were engaged fully in all aspects of the Morah, and all regarded one another as social equals. Although Emerson was an avid abolitionist, he shared with his Massachusetts contemporaries, a generally benign sense of the inferiority of the black race. The issue, after all, was principle, not potential. And, although he had known his share of intelligent and educated women, social life in Concord seldom accorded them the kind of obvious and wide-ranging equality he witnessed but would not recall.

As each mealtime approached, one or another of the company (men and women, black and white, and even the Jews) would excuse themselves only to return silently a short time later to rejoin the conversation. As though meticulously planned and coordinated by some unseen chef, and to no one’s apparent surprise (including Emerson’s), the last of the departees would throw open the parlor doors and announce the meal. Again, although beyond surprise, Emerson was greeted at each meal with an amazing array of dishes he had never before encountered, all prepared with foods he knew to be native to the American continent—corn, tomatoes, beans, turkey, okra, and much more.

On the second, fifth and seventh days, they also read to him passages from what they told him were ancient Roman, Greek, Hebrew and Egyptian manuscripts: Poetry, science, mathematics, tragedy—all of it obviously related to one or another of his sermons, essays and lectures—and none of it in any way familiar to him from his earlier education at Harvard. After reading an excerpt or two, they would again question him eagerly for his reactions.
Early on the evening of the ninth day, one of them—the black man with a huge, muscular build and a deep *basso profundo* voice—told him that on the following day, he would return to Columbus to take up his lecture tour. He would, the man said, have no recollection of the events of the past nonce. Because of the very special nature of the community where they lived, he explained, it was absolutely essential that they maintain the strictest secrecy. That was the reason for Mesmerism, a term which Emerson failed to understand at the time and learned over a few years later but always regarded with great skepticism. The man then sketched an alibi which he said Emerson might use if he chose, and the company adjourned to a night of feasting and ceremonial dancing of a type which will be detailed later.

On the following day, Emerson found himself back in Columbus repeatedly accosted by well-wishers who hoped he had recovered entirely from his bout of dyspepsia. Seldom before when he had been depressed or dyspeptic had the Great Man felt so euphoric immediately upon recovery. In the months after the incident, however, he found himself working on the notes which were to become *The American Scholar*. 
The Sennetts of Dare County

As long as anyone in and around Barley Mill could recall, members of the Sennett family had been engaged in - in fact, dominated - local politics in Dare County, West Virginia. Although dark-haired, olive skinned with brown eyes and dark, curly hair, members of the Sennett clan publicly traced their ancestry to an Anglo-Saxon lieutenant in Walter Raleigh's Roanoke militia, and their inheritance to a land grant in the original Virginia colony, near the headwaters of the Kanawha and Potomac Rivers in the folds of the Allegheny Mountains. Everyone in Dare County had always regarded them as true descendants of the English colonists. Protestant, patriotic and parochial to a fault like other leading families among the small-town gentry of non-metropolitan America in the late 20th century. While it was true that members of the family were sometimes seen in the company of
Negroes, Mexicans, Orientals, Arabs and other strangers and outsiders, everyone assumed that probably just meant they were liberals in the Eleanor Roosevelt/Nelson Rockefeller mode even though they didn’t make a big point of it.

For longer than anyone in Dare County cared to remember, a member of the deGrasia family, now known as the Sennetts, had served as County Clerk of Dare County. Living in Barley Mill and commuting daily to the county court house in Landover was believed to be a dull, thankless job which paid little, and required little of the incumbent other than to faithfully record the title transfers, marriage, birth and death certificates and the wills of county residents dutifully filed by their lawyers. No one in Dare County ever gave much thought to the quiet eagerness with which generation after generation of the shy, bookish and thoroughly ordinary deGrasia/Sennetts had taken their place in the Clerk's office on the second floor of the red brick court house which occupied the most prominent place on the town square in Landover.

Folks in Dare County seldom took the time either to remark on the fact that as far back as anyone could recall, only one member of each generation of the Dare family--the fortunate or unfortunate as the case may be – son who eventually became County Clerk had ever moved from Landover to Barley Mill upon reaching adulthood. While other local families continued to grow, or shrink and die out, census records would show just one deGrasia household in each generation for as far back as the town kept records.

Just last year, there was a small, front page article in the Landover Weekly Banner announcing that Sable Sennett had graduated summa cum laude from Carlton College in Minnesota and planned to enter a doctoral program in international relations somewhere on the east coast. Several years earlier, her older brother Cane, after a stellar high school football career had likewise graduated, gone on to college somewhere and left town, it seemed, permanently. That left Abelard (Abbe) Sennett, the oldest, to get by as best he could on a decidedly sparse legal practice until such time as his father, Adam, retired and he would take his rightful place as County Clerk and assume the family sinecure. In each election, there would be candidates aplenty for the three positions on the County Commission, and even more for the lucrative position of Sheriff, and for Magistrate and County Attorney. But Dare County residents had always been content to enable with their votes the family lineage of Adam Sennett to handle the county clerk’s responsibilities as his forebears had always done.

There was some resentment but mostly curiosity among the women of Dare County's other leading families that no male Sennett in Barley Mill had ever married a local girl. Although not uniformly handsome, there was a charm and understated elegance about all of the Sennett men that did not escape notice. Adam’s father, Joshua, in particular, had been the secret love of every girl in town
when he came to Landover as a bachelor County Clerk following his father’s death several decades ago. Yet, he had somehow found a wife, Adam’s mother, from elsewhere. Adam, too, had been popular among the high school girls, yet had met and married his wife, Edie, when he was away at college. Thus it was that each new generation of Sennett men, regrettably enough, either left town and were not heard from again, or came home one day with a new wife from outside Dare County to settle into a quiet life among the local gentry.

Male politicians in the county, which had voted Republican ever since the Civil War, generally did not share the women's view. To a man, they thought the Bennetts simply lacked spunk. They used to comment to one another, and from father to son, on how Adam’s great-grandfather on his mother’s side, Vincent, and his paternal grandfather, Carlisle Sennett, could have been Governor of West Virginia if only they had had the gumption to run. Adam, like his father and grandfather before him, had graduated from Duke University and the West Virginia University law school, and he too, like his ancestors before him had been approached about standing for election to the state legislature, with an eye toward eventually moving on to the Governorship or perhaps the U.S. Senate. But like all those before him, Adam had politely declined, and that had been the end of it. The Sennett men were seemingly content to live a quiet life as country gentlemen which included a life of public service as County Clerks, and that appeared to be about all there was to it.
The decade from 1830 to 1840 was a time of great change in the Cibola community. For almost 300 years from its formation in 1585 until that fateful decade, members of the Cibola community had lived in peace with their Amerindian neighbors, with Choctaw, Chickasaw, Seminole, Creek, Cherokee to the south and the Iroquois league to the north. They visited, traded, and sometimes even joined one another’s communities. Individuals, sodalities and families from both north and south would periodically visit one or more of the seven villages that made up Cibola at its greatest extent, staying for periods of time and occasionally even joining the community permanently. For much of this time Cibola like smaller, local Amerindian communities was, in fact but not in name, among the
minor parties to the Iroquois League as it had existed for centuries, perhaps back to the 12th century by the European calendar.

In the lands to the north and east of Cibola, the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas and Senecas had organized the Iroquois League long before the founding of the Cibola community. Leaders of the league were well aware of the unusual community of Europeans, Africans, Asians, Amerindians and Asians as it sprang up deep in the Appalachian mountains, regularly visiting and trading with these unusual communities. From what they observed, these Europeans who were one part of Cibola must be a different species from the greedy, rapacious, hate-filled and at times, murderous savages who sought to conquer, kill, or enslave all those who were different from them.

At any rate, leaders of the league did not see Cibola as a threat and community leaders of Cibola responsible for neighbor relations actually held talks with representatives of the league several times around the early 1720s. They also periodically traded and talked with them after that. When in 1722, the Tuscarora joined the league, an invitation to join was also made to Cibola, but it was mutually agreed that formally joining the league at that particular time would expose the community to too much risk of awareness from the growing threat posed by the European invaders in their constant movement west. In the next several decades, individual settlers then families and then entire communities of Europeans began to settle in mountain valleys within two days walk of Cibola.

In the Tuscarora treaty agreement negotiations, it was also decided that Cibola would have more-or-less exclusive access to all of the hunting, fishing and gathering in the mountainous lands north of the [New] River gorge and east of the [Ohio] River as far north as the bend in the [Ohio] River. The only exceptions to this were moose and elk hunting which were open equally to all members of the league everywhere in league territories. Since there were no moose in the immediate region around Cibola and only a few elk, this provision was of little practical consequence. The surviving mound of the Adena community [in present-day Moundsville, WV] would, for all practical purposes, mark the northern boundary of the Cibola community, with the Ohio River forming the western boundary.

Only a few decades after the formation of Cibola, leaders of the community like their counterparts in Quebec, the Burgundian Netherlands, Saxony, Norway and elsewhere were generally aware of numerous European and American political developments. For example, they generally knew about and felt themselves bound by the 1763 Treaty of Paris which ended what were known to the Europeans and colonists as the French and Indian wars.
More than a century and a half earlier, the act of the Elizabethan Parliament in England known as the Poor Law, with its assignment of local community responsibility for widows, orphans and others. Their African, Asian, European and Amerindian ancestors had already forged strong community norms of the treatment of strangers.

They also followed closely the events in the British colonies during the American War of Independence, notably the Declaration of Independence and the 1789 Constitution, which they knew bore some resemblance to their own Iroquois League. They were at first highly optimistic about the 1789 French Revolution, and then deeply shocked and chagrined by the Reign of Terror which it provoked.

The Cibolans were also aware that the newly founded American national government, which at first moved from Philadelphia to New York and then to a new city called Washington in the District of Columbia, periodically engaged in a range of frivolous, shocking and at times deeply disturbing discussions of what to do about “the Indian problem.” How shocked would the Americans have been to learn that the Cibolans had solved any such problems three hundred years earlier, and that there was no more an “indian problem” of native peoples than there was a European, African or Asian problem. The Americans’ first important political leader, their “President” George Washington expressed the view that the best solution was to “civilize” the non-Europeans, by which he meant to make them as much like Englishmen as possible, convert them to Christianity, teach them to read and speak English and embrace the Englishman John Locke’s system of individual ownership of land and other property, including slaves.

The 18th and 19th century Cibolans found the notion of the frontier Americans - many of whom appeared to be crude, illiterate bumpkins, while others spoke only French, German, or some other language, teaching them to read and speak English particularly amusing. Most other non-English members of the community had learned to speak and read English by the early 1600s from the Roanoke survivors in their midst. Most Cibolans also spoke Castilian Spanish, French, Mandarin Chinese, and one or more of several Algonquin dialects. For at least the past 300 years, children in the Cibola community all learned to speak and read at least six languages, and classes in the schools were taught in a range of languages.

The members of the Iroquois League spoke various Iroquoian dialects, including Mohawk, The Cherokee were the only southeastern nation whose language was
Iroquoian. Most of the “five civilized tribes” southeast of them spoke the Muskogean family of languages, which consists of six languages that are still spoken: Alabama, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek-Seminole, Koasati, and Mikasuki. Three additional Muskogean languages became extinct since the founding of Cibola: Apalachee, Houma, and Hitchiti.

Later, after a huge and lengthy war among themselves, the Americans - like the English before them and other Europeans at various times - formally abandoned the institutions of slavery and people as property. In the decades before and after that great war it became clear that the Americans were increasingly committed to what the Cibolans had first known as the Smith system of trade, but which later became known as market economics.

All of these community beliefs and practices were put to the test during the decade of the 1830s. Roughly three centuries after the Spanish had founded St. Augustine and moved north from Mexico into numerous communities to the southwest of Cibola, there were more than one hundred thousand perhaps several hundred thousand, Amerindians in the lands from the Atlantic to the Mississippi River.

It was only several decades later that white settlers came to the area and broke the peace, in a pattern identified in Ralph Deigh’s Notebook #1. For example, in his history of Kanawha County (1876) George W. Atkinson wrote “In 1772 a German by the name of Stroud locating on the Gauley river, then in this county, built a cabin and made a clearing.”

Atkinson noted, perhaps a bit fluorescently, “From 1765 to 1774 there were comparatively few attacks made upon the white colonists by the Indians. The treaty of Paris, in 1763, resulted in general peace along the frontiers, had been pretty generally adhered to by all the savage tribes. The peace, however, which had for nine years blessed and fostered the frontier settlements, was suddenly broken by the murder of several friendly Indians, in 1774, on the Monongahela and Cheat rivers. This unfortunate aggression on the part of these white men gave rise to a general raid by the Indians upon all the settlements of the frontier. Had it not been for these uncalled-for attacks upon the Indians by rash and inconsiderate, not to say blood-seeking white men, our first settlers would, perhaps, have lived for many years unmolested in their rural homes, to breathe the pure air of this beautiful Valley, then unclouded by the smoke of the furnace, the factory, the cabin, or even the camp fire, except that of the Indians and their own. But it was decreed that peace should no longer hover over the Great Kanawah's waters; and its pioneers were doomed to early, though not unhonored graves.” What Atkinson and other European authorities failed to note is that the Cibolans and other league members were not provoked to take action until it became clear that the instruments of justice in the Anglo community were not going to take action against the murderers.
State governments joined in this effort to drive Native Americans out of the South. Several states passed laws limiting Native American sovereignty and rights and encroaching on their territory. In a few cases, such as Cherokee Nation v. Georgia (1831) and Worcester v. Georgia (1832), the U.S. Supreme Court objected to these practices and affirmed that native nations were sovereign nations “in which the laws of Georgia [and other states] can have no force.” Even so, the maltreatment continued. As President Andrew Jackson noted in 1832, if no one intended to enforce the Supreme Court’s rulings (which he certainly did not), then the decisions would “[fall]…still born.” Southern states were determined to take ownership of Indian lands and would go to great lengths to secure this territory.

In 1830, President Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act, which gave the federal government power to exchange Native-held land in the cotton kingdom east of the Mississippi for land to the west, in the “Indian colonization zone” that the United States had acquired as part of the Louisiana Purchase. (This “Indian territory” was located in present-day Oklahoma.)

In 1835, a few self-appointed representatives of the Cherokee nation negotiated the Treaty of New Echota, which traded all Cherokee land east of the Mississippi for $5 million, relocation assistance and compensation for lost property. To the federal government, the treaty was a done deal, but many of the Cherokee felt betrayed: After all, the negotiators did not represent the tribal government or anyone else. “The instrument in question is not the act of our nation,” wrote the nation’s principal chief, John Ross, in a letter to the U.S. Senate protesting the treaty. “We are not parties to its covenants; it has not received the sanction of our people.” Nearly 16,000 Cherokees signed Ross’s petition, but Congress approved the treaty anyway.

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Sometime after the Treat of Paris which ended the French and Indian War, a black Freedman from Philadelphia joined a team of explorers for a trek southwest into the mountains of western Virginia. The team became lost somewhere between the Blue Ridge mountains and the Ohio River and were not heard from for many months. In their travels, one day in pursuit of elk, they entered a natural cove completely surrounded by a high rock ledge, that contained within it another cove which the surveyors estimated to be at least 10 miles long and varying from 500 yards to a quarter mile wide with only a narrow slit entrance at the southern end. As they passed through into the inner cove, expecting to find the Ohio River just beyond, they entered instead into the world of Cibola. There they found an
established community of six small towns that were obviously already very old and included members of all known races. These strange, isolated people were living together on principles of local democracy learned from the Five Civilized Tribes and the Iroquois Federation. Each community had two elected leaders—a war chief and a peace chief—although the communities were so isolated and had so successfully mastered peaceful relations with their neighbors that the war chief seldom had any leadership responsibilities and had assumed responsibility for leading hunting and fishing parties.

Regarding their discovery as a major curiosity, each member of the team told their stories to friends upon their return to Philadelphia but were generally disregarded or ignored. It was generally assumed that they had been unsuccessful in their search for furs, gems or precious metals and were covering up their failure with this fantastic tale of a hidden society in the mountains to the southwest. Everyone they spoke to about this strange experience understood that there were colonial Europeans along the seaboard and “red Indians” everywhere, but the prospect of Englishmen, Spaniards, Frenchmen, living together with red Indians, black Africans, Arabs, Jews, and people from Cathay was simply more than anyone could fathom.

One of those who did believe the black Freedman was a young man of mixed race (part Seneca and part English) whose name has been lost to us but who was hungry for adventure. Sometime later he signed on to the surveying crew led by George Washington which surveyed the frontier lands of western Virginia which included Cibola. With the directions given him by the original visitors and several Amerindians hired by the survey party as guides, they were able to slip away from the main survey party and rediscover the cove within a cove. There he saw for himself the mysteries the Freedman had told him about. By this time, the leaders of Cibola were deeply worried about discovery and destruction of their community by rapacious European adventurers and the young surveyor was sympathetic to their plight. He was, in fact, anxious to return to Cibola to live, having fallen in love with one of its young female residents. A man of considerable intelligence, ingenuity and cunning, he devised a plan whereby simply falsifying a few key measurements, he set in motion a complex process in which the exact longitude and latitude of the interior cove of Cibola quite literally do not exist. What shows up to this day as a single 960-acre plot of land between two mountain ridges (part of the plot owned by Mueller Mining), due to the “surveying error” the young man introduced actually hides the hollow within a hollow that is narrow and more than 10 miles long. It was this surveying “error” within the boundaries of the land first owned by “Digger” Barnes and later purchased by Harry Mueller’s company.

In this way, the property records of this part of western Virginia contained approximately 30 square miles fewer than the actual reality, and Cibola was safely
hidden from colonial America as long as the fiction could be maintained. After satisfying himself that the ruse worked, the young man returned to Cibola, married his sweetheart and his descendants continue to live there today.

The Freedman and the others who had tried to spread word of Cibola in colonial Philadelphia all died in the Revolutionary War. After the initial skeptical responses, they had mostly kept the secret of the towns in the hidden cove to themselves. Several hoped to return there after the War and join the community. Before he died, one of them (who feared for his soul) shared the secret with another soldier, who claimed to be an illegitimate son of Ben Franklin. Meanwhile, Franklin, Jefferson and John Adams together with a renegade South Carolinian Freedman, the Frenchman Lafayette and a Spaniard who had spent two decades in Mexico were invited to join a secret society to find asylum for escaped slaves. For several decades in the mid-19th century, runaway black slaves were the only new immigrants to the Cibola community. But at the time of the "Trail of Tears" a new wave of Cherokee immigrants were taken in--including the young Sequoia, who studied in Cibola for several years before rejoining his family in Oklahoma territory. Entry of the Cherokee into Cibola was nearly revealed later in the 19th century with the myth of the "Melungeons" which is still alive today in East Tennessee, western North Carolina and southern West Virginia.

The entire community was discovered by the Secret Service during Reconstruction. They informed President Grant who suppressed the story, ordering his clerks to bury the records deep in the archives of the Bureau of Land Management where Arthur Sennett and his predecessors dealt with them in the following two centuries. Since that time, one desk-bound agent of the Secret Service is assigned lifetime responsibility for keeping the details surrounding such matters secret for a period of 500 years, after which time it will be revealed. Even as the federal government grew in size and scope, this position remained unfilled for several decades, and thus Arthur Sennett in his post at the Department of the Interior became the only federal official actively dealing with Cibola.
mentioned in the West Virginia Encyclopedia is a modern house. They are all commercial, educational or government buildings.

Like Jefferson, Deigh lacks formal professional architecture training. It is well known that Jefferson was self-taught in neoclassical architecture through his reading of the writings of Andrea Palladio. Several biographies of the world’s most celebrated self-trained architect, Thomas Jefferson, drafter of the Declaration of Independence, nation-founder and third U.S. President, which deals occasionally or peripherally with Jefferson’s architectural masterworks, Monticello, the Virginia State Capital, and the University of Virginia academical village, with its Lawn and the magnificent Rotunda. His design of the state capital building in Richmond is based on the Maison Caree, an ancient temple in France, of which Jefferson supplied drawings while living in Paris. To Jefferson’s deep annoyance, the builder departed significantly from his plan, and his original design was not finally realized until after his death. Jefferson also worked with Major Pierre Charles L’Enfant to lay out the grid plan of Washington DC.

In the cases of other less well-known folk architects, their lives often remain largely uncharted in part because no one has shown us how this is to be done. We know for example that Ralph Deigh was a combat veteran of at least two recent wars. We also know something of the manner in which he met and came to live with Amy McMillen, his companion and architectural muse, although there are some major discrepancies in these accounts.

The most prominent architects today are graduates of Ivy League and other top-tier universities, students at internationally recognized schools of architecture who go on to celebrated, highly publicized, heavily marketed and profitable careers building urban monuments for wealthy corporations. By contrast, Ralph is a graduate of a “minor league” public university in a small state, with a double major in art history and engineering who also completed a couple of graduate courses in landscape architecture before enlisting in the military, which had no particular use for his talent and assigned him to public liaison work in Afghanistan.

It was only after spending nearly a decade in the military and part of another decade designing and building innovative modernist doll houses for fathers hoping to delight their young daughters that he was able to open his model building workshop in the remodeled barn behind The Doll House shop run by his companion, Amy McMullen. Ralph had never fully mastered architectural drawing and was even less skilled with computer-assisted drafting (CAD). It was not until he met and teamed up with Lil, Draftswoman that his full potential began to be realized. Only then did the architectural world become aware that Deigh’s model houses were part of a larger life-work dedicated to radically rethinking and redesigning a modernist, 21st century version of the American small town in the mountains of Appalachia. More years passed before Ralph and Amy met
Rosemary Mueller and Adam Sennett, and the members of the Eden Mythology Group. It was only at this point that all of these various lives began to focus on the idea of designing and building a completely new small town in the former Appalachian coalfields of Dare County, West Virginia. Even then, it took a devastating flood that destroyed one town, a tornado and a lethal forest fire that destroyed another to prompt the foundation of the utopian village of Eden. Along the way, it has become increasingly clear that Deigh and his associates completely reframed the fundamental nature of the American small town.

Ralph Deigh was never an imposing figure. In his mid-40s, he was about 6’ 1” tall, with a slender frame, slightly protruding stomach, and receding hairline. His personality has been described variously as exuberant, and enthusiastic. He had always been very intense about his calling, even when it failed to pay his bills and the world showed no interest in his work. For much of his professional life, his primary clients had been the concerned fathers of little girls and his primary architectural products were scale-models regarded and sold as doll houses. A few of his designs were also turned into modernist backyard playhouses for that same clientele.

According to people who have known him, Ralph had never been particularly concerned about money. He had decided upon his life work when he was in high school in a small company town further west in the coalfields of eastern Ohio. It was already clear at that time that coal mining was a declining industry, propped up by adroit politics pursued by industry leaders and an enduring culture of nostalgia for “the good old days” that never were, or were far too short, depending on who you talked to.

Ralph was aided in arriving at his rather precocious views by his grandfather and a favorite teacher, both of them former coal miners. Unlike his adolescent peers and their parents, Ralph understood clearly from an early age, that there was no real future in the coal mining communities of Appalachia and that little serious work was underway to invent one. They would never return to the profitable conditions when miners were well paid in the 1970s; nor to their pre-coal mining conditions based on subsistence forest agriculture supplemented, as many former miners still were by various forms of hunting and gathering. They also helped him understand “the facts of life” in mining communities: most importantly that coal miners often died young, either from lethal accidents, from any of the panoply of vicious diseases to which miners were subject, or from self-induced diseases and conditions arising from smoking, excessive drinking, or poor diets.

To the youthful Ralph it seemed that despite these awful circumstances the people of his home community, the coal camp of Kenneth, Ohio, like those in most other mining communities were constitutionally unable to face up to life above ground and without coal. So they looked to a largely imagined past and mistook it for a
charming, prosperous and hopeful future. Ralph’s solution to this had long been clear to him, well before he relocated to Dare County. Someone would have to completely reimagine and redesign the Appalachian rural community for a world after coal. Without such an initiative, local politicians and community leaders would not be able to help themselves. They would continue to publicly pine after the “good old days” of a robust coal economy and life in the coal camps, even as the vast majority of their children grew up, moved away and found new ways of life for themselves elsewhere. Much the same thing had been happening for decades in former farming communities and fishing villages all over the country. And, in rural America, there was no end to this vicious cycle in sight.

Although Ralph Deigh seldom discussed these concerns and interests with anyone other than Amy, all of his housing and building designs and the model houses he built were part of his singular life project. And mostly as a by-product of the wondrous doll houses he produced for his clients in the workshop in the remodeled barn behind Amy’s shop, his fame eventually began to spread throughout Appalachia but not beyond. It was in this way that Ralph became established as a vernacular architect, on par with the painters, wood carvers, quilters, musicians and other folk artists of the region. Even so, Ralph’s modest reputation as a folk architect, and in particular his lack of celebrity status, stands in marked contrast to the magnitude of this contribution. He continued to shop at Gabriel Brothers, and wore polo shirts most days, with his dress outfit being khakis and burgundy penny loafers with white socks.

Ralph Deigh believed his architectural work to be modern in its use of large expanses of glass, steel, concrete and plastic, it’s incorporation of abstract and curved shapes, cantilevers, low pitched roofs and wide overhangs, and its rejection of neoclassical and beaux art decoration plastered onto stone or masonry piles. Deigh was especially indebted in differing ways to the works of Frank Lloyd Wright and other modernists. He made ample use of such Wrightian devices as naturalistic (“organic”) site selections, horizontality, cantilevers, clerestory windows, incorporation of appropriate and available natural features, complex geometric shapes and linking indoors and outdoors with transitional spaces, decks, patios, and arbors. Even so, he generally rejected Wright’s preference for hidden or concealed entrances as “too urban”, although he often tried to incorporate the architectural drama of the compression-and-expanded revelations of so many of Wright’s entrances. His notebooks are filled with photographs and sketches of works by a wide variety of modernist architects, together with his comments and observations on them.

One superficially anti-modernist feature of the work of Ralph Deigh that stands out perhaps more than any other is the conscious, deliberate avoidance of individual innovation, novelty or idiosyncratic design characteristic of modern starchitects.
He has often been quoted as saying that contemporary rural people have little wish to be unique or different. They would rather fit in, to blend with their surroundings and to be accepted by their community peers who wish for the same things. Thus, Ralph Deigh’s vernacular architecture shows almost no radical architectural or innovations or departures from the design norms. Every design and every building he has done is “reminiscent of” or “in the style of” an already established modern architect. Tried and true is the way he generally puts it.

Importantly in the Appalachian context, Deigh’s architecture is considered modern, first and foremost, in its rejection of the basic rectangular cabin with attached lean-to, incorporation of modern features in the basic design of the houses rather than either as absent or retrofitted features. This includes such features as open concept floor plans, indoor plumbing and central heating and air conditioning in the original design and not retrofitted, double- and triple-paned glass, insulation and roofing materials with high R-values, skylights and solar tubes, sliding glass doors, clothes washers and dryers, modern kitchens with refrigerator/freezers, disposals, dishwashers. Deigh has a particular fondness for in-floor heating. “It’s not rocket science,” he has said, “Heat rises. So it makes sense to put it at the lowest point and let it do what it will do.”

Many of Deigh’s designs are considered modern vernacular architecture in their incorporation of certain traditional elements of Appalachian building such as retaining walls, no basements (especially when building on solid rock close to the surface), buildings on raised pedestals on one or more sides, entrances/exits on multiple levels, front porches accessible to pedestrian traffic, fenced gardens, and use of a wide variety of shed and lean-to combinations.

By far the most controversial aspect of Deigh’s modernism among many Appalachians is his commitment to sustainability and the environment. The belief is still widespread throughout the region that coal mining employment has faltered only because of dark and sinister political forces imposing environmental regulations on saintly mine owners who would provide more employment if only they were not constrained from doing so by the absurd demands of government bureaucrats. There is widespread disregard for such factors as automation of mining and declining market demand for coal. This has been strongly aided and abetted by savvy—if regressive—marketing campaigns (e.g., “Friends of Coal” campaigns) and a host of political false flags including “Obama’s War on Coal” and anti-Hillary disinformation campaigns in the period 2012–2016 and Trump’s 2017 declaration that “The war on coal is over!” Thus, in the face of evidence to the contrary, it is widely believed that suspension of air and water quality regulation and standards will free up the coal industry to bring back the jobs. In the face of this regressive political environment, Deigh’s redesign of the mountain community is tangible evidence of workable ideas of sustainability, including a
controversial standard exceeding carbon neutrality. This is a condition termed carbon positivity.

Ralph Deigh hated that term, but some others might also characterize much of his work as remodern, in the sense that it lacked any postmodern sense of irony and cynicism and sought a renewal of a sense of architectural beauty at the expense of what he called the “‘ugly sublime’ and the just plain ugly”. Taking inspiration (and unapologetically stealing ideas) from such other modern urban architects as Wright, Buckmaster Fuller, Marcel Breuer, Zaha Hadid, Frank Geary, Eero Saarinen, and a host of lesser known and more recent others, Deigh also sought to use both simple and complex geometrical forms including hexagons, octagons, spirals, trapezoids, rhombuses, and complex, computer generated curves in his building designs. One departure from what is generally thought of as modernist design are the hexagonal and octagonal log cabin designs he designed, patterned on the work of certain English and European architects.
Amy McMillen ran a toy and doll shop in one of those West Virginia communities east of the Ohio River (although which one isn’t completely certain). This is where Ralph came to live, and to design and build modernist model houses for the parents of her child customers. From his original designs of individual model houses, it was a relatively small step to his monumental plan for the new community and design of the individual buildings of what he called Eden, Appalachia. But much else in the life of the architect remains in doubt.

In one account, Amy was coming out of the entrance of the old A & P on Main Street years ago when she saw this tall, hunched-over fellow in dirty, rumpled khakis that looked like what he must have been wearing when he had been mustered out of the military recently. (She didn’t know; did anyone say mustered
He was shambling along the street looking every inch the homeless vet with a healthy dose of PTSD. After dropping her groceries in the car, she saw him eying a dumpster across the way and decided he must be hungry. She chose a direct approach, walking up to him and asking, “I’m on my way to the cafe for a sandwich. Would you care to join me?” He had looked her over, shrugged and said, “I guess I’m not going to get a better offer at the moment.” They both laughed at this and the two walked two blocks south to the Laughing Bismarck.

There were several scowls and curious looks from the staff as the tall, attractive blond entered the bakery with her disheveled companion, but since she was a fellow member of the local Chamber of Commerce, the manager smiled, chatted briefly with her about the weather, and seated them as far from the window as possible. They talked for a while as she learned that he was living temporarily under the Johnson Street bridge near the mouth where the creek dumps into the river.

Several days after this first meeting, Ralph Deigh reached over and picked up his cell phone off the large rock under the Johnson Street Bridge. It was still the closest thing he had to a real office. “Hello?” he said without looking at who the caller might be. He didn’t get many calls and the phone was costing him more than he could afford every month. It was also a pain to keep charged, and so when it rang, he couldn’t afford to be selective. He answered, “Hello?”

“Mr. Dee? This is Amy McMillen.” After their first meeting, Ralph and Amy had agreed to stay in touch. But this all seemed rather sudden. Even so, Ralph chuckled slightly at her formality, and remembering her difficulty with his name the first time they met. He repeated again now what he had told her then: “My mother always said we pronounce it ‘day’, Mrs. McMillen.” Clearly, this was to be a standing joke among them at least until it grew stale. Then after a moment’s hesitation, he asked “How can I help you, Amy?”

“What? Oh, yes, sorry. I’m calling to find out if you would be interested in helping me with a project I have in mind. I’m planning to move to Dare County soon. I own a little shop in Barley Mill selling dolls. I’ve been driving back and forth. . .”

“. . .Yes, I’ve heard of it, although I’ve never been there . . . To Barley Mill, that is.”

“Well, business has been very good lately and I need to expand. I need more space to display my dolls. I have a chance to buy a small farm on Highway 57 just outside of town. The farm house is close to the road and I think it would make a good shop, and I plan to live in the rest of the house. It’s going to take a lot of work of course.”

“If I do buy the place, I would want to sell off most of the agricultural land, keep the house, barn and outbuildings and renovate the house. I’d like to live in part of
the house and redesign the rest of it as a workshop and shop.” She continued. “But I guess I said this already.” She was clearly nervous about the prospect.

“It’s part of the estate of a family I know, and I think I can get it for a very good price. The events of the farmer’s death are . . . unpleasant . . .” Her voice broke and she hesitated slightly . . . “I don’t want to get into that, but in particular they—the family—don’t want to go through the public spectacle of an auction, and their lawyer, who is serving as the executor of the estate. You may know him—John Graham. John tells me the family are quite happy with my offer, so it will probably be handled as a private sale. . . If all goes according to plan.”

“Ralph, I know you haven’t completely gotten back on your feet, but I really need an architect. And I can’t afford any of those big city types. I know you’ve done some work along these lines. Is this something you might be interested in exploring with me?”

“Yes.” Ralph said without a moment’s hesitation. “This does sound like it could be interesting.”

“Good. Could you meet me there tomorrow about 2 PM?”

Clearly, she didn’t realize that he was without transportation of his own. But, one of the other guys who lived under the bridge with him kept a 25 year old 4-door Chevrolet parked on one of the side streets near the bridge for use in cold weather. Charley kept the car gassed up in case he ever needed it, which he didn’t seem to. Ralph’s driver’s license was still valid and so if Charley would agree to him using it and the car would start, he’d keep his appointment with Amy.

They agreed on the time and Amy gave Ralph directions to the farm. “If you get there before me, just pull into the driveway on the east side of the house. There is no one living there now. Not since the . . .” Ralph wondered what had happened; clearly, she could not say. It must be a suicide or homicide or a particularly nasty divorce at least, he concluded.

The next day at precisely 1:55 PM Ralph pulled into the driveway in Charley’s Chevy, as instructed. He had been able to stop by the Vet Center for a shower and a shave. He kept a clean set of clothes in his duffle bag for job interviews, and this seemed to be precisely that. So he was more dressed up than at any time since he took off his uniform. He had always hated being late for anything, and as a result he seldom was. Homeless, but clean and prompt! he laughed to himself. He also disliked waiting for people who were late, and so he was relieved when precisely at 1:59 PM a pale blue late model SUV with Amy at the wheel pulled into the driveway behind him.
“Ralph. It’s good to see you. You clean up well.” She knew she shouldn’t have said that the moment it came off her lips. But the damage was done, so she pressed on. “Thank you for meeting me here.” The next hour was something of a blur for Ralph as Amy, talking without stop, led him through the various features of the farm beginning with the small, three-bedroom, one bath, two-story farm house that appeared to him to be about 75 years old. It was, as Amy had said on the phone, near the road, but she hadn’t mentioned that it was in need of some serious renovation. Pieces of siding were missing in several places, apparently the result of a severe storm last year. Numerous shingles were damaged, and the entire roof would need to be replaced. The same was true and then some of the windows, which were wooden, with huge gaps in the caulking. The windows wouldn’t stop any wind; it wasn’t completely clear they would even slow it down. They appeared to be the original, single-pane glass, useful for looking through but roughly the equivalent of open windows.

Through the nearest window he could see worn and cracked linoleum on the floor of what appeared to be a sort of dining room/family room combination. He guessed there was soft pine flooring under that, much of which would need to be pulled up. He could see an oil-burning stove at one end of this room, with a black stovepipe rising from it, before making a 90-degree bend toward the circular chimney opening high in the outer wall. Ralph made a mental note that if this were to be a business location, installing a complete new central HVAC system would probably have to be a priority. New flooring throughout and the HVAC would not be cheap!

“I think it would be best to close off this driveway and make a parking lot over on the west side,” Amy said, pointing to the open lawn on the other side of the house. Ralph quickly guesstimated that there appeared to be room for at least a dozen cars in the indicated space and told her so. “That would be ideal!” Amy bubbled. “With landscaping. There must be landscaping.” Ralph smiled. He had always believed in including landscaping details in all his projects, but it wasn’t often that clients voluntarily requested it. More often, they saw his plans for trees, bushes and plants as needless, frivolous, additional expense. He was beginning to really warm to the idea of working with Amy.

As they walked around the property Ralph noted that immediately behind the house was a small, square building that once had been a pump house, sitting over a well with an electric pump motor mounted on the cement floor. Amy said this and the outhouse a few yards away were irrelevant now because the town of Huttonsville had extended city water and sewer out past the farm several years ago. At this, he made a mental note to check out the condition of the indoor plumbing in the house. Old farmhouses like this almost never had original plumbing indoors, and sometimes commodes, tubs and showers were located in some very strange places with some very strange piping. Behind the pump house about 50 feet to the
west was a wooden corncrib and directly to the south of that there was a one-story chicken coop with thick walls built entirely of large sandstone blocks mortared in place. Was it built for chickens, he wondered? It looked like it might withstand an artillery barrage. The walls were sturdy enough to safely hold cows or even bulls.

The farm yard was flat with a slight downward slope from the road to roughly the chicken coop. From there, the slope down was sharper with a vertical drop of perhaps 30 feet down to the barn, which was aligned with the driveway where they had parked. The other outbuildings were set slightly to the west of the house. Farm fields surrounded what Amy called “the door yard” on three sides. This was, he knew, a somewhat archaic term common in this region and referring to the parts of a farm not devoted to fields and pastures.

The barn was not one of those huge hip-roofed red barns seen throughout Pennsylvania, Ohio and throughout the Midwest. It was relatively small, painted white with a single V-shaped roof. As they walked in on the ground floor, Ralph noted that there were stalls for two horses, and a total of 12 stanchions for milk cows in two parallel rows of six each. The stale, dusty smell indicated to him that the barn had not been occupied by livestock for some time.

At the front, under the driveway to the hay mow, was a small, cool room that Amy called “the milk house” with a cement tank large enough to have once held several 30-gallon milk cans in circulating cool water until the dairy came to collect them each day. In one corner of the milk house was an unfamiliar device Amy called a cream separator, with a hand crank that looked as if it had not been used for many years. “Antiquers love this old farm stuff.” Amy said, “I think I can probably sell all of this stuff on eBay, and some old milk cans and wooden block and tackle pulleys and all kinds of other stuff laying around here. I’ve talked about it with Milton Raese, who has an antique store over near Buckland. It won’t pay for the remodeling of the house, but it could produce a tidy sum anyway.” Not for the first time, Ralph was impressed with Amy’s business acumen.

As they walked outside and up the sloping driveway into the hay loft, the germ of an idea was already beginning to take shape in Ralph’s mind. It was uncanny but he had the impression that Amy might have had a similar thought. Not only would he be interested in doing the renovations that his new friend wanted, this barn, and in particular the hayloft, would be a perfect location for him to establish his architectural practice. They looked over the hayloft, noting its features and a few structural problems that he thought could be easily corrected, talking there for perhaps another half hour.

“And,” Amy added finally, there is another small place—really nothing more than another door yard with a second farmhouse, a much larger barn and 2 or three falling down outbuildings at the far end of the property. I would want you to
arrange to have all of that removed, so I can turn that back into farmland and include it in the land that I sell off.” Ralph asked if that was really necessary. Couldn’t she just sell the land as-is and fix up and rent out the second place? Absolutely not was Amy’s answer and, as he learned later, Amy had a keen eye for such matters. The wood in the other barn as well as two of the outbuildings on the original site was weathered but in good shape. No termites or dry rot, and thus the boards from these buildings would easily be sold to suburbanites interested in paneling their dens and family rooms. The house on the other site, however, was completely derelict. All of the weight bearing joists were rotted and even to step into the main floor was to risk ending up in the basement with the entire structure on top of you. Amy was definitely right; that house would have to go and selling off the lumber of the other buildings seemed the best course.

“So, do you think we can work together on this?” Amy asked as the afternoon turned into evening. “Perhaps we can get some dinner and talk about it further.”
Ralph was on his second or fourth date with Amy, depending on how you counted such things. Did their first meeting when Amy took him to lunch, or their appointment at the farm that afternoon count as dates? For that matter, was the very idea of dating obsolete? They had first gotten together for business—her need for a renovation design and his wish for his first real paying job in a very long time. At first, they had talked only about the farm house renovation, but as the afternoon wore on the conversation became more personal and reflective and they had already begun to discover just how much they enjoyed being together. The afternoon had turned into evening as they talked and eventually, they went to dinner together at a country inn a dozen miles away just outside of Barley Mill.
They had gone together in her SUV. Ralph was grateful, and certain that Charley would approve when she said, “You can just leave your car here, and I’ll bring you back later.” He had thrown his portfolio with the notes he had been making all afternoon into the trunk of Charley’s car. “Just in case.” He said to himself, although he had no idea why anyone would want to break into this old, second-hand car to steal a sheaf of notes scratched on his one and only legal pad.

They had a leisurely dinner. He had the pork chop special and she had a chicken piccata; they shared a bottle of Pinot Noir after she told him she didn’t care for white wines. They both declined dessert and later she took him back to his car, talking all the while about her plans for the new location. As he started to get out of her car, she had leaned across and kissed him on the lips and said, “Follow me back to my place for a drink?”

“It’s complicated,” was all he said.

Earlier in the evening, as they were eating their salads the question had arisen of how he planned to support himself until his architectural practice could get going. His answer had obviously surprised her. “You build doll houses?” she asked in response, trying hard but unsuccessfully to keep a note of astonishment out of her voice.

“Actually, they are exact scale models of houses and other buildings I’ve designed,” he had told her, “but ever since I got out of college, I’ve been able to sell some of them. Guys with young daughters have found that they work very well as doll houses. Even while I was in the Middle East, I occasionally found time to scratch out a new design. I’ve got notebooks full of ideas for them in my brother’s garage in Columbus. I was never very good at architectural drawing, but modeling is really easy for me. In those cases—like your renovation—where I need actual detailed drawings, I have a friend who does them for me.”

A few days later one of them—he was not sure later whether it was him or Amy—had finally broached the idea that had been brewing for both of them since that first day at the barn. Whoever first raised it, they were both quickly adding details and possibilities nearly as fast as they could speak. He could set up his drafting table and doll-making workshop in the old hay barn. That would keep him close enough to oversee her renovation site and give him a place to work on his other projects. There was enough room on the ground floor of the barn if they ripped out the horse stalls for all of his wood working tools and he could keep an ample supply of wood under roof where the cows had once stood. For some reason known only to the previous occupants, the barn was wired for 220, although it would need to be inspected before he used it. There was plenty of room to store his model houses on shelves he could build and even room to set up an entire model village in the loft. Amy could keep a model house or two in her renovated store.
and direct interested customers to the barn for further examples. With a few sheets of plywood and a few studs, he could put up a curtain wall and use one corner of the hayloft as his architectural office. He could give up his plan to rent an office in town, which was far too expensive for his current income anyway. They would work out some arrangement for rent in the barn, but that could wait for a later time, she said. There was plenty of room, and he could build and display as many models as he wished.

And, of course, he could live in the house. There was plenty of room and he could come and go as he pleased. Work on the renovation was proceeding well enough that the house was now livable and almost ready to open as Amy’s new business location. It had seemed the most natural thing in the world when they had decided to live together in the renovated house. Ralph was not at all communicative about his wartime experiences, but Amy soon realized how complicated Ralph’s life had become. Shortly after he came to live with her, Amy was awakened in the night for the first time by loud shouting coming from his room.

Everything that Amy ‘knew’ about Deigh’s combat experiences came from these late-night outbursts, which occurred nearly every night. He had either been a sniper or someone who defused roadside IED’s. Or, perhaps both, at different times in different wars. And he had either killed four, or forty or four hundred targets, or he had diffused that many bombs, or saved that many victims. Very little was clear from his late-night ramblings.

All that was certain was that when he began to shout in his sleep, she would go into his room, get into his bed and hold him in her arms while he slept. This seemed to calm him. When she did this, he would almost immediately quiet down, never wake, and continue to sleep peacefully. In the early morning, before it was light, Amy would rise and return to her own bed while Ralph slept. Although this pattern was repeated several times a week for as long as they lived together, they never spoke of it and Amy was genuine uncertain whether Ralph was even conscious of her nocturnal visits.

These late night encounters were more maternal—perhaps even clinical or therapeutic—than sexual. As she told skeptical confidants, theirs remained a plutonic relationship throughout and these late-night rendezvous were not sexual in any usual sense. “If you had seen what is left of him down there, you would know for sure that he could never have regularly sex,” Amy told her friend Donna Doddridge. “I don’t know what happened to him, or what they did to him, or even who did it but there isn’t much more to say.”

“We’ve never talk about it, and I’m certainly not going to ask him” she told Donna.
After seeing the barn, Ralph had sketched out some basic ideas and then asked his friend Lil, Draughtswoman to work up some detailed drawings. He was genuinely enthusiastic a few days later when he saw what Lil… had done. Like most hay barns, this one was completely enclosed on all four sides with small windows high up in the gable ends and a couple of dormers with windows high up on the sides. This would be great for ventilation. And the entire loft had solid wood floors at least a foot thick. Even with the high windows, the loft was, like most hay barns, dark inside and he had thought at first it would require some fairly strong electric lighting for him to work there.

A more-or-less random mention of north lighting in artist’s studios in something he had been reading, however, moved his thinking in an entirely different notion. With a few relatively minor structural modifications, he told Lil. . . they could simply rip out the barn boards on the north end of the barn and replace them with a complete wall of framed glass windows, at least some of which could be opened. This would have the effect of lighting up the space and providing a very substantial source of natural light in the loft. He had seen something like this done in an old stone barn in Cork, Ireland in a magazine and when he saw the drawings that Lil . . . worked up he knew that this would be a very workable solution, not only for his office but also for the studio space and the workshop space on the ground floor where he had installed his power tools and would do his model building.
Lil. . ., Draftswoman

Ralph Deigh was the first person to concede that Lucy Isabella Liu, who worked under the professional nom de plume of Lil, Draughtswoman, was a principal reason for any success he may have had. From his workshop at the Doll House, Ralph had sketched out his various plans for modern buildings and rural communities in more or less random fashion as the ideas had come to him. However, it was Lil, Draughtswoman, with her engineering and computer skills
who had transformed his ideas into actual architectural drawings usable by contractors and builders.

Lil, Draughtswoman, had started her career as one of the lead programmers on an open source CAD (computer-assisted design) project in Silicon Valley, but abruptly quit and moved to an isolated farmhouse in rural western Virginia. She had already developed quite a local following before she met Ralph Deigh. According to her followers, there are two proper ways to refer to Lil, Draughtswoman. The first are exactly those 17 characters in that order (including the comma). The second is to abbreviate her name with a three-dot ellipsis, thus: Lil . . . No additional dots or any other punctuation marks or simply Lil are considered appropriate.

Lil . . . is six feet tall. Her father was Chinese-American, from a California family that had been in the U.S. since the late 18th century, while her mother was Afro-Caribbean; one of those unusual pairings that came about in a smoky haze during the 1960s in a way that neither of Lil . . .’s parents recalled very clearly, or so they had always told Lil . . . People always assume that Lil . . . inherited her unusual height from her mother, one of the popular stereotypes in Appalachia being that all Chinese people are short. Actually, her mother was about 5’ 5” tall, while her father was 6’ 3”, although it was unclear whether this was a part of his Chinese heritage or the result of a liaison by one of his ancestors with an American Amazon in the days when San Francisco was known as Baghdad on the Bay.

Lil . . . had a very flamboyant manner which was always on display with everyone she encountered. “Amigos,” she was inclined to say, “Carpe Diem. I hope you realize what a great time this is to be alive and how this is the absolutely best place to be right now!” Her flamboyance and extravagance are due, in large part, to her personal rejection of the male ethos of Silicon Valley. Although she might at times deny it, Lil . . . has always been very troubled by her non-acceptance professionally. Most of all, she detested being condescended to. “She knows that she is better than most of the guys,” her friends would say, “But she also knows they don’t really accept her, and she just doesn’t know what else to do about that.”

When Lil . . . enters a room, the initial response is almost always the same: shocked silence as everyone in the room stops talking and just looks—gawks, really—at her. Open mouths silenced by the tall, dark-skinned woman with almond eyes and curly black hair who has just entered. At such points, Lil . . . usually has something witty, enigmatic and self-denigrating to say. It would be fair to say that Lil . . . basks in the attention. On more than one occasion when conversation continued after her entry, Lil . . . had been known to clear her throat loudly until the crowd looked her way again and quieted. At that point, she would say simply “That’s better!” and offer one of her standard original, pithy witticisms. Despite these and a host of other personal peculiarities, Ralph always found Lil . . .
to be a pleasant, easy going person who was fun to work with despite these few major obsessive traits and perfectionist tendencies that came out in her work.

Lil . . . did not like to work at Ralph’s barn workspace at The Doll House, preferring, she said, her own perch in a former storage closet at her own isolated farm house. Fortunately, Lil . . . was very tech savvy and from that remote location she was instantly in touch with the online world. Thus, after making a few arrangements for Ralph in the barn-workshop, Lil . . . was in daily—sometimes even hourly—contact with Ralph on all their projects via text messaging, cell phone and Facebook. Probably the biggest arrangement Lil. . . found necessary was to “dust proof” Ralph’s hay barn office to keep the dust, sawdust and litter left over from the barn’s earlier history or produced by his model building away from the computers, monitors, printers and other equipment installed at Lil . . .’s insistence in the office. And with Lil . . . in her own location, Ralph could concentrate on his designs and models without interruption.
The following op-ed piece was published in the Daily Eagle & Advertiser on March 14, late in the year before Ralph met Rosemary and Adam. It was entitled “The Traditionalism of Rural Life” and carried the by-line of Ralph Deigh.

One of the truly remarkable aspects of contemporary rural life and something that may not be evident to those not familiar with it is its remarkable ‘conservatism’; which is to say its unthinking traditionalism. To be rural in the modern world is too often to be a traditionalist more oriented to the past than to future or present; to wish to turn back the clock to right after World War II, 1948 or 1950, perhaps, or
earlier to the 1920s or the 1890s. In its more extreme forms, such traditionalism seeks to unspool history back to the middle ages when everyone other than powerful, old white men ‘knew their place’ and those men were willing to enforce their domination by all means necessary.

The late W.F. Buckley might as well have been speaking for rural traditionalists everywhere when he coined that remarkable image of a titan standing astride history yelling “Halt!” (Note: Buckley actually said, “A conservative is a fellow who is standing athwart history yelling ‘Stop!’”) Even so, the remarkable idiocy of the comment and the ‘conservative’ obsession with stopping or ending history, is evident. The signature quality of contemporary rural life is the threadbare fancy that social change in all its manifest dimensions could possibly be turned on and off like a spigot, and that, all things considered, the preference would be to turn the spigot of time off. Rural traditionalists generally wish to turn back the clock to some past golden age when, it is believed, life was somehow less complex, multifaceted, and more fulfilling. Such an image is ridiculous to anyone who examines it closely. Life in the past may have been simpler, but it was also riddled with inconvenience, disease, personal threats of violence, shorter life spans and premature death and none of the signature advantages of affluence, education and a knowledge economy. Refrigeration, indoor plumbing and central heating deserve to be noted among the greatest achievements of the human species.

To the typical urbanite, rural traditionalism may appear to be all pervasive. In the U.S. alone it is tempting to see 3,000 counties of rural openness, ignorance, vacuousness. These are the images conjured up by things like the bumper sticker proclaiming, “If you hear banjo music, don’t stop paddling.” Yet, everywhere one looks throughout the remaining rural precincts in this vast land, one is likely also to encounter another, possibly a minority and definitely quieter, rural voices which say just as forcefully as any traditionalist:

Yes, we wish to live rural. We understand the virtue of small scale, longstanding close relations, and we love the broad intimacy of our small communities, and the closeness to nature and to our neighbors, but we are also modern, educated intelligent people, tolerant of differences, invigorated by complexity and diversity, and most of all, open the opportunities, challenges, and even the threats of change. We do not want to move to the city to find our preferred way of life. We wish to find such things living in our farms, villages, small towns and in the countryside.

I speak not here of the development grifters, the real estate con men, the chamber of commerce carnival barkers, who equate progress and change with increases in their own wealth. I speak instead of those voices who spoke up—and continue to speak—for the end of segregation in the rural south, for those progressive locavores defending for ‘the family farm’ and sustainable agriculture, for all those who contested strip mining, mountaintop removal, pipelines through sacred lands
and all of the assorted desecrations of nature committed in the name of a false and empty ‘progress’.

It is to their memory, but more importantly to their futures, that the community of Eden is dedicated, and it is because of them that the future of Eden looks so bright. It truly is a beacon shining on a hill.

_______

Adam couldn’t quite believe what he was reading. The piece had been commissioned (encouraged, really) by Daniel Messenger, who had first heard about Ralph Deigh and his housing models shortly after he came back to work at the D. E. & A. Although they did not yet know Rosemary, Adam, or Ralph, the article also piqued the interest of Daniel’s friends, Art and Gloria Payne, and Gloria’ sister, Joy Reasoner Hart.
Ralph Deigh looked at the screen on his portable computer, clicked a couple of links and saw the web site for Monticello unfold on his screen. Another click or two took him to an article on Thomas Jefferson’s plan for the University of Virginia, which over the course of the nineteenth century had been stretched, adapted and fitted to different circumstances across the continent, from Colby College in Waterville, Maine to Hawaii Pacific University in Honolulu.

Thinking about and designing the academical village, Jefferson had said, was “the hobby of my old age”. Ralph was pretty certain it would be his as well. A curator at the site noted that the idea had actually, evolved in Jefferson’s mind over several decades, and that was certainly true for Ralph.
“We wish to establish in the upper & healthier country,” Jefferson had written to tidewater Virginians, “and more centrally for the state a University on a plan so broad & liberal & modern, as to be worth patronizing with the public support, and be a temptation to the youth of other states to come, and drink of the cup of knowledge & fraternize with us.”

“In fact, a University should not be a house but a village.” In other words, it should consist of a campus composed of multiple buildings rather than a single structure. Such a campus should also be expandable. ‘An “academical village” was not only more convenient, safer, healthier, and less noisy (and thus more conducive to study), but, because a village can grow organically as space is “wanting,” its cost initially would be less than that of a single large building necessarily constructed on the basis of predicted future enrollment. Moreover, as Jefferson later wrote to Governor Wilson C. Nicholas in 1816, the small buildings of a village provide the opportunity to exhibit “models in architecture of the purest forms of antiquity, furnishing to the student examples of the precepts he will be taught in that art.”

Jefferson’s plan for an academical village was more fully described in the Report of the Commissioners for the University of Virginia, commonly called the Rockfish Gap Report, which he drafted and which, in 1818, recommended to the Virginia General Assembly that an existing college site in Charlottesville be the location for the new state university. As to the ground plan for the university, the report stated “they [commissioners] are of opinion that it should consist of distinct houses or pavilions, arranged at proper distances on each side of a lawn of a proper breadth, and of indefinite extent, in one direction, at least; in each of which should be a lecturing room, with two to four apartments, for the accommodation of a professor and his family; that these pavilions should be united by a range of dormitories, sufficient each for the accommodation of two students only, this provision being deemed advantageous to morals, to order, and to uninterrupted study; and that a passage of some kind, under cover from the weather, should give a communication along the whole range.”

Jefferson contracted with Peter Maverick, an engraver, to provide a formal representation of the ground plan for his academical village. He received a proof in November of 1822 and work on the campus of the University of Virginia began sometime after that.

The academical village idea is reproduced on one form or another in every “college town” in America. Most were founded and built in the 19th century after Jefferson’s plan. Most have as much in common with Williamsburg and William and Mary as with the central campus at UVA: incorporating the college campus complete with classrooms, libraries and student housing, at a location adjoining a downtown area with shops and restaurants and flowing into nearby residential
neighborhoods. Even Frank Lloyd Wright’s novel Florida Southern College follows the general profile of the Jeffersonian academical village and also flows easily into the nearby community. With the growth of higher education in the last 50 years, many of these “villages” have subsequently been suburbanized with the addition of shopping centers, parking lots, stadia, arenas, theaters and the like on the original academic village. A very few, like Hiram College in the outer Cleveland suburbs, are sufficiently incorporated in urban areas that they can afford to leave the amenities outside and retain their pristine originality.
Rosemary was finally able to arrange an appointment with Adam Sennett, and she asked Madeline to accompany her for the long drive to the Dare County Courthouse. They left home early, around six in the morning, with Jerry at the wheel as usual. “It should take about three hours to get there,” he had ventured without being asked. When he heard of the trip a few days earlier, Jerry had told Rosemary in his usual manner, “I ain’t got nothin’ to do that day anyway, so why don’t I drive you over there? Those West Virginia roads can be tricky this time of year.” Or any time of year, thought Rosemary as they crossed the Ohio River into West Virginia and made their way to U.S. Highway 57. Most of the roads in the state originated as carriage tracks and no one in the state highway department
appears to have ever entertained the thought that modern cars—and those monstrous coal trucks—were wider than the typical 18th century carriage.

At 9:30 that morning, Rosemary and Madeline presented themselves at Adam Sennett’s office in the Dare County Courthouse while Jerry “went to have a look-see around town.” Adam had no receptionist and met them at the door himself. After the usual greetings and introductions and a bit of small talk about jury duty, he suggested that there was a table waiting for them at the Chat N Chew coffee shop on Main Street about a block East of the Courthouse complex. “They’ll be expecting me.” Adam said. Rosemary wondered first if Adam’s was saying that he had made a reservation. That seemed a bit excessive, but she quickly realized that he simply meant that this was his regular time to drop in at the local cafe for morning coffee and he didn’t wish to break his morning ritual. As they walked into the cafe, Adam was greeted by a wide assortment of people, but she noticed that he only introduced them to a select group—the local newspaper editor Daniel something, a woman with the unlikely name of Freddi, both of his sons and a couple he said had moved there from Wisconsin who were sitting at the front table. Madeline, whose sense of such things was far more fine-tuned than Rosemary’s had the impression that it was no accident that these people were all present, although she said nothing.

Rosemary was one of those people with whom people loved to share their life stories, and as soon as they were introduced to the Andersons, she began to learn too much about them. Mr. And Mrs. Cyril Anderson, Cy and Helen, and their two children, Vicki and Steve, had moved from their farm near La Crosse, Wisconsin to rural Dare County about a decade before. The two children had been very unhappy with the move, Helen said, and missed their friends back in the Midwest. As they grew up each in turn “moved back home” to attend the University of Wisconsin and restart their lives there. In contrast to their children, Cy and Helen had grown to love their new home in the mountains which to them were not really mountains—“not like the Rockies. Those are real mountains”—but simply higher and more beautiful versions of the verdant hills they knew in the Mississippi River valley around La Crosse. The Anderson had gotten themselves quickly and deeply involved in the civic life of Dare County—that was how they had met Adam. Among many others they were friends with they often said “Midwesterners, like marigolds, transplant easily.”

Although they loved their new life in West Virginia and adapted easily to life in Dare County, the Anderson also maintained a variety of close ties back in Wisconsin. In particular, Helen shared with one of those connections, Betty Ann Norris who had been her best friend since elementary school, an interest in antique and handmade doll clothes. Both women enjoyed sewing, and much of their correspondence involved exchanging pictures, patterns and drawings for doll
clothing they had designed and created. Together, Helen and Betty Ann had
designed and sewn literally hundreds of doll costumes. Helen kept all of the actual
outfits in chests of small closets that Cy had built especially for the purpose, and
all of the patterns and drawings were stored in file cabinets. At first after the
children left for college, they tried to keep all of these collections in the now-empty
bedrooms, but after a while this became too much, and Cy cleared out and
repainted the inside of the garage. While their cars sat outside year-round now, the
entire collection of doll clothes and patterns began to occupy more and more of
what had once been the Anderson’s two-car garage.

Helen asked if Rosemary or Madeline had ever stopped at the Doll House just
outside Barley Mills on Route 57? They hadn’t. “You should stop some time. Amy
McMillen is a wonderful person, and my best customer. She always keeps a wide
range of my doll outfits in stock and they seem to sell. I had a custom label created
that goes into each of them. ‘Daring Designs’. That’s me. She sold my stuff even
before they moved to the new place. I think she used to have a dinky little
storefront in downtown Barley Mill. It’s much better now. Her fella, Ralph, did all
the renovations on that old farm house. She keeps her shop downstairs and they
live upstairs. I think he’s an architect, but there isn’t too much call for that sort of
work round here, so he spends his time building the craziest modernistic doll
houses you ever saw. He not only redid the house they live in and turned the
downstairs into a show for her doll business, he also fixed up the barn for his doll
house building workshop. Probably the most beautiful barn in the region.”

Cy said very little and Adam seemed more than willing to let Helen talk on all day,
but after a few minutes Rosemary said it had been a great pleasure to meet them
and she hoped to see them again and the trio of Adam, Rosemary and Madeline
settled into a corner table near the back. After placing their orders—despite its
vintage name, the Chat N Chew had a range of coffee and tea drinks to rival any
urban boutique coffee shop—Rosemary explained to Adam what she called “my
little mystery”. Madeline filled in several details from her time working with Harry
that Rosemary was unaware of. Throughout their conversation, Rosemary had
several times had the distinct impression that Adam wasn’t really listening, and a
couple of times he had actually teared up. “Allergies” he said as he pulled out his
handkerchief and dabbed at the tears running down his cheeks. Overall, Rosemary
was positive that their conversation was touching on something deeply troubling to
Adam, but he said very little. Finally, he said only that he recalled the visit from
Marvin Martin, but he had no idea what the detective may have been looking for.
He assured them that there were legal deeds for all of the land in the county, and
while he was aware that George Washington had surveyed at least part of the area,
everything was in order as far as he knew. “But I’ll look into this and get back to
you as soon as possible. Now I really must get back to work.” With that the
conversation was over. After saying their goodbyes, Madeline called Jerry on her
cell phone and within a minute or two he arrived in front of the Chat N Chew to pick them up and they began the long journey home.

“He knows a great deal more about this than he’s willing to say,” Madeline offered as they drove out of town. “And it was no accident that those people he introduced us to were there.”

“Do you think so, dear?” Rosemary asked rather absently. “I thought Helen Anderson was rather interesting. People from Wisconsin don’t move to the mountains all that often. I just wish she didn’t talk so much.” Then, after a brief hesitation, she added “I would have liked to talk more with that Freddy woman.”

“I didn’t really believe Adam’s story about allergies.” Madeline said after a long silence. “Did you?”

“No, dear. I think he’s really troubled by something. It’s almost as if he is holding back a lot of grief he really ought to be letting go of. I remember how Harry used to do that. When someone he really cared about died, he would always put on a brave face; just like the famous British ‘stiff upper lip’ and then for months afterwards his eyes would tear up at the strangest times.”

Rosemary offered Madeline several examples as they traveled down Highway 57 toward Barley Mill. As she glanced out the window, she suddenly turned away from Madeline, leaned toward the front seat and said to Jerry, “Turn around when you can, would you? We just passed a business back there called The Doll House. I’d like to stop in there.”

Then to Madeline, “I think that must be the place Helen Anderson was referring to. As long as we’re here, I’d like to see it.”

Then back to Jerry, “When is Lily’s birthday? It’s coming up fairly soon, isn’t it? Do you think she’d like a doll?”

“It’s next month. The 17th.” Jerry replied. “That would be very nice of you, madam.”

Jerry had once again dropped into his very formal English butler voice and doffed his cap before turning left into a side road to turn the car around. They all laughed at this recurring familiar small joke, as they always did. Jerry got the car turned around and headed back down Route 57 away from Barley Mill and back toward The Doll House. None of them could have known that this was the very road that Freddy had walked up in the rain only a few days before while avoiding the steady stream of large black SUV’s coming out with their gruesome loads.

Ralph Deigh looked up and smiled as the three customers entered the showroom of The Doll House. Amy had a dentist appointment in town today and she had asked
him to mind the shop for her while she was gone. Ralph often did this, and so he felt completely comfortable as the customers came in; an older woman, her husband or perhaps her brother, and her daughter, he thought. “Welcome to The Doll House” he said. “Please feel free to look around. We have a large selection of dolls of all kinds, and of costumes and outfits, many of them part of the ‘Daring Designs’ collection done by a Dare County woman, Helen Anderson.

“Ah, yes.” replied the older woman, “We just met Ms. Anderson this morning over in Landover. She suggested we stop by on our way home. You must be the architect who designs and builds these wonderful doll houses.”

“They are actually scale model houses, but many people use them as doll houses. Yes. I’m Ralph Deigh.”

“How do you do. My name is Rosemary Mueller. And these are my friends Madeline Klein and Jerry Eliot. We came over from Ohio this morning.” She mentioned the name of the city in Ohio, but Ralph didn’t recognize it.

“Pleased to meet you” Ralph said, pointing to a general display to his left. “Helen’s Daring Designs are right over there. In addition to the housing models here, I’ve got more in my workshop back there in the barn. I’d be glad to let you go back there and look around, but I can’t leave the shop right now until Amy gets back. As you probably guessed, it’s her shop. I’m just ‘minding the store’ while she’s gone for a couple of hours.”

“I’d like that very much,” Rosemary said, as much to her companions as to Ralph. They nodded in silent agreement, both of them pleased to see such a display of enthusiasm in their friend. After fifteen minutes or so, Rosemary identified a couple of dolls that interested her, and a few possible outfits. “Or, do you think Lily might prefer a doll house?” she asked Jerry. Embarrassed by the extent of Rosemary’s attention to his granddaughter, he immediately lapsed into his English butler routine again. “Anything would be just fine madam.”

At this both Rosemary and Madeline laughed while Ralph looked at them curiously. “Old joke,” Madeline said, and Ralph nodded, still not completely certain what the joke was. It didn’t appear they weren’t laughing at him, but when a man built doll houses and sold doll clothes you could never be completely certain. Oh well, he thought, if they’re laughing at me, it’s their problem.

Shortly after, the three of them headed for the barn to see Ralph’s larger display of model homes. Before they went out, Ralph saw that they were fully briefed on what to look for and where to find things. He even included a brief introduction on his theories of rural architecture and the need to rethink small town living. Not too much, he hoped. Just enough to give them the idea that this was not just a kids’ toy, although it certain could be that.
Amy drove into the parking lot just as the group was walking back to the showroom from the barn. As she stepped into the shop, Ralph told her, “We’ve got some customers. They’re down in my workshop right now. Woman from Ohio named Mueller and a couple of her friends.”

“Mueller? Do you know who that is? I just saw Adam Sennett over in Landover and he said he had met with her earlier today. That’s the widow of Harry Mueller. She owns half of Dare County! And a few billion dollars in addition.”

“Seems like a very nice lady” was all Ralph could think of to say. “

“You met Adam Sennett? In Landover? I thought you had a dentist appointment in Barley Mills”.

“No. Doc Washburn referred me to the orthodontist in Landover. I ran into Adam on the street as I was going into the office there and he told me he had been Mrs. Mueller earlier. He seemed very upset by the meeting, although he didn’t say why. I wanted to ask him if they were done with the barn down on the other place.”

Amy and Ralph both knew that Adam and the rescue teams had used the barn as a temporary morgue for the bodies of the Melungeons, or whoever it was that had come floating down from the mountains, so there was no need to discuss it further. Besides, it was at that time that Rosemary, Madeline and Jerry arrived back at the shop; time for introductions all around, and for some Doll House business.
Rosemary arranged to purchase a doll for Lily, a particular doll house model that she found in Ralph’s showroom and three outfits that she had selected earlier.

Much to Amy’s surprise, she paid in cash, and while Ralph helped Jerry load everything into the trunk of their car, the three women made small talk. Actually, Amy and Madeline did most of the talking, while Rosemary seemed to fade in and out of the conversation as she mulled over what she had just heard. As they were approaching the shop, one of the windows of the shop was open and she had overheard Amy telling Ralph that she had seen Adam and that apparently her suspicions that he was very upset about something were shared. Madeline and Jerry were a few steps behind and talking to one another at that moment and appeared not to have heard. It hardly seemed likely that Rosemary’s inquiries about her “little mystery” should be enough to upset Adam this much. So, now there were two mysteries, although she had no idea whether they were related in some way.

Once the car was loaded, they were on their way back home. Rosemary was unusually quiet for the remainder of the trip. Madeline had plenty of her own things to think about, but she put them out of mind as she and Jerry made small talk until about half way into the remaining two hours of the trip, she fell asleep.
Leaders Act

No one in Dare County quite understood the full ramifications of the weather reports as they began to accumulate that October. A monumental hurricane blew in off the Gulf of Mexico, moving very quickly as it reached landfall, and only began to slow as it entered the southernmost of the Appalachian mountains in northern Mississippi. By this time, it had been downgraded to tropical storm status. Because the damage to New Orleans, Mobile, Natchez and other southern cities in its path was minimal, the storm quickly fell to the back pages of the newspapers, with only an occasional mention on 24/7 cable news. The storm still packed tremendous quantities of rain and continued to slowly move northeast blanketing the entire southern Appalachian region in heavy rains. As such storms do only once or twice a century, this one moved northeast directly over the highest ridges of the mountains. It appeared to be straddling them, unable to move off the mountains. When the center of the storm reached West Virginia, it stalled completely and continued to drop record rainfalls on virtually the entire state for days on end. Only many days later, a high-pressure area from the Midwest would move in and begin to push the remnants of the storm eastward over Maryland and Virginia. By this time, more than half of West Virginia’s counties had been declared disaster
areas by the Governor’s office, even as the rain continued without letup. But you know all of this already; It is part of the historical record. What is not well known, lost in the general mayhem, is what happened in Dare County, West Virginia.

It began on a Thursday evening in October, when the rumor spread throughout Barley Mill that a slurry pond ten miles further up in the mountains northeast of town was seriously weakened by the rain. Members of the Thursday evening salon were gathered at the Payne household to listen to a new account in their growing chronicles of the Myth of Cibola, which they had now been building for many months. Art Payne was just beginning his latest tale of the connection between Cibola and the lost Amerindian cities of Etzanoa and Cahokia when the telephone rang. Gloria stepped into the other room to answer it as she signaled for Art to keep talking and, returning a few moments later gestured to Cane Sennett and said, “Cane? It’s your dad.”

She handed Cane the wireless phone and he listened quietly for a brief time. He said only, “Okay. I’ll be right there.”

He handed the phone back to Gloria and addressed no one in particular. “Dad says something has happened at the old slurry pond up at Ten Mile point. Apparently, there was a breakout of some sort and a couple of county roads have been washed out. He needs my help.” He said this as he pulled on his coat and was out the door before anyone could ask any questions about why the county clerk would be interested in road washouts and what use he expected to make of his youngest son. Everyone in town, including newcomers like Freddie Watson, who had more than a little interest in Cane Sennett, knew that if there was any type of serious problem to be dealt with, Adam Sennett would turn first to his older son, Abbe. He was the more reliable son, and his parents would turn next to his sister, Faye Sennett Morgan. Despite Cane’s well-meaning intentions, he was still widely regarded as the family scapegrace. It must truly be an all-hands-on-deck situation for Adam to call in Cane.

The only one not mulling this minor human drama apparently playing out at the Sennett household was Freddie Watson. In recent months, she had become closer to Cane than anyone else in town; good friends? Yes, that must be what they were. Very good friends. As a result, not only did Freddie know a great deal more than the others present about the complex relations between Cane and Abbe Sennett and their father, Adam. She also knew that this particular slurry pond had nearly been empty prior to the current storm, but also that the soil in the base contained a devil’s brew of toxic chemicals including lead, arsenic, and a hundred other dangerous substances that had flowed or been pumped out of the coal mines up there decades ago. The Environmental Protection Agency and the state mining reclamation people had tried several times to get the coal company involved to secure, and even clean up, the pond with little to show for their efforts.
Unfortunately, the mines were all closed now and their former operator, Enoch “Digger” Profitt, had fought with every weapon in his legal arsenal to escape any responsibility for the aftermath. Thus, the state EPA had little to show for its efforts, Profitt had just walked away, and that slurry pond may have been the closest thing to orphan land in all of Dare County.

Even more importantly, if her investigations were correct Freddie was certain that the real community of Cibola was located only a mile or so downstream from that same pond. If the pond were to break out, the people living in that hidden community would be right in the path of any floodwaters rushing down the valley. And if her investigations were correct, the Sennett family must be the historic leaders of the community, responsible for protecting all who lived there. That might just be the real reason Adam had called for Cane to come; they were mounting an all-out rescue effort.

Freddie had been right, but even so she could not believe what she was watching. Now thoroughly soaked, she had left the salon right after Cane and followed as quickly as she could behind the black, four door Suburban that had pulled away from the Sennett house on Windsor Avenue just as her car was approaching it up Sycamore Street. She turned her old Toyota onto Windsor and followed the black behemoth at a reasonable distance as it drove out of town. About four miles further on, the driver signaled a right turn and slowed before turning onto a small, nearly invisible side road. The vehicle had completely disappeared into the forest by the time Freddie pulled her car to the left side of the highway near that road leading off to the right.

She listened carefully for the sound of the heavy vehicle making its way up the mountain, but all she could hear was the sound of the constant downpour. After doing her best to hide her car behind a thicket a few yards off the road, she pulled on her hiking boots and began to make her way up the trail.

After she had gone only a few hundred yards into the trees, she began to hear sounds, most of all the awful sound of rushing water. It was really a high-pitched roar, almost a scream, rising and falling but never completely stopping. Through the trees she began to see lights of various kinds, but the overwhelming sense was the noise of the rushing floodwaters. She could now see—or would it be more correct to say sense—a great flurry of activity just ahead, but she wasn’t able to make out anything very clearly.

On the sidehill about fifty feet from where she was at present, Freddie saw a deer stand that she hoped might give her a view of whatever was happening just beyond. Just as she started up toward it, a large, black Suburban like the one she had followed out here began to move toward her. As its headlights swept across the hillside, she crouched low behind a large sycamore tree getting still wetter even as
she hoped that the driver had not seen her. The vehicle kept moving down the road she had just walked along toward the main highway as she resumed her climb up to the deer stand, which was about eight feet off the ground, with an improvised ladder dangling down from it. She quickly climbed the ladder and ducked into what little shelter from the rain the deer stand offered.

As she had suspected, once up on the platform of the stand, she had an unobstructed view of the scene below. And what a scene it was! There were four additional identical black Suburbans parked in a semi-circle about 25 feet apart. A short distance away, someone had strung what looked almost like a tennis court net only wider and much longer across the raging waters of Bramble Creek, which was now swollen to roughly four times its normal size. Several men were in the water, struggling to stand against the raging current. Each was anchored to a large tree beside the creek with ropes and they were periodically pulling large objects—human bodies Freddie realized—from the water and guiding them to the edge of the creek where small groups of other men would lift them carefully and place them on the ground away from the creek.

Someone—she quickly realized it must be Cane’s mother, Dr. Evie Sennett—was examining each body for signs of life as it was recovered from the water. She would periodically look at her watch, shout something to another shadowy figure sheltered, as much as possible, from the rainwaters who appeared to be writing notes in what looked like a journal. As she watched, the rain subsided briefly and for a few brief moments, Freddie could hear what Dr. Sennett was saying and who she was calling to. She appeared to know the names of most of the victims. She was calling out their names, apparent causes of death like “blunt force trauma to the neck and head” “chemical burns” or “most likely drowning”. She would conclude each such episode by looking at her watch and pronouncing official times of death. Incredible, Freddie thought, she seems to know all of them!

The whole operation was being conducted with such efficiency and grace it clouded for the moment the very grim nature of the task that was taking place. Occasionally, she would shout something like “this one is alive!” which would produce a scramble of workers, including Dr. Sennett who deftly switched hats from coroner to concerned physician. As Freddie looked around the scene, she thought she saw Evie’s husband, Adam with Cane by his side. Their other son, Abbe was nowhere to be seen. She realized at that moment that the person under the tent shelter who Dr. Sennett was giving information to must be Abbe and Cane’s sister, Faye Sennett Morgan.

She did not recognize any of the other people working at the rescue site. They appeared to be strangers from outside the insular, white, Scotch-Irish and northern European residents of Dare County. Some appeared to be African-Americans with very dark skin and black curly hair. Others appeared to have native American
features, while others looked Southern European, and still others had the almond shaped eyes of east Asians. Yet, they worked together as a single, well-practiced team; members of a single community. Freddie had worked in Washington DC long enough to realize how misleading it could be to characterize people by their physical appearances, but this appeared to be a United Nations operation! She wondered how people from so many backgrounds all had found their way into a local Dare County rescue operation. Then she realized, these must be the surviving men of Cibola; rescuing survivors washed downstream and retrieving the corpses of those who didn’t make it through the floodwaters alive.

After observing this scene for a while, and watching Dr. Sennett pronounce three more people live, Freddie knew it would be immoral to just stand by and watch any longer. She knew who those people both living and dead were who were washing downstream in the flooded creek and she had no choice but to help, she told herself as she climbed down from the deer stand and began to walk toward the creek.

As she approached the crowd of rescue workers, Adam Sennett looked up from what he was doing and smiled.

“We’ve been expecting you. Cane take your friend over to the tent to relieve Faye for a little bit.”

Meanwhile, miles away from the carnage on Bramble Creek, the black Suburban pulled off the county road onto a narrow lane toward a ramshackle barn that still stood despite the agreement to tear it down that had been reached by the owner and her architect some months before. Unbeknownst to Freddie, Adam had already made arrangements earlier that evening with Amy McMillen to rent the second barn that she and Ralph had not yet torn down. Unbeknownst to Freddie, Adam had already made arrangements earlier that evening with Amy McMillen to rent the second barn that she and Ralph had discussed tearing down as a temporary morgue just before Freddie saw him drive off in the black Suburban and followed him to the rescue/body retrieval site. When he called, Amy noted that he had referred to it as “that barn on Billy Michaels’ old place.” She would have to find out who Billy Michael was, and why he no longer lived there. Why, indeed, had that farm been merged with the other into the property she now owned. Adam Sennett would be just the person to help her with that.

Somehow, other more urgent things had always come up in the seemingly permanent renovation project being carried out by Amy and Ralph and the second barn at the far end of her property had remained standing even as Ralph had transformed the one near her shop into an amazing architectural office. What’s more, it turned out that the roof and walls of the Michaels barn was in surprisingly good condition. That isolated barn, deep in its own hollow, was where the black
Suburbans were headed now as each one left the collection point and made their way up Highway 26 over the course of the night.

At first, Adam had tried to be deliberately vague about its intended use when talking with Amy, but finally he had to tell her, if not exactly the truth, at least a reasonable facsimile of what was true. “It’s not a very pretty story.” He said. “There must have been a large gathering of Melungeons or hippies or somebody somewhere up on the mountain just below that slurry pond that gave way tonight. When the pond broke, a lot of these unfortunate people were caught up in the waters and drowned, poisoned, or crushed against the rocks. There are a lot of bodies coming down toward the river. So far, we’ve been able to intercept them, but we need some place to set up a temporary morgue to keep them until we can figure out what to do with them.”

What was this thing with Melungeons in this part of the country, Amy wondered as she talked with Adam. Amy had asked how many bodies Adam expected. “Dozens,” he had replied. Then after a long pause. “Maybe hundreds. I . . . I just don’t know. We’re trying to keep the bodies from floating down the river and being lost in the trees. They deserve better than that. Bodies floating in the river and hanging from trees always cause a lot of panic and questions about where they all came from, and what to do about them. We’re just not prepared with any answers tonight.”

“I think I can understand that,” Amy responded vaguely, not really understanding at all and not really wishing to. Who would be asking such questions? And why wouldn’t Adam be able to answer them? For that matter, what would several hundred people be doing camping up on that mountain this time of year? It was only later, after the full story became public, that she understood what had happened that fateful night and to whom.

“You old barn is off the beaten path and it is about the only place we could think of that was close enough and big enough to keep all the bodies—we hope—until we can figure out what to do next.” Amy assumed we must be the county emergency leadership and agreed immediately with Adam’s assessment, and demurred completely when he asked about rental arrangements. “Don’t worry about that.” was all she said. “If you need it, it’s yours for as long as you want.”

After she said that, she wondered briefly if she was opening up any liability problems for herself. She would have to ask Ralph about that. “Is it okay if I talk with Ralph about this?”

“I guess so.”

With that, their conversation had ended, Adam had put down the phone and returned to his SUV for the drive back to the Bramble Creek collection point, completely unaware that Freddie was following behind at a discrete distance.
Freddie continued to work alongside the others at the site on Bramble Creek for many hours until suddenly she realized it was getting light and the rain had stopped for the time being. More importantly, the periodic log jams of bodies spilling into the large net over the previous few hours seemed to have ended, and the waters of the creek were starting to calm and recede.

In the last hour, Adam had spoken briefly with groups of two or three men at a time, who had then moved off into the woods up the creek, presumably searching for additional bodies that may have become lodged there. Only occasionally would one or two of the men return with a body bag slung over their shoulders or on a makeshift stretcher between them and place the contents in one of the black Suburban’s after another brief examination by Dr. Sennett and some hurried notes written in the log book by her daughter. Not once did one of these crew indicate that they had found a living victim.

When the gray Appalachian dawn revealed a heavy fog over the area, with only a light drizzle, Dr. Sennett, wiping her hands on a rather shabby and deeply stained towel, approached Freddie and said in a friendly tone, “Thank you for all your help. We will need to talk, but not now. Please don’t discuss what you’ve seen and heard here tonight with anyone until we’ve had a chance to explain.” Freddie agreed that was best. She had her ideas, but they were really only suspicions at this point. A few moments later, Adam Sennett came over to where Freddie was standing and said simply, “Cane told me that you had pretty well pieced things together. After things quiet down—which won’t be for a few days yet—we can answer any questions you may still have.”

Freddie was by this time so mentally and emotionally numb from the things she had seen and participated in during the past six hours that all she could say was “Uh huh.” Finally, her mind unscrambled sufficiently for her to ask, “What about all the bodies? Where did you take them? What will you do with them? There were so many!”

Cane was suddenly standing between her and his father, and answered, “Dad was able to rent an old barn a few miles from here where we’ve put them temporarily. The Dare County KKK have taken over that part of the task and are arranging to transport the bodies back how even as we speak.”

At the mention of the Ku Klux Klan Freddie blanched visibly, thinking of the history of lynchings, burning crosses and the many black, Amerindian and Asian workers, both among the rescue workers and the victims she had seen the previous few hours. Noting this, Adam and Cane both began to laugh, and Adam told her “Don’t worry. They aren’t what you think. I’ll explain that also. Actually, I think you’ll really going to enjoy hearing about that.”
After that little more was said. Cane offered to drive her home, and they walked in silence to where she had left her car. He was also unusually quiet as he drove her to Daniel Messenger’s mother’s house which she had been renting. They both said “good night” more or less simultaneously after they got out of the car, laughed nervously, and Cane said, “I’ll walk home from here. It isn’t far.” At this, he started down the street and Freddie, saying nothing, went inside, laid down on her bed and immediately fell asleep without brushing her teeth.
Rosemary watched the elevator door open and stepped off on the 11th floor. Directly in front of her, she saw the sign that said simply Graham, Graham and Associates, L.L.P., in polished brass letters set off against a wall painted an unusual, even distinctive, shade of blue. She knew that the sign was intended to impress clients and intimidate opposing counsel and she never failed to feel a strong reaction herself when she came up here. It wasn’t fear; they were after all her attorneys. It was more a mixture of awe and a strong sense of the solidarity of the firm. Edward and John Graham were descended from the oldest branches of the local aristocracy in the city, perhaps even this whole region of Ohio. Their ancestors had come to the Western Reserve from New England with the first wave of settlers, and both men had the manners and pedigrees to prove it.
Edward was the rock-solid head of the firm. His mother once told Rosemary that he had begun wearing a three-piece suit with matching vest to school when he was eleven, but she wasn’t certain whether to believe the older woman or not. Edward had been the original attraction to the firm for the then-nouveaux riche Harry decades before. Over the years, the two had become more than lawyer and client. They were best friends. She knew that Harry’s death had affected Edward nearly as deeply as it affected her. Rosemary had always been uncertain whether Harry was aware of Edward’s brief affair with his first wife Amy, but she knew he was not alone. Amy had really gotten around. As she understood it, after a very brief fling, Edward had clearly felt remorse for betraying his friend and spent the rest of Harry’s life seeking to make amends. It appeared there was nothing quite like a momentary lapse of youthful judgment to cement a lifelong friendship! It wasn’t that he offered Harry discount legal services, or anything like that. Graham and Graham wasn’t that kind of firm, and besides that might have led to awkward questions Edward wasn’t prepared to answer. The firm always gave Harry more and better personal legal attention than any of the firm’s other clients.

Edward’s brother, John M. Graham was another story entirely. Edward loved his younger brother and had watched out for him ever since John entered the exclusive prep school where Edward was already captain of the varsity baseball team. John was never an athlete or a student leader; he also wasn’t a bad kid, Edward told himself and others. Actually, at 43, he wasn’t a kid at all, and hadn’t been for decades. Yet, Edward, at 48 still thought of him as his kid brother. Unfortunately, John had a history of bad judgments, and getting involved in scrapes that Edward had to help him out of. Edward had promised his mother in the final stages of her terminal cancer that he would watch out for John, as she always called him, and thus far he had been good to his word. When he thought about Amy and their affair - which he seldom did anymore - he wondered why it was that he and not John had gotten involved - however briefly - with Harry’s first wife. It had been the kind of dumb, impulsive thing that John was always doing.

John never brought in any big clients for the firm. Not only wasn’t that his role; it also wasn’t necessary. Edward seemed to know everyone in the state of Ohio, and when they needed legal help they would come knocking at his door - wills, divorces, annulments, real estate, corporate law, tax law - the firm offered the full range of legal services. They also kept a virtual army of accountants, private investigators, management consultants and other specialists on file. Although Edward and John still spoke of their “small, family firm,” in reality they had seven full partners, a dozen junior partners and nearly 50 recent law school graduates on staff.

As part of his role in the firm and the family, John was active on the boards of numerous local charities. At various times, he had been a board member or
president of the local Episcopal Church board of trustees, the local two-county United Fund, a founding board member of the Community Foundation, and the regional Ohio State University alumni association, just to name a few of his assorted charities. In addition, John did pro bono legal work for at least a dozen local nonprofit charities, assisting and advising them on everything from unrelated business income to board liability. John’s enthusiasm for this kind of local philanthropy appeared to be unbounded, and Edward had to admit John was very good at it; not only the legal matters but also general management concerns - far better than he was at any of his other legal work - but in this case his enthusiasm, as it often did, had gotten the better of him.

Edward learned of what John was doing when he got a call from Madeline Klein. Edward knew Madeline from the years she had worked as Harry’s publicist. He had once tried to put a move on her, but she had quickly resisted it. Ever since, he had been convinced that she was a lesbian. She had been a key member of the small group that had managed what Edward thought of as the cover-up of the real Harry Mueller; the manufacture of that ridiculous public image of Harry as a heartless miser and scoundrel. He regretted the whole thing now, especially since the publication of the scandalous obituaries for Harry and what seemed to be the increasingly virulent attitude of the *The Daily Eagle & Advertiser* recently. He wished they had never gotten involved in this. Rosemary had called him recently after her disastrous interview with Jason Browning and he knew now that his friend was forever marked in public memory with the negative public image they had constructed. It was completely unfair, but Harry’s public image had taken on a life of its own and it appeared it would outlive him.

Thus, Edward was pleased when Madeline called asking for an appointment for Rosemary with John and him. He was pleased first because Rosemary had kept Madeline on after Harry’s death. She had been very good for Harry, and from what he understood had become a close friend and confidant of Rosemary’s. He was also pleased because it was the first time Rosemary had gotten in touch with the firm for many months and suggested that she was getting ready to confront the enormous challenges of the fortune with which Harry had burdened her. That’s what it was; an enormous burden.

In the course of their conversation, Madeline had also told Edward that both she and Rosemary’s lifelong friend June Averill had been approached by John “on the Q.T.” and sounded out about whether they would work with him to convince Rosemary to create a large charitable foundation under John’s control. “I don’t quite know how to put this, Edward,” Madeline told him, “but I don’t think that is a very good idea. I think Rosemary has her own ideas about what to do with the money. June and I discovered quite by accident that John had approached both of
us, but as soon as we figured this out, we had to tell Rosemary. And you. We owe her that.”

“Yes. Of course you do. I’ll deal with this right away. Before we meet with Rosemary,” was all Edward said.

Now, as Rosemary approached the receptionist’s desk, Janelle, who had been with the firm for decades and recognized all of the clients by sight, said, “Good morning, Mrs. Mueller. You can go right in to the conference room. I’ll put the water on and bring you a pot of tea as soon as its ready.”

“Thank you, dear.” Rosemary went to the main conference room and stood looking out the window. She could never quite get over how the city was growing again in recent years. It was no longer the gritty, dark industrial hell of history. It was now a shining, green post-industrial marvel. As she was remembering the difficult times after the industrial collapse of the 1980s, when much of the steel industry went to Asia and manufacturing moved south to North Carolina and then Central America, Janelle came in with her tea. They exchanged pleasant comments on the view and as she was leaving, she met Edward and John at the door. By the look on John’s face, Rosemary was certain that Edward had confronted him. She was certain that Edward would take care of matters satisfactorily as he always did and felt no reason to discuss John’s attempted coup further unless one of them raised it, which she doubted they would. Discretion was the hallmark of Graham and Graham and she expected they would live up to their reputation in this instance. After the usual exchanges of greeting, news about their wives and children, and other idle conversation, Rosemary took the initiative.

“I asked to see you both today because I have some tentative proposals I’d like to discuss about what to do with this financial albatross that Harry hung around my neck. I never knew anything about money, but June and Madeline have been coaching me. And Linda Sue. Turns out she has a pretty good head for finance!”

At this Edward smiled and interrupted her. “As you asked, I’ve met several times with Justin and the senior staff of Harry’s firm - pardon my calling it that, but even though they’ve been running it quite successfully, for nearly a year now, I can’t quite get past thinking of it as Harry’s firm. They are very much interested in keeping the doors open and believe they can continue to make the firm a success. They’ve even added a bunch of new clients.

“Yes.” Rosemary said. “I agree completely. But, please let me continue.”

“Of course.”

“I don’t wish to know anything at all about Harry’s businesses, but I want to do right by the employees - particularly the long-term ones. June helped me research an arrangement - an ESOP, I think it’s called. . .
“Yes,” John interrupted. “It stands for Employee Stock Option Plan. They’ve become all the rage in some businesses since Wheeling-Pittsburgh steel reorganized the first large ESOP back in 1987.”

“Well,” Rosemary continued, “I’d like your help in reconfiguring Harry’s business as an ESOP for the employees based on the seniority of their service. After some appropriate probationary period - two years, something like that - everyone should receive their full salary, and in addition, a regular, annual assignment of a portion of the profits. I think that’s how it works.”

“I’m sure” she went on, “that our friend George the Accountant... I’m sorry, I can never remember his last name. That’s what Harry always called him; George the Accountant. Even when he came over to the house for holiday dinners, Harry always called him that. Anyway, I’m sure George can find a way to put a value on the firm that is fair and equitable to everyone concerned and to come up with a way of dividing things up that will work now and in the future.”

“If there is some reason to do so, you may want to make me a small partner in the arrangement - a one percent equity, something like that - just to signal to the employees that I’m not walking away completely. It can even be set up to just disappear when I die. If there is no good reason to do this, I’m perfectly willing to walk away from the firm completely. I never knew what Harry did there anyway, and I am much more interested in the other parts of my plan. The charitable foundations.”

Both Edward and John noted her use of the plural but maintained their poker faces homed in years of trial work and said nothing.

“George the Accountant has been sending monthly financial statements to me since Harry died. Mostly I can’t make heads or tails of them, but apparently, I am worth in the neighborhood of thirty-one billion dollars, give or take a few hundred million over and beyond the firm.” Neither Edward nor John showed any surprise at this news and merely nodded in agreement. Neither thought it necessary to add that this figure was continuing to grow even as they sat there.

“I want to make arrangements for as much of it as possible,” Rosemary continued. “In particular, I don’t want to spend every day the rest of my life thinking about and having to deal with all that money. I have other things I’d rather be doing.”

“The first thing I would like you to do is to establish trust funds for my friends. I am not planning to live forever, and I don’t want them to have any financial worries after I’m gone. So, I want you to make arrangements so that after I die, they all can continue to live in my house for as long as they wish. That includes housing for Jerry and his wife, even if he dies first, living in the caretaker’s cottage. I assume that would involve putting the property in some kind of trust?”
“We’ll arrange that,” Edward said.

“Then I want you to set up individual lifetime income trusts, or whatever you call them, for each of them. June, Madeline, Linda Sue, and Jerry. Talk to George and put around ten million dollars in each of them. George can help you select portfolios of assets - isn’t that what you call them? - that will be safe but continue to grow and leave each of them with incomes for life. And as you get that worked out, add yourselves and George to the list. You guys have always faithfully served Harry. . .”

As she said this, she noted a momentary twitch in Edward’s left eye.

“. . .and it’s only fitting. I know you probably don’t need a guaranteed income the way the others will when I’m gone, but Harry would have wanted this.”

They both nodded. “Lordy, I can’t believe I’m saying this, but by my estimation that’s less than a hundred million dollars. Next” Rosemary continued “I want you to set up a special fund called something like The Harry Mueller Fund for Community Improvement in the local community foundation. Put about five hundred million in there and set it up so that John is the primary decision-maker on grants and payouts, but we’ll need two other trustees to protect him from his own worst impulses.”

As she said this, they all laughed, but John’s laughter was not altogether comfortable. “The community foundation will probably need some additional help with their part in managing the investments in this fund over and beyond their normal fee, so talk with them and include that in the arrangement.”

At this news, John’s smile returned, and he shifted nervously in his chair until Edward gave him a stern glare and Rosemary continued.

“Everything else that I own is to be placed into a fund to be formally named The J.B. And Rosemary Mueller Foundation, but which I hope will be known simply as The Mueller Foundation. All of Harry’s and my remaining assets are to go into that foundation after the others are created. I assume it’s the one that will have that thing - what’s it called, a charitable remainder trust or something - that will provide my income for the rest of my natural life.”

Rosemary let out a deep sigh and continued. “I don’t know if this is necessary at this point or not, but I want you to know that I intend to create a program or some such within the general foundation for community support and rebuilding over in Dare County, West Virginia. I didn’t see much about it on the news here, but there’s been a double tragedy over there. First, a dam broke and some kind of isolated multi-racial community tucked away in the mountains was flooded out. Flash flooding is a continuous problem over there, you know. Apparently, this was
not as bad as the Johnstown Flood in Pennsylvania in 1889 but at least as bad as the Buffalo Creek disaster in 1972.”

“Then, as if that wasn’t bad enough, two weeks later virtually all of the downtown and most of the houses, schools and churches in Barley Mill were destroyed. The undergrowth in the area was extremely dry and a tornado not only destroyed a couple dozen houses. It also touched off a series of electrical fires which overwhelmed the local firefighting capabilities and spread to the brush and trees and pretty much the whole town burned down.

“As you must know, Harry was - and now I am - the biggest landowner in Dare County. Even though what I own is mostly forest, I just feel we have to do something to help those poor people out. As you know, Edward, I’ve already made arrangements for emergency shelter; checks to the Salvation Army and Red Cross, that sort of thing. But they’re starting to talk about where and how to rebuild and I intend for the foundation to be actively involved. So you’d better get to work on that one fast. Madeline and June are already spending four days a week there.

“I assume that your people can draft proper letters of gift - isn’t that what they’re called? - for all of the different things that I mentioned. Tell them they can call me if they need any additional information.”

With that the meeting ended. Edward and John sat for a moment in stunned silence at the determination and resolve expressed by the woman they had always thought of as somewhat diffident and weak willed. Then they walked Rosemary to the elevator and as she rode down, she remembered that she hadn’t told the lawyers about who she wanted as trustees and board members on each of the various financial instruments she was calling for. She would give Edward a call when she got home.

As she stepped out onto the street, she said quietly to herself, “Harry, for the first time since you died, I feel almost free of the burden of all your damned money.”
As she arrived home from her meeting with Edward and John, Rosemary was surprised to see a Michigan state police car in the driveway in front of her house. It was a bright blue car with official Michigan license plates, flashers, and large police logos on the doors. Jerry dropped her off at the front door and as she came inside, Linda Sue whispered anxiously, “that Detective Horton is here to see you. He’s in the front room.”

As she walked in Rosemary, with all of the renewed sense of self-confidence she took away from her meeting with the lawyers, said “Detective Horton? I’m Rosemary Mueller.”
“How do you do, ma’am.” Turning to the man on his right, he said “This is my partner Sgt. Evans.”

“Won’t you have a seat, gentlemen? And, please tell me why you are here in Ohio.” It was more of a question than a request. “It is legal for you to be here, isn’t it?”

“Yes ma’am. The Ohio authorities have been briefed on the reasons we are here and, if you are uncertain about talking with us, I can give you a number to call in Columbus. Mrs. Mueller, Sgt. Evans and I are with the Cold Case unit of the Michigan Bureau of Investigations. We have recently gotten some new information that has caused us - my boss, actually - to reopen an old case involving the circumstances surrounding the death of your husband’s first wife. Did you know her? Claire, I believe her name was.”

“No. I never met her. She was already long gone when I met Harry.”

“And, Harry is - or was - your husband, J.B. Mueller?”

“Yes.”

“Do you know anything about how she - his first wife - died?”

That was the question she had been dreading.

“Well, as my husband explained it to me, she didn’t exactly die. Have you talked with my husband’s attorney, Edward Graham about this?”

At the question, Detective Horton’s face went to a definite scowl. “Yes, ma’am. Or at least we tried. He clammed up and claimed attorney client privilege, even though as I reminded him, his client was dead. He said you were now his client. Is that correct?”

“Well, then, should I be talking to you without Edward being here?”

“That is your right, ma’am. But I have to tell you, it would look suspicious, you lawyering up at this point.”

“You see, Mrs. Mueller” he continued, “Here is our problem. According to all the official records of the State of Ohio, your predecessor,” looking at his notes, “Mrs. Claire Mueller, died in this very house, or” he looked around the room “at least at this street address thirty-eight years ago. But less than a year ago, an unidentified body turned up in Tulsa, Oklahoma. It appeared to be foul plan and the body was that of a woman in her late sixties with identification indicating a non-existent address in Grosse Point, Michigan. DNA records turned up nothing, but then we caught a break. The medical examiner spotted a one-of-a-kind filling in one of her teeth matching a procedure developed at Ohio State University in the late 1940s. It never caught on, but through dental records in Ohio we were able to identify the victim as one Claire Johnson Mueller.”
“What we are trying to establish now is how this first Mrs. Mueller managed to die twice. Now can you help us explain that?”

Not only was she able to explain Claire’s apparent double deaths, over the next half hour she also supplied the detectives with a possible motive for the homicide. “Detective Horton,” she began. “My husband’s first wife was what my grandmother used to call a hussy, and my mother called a floozy. She married Harry - that is, J.B. - for his money and betrayed him many times before he caught on. My husband was a financial wizard who got awfully rich, but in many ways, he was a very innocent man, and by the time he saw her for what she was it was already too late.”

“You can confirm all of this with Edward Graham, Detective Horton. I’ll tell him it’s okay to talk to you, although he will not want to talk about this for the most obvious of reasons. He was one of Claire’s conquests. In a moment of what I believe they call ‘youthful passion’ he betrayed his best friend and spent the rest of that friend’s life trying to make it up to him. As far as I knew, Harry never suspected anything - with Edward at least, but I’ve just recently learned that wasn’t the case.”

“But his deceit gave Edward a powerful reason for helping Harry. Together they cooked up a cockamamie scheme to buy off Claire, send her away and bury an anonymous female corpse in her place, getting her completely out of Harry’s life and saving the county the expense of one more burial. I’m ashamed to admit they bought the silence of the county coroner - who has long since died - with some fancy piece of lab equipment and no one was ever the wiser until now.”

“It was one of the few times that the local press gave Harry a break. They loved Claire; said she was great copy. You can imagine the headlines: Beautiful young wife of local miser dies of agonizing disease. The story apparently dragged on for days, with lots of speculation about how it was that someone as unappealing as Harry could have married someone as young and beautiful as Claire. Part of the reason, of course, was that the editor at that time was also one of her conquests. None of the men she had affairs with ever seemed to question the story that Madeline - on no, actually, it was Madeline’s predecessor, Delores Fellows. No one ever questioned the stories Delores put out over the many weeks of Claire’s “illness” or the report of her death.”

“So you see, Detective, that’s how Claire Mueller managed to die twice.”

“Well, Mrs. Mueller, I have to admit. I’ve been a detective for twenty years but that is one of the most implausible stories I’ve ever heard. Except that it all sort of makes sense. Betrayed husband “kills off” unfaithful wife and sends her packing.” He laughed at his own cleverness, and on cue his partner did as well.
And then, after a pause. I’m sure you are aware most of the things you’ve told me should be pretty easily corroborated.”

“Yes. I’m aware of that, Detective. Anyway, I got all of this second hand. I was nowhere near here until at least two years later. I was teaching in Dayton at the time. I’m just telling you what Harry told me.”

“Mrs. Mueller, I have to ask. Have you been to Tulsa recently?”

“No.”

“Do you know anyone there?”

“No.”

“Do you own a gun?”

“No.”

“Well I guess that’s about it for now then. We will call you again if we have any more questions.”

With this the policemen stood up and headed for the door. As they walked down the driveway a few moment later, the younger man asked his senior colleague,

“She seems like a really sweet little old lady, but did you believe that cock and bull story she told us?”

“I don’t know. There’s plenty here for us to check out. I have to admit it’s pretty suspicious that the first wife and the husband both died within a few days of one another. If we come up with anything, we may have to have the bodies exhumed.”

“Meanwhile, I want to get back to Michigan as quickly as possible. Just being here in Buckeye territory makes my teeth itch! If I see one more red and white bumper sticker or another kid wearing an OSU jersey, I think I’m gonna puke.”
Aunt Emma
“Tonight,” I would like to tell another part of the story of Cibola,” Freddie began on a rainy, cold night in mid-winter a few months after the twin disasters that destroyed Barley Mill and left the villages of Cibola uninhabitable. “As you know, recent events have given an entirely new complexion to the project that we began many months ago in the Thursday night salon.”

“Tonight’s tale,” she continued, “is as far as I have been able to confirm entirely true. I got it directly from one of the current leaders of the Cibola community who is also principal public health officer in Dare County, Dr. Evelyn Sennett. She was encouraged to share this story with us by her son, Cane Sennett.” At this, Freddie hesitated and then gestured toward Cane as she blushed ever so slightly, giving further proof to what everyone in the Thursday evening salon already knew: There was, indeed, a budding romance between Freddie and Cane Sennett. “As you are all aware, Cane has been attending this group for me for some time now, and just last week he convinced his mom to share this story with us.”

“Evie. . . Dr. Sennett, that is, told me that she found the story that I am going to read tonight as she was going through the personal effects of her great aunt Emma, who died five years ago. This is one of several family and community recollections written down by Aunt Emma over the years. She . . . Dr. Sennett that is, was able to retrieve the pages from the upper floors of her house in Cibola after the . . . after the dam broke along with a number of other priceless family mementos.” At this last comment, her voice broke, and Freddie paused to gather her thoughts.

“Our house up there is completely unlivable, like most of the rest of the dwellings, but we were able to save a few things from the second floor and the attic before the black mold took over everything,” Cane added from his seat near the door, trying to give Freddie time to regain her composure.

“Yes. Well.” Freddie continued, “Aunt Emma wasn’t much of a writer, as you will see. There are a bunch of sentence and paragraph fragments, and she didn’t write a very complete narrative, but the information she did include is fascinating. So let’s get started.” With this, she picked up a handful of handwritten sheets and prepared to read. “This is all handwritten,” she said as she looked up, so I may stumble over some of the words.” Then she began reading what Emma Hutchinson had written:

My grandmother, Sequoyah Milerunner, was half Cherokee. My great grandfather Thomas Jefferson Milerunner was a tiny baby when his parents escaped in the nick of time as General Jackson and his troops descended on their village. They rounded up everyone who hadn’t escape (sic) and herded them off to Oklahoma territory. Grandpa Great Jeff, as we called him, grew up mostly in the woods of western North Carolina, and eventually fell in love with and married my great
grandmother, Nancy Dawes, whose family came to the area from eastern Virginia in the 1820s. Together, they had five children who survived into adulthood, including my grandma Sequoyah, or Sadie, as her husband, Rutherford Winslow, called her. This is the story Grandma Sadie told me about how they came to live in Cibola.

Freddie looked up from the manuscript. “I’m not convinced Emma got all of her dates correct. There may be a generation, or even two, missing here. The Trail of Tears, which is what the Cherokees called the forced exodus of their people from their homes in North Carolina, Tennessee and Southwest Virginia, began in the summer of 1838, but the federal government policy of removal of the Cherokees continued long after, so it’s kind of hard to say what happened when, but the fundamental point that Emma’s family were among those who remained behind is clear.” Then, she continued to read.

According to Grandma Sadie, the name Cibola was originally an acronym composed of the first letters of the names of the six villages that made up our society. It stands for the original names of the six villages: Catalan, Indios, Boston (or, perhaps, Bristol or Brighton), Orient, London, and Araby.

“That’s a novel explanation.” Freddie interjected. “I don’t think I’ve ever heard it before, and, frankly, I don’t know how much stock to put in it.” Freddie read one more sentence

According to some family and community legends (with support from a few community records) the Cibola community was founded by a mixed group of Spanish, English and Cherokee elders in the 1850’s.

“As we know, that isn’t accurate. Actually, the Cibola community was already nearly 300 years old by the 1850s.”

One of the elders, A.B. Campbell, had been a devoted Fourierist and had founded the Columbian Phalanx in Zanesville, Ohio in 1844. Freddie looked up from the page again.

“According to a book by Fogarty published in 1972 the Zanesville phalanx founded within a year, after ousting Campbell as its leader because of his advanced views on property and racial equality, not to mention against marriage, the Bible and work on Sundays. A letter by someone named Mary Gove which Fogarty quotes does not give his age, describing him only as one of a group of young men in the community. I believe him to have been about 25 at the time. He was already a Methodist minister and self-educated in several subjects.” She looked down again at the manuscript and read.¹

Upon leaving Zanesville, Grandpa Campbell set out to visit a number of the many other experiments in community living going on in the U.S. at that time. He traveled first to the Perfectionist colony of Joseph Noyes at Putney, Vermont where he lost his virginity and became a life-long believer in sternpiculture and coitus reservatus - practices he attempted to introduce into Cibola, when he arrived there several years later. The Cibolans were already well ahead of him in birth control, but because they had perfected other, less intrusive forms of birth control, found his ideas on C.R. rather foolish and annoying.

Campbell traveled with Noyes and his company when they left Vermont in 1847 and moved with them to Oneida, New York. There, he helped in the construction of the first wooden Mansion House in 1849 and developed a life-long admiration for the evening meetings of "the family" held there each night along with other aspects of the Perfectionist life style. Within two years, however, he grew restless at Oneida and left there, reportedly accompanied by two daughters of the colony and a young man of 23.

From upstate New York, this little band traveled southwest to western North Carolina, where they had numerous adventures, eventually hooking up with a small band of 15-20 Eastern Cherokees who had hidden out years earlier from Col. Jackson's army, who had herded the vast majority of their fellow Cherokees west to Oklahoma along the infamous “trial (sic) of tears”. At first, the survivors whose parents and grandparents were fervent Americans and had “lived English” at least since the 1780s, adopting that language and assimilating as far as they were allowed into the Euro-American customs, culture and community of the Carolina outback. Yet they still sought to be reunited with their people in Oklahoma.

“Little did they know,” Freddie injected, “That in Oklahoma, the brutal physical conditions combined with the soldier’s orders to ‘kill the Indian to save the man’ had sparked a militant Cherokee rebellion against what Aunt Emma calls ‘living English’ and a revival of all the traditional folkways.”

Soon after the arrival in their midst of Campbell and his small band, however, the Cherokee leader told Campbell what he knew of the Cibola community. How he had learned this, I don’t know, but Grandma Great told me another time that all the Cherokees knew about Cibola, but they only were very careful to only tell those English and Americans they trusted most. This leader, who had adopted as his English name Nathaniel Jones, told Campbell that they wanted to give up living wild and join this unusual community. He invited the Campbell group, who had the best available maps of western Virginia, to join them in searching for it. Unfortunately, the directions to Cibola they had were passed from mouth to ear many times and had been somewhat jumbled in the telling. They knew they were looking for a valley within a valley somewhere to the north, but not certain exactly where. Fortunately, several of the Cherokee men were highly skilled at forest
travel, but even so the Jones-Campbell spent one entire spring and summer searching before they were able to connect with Cibolan hunters who welcomed them, guided them into the secret valley and invited them to stay. Initially, some of the older Cherokee people still expressed their desire to rejoin the others in Oklahoma, but all of the younger ones soon joined in and were quite happy there.

In this secret valley, there were six separate communities that had grown up there. Each was, at that time, somewhat unique due to their English, Spanish, French, African, Chinese and Moorish populations. Already at the time, Grandma Sadie said, there was a great deal of jumbling together and you couldn’t really tell what was what or who was who. The leaders of Cibola offered us Cherokees the chance to start our own village, but after talking with the other men, and the Peace Chief, Clara Gray Dove.

“I’m sorry,” Freddie said, “I can’t make out this name. But I do know that the Cherokees and other Southeastern native peoples sometimes elected two leaders. One for times of peace and one for hunting and war. Apparently, this Clara or whatever her name is, was one of those. Anyway. . .”

The new arrivals informed the leaders of Cibola that they would “live English” has they had been doing and see where things went from there. Everyone, both the Cherokees and those in the Campbell band were very happy in Cibola and quickly adapted to life there. Some people say that the Cibola community was able to survive when so many of the utopian communities failed because they found a lode of diamonds in the Appalachian mountains and were able to sell them through the international diamond cartel.

Grandma Sadie also told me once that there was a feeling among some of the more traditional Cherokees whose elders came to Cibola that they should have formed a separate, seventh community. From the Cherokees, at least two of the six communities learned of the traditional Cherokee seven-sided "council house" as the spiritual and cultural center of the Community. Within a few years, one of them had built such a community center, but the other never could reach a decision. As far as I know, they still haven’t.

“That’s pretty much where Aunt Emma’s tale leaves off.” Freddie concluded.
“Amy, where did you get these interesting chairs?” Rosemary asked her hostess.

“Ralph built them. They are his own modification of a Frank Lloyd Wright design used in one of the Usonian houses. Don’t ask me which one! He likes to build things like this; pieces ‘in the style of’ Wright or one of the other modernist architectural innovators and add his own individual touches. For these, he used indigenous hardwood grown right here in Dare County. It was milled and planed over at Jackson’s lumber mill, with Ralph looking over the shoulders of the workers all the time. He likes to use local materials in all his projects. Isn’t it beautiful?”

Rosemary agreed. The grain and color were rich and vibrant, seeming to show off every grain in the wood. And with the cushions they looked as if they might be
more comfortable than some of the Wright chairs she had seen. “There’s a guy—Jack something—who also makes Wright-like chairs and sells them at Tamarack in Beckley. Ralph doesn’t sell any of his furniture. I don’t think the idea ever occurred to him.”

Since she expected they would be there for several hours, she certainly hoped they were comfortable. Ralph had the chairs all aligned in one large circle. They were standing just inside the circle as they talked. “Ralph calls this a ‘magic circle,’” Amy said. “He likes everyone in small groups like this to be able to see each other.” Over on one side of the loft-workshop Madeline and Linda Sue were talking with three people Rosemary didn’t know. Meanwhile, Jerry was wandering around by himself looking at Ralph’s model houses. On the other side of the loft Ralph was explaining something about one of the models to another small group, which included Adam Sennett and Edward Graham.

At the top of the hour, Rosemary tapped on her water glass with her folded reading glasses, producing a surprisingly pure bell tone at the sound of which everyone turned toward her and fell silent. “Please find a seat inside ‘the magic circle.’ At her use of this term, Ralph Deigh smiled broadly. After everyone had taken a seat, she remained standing and said, “Good morning. My name is Rosemary Mueller, and this is the first official meeting of the board of the Mueller Foundation. We haven’t quite finished the legalities yet, but I am assured by legal counsel that it’s okay for us to meet and get things rolling,” she said. At this, several people looked toward Edward Graham who shook his head up and down several times and smiled.

“The foundation is named for my late husband, Harry. For those of you who may not know him, this gentleman” she said pointing across the circle, “is Mr. Edward Graham, Harry’s longtime friend and our family attorney. Edward’s law firm is handling the legalities of setting up the foundation. As you may know, a partner in the firm, Mr. James Harbaugh—Jim—has been working with us more or less full time and has decided to build a home in the planned community. He had to be in court this morning, so Edward very graciously decided to stand in for him, and he will tell you a few things about the foundation later. First, I think we should probably all introduce ourselves. Adam? Why don’t you start. Then, Ralph. Then we’ll just continue around the circle.”

“Good morning, everyone. I’m Adam Sennett and as many of you know I am the Dare County Clerk. What you may not have known is that I am also the current arranque de cinta de la paz, or peace chief of the Cibola community, about which there will be more to say later.” At the mention of Cibola, Freddie and the other members of the Thursday evening Arts and Letters Club most of whom had not
previously met Adam, glanced at one another expectantly: This could be a more interesting morning than they were anticipating. June, Madeline and Linda Sue couldn’t help noticing this and they wondered what Adam was talking about. But they would have to wait to find out anything further as Adam turned to the man at his left who spoke next.

“Hello. I am Ralph Deigh, architect and model maker, and I want to welcome you to my workshop. I know that all of us are shocked and deeply saddened by the destruction and loss of life from the flash flood in the mountains above Barley Mill and then the tornado and fire in Barley Mill. Many of us here have already been involved in various conversations about what we might do to set things right here in Dare County.” At this, he looked at Adam, Rosemary and Madeline. “And I am looking forward to working with the rest of you on this venture. My chief draftswoman, Lil, isn’t in the office today. She’s working hard on some sketches for the community center and sends her apologies. I’m sure you’ll all have a chance to meet her in the near future.” At this, Ralph paused and looked back at Adam, who looked to the woman at his right and smiled as she began to spoke.

“I am Dr. Evie Sennett, Adam’s wife. I’ve been a GP serving both Barley Mill and Cibola for the past 31 years.” Rosemary noted that Adam’s wife was professionally dressed, well-groomed but still had an air of disorder about her. She seems depressed, Rosemary noted, not yet realizing the extent of the death toll in the Cibola flooding and Evie’s role during that fateful evening. Although she was also aware that the Sennett’s other son was not present for the meeting even though he had been invited, she thought little of it.

The young man seated next to Dr. Sennett said only “My name is ‘Cane’ Sennett.”

“I am Frederika Watson, but everyone calls me Freddie. I grew up in Washington D.C. and I moved to Barley Mill six years ago. I’m an independent archival researcher and with the internet it’s just as easy for me to work here as it was in D.C. I live—that is, I lived before the fire—in Danny Messenger’s mother’s house.”

Freddie paused and the woman next to her said “Hi. I’m Linda Sue Winslow. Rosemary is my aunt. . . My dad’s sister. I’m pleased to be here. Aunt Rosemary asked me to come with her today, so Jerry drove us all down here.” As she said this, she motioned slightly to the man next to her.

“My name is Jerry Eliot, and I’ve known Rosemary and Harry for years. These days, I drive her where she needs to go.” Rosemary had invited Jerry’s wife Doris to come along in the car with the others, but she had declined. “I don’t think I
could stand to see all that destruction in real life,” she said. “The pictures on the TV are almost more than I can bear to look at.” Indeed, particularly for those who had been to Barley Mill before, the brief visit to town upon their arrival had been almost too painful for words. Madeline had made arrangements for all of them to stay at a large bed and breakfast in Huttonsville, and no one in the car had said anything during the last leg of the trip.

“Hello everyone. I am Madeline Klein. I used to do public relations for the Mueller Companies. Rosemary has asked me to be the executive director of the Mueller Foundation. It’s been a real pleasure to get to know Adam, Evie and Cane, even though it has been under these very adverse circumstances, and I’m looking forward to working with them and with the rest of you and others from the two towns.”

“My name is June Averill and I have been Rosemary’s friend since we were children. I’m hoping that someone will explain to those of us who are still in the dark what this second community—See-bowl-a?—is and how it is connected to the devastation we say in Barley Mill.”

At this, Rosemary blushed visibly and said, “Oh, June! I’m sorry. I guess somehow in all the commotion, I forgot to explain to you what that’s about.” Then turning to Adam, she said, “I believe Adam will fill in some of the blanks for you and anyone else who isn’t up to speed after we finish with the introductions.” Then, looking at the blond seated next to June she said simply “Amy?”

“Good morning. I’m Amy McMillen and I own The Doll House over there by where you parked. I guess I’m here to represent the business community of Barley Mill.”

“My name is Daniel Messenger and I am a journalist, although right now I guess you could say I’m between beats. I grew up here, that is, in Barley Mill, although we never heard of Cibola at that time. I used to be editor of the local paper but like so much else in town, our entire plant was destroyed in the fire. You don’t need to worry that anything you say here today may wind up in the paper. Ms. Mueller and I have already agreed that my presence here is due strictly to my participation in the Thursday evening group and this meeting is off the record.”

“I’m Joy Hart. Member of the Thursday evening group.”

“I’m Art Payne. I’m a native of Barley Mill. I used to teach at the high school until my father died and I took over the family business.”
“I’m Gloria Payne. Art’s wife. The Thursday evening group has been meeting at our house since shortly after Art and I got married and moved here—to Barley Mills that is.”

“I’m Tom Reasoner. I live in San Francisco, but I grew up in Barley Mill. After the fire I came back to see about my sisters. Joy and Gloria and if there was anything I could do to help. I’ll be going back to California on Thursday, but Rosemary invited me to sit in today.”

“Hi, everyone. I’m Tessa and this is my husband Ron Brewer. We moved here from Wisconsin a few years ago, and like just about everybody else in Barley Mill we lost everything in the tornado and fire and right now we’re living in one of those god-awful FEMA trailers.” This last comment brought a murmur of recognition from several people around the circle.

“I’m Ed Graham, and as Rosemary indicated I’ll be handling the legal affairs of the foundation.”

“Well, that seems to be everyone who is here. Thank you all very much.” Rosemary said slightly hesitantly. “We were expecting a few more people but they must have been delayed.” As she said this, the door opened, and six people entered. “Ah, yes, here they are now.” she corrected herself. “Come in. Welcome. Please find a seat and then we’ll ask you to introduce yourselves. We’ve just finished introducing ourselves.” All of this was accompanied by smiles of recognition and greetings to the newcomers from Adam, Evie and Cane, and a sudden air of intense interest from Freddie Watson. The rest of those who had just introduced themselves looked at the newcomers with mild curiosity.

The newcomers seemed to be three men and three women. One of the men appeared to be what Rosemary’s mother would have called “a swarthy, Mediterranean type”, somewhat resembling Adam Sennett in appearance. The second man appeared to be Asian—Chinese or maybe Japanese or Korean. With them were a tall, dark African American woman and another woman whose entire body was covered by a very colorfully decorated burqa. The third man was apparently northern European—English, Irish, German or Scandinavian and the final woman was apparently a native American. They each introduced themselves as requested but said little beyond their names. “These folks all live—or they did—in Cibola. Like most people there, they have lost nearly all of their possessions and at least one family member. Jeremiah lost his wife and three children.” Adam noted, provoking some shocked and nervous looks from the newcomers. He went on to explain that because FEMA officials had no record of
the residents of Cibola, they like the rest of the survivors of that community who were still around were living in tents high up in the mountains.

After everyone was seated and the introductions were complete, Rosemary turned to Adam who began, “Many of us here today share the common experience of recent loss. Some of you are—or were—residents of Barley Mill before the tornado and fire which destroyed nearly all of the town.” Smiling at the most recent entrants who still seemed somewhat uncertain, he continued “Others are from the nearby community of Cibola, which was also recently destroyed by flash flooding.”

At the mention of this latter community, Daniel, Joy and the other members of the Thursday evening Arts and Letters Club were suddenly animated, shifting in their seats and listening intensely. “The rest of you have come to Dare County on behalf of the Mueller Foundation to offer your assistance, and we welcome you. All of you—us, really—have experienced far too much loss of life and injury. He then gave a very brief history of the Cibola community, placing most emphasis on its inclusive, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic legacy. “Our forebears felt very strongly that we had to live apart and in secret until such time as the rest of America caught up with us. There is a very strong feeling among my fellow Cibolans that that time has arrived.”

“We must now face the challenge of rebuilding not one but two shattered communities. Some people in each community wish to restore things to the way they were before.” At this he paused for a reaction from the group that did not come. “That’s good.” he said more to himself than anyone. Then he continued, “And some of us believe the time has come for some truly original thinking about what a small town should be in the 21st century. We know that most of you agree, and we welcome this opportunity to work together. ”

“Rosemary and Ralph and I have been talking for some time now,” Adam said, “It seems like it has been almost nonstop since the disasters and we would like those of you who are interested to join with us in planning a joint rebuilding effort around an entirely new town; a completely new, modern type of rural community really.”

“All of you, I think, have seen some of Ralph’s models. Some of you may have read of his speeches in the newspaper,” at this he looked at Daniel, “Or even seen some of his notebooks. Rosemary and I agree that he is correct that a new type of rural community better suited to the 21st century is very badly needed, and he has put his finger on many features that are ideally suited for building in these mountains, and we’d like to use his ideas as the beginning point of our rebuilding
efforts. We’d like to abandon the old town sites of the two towns, although some people will almost certainly want to continue to live and rebuild there. Our priority will be to rebuild at a completely new location on land that one of Rosemary’s companies owns and that she has already deeded over to the foundation. We don’t know yet what to call the new community, but that’s one of the places where you all can help out.”

“We know that not everyone in either community will welcome this effort, and that some people will want to rebuild just exactly what they had before. In fact, the State of West Virginia has already told us that financial aid from the state will only be available to those who choose to do so.”

Madeline put down her iPhone, raised her hand to get Adam’s attention and began, “I don’t mean to get us off-track. But I don’t know, and I suspect several others don’t either. I’ve been to Barley Mill several times, but where is Cibola and where kind of town is it? Or was it? I’ve just checked Google Maps and I don’t come up with anything. At that, Adam replied, “Oh. Now that’s a very good question.” He turned to Freddie Watson who was seated three chairs to his left and asked “Would you like to explain this? You seem to have most of it figured out. I can fill in any additional details.”

Freddy appeared momentarily struggling. “Oh. Well. Where do I start? Give me a minute to collect my thoughts.”

“This is a good time for a break, anyway,” Rosemary noted. “Let’s take a few minutes to give Ms. Watson a chance to collect her thoughts. Coffee and doughnuts and some assorted other ‘goodies’ are already on the table over there. Please help yourselves. We’ll reconvene in 15 minutes.”

After the break, everyone quieted down quickly and Freddie began the long, winding tale of Cibola as she understood it. “In 1540, records indicate that the Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto visited Cherokee territory south of here. You probably all know that St. Augustine is the oldest city in what is now the United States, and you may generally be familiar with the disappearance of the Roanoke Colony in North Carolina. You may even know that in the 1560’s, the northeastern most advance of Spanish colonialism is thought to have massacred most of the French Huguenot garrison at Fort Caroline, near today’s Virginia Beach, Virginia. What you probably don’t know is how all of these events almost a century before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock are connected and what they have to do with the various mounds built in western West Virginia and eastern Ohio. You may never have even heard of Etzanoa, Quivira or Cahokia. Or that the Pueblo people in what is today New Mexico temporarily expelled the Spanish from their colony
in 1680. Incredible as it may seem, each of these events and many others—like the ‘disappearance’ of the Roanoke Colony, the Cherokee Trail of Tears in the 1840s and the Underground Railroad—all resulted in immigrants coming to the isolated mini-society of Cibola, just north of here in the Appalachian mountains.”

With that introduction, Freddie Watson wove together over the next hour the many threads of the history of Cibola as she understood them, right up to the recent floods. Periodically, Adam or Evie would interject an additional point, or one of the others would interrupt to ask a question but generally they all just listened. Finally, she paused and Rosemary said, “This would be a good time to break for lunch. Madeline has made arrangements for a catered lunch for everyone and we can continue talking and getting to know one another better as we eat.”

Adam picked up the discussion right after lunch, noting that Cibola had remained hidden in the mountains for more than 400 years for the protection of the residents living there, and then he referred to the special role that his family and unnamed others had played as agents and ambassadors to the outside world. “We all agree that the time has come for our isolation to end.” He said definitively and there were murmurs of assent from his family and the six Cibolans. “The things we value most—personal freedom for all, equality, respect for diversity and for the environment—are now built into the fabric of American society and sufficiently protected by law and public opinion that we don’t need to hide anymore.”

“Needless to say,” he continued, “not everyone in our community agrees with this decision, and those who don’t are already making arrangements—which they don’t intend to share with us or anyone—to relocate in another secret location somewhere.”

“The recent flash flood hit us very hard. We think the final count is that 189 people from Cibola—including our eldest son, Abbe—may have died that night and in the days afterward.” At this news, a wave of shocked expressions of surprise and horror passed over the group, and “Everyone who is here from Cibola lost someone that night. Several entire families were lost. But we know, too, that there has also been deep suffering in Barley Mill. But we must not dwell on that now. Instead, we must work together to build new lives for all of those affected. We currently have approximately 350 people—relatives, friends and neighbors—who are planning to leave Cibola forever sometime in the next few weeks, and another 750 who are interested in joining this new community venture.

“This will be hard for everyone. Because the state of West Virginia doesn’t even know they exist, all of them are currently camping out in the woods up on Gamble Mountain, and thanks to Rosemary and Madeline, we’ve been able to provide them
with tents, food and the basic necessities.” After a pause, he added, “We, that is Cibola, have lived on about 36,000 acres of undocumented land up there which was part of an original Spanish land grant in 1543 but for very complex reasons was never actually registered as part of the property records in the United States.”

Following this, Art Payne gave a report of conditions in Barley Mill. There were, he said, 77 fatalities in the tornado and another five people who died in the fire which followed. The most recent census of Barley Mill before the disaster set the population of the town at 2,018 but that was three years ago, so there were, he said, probably around 1,900 to 1,940 people there now. There had also been an unusually large number of deaths of older people since that fateful day and several dozen people had left town permanently, either to live with relatives elsewhere or in search of jobs, and so he estimated the final number was probably closer to 1,800 Barley Millers right now. Of these, he said, a survey that Joy had designed and he, Joy, Gloria, Tom, Dan, and Tessa had conducted suggested that about 40% of the people still in town were interested in rebuilding on their existing land as soon as possible. “That means,” he concluded “that about 1,050 people may be open to moving to a new community somewhere in Dare County.”

“So,” Ralph said, “We could be looking at an initial population of 1,800?”

“That’s the way I see it. Of course, if we follow through on the plans we’ve talked about, some of them won’t be interested. So, we may want to think more in terms of 1,500 with the possibility of expanding to 1,800 or even 2,000.”

The conversation went on like this for most of the afternoon, touching on various details. Rosemary explained that she, Ralph, Adam, and two others yet to be selected would be the initial board of the Mueller Foundation. As the afternoon was coming to a close, Evie said, “Would it be possible for us to give this project a name? I’ve noticed we all stumble over calling it “the new town,” and “the new community.” I wish we could call it something specific. Cibola and Barley Mill are probably not good choices for obvious reasons.” Her reasons weren’t obvious to everyone, but no one said anything.

Thomas Reasoner spoke up at this point. He had, he noted, studied poetry in San Francisco and there were many reasons to choose the name Eden (or, perhaps the alternative Elysium). It was to be, he said, a locus amoenus, the Latin term for a pleasant or an idealized place of comfort and safety, and a location for human love in all its forms. A shady place, or woodland.

Ralph agreed that was a very good suggestion, “Thomas Cole’s A Cabin in the Woods, for example, can be termed edenic or elysian in tone. Much the same can
be said for Cole’s painting of the Garden of Eden.” He paused briefly and then added,

“Although he also did one called Expulsion From the Garden of Eden” Thomas added. “References in literature to such places go back past the Book of Genesis and further back than Homer. We even have our own Adam and Eve. And Cane.” Daniel winced when he realized that his friend was wound up now and there was little that could be done to stop him. “While many in the Christian tradition, including St. Augustine and Origen rejected the story of the Garden as far-fetched, there should be little doubt,” Thomas said, that the idea of such a pleasant, idealized place had a powerful hold on European and American imagination from the earliest days.

“The idea of an Eden,” Thomas continued, “was also a popular trope with Medieval and Renaissance poets, and what the critic Northrup Frye called Shakespeare’s ‘green world’ — a space outside the city where passions can be freely explored; a place apart from civil society and outside civilization. The green world is the Forest of Arden in As You Like It, and the locale of A Midsummer Night’s Dream and Titus Andronicus.”

With this, Rosemary had apparently heard enough. She interrupted Thomas and said, “Well, you’ve given us a lot to think about overnight. Perhaps we can put off the question of names until we get together again at nine tomorrow morning.” With this people began gathering there things together, standing and in other ways indicating their agreement that the meeting was over for today.

But the die was cast. There was no further discussion of names the following day or any time after that. From that afternoon forward, the venture was simply known as The Eden Project and the name of the new community was by acclamation Eden, West Virginia. That evening at the B & B, June said to her friend, “Actually, Rose, whatever else it is, the name Eden is a wry comment on the John Denver Song “Almost Heaven, West Virginia.”

“Thomas Reasoner must want to be a professor of literature out there in California” was Rosemary’s only reply.
The following article appeared in the weekend edition of The Daily Eagle & Liberty in January:
By Daniel Messenger, Editor of the Barley Mills, WV weekly newspaper and guest columnist of the Daily Eagle & Liberty.

One the greatest and most hopeful innovations of the Eden Plan, according to Ralph Deigh in a speech to the Barley Mills Chamber of Commerce today, is the proposal for a Bachelor of Practical Arts degree.

“We’ve gotten into the situation in rural America where more and more young people would like to have a college degree but don’t really have either the preparation or the genuine interest to earn one. It isn’t that they are “too dumb” to do the work. It’s just that they don’t see the connection to their own lives. They don’t see any connection between the courses they must take to earn a college degree and where they see their lives going. For many kids coming out of small towns and rural areas, the current arrangements just don’t really provide what they need. And the present arrangements of vocational tracks, junior colleges and “trade schools” don’t really do it either.”

Mr. Deigh is a landscape designer and model builder who is one of the three members of the steering committee planning the new town of Eden which is under construction in Dare County. The wealthy widow, Mrs. Harry Mueller (Rosemary), and Dare County Clerk Adam Sennett are the other current members of the committee responsible for The Eden Plan. Mr. Deigh began his address with a brief historical overview of post-secondary education in the U.S. and its connections to communities.

“Thomas Jefferson not only laid out the rudiments of the modern college campus with his plan for an ‘academical village’ that became the University of Virginia and the city of Charlottesville, Virginia. Without really intending to, Jefferson also defined the sinews of what we still think of today as the American college town. Whether it is Charlottesville, Hiram, Ohio; Northfield, Minnesota, or West Liberty, Buckhannon or Concord, West Virginia, the model of the small town where the local college is the leading industry is well established in the U.S. Moreover, the model appears to remain intact when those same “academical villages” grow up to be fairly large cities like Morgantown and Huntington, West Virginia, larger cities like Ann Arbor, Michigan, Madison Wisconsin, Berkeley, California or even, perhaps Columbus, Ohio.”

“Although the modern university is a highly complex and multi-faceted reality,” Deigh continued, “there are really only three primary origins of these college towns. One is the liberal arts college, an undergraduate institution with a strong emphasis on teaching and the liberal arts. We don’t go too far wrong,” Deigh noted, “in seeing the initial and continuing role of such institutions as producing enlightened individuals—cultured and cultivated ladies and gentlemen able to live
meaningful and productive lives. Liberal arts graduates should be versed in history, philosophy, the fine arts and sciences.”

“The second type of college town began to appear sometime after Jefferson, late in the 19th century, after the passage of the first Morrell Act in 1862. We can call these the A & M’s, letters that stand for agricultural and mechanical institutions, a fair reflection of the industrial revolution that transformed what was then a predominantly agricultural nation. Whether in the aptly named Texas A & M and Alabama A & M or Virginia Tech and Cal Tech (short for Polytechnical Institutions) or Michigan State, these institutions grew out of Agricultural and Engineering colleges, rather than the more classical humanities programs that in most cases were later add-ons.”

“There is also a third variant to these two, and that is the religious college established for the specific purpose of training clergy. Harvard University was established in the 17th century as just such a training institute and at a time when Cambridge, Massachusetts might be seen as a kind of pre-Jeffersonian “academical village”. We should note, however, that from the earliest, Cambridge was part of a dynamic and complex city and Harvard never dominated there in the way that Oberlin College has always been predominant in Oberlin, Ohio.”

“These three variants, or rather their latter-day descendants have long dominated higher education in the United States. Today, some are still located in small towns where they are typically dominant. Others have come to fit in larger towns or even cities.”

“More vocationally-oriented two-year (or junior) colleges, public vocational schools and private, for-profit colleges and “trade schools” in such craft fields as beautician (or beauty) and barber colleges were later, mid-20th century add-ons. Importantly, there are few examples—actually, none that I am aware of—where these vocationally-oriented programs are the dominant institutions of a community in the manner of the familiar college towns.”

Having laid down this historical outline, Deigh went on to detail a proposal for a completely new type of 3-year, post-high school college degree program to be offered by the Agricultural, Mechanical and Information Arts Institute which is to be the foundational institution in the new town of Eden. “What we envision are completely new combinations of civic, humanistic and technical education,” Deigh told the Chamber audience, “that link programs in civics and humanities with strong programs of vocational training in diverse classical fields such as culinary arts, ‘old technology’ fields like electricity, and ‘new technology’ fields like computer programming.”
“One of the unique aspects we think we can bring to bear in this area is a unique set of tools joining humanistic scholarship and a program of practical and technical subjects. It would be a mistake to call these disciplines at this point” Deigh added.

“One of these would be a system of sabbaticals and post-doctoral appointments in which we bring to our campus interested and qualified scholars who are prepared to use their research skills and scholarly abilities to build the knowledge base to support this new approach. We envision courses, books and articles on topics such as the history of French baking or Chinese cooking, and perhaps even something like the contemporary history of heating and air conditioning or supermarket management.”

Deigh's presentation was not without controversy. There were even scattered boos from the audience when he said this. “The other prong of this approach would be completely new approaches to civic education. I know we live in a highly partisan era, and some of you may disagree with me on this, but from my perspective it should be completely obvious that the result of the 2016 Presidential election—the election of a completely unprepared, untested, and in the view of many unqualified, candidate as leader of the free world might not be the wisest or most sensible form of populist protest.”

“This became even more problematic,” he went on, “when, in the context of contemporary developments in Russia, Turkey, Hungary and elsewhere of important links between this brand of populist protest and anti-democratic authoritarianism.” At this, Deigh’s speech was interrupted by shouts from several audience members three of whom rose and walked out of the hall. “Unfortunately, this kind of behavior,” Deigh ad libbed departing from his prepared text, “has become altogether too common. It is not healthy for our civic life when we—all of us—are only willing to listen to or read those who agree with us.”

Then, returning to his prepared text, he said “This is not a partisan matter. For the good of our country, we all need to find ways to address our differences, to talk to—and to listen to—one another. And, there is strong evidence that the kinds of students we hope to attract to this new form of higher education are often among the most ill-informed and ill-prepared students coming out of high school as far as civic education is concerned.”

“These are the students—many of them—who surveys show cannot identify the three branches of government or cannot name even one of their elected public officials. These are the young people who don’t know the difference between a County Commissioner and a Planning Commission.”

“As the third prong of our educational innovation, we propose to develop new approaches to the civic education of our students; approaches that will be of greater interest to them and more relevant to their careers and adult lives.”
As he concluded his remarks, there was a smattering of applause from the audience of local business people. “We’ve heard all this before, but the fact is that college graduates continue to come into the job market woefully unprepared for the world of work, and I didn’t hear anything today that would change that,” said Anton Burns, local insurance agent and Secretary of the Chamber. Gordon Morris, owner of Morris Machine Shop, was even more pointed in his criticism. “I agree there is need for new forms of practical, work-related training for young people looking for jobs, but why anyone would want to combine that with humanities and civics is beyond me. Does he think young people today would really be interested in this kind of degree?”

A quite different reaction came from Gwen Owens, owner-operator of a local steak house. “I think Mr. Deigh and his group are really onto something here. I am very much looking forward to seeing this approach in action. I might even want to take some of those courses in the history of cooking and baking that he mentioned.”
There was a flurry of activity in and around the Eden Project in the weeks following that first, informal board meet-and-greet. At Rosemary’s insistence, the following day Edward held an “all hands” meeting of the junior lawyers at his law firm and parceled out a variety of assignments that needed to be seen to as part of setting up the Mueller Foundation. “This is going to cost you a great deal of money,” he warned Rosemary. “I don’t care” She replied. “We need to get this taken care of as soon as possible”. There was an urgency in her tone that he had seldom seen in his usually diffident friend.

Rosemary, Ralph, Madeline and the others at the retreat were all deeply engaged in the effort to design and build Eden. Between them they had held at least three
dozen meetings with various combinations of people involved and the effort was beginning to show results.

The very first thing that Edward took care of himself was drafting a personal services contract for Madeline to handle foundation business even before there was a foundation per se. This way, Rosemary said, “no one will be able to say or think that she does not speak for me and the foundation with full authority. I want Madeline to be the face and public voice of the foundation and my hope is that she will have the full backing of the board from here on out.” Madeline was now working full time on foundation matters. That included spending 3-4 days a week in Dare County, where she was becoming a familiar figure. As such things often do in small communities, word had spread quickly that a rich widow from Ohio had taken an interest in the recovery effort in Dare County, even though Daniel’s newspaper had not been able to produce an issue since the tornado. The entire newspaper production facility had been directly in the path of the storm, and in all likelihood, it would never publish another issue. Madeline was often mistaken for that rich woman from Ohio and found it increasingly difficult to walk down the streets of the county seat or to visit the disaster sites in Barley Mill or Cibola. “I’m not Rosemary Mueller,” she would tell people, “but I work for the foundation she is setting up.” In reply to the increasingly frequent requests for money for everything from rebuilding houses, to buying replacement chickens for those killed in the storm, her answer was the same. “This is a long-term project and the foundation will be primarily an operating foundation. As Mrs. Mueller and the other board members have decided, we’re going to spend most of the money on designing and building the new community of Eden, but we hope to be as transparent as possible. We’ll let everyone know when the foundation is operational and what the funding guidelines will be.

For the most distressing or compelling stories of need that she heard, Madeline kept the contact information for the Salvation Army, American Red Cross, FEMA and the West Virginia Emergency Management office with her at all times. Rosemary had made several million-dollar gifts to each of these charities to use as they saw fit about the time of the board retreat, and she had informed Madeline earlier this morning that she was prepared to give more when it was called for.

Back in Ohio, a junior member of Edward’s firm drafted a letter of gift after meeting with Rosemary to better understand her wishes, and then met with her several times again to discuss amendments, refinements and modifications to the letter. Rosemary thought the gift letter technically adequate but a bit too grandiose for her taste and made her seem like some sort of wise woman of unlimited charity and vision, but the lawyer convinced her that this was how these things were usually done. Like it or not, he said, she would now be remembered as a great philanthropist. “Imagine that!” She told June that same evening. “I can’t even rid
myself of Harry’s money without all this fuss.” Her main concern, however, was that the letter of gift carefully constrained foundation activity to Dare County and Ralph Deigh’s rural community redesign effort. They had discussed this extensively in several meetings following up the original retreat, and she had the sense that there was a strong commitment to this effort among those involved in the board and the advisory committee, both of which were being formalized.

Other lawyers experienced in corporate and tax matters handled the necessary corporate and charitable filing requirements of the Ohio and West Virginia Secretaries of State offices, the charitable reviews and the request for tax exempt status with the IRS. The foundation would be enabled to operate in both states, even though its principal activities would be in Dare County alone. A partner in the firm specializing in real estate worked with Madeline to identify an office suite for the foundation in the same building as Harry’s old firm, and another satellite office in Dare County. The Dare County office of the Mueller Foundation was on “lawyer’s row” in Huttonsville, in the block adjoining the federal court house where Rosemary and Adam had first met. Madeline would have preferred the Dare County office to be in Barley Mill, but after the tornado there was no suitable office space available there, no electricity and no internet service. And there would be no buildings at all at the Eden site for at least another six months.

Another team of more than two dozen lawyers had worked full time under the direct supervision of Edward Graham, and with extensive input from Justin and other senior staff members of the firm, and a labor lawyer they brought in from Washington DC to help structure the ESOP.

Art Payne came in to the foundation’s new office in Huttonsville one afternoon while Rosemary was there talking with Madeline. She and Jerry had driven over that morning and she had brought with her a bundle of the key documents setting up the foundation and wanted to highlight a few points to make sure Madeline understood her intent. “You’re not going to believe this!” Art told the two women. “I’ve just met with Maynard Gouch from the Governor’s office. He told me that the state office of housing development could support rebuilding loans only for those people in Barley Mill who were willing to build on their existing lots in the exact footprint of the house that was destroyed. Of course, since Cibola doesn’t officially exist as far as the state is concerned, and Eden has not yet been built, there will be nothing available for people in either community. Any prospect of state support for Cibola or for those people willing to abandon their lots in Barley Mill and rebuilding in Eden is out of the question according to Maynard.”

“How many mortgages are we talking about?” Rosemary asked.

“I don’t have any real idea.”
At this Madeline suggested “Well, we may need a residents’ meeting of people from both communities to try to sort this all out.” Then she added, “It’s pretty clear that the State of West Virginia will have nothing for people from Cibola at this time. It’s going to be several years before the West Virginia and federal courts can even begin to sort out the question of their citizenship and birth rights.”

Later that same day Ralph and Lil. . . dropped by the foundation office in Huttonsville to show Madeline the preliminary drawings for the Labyrinth, the Mountainview Community Center and the transportation grid. Daniel had told Rosemary the previous week that rumors about these controversial features of the Eden Plan had leaked out in Barley Mill and many locals, particularly the traditionalists who had decided to rebuild on their existing lots in town, were enjoying many a good laugh over the idea of a concrete subway, sewer system and communications grid in a small Appalachian town. Others found the idea of a 30-story structure combining schools, and community centers and “facing the mountain” even more amusing. But, most controversial of all was the plan not to allow auto and pickup traffic in the town of Eden itself. “It’s probably a good thing the foundation will have enough money so that we don’t have to rely on public opinion in Dare County to make this whole thing work,” Daniel had told Madeline over a weekend dinner they shared with Ralph and Amy. They had invited Lil. . . and a friend of her choosing to join them but she had declined. No one, including Ralph, seemed to know anything about Lil. . .’s personal life and she seemed determined to keep it that way.
The essential feature of The Eden Project from the very start was the decision that it would be entirely modern in design and yet owe much to the historic English village. Adam Sennett informed the other members of the Eden Project planning group that in recent years the residents of Cibola had grown quite tired of coping with the limitations and quirks of their four-hundred-year-old village. Despite its charming appearance Cibola had numerous practical drawbacks in construction, plumbing, and electrical wiring, not to mention the absence of central heating, cooling and ventilation. There were also serious deficits in the water, sewage and storm water drainage systems and other community features. This combined with the fact that the Profitt Coal Company had admitted no culpability in the collapse
of the slurry pond meant that virtually all of the residents of Cibola who had survived the flash flood were opposed to rebuilding the Cibola site and strongly in support of the Eden project, even though they knew it would mean a dramatic transformation of their old ways of life. Before they could fully commit to the new community, however, the Cibolans had to be reassured that Eden would be developed along the lines of urban multiculturalism rather than the mono-cultural, often segregated, lifestyles of white, protestant rural America. Over the centuries, they had had plenty of opportunity to observe how the latter had gone from something warm, positive and nurturing to something quite opposite. “We want to be like Morgantown, Asheville or Chapel Hill, and not like the legislature” was a sentiment heard often in community meetings called to discuss The Eden Project.

The prospect that the majority of surviving residents of Barley Mill would join the Eden Project was somewhat less likely, in large part for the financial reasons Art Payne discovered. Some residents would be rebuilding on their existing lots out of financial necessity; this was the only way to take advantage of loans and grants available from the state. Without such funds, they had no hope of rebuilding. Others, joined by a small number of outmigrants from Cibola, had elected to seize the opportunity and move elsewhere even though moving meant starting over with no assistance. This option seemed to be particularly favored by young couples just starting out in life and for them Charleston, Cincinnati, Charlotte, Pittsburgh and Washington DC seemed to be the most popular destinations. In this, they followed patterns familiar to generations of Appalachian families.

After numerous meetings of the Steering Committee, the decision had been made to plan the new town of Eden, West Virginia for an eventual population of 3,000, to be divided more or less equally among six villages or hamlets. Early in the planning, Freddie told the group that she believed Cibola was originally an acronym made up of the first letters of the names of the original six colonia that made up the Cibola community in the 16th and 17th century. These were: Catalan, Indios, Boston (or Bristol or Brighton), Qufu (named for the birthplace of Confucius), London (or Lancaster) and Araby. Because Cibola was virtually unpronounceable, the name had come to be respelled with an O, a shift that might also be attributed, Freddie said, to the popularity in decades past of the term oriental.

Many meetings were spent in trying to select names for the six hamlets while the target population of ±500 each had provoked almost no discussion. The official estimates from the Steering Committee calculated this would mean roughly 230-280 households in each village, depending on the proportions of single-person and multi-person households.

For reasons that neither Adam nor any of the others seemed clear on, this separate village plan had gradually been abandoned at Cibola as the community grew in the
18th and 19th centuries, and the six colonia had melded into the major neighborhoods or “quarters” of the unified multi-cultural community of recent memory. As Freddie explained it, Cibola may have gone through an assimilation stage during the 20th century, but no one was quite certain why.

“Actually,” Evie Sennett told the planning team one afternoon, “our people in Cibola have never seemed to find anything like an ideal combination of full integration and separation. They’re as restless as other Americans. We’ve never really had a particularly strong concept of race, and never practiced any forms of overt segregation. Yet, sometimes religious differences become more important and sometimes ethnicity or language groupings rise up, and at other times, everyone has been content with the idea that we are all one people.”

For Ralph Deigh who had grown up in the all-white, working class protestant milieu of the coal camp of Kenneth, Ohio that sounded somewhat optimistic, but he had it admit it was also a great deal like his military experience (especially in combat) and he wanted to do everything he could to encourage continuation of the political culture of Cibola in Eden. Art Payne and other members of the Thursday evening Arts and Letters Club were also eager to follow what they had come to call the Cibola code.

“The population estimates we’ve got now are within the range I’ve been toying with for the ideal 21st century rural community.” Ralph Deigh, “I think we should go ahead on that basis.”

“Some of the small world research would suggest that the actual ideal number might be closer to 150,” Susan Payne added, “but from interviewing people from both Cibola and Barley Mill, it looks like each village of five hundred or so will eventually break down into anywhere from three to seven interlinked networks of kin, friends and neighbors. Janice Neeley, one of the Cibolans who identified with the Cherokee ancestry group, agreed with Susan’s assessment. “That is a lot like the clan structure of traditional Cherokee towns and other native communities in the Southeast.”

“Fine.” Madeline replied. “That’s settled. Rosemary gave me the go ahead to create a housing loan fund before she died. We’ve been working with John Graham and Jim Harbaugh on the legal arrangements and the foundation is now ready to go ahead and make mortgage loans for the people from Cibola who can’t get state financing and we should be able to begin construction of the first housing very soon. We are encouraging people from Barley Mill to talk with the state first, but those who can’t make acceptable arrangements and want to relocate to Eden will also be welcome to apply.”

“We’ve structured this as a conventional federal credit union, with all the usual federal guarantees. The foundation will put up the original capital, but the credit
union will be largely self-governing and the board will make its own decisions on loans and mortgages. Repayment will be structured as ten-, fifteen- and thirty-year mortgages. We’ll be ready to start taking applications for loans in the next couple of weeks.”

“That sounds great,” Adam Sennett said, “we just need to make sure that we warn everyone that the community infrastructure, like the houses they are building will be a work in progress for a while yet. Lots of mud and promise.”

“Jim told me yesterday that the first contracts have been signed for construction of the Labyrinth. Construction company out of Wheeling, I guess.” Jim Harbaugh was a partner at Graham and Graham who had moved to Dare County to monitor the legal aspects of the Eden project and had subsequently decided to build a summer home in the first Eden village. Jim’s wife, Elise, was born in Taiwan. She was actually his second wife, and they were expecting their first child in November. Through Jim she had gotten to know and become friends with several of the residents of Cibola who identified as ethnic Chinese and she and Jim had gotten to know a variety of others before making the decision to build here. Elise had been quite surprised to learn that most of the ethnic Chinese in Cibola spoke excellent Mandarin. Jim and Elise lived in a double-wide that served also as his law office until their home in Eden could be built. He was quite comfortable telecommuting to his office in Ohio, and so he traveled back there less and less frequently. Installing a high-speed fiber optic network connection to Dare County was one of Madeline’s very first projects for the Mueller Foundation, and Jim was one of the original users. He was now licensed to practice law in both West Virginia and Ohio and his client load was a very satisfying mix of people from both states. The first phase of the Labyrinth project involved pouring the concrete and actual construction of the physical structure with its tunnels, roadways, walkways. Phase 2 of that project would be the wiring of the electrical grid and completion of the fiber optic network, cell phone towers and the other IoT (internet of things) features that were to be an integral part of the villages of Eden.

Ralph used all of the model building skills he had developed in designing and building doll houses for his customers, as well as the drafting skills of Lil... to develop an entire scale model of his plan for Eden, Appalachia in Amy McMillen’s barn where he had his office and workshop. It had taken him nearly a decade to do so. Along the way, the vernacular architect had thought through, designed and built scale models of five of the six planned villages. These he originally named Woodlands, Bridgeville, Crestboro, Windsail, Axialtown, and Spinal Column. “I’m really not sure about those last two names,” Ralph told Amy one evening, “But, since we’re building Woodlands and Bridgeville first, we still have time to come up with better names sometime later.” Woodlands was to be the first village built. It would be located along the river with the Labyrinth at its core. It would be
a village of roughly 300 detached single family structures, the core of the Labyrinth and the main campus of the Mechanics Institute.

Next would come Bridgeville, the largest and most radical of the six villages. It would consist of a cluster of five apartment buildings approximately a half mile from Woodlands, designed to house as many as 1,000 people in units with one to five bedrooms. The largest of these would consist of 100 units, and like the single arch New River Gorge bridge across the gap between two mountain ridges with the river flowing under it. Thus, the name. The other four apartment buildings would be juxtaposed, two each on each side of the river.

All of these communities were designed as “next generation” rural communities” using Deigh’s own modernist principles of architecture and rural planning. He was in complete agreement with Frank Lloyd Wright who, according to Joseph J. Thorndike Jr. in “The Architects”, believed that American society should plan communities “with all of the advantages of the city and the country and without the disadvantages of either.”

Some years ago, Deigh had read the work of the urbanist Robert Fishman, particularly his essay “Beyond Utopia: Urbanism After the End of Cities.” In the 1980s, Fishman argued that “we” - architects, designers, planners and urbanists - were already beyond the possibility of utopia. Not only is modern society beyond the influence of specific utopias such as Le Corbusier’s 1925 Plan Voisin. To this list, Fishman might also have included Frank Lloyd Wright’s Broadacre City except as Deigh was aware that particular plan had been out of favor with architects and designers for many years already. It did, however, include Wright’s 1930s vision of mixed rural and urban features with multi-floor towers, farms, orchards and highway interchanges.

The reason that we are beyond utopia, Fishman argued is simple: “We can no longer share the fundamental assumption that lies behind this image: that it is both possible and desirable to completely rebuild our cities and our societies according to some new and better model.” There is the sheer fact of post WWII urban development, whole new generations of skyscrapers, shopping malls, housing subdivisions and all the rest. The central and edge cities that had grown up and grown large since 1946 were simply too new and too massive to be replaced by some other path of urban development. The office buildings in both contemporary urban and suburban America, the renewed and renovated “downtowns”, office parks, together with the highways, freeways and tollways that linked office workers to home in their stratified subdivisions, gated communities, apartment complexes and increasingly the gentrified older neighborhoods of central cities, as well as the shopping malls, sports complexes, hotels, motels and restaurants that service them.
“That may well be”, Ralph would lecture Amy, Freddie, members of the Planning Group and anyone else who would listen, “but we know also that the small towns of Appalachia are old, tired and yet people want to live out here. Of the 3,144 counties in the U.S. the cities occupy only a tiny percentage of them. This is particularly true in the Appalachian region, where the few large urban areas like Pittsburgh and Knoxville and the many more smaller cities like those in West Virginia were offset by a substantial number of entire counties in every Appalachian state with populations of 10 thousand people or fewer.”

In general, Deigh said, these rural communities fall outside Fishman’s analysis for a variety of reasons. Rural life in North America was largely still lived in reference to a frequently mythical - past of gemutlichkeit and barn raisings, quilting bees, church suppers, ice cream socials, and Sargent Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club band concerts. While many of these communities had been reasonably successful at recreating selected elements of this imagined past for the present, this did not negate certain other realities. Notably, out-migrating young people far outnumbered the retirees and “back to the landers”, resulting in a seemingly permanent population bleed from rural communities to the cities.

Each year, large numbers of young people - high school graduates and others - continued to leave rural communities for college, jobs in the city, to join the military and for other similar reasons. While some would return to take up the traditional life they had grown up with, many would not, choosing instead to take up life in the city or (more likely in) the suburbs. Beyond this, there was the ticking time bomb of the sheer age of much of the rural housing stock, commercial buildings, and the largely unseen infrastructure - water and sewage pipes long buried in the ground and deteriorating, the electric grid, not to mention the aging supportive facilities like water and sewage treatment plants, and electrical substations. Each year without fail the combined forces of nature visited tornados, hurricanes, floods, wildfires and other natural disasters on a number of rural communities across the country and left them with the choice of whether and how to rebuild. In most instances, the choice for local people was like that facing Barley Mill at the moment, and for ‘practical’ necessities, the decision was made to rebuild the community much as it had been before simply because there were no readily available alternatives. In this way and through various individual renovations, many individual elements of modern architecture and design had come to rural America.

At the same time, mega-corporations like Walmart and Amazon were among the forces that had successfully undermined the economic basis of small-town downtown business districts.

All of these things combined were enough for Ralph Deigh to suggest the need for a healthy dose of utopian thinking about rural communities. Most existing
communities in rural America had their origins in the 18th and 19th centuries by a mixture of colonial immigrants, pioneer settlers moving westward, later immigrant Europeans drawn by the push of lebensraum and the pull of advertising by real estate speculators trying to make their fortunes. Practically speaking, what this meant is that the real conceptual origins of rural America were to be found in the medieval villages of northern Europe and the collective imaginations of the people who wished to settle there and the people who wished to sell them the land to do so. England, certainly, but also Scotland and Ireland, Germany and Scandinavia. Jewish immigrants may have come from the shtetls of Central and Eastern Europe, but they gravitated extensively to new lives in American cities, notably the lower East Side of Manhattan, and from there fanned out to cities across the country and eventually the suburbs.

Like many other American communities, most rural communities were periodically damaged throughout their histories by natural and human disasters including fire, flood, tornado, and hurricane. Sometimes also, the nature of the market economy changed dramatically and left them without viable economic futures. Over the course of the 20th century, farming, fishing, and mining ceased to be viable ways of life for large numbers of people, yet residents of these communities, like many others loved one another and their way of life and feared the city. So they fought hard and creatively to remain together and to remain where they were and what they had been.

In The Eden Plan, the decision was made to adopt principles of modern urban design in the full sense of that term and rather than the conventional low-density design of the typical American small-town dating to the early 20th century to build the town around mixed housing, including a number of high rise, housing-and-services cores, surrounded by parkland. Even so, the introduction of mixed housing may have been the least radical of the design principles embraced by the residents of Eden.

In the construction of the first village in Eden, the decision was made to locate housing on the hillside with the core services of the town along the river at the bottom of the narrow, steep valley. Mountainview, the school and community building was a core service that was a partial exception to this design principle, stretching as it did from the river flood plain upward for 30 stories.

The very location of the town in the Appalachian mountains resulted in creation of a new wildlands-urban interface like those that experts now recognize as major factors in the destruction by fire of housing built in forest zones. Lack of adherence to the principles of fire management and control in such interfaces was found to be a major factor in the firestorm which destroyed much of Barley Mill after the tornado. Thus the Eden Plan seeks to take this into account with a series of steps discussed below.
The Eden Plan also adhered to a quadruple bottom line approach with concern for the 4P’s – people, profit, planet, and progress. Ralph recognized that for a lot of people this was just meaningless jargon, but he told Madeline, “People want to get ahead; to make a better life. That’s why they keep leaving little places like Dare County. And, here in Appalachia we have our own long, sorry history of some people getting ahead at the expense of others and at a very high cost to the environment. We can’t afford to plan without taking those things into account.”

Thus, a key part of the quadruple bottom line approach of the Eden project was to make the community “pollution averse”; that is, to identify all possible sources of negative human impact on the natural environment and to reverse or eliminate them. The one factor that proved to be most controversial in West Virginia with its rich coal history was declaration of a neutral carbon footprint for Eden, including maximum use of wind and solar power and use of natural gas where necessary rather than coal. For some residents of Dare County and the rest of the state, this was an unforgivable error, not offset in any way by the commitment to use local materials, including wood products, rock and gravel, local clay in bricks. Two candidates for governor actually denounced The Eden Plan by name, but thanks to a clever publicity campaign initiated by Madeline and under-written by the Mueller Foundation, the issue was quickly put to rest.

The ad campaign was built around the West Virginia state motto, *montaini semper liberii*, that is, mountaineers are always free, and argued four or five variations on the theme that what the people in Eden did in their own community was nobody else’s business, and if they wanted clean water and clean air so be it. Thanks to a series of timely meetings with community leaders throughout the state emphasizing home rule and local autonomy, and placement of ads in key newspapers and radio and television stations, the state legislature actually sponsored a highly publicized, but largely symbolic, resolution enabling local communities to exceed state pollution guidelines whenever they deemed such action in their best interest.

Less controversial, perhaps only because of its rather obscure origins in the prairie school period of Frank Lloyd Wright early in the 20th century is the commitment to horizontality. Buildings are generally characterized not only by the use of local materials but also earth-hugging designs and maximum adaptation to natural settings, even though this sometimes conflicts with woodlands-urban interface guidelines.

Because all buildings are designed with central heating, ventilation and air conditioning, most are characterized as well by open floor plans. Cantilevers, porches, patios and covered walkways are also commonly employed. Under the Eden plan, all buildings are designed with nature in mind, including sunlight, typical wind patterns, water flows, and maximum use of local indigenous plant
species. There is also extensive use of concrete and plastics and a general concern for the plasticity of materials.

Ralph Deigh was aware from his architectural reading that one of the theoretical forms that modern architecture took was Le Corbusier’s five principles of “New Architecture”, first expressed Towards a New Architecture published in 1926. As he explained it to other members of the planning group Le Corbusier’s ideas, either directly or in modified form had an important impact on his plans for the Eden Project.

First, the French modernist architect said that builders should lift the building over pilotis [columns of iron, steel, or reinforced concrete supporting a building above an open ground level], as in his famous Villa Savoye. The ground floor of the house, like the street, he famously said, belongs to the automobile. Therefore, housing should be raised on pilotis to allow the automobile’s movement or the green continuity. Ralph knew from the start that at least those structures in Eden that were located below the 500-year flood level ought to incorporate pilotis just as a practical matter. However, since, as Le Corbusier said, the street belongs to the automobile, Ralph reasoned that keeping both autos and streets out of the rural community was the wiser course. Not only did this create a link with earlier community designs, like the traditional English village, it also solved a host of practical problems for the Eden Project. Instead of streets, the structures in Eden are tied together by a web of walking and biking paths, and numerous conveyances including elevators, escalators, and moving sidewalks to funiculars and PRTs.

Secondly, Le Corbusier argued that the building floor plan should be free from structural conditioning so partitions can be organized in any way. This was his version and extension of Frank Lloyd Wright’s open floor plan. This “open plan” principle is incorporated in many of the houses and other buildings of Eden, not only in open, flowing public areas, but also in non-structural curtain walls, moveable walls, and spaces which flow easily between inside and outside.

Thirdly, many of Ralph Deigh’s designs incorporated the free facade, in which the structure separates from its facade relieving it of its structural function. In the traditional Appalachian log cabin and shed style buildings, Ralph noted, just as in the traditional brick and stone house, the facade is the structure of the building. But the use of structural steel, cantilevers, pilotis, reinforced concrete and other modern architectural features, Le Corbusier was quite correct that it is possible to construct the free facade.

The fourth of Le Corbusier’s principles involved the horizontal window. The facade, he noted, can be cut along its entire length to allow a room to be lit equally. A modified version of this principle - large windows - is incorporated in the vast majority of the structures designed by Ralph Deigh for Eden, from the Creek
House with a 180-degree living room view of the creek flowing past it, to the Slash House which looks out from its artificial crevice, cave-like into the canyon beyond. It is also incorporated in the Crystal House, with its multi-faceted window wall.

As a fifth and final principle, Le Corbusier said that a building should give back the space it takes up on the ground. One of the ways the French master encouraged this was by replacing the building’s footprint with a ‘garden in the sky’; rooftops planted with grasses, wildflowers or gardens. Roof gardens incorporated into many houses and buildings in Eden. The natural terrain makes the use of partial berms straight-forward. A more recent adaptation was the series of high-rise farms that Ralph Deigh designed for Eden. This also makes sense in terms of the woodlands-fire interface (which would include most of West Virginia) discussed below. The crowning glory of the principle of a building giving back the space it takes up on the ground is the Community Center, with its orientation facing the mountain, and its many sources and avenues of “shine through” light falling directly on the hillside.

After the fire which destroyed much of Barley Mill, the Eden Project committee, foundation staff and Ralph Deigh’s design group agreed to carefully attend to fire guidelines for minimizing risk in the wildlands-urban interface (in which interface precisely the community is to be located.) All new buildings in the Eden community should be designed with the following guidelines in mind. Under those guidelines, builders are strongly encouraged to select fire resistant building sites. Building among thick stands of trees, on hilltops, or overhanging a prominent rock outcroppings are deemed to be particularly dangerous sites. All buildings should be constructed with secure eaves and vent openings, and requirements that these should be screened and cleaned regularly as part of regular owners’ maintenance are written into all deeds. Roofing, siding materials, insulation and low flammable underlayment are to be selected carefully for their fire-retardant qualities. Cedar shakes and wooden siding are banned outright by the Eden Corporation covenants issued with the original deeds. Tile or steel roofs and concrete or brick walls and steel, fiber cement or stucco siding are preferred. Owners are also encouraged to keep combustible materials cleared from around all houses. This includes dry grass, brush, stacks of firewood, flammable debris, wooden fences, wooden decks. This includes anything that gusts of wind-blown embers might ignite. Cleared, defensible spaces at least 30 feet, and preferably 90 feet from any building are recommended. There must be good access to the property for emergency vehicles, including heavy fire trucks. This includes 12 to 20 foot wide driveways, culverts strong enough to bear fire trucks and hydrants or standing water sources for fire fighters. Lawn sprinkler systems are encouraged. Among the most controversial of the wildlands-urban interface guidelines are requirements for interiors: Owners are encouraged to upgrade windows and draperies with noncombustible materials. Intense heat from a wildfire can actually ignite interior drapes and furniture
through closed windows. Thus, the best choice is non-combustible shutters outside windows that can be quickly closed in a fire emergency.
Ralph Deigh believed his architectural work to be modern in its use of steel frame construction, large expanses of glass, concrete and plastic, incorporation of abstract and curved shapes, cantilevers and its rejection of neoclassical and beaux art decoration plastered onto stone or masonry piles. Deigh was especially indebted in numerous ways to various works of Frank Lloyd Wright but also to a variety of other architectural masters, including Mies van der Rohe, LeCorbusier, Zaha Hadid and, somewhat to how own surprise, various Chinese architects, notably the traditionalist Liang Sicheng, and the modernist Ma Yansong. He tried to make ample use of such Wrightian devices as naturalistic (“organic”) site selections, horizontality, cantilevers, clerestory windows, incorporation of appropriate and
available natural features, complex geometric shapes and to link indoors and outdoors with transitional spaces and passages, decks, patios, and arbors. His notebooks were filled with photographs and sketches of works by a wide variety of modernist architects, annotated with his comments and observations on them.

Deigh believed his own work to be modern in its use of large expanses of glass, steel framing, concrete, and plastic and its rejection of neoclassical and beaux art decoration on stone or masonry piles. Deigh also made ample use of such FLW devices as cantilevers, clerestory windows, incorporation of natural features when appropriate, minimizing inside-outside with transitional spaces. Also decks, patios

Deigh also had more than once characterized his work as remodern, in the sense that it lacked any postmodern sense of irony and cynicism and straightforwardly sought a renewal of a sense of beauty at the expense of what he called the “ugly sublime”. In a sense, it was an extension of what some have called Vancouverism, which is mostly about proximity and mixed usage. Vancouver architect Bing Thom described Vancouverism this way: “It's a spirit about public space. I think Vancouverites are very, very proud that we built a city that really has a tremendous amount of space on the waterfront for people to recreate and to enjoy. At the same time, False Creek and Coal Harbour were previously industrial lands that were very polluted and desecrated. We've refreshed all of this with new development, and people have access to the water and the views. So, to me, it's this idea of having a lot people living very close together, mixing the uses. So, we have apartments on top of stores. In Surrey we have a university on top of a shopping center. This mixing of uses reflects Vancouver in terms of our culture and how we live together.” (Sharma, Ian Alexander Narasimha (2012). "On the Edge: Redevelopment Projects at the Urban-Marine Interface in Vancouver, BC" (PDF). University of Washington. Retrieved 25 August 2014).

Unlike the modernist starchitects, Ralph Deigh was a vernacular architect in another sense. Not only did he have no formal training in architecture, he also felt no strong compulsion for the kinds of startling original designs, daring novelty and expressionistic individualism. “As far as I’m concerned that’s all part of the utopianism that the urban theorist Robert Fishman has declared dead.” Ralph once told the Dare County Rotary Club. “Hiding in plain sight just behind all the flat roofs, cantilevers, vast expanses of glass and other startling and highly visible fireworks that most people associate with the visual art of ‘modern’ architecture, the modernists have given us a new architectural vocabulary that is as original in its own ways as Greek temples or the Gothic cathedrals.”

“We’ve incorporated many of these features - like central heating and open floor plans - in our new construction, but there is so much more that we might also make better use of. And by ‘we’, I don’t mean future starchitects, who will probably always strive for originality and individual distinction. I mean those of us who are
in the trenches - the ordinary designers, crafts people and builders of this world, especially those of us in the Appalachian mountains.”

“We have wonderful people here in our beautiful mountains, but let’s face reality. Our cities and towns are, in the main, butt-ugly remnants of a past we would be better off casting aside, and there is still too much evidence of continuing violence to the environment and inhumanity to one another.”

“A real, authentic Appalachian architecture should strive not for individual originality in design, buildings that draw attention to themselves, but for a built environment that serves our people and protects our environment for future generations.

Importantly in the Appalachian historic context, Deigh's architecture can also be considered modern in its rejection of the basic free-standing cabin with attached lean-to, incorporation of modern features in the basic design of the houses rather than either as absent or retrofitted features. This includes such features as open concept floor plans, indoor plumbing and central heating and air conditioning in the original design and not retrofitted, double- and triple-paned glass, insulation and roofing materials with high R-values, skylights and solar tubes, sliding glass doors, clothes washers and dryers, modern kitchens with refrigerator/freezers, disposals, dishwashers. Deigh has a particular preference for in-floor heating, a feature he discovered in Korean and other Asian buildings.

Many of Deigh's designs are also considered modern vernacular architecture in their incorporation of certain traditional elements of Appalachian building such as retaining walls, no basements (especially when building on solid rock close to the surface), entrances/exits on multiple levels, front porches accessible to pedestrian traffic, fenced gardens, and use of a wide variety of shed and lean-to combinations.

By far the most controversial aspect of Deigh's Appalachian modernism is his commitment to sustainability. The belief is still widespread throughout the region that coal mining employment has faltered only because of dark and sinister political forces and a disregard for such factors as automation and declining market demand. This has been strongly aided and abetted by savvy - if regressive - business marketing (e.g., “Friends of Coal” campaigns) and a host of political false flags including the “Obama’s War on Coal” and anti-Hillary disinformation campaigns. Thus, it is widely believing that suspension of air and water quality regulation and standards will free up the coal industry and bring back jobs. In the face of this regressive political environment, Deigh's redesign of the mountain community is tangible evidence of workable ideas of sustainability.

Ralph Deigh hated the term, but some others might also characterize much of his work as remodern, in the sense that it lacked any postmodern sense of irony and cynicism and sought a renewal of a sense of architectural beauty at the expense of
what he called the “‘ugly sublime’ and the just plain ugly”. Taking inspiration (and unapologetically borrowing ideas) from such modern architects as Wright, Buckmaster Fuller, Zaha Hadid, Frank Geary, Eero Saarinen, and a host of lesser known others, Deigh also sought to use both simple and complex geometrical forms including hexagons, octagons, spirals, trapezoids, rhombuses, and complex, computer generated curves in his building designs.
One the greatest and most hopeful innovations of the Eden Plan, according to Ralph Deigh in a speech to the Barley Mills Chamber of Commerce today, is the proposal for a Bachelor of Practical Arts degree.

“We’ve gotten into the situation in rural America where more and more young people would like to have a college degree but don’t really have either the preparation or the genuine interest to earn one. It isn’t that they are “too dumb” to do the work. Nothing of the sort. It’s just that they don’t see the connection of academic learning to their own lives. They don’t see any connection between the courses they must take to earn a college degree and where they see their lives
going. For many kids coming out of small towns and rural areas, the current arrangements just don’t really provide what they need. And the present arrangements of vocational tracks, junior colleges and “trade schools” don’t really do it either.”

Mr. Deigh is a landscape designer and model builder who is one of the three members of the steering committee planning the new town of Eden which is under construction in Dare County. The wealthy widow, Mrs. Harry Mueller (Rosemary), and Dare County Clerk Adam Sennett are the other current members of the planning committee. He began his address with a brief historical overview of post-secondary education in the U.S. and its connections to communities.

“Thomas Jefferson not only laid out the rudiments of the modern college campus with his plan for an ‘academical village’ that became the University of Virginia and the city of Charlottesville, Virginia. Without really intending to, Jefferson also defined the sinews of what we still think of today as the American college town. Whether it is Charlottesville, Hiram, Ohio; Northfield, Minnesota, or West Liberty, Buckhannon or Concord, West Virginia, the model of the small town where the local college is the leading industry is well established in the U.S. Moreover, the model appears to remain intact when those same “academical villages” grow up to be fairly large cities like Morgantown and Huntington, West Virginia, larger cities like Ann Arbor, Michigan, Madison Wisconsin, Berkeley, California or even, perhaps Columbus, Ohio.”

“Although the modern university is a highly complex and multi-faceted reality,” Deigh continued, “there are really only three primary origins of these college towns. One is the liberal arts college, an undergraduate institution with a strong emphasis on teaching and the liberal arts. We don’t go too far wrong,” Deigh noted, “in seeing the initial and continuing role of such institutions as producing enlightened individuals - cultured and cultivated ladies and gentlemen able to live meaningful and productive lives. Liberal arts graduates should be versed in history, philosophy, the fine arts and sciences.”

“The second type of college town began to appear sometime after Jefferson, late in the 19th century, after the passage of the first Morrell Act in 1862. We can call these the A & M’s, letters that stand for agricultural and mechanical institutions, a fair reflection of the industrial revolution that transformed what was then a predominantly agricultural nation. Whether in the aptly named Texas A & M and Alabama A & M or Virginia Tech and Cal Tech (short for Polytechnical Institutions) or Michigan State, these institutions grew out of Agricultural and Engineering colleges, rather than the more classical humanities programs that in most cases were later add-ons.”
“There is also a third variant to these two, and that is the religious college established for the specific purpose of training clergy. Harvard University was established in the 17th century as just such a training institute and at a time when Boston might be seen as a kind of pre-Jeffersonian “ academical village”. We should note, however, that from the earliest, Boston was a dynamic and complex city and Harvard never dominated there in the way that Oberlin College has always been predominant in Oberlin, Ohio.”

“These three variants, or rather their latter-day descendants have long dominated higher education in the United States. Today, some are still located in small towns where they are typically dominant. Others have come to fit in larger towns or even cities.”

“More vocationally-oriented two-year (or junior) colleges, public vocational schools and private, for-profit colleges and “trade schools” in such craft fields as beautician (or beauty) and barber colleges were later, mid-20th century add-ons. Importantly, there are few examples - actually, none that I am aware of - where these vocationally-oriented programs are the dominant institutions of a community in the manner of the familiar college towns.”

Having laid down this historical outline, Deigh went on to detail a proposal for a completely new type of 3-year, post-high school college degree program to be offered by the Agricultural, Mechanical and Information Arts Institute which is to be the key institution in the new town of Eden. “What we envision are completely new combinations of civic, humanistic and technical education,” Deigh told the Chamber audience, “that link programs in civics and humanities with strong programs of vocational training in diverse classical fields such as culinary arts, ‘old technology’ fields like electricity, and ‘new technology’ fields like computer programming.”

“One of the unique aspects we think we can bring to bear in this area is a unique set of tools joining humanistic scholarship and a program of practical and technical subjects. It would be a mistake to call these disciplines at this point” Deigh added.

“One of these would be a system of sabbaticals and post-doctoral appointments in which we bring to our campus interested and qualified scholars who are prepared to use their research skills and scholarly abilities to build the knowledge base to support this new approach. We envision courses, books and articles on topics such as the history of French baking or Chinese cooking, and perhaps even something like the contemporary history of heating and air conditioning or supermarket management.”

Deigh’s presentation was not without controversy. There were even scattered boos from the audience when he said this. “The other prong of this approach would be completely new approaches to civic education. I know we live in a highly partisan
era, and some of you may disagree with me on this, but from my perspective it should be completely obvious that the result of the 2016 Presidential election - the election of a completely unprepared, untested, and in the view of many unqualified, candidate as leader of the free world might not be the wisest or most sensible form of populist protest.”

“This became even more problematic,” he went on, “when, in the context of contemporary developments in Russia, Turkey, Hungary and elsewhere of important links between this brand of populist protest and anti-democratic authoritarianism.” At this, Deigh’s speech was interrupted by shouts from several audience members three of whom rose and walked out of the hall. “Unfortunately, this kind of behavior,” Deigh ad libbed departing from his prepared text, “has become altogether too common. It is not healthy for our civic life when we - all of us - are only willing to listen to or read those who agree with us.”

Then, returning to his prepared text, he said “This is not a partisan matter. For the good of our country, we all need to find ways to address our differences, to talk to - and to listen to - one another. And, there is strong evidence that the kinds of students we hope to attract to this new form of higher education are often among the most ill-informed and ill-prepared students coming out of high school as far as civic education is concerned.”

“These are the students - many of them - who surveys show cannot identify the three branches of government or cannot name even one of their elected public officials. These are the young people who don’t know the difference between a County Commissioner and a Planning Commission.”

“As the third prong of our educational innovation, we propose to develop new approaches to the civic education of our students; approaches that will be of greater interest to them and more relevant to their careers and adult lives.”

As he concluded his remarks, there was a smattering of applause from the audience of local business people. “We’ve heard all this before, but the fact is that college graduates continue to come into the job market woefully unprepared for the world of work, and I didn’t hear anything today that would change that,” said Anton Burns, local insurance agent and Secretary of the Chamber. Gordon Morris, owner of Morris Machine Shop, was even more pointed in his criticism. “I agree there is need for new forms of practical, work-related training for young people looking for jobs, but why anyone would want to combine that with humanities and civics is beyond me. Does he think young people today would really be interested in this kind of degree?”

A quite different reaction came from Gwen Owens, owner-operator of a local steak house. “I think Mr. Deigh and his group are really onto something here. I am very
much looking forward to seeing this approach in action. I might even want to take some of those courses in the history of cooking and baking that he mentioned.”
Ralph had been on a more-or-less permanent high ever since Rosemary had made clear that she intended to see that a sizable portion of her vast fortune went into the construction of Eden and communities like it. In the very earliest stages of the project and before Rosemary’s illness proved fatal, she had designated Ralph and Madeline and Adam as the official steering committee of the Eden Project. Although they worked well together as a team and shared responsibility for all major questions, Ralph was most concerned with architectural, design and physical planning questions. Madeline took principal responsibility for the legal and financial issues, and Adam was the local organizer, with an uncanny ability to
identify the right person for each task, organize support, and call forth the best in everyone involved in the project.

They had had a chance to discuss many things with Rosemary before she became ill and all four of them were in agreement that getting the Mechanical Institute underway was perhaps the highest priority of all. For one thing, it had been clear in the weeks following the twin disasters that there was a considerable pool of local talent in Dare County that could be needed in realizing the Eden Project: local builders, carpenters, plumbers, stone masons, cabinet makers and many others. To his surprise, Ralph found a remarkable talent pool among the previously unknown residents of Cibola. His favorite examples were Alejandro Gomez, whose family had been stone masons for hundreds of years and who had actually refined his skills at dry stone construction in the traditional Inca manner with apprenticeships in Quito, Ecuador and elsewhere in Latin America. The international internship program of Cibola, which apparently reached back to the late medieval guilds and apprenticeships, had been one of its more remarkable features. Ralph was also surprised and delighted to learn that another Cibola resident, Gordon Le, was very adept at Chinese timber frame design and construction. Although he was quite elderly, as a young man Mr. Le had studied Chinese architecture with Liang Sicheng. In 1930, Liang and a colleague won an award to design the physical plan of Tianjin. Their plan incorporated contemporary American techniques in zoning, public administration, government finance and municipal engineering. Liang’s colleague, Zhang Rui, had spent an entire summer consulting with American programs in architecture and planning in Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Minneapolis and elsewhere, and Gordon Lee had spent that entire summer as Prof. Rui’s amanuensis. Mr. Le was able to finish his education in Chinese architecture in 1946 when Sicheng was in the United States as the Chinese representative to the United Nations committee that designed the United Nations building and the following year when he returned to the U.S. to accept a doctorate from Princeton University. Since that time, he had completed a variety of “log cabin” construction projects within the Cibola community, and when he fled Cibola just prior to the flash flood Lee was able to bring several of his drawings with him. To the extent he was able, and his declining health would permit, Gordon Lee had already agreed to teach timber frame construction techniques and a unit on Chinese planning at the Mechanical Institute. He would also oversee building one of his timber frame designs on a suitable lot in one of the Eden village clusters. Ralph, Madeline and Adam had also talked with Le about doing the plan for one of the six village clusters, using his insights from several trips to the most innovative of the several hundred new Chinese cities built since the 1990s.

Ralph Deigh's concept of the Mechanics Institute is at the intellectual and economic heart of the community design of Eden. Mechanics Institutes generally are educational establishments designed to provide adult education in technical and
mechanical subjects to adults. The name is widely used in commonwealth countries, including Great Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. The gender-neutral term “vocational education” and “vocational school” are more often used in the U.S.

What is unique about the Mechanics Institute in Eden is the breadth and range of its program, and in particular, the inclusion of artisanal and artistic subjects including glass blowing, sculpture, blacksmithing and iron work.

Ralph Deigh began developing this idea and the needed facilities with Thomas Jefferson’s 18th century designs for the “academical village”; a project that was, Jefferson said, “the hobby of my old age”. “In fact,” Jefferson wrote, a University should not be a house but a village.” The concept actually evolved over several decades. In sketching out a plan that eventually became the University of Virginia and was borrowed by a broad range of 19th century North American towns “we wish to establish in the upper & healthier country, & more centrally for the state an University on a plan so broad & liberal & modern, as to be worth patronizing with the public support, and be a temptation to the youth of other states to come, and drink of the cup of knowledge & fraternize with us.”

‘An “academical village” should be more convenient, safer, healthier, and less noisy and thus more conducive to study. Because a village can grow organically as space is “wanting,” its cost initially would be less than that of a single large building necessarily constructed on the basis of predicted future enrollment. Many college towns have come to rue those words by the Sage of Monticello as expanding campuses “gobble up” local real estate, including farm lands and former residential neighborhoods of deteriorating housing.

Moreover, as Jefferson later wrote to Governor Wilson C. Nicholas in 1816, the small buildings of a village provide the opportunity to exhibit “models in architecture of the purest forms of antiquity, furnishing to the student examples of the precepts he will be taught in that art.” In this regard, Deigh's efforts were in the spirit of Jefferson’s modeling, but Deigh's modernism represented a sharp departure from the campus neo-classicism that Jefferson’s concept encouraged. The Prairie School, Wright, Le Corbusier, brutalism, and more recent works by Geary, Habib and others are equally as worth as the classic Greek and roman architects, he was often quoted as saying.

Jefferson’s plan for an academical village was more fully described in the Report of the Commissioners for the University of Virginia, commonly called the Rockfish Gap Report, which he drafted and which, in 1818, recommended to the General Assembly that Central College in Charlottesville be the site of a new state university.
As to the ground plan for the university, the report stated “they [commissioners] are of opinion that it should consist of distinct houses or pavilions, arranged at proper distances on each side of a lawn of a proper breadth, and of indefinite extent, in one direction, at least; in each of which should be a lecturing room, with two to four apartments, for the accommodation of a professor and his family; that these pavilions should be united by a range of dormitories, sufficient each for the accommodation of two students only, this provision being deemed advantageous to morals, to order, and to uninterrupted study; and that a passage of some kind, under cover from the weather, should give a communication along the whole range.”

Jefferson contracted with Peter Maverick, an engraver, to provide a formal representation of the ground plan for his academical village. He received a proof in November, 1822.

What is unique about the Mechanics’ Institute in Eden is the breadth and range of its program. It is not a stretch to suggest that just as Morgantown, Buckhannon and others are “college towns”, Eden is an institute town; that is, the various programs of the Institute are so large, diverse, successful and well-known that they constitute the principal economic driver of the community.

While approximately 25% of the high school graduates of Eden continue to go on to college, most of the other 75% Critical to the success of this enterprise is the Program Planning Department, a staff of five which continually monitors employment statistics in search of trends and makes recommendations to the Institute Management about opportunities for future employment.
One of the remarkable characteristics in Deigh's master plan for Eden is the absence of a central business district (CBD or “downtown”). The typical North American rural community is centered around the dichotomy of the traditional small town and the surrounding countryside, with the CBD being one of three primary spatial divisions of the town; the others being the residential neighborhood(s) and scattered community spaces and public buildings, such as parks, athletic fields, churches, schools, lodge halls and fraternal buildings. Typically, the shops and stores of the small-town CBD are arranged in linear fashion, side by side on the street level of two- and three-story brick buildings, with the upper stories devoted to diverse other uses including apartments,
community rooms, and storage. The CBD’s of small-town Appalachia are no exception, although sometimes there are accommodations for terrain, weather or climate.

Following the general pattern first developed in the High Streets of English market towns, sidewalks on both sides of the street are often broader than those found elsewhere in the community, run the length and breadth of downtown, allowing for pedestrian traffic and access to the individual stores. In many Appalachian small towns, downtown is the only place with sidewalks at all, and separate walking and bike trails may be similarly non-existent. By the early decades of the 20th century, accommodation to the automobile also featured diagonal or parallel parking spaces along the streets passing through downtown, and later municipal parking lots in nearby vacant or abandoned lots.

Twentieth century urban architects like Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier made a series of accommodations to the automobile in their urban designs, including the latter’s use of pilotis. Architects, Le Corbusier wrote in 1926, should lift the building off the ground with a column of iron, steel, or reinforced concrete supporting a building above an open ground level. The ground floor of the house, like the street, should belong to the automobile and pilotis should allow the automobile’s movement or continuity of green space. Ralph Deigh was no longer prepared to cede that much autonomy to the internal combustion engine; at least within the precincts of the community itself. Thus, the design of The Eden Project allowed no automobile traffic within the residential areas of the town and restricted automobiles to the two substantial parking ramps located at opposite ends of the town. Initially, local residents and their guests were allowed to park their private vehicles there and proceed throughout the town of Eden and all of its seven hutongs, or village neighborhoods, by way of the extensive local transit system consisting of walkways, bikeways (skateboards encouraged), moving sidewalks, elevators, escalators, chairlifts, funiculars and the PRT, which also linked Eden to Barley Mill, where the Eden Project also constructed two multi-story car parks.

Eventually, the Eden Plan called for the elimination of privately-owned vehicles entirely. In Phase 1 of the plan, a limited number of Zip Cars were available for immediate use by local residents and a network of rental bicycle stations like those found in many urban areas today were already in place. With the use of their Eden Project identity cards, residents and their guests could rent a bike from at least 21 different locations divided more or less evenly among the seven hutongs (five of these bike racks were actually at the apexes where two or more village entrances were within 100 yards of one another).

Downtowns in rural communities are often located near the physical center of the town along the main highway passing through the town, or at the intersection of two or more roads passing through (e.g., where a North-South highway crosses an
East-West highway). In the traditional English market town, this roadway is often designated as the High Street, but in most of rural America, its nom de plume is Main Street. If there is a large volume of truck or even automobile traffic on any of those Main Streets or the streets which cross them in the downtown area, serious problems of congestion and public safety may result and in Deigh's view stop signs or traffic lights seldom represent acceptable solutions.

For this reason, the master plan for Eden bans all automobile traffic from the town per se, establishes a system of parking garages on the periphery, encourages the use of Zip-cars, and limits truck traffic to delivery vehicles in the Labyrinth. The phase one plan called for sole reliance on walking and a network of sidewalks and trails throughout the town, but in the phase two plan this was supplemented with a village transportation grid that included a variety of horizontal moving sidewalks, vertical escalators and elevators, and a multi-stop “people mover” or personal rapid transit (PRT) system. All of this was electric powered, using the local electric grid powered entirely by wind, water and solar power.

When he first learned of Sidewalk Labs, an Alphabet (formerly Google) off-shoot, and their effort to “reimagine cities from the internet up” Ralph Deigh knew that such a project would focus on the great metropolitan urban centers. Their first project he learned was in Toronto. He thought it was unlikely to ever consider the implications of reimagining wired small towns and rural communities, many of which still struggle with the day-to-day problems of glacially slow internet service and house vast numbers of the information poor. Yet, that was precisely where his efforts had been pitched: To building a completely new kind of small town around the “information superhighway” rather than the conventional highways.

In a city built from the internet up, Sidewalk Labs “imagined a flexible physical layer that included street grids, open utility channels, and upgradeable digital infrastructure, adaptable software and other features such as privacy rules, regulations that lay out approaches to city management, and principles of governance that would empower people to build and change “applications” much faster than is possible today (Doctoroff, 2016). When he first started exploring this, Ralph’s only reference point in addition to the PRT was a “smart bridge” over the Monongahela River in Morgantown which engineers from WVU nearby had loaded with a wide array of sensors and test equipment. And, he thought, why not incorporate the best electronic infrastructure throughout a completely new kind of small town? Fortunately, Madeline, Jim Harbaugh and a few others were thinking along these same lines, and the high-speed fiber optic network into Dare County that they relied upon was only a tiny first step.

The key feature of infrastructure development in the new community of Eden was Ralph Deigh's design of an integrated concrete core structure running along the valley floor next to the river. Deigh initially called it the Hub, then the Viaduct, but
whenever he mentioned the topic, local wags referred to it as the crypt. Whatever it was called, it would be truly revolutionary in small town development, an electronic communications, public utility, and transportation core that housed all of the trunk lines of the electrical, electronic core of the community along with an underground highway and transportation system.

Eventually, the name Labyrinth was settled upon. It was designed, first and foremost, to house much of the utility and communications infrastructure - electricity and the internet of things and other vulnerable components - to keep them free from the weather, and in particular safe from the flash flooding characteristic of Appalachian rivers. Like Timex watches, the Labyrinth is designed to be water-tight and secure even if submerged in 50 feet of water.

A cross-section diagram of one part of the Labyrinth (shown in Figure 1) shows an outer wall running along one bank of the river, with tunnels for conventional train and PRT traffic, a second tunnel for truck traffic and two separate pedestrian tunnels for inspection and servicing of water and sewer mains, and electric and telephone lines and internet and cable tv and Internet of Things (IoT) facilities. The Labyrinth also includes the central multi-modal transportation hub of the community, which would allow local travelers to transition easily from the PRT, or any of the assorted funiculars, escalators, and system of moving walkways to the “Hooterville Trolley” or the reverse.

The Labyrinth is designed to incorporate utilities and includes an open-ended approach to the Internet of Things (IoT). It runs the entire length of the central village campus. At the upper end and also at the lower end where the river exits the Township, the Hub includes locks and dams to hold back high waters and modulate flash floods, create a reservoir for the water supply of Eden. At the upper end is a water treatment plant, that processes clean water for village use. At the lower end is a sewage treatment facility that returns clean water to the river.

One of the several novel features of the Labyrinth (not shown) is its inclusion of several labs for monitoring the numerous miniature chemical treatment plants on the assorted streams flowing out of the mountains and into the river over the scope of the township. As an unfortunate part of the history of mining, chemical pollution into local streams of acids, rare substances and even radioactive materials, and diverse other unsavory substances.

As a key part of the quadruple bottom line approach of the Eden project, one of the goals of the Eden project is to become “pollution averse”; that is, to identify all possible sources of negative human impact on the natural environment and to reverse or eliminate them. Toward this end, automobile traffic was completely eliminated in the villages in favor of pedestrian traffic. Eden is designed to have two additional intermodal transportation hubs at each end of town. This includes a
network of parking ramps and a fleet of rental cars, PRT stops, bike racks, and rental bikes.
Razi Hadid was an Iranian engineering graduate student at Michigan State University with an interest in personal rapid transit - what most people called people movers. Razi came to Morgantown the summer after the flood and tornado in Dare County to study the PRT at West Virginia University. When he arrived he had no knowledge of Eden, or of Cibola, or Ralph Deigh, or Rosemary Mueller’s generous gift, or the Mueller Foundation. He only knew that the PRT had been created in the early 1970s by Professor Sami Elias, an Egyptian-American engineer who was then on the WVU Engineering faculty. Razi divided his summer between interviews with the PRT staff - some retired and some still working - and the university archives where the original technical drawings, calculations and
technical memoranda were housed. The project had been a joint effort of federal transportation officials, the university, the Jet Propulsion Laboratory and Boeing Corporation.

There were several separate design approaches extant at the time. The PRT was based on the staRRcar concept of William Alden. The original Alden staRRcar was a "dual-mode" transit system – small cars that operated like traditional electric cars when driven around town for short distances but allowed long-distance travel via automated guideways that provided power. The vehicle were quite lightweight because they could only travel at low speeds when manually guided and didn't need full crash safety or large battery packs. The PRT design did away with one part of the dual concept - independent electric vehicles driving around town on the open roadways and concentrated everything on lightweight cars operating exclusively on guideways. They were encouraged in this by Alden and his engineering team, who realized that developing a single-mode vehicle (operating on a guideway rather than the open roadways) would be much less expensive.

Phase I of the PRT system was 8.4 km of track (4.2 each way), 45 vehicles and 3 stations. It opened in 1974. Phase II expanded the system to its 5 current stations, 73 vehicles and roughly 14 km of guideways, a figure which counted all the station entrances and exits, turnarounds and sidings. The full travel distance from one end to the other was 5.8 km.

Decades before electric cars like the Tesla and the Toyota Prius became popular, the PRT cars were powered by three-phase 575-volt AC direct current motors. Electric pickups are fixed on both sides of each cars and connect to electronic rails on one or both sides of the guideways. Each car also has four-wheel steering for increased mobility into and out of stations while retaining full contact with the power source.

Shortly after the original PRT from the Beechurst Station in front of Brooks Hall downtown to the Engineering building on the Evansdale Campus was up and running and even before the extensions to the Health Sciences campus and Walnut Street downtown were completed, Professor Elias had decamped from Morgantown for the staff of the Washington D.C. Metro. By that time, his work on the PRT was complete, and others were able to go on to complete Phases I and II of the system.

Late in the summer and quite by accident, Razi met Lil... who happened to be in Morgantown for a conference on landscape architecture. They met on a Friday evening at a local student hang-out and in the early stages of getting to know one another Razi asked what Lil... did or where she worked or something of that nature and immediately their attention turned to their mutual interest in small scale transportation systems. They soon adjourned from the bar to the Blue Moose, a
local coffee shop which was much more conducive to a quiet conversation on PRTs, and when the waitress informed them that the coffee shop was closing, Razi mentioned that the university had a program called WVU Up All Night, where they were able to find a quiet corner at the Mountainlair student center where they talked until the sun was well up in the sky the following morning. One of the things that Lil. . . told Razi during that fateful night was that each year the students held a contest in front of the Mountainlair student center to see how many people could get into a single PRT car. The current record was 97.

Razi was able to tell Lil. . . one thing she had only been vaguely aware of. The PRT system, he said, operates in three modes - demand, schedule and circulation. Demand, or true PRT mode, in off-peak hours, responds to rider requests. Either timed (at 5-minute intervals) or number of riders (when requests reach a preset number, like 15) can activate dispatch of a car to that location. During peak demand hours, in schedule mode the system operates fixed routes in anticipation of known demand. During the lowest demand times, late nights and early mornings before students leave for classes, circulation mode operates a smaller number of vehicles that stop at every station, like a bus service.

By the time he met Lil. . . Razi already realized that some aspects of the original PRT design were no longer necessary. For example, the concrete pathways have magnetic induction loops to provide data to operating computers. Embedded pipes can be heated to melt snow and ice. 35% is at or below ground level; 65% is elevated bridges and viaducts. He hadn’t yet settled the question of the necessity of headed pathways, he told her, but GPS probably made the magnetic induction loops unnecessary. One of the real plusses of the guideway system, he told her, was safety. On highly crowded campuses, with often-careless and transporting carefree young people, the PRT had had no injuries in the first 42 years of operation. One previous November, he had learned, a glitch in the increasingly obsolete computer system had caused a minor collision of two cars, resulting in minor injuries to two students.

Lil. . . had also told Razi what she knew about the problems experienced in the early days. Because this was to be a featured success of the Nixon Administration, impossible deadlines had been set by Washington, resulting not only in numerous missed deadlines but also in huge cost-overruns. The total cost of the system exceeded $130 million in 1975 dollars.

“But they did get it up and running, and it’s been transporting thousands of students every day for nearly 50 years,” was Razi’s reaction.

And, Lil. . . noted, an internal study by the WVU Transportation and Parking office compared the operating cost per mile of the PRT with other comparable mass transportation systems in the U.S. and found that only the subway operations in
New York and the MTA in Boston - both massively largely systems - were less expensive. In the course of his summer in Morgantown, Razi had also learned of proposals to extend the PRT southward from Walnut Street to the Waterfront area and to the northwest to the Mylan Park area. He had originally thought he might be able to get a job with this expansion effort, but when he learned that the estimated cost of these extensions was $30-40 million/mile, he quickly realized that was unlikely to happen anytime soon.

“You aren’t going to believe this,” Lil. . ., whose conversation was usually extremely limited and focused to the work at hand, effused to a somewhat startled Madeline the following Monday, “but I met an engineer up in Morgantown Friday night who I think you should hire. He’s finishing up his masters in engineering at Michigan State, where he specialized in ‘vehicular robotics’ - specifically, self-driving vehicles. He came to West Virginia to study the PRT because he’s interested in latest generation people movers that combine features of light rail and robotic vehicles.”

And so it was that Razi Hadid came to the Eden Project. The first true professional hired, he became supervisor of transportation projects in Eden. His first major undertaking was to oversee the design and installation of the twelve and a half mile PRT from Huttonsville through the riverfront Labyrinth in Eden to the federal courthouse in Landsdown. When Razi came to Huttonsville for an interview, there had been a few moments of inter-generational tension as he and Ralph Deigh got their respective egos under control. It was quickly apparent to Ralph that not only did Razi have engineering expertise far beyond Ralph’s limited understandings. He had also quickly grasped the larger objectives of Ralph’s intention to make Eden a post-car culture environment in which the automobile was merely one component of a larger system design, and not the be-all and end-all of local and regional transportation. In fact, when Razi said more or less that to a larger gathering of the Advisory Committees at the Mueller Foundation offices, Ralph whispered to Madeline, “I couldn’t have said it better myself.”

Razi also revealed at an informal meet-and-greet after the interview that his interest in PRTs was first stirred by the popular television show, Green Acres, starring Eddie Albert, Eva Gabor, and his favorite inanimate character, The Hooterville Cannonball. The Cannonball was an 1890s steam locomotive pulling a single passenger car. It ran on a neglected, forgotten or abandoned rail spur from Hooterville to Pixley. Under Engineer Charley Pratt and Conductor Fred Smoot, both retired railroad employees, and despite the continuing efforts of J. Homer Bedlow, supervising V.P. of the C&FW Railroad company, who tried unsuccessfully to end the service, the Cannonball operated more like an on-call taxi service than a regularly scheduled transportation utility. (In PRT parlance, this is known as “demand mode.”) “For the residents of Hooterville and nearby
Mayberry, it was personalized rapid transit!” Razi would tell anyone who would listen. “Whenever events in their lives called for it, the train would even make unscheduled stops for the passengers to go fishing or pick fruit, or whatever else they might want to do.

“The first time I saw the show, I thought ‘why not?’ That’s the way urban subway systems function. When I want to get from my hotel in London to the British Museum, I just hop in the Tube and get off at the right stop. That’s how personal transit should operate in rural areas, also. First, we had Yellow Cabs and now there is Uber and

As Razi indicated at that gathering and frequently later on, that simple ideal meant that he also shared Ralph’s vision of a multi-modal transportation system that included walking trails, moving sidewalks, escalators, bicycles, pedicabs, funiculars, aerial tramways, and his own personal favorite, personal rapid transit. Like the Cannonball, the Eden PRT should be on call practically anytime someone needed to go from Eden to Huttonsville, or return. Razi, working with Ralph, Adam and Madeline, agreed to a total of 12 stops along the 19.3-kilometer route. There would be a stop at five of the six village nodes in Eden, two stops at the northwestern end in Huttonsville, one at the edge of town and one in the downtown area, a stop in Barley Mill, two at small settlements (actually former coal camps) along the route, one in Barley Mill and the eastern terminus at the federal courthouse in Landover.

It had been fortuitous that with only a few adjustments, the route through Barley Mill crossed six properties. Five of the six were owned by residents who were either planning to relocate to Eden or move away and it was very easy for Madeline and foundation staff to gain the necessary permissions.
Ralph Deigh’s original vision for the Mechanics Institute had been of a single building, containing a series of separate workshops, ateliers and labs for the various mechanical arts. However, it quickly became clear that this would be too narrow a focus that would separate the education and training aspects of the Mechanics Institute from the living heart of the community of Eden. Rather than a traditional downtown separate from the campus, the various educational programs of the Institute would be distributed in and throughout the town. Parts of the E.M.I. campus would, in fact, be scattered among all seven villages that make up the Town of Eden, West Virginia. One of the first opportunities to work out this
approach came into view as the plans for the transportation grid, and the PRT in particular, began to gel.

For this purpose, and unlike the Morgantown PRT and most urban subway systems, Razi’s design for the Eden PRT featured three sizes of cars - a six-seat model which could actually accommodate twelve people fairly comfortably for short trips, with six seated and six standing; a twelve-seat model which would accommodate up to twenty people; and a 36-seat model which in an emergency could handle up to 70 people. In Phase I, only two 36-seat cars were included. They were not expected to be used often and one was to be kept in reserve at each end of the line. Approximately a dozen each of the six- and twelve-seat models were built and installed. This was more than anyone expected would be in use at any given moment, but as the experience with the Morgantown PRT had demonstrated, cars often had to be pulled offline for maintenance and major or minor repairs, sometimes at awkward times, late nights and weekends, and this number also gave the system a comfortable margin for meeting needs of travelers during peak travel times. It very quickly became clear, for example, that the PRT immediately transformed Eden from an isolated small town into a web of connections with both Huttonsville and Landover, as people could live in the relative seclusion of Eden with all its amenities, and work in either Huttonsville, or any of the five possible stops along the way. Once their new housing was completed in the first village, Adam quickly became accustomed to taking the morning train to the county courthouse in Landover returning on one of the evening trains along with the other commuters. While Evie could carry out most of her various duties as County Medical Examiner and practicing physician using the Eden transportation system, it was sometimes necessary for her to take the PRT to one of the parking garages at either end of town where she would pick up a Zip-car rental for the day in order to visit some of the more remote communities, or to travel to Charleston, Huntington or Morgantown for a medical meeting, or which she had far too many.

There was no real problem in simultaneously operating all 28 cars of the PRT system along the twenty-five miles of the route, with each one having an average of .96 miles of space to roam around in. To the extent the PRT flourished, it could easily accommodate up to 50 cars or more in that same space. Also, like mass transit systems based on Elias’ original concept for the PRT, the Eden-Huttonsville-Landover circuit was computer-controlled in such a way that the separate cars would never collide with one another. As far as the computer was concerned, it was logically impossible for this to occur. Each would operate in its own “lozenge” of space ahead and behind, with the system computer algorithm automatically speeding up cars ahead and slowing down cars approaching from the rear to keep them from entering another car’s cartridge. Moreover, each car had its own built in crash-avoidance system, which would automatically break and slow
cars if they ever got too close together and stop automatically if that failed to solve the problem. The lozenges were on the order of 10 car lengths ahead and behind, or nearly twice the amount of space it would take a car to safely come to a halt without making contact with any other. That technology which was becoming standard on regular American highway vehicles was not even available when the original PRT was designed and built in the 1970s. Thus, Razi was fond of saying, a temporarily stopped car near the Huttonsville end of the line would not interfere with the operation of any other cars starting out from Eden or from Landover until they entered the last mile into Huttonsville. Even then, a “traffic jam” of a dozen cars could easily be accommodated within that single mile.

Transportation technology had advanced significantly since the original PRT was designed, and in particular, the development of the Tesla battery, charging stations and electric cars in general as well as some of the “self-driving” features on production automobiles had made it possible to design the Eden-Huttonsville-Landover PRT without the third rail. Each car can carry its own energy source, with a constant rotation of cars into and out of service for charging.
Her life had changed dramatically in the months following Aunt Rosemary’s death, Linda Sue told herself as she and Jerry drove the narrow West Virginia road into Dare County. Since then she had become the lady of the house, in charge of the staff and the grounds, making room assignments for the frequent guests and supervising meal preparation and housekeeping. Keeping up with all of that had proven particularly trying at the time right before and for the first few weeks after the funeral. The combination of Aunt Rosemary’s sudden illness and dying and all that money meant that what seemed like unending hordes of long-lost relations, some real and some not, were continually arriving from nowhere.
With help from Madeline, John Graham and a few of the staff counsel at Graham and Graham, Linda Sue had developed a regular routine for herself and the household staff to handle them when some new “third cousin, twice removed” showed up on their doorstep. First, she would invite them in for a cup of coffee and a chat. If the person proved to not actually be a relative, she would give them a standard foundation form with instructions and send them on their way. The matter was then for Madeline to sort out. If the visitor claimed to be a relative she did not know, Linda Sue would use the information she had gathered over coffee and ask June to join them to make conversation while she placed a call to her father in Omaha to see if he had any idea who this relative might be. If between them they could place the person, she might invite them to stay for a day or two in one of the bedrooms upstairs.

The first few times Linda Sue did this, the housekeeper would report something missing from the guest room after the relative left. It was usually something inexpensive and easily replaced, but on more than one occasion, a clock radio was taken. Imagine that, she told her father last week. For some reason they could not begin to imagine, members of her extended family seemed to have a penchant for clock radios.

During the course of the relative’s visit, John or one of the other lawyers would just “happen to be in the neighborhood and drop by” for a social call, be introduced to the relative, and, after some casual conversation bring the subject around to the relative’s expectations. Most wondered if they were mentioned in Aunt Rosemary’s will. Inevitably, they were not, but after Madeline learned of these visits, the board of the foundation agreed to set up a small contingency fund. The lawyer would listen to the supplicant and after tacit approval indicated with a discrete head nod from Linda Sue, the visiting lawyer would suggest a small sum, usually between $250 and $1,000 depending on the degree of relation. After a few legal niceties, including signing an acknowledgement, non-disclosure form that also promised there would be no further requests, the relative would go back home happy in the assurance that the check would be mailed to their home address by the foundation within a week.

If Linda Sue’s father did not recognize the name or know of a family connection, the situation was more complicated. She would rejoin the conversation between June and the visitor, take a name, phone number and address, and inform the visitor that some things needed to be checked out, thank them for coming and send them away with a highly official looking form from the foundation that required, among other things, a fuller statement of the

Over time, such visits grew increasingly less frequent. "Now that the parade of relatives has dropped off there isn't that much to do. June has moved back to her own house, it's really kind of lonely here during the week,” she told her mother.
Madeline was gone for most of every week on Foundation business over in West Virginia. And when she came back on weekends she brought a steady stream of house guests with her, from both Barley Mill and Cibola. Most were just regular people, but some seemed extremely exotic to the young woman from Omaha: Indians, Chinese, Africans, Spanish speakers and others she could not quite identify.

But the biggest change in Linda Sue's life had been quite unexpected. One weekend, Daniel Messenger had been among Madeline's guests. When she learned that Linda Sue and some friends were going to a concert Saturday night in Cincinnati she, rather brashly Linda Sue thought, suggested they might want to take Daniel along too.

Daniel and Linda Sue had really hit it off and, long story short, not only was Daniel now a regular visitor, spending most weekends at the Mueller Mansion in Ohio. Jerry and his wife had decided to spend six months on a south Texas beach, and Madeline claimed it helped her a great deal to have Daniel do much of the driving back and forth from Eden. It appeared that the Barley Mill newspaper was permanently shuttered, but Daniel had taken a reporting job with the only other paper in Dare County. As the demands of that job became more intense, Linda Sue started going to West Virginia a couple of days each month.

After learning from her father of her deceased mother’s Wichita Nation tribal identity and even her possible pre-Columbian family connection to Etzanoa, Linda Sue decided to move to Eden permanently and change her name to Susan Birdsong.

Ever since Aunt Rosemary had passed away, Madeline was spending more and more time in Dare County on foundation business and June was gone from the house for longer and longer periods of time for what seemed to be an infinitely expanding variety of reasons. Linda Sue found herself alone much of the time and had become more and more dissatisfied with her role as household manager, factotum of the Mueller estate and housekeeper for the seemingly endless round of visiting Mueller relatives who arrived hats in hand hoping to carve off their own greedy little pieces of Uncle Harry’s vast fortune.

In pursuit of greater insight into her new-found native heritage and simply to pass the time in her frequent evenings alone, Susan learned that the Spanish explorer, Francisco Vazques de Coronado was said to have encountered the Wichita people in 1541 near a bend in the Arkansas River in what is now central Kansas. The Wichitas don’t appear to have interested Coronado much, or distracted him for long from his incessant search for gold. In fact, Coronado may have seen Etzanoa, still the second largest city in North America and simply misunderstood what he was seeing; he recorded in his journal that the Wichita people lived in “no more
than 25 towns” and appeared to have no gold, silver or precious gems. More recent anthropological estimates have placed the likely population of Etzanoa at anywhere from five to twenty thousand people. This pointed to a city second only to Cahokia a few hundred miles to the East. The very idea of such permanent settlements on the North American plains are quite at odds with the usual images of small, isolated mobile bands of constantly moving hunter-gatherers with their teepees, tent poles and ponies - which they would not have had anyway, until long-extinct horses were re-introduced from Europe in the seventeenth century.

Horses or not, Susan Birdsong decided it was time for a change in her life. When she learned of the historic presence of both Spanish and Amerindian people among the population of Cibola, and that many of these same people would be moving to the new community of Eden, West Virginia Susan decided that was where she belonged. She had already met a number of what she still thought of as the “Cibola Indians” at Madeline’s office in Huttonsville. In her transition from Linda Sue to Susan, it would be a stretch to believe that she felt any actual emotional affinity, much less “blood ties” with these new acquaintances, she did enjoy talking with them and looked forward to meeting them again.

Her move to Eden was eased considerably when the board of the Mueller Foundation decided to sell the Mueller Mansion and grounds. From the board’s perspective, the decision was made only after it had assurances that for all intents and purposes Madeline and June no longer lived in the Mueller Mansion and that Linda Sue wanted to move out. Rather than advertising to replace her as house and property manager, the board instructed Graham and Graham to sell the house and grounds and make suitable arrangements for Jerry and Doris Eliot and Alec Jones and his wife to remain in their homes on the property for life. By that time, the Jones’ only son was already away at college and the board felt no additional action on his behalf was necessary. The international corporation that bought the property had plans to turn it into a luxury executive retreat and conference center complete with an 18-hole championship golf course, swimming pools, tennis courts and sauna. The third-floor suites that had once been occupied by Madeline, June, Linda Sue and the seemingly unending round of shirrtail relations who came to visit and fortune-hunt made the house particularly attractive to the corporate buyers.

One suggestion had been that the new resort would be known as the J.B. Mueller Estate and Conference Center. The marketing and branding consultant retained by the corporation felt that “J.B.” Mueller, the initials of Harry’s legal name, would not be associated with the infamous “Harry” Mueller in local public estimation. That notion was rejected and the complex was to be known simply as Greenswand Acres, which the same consultant said had a suitably aristocratic ring to it. This, he
said, would make it particularly appealing to status-conscious executives who were 
the target market for the new center.

So it was that Susan Birdsong came to move to Eden, West Virginia. Because of 
her efforts in caring for Harry and Rosemary in their final years, and because of 
her friendship with her, but mostly because she knew Susan had proven herself to 
be an excellent manager even under difficult circumstances, Madeline tried hard to 
find a suitable place for Susan in the foundation. After Susan had confided to 
Madeline the reason for her name change, Madeline had even joked “So, if we 
hired you, we can count it as an Affirmative Action hire,” but she could tell from 
her friend’s reaction that was not a good thing to say. The problem was that there 
was no real job for Susan at the moment in the Eden Project.

The best they could offer was a position directing the town farm experiment. 
Madeline had already hired - and subsequently fired - three professional agriculture 
bureaucrats for that position. Each one was full of great ideas and bold notions 
during the job interview, but once on the job their stories were distressingly 
similar. Each in turn was more concerned with protecting their bureaucratic turf 
and (so it seemed to Madeline) and arranging the pencils on their desk than with 
getting an actual program designed and underway. Thus, while the rest of the Eden 
Project was making great strides, the urban farming program languished.

The basic idea, Madeline explained to Susan, was deceptively simple. Urban 
farming had been something of a social movement that caught on in many cities a 
few years back. Urban farmers would use vacant lots, apartment building rooftops 
and a wide range of additional spaces as small acreages to plant and grow 
foodstuffs in efforts to make cities more self-sustaining. Early in the planning for 
the Eden communities, someone had pointed out that most of rural Appalachia, 
like the area around Barley Mill which had attracted the first farmers to move there 
was no more suitable for extensive agriculture than inner city Cleveland or 
Pittsburgh, and yet urban farming was well established in both those places.

Madeline wasn’t the only one who was enthusiastic about the Eden farm 
experiment. Ralph Deigh knew that Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello, in addition to 
being a world historic site notable for its distinctive architecture was also a 
working farm where Jefferson (which is to say, slaves under his and his overseers’ 
direction) cultivated what scholars have determined to be more than twenty 
varieties of peas. When Ralph told Amy about this one evening some time before 
the Eden Project got underway, her only first reaction was, “Goodness! They must 
have had peas at every meal when they were in season.”

The topology of the Appalachian mountains is not ideal for conventional farming, 
as the founders of Barley Mill had learned to their dismay, or even the kind of 
irrigated farming that Susan was familiar with in Nebraska. Generally, the land is
rocky with abundant clay and very little fertile topsoil, which was washed away
generations ago. Yet, the urge to connect with the land and to grow things remains
particularly strong in Eden, as it is in most rural communities. Vegetable gardens
had been a familiar feature of the landscape in both Cibola and Barley Mill.

In a manner consistent with the mountainous terrain, Madeline explained to an
increasingly interested Susan, the intent was to introduce structures for “vertical
farms” in each of the seven villages, following the model of urban vertical farms
already well developed in some urban areas. There was, she said, even a web site

In developing this idea, vertical farming in each of the Eden villages would be
developed and operated by ‘locavores’ - mostly urban kids who were drawn to
trying their luck at farming but initially required some education, guidance and
supervision - and most of the produce produced from the vertical farms would be
sold at local farmers’ markets in Dare County and nearby counties. It had already
been decided that a portion of one vertical stack in each village would be devoted
to 4-H Club projects. “The initial sketches that Lil . . . has come up with look to be
like a stack of dishes piled up in a sink,” Susan would tell friends later, “but it’s
really clever how the students at the Mechanical Institute have come up with a
series of motors, hardware and software to optimize the correct exposure to
sunlight.”

“Some of the levels in the farm stacks even have canopies to regulate the amount
of rainfall getting in.”

The first step in creating a vertical farm involved identifying a suitable
mountainside that receives relatively full sun for the maximum number of days per
year. Construction was relatively straightforward: A series of cantilevered grow
tables or “shelves” linked together at the hillside ground level by its own small
funicular designed not for hauling passengers but for hauling produce down to a
terminal/distribution center in the

“So why not in Dare County?” Madeline asked Susan as she explained the basic
idea, “Why not in Eden?” She was slightly taken aback, however, by the
enthusiasm in Susan’s response. “What fun! It would be like creating seven
wonderful gardens! And, in these mountains, some of them could even be hanging
gardens!”

Madeline was fairly certain Susan had not seen them, but that was precisely what
Ralph and Lil . . . and their design team had drawn up preliminary plans for earlier,
and one of the things that all three of the previous managers she had fired had
denounced as completely unworkable agriculture. “That looks like a stack of dirty
plates piled up in the sink!” one of them had literally howled. Madeline had to
admit there was a certain accuracy in that observation, although she failed to see why that was a criticism.
In the years after Rosemary’s death, Madeline had refashioned herself into the resident expert in two important topics even as she led the foundation that provided the funding for The Eden Project. She found it highly ironic that both of them were legal and economic at their core and required levels of secrecy and stealth that were totally contrary to her training and past work in public relations. In the first instance, she had developed an extensive grasp of the law and economics of home ownership. Under the direction of Jim Harbaugh and John Graham of the Graham and Graham law firm, she and the foundation staff had worked out the novel home ownership arrangements that were a key part of The Eden Plan.
Under the Eden Plan, the seven villages of Eden, West Virginia would not become a municipality under the laws of West Virginia, which allowed only limited forms of “home rule” to local communities and these were granted only grudgingly by the state officials who appeared to believe strongly in centralized control in most forms of governance. Instead, all of Eden was organized as a condominium - a kind of private holding company in which residents held shares and exercised extensive rights of self-governance. Initially, all of the property was owned by the foundation, the housing staff of which worked with prospective residents - in both single-family dwellings and congregate units in apartment buildings - to approve designs and furnishings.

After they moved into their new housing units in Eden, residents would pay a single fee each month to the condominium corporation set up by the foundation. Designed to feel like “rent” the payment consisted of three parts. First, there was an amount representing ordinary real estate and personal property taxes paid to Dare County. Second was a monthly maintenance fee for maintenance on the Eden property, which extended to the entire township. Finally, a portion of each monthly payment went was credited to the home owner’s personal capital account. This had two effects, one immediate and another long-term.

Somewhat more esoteric was the knowledge she had recently begun to acquire of the law, ethics and practices of mineral rights in Appalachia. At times it seemed that everyone in the world knew the basic outline of what had happened in West Virginia historically as local residents sold the rights for timber on their property and oil, coal and other substances buried deep under their properties for peanuts to representatives of out-of-state companies. And how these same people were forced to stand by as these same absentee rights-owners tore up the land and reaped literally billions of dollars in profits year after year until the valuable resources were exhausted and literally closed up operations and walked away leaving residents of the state to deal with long-term effects of water pollution, environmental devastation and so much more.

Beginning late in the 19th century, first with oil and then with timbering and finally with coal, the same fundamental processes of legal manipulation, exploitation and environmental degradation played out across most of the state. And as if that wasn’t enough, the story repeated itself yet again in the first decades of the 21st century as wildcatters engaged in “fracking” and explorations for natural gas deep underground repeated the process.

Fortunately, Madeline and the trustees of the Mueller Foundation realized early in The Eden Project that they - that is, the foundation - now owned the mineral rights to huge portions of the land in Dare County. Most of the rest were controlled by a single entity - a holding company owned by Enoch “Digger” Barnes. Born roughly a decade after Harry Mueller and seemingly cut from the same ruthless capitalist
cloth, Barnes was now living in semi-retirement seldom leaving his home in Richmond, Virginia. Madeline was uncertain whether Barnes’ reputation for ruthlessness and skullduggery was real, or a carefully constructed image like Harry’s which she had played a role in creating. Regardless, he was currently facing a veritable panoply of illnesses and health problems, and Barnes apparently had little appetite for further exploitation of the resources he controlled in Dare County. The timber operations he owned had laid off most of the employees and the saw mills sat idle. The underground coal mines he owned had been shuttered since the late 1990s and the last downturn in coal prices had brought a halt to the strip-mining operations as well. Barnes had once been highly enthusiastic about the “automated mining” brought about by the development of long-wall mining equipment, and he welcomed the savings in labor costs involved, but he was personally appalled by the explosive techniques of “mountain top removal” and had never consented for his company to engage in the practice, at least in Dare County.

Barnes had made clear to friends, family and anyone else who would listen that in old age he was deeply troubled by the very practices which had made him one of the richest men in the state of Virginia, and among the thousand richest in the United States. He was, thus, immediately interested when approached by Madeline and the legal team of the Mueller Foundation. He dispatched his own legal representatives with instructions to reach the best deal possible. Within the span of two long afternoon meetings at one of the exclusive private clubs in Richmond, the basic outlines for a complex and detailed set of legal arrangements that would, in reality, take years of legal spadework to sort through got underway. Under the terms of the deal, the Mueller Foundation purchased all of the mineral rights owned by every one of Barnes’ nine companies operating in Dare County, West Virginia, at the same time acquiring all of the liabilities associated with those properties as well.

This is the point at which the real and radical philanthropic intent of the Mueller Foundation plan becomes clear. The foundation had gathered together all of the mineral rights in Dare County, but not in order to assume that outsiders would continue to take resource-based wealth out of the county and the state. The plan instead was to transition a complete break with the tragic history of the county and the state. Dare County would move completely out of dependence on extractive industries and into a future not tied to coal.

Foundation trustees were unanimous in their view that this was both necessary and desirable for the county, if not for the state as a whole. “It isn’t our role or our intent to tell the entire state of West Virginia what it ought to be doing,” Trustee David Wilson was heard to say. “But getting free of the extractive industries is in the best interest of Dare County.”
Billy McGann was one of those widely known characters sometimes found in small town Appalachia. During the decade after graduating from college, he had become “an itinerant expert” traveling from town to town in West Virginia, eastern Kentucky, east Tennessee, western North Carolina and southwest Virginia preaching the gospel of clean water. No one was quite sure how he was supporting himself in this activity, and his generally disheveled appearance suggested this may be a failing effort.

When he arrived in Dare County, an unknown local talent scout latched onto him almost immediately. It was rumored to be Shirley Jacks, who owned a popular roadhouse just outside Barley Mill that was completely destroyed in the tornado. It
was said that Shirley didn’t quite know what to do with herself now that she no longer had the bar to stand behind and the regular customers to talk with, and that she spent as much time as she could outside her FEMA trailer “just stirring up trouble.” At any rate, Shirley - or whoever the talent scout really was - is said to have shown up midmorning one recent Thursday with Billy McGann in tow at the Dare County office of the Mueller Foundation asking to see Madeline Klein. Madeline happened to be in the office that morning going over drawings for the latest additions to the transportation plan with Razi and Lil . . . They were talking about the specifications for four zip lines - two points of origin and two terminations - that would link to the upper floors of the high school in the Community Center and be used jointly by the Biology and Physical Education staff for canopy tours along the entire mountainside from the ridge to the river. After the introductions, Lil . . . said she had enough to work with for a couple of days and left with Shirley, as Madeline’s factotum Brian brought in coffee. Razi and Billy had been engaged in an intense conversation about something or other, but Razi, also seized the occasion to excuse himself and left.

“Oh, I thought they would be staying. I’ll take the other two cups away.”

“That’s okay, Bri. Just leave them.” Madeline sometimes wished Brian wasn’t quite so eager to please. She’d knew she’d have to speak to him about that soon. In his case, it was clearly a passive regressive response, more in anger than in subservience. But not this morning; she had other things on her mind.

“Well, now. Mr. McGann. I understand you are interested in clean water.” It was a dumb thing to say, she knew, but how do you begin a conversation with a self-proclaimed “water expert” who had apparently been traveling from town to town at his own expense “preaching the gospel of clean water?”

Billy McGann had come by his particular environmental interest quite predictably. His father, Bill McGann Sr., had worked for MSHA, the Mine Safety and Health Administration, for nearly 20 years after getting out of the Army, where he had also done something in environmental inspections; Billy wasn’t quite sure what. Billy had been sixteen when his father was drowned when he fell, or was pushed, into a toxic waste collection pond on the edge of a large strip mine in eastern Kentucky. Five miners who witnessed the event swore in court that he had been pushed by one of the corporate thugs who worked for the company but at least six other witnesses - said to have been bought off by the company - swore that it was an accident. The jury was undecided, but at any rate, the body was never recovered. The acidity in the pond was certainly high enough that divers could not enter the water. MSHA experts said it was so high that it was virtually pure hydrochloric acid with a few other toxic chemicals mixed in for good measure. Most likely, it would have completely consumed the body within 24 hours, just as
it often did the ducks, geese and assorted other migrating waterfowl who periodically made the mistake of landing there.

Billy’s father was a very hard, even cruel, man and he and his father had never gotten along. Billy felt completely unable to please his father. After the accident the others in the Kentucky MSHA unit had taken Billy under their wing, offering him part time work after high school, summer jobs for his final two summers before graduation, and even helped him apply for a college scholarship for the children of MSHA employees who died in the line of duty. Billy didn’t want to go far from home in order to be available to help his mother with his three younger siblings, and so he enrolled at Marshall University, which was less than an hour from home. By the time he was twenty and a college junior, Billy had settled into his chosen major in environmental biology and was increasingly interested in problems of clean water. By graduation, he had decided that clean water in Appalachia would be his life’s work.

One of the endemic problems of mining communities is the pervasive pollution of creeks and small streams, along, of course, with the predictable and formulaic denials of corporate responsibility. At the same time, Billy knew there was a lot of misunderstanding on all sides. It might be comforting to believe, Billy would tell anyone willing to listen, that strip mining and mountaintop removal were most responsible for the pollution of the waters of Appalachia, but the reality is that underground mining, and all of the various debris piles associated with it had also been responsible for water pollution in the region over many decades. As mining operations of any kind disrupted the natural downhill flows of water, rain water on the ground inevitably comes into contact with assorted contaminants. Even so, it was certainly true that mountaintop removal made the problem enormously worse.

As they talked for the rest of the morning, over lunch at Priscilla’s, and into the afternoon, it became increasingly clear to Madeline that it was to be her mission to get Billy off the road and involved with the Eden Project. In response to her questions, he had explained several different water purification processes including reverse osmosis and carbon filtration that might be used to purify water in the Eden system. In addition to the efforts to purify water within the immediate township, the Eden Plan ought to translate water quality from a problem into employment opportunities for graduates of the Mechanical Institute. Unfortunately, Madeline replied, there was no one currently available at the Institute to take up this challenge.

One thing led to another, and before most people realized what was happening, a year had passed, Madeline and Billy were living together, and he was getting comfortable in a position teaching water purification at the Mechanical Institute. One of the things that both Ralph and Adam were most pleased about are the miniature, semi-portable water treatment (MSPWT) plants that were being
produced under Billy’s direction by the engineering shop at the Mechanics’ Institute. The plants are pure instrumentation. As Billy explained, the basic science of waste treatment involved had already been worked out by others, but most such plants were massive developments spread across several hectares and capable of processing and treating millions of gallons of polluted water daily. The problem was that such plants also cost millions of dollars to build and maintain, required months of construction and were permanent installations. The technology of such plants was so infeasible that decades - even centuries - later many small Appalachian communities still did not have such treatment facilities and were destined to continue to be surrounded by high volumes of polluted water. Under Billy’s direction, and with ample financial support from the Mueller Foundation, the Mechanics’ Institute solution provided a growing range of miniaturized alternatives to this situation. Depending on the nature of the problem, any one of ten different prototypes could be adapted to water treatment very close to the source of the problem.

What was truly innovative about the solution worked out by a group of high school graduates working under Billy’s supervision at the E.M.I. in Eden was miniaturization: An entire, complete waste water treatment facility roughly the size of a vending machine which could be built for roughly $5,000 to $100,000 depending on the configuration, and could be hauled anywhere on a small trailer, installed along creeks and small streams and process small flows of thousands of kiloliters of water daily, 365 days a year right near the site of the pollution.

Billy had gotten the idea of miniaturization from his college chemistry class, where he observed the miniaturized labs used by chemistry students to conduct ordinary chemical education experiments. The idea, they were told, was to preserve the essence of the experiment while reducing - not eliminating - the need for equipment and supplies. The first version of the device that the Mechanics’ Institute students developed was for dealing with the problem of human waste; a compact, portable septic tank, as it were. Unbeknownst to them, it mimicked a widely-available septic tank system already in use in airplanes, busses, recreation vehicles. Unlike conventional systems, it did not require a huge drain field downstream from the household. From there, the eager students branched out into specialized systems capable of extracting acids, chromium, and a vast range of other exotic substances from the water.

The installation of multiple MSPWT plants looked like it would be a workable solution for waste water treatment in the small villages of Appalachia previously unable to afford construction of sewage treatment plants. It had also proven to be an excellent way of dealing with the enduring problems of mine drainage in and around coal and other mining communities. By making a few simple adjustments described by one of the students as adding different filters or different strains of
chemical-eating bacteria, Model B of the miniaturized portable plants were able to purify stream water not only of the biological contaminants of human waste, but also to extract assorted acids, debris, heavy metals and other contaminants of the mining process. Installed up-stream as close as possible to where the stream came into contact with the contaminants. Before long, these devices began to be adopted around the world in Wales, China, Slovakia and other coal mining regions as simple, practical solutions to the problem of pollution from mine drainage. The associated patents are also providing a continuous revenue stream to the Mechanics’ Institute, allowing it to sustain and expand its training programs.

Before too long, Billy was joined by a local resident, with similar interests. Gary Ellingson is a graduate and faculty member at the Mechanics Institute and the inventor of an equally small, semi-portable device that can be installed in line with the miniaturized water purification equipment for the purpose of capturing some of the chemicals which had commercial value, such as chromium, copper, magnesium, selenium, and others. An economist from the Regional Research Institute at WVU was projecting that within five years capture of half a dozen of the most valuable chemicals from polluted streams was expected to be a major revenue stream for the Institute.

It is a very prosaic but highly important aspect of this overall project that these devices can be set for a wide variety of different purification efforts. Thus, the vertical farmers in Eden township found that they could reduce or eliminate the effects of pesticides and fertilizers used on their fields with it, and not unimportantly, other farmers in Dare County and beyond could also reduce the polluting effects of manure from livestock by placing the devices in streams flowing through and out of pastures. Altogether, Billy’s team received 94 patents for variations and versions of their devices, and he and the community of Eden were able to benefit equally from these.

Thanks to Gary, her childhood sweetheart, Shirley Jacks was even able to re-open a completely redesigned version of her roadhouse on the far side of Barley Mill, right near one of the PRT stops on the route to Huttonsville.
Tricksters

The Thursday evening salon group were involved in a variety of activities to uncover additional facets of the Cibola community out of the public eye and to promote the interests of the community. One of the strangest and most amusing of these tales has been passed down to a number of elderly Cibola residents by their grandparents and older relatives when they were children. This is their story. It involves the duration in Cibola of the Amerindian institution of the tricksters - groups of (mostly) boys and men who conceive, plan and conduct assorted “tricks”, pranks, and practical jokes.

The trickster, a player of tricks, deceiver, shape shifter or master of disguises whether sacred and merely lewd is a stock character in many Amerindian cultures. The trickster was also a tinkerer or fixer-upper, noted for his ingenuity in forming creative solutions to problems. Gastronomic tricks, and those involving flatulent, sexual, phallic or fecal tricks are particularly common in the trickster annals. Thus,
it was with the tricksters of Cibola as well. As far as is known, there were tricksters, and even an organized clan for them, in Cibola from the very earliest decades of the seventeenth century, although very little is known of the tricks of the earliest tricksters.

It was perhaps inevitable, given the number of native Americans involved in the Cibola community over its nearly 500-year history, but there is ample evidence that at least by sometime late in the 19th century, there was an upsurge of trickster behavior originating among men and boys from Cibola.

After the emergence of the original Ku Klux Klan in the 1880s, a group of approximately two dozen men from Cibola - Hispanic, French, English, Cherokee, Cree, Seminole, Afro-Caribbean, Ghanaian, Irish, mixed together in that amazing biological stew and cultural hodgepodge. At the time, reports came filtering back to Cibola from many different parts of the Reconstruction South that the white robed and hooded Klansmen were spreading terror throughout the region. It was immediately obvious that the KKK would make a tempting, if formidable, target for the tricksters of Cibola.

One of the longest-lasting of the early accomplishments of the Cibola tricksters was formation of the “Dare County Chamber of Commerce,” (DCCC) which was, in reality, a front for the largest and longest-lasting hoax ever perpetrated by the tricksters of Cibola. The existence of a chamber of commerce headquartered in Cibola was in itself a massive joke. Throughout its history as a secret community, Cibola never joined the American market system or modern consumer society, retaining a mix of subsistence economy, household production and economic cooperation. By the time of its destruction, there were still only a few small shops scattered throughout the seven villages. These were mostly small, independent craftspeople - a shoemaker, apothecary, seamstresses, a watchmaker, and a few others. The reason for founding the DCCC was because leaders in Cibola had found that local businessmen were prominent in the organization of local Ku Klux Klan chapters during this period. The Cibola tricksters concluded that a local chamber of commerce would give them perfect cover for their activities and because it was officially designated a county-wide entity with a post office box in Huttonsville, any efforts by outsiders to track it down would come to no avail. Thus, for nearly a hundred years and unbeknown to national clan leaders the DCCC was the only multi-racial, multi-cultural chapter of the KKK.

Originally founded as civic and social organizations, as the era of Reconstruction drew to a close, these local Klan chapters turned increasingly toward reinforcing white supremacy by bedeviling and terrorizing local black, Jewish, Amerindian and other minority populations.
As they learned of the extent of the involvement of members of the business community in this new and terrible dynamic, a group of roughly two dozen adult men and teenaged boys from all seven villages of Cibola, most of whom were already well-established local tricksters, hatched the idea of the DCCC as a front for their very own, and very special, KKK chapter. Although members and their families became very proficient at designing and sewing the white robes, conical hats, white gloves and other costumes of their simulated klan chapter, as well as an ingenious false-bottomed carpet bag for traveling incognito with the minimum chance of being detected, the first KKK movement died out before the DCCC could engage in any real tricks outside Dare County.

Youngsters who were invited to join the trickster clan often started out on a range of what are often called “school boy pranks.” They might, for example, furtively smear butter on the windshield of a local driver known for his rude and aggressive road manner. Before the automobile, feeding mild laxatives to horses expected to be in parades in communities around Dare County was a common practice. In the 1960s when the anti-smoking campaigns were still gaining momentum in the U.S. and many smokers still smoked pipes. Tins of Sir Walter Raleigh were at the time a familiar pipe tobacco brand and a favorite trick for younger tricksters was to phone local grocery and drug stores and ask, “Do you have Sir Walter Raleigh in the can?” When the clerk answered, “Yes. We do.”, the caller would reply, “Well, you’d better let him out!” and hang up, usually laughing uproariously.

Another common trick for young tricksters was to paint various nonsense phrases and images in a variety of public places around Dare County, although some tricksters, mindful of the possibility of permanent damage to the property of others, were careful to use only water-soluble materials that were easily removed. In the 1940s and 1950s, the “Kilroy was here” phase, together with the famous oval-shaped bald head and elongated nose peering over a fence, was very popular. It is still believed by some in Dare County that the Cibola tricksters were the original inventors of graffiti, although this is not the case since examples have been found on monuments at ancient Pompeii, on the walls of Mayan temples in Mesoamerica, at Newgrange Mound in Ireland and even Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. Regardless, the Cibolan tricksters were prolific producers of graffiti from the very earliest days of the community, and local leaders had always been very tolerant of the practice. One day each year was devoted to scrubbing, repainting and in other ways removing graffiti and members of the otherwise-secret clan of tricksters were prominent among the volunteer cleaners.

As they grew older, and in particular after the second half of the nineteenth century as the railroad came to Dare County, adult members of the Tricksters began to reach out further into the world, and design plots that were more intricate, more politically potent and more dangerous. Over time, the Ku Klux Klan and the
Baldwin-Phelps detectives became favorite targets of the tricksters, who lived in a highly diverse community and were deeply offended by the racism and xenophobia of the Klan and the aggressive bullying of the detectives.

Annually, a group of self-selected young members of the Trickster squad of the DCCC would identify 1-2 Klan leaders at different points in the six-state region and plan an elaborate ruse that would lure them to a remote location. Usually, the leaders had already been identified or singled out for particularly heinous behavior, but there was no chance of them being brought to justice. The Tricksters would capture the Klansmen and after hypnotizing them in order to subdue them for a fixed number of hours (usually 13 for some reason), lock them in a steamer trunk with instructions for the victims to “awaken” after midday inside the specially designed cage which would then have been placed in a prominent location in the downtown area of their home community. The malefactors would then find themselves inside the cage in a public place and completely naked, having already been the object of laughter and ridicule from passers-by for some hours already. Several of those handled in this manner were known to have left the Klan and more than a few moved away from their communities.

During the long 19th century some of the Cibolan tricksters also became prolific pickpockets; adept both at lifting objects from unwary victims and placing objects unawares in the pockets of the unsuspecting. One especially favorite activity of this sort was “lifting” the revolvers of B-P detectives in diverse mining camps in Dare County and several surrounding counties. The tricksters would then fill the barrels and chambers of the weapons with pine pitch and leave them in a prominent location for the detectives to recover. This particular trick had various unanticipated consequences. Not only did word of the prank spread among the miners’ families in the camps, who were very amused. There was the further prospect of the detectives spending many hours and large quantities of carbolic acid in their efforts to clean their weapons. They also went to great lengths to keep word of this from company “higher ups”. These were not always successful, and several detectives were known to have been disciplined by the company for carelessness in losing their weapons.

As far as Freddie and the salon members were able to determine, most tricksters preferred placing rather than lifting, and specialized in inserting (rather than removing) objects from the pockets of Klan members during marches and rallies. Some of these were religious messages, notably Bible passages opposing hatred and maltreatment of strangers. But many were also humorous, and frequently scatological. Some of these were their own variations on the well-known “Your mama” theme: E.g., “Your mama is so fat, when she goes to church, she sits next to everyone!” and “Your mama is so dumb. She got locked in a mattress factory and had to sleep on the floor!”
There is talk among the tricksters that at some time past - some say it was in the 1940s while others claim different years earlier or later - a group of teenage tricksters from Cibola carried out a legendary prank that is still laughed about all over Dare County. They had learned that the town constable in Barley Mill ran a speed trap on the state highway through town and was ticketing out-of-towners and then collecting the fines directly from them with promises to turn the fees over to the local magistrate but never doing so. The errant cop would park his patrol car at the intersection of State Highway 58 and County Road 26. About 100 yards away in both directions were speed limit signs the town council had been convinced were necessary announced a sudden 15 mile an hour reduction in the legal speed. High percentages of non-residents passing through would inevitably either ignore the signs completely or take too long to slow down. Office Johns, for that was the malefactor’s name, pretty much had his pick of which cars to ignore and which to target, but he had a decided preference for out-of-towners and particularly black or brown skinned drivers.

As it happened, later at night, usually after 10:30 p.m., the officer after having consumed his usual large dinner would fall asleep at the wheel of his patrol car, awakening only by a particularly loud or fast vehicle passing through. Under their plan, after determining the officer was sound asleep, a small group of tricksters approached the patrol car from the rear and attached a heavy log chain to the rear axle of the patrol car, fastening the other end to a fire hydrant located on the nearby curb, careful to leave about 15 feet of slack chain. All of this was done successfully without waking the sleeping officer and when the task was completed the three tricksters disappeared into the night as quietly as they had come.

A short time later, a red pickup truck driven by an African-American driver with two Amerindian passengers came racing down the street at a relatively high speed, windows open, drivers and passengers yelling in full voice, headlights off, horn honking and headed out of town. Officer Johns, startled awake, headed after the malefactors only to feel a sudden jerk with a shower of sparks before the car came to a complete stop. When he looked in the rear-view mirror, he saw the entire rear axle and wheel assembly of his squad car on the street behind. Although not part of the trickster’s plan, the chain had also pulled the hydrant from its position and a fountain of water was streaming about 10 meters into the air.

On other occasions, tricksters were reported to have planted newspaper columns and what have since become known as “op ed” pieces in newspapers throughout the region. In the particularly stellar example of such a “plant”, one of the Huntington, West Virginia newspapers printed a column by a supposed Klan leader indicating that he had had a change of heart and would, henceforth, forewear all Klan activities. In other cases, announcements published in a wide variety of regional newspapers announced entirely fictitious holidays, complete
with plans for parades and rallies. Klan leaders were left to explain later that no such holidays, parades or rallies were in the works.

On another occasion, an exhibit was mounted at an international Klan gathering purporting to display, in the manner of a medieval relic, the finger of the first Grand Dragon of the Klan, supposedly lost in a complex and amazing set of circumstances. A message in a mixture of Aramaic, Greek and Latin was accompanied by a “translation” which indicated how heroic the Grand Dragon had been. The entire exhibit was presented at three successive Klan gatherings until a Klan member fluent in all three languages did his own translation and reported to embarrassed Klan officials that the message actually said the finger was actually the middle finger of a female orangutan who had died at the Cincinnati zoo and had been found with her middle finger extended in an obscene gesture widely known as “giving the finger”.

It was not until after the release of the movie, *Birth of a Nation*, in 1915 which was responsible for the second birth of the klan that the Dare County Chamber of Commerce and its covert KKK wing swung into real action. These were the sons and grandsons (and daughters and granddaughters) of generations of tricksters at Cibola, and they proved even more adept at the task than their forebears. Their additions to the original costumery of their forebears included not only the addition of female tricksters to the secret company, an addition which vastly increased the range of possible tricks they might engage in. They also added the refinement of a finely knit fabric white glove worn under the standard KKK-style white glove. This was a necessary addition because of the tremendous range of black, brown, yellow and red skin tones present among the Cibolan population. The glove was actually a light, yellowish pink with slightly irregular, bluish, raised lines to simulate the skin tones and veins of the “white” hand of a “pure” Anglo-Saxon Klan member. The design of the gloves was so hand-like that they even contained simulated fingernails.

The idea was that if any other Klan member asked, or more likely, demanded that a Cibolan remove their gloves, or the situation otherwise arose, this would offer a bit of additional insurance. While it was unlikely that the white under-gloves would pass a detailed inspection in the harsh light of day, members of the DCCC reasoned, in the torch-lit circumstances of a Klan night they almost certainly would. In the end, however, the gloves proved both expensive and time consumer to create, and so on most outings the members of the Cibola klan used stage makeup to give everyone the proper white hands.

And this proved to be the case in the remarkably few instances when such challenges were issued. “These klan guys may be mean as junkyard dogs, and what they do is downright evil, but they are none too bright,” was the general sentiment of the members of the Dare County Chamber.
With the rise of the Civil Rights Movement in the late 1950s, the Cibola tricksters ceased to present themselves to the world as the Dare County Chamber of Commerce (nee Ku Klux Klan). Prior to that, they had conducted literally dozens of KKK-related tricks. One of the all-time favorites of several successive cohorts of the group was to find out the location of a large Klan rally somewhere in the Eastern United States and to plant exotic fireworks, which were procured from Chinese sources in San Francisco, in the obligatory Klan bonfire. Then, when the bonfire was lit and the fireworks went off, Klan members would be forced to scatter in all directions as tricksters planted in the crowd yelled things like “Run for your lives! It’s the FBI.” And numerous other shouts designed to foment confusion and disrupt the event.

Whenever possible, the tricksters also tried to infiltrate the telephone trees of local Klan groups, so that in the hours before a planned rally, march or gathering they would phone someone high up in the hierarchy, claiming to be someone even higher, with one of a series of false messages intended to disrupt the event. One of their favorites was to call the number two or three leader in a local Klan chapter with news like this: “Bernie? This is Clarence. Tonight’s march has to be cancelled. Joe’s got the runs. Put out the word.” It seemed to most members of the Dare County Chamber to be in the best traditions of trickstering whenever they were able to spread a false rumor that a local Klan leader had been sidelined with a bout of diarrhea.

The most difficult facet of the ongoing trickster operations of the DCCC in the decades from the 1920s to the late 1950s was gathering information on the various KKK events to be disrupted. Over the decades, the group operated all over the eastern U.S., most notably in the states of the old Confederacy. In half a dozen of the most opportune situations, they were able to learn of Klan discontent with particular African-American, Jewish, or Catholic local figures and sent out “watch teams” of two or three tricksters, who would move into the affected communities and report back to the group regularly with coded telephone and telegraph messages. Generally, one of the lightest skinned (“Anglo”) tricksters was paired with someone who could blend into the affected group. In such cases, the Anglo team member might pose as a traveling salesman and Klan member who would make attempt to make contact with the local KKK chapter and keep abreast of their plans. The other member could usually be more open and forthright with members of the affected group.

On several occasions, such teams were able to learn of plans to burn out local troublemakers late at night as a warning to others in the area. By warning the occupants, their houses and contents were still destroyed, but several lives of local leaders and their families were saved in this way. Gradually, however, the national klan leadership began to connect the various incidents incited by the tricksters of
the Dare County Chamber of Commerce, and those light-skinned members of the DCCC who attended national and state klan conventions began to bring back reports of steps the leadership was taking to identify and neutralize this activity. In particular, one of the most deeply held secrets of the Klan was its sponsorship of an offshoot group to be known as the Rural Nationalist Association, or RNA. At about the same time, there began to be reports that the klan, along with many leftist and other organizations, was being infiltrated by the FBI.

In the final decades of the Cibola community, trickster activity was once again limited to local pranks, mostly graffiti, and by the time that the Cibolans began moving into Eden, it was unclear whether any such activities would continue at all.
Since first learning of the existence of Cibola, Ralph Deigh was fascinated by what he had come to understand of its unique fusion culture. In some respects, each of the component cultures and language groups that made up the community had retained elements of its origins while contributing to the general fusion that defined the community as a whole. Unity in diversity was an altogether apt phrase for what he saw. In other respects, Ralph found fascinating the ways in which the different cultures had blended and melted together into truly unique combinations. It has not always been easy and the history of Cibola gave ample tribute to a great deal of “feudin’, fussin’ and fightin’” including a range of local disagreements about what to do in the wake of what some were calling “Digger Proffitt’s flood.”
In Eden’s architecture, one of the most fascinating physical examples of cultural fusion was something Ralph called “hutong haciendas,” which was his own term for the blending of the traditional neighborhoods of multi-generational walled compounds still found in old Beijing and various elements of Spanish colonial haciendas.

Dangerous chemicals were still found everywhere at the hidden Cibola valley site, still standing in pools and small ponds everywhere when Ralph convinced Adam to let him visit one of the seven villages that made up the Cibola community. Technically Adam’s permission wasn’t necessary since the court had already issued a preliminary determination that the Cibola property was owned by the Mueller Mining Company, but he knew that this decision - which really meant that the Cibola site was operationally now owned by the Mueller Foundation and under the full control of the Eden Project - was not yet clearly understood by survivors from Cibola, particularly those who had fled Dare County and were seeking to melt into greater American society. Adam, Evie, and other leaders of the Cibola community were receiving almost daily letters, calls, and electronic messages from former residents of Cibola expressing their concern that their community had been seized by outsiders. Fortunately, the issue had even erupted openly on social media - “gone viral” in a new term Ralph learned. It was, however, a major topic of conversation among a half dozen private and secret social media groups there. Although the number of followers was presently very small, no one could predict when the issue might go viral.

The Qufu neighborhood, which like the other colonia of Cibola was no longer habitable even though it had escaped the full brunt of the flash flooding when the dam holding back the retention pond broke. Unlike the other colonias its buildings were still largely intact and it was easy to make out the hutong, or neighborhood of walled compounds, that had been there. Consisting of approximately fifteen siheyuans, or courtyard houses, each surrounded by high adobe-like walls and connected by several narrow, intersecting lanes. Ralph had the feeling walking in these lanes in his protective white jump suit and head gear that he had been transported somehow to South China. Except that, as he learned from Song Lee, former resident and the group guide and companion for the tour, the neighborhood had been occupied by families named Sanchez, Mandeville, Gutmann, and yes, Sennett as well as some familiar Chinese names.

The number of deaths by drowning and chemical poisoning in Qufu when the holding pond collapsed had been smaller than in several of the other colonia of Cibola. Accompanied by Adam and Cane Sennett and the Peace Chief of Qufu, Ralph, Lil. . . and Freddie all suitably outfitted in protective jump suits had spent a very busy 10 hours walking in and out of the now empty siheyuans of the Qufu hutong, observing, making notes, sketching, asking questions, and absorbing all
they could of the design and functioning of this unique community. Ralph would have preferred to camp over night at the site and spend at least another day and preferably two or three there, but as public health officer of Dare County, Dr. Evie Bennett had vetoed that idea immediately. “It’s just not safe to be there for long periods of time yet,” she said. “In fact, I would prefer if you could limit your visit to six hours or less. And it is essential that everyone wear protective gear” she insisted. The day passed quickly, and before he knew it, Adam and Cane were telling Ralph and the others it was time for everyone to leave.

On the trip back down the mountain and back to Landover, where they were meeting Amy and Madeline for dinner, the investigators continued to pepper those who had once lived there with questions, but one thing was already clear in Ralph’s mind. These unique traditional dwellings had been well adapted to the Appalachian mountainous environment. Later, he learned also just how much the Cibolans loved them and from what he had seen he could understand why. These structures gave physical form to the traditional family values of the Appalachian region just as they had to Chinese families for centuries. In Appalachia, it was sometimes said, family wasn’t everything; it was more important than that.

At bottom, the siheyuans of Cibola were family compounds housing at least three, and sometimes four or five generations of an extended family. While many of those found in south China were built on flat lands, the Cibolans had adapted the form to the rough mountain terrain. That was their virtue. Their drawback was that most of them did not have indoor plumbing, and water had to be carried from wells in the courtyards or from nearby streams. Most also had only the most rudimentary wiring for electricity, which was produced on site by loud, smelly generators, with only limited facilities for refrigeration, and no central heating or air conditioning. None of that was insurmountable, however.

In the days following their eye-opening field trip to Qufu, Ralph, Lil. . ., and the growing platoon of architectural technicians they were hiring with Madeline’s encouragement and funding began to explore a variety of different designs for what Lil. . . explained was to be “a thoroughly modern hutong hacienda.’

‘Architectural technicians’ wasn’t really the right term for all of the people now working on designs for Eden, according to Ralph, and apprentices seemed overly general. Regardless, theirs was the first program of the still-nascent Eden Mechanical Institute and the several dozen workers - young and older alike - were enthusiastically learning the ins and outs of architectural design software in the 21st century. Ralph had been amused to learn that for vocational education purposes an “older worker” was anyone over the age of 40. At that rate, he himself was positively antique!
Together, Lil . . . and the growing army of apprentices had been toiling to turn reams of Ralph’s sketches, notebooks and doll house designs into architectural drawings, contributing their own ideas and suggestions as they worked. One of the “older worker” apprentices, Chris Polumbo, who wouldn’t actually be 40 for a couple of months yet, had been working with Vincent Martin, another apprentice and journeyman carpenter. They shared a developing fascination with traditional Chinese timber construction. Martin had formerly worked for a central West Virginia company that built modular log homes out of specially treated local timber. Together, and with the full cooperation of Lil . . ., Chris and Vincent began showing Ralph their sketches of a “log cabin” version of a siheyuan. “I know it’s crazy, but we got some of our ideas from cowboy movie versions of cavalry forts!” Vincent told Ralph. “But instead of an outer stockade of vertical timbers sunk into the ground, we went with horizontal stacked timber for the outer walls of the see-hey-yen.” Vincent pronounced each syllable of the traditional Chinese term slowly and carefully, with his distinctive southern West Virginia accent, as if his mouth was still having trouble forming the word. Even so, Ralph gave him credit for making the verbal effort; one more small victory for the indigenous multiculturalism that Cibola, and now Eden, represented right here in the middle of the Appalachian mountains. There was no doubt of the imaginative designs that Chris and Vincent were hatching. This was work definitely to be encouraged.

When he shared some of their ideas and sketches with Adam and Madeline, they agreed, and a meeting was arranged for the six, including Lil. . . to talk the whole thing through.

“We got the idea of emphasizing the horizontal from pictures of Frank Lloyd Wright’s Usonian houses,” Chris told the group. “Until Vince showed me pictures of some of the houses he worked on, I never knew you could build ‘log cabins’ that big. But then, I thought, why not? Apparently, some of the traditional timber temples in Japan and China are huge! And log cabins have been so important to Appalachian traditionalism.”

A log cabin is a structure built of stacked log walls, with various forms of interlaced corners and mud or other forms of fill in the “chinks” or gaps between the logs. They were typically built on more-or-less flat lots, although this ad hoc design group agreed there was no particular reason to limit themselves to such designs, or for that matter to rectangular shapes. Log structures had seemingly never held much interest for American architects, but under the tutelage of the Cibolan experience and the design group, Ralph were increasingly fascinated by the form. He learned that log cabins were first described by the Roman architect Vitruvius, who observed them in parts of Turkey. Log structures were probably built in parts of Scandinavia and Eastern Europe as early as 3,500 years ago. Nobody seemed to know for sure how they ended up in North America; whether they came over with the European explorers, and whether indigenous forms of log
cabins existed before that among the native Amerindians. He just knew that for northern - and mountainous - climates thick logs provide better insulation than timber framing covered by grasses, leaves or hides.

Whether or not they had been here already, among the Iroquois peoples or others, log cabins were imported to North America from Europe with some of the colonies of Europeans. For example, they were being built as early as 1638 in the New Sweden/New York colony, but Ralph often wondered if, given the abundance of timber in the region, Iroquois long houses in the Great Lakes region might also have been log structures from earlier dates.

Site selection was very important in building a log cabin, both for light and drainage, but there was seldom systematic thought given to placement on the site or proximity to other structures. “In China, siheyuan reflect important aspects of Confucian ethics and cosmology. They are usually positioned in alignment with the compass, on a north-south, east-west axis and reflect a definite hierarchy.”

Chris noted sounding as if he’d just read that the night before, “The northern-most structure was ordinarily the most important, or principal residence with a main doorway that opened to the south. Walkways and paths from there to the side houses - lesser residences facing east and west - would be decorated and covered, providing shelter from sun, rain and snow. The ‘opposite house’ at the far south side of the courtyard faces north.”

“The mamma-son and the papa-son would usually live in the north house,” Vincent added, inadvertently slipping into a Korean vernacular he had learned from his grandfather, rather than the Chinese idiom he intended.

“In larger siheyuan,” Chris continued, “a ‘backside’ building might be located behind the main building, and it might even have two stories.” An ideal place, it seemed, to put communal bathroom facilities complete with bath, shower, commode and bidet and perhaps the steam shower (or pseudo-sauna) that was so popular among millennials.” Of course, none of the siheyuans at Cibola had bathtubs, showers, commodes, bidets or even running water, “but if we were to do something like this in Eden, that would be the traditional place to put it.” He paused briefly, “Or, maybe we need to put most of that stuff in each unit and just put more communal features like saunas and hot tubs in the backside building. And, maybe a large, walk-in cooler or freezer.”

The backside building would also be an ideal place for storage rooms; a place to keep hand and power tools, rakes, shovels, gun cabinets and all the rest. There was, of course, no need for a garage in the classical Chinese Hutong, and there wouldn’t be in Eden either, since automobiles were banned in town and restricted to the perimeter parking garages associated with the outer ring transportation hubs. Ralph had designed the garages so that each of them also had large storage lockers, small
locked tool rooms, really, where those who liked to tinker with their cars and pick-up trucks, or do their own maintenance, could keep what they needed. There were also several special bays in each garage for such work.

“A hutong is a neighborhood of siheyuans, that first developed in the 13th century.” Chris added, warming to his subject. “They are neighborhoods, really. Pre-revolutionary Beijing was chock-full of them, but in recent decades literally hundreds of hutongs have been torn down and thousands of siheyuans have been bulldozed.”

“There is another similar kind of cluster housing found mostly in southern China. I forget what it’s called, but they are round sort-of-apartment buildings with plain outer walls almost like castles. They developed in the middle ages, apparently, to protect villagers from bandits and roving gangs. But people still live in them.”

“Hakka.” Vincent chimed in. “But I don’t know if that’s just the name of the round end building or the entire complex. In one of the books we got, there was a schematic of a hakka, I guess you’d say, in a Chinese town called Doubon or Dooban or something like that. Have you ever been to Chaco Canyon in New Mexico? There’s an archeological site called Pueblo Bonito. The existing walls suggest that it was once a four or five story adobe structure very much like the daub and wattle of Doubon.

“I’ve also seen something similar called a tulou or ‘earthen building’, which is a traditional communal residence found in Fujian Province South China, usually in a circular layout surrounding a central shrine.” Vincent was warming to the subject now. At times, the walls of tulous were made of cut granite or fired brick rather than the pounded mud we call adobe and the English call cob.”

“It’s really amazing how much the floor plan I saw of the hakka in Doubon looks like the skeleton outline you can still see at Pueblo Bonito. Actually, there’s a whole bunch of similar structures scattered across the canyon floor for several miles around Pueblo Bonito. And I guess they must be from about the same time period that the hakkas first developed in China,” he added. “Thirteenth century give or take. Coincidence? Who knows?”

“Or cares?” Chris muttered to himself. He knew Vincent was very interested in tedious and irrelevant details and coincidences like that, but sometimes he found it very frustrating having to listen to him. But before he could say more, Vincent had launched into his own speculations on the similarities and differences between siheyuan, hakkas, the mysterious ruins at Chaco Canyon and more recent pueblo structures at Taos, San Juan and elsewhere in the Southwest.

“It’s kind of crazy when you think about it, but everybody and his sister in Dare County seems to know what a Mongolian Yurt is but siheyuan, hutong, hakka and tulou are pretty much unknown terms” Ralph noted. “That’s especially strange
since yurts, like those iconic tee-pees,” he said drawing apart the two syllables, “are shelter for nomadic people, while siheyuan, hutong, hakka and tulou are names for types of housing that fit well in rural communities. There aren’t too many nomads in Dare County, unless you include those people who spend Fall weekends tailgating in Morgantown and Huntington.”

“‘It’s a testament, I guess to the ways so many rural people like to look backward and inward.”

The meeting went on for several more hours with the discussion of architectural details by Ralph, Vincent and Chris, gradually evolving into discussion of the cost of building these kind of communal structures at Eden, regardless of what they were called. Finally, the decision was made to design one of the seven villages of Eden as a hutong of siheyuans for extended families with at least one multi-story hakka somewhere in the mix.

The first family to opt for construction of their own siheyuan in Eden was a retired couple in their early 70’s with three adult married children, two daughters and the youngest, a son, eight grandchildren and two unmarried adult cousins who had lived with the retired couple since their parents were killed in an auto accident years before. They had always lived close in the Appalachian style in four detached houses within a quarter of a mile of one another. “This will be great!” The grandfather said when the deal was settled. “Now we can be together all the time.” There was general agreement on the plan. Only the grandmother seemed to notice the strained smile on the face of her lone daughter-in-law as she struggled to put the best construction on the announced plan. I’ll try to make the best of it, the younger woman thought to herself. If worse comes to worst, I’ll just have to get a divorce.

Another family who chose a second siheyuan was headed by an elderly widow in her 80s with four children whose husband had died more than 30 years ago. Her eldest son had four adult children, the oldest a son and three younger daughters, only one of whom was married, and no grandchildren. Her eldest daughter and second son had no children, while her youngest daughter had four children, two girls and two boys, and her youngest son had three boys.

One of the major adaptations of the hutong haciendas was the ways in which they flowed across the mountainsides, often with cantilevers, open spaces and other modernist features at least as reminiscent of the Habitat in Montreal or the more recent Interlace in Singapore as the traditional flat surfaced siheyuan. Another innovative feature, inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright’s geometric designs was movement away from the box - the four-sided rectangles - of the traditional siheyuan with the development of hexagonal and octagonal designs. Finally,
following out the design innovation pioneered by Chris and Vincent, several of the siheyuans in the hutong hacienda neighborhood were constructed as log homes.
Ralph Deigh opened his eyes, gradually becoming conscious of the surroundings that seemed strange at first and then, suddenly, familiar. He realized he must be at the homeless shelter he used to stay at on cold, winter nights when he first got back from his last military service in Iraq. He was at Hyacinth House! Most nights during that period in his life, Ralph had spent under the bridge approach along the east bank of the Ohio River, but when the temperature got below freezing some nights that winter, he would check in with the front desk at Hyacinth House and get assigned a bed for the night.

And here he was again. But what was he doing here?
Just then, a familiar face appeared in view. A gentle giant he had known in those days only as Big Ernie stepped into view with a broad, but somewhat tense, smile. “Hello, Mr. Deigh,” Big Ernie intoned in his familiar, East Tennessee tones, “what brings you back to these parts?”

“Hello, Big Ernie. I have no idea what I’m doing here, or how I got here.”

“It’s okay, Mr. Deigh. It happens sometimes. Do you remember anything about last night, or yesterday, or how you got here?”

“No. It’s all just a blank. I got nothin’.”

“Okay. Have you got your meds with you?”

“No.”

“Well, then. We’d better see about getting you back to what my boss insists that we call your ‘significant others’. Amy, wasn’t it?”

“Yes. Amy McMillen. My god, Ernie. How did you remember that? It’s been years.”

Big Ernie blushed slightly at the question. “She’s a real nice lady. Sends me a Christmas card and a box of chocolates for my birthday every year.”

Ralph smiled at this reminder of Amy’s kindness as he reached for his cell phone. “Fortunately, I didn’t lose this,” he said as he pressed the button for Siri, or Alexa or whoever the latest AI character was and at the beep said in a familiar tone, “Call Amy.” Although Ralph could not see it, Big Ernie noticed that his phone immediately flashed what must be her number on the screen and it was reflected on Ralph cheek. Then, after a few seconds.

“Hello?”

“Amy? It’s Ralph.”

“Ralph! Thank goodness! Where are you? I’ve been worried about you. Are you okay? It’s been three days.”

“I’m okay. I . . . Three days? Really? I have no idea what happened or where I’ve been. Three days? That must mean it’s Wednesday? I woke up a few minutes ago at the homeless shelter. Down by the river. The Ohio. You know. Hyacinth House near where we first met?”

“How did you get there? Lil. . . saw your truck parked in the lot at Bernie’s yesterday afternoon. She had her spare key with her and brought it over here. Bart said you had been in there briefly Sunday night, had a burger and fries and left about 9. How on earth did you get over there?”
“I don’t know. But that answers one question. I won’t have to go out looking for my ride, and I doubt that Andy Ritter is still around or still has that old Chevy of his parked on the streets near the bridge. So, could you get away and come pick me up?”

“Sure. Things have been pretty slow in the shop this morning, so I’ll just hang up the sign. I’ll text you when I’m getting close. Okay?”

“I need to get some breakfast.” Ralph replied as he looked at his watch. “I’ll probably be over at the coffee shop across the street for the next half hour. Then I’ll just hang around here on the bench outside the shelter until you arrive.”

Fortunately, Ralph still had his wallet. Theft of personal items had sometimes been a problem at the shelter, so Ralph assumed Big Ernie had been watching out for him since last night. He had a couple of wrinkled $20 bills, so after saying his goodbyes and heartfelt thanks to the attendant and signing out at the front desk, Ralph walked across the street for some pancakes, eggs and bacon. From the strength of his appetite, he assumed he hadn’t eaten much for the past several days.

It took Amy about two hours to drive to the shelter, and Ralph was waiting outside when she arrived.

“It’s good to see you. I didn’t know whether you were gone for good or what. Is Big Ernie still here? I’d like to say hi and thank him for taking good care of you.”

“No. He went home. His shift was over and he won’t be back again until eight tonight. Apparently, he works all night every night.”

With that, Ralph got into Amy’s car. She drove and Ralph rode in the passenger seat. Neither of them said much on the trip back, until they were a few miles from the Doll House.

“I’ve been trying to do too much,” Ralph said without any introduction or explanation.

Amy hesitated for a moment and then asked “So, what are you going to do about it?”

Over the next several weeks, Ralph spent little time thinking about the three days lost from his life and what might have preceded waking up at the shelter. Scraped knuckles on his right hand told him that he probably had been in a fight at some point, and a single, almost unnoticeable bruise on his left cheek suggested that he may have gotten the better of it. “I just hope I didn’t hurt anyone,” the normally peaceable architect said to himself when he was alone in his workshop.

But, the more he thought about it, the more certain Ralph became that his original plan to do all the design work for the entire Eden Project was unrealistic. It was
simply beyond his ability. The overall concept and plan would always be his, and there was now enough general agreement with enough key people that Eden had already taken on a life of its own. And he would of course remain on the steering committee for the Project.

And so it was that Ralph Deigh returned to his original interest in designing houses and building models. Amy gradually began to notice over a period of weeks after that Ralph was sleeping more peacefully again and generally seemed to be more at ease than he had been for some time. It is also how The Eden Project came to hire not one, but three, Asian architectural firms. There were a lot of boring and tedious details in between the decision and result, but only a few of them add anything to our story. It is enough to note only that when Ralph explained what had happened and what he must do to Madeline and Adam, the other members of the Steering Committee, they assured him that they were both fine with his decision. “He’ll live a lot longer this way,” was Evie’s only reaction later that evening when Adam told her of Ralph’s decision.

“In the past few decades, a handful of Chinese architects have done some fantastic work. Truly, world class architecture. They have built literally hundreds of new cities. Most of them are pure schlock, of course. Not quite as bad as Soviet architecture in its heyday, but still insipid, dreary and unappealing.” Ralph was talking with Lil. . . and Madeline one afternoon. “But that isn’t uniformly the case. Some of the new Chinese designs are truly inspiring. In particular, there is a group in Beijing called MAD Associates. . .”

Madeline said, “I don’t think I’ve ever heard of them. Are they new?”

“Actually, its MAD Architects. I’ve seen pictures of their Wood Sculpture Museum. Interesting.” Lil. . . noted with only a hint of enthusiasm.

“. . .The firm was founded in 2003. Ma Yansong is the founding partner and he came up with the name MAD Architects. Some of his ideas about ‘organic architecture’ and the relation between nature and the build environment are just what we are going to need for the Mountainview Community Building. Kind of a mix of late Frank Lloyd Wright and Zaha Hadid.”

“They sound expensive,” Madeline said, adding quickly, “Of course, that shouldn’t be a problem. It might be good to have a world-class starchitect design at least one building for Eden.”

“One of Ma Yansong’s specialties has been his use of curves and irregular edges that mirror the landscape. The late critic Vincent Scully was the first to point out this feature of pueblo buildings like Taos Pueblo. That’s part of what he means by ‘organic’ architecture, and it’s just what we need in Appalachia.”

“One article I saw identified him as ‘the architect who banned straight lines.’”
In the months that followed, they all heard some grumbling heard locally in various coffee shops and bars around Dare County as word of the decision to hire Chinese architects leaked out to the public. “What do they need to get some Chinese guy nobody’s ever heard of for?” was a fairly typical question. “We got plenty of good architects here in the good ole U.S. of A.” Ralph and Madeline both knew that informed architectural criticism had never been a well-developed avocation in Dare County, but patriotism and public piety were always in fashion. On the other hand, the prospect of an internationally-known Chinese architect designing one of the most important buildings in the county, maybe even all of West Virginia, quickly became a source of great pride among the Chinese ethnic community from Cibola still housed in temporary FEMA trailers outside Huttonsville.

“And, groups of both Chinese and Japanese architects have done something virtually unheard of in the U.S.” Ralph had told Madeline and Lil . . .

“They’ve rethought and redesigned small, rural communities.” Ralph told Adam and Madeline one afternoon after There’s the Rural Urban Framework (RUF), a design lab at the University of Hong Kong. There are a number of similar university affiliated rural design centers in the U.S., but they’ve done nothing to compare with RUF. And, in Japan,

The third group was actually an Asian-American firm headed by a former student of Liang Sicheng, and including a consulting agreement with Bolchover and Lin in Hong Kong. While the other Chinese group would focus on the community building, and the Japanese would consult on general matters of rural village design, this latter group had a very precise portfolio. Their task was to re-examine the traditional Chinese hutong, with their high-walled siheyuan, or housing for extended families, and redesign it with modern facilities (notably well-appointed kitchens and bathrooms) and incorporating modern architectural features.

“This looks like just the sort of housing we need in the Appalachian mountains, where extended families often live in their own detached cabins in close proximity to one another.”

“Hey, we’re gonna live Chinese and Appalachian!” was the reaction of another of the displaced ethnic Chinese Cibolans. “This is really exciting. I can’t wait to see what they come up with!”
“The Spanish had very clear ideas about what their cities in the new world should look like,” Carlos Juan Baker said to his good friend as they walked along the riverbank between the Labyrinth and the water’s edge, “much like their cities in the old. The English who came seem to have been of two minds. The Puritans who settled the New England colonies came mostly from the English countryside and their clearest idea of what a community should look like was modeled on the English country village with its church and burial ground, houses scattered about helter-skelter, and in the case of market towns businesses strung out along a high street, or sometimes at the cross-roads of two main roads”
They had taken the PRT to Eden from the stop nearest what they called their refugee camp—the FEMA trailers which had been installed at the edge of the physical remains of Barley Mill. They had been living there ever since the twin disasters more than a year ago. Carlos and his friend Joy had both lived in Cibola before the flood. It was a beautiful early summer day and they had decided to get off one stop early and walk along the river on the walking/biking path through Eden Center.

“That’s right.” Joy Chen said. “That idea of a ‘city on a hill’ proved not to be much of a planning ideal. It just didn’t scale. Except in the smallest villages with their commons and village greens, it proved to be mostly a muddle with no overall plan or design.”

“Ah, I see you’ve been to Boston!”

“Actually, that’s true just about everywhere in America,” Joy told her friend, “except maybe the Old Town area in Savannah.”

Such conversations about urban planning, community design, housing, and rural life were becoming surprisingly common among the young people of Dare County ever since the Institute had opened and construction had begun on other parts of the Eden villages. “That’s why they called it New England! Not only did they name their towns after English antecedents, like Boston and Greenwich and Manchester. They used the same principles of urban design.”

“Isn’t that pretty much true of all the ethnic groups that came to America? Look at Chinatown in San Francisco or the Sante Fe style in New Mexico.”

“Maybe, but you don’t see any Italian hill towns anywhere in Appalachia,” she replied. “And the plazas in Albuquerque, Sante Fe and Taos are definitely hold overs from the Spanish colonial past, but while the adobe look in Sante Fe may be partly authentic, it’s mostly the result of some very modern community planning.”

“I guess you’re right.” Carlos had to admit that Joy knew what she was talking about. Besides, he really enjoyed watching her get really enthusiastic about just about anything. He just enjoyed spending time with her! She had just completed her master’s degree in modern urban design from Case Western in Cleveland and was one of the kids who grew up in the isolation of Cibola—they both were. They had both moved back to Eden to teach at the Eden Mechanical Institute. He had completed a bachelor’s degree in communications at Marshall University before accepting a position at EMI, to teach his real love which was masonry. Retaining walls were his absolute favorite, and God knows there would always be a need for them in Appalachia. He was currently studying construction techniques in some of the larger old mining and railroad towns where some walls eight and ten feet high had been standing for almost a hundred years without a crack in them.
But today he was just loved listening to Joy, who could get quite wrapped up in whatever subject she was expanding on. He just smiled and enjoyed the sunshine on his face as she continued.

“Most indigenous American cities grew up out of towns that were founded largely as commercial centers. The English village pattern started by the Puritans was gradually replaced by the town as a service center for the surrounding farms in the countryside all across the Midwest and the South. This pattern became nearly universal among rural communities in the United States in the 19th century when subsistence farming began to disappear and farmers came into the national market economy. Towns became the connections between the once self-sufficient farms with their cabins in the woods, and the distant markets of the eastern Seaboard, and Europe.”

They had agreed to share an apartment for the coming year in the Bridgeville section of Eden. They had been told that their building would be ready for occupancy within a month. It spanned the entire gap across the river between the ridges on either side more than 150 feet above the river. Each unit in the complex had a balcony and those in the bridge span overlooked the river with wonderful views several miles down to the bend.

“Yes. And Philadelphia and Charleston, not to mention Savannah, Alexandria, Providence and New York. I have to admit there is a certain patina and beauty in the result—after a couple of hundred years. But that really shouldn’t blind us to the fact that absent the farm-to-market role as intermediaries, most small towns today are simply dying on the vine. They have no real purpose, and yet people—some people—seem to love living there. They like the idea of living the way their ancestors before them lived.”

“The typical rural town in the U.S. everywhere west of Philadelphia is just a commercial afterthought! It’s a city that never grew up.”

“A few blocks of downtown businesses—a central business district, they call it. Somewhere in or near downtown you can expect to see a highway heading in and out of town, and quite likely a crossroads where two highways meet. And blocks and clusters of houses spreading out in all directions, with an interruption here and there where land was available at a reasonable price at the time for churches, schools and a few assorted other ‘public’ buildings.”

“More than likely, there once was a railroad running through town, somewhere close to downtown, perhaps there still is, with a siding or two, although that’s all mostly gone now. Towns turned them into “rail trails” for walking and biking, or simply abandoned. In much of the country, towns got located where the train tracks, water supplies from navigable rivers, and roads such as they were, came
together. The term “crossroads town” has real meaning in this part of the world, particularly where two state highways, or a state and federal highway intersect.”

“So, what you’re saying, Joy, is that the small town today is largely an anachronism that grew up in response to the re-positioning of the family farm from a self-sufficient household economy to an agricultural producer for the regional and then national economy?”

“That’s right. That’s where they all got started. Some of these places grew into large towns, and others grew into huge cities. But they pretty much all share similar origins, except in the Southwest. Cities like Albuquerque, Sante Fe, Tucson and Los Angeles were founded by the Spanish as actual cities. “The Spanish came to the Americas with definite plans for building their ideas of proper cities, with plazas, cathedrals, municipal buildings and all the rest.”

“And this is not the first time this happened on this continent, either. Just like 19th century American towns, Mayan cities were not formally planned. They just grew outward from an original core through the addition of palaces, temples, sacred ball courts and complex residential complexes. Urban cores were usually ceremonial and administrative centers, in some cases separated from residential areas by walls. Ruling elites lived in the center, which was also where people gathered for public activities.”

With that, their conversation turned to other subjects as they approached the escalator that would take them from the river level up to the entrance to the bridge. At the lower end, there was a short all-weather escalator with a covered overhang that took them up to the level of the PRT station, where they walked past a row of rental bikes and from there, they stepped into the elevator which took them up to the main entrance of The Bridge, where they were to meet the realtor who would show them their unit.

As they stepped off the elevator, they were greeted by a woman’s voice, “Hi. You must be Joy and Carlos. I’m Amanda. Did you have a good trip out here?”

“Yeah” Carlos said, “It’s a beautiful day and it’s always nice to get away from the refugee camp.” Amanda looked puzzled by this. “That’s what we call the FEMA trailers.” Joy added, “We’re really looking forward to getting out of there and getting settled here in Eden.”

“Well, let’s go look at your unit. It should be ready in a couple of weeks. There’s not too much more work to be completed yet.”

Amanda gestured to another elevator, marked “Residents Only” and as the door opened she said, “Your unit is on the third floor not too far from this end. It’s got a gorgeous view down the valley. I can’t wait for you to see it when there’s a bit of valley fog!”
No one had seemed to notice the man and woman talking outside the elevator as they stepped off. “What is it you wanted to ask me about?” Freddie asked her companion. “Cane is waiting for me. We’re going to take the funi up the mountain and hike back down this afternoon. I’ve got to pick up the lunch first from Priscilla’s.” Funi (which she pronounced “funny”) was a local reference to the funicular that ran from the PRT stop to the top of the mountain.

Daniel hesitated only a moment at the mention of his favorite local sandwich shop. “Well, you see, there’s this guy I worked with a few years back at The Metro
News. He was an editor there, but now he’s an independent writer. Full time! Novels. Long-form journalism. That sort of thing.”

“He’s traveling cross-country to attend some big annual electronics show or something out in Las Vegas that he’s doing a piece on for Wired and wants to stop by Dare County to see me. He expects to be here Wednesday afternoon through Friday morning next week. He hates flying so my guess is he’s still driving an old wreck of an RV he got with the royalties from his first - actually his only - successful book. He asked if he might attend a meeting of our Thursday evening group. I told him about our gatherings a few years ago. Now he says he might have a helluva story for us. I couldn’t tell if it was fact or fiction, but he said he was sure we’d find it interesting.

“Well, yeah. Okay. I’m fine with that. As long as it’s okay with Art and Gloria. It’s their home. Have you mentioned it to any of the others? I can’t see why anyone would object. What’s this guy’s name, by the way? Have I heard of him? Maybe read anything he wrote?”

“It’s Phil. Phil Anthropod. He’s been around for years, but he’s never been a big name or celebrity writer of any kind. In fact, I think he’s just been eking out a living most of his adult life. As far as I know, he’s never been on any of the late-night talk shows.” At this Daniel laughed; Then coughed, while Freddie just stood there unsmiling.

And so it was that on the following Thursday evening, Art and Gloria Payne welcomed everyone including Phil to the Thursday Evening Salon and invited Daniel to introduce their guest.

“Everyone. If I can have your attention, I’d like you to meeting a former newspaper colleague of mine. This is Phil Anthropod. We used to work together before I came back to Barley Mill. Phil is a writer and that limousine out on the curb is the fruit of his labors.”

There was a quick burst of restrained laughter, with Phil laughing loudest of all.

“When they see my home-on-wheels everyone wants to be a writer!” he said.

“Phil stopped by Dare County to see me - and to meet some of my friends - on his way to a tech conference in Las Vegas. I’ve told him before about this group and he says he’s got a really good tale to tell us tonight, but he wouldn’t tell me what it’s about. So, Phil, why don’t you tell us your tale.”

“Thank you, Danny. It’s really been good to catch up with you in the last few hours. We had some great times at the old Metro. Remember the night Charlie Watson fell off the back deck of the local watering hole and straight into the river and we had to fish him out? What was the name of that place, anyway? The Press, wasn’t it?”
Daniel nodded and smiled. Then, laughing, Phil turned to the others and began. “I want to thank you, Art and Gloria, for welcoming me into your home tonight. I’ve heard a great deal about your group from Danny, and I hope you like what I have to say tonight. But first, a slight correction. I’m not on my way to Las Vegas; just passing through there, although I do plan to stop by the LVPD. And I’m not going to that big annual tech conference they have out there. I’m headed to Riverside, California for the annual meeting of the Left Coast mystery writers association.” At this, he paused, sighed and said, “I’m really quite nervous, talking to you like this. Like most writers, I’d rather be at my typewriter, but I figured writing out my tale and doing a reading tonight might strike you as a bit much.” He paused, then added, “I guess most writers my age are now using word processors.”

He paused again, took a deep breath and began again in an altogether serious voice.

“A few weeks ago, I was in Detroit polishing up a few last-minute details on a story I’m hoping to sell to Vanity Fair or Esquire. One evening after dinner I was having a drink by myself in the hotel bar, when I met a Michigan State Police lieutenant named Nick Evans. We talked about a number of things, the water in Flint, the empty houses in Detroit, the new quarterback the Lions were hoping to trade up for, that sort of thing.”

“One thing led to another, and he told me he was retired from the State Police. I said he seemed kind of young to be retired. ‘It wasn’t really my choice,’ he said. They had apparently given him an honorary promotion to lieutenant and kicked him upstairs. ‘It was a desk job and I never got outside the building most days. When I did, it was only to attend some meeting or other. I got so bored,’ he said, ‘I had to get out of there.’ He and his partner, Sgt. Tom Horton, had been in the Cold Case unit and had dug into a case that was their downfall. They couldn’t let it go, but they also couldn’t get the evidence they needed for an indictment. While Nick was just kicked upstairs, Tom was apparently kicked out of the force. As Nick told it, he had become such a nuisance - “a real pain in the ass” - to the powers that be in the department that they put him out to pasture.

“He was convinced - they both were, really - that they had stumbled upon an unsolved triple homicide at least, maybe more. It could even be a serial killer they were after. It just felt that way. But they couldn’t come up with any conclusive evidence to prove it was anything more than a series of coincidental deaths, no matter where they looked.”

Art, Gloria, Freddie and the others present that evening began looking at Daniel periodically, asking with their eyes what does this have to do with us? When Phil noticed these periodic glances, he responded, “I’m sure you are all wondering what any of this might have to do with you. It’s just this: Three of the victims were an
Ohio self-made billionaire named Mueller, his first wife Claire and his second wife Rosemary.” With that, everyone in the room including those who had been only half listening, as they later described it, sat up straight and he had their full and complete attention.

“The authorities ruled all but one of the deaths ‘natural causes’, and there was no initial reason for suspicion. It was only later that official doubts began to form. The only reason the Michigan Cold Cases unit even got involved at all was because the first wife, Claire, who was killed in Las Vegas listed a Michigan address on documents found on her body. The list of possible suspects is quite lengthy, and the obvious motive was money - gobs and gobs of money. This Mueller guy was, as you know, a multi-billionaire and his second wife put most of the fortune into a series of charitable trusts just before she developed a fatal illness. Those two Cold Case detectives convinced themselves that all three deaths were homicides, but they were never able to find a shred of solid evidence, or to point toward the killer or killers.”

“When this former detective told me all this, my eyes were beginning to glaze over,” Phil continued. “But now, here’s where it gets really interesting. I suspect many of you knew Rosemary Mueller.” He looked around the room as most of those present were shaking their heads affirmatively and mumbling various affirmations. “Two weeks before Ms. Mueller died, a nun who had previously been in touch with her was also found dead in the chapel at her nunnery. Isn’t that what you call those places? When a bunch of nuns live?” Freddie’s nod seemed to satisfy him and he continued.

“She had been stabbed in what was ruled a drug-related homicide. But, Lt. Evans - Nick - even though he was already retired learned of the killing from a contact in Ohio. He knew that she had visited Rosemary earlier. Apparently, her father was a private investigator and she had returned one of her father’s case files to the Widow Mueller.”

“You know, now that you mention it, one of the young lawyers in our firm died under somewhat mysterious circumstances a few months ago.” The comment came from Jim Harbaugh whose house in Eden had recently been completed and who was now in full charge of the Eden, West Virginia office of the Graham & Graham law firm. Since moving to Dare County and meeting most of the members of the Thursday Evening Salon Jim and his wife Virginia - her friends all called her Ginny - had been invited to join and had been attending Thursday evenings occasionally for the past several months. This was, in fact, their third consecutive Thursday with the group and Jim and Ginny were both already doing research for their own presentations at some future Thursday evening. But this speech tonight by Phil Anthropod really whetted Jim’s curiosity and led him to decide on the spot that he would completely shift his focus.
He had been planning to deal with some of the legal issues raised by the discovery of the whole community of Cibola, people who had been born here and living in Dare County their entire lives, yet were completely “off the books” as far as the entire U.S. legal establishment was concerned. No official birth certificates, no recognized school attendance or graduation records, no driver’s or marriage licenses, no property ownership or credit records. Nothing. He knew that a legislative committee was working on the matter, but he didn’t expect much to come of that. But that whole question would have to wait for a later day.

Although most of his legal work had always been in real estate, Jim was a romantic at heart and the urge to get involved in this apparent legal mystery he was introduced to tonight was proving to be overwhelming. Or so Ginny gathered as she sat next to Jim on the chairs near the doorway leading to the front hall in the Paynes’ living room. Only a couple of minutes into the presentation by this tall, lanky midwestern writer, Jim had opened his iPad and began to take notes. She had been vaguely aware of the death of the legal associate Jim mentioned, but she was completely unaware of any mystery surrounding his death.

Phil mentioned two other possibly related deaths the ex-cops had told him about before wrapping up his remarks. As the evening was complete and people were beginning to leave, Phil whispered to Daniel, “I’m sorry that the architect - Ralph Deigh isn’t it? - wasn’t here tonight. I’ve heard a great deal about his ideas on rural architecture and I was looking forward to meeting him.”

“He has never attended our Thursday evenings,” Daniel replied. “This just isn’t his thing. He’s really pretty much a loner, I guess. Even though the entire Eden project pretty much revolves around him, he’s really not very involved with other people. From what I understand, Amy has a terrible time getting him to attend just about any gathering that isn’t about building Eden where there may be more than 2-3 people.”

“It’s probably related to his time in the Middle East,” Phil mused, “I understand he had a pretty rough time of it there. It’s too bad. I would have liked to meet him.” He paused briefly. “Lt. Evans - Nick - thinks he’s one of the prime suspects.”

“I seriously doubt that,” Daniel replied. “If you knew him, you’d see why. I’ll give him a call when we get back to the house. He might be free for breakfast tomorrow. I’m assuming you don’t necessarily need to get an early start?”

“Great. But now I’m ready to go back to your place, so I can turn in. I’m really worn out.”
Ralph was free the next morning and so the three of them—Ralph Deigh, Phil Anthropod, and Daniel Messenger—met for breakfast in the coffee shop that was part of the cooking school at the Mechanic’s Institute. Serge Amien, the lead instructor in pastry came out to greet them, and since he didn’t have his regular bread baking class until 11, decided to join them. Phil was delighted at this, since it gave him an opportunity to get several different perspectives on what he called the Eden Experiment.

The first thing Daniel noticed was that Ralph turned unusually shy and reticent when Phil mentioned Eden as an experiment. Serge, on the other hand, was his...
usual voluble self, laughing and cracking his old jokes which seemed to be familiar
to everyone except Phil. He was particularly witty in teasing Daniel about his
budding relationship with someone he called “that girl from Ohio.”

As they were talking, a tall, lanky brunette came into the coffee shop. She was very attractive even in the ill-fitting bib overalls she was wearing and obviously very comfortable in her clothes and these surroundings.

“Hello, Barbara,” Daniel said as she approached their table. “What’s new?”

“Hey, Dan. Ralph.” Then turning to Phil, she said, “You must be that writer they said was here in town to hear all these guys lie about what’s been going on up there in that secret government stuff patch. I call it Area 52. God knows what kind of experimental secret stuff they got goin’ on up there.”

When this got no reaction, she continued. “All this nonsense about a village with Europeans and Spanish and Indians and Nee-groes livin’ together up there in secret for 500 years is just one great big load of bull crap. Same kind of political correctness B.S. we been hearin’ from them Washin’ton liberals for years. Ain’t that so, Barry?” At this she turned toward the coffee shop manager over by the door. As she did, he turned several shades of pink and then scarlet, before stammering, “I. I. I. I don’t know anything about that, Barbara.”

As planning for the Eden project had evolved in the first few months, it was increasingly obvious to the members of the planning committee that not everyone was happy with Ralph Deigh’s commitment to modern design. Barbara was clearly one of those. Some of the residents of Barley Mill who were otherwise committed to relocating in the new town of Eden had given decidedly mixed reviews to the models they were shown. And it soon became clear that the objection wasn’t to what Ralph considered the key features of modern design, whether it was the use of central heat and air conditioning, structural steel and concrete, open floor plans, cantilevered porches and balconies, large expanses of glass or easy, open flow between interior and exterior spaces. “I think what many people object to most,” Ralph told Amy one evening, “are the plain, simple, unadorned exterior facades they associate with modernism.”

“I like the idea of having bathrooms with showers and central heat and an up-to-date kitchen and all the rest,“ Gina Millsap, one of Barbara’s close friends, had told the planners at one community meeting, “but I don’t like all those la-de-da modernistic Frankie Wrightie designs with their six sides and plain walls and all that. I want a house that looks like a house. A place you want your kids to grow up in. Something really sweet and sentimental like those paintings by Thomas Kinkade. Something that will give me a warm feeling inside.”
The following morning Madeline and Lil. . . had been having a laugh over Gina’s approach to modern design in the kitchen of the FEMA trailer that was serving as the on-site office for the Eden Project when Ralph arrived.

“I think I know where Gina’s coming from,” he told the two young women. “She doesn’t like the spare, featureless facades of so much ‘modern’ architecture. She wants a house that looks like her idea of a house. And I’m sure she’s not alone in that. And for what it’s worth, I agree completely that ‘modern’ flat roofs are a very bad idea, especially here in Appalachia where we get so much rain and snow. Flat roofs have been no end of trouble in a whole variety of Wright homes.”

“I could argue,” he continued, “that those early modern architects did plain facades just to highlight the really innovative structural features of their designs and their new uses of materials—the glass, concrete, and steel. More traditional facades like Gina wants in her house would have minimized the real innovations.”

Neither Madeline nor Lil. . . knew quite what to say to this so they said nothing, and the conversation soon turned to other, more mundane matters on the daily construction schedule for Eden.

After a few more community meetings and some sampling of local opinion, the planning group determined that community views were almost evenly split on this question of modern facades. Some people really loved the idea of ‘modern looking’ facades, whether the clean geometric lines of a Wright design or the voluptuous curves of Geary, Hadid or the MAD group’s Huangshan Village, and another group of almost equal size really hated that look and wanted housing that “actually looked like houses, and not space ships.”

After a few more weeks of discussion with Madeline, Lil. . ., Adam and others, Ralph finally arrived at what appeared to be a suitable compromise. “I think,” he told the group, “that if we wrap thoroughly modern designs and material and features in some very traditional looking English cottage and log cabin facades, it looks like we can make part of the community very happy.” And so it was that the basic plan for two of the additional villages of Eden began to fall into place. Housing in one of the seven villages of Eden would have the appearance of Currier-and-Ives-meet-Thomas-Kinkade-inspired traditional facades, and the second would consist entirely of modern, log cabin designs. The first would be named Sunlight Village and the second would be called Pioneer or Frontier something. Ralph objected for a brief time to the latter, in particular, because it violated one of his principles of organic architecture—the use of local, indigenous, materials. “We’ve got millions and millions of trees in Appalachia,” he would point out, “but almost none of them are big enough or straight enough to work well in the kind of log house construction people want. For that, we will have to import all of the logs from Canada and the Pacific Northwest.”
“Make no mistake,” Ralph assured the assembled design staff and planning group, “all of these houses are to be completely modern on the inside, right down to the most melding of inside and outside that we can fit in. But, when it comes to roof lines, overhangs, outside facades including landscaping, the model for Sunlight Village will be the English village and those very popular Thomas Kinkade paintings. In terms of landscape design,” he went on, “for this particular village we want lots and lots of paths through the woods, crisscrossing creeks, wishing wells, arbors, dappled light through the trees and all the rest.”

“The log cabin village doesn’t have a name yet. I suppose some historical reference invoking Lincoln or Daniel Boone might be appropriate, but here too the log cabin facades will be just that—traditional faces on some strictly modern designs.”

And so it was that what others later called “the great compromise” was struck. Four of the seven villages of Eden were to be—in terms of external appearances—completely modern in design, while two others would be equally modern in their basic architectural features but with more traditional-appearing facades. The basic configuration of the seventh village had yet to be decided. From the first moment that Gina Millsap and a group of her friends were shown some of the preliminary sketches that Ralph had authorized they were equally ecstatic in praise of the bathroom fixtures in the master bedroom suites and the “really cute” scalloped window boxes overlooking the faux back yard wishing wells.

And, with that, Phil announced that he must be on his way west to wherever it was that he was really going. Ralph and Daniel walked him out to his car and went their separate ways.
There had been no signs of trouble in Eden as the two dozen men dressed in camouflage gear, their faces covered in balaclavas, moved stealthily down the mountain shortly after midnight on an otherwise quiet Sunday evening in late May. The Eden project had been underway for a little over three years, and work was underway at all seven village sites. The first two villages, the Labyrinth, the Community Center and about ninety percent of the transportation grid were nearing completion. Most of the people from Cibola, as well as most of those from Barley Mill who sought to relocate to Eden had moved out of the FEMA trailers, and work was also nearing completion on many of the federally-subsidized houses rebuilt in Barley Mill. The Cibola site far back up the mountains had now been completely abandoned and was beginning to be reclaimed by the forest, just as
centuries earlier, the communities of Mayan civilization had been reclaimed by the jungles of Central America. Adam Sennett and his daughter-in-law, Freddie Watson, and her husband Cane had spent an entire week on a walking-tour survey of the boundary fence with its federal No Trespassing signs that had once completely surrounded the Cibola site. They found that the fence was rusting badly and falling into disrepair in numerous places. In particular, large gaps had been opened in the direct path of the deluge that was created when the slurry pond gave way and the other residents of Dare County suddenly learned of the existence of the Cibola community several years before.

Each of the men carried an automatic assault rifle, several clips of ammunition, three or four hand grenades, and a small package of C4 and PE4 explosives. Unbeknownst to anyone in Eden, this group who called themselves the Rural Nationalist Association, the RNA, had covertly been stockpiling caches of weapons, ammo and explosives in locations on the perimeter of Eden for several weeks, prior to what they were calling, with no sense of any historical irony, “VE Day”. VE in the RNA battle plan, was short for Vengeance toward Eden, with no seeming awareness of the misspelling.

The RNA as an organization was committed to the preservation and protection of traditional rural ways of life by any means necessary. To them, the Eden Project represented the single most repugnant development in rurality in the last half-century. Nationally, the political and public relations arm of the RNA had issued numerous warnings of the threat that The Eden Project represented. Now the time had come for action, and the men who moved swiftly through the night were committed to acting. Their dedication to the mission was unanimous - with one exception.

From his location in the woods, he heard no further noise for at least an hour. Then, at precisely one A.M. the explosions began and pandemonium reigned for what seemed an eternity. For roughly the next half an hour he could hear the sounds of explosions, gun fire, screaming, shouting and the general din of battle. Then, just as suddenly it was over and he knew that things had gone according to plan and all of the men of the RNA were making their escape back into the woods and moving toward the rendezvous point, where he hoped their journey would end.

After he was certain that all of his two dozen collaborators slipped back into the woods as silently as they had come, one lone figure dressed exactly like the others emerged from the woods, pulled off his balaclava, laid down his unfired weapon and, with an anguished scream of pure rage threw his cell phone against the nearest large tree almost certainly shattering the screen and destroying it. He knew they might miss him temporarily but it no longer mattered. His cover would be blown, but that didn’t matter either. He had done everything that he set out to do, and even as he sat there the federal “roll up” of the RNA would be beginning.
In the planning for the raid, he had been assigned as a one-man team to set explosives to bring down the parking garage and Intermodal Transportation hub (IMTH) on the outer ring of the PRT tracks and as the other men had begun splitting up to set their explosive charges, no one noticed that while he set off in the general direction of the hub before he had moved back into the cover of the surrounding woods, sought a position on high ground and had spent nearly all of the time during which the raid was unfolding trying to reach his control officer, who in turn had been trying to convince his superiors that the raid was, indeed, occurring, and waiting for the forces of law and order which had not yet arrived.

The sheer audacity of the raid and the speed with which it was executed, together with the late hour had worked to the advantage of the RNA, just as they had hoped. What the leaders of the RNA had not counted on was a mole in their midst, one who could now identify all of those who participated, and who in his 27 months undercover with the organization had systematically generated enough evidence to put all of them in prison for the rest of their lives. Thanks to him, the feds knew for example, the secret location in the forest where they would gather two hours from now to debrief one another on their mission. He knew also that federal agents were already waiting for them there and would immediately arrest and transport the men to different locations for interrogation. He hoped that this would mean they would not be able to immediately determine his absence, before he too had a chance to get away.

Although the RNA had been planning and talking about this raid for months, he was still horrified at the extent of the devastation to the new town of Eden. Everywhere he looked he could see fires burning, and in the flickering light of the flames the damaged and destroyed houses and buildings.

Abbe reflected as he sat there and waited for his control officer to arrive along with unknown others what a strange, disconcerting several years it had been for him. He had left Barley Mill nearly 40 months ago for Washington DC. He thought at the time that he was leaving for a short six-month stint deep in the federal bureaucracy as so many of his ancestors, including his dad’s great uncle Arthur, had before him. After that, he had expected to return to his dual life in Barley Mill and Cibola to begin the long process of preparation under his father’s guidance to take up leadership of the Cibola community, including the steps necessary to get himself elected as the next Dare County Clerk. It was less than two weeks later that “Digger” Barnes’ slurry pond had failed flooding the secret valley where the Cibola community had existed for more than four hundred years, poisoning the environment, destroying most of the buildings in the town and killing more than two hundred of the friends, neighbors and relatives that he and his brother Cane and sister Sable had grown up among. He learned of the flash flooding the day after it happened when his father called. It had been a highly
emotional call as his father described what had happened, and how his mother, as the principal medical officer of Cibola and the county had borne the brunt of the effort. He also explained how Cane had risen to the occasion, how Freddie Watson had gradually pieced together the story of Cibola and joined the rescue operation that night. He called again less than a week later told Abbe numerous additional details of ghastly and heroic events associated with the storm that destroyed Barley Mill.

In the weeks and months that followed, Abbe’s family, which seemed to increasingly include Freddie, as well as Abbe’s fiancé Juanita whose parents and three siblings had drown or died of chemical poisoning in the flood, had also kept him abreast of the storm that destroyed Barley Mill. Although they weren’t actually engaged yet, Abbe’s parents took his eventual marriage to Juanita more or less for granted, and after the devastation of her family of origin, they asked her to move in with them in their newly constructed siheyuan. She had gradually assumed an increasing role in the many details of the completion of their new home in one of the hutongs of Eden, where there would be accommodations for Abbe and Juanita, his parents Adam and Evie, both of his grandmothers and a widowed aunt and who had somehow survived the devastation, as well as his baby sister Sable, and Cane and Freddie, who were already living together in one of the FEMA trailers on the outskirts of Barley Mill.

His involvement in the planning of these domestic arrangements in Eden had ended abruptly a few weeks later when he was contacted in his tiny office in Washington by a representative of the clandestine service which had replaced the NSA as the nation’s most super-secret intelligence service. The recruiter explained that he was part of a super-secret federal effort originally designed to protect Cibola, and he had known Abbe’s father and mother for years. Adam later confirmed this. The recruiter then asked Abbe to join a covert training program, following which he would be assisted to infiltrate the RNA, which they had learned was planning a series of attacks on Cibola, which they had somehow learned about.

It had all gone, as they say, like clockwork after that as he completed the standard course of agency training, worked with the ‘scribes’ as they created a plausible life history for him, complete with all the proper documentation. The story the documents told was of an alienated, anti-social youth, Robert Wayne Marshall, abandoned by his father at an early age and raised by his single mom, whose substance abuse problems had grown gradually worse until she died of a drug overdose when he was 14. Subtly woven into his new life history were the facts of his racially pure Anglo-Saxon heritage, and his hatred for “race mixing” which he had learned from his father and uncles. Left on his own, his legend also showed that he had been in and out of trouble with local police and in various foster care
homes for the next four years, until he enlisted in the U.S. Army. In the military he had been trained as a signals intelligence operator, able to handle the transmission of coded and uncoded messages in a variety of forms. What it didn’t show is that he also had been given sufficient training in equipment service and maintenance during his agency training period to be able to install nearly undetectable nanotechnology listening devices in just about any equipment. None of this was enough to keep him out of trouble and he received a dishonorable discharge, following a 180-day sentence for assorted misdemeanors.

With his training completed and his backstory intact, ‘Robert Wayne Marshall’ began the slow but deliberate process of infiltrating the RNA. As his recruiter Burton Smith had first suggested to him, Abbe was a perfect candidate for the agency because he and his family had been living double lives for generations, as community leaders in Cibola and ordinary residents of Dare County. Abbe had first joined a survivalist compound in the Ozark mountains of rural Missouri, moved into Branson, Missouri and almost before he knew it been recruited by the RNA, quickly moving into the leadership group of the local cell. Like many domestic terrorist operations, RNA leaders were highly paranoid, but not the brightest bunch, and so with expert guidance from the counter-intelligence experts at the agency, they had devised a near perfect approach.

He began by taking a small apartment in an old, tired section of Branson. In evenings over the next several weeks, he worked his way through a series of local bars and road houses, appearing to drink too much and getting more obnoxious as the evening wore on, loudly holding forth on a wide variety of racist, paranoid and nativist thoughts and opinions expressly designed to attract the attention of the RNA. Eventually each night, he would be asked to leave and the next night he would repeat his act in another similar joint. After the seventh such performance, as he entered a roadhouse on the edge of town with a large neon sign proclaiming it as Porky’s Lounge, he noticed something different. The bar, like the parking lot, was nearly empty, there were no cars in the ground parking lot outside and inside a single bartender was serving five guys with shaved heads at a single table.

“Hey stranger. Why don’t you join us for a beer?” one of them said as he entered in a tone that made clear it was not a question.

“Glad to,” he replied, pulling back the only empty chair. “Name’s Robert,” he volunteered as he said down, “Robert Marshall, but my friends call me Sonar.”

“Sonar? That’s a strange moniker.” The same man who had spoken before said. The others just looked back and forth between Robert and the speaker. Clearly he was the leader, at least for now.

“Got it in the army,” ‘Robert’ replied. “I was a radio op and tech.” He omitted the detail about his dishonorable discharge on purpose.
Ignoring his explanation, the leader said, “Sounds like you’ve been makin’ a real pain in the ass of yourself and gettin’ kicked out of every two-bit bar in Branson. What’s the deal?”

“I got this thing about gub’ment. I hated the army. I hate taxes. I hate all this socialism taking away our freedom, and after I drink a little bit I don’t give a damn who knows it.” Robert said and smiled sheepishly. Then quickly: “Got any idea if a man can get a drink in this place?”

At this one of the other men signaled the man behind the bar, who called out “Whaddya drinkin’ Sonar?” Clearly, he was part of the group and had been listening along with the others.

“Bud. Light. ‘Less you got any of them Chinese or Mexican beers,” Robert replied, pronouncing the adjectives with a sneer. At this, all the men laughed, acknowledging his joke. One by one they introduced themselves: Vern, Jack, Scorch, Fletcher and Milt. Only the leader failed to volunteer his name.

“Bud Light comin’ right up” the bartender, whose name was Irv, said as he reached for a glass and placed it under the spigot. He brought the beer to the table and set it down in front of Sonar. “Here ya go.” he said and then reached back and pulled a chair from the next table and sat down slightly behind Sonar’s right shoulder. Clearly, he was part of whatever was happening here. No one said anything or reacted in any way other than slightly shuffling their chairs to the left and right to make room for Irv. Clearly, he was a member of the group and they were all regulars in this particular tavern.

Over the next half hour, they talked about the usual things men talk about in bars - baseball, the NFL, high taxes, the NBA, the stock market, women, until finally the leader, who finally said his name was Mel, said “So, Sonar, we could use a guy like you. How’d you like to do something real and not just sound off in bars?”

That was it. The moment he had prepared for. With no more introduction or fanfare than that, Mel had inducted ‘Robert (Sonar) Marshall’ into the RNA. The questions that followed suggested they must have already done background research on him before this barroom “meet and greet”. They continued talking for another hour until Mel said it was time to show him “our little country place.” They all got up to leave and Irv turned out the lights and the neon sign out front and locked the back door as the men all of the men began to pile into two cars that were parked out of sight behind Porky’s along with a lone pickup truck. Mel indicated to Sonar that he should join him in the F-150.

“I’m sorry to do this to you, but it’s for your own safety, really.” Mel said as he handed him the large sleep mask. “This way if those bastards in the FBI ever question you, you won’t be able to tell them where we are.” Mel couldn’t know that even as they spoke, the agency (not the FBI) was monitoring and recording not
only their location but every word they spoke through a nano transmitter embedded in Abbe’s cheek. The transmitter was able not only to transmit every sound that Abbe himself could hear, but also to offer constant feedback on his location through GPS.

“I’ve asked one of our guys to stop by your place and pick up your things.” With his statement, Mel made clear that, first, they knew where he was living. Just as importantly, “stopping by” to pick up his suitcase meant also that they would have ample opportunity to thoroughly search his meagre belongings, and that it was probably already searched and packed. Fortunately, his training had fully prepared him for this eventuality and they would find nothing there to compromise him.

He could now hear the gradually increasing sounds of the task force approaching his location, so he pulled off his camo top exposing his white tee-shirt and placing his arms up and his hands-on top of his head in a gesture of surrender as he had been trained to do. They were coming along the PRT tracks from the direction of the IMTH he was supposed to have blown up.

The troops had obviously been warned to be on the lookout for him. As the first squad came into view, the leader said something to his men and then called out “Are you Abbe Sennett?” After he said he was, the leader spoke into his helmet mike and the troops immediately surrounded him, forming a complete wall with no breaks and their backs to him facing outward. Clearly, they had been told to protect him and were intent on doing so. Within a matter of minutes what appeared to be an armored All-Terrain Vehicle appeared from the opposite direction and Abbe was quickly loaded aboard. There was only one other man inside, driving the ATV. He immediately recognized his recruiter, Ben whatever. In the confusion of the moment, he was unable to remember Ben’s surname.

“Abbe. How are you?”

“I wish this hadn’t happened,” was all he could reply.

“Yeah, well let’s get you out of here.”

And with Ben driving slowly and carefully across the mountain landscape to a larger vehicle waiting just outside the newly reconstructed Barley Mill, Abbe left Eden for what he knew would be the final time.
Exodus

Over the next two weeks, as he was debriefed at a secret location somewhere in the southwest and gradually freed from the persona - and the misdeeds - of Robert ‘Sonar’ Marshall, Abbe Sennett also learned a great deal more from his debriefers of the effects of the raid on Eden. He knew - or at least believed - that he was in the southwestern United States because of a host of familiar signs - the brown, red, yellow and gray green colors of the landscape, the pinion trees (mostly bushes, really) and cactus, the dusty, dry heat, and every time he walked any distance the familiar signs of high altitude to which he had not yet fully adjusted. He could be just about anywhere in Nevada, Arizona, Utah, New Mexico, or southwestern Colorado. During his debriefing the question never came up and he never asked.

The wide-ranging conversations went on all day, day after day in a sunny, simply decorated room stocked with comfortable chairs and ample supplies of coffee, both decaffeinated and regular, soft drinks of all kinds in a dispensing machine like those he had seen in fast food places that could produce 10 different flavors of lemonade and nearly a dozen variations of diet Coke. He found in the first three
days that his favorite drink was a diet root beer and while they talked he preferred sitting facing north, looking toward a whitish image on a distant hillside. It was several miles away, far enough that he couldn’t see it clearly, but he had decided by the second day that it was either a water tank for cattle or a bare spot which for some reason had none of the purple sage grass that grew on the rest of the rolling landscape as far as he could see in any direction. He found himself studying the water tank, for that must be what it was, during breaks in the conversation when his mind was not focused on the debriefing and could just wander.

They had told him a great deal about the raid by the RNA on Eden; answered all his questions, really. Between interrogation sessions one afternoon, his controller, whose name he learned was Bill Anderson although Abbe doubted that was his real name, had told him that his undercover work had enabled the agency to roll up more than a dozen networks they referred to as ‘domestic terrorist’ groups, and had resulted in the arrest of more than 1,000 people and the confiscation of an untold numbers of guns and ammunition. Bill also handed him a pardon, signed by the President herself, exonerating him for his involvement in several bank robberies, burglaries to capture guns and ammunition and other crimes which Abbe had been forced to participate in during his undercover work. Fortunately, he had only had to shoot one victim during that time in order to maintain his cover and that resulted in an incidental wound to the fleshy part of the victim’s right leg. He meant to miss completely, but the bullet had shattered when it ricocheted off a rock and the victim was hit in the leg with a fragment. He had also had to beat up several of his comrades in the RNA - and had been beaten in turn by several of them - in the monthly combat exercises that Mel insisted upon. He was fairly certain that the agency would have exonerated him even if he had actually killed someone, but he was glad not to have that on his conscience and grateful for the pardon.

He would regret for the rest of his life that the raid on Eden had mostly succeeded in the original terms the RNA had laid down. Numerous buildings, including the Community Center, the parking garages on the north and south ends of town, and the Labyrinth had been destroyed or heavily damaged. Also destroyed were nearly 1000 meters of PRT track and several cars, at least one funicular and nearly a dozen homes or apartment buildings including the siheyuan where Juanita had been living with his parents, his brother, sister and their significant others and a couple of additional relatives. His parents and Juanita had both been hospitalized for assorted shrapnel and impact wounds for a few days after the attack but he was told they were all recovering nicely, although still traumatized by the attack and the deaths of others. He had talked with all of them several times by phone and they sounded as good as could be expected under the circumstances. All of them were having trouble sleeping, and as it often did in such cases, the phrase PTSD came up often in the conversations.
Others in Eden had not been as lucky. Ralph Deigh had been working late the evening of the raid and died in the explosion at the Labyrinth. It was ironic, Abbe thought, that Ralph had survived his experiences and injuries in two wars in the Middle East only to die during peacetime in an act of domestic terrorism. But he knew that Ralph had been explicitly targeted by the RNA. Approximately 20 others in Eden also died of either gunshot wounds or were killed by the assorted blasts. They included Madeline Klein and Linda Sue Winslow, who had been staying with Ralph Deigh and Amy for a few days. Amy had been away that night visiting friends. For no apparent reason he could think of, the list of casualties also included a retired Michigan police detective, who had built a house for himself in Eden and a retired couple from Wisconsin, Ron and Tessa Brewer.

Abbe was deeply troubled by all the deaths, which included several others he had known and grown up with. He was even more troubled by the fact that the agency and the forces of law enforcement had actually not been able to stop the raid from taking place. His intelligence reports together with the transcriptions from the GPS and assorted microphones and bugs had given them ample basis for acting to arrest him and the rest of the RNA raiders before they reached Eden. At least one of his interrogators insisted that because of the remote location of Eden, they had simply been unable to mobilize in time, but he knew from the timing of the intelligence he had provided on the raid that this was not true. From other information he had gathered from his interrogators, which after the first day included Bill Anderson, it looked like a classic organizational snafu, which he knew was an acronym for “situation normal; all fouled up”. (He also knew that some people used another R-rated term for fouled, but he felt that term - once its shock value had expired - added little to the basic sentiment, which was already clear with fouled so he would stick with the G-rated term.)

All members of the RNA who had participated in the raid on Eden were now in custody and would be held in separate federal secure locations until their trials. As far as other members of the RNA were concerned, the lockups included him, but he knew there was no way to guarantee that false information would hold over the long run. It was expected that there was ample evidence that, thanks to Abbe’s undercover work, which would come out in court, all of them would receive life sentences in maximum security for their assorted crimes, including first degree murder charges against 17 of them. In order to assure their long-term safety, a witness protection plan for him and others was already being activated.

Abbe knew that once his interrogation was complete and they were recovered enough from their injuries to be able to travel all of them would disappear from Eden forever together with Abbe and Juanita. His parents, Adam and Evie, his brother Cane and Freddie, who he had learned was three months pregnant, his sister Sable, both of his grandmothers and Faye Sennett Morgan, his widowed aunt
all of whom had been living in their siheyuan. Since he had not been anywhere near Dare County since just before the flood, many people who knew him there already assumed he was must be dead. In fact, Cane had told him with a nervous laugh that rumors going around asserted that he had been killed by his brother before the flood, in a fit of jealousy.

The relocation was necessary the agency had told him - and more recently told everyone else in the family - for their protection. There were other cells of the RNA, but no one could say much for certain about any of them. Abbe and his controllers had known for nearly six months about the planned raid on Eden as he participated in the planning and had planted listening devices in the supposedly encrypted radio and computer equipment by which Mel and the leadership of his RNA communicated with others in various terrorist networks.

The raid on Eden had ostensibly been in retaliation for the way in which people from Cibola and others from Dare County had for several generations continued their trickster KKK klavern, openly mocking and even at times actively subverting other KKK operations with their multi-racial, multi-ethnic operation. The post-raid plan of the RNA called for an extensive program of news releases and social media postings explaining and justifying this purpose of the raid. This would, Mel explained to the raiders during their training, create a diversion to direct the feds away from the RNA and shine a negative light on the KKK, which he saw as an inferior rival group that now included other whites, including Scots, Germans and Irish, and did not limit itself only to “pure” Anglo-Saxons. The real reason for the raid Mel had made clear was to disrupt and if possible, destroy the “mongrel community” of Eden which not only mixed white and non-white racial groups and “polluted and defiled” what Mel called “our sacred, traditional rural values” with its much-extolled modernism. Mel had also made clear, Abbe explained to his debriefers that the death of Ralph Deigh was no accident. Through his speeches and writings, Ralph had made himself many enemies among rural traditionalists, including the leadership of the RNA, and killing him was one of their main objectives. Only in the killing of his father, Adam, “the sub-human leader of that pack of mixed breed monkeys” had they failed.

“And here our story ends,” the white-haired Daniel Messenger said to his dozen or so fellow Thursday nighters, gathered in the living room of Art and Gloria Payne as he looked up from the text he had been reading.
Version Notes

“A Note on Version Numbering

Because it is so easy to make revisions to an electronic manuscript, some system for keeping track of those changes seems appropriate. The scheme for denoting versions of this manuscript is related to that employed by software developers and computer operating systems. It includes two or three letters and three digits (e.g., Edition 1.1.1 indicates the first release of the first edition). The first digit denotes the edition number. The second indicates a new release with minor, but meaningful, corrections to the text. The third digit indicates any other type of technical correction (spelling errors, added sources, and the like). Finally, the letters preceding these numbers indicate the electronic publishing platform for which the version in question is optimized. (MW 1.2.1, for example, indicates substantive corrections to the first edition of the Microsoft Word Read-Only version, while AR 1.2.1 indicates the same changes to the Adobe Reader version and Apple 1.2.1 indicates the same textual changes to the Apple iBook version.

As with software errata, we will endeavor to include lists of such revisions in this section.”

(Excerpt From: Roger A. Lohmann. “Voluntary Action in New Commons.” Apple Books.)

Version Med 1.1.1

The very first chapters of the novel, Building Eden were written as a series of articles on the Medium.com platform under the pseudonym Phil Anthropod. In an associated set of initiatives, the notebooks of Ralph Deigh also began on Medium.

Version Scr 1.1.2

While working on some of the early chapters, I began using the writing platform Scrivener. All of the remaining chapters of Building Eden were written initially in Scrivener and copied into other formats for presentation.

Version Apple 1.1.3

When I made the decision to produce an Apple Books version of the novel, the Biography format in iBooks Author was chosen because it had a picture on the first page of each chapter. Apart from that, I relied almost completely on the structured
formats of iBooks Author. The chapter photos in the Apple Books (.epub), Word (.docx) and PDF versions are an assembly of photos snatched off the internet. I have been unable to identify the photographers for most of them, but will continue to try to do so, periodically updating versions of these three to reflect those results.

Version MW 1.1.4

It proved nearly impossible to produce a PDF version directly from iBooks Author that was suitable for uploading to my WVU Digital Commons Research Repository collection. The best route to that proved to be through MS Word with its powerful editing features. The final step in this process was to print the manuscript as a PDF file.

- Removed redundant section from Chapter 31.

Version PDF 1.1.5

Printed directly from MW 1.1.4
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Chapter 7. Photo of detain from engraving, c. 1760, after C. Le Brun. Posted on Wellcome Trust website. No copyright information available.


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Chapter 13. Photo by Roger A. Lohmann. 2015.


Chapter 16. Painting by Englishman John White. Sir Walter Raleghi’s 1590 Expedition to Roanoke Island to find the Lost Colony uncovered ‘Croatoan’ carved on a tree. This may be in reference to the Croatan island or people. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The-Lost-Colony_0. Wikimedia Commons. Public Domain.

Chapter 17. 1585 map of the east coast of North America from the Chesapeake Bay to Cape Lookout by John White. Wikimedia Commons. Photo by British Museum; cropped.
https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a6/Roanoke_map_1584.JPG


Chapter 20. Ralph Waldo Emerson House, Concord MA. Photo by Daderot. Wikimedia Commons. GNU Free Documentation License. 1.2.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ralph_Waldo_Emerson_House_(Concord_MA).JPG

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Chapter 22. Trail of Tears in Vollage Creek State Park near Wynne, AR. Photo by Thomas R. Cachnitzki. Wikipedia Commons. CC BY 3.0.
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Chapter 27. The Pemberton Coal Company Church. Beckley Exhibition


Chapter 29. The Rotunda by Thomas Jefferson. Photo by Bob Mical. CC-A 3.0 Unported  


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Chapter 38. Miner’s Cabin Exhibit at Beckley Exhibition Coal Mine. BeckleyWV.


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Chapter 55. U.S. Marshalls Protecting a Cooperating Witness.