

# Preston County: Another World

By GENE GOODRICH  
Sunday Times Staff Writer  
TERRA ALTA, W. Va. — The mind is boggled at the sight. The eyes blinded in disbelief. The ears deafened by constant roar of the wind. All of the senses are filled with aghast at it all.

Driving into West Virginia on State Route 7, west of Oakland, is like driving into another world — a world one sees only in pictures. Of the high Sierras. The Canadian Rockies. The Swiss Alps.

That this sight could be "I'll old" Preston County, West Virginia, is beyond imagination. Sights like 35 and 40-foot drifts over roads. Homes so choked with walls of snow that only a doorway peers out like an eye at the end of a white tunnel.

"They gave up trying to keep the streets clear here in Terra Alta," said Preston County News co-publisher Rich Hopkins Friday.

As it is today, traffic — if any — slowed to a crawl over the hamlet's two main thoroughfares, and is barely negotiable by four-wheel-drive vehicles, jeeps and possibly Army tanks.

"Most people around here by now are used to it," said Hopkins of the snow. "But I don't think anyone is accustomed to the winds."

"It's the wind, not to mention the 188 inches of snowfall through yesterday noon, that has beleaguered the residents of the Preston area, just across

the Maryland line. The wind, which stopped for two whole days last week, has constantly kept virtually all roads in and out of the area clogged with drifts that would punish mammoth snowblowers with their size.

"In some parts of this area," said Hopkins, "you can't see the top of the drifts from your car window. But even looking up is dangerous because you don't know what to expect at the other end of the tunnel you're traveling through that has become the roadway."

As bad as winter has been in eastern Preston County, it's not predicted to get better. Eight more inches fell Friday night following what local residents had thought might have been the beginning of a warming trend Wednesday and Thursday.

And, following the snow, returned the winds, and more snow and more winds. By last night, the State Roads Commission had warned travelers to stay out of Preston County and for local residents to stay off the roads except in dire emergency.

For, chances were, there were no roads to travel on.

"I was born and raised here in Preston County and have never seen anything like this in my life," said Kingwood strip mine operator Milford Jenkins. "I'm at a loss to even think about tomorrow and what it may bring," said the owner of the Mary Ruth Coal Company.

Jenkins, who employs several men on mines in the Terra Alta-Cranesville area, has closed down his mines and turned his personnel and machines over to the State Roads Department in an effort to keep some of the arteries open.

"It's an endless task," he said. "The State Roads equipment in this area is so outdated that it couldn't possibly keep up with conditions such as these. Even my machines have a tough time."

Jenkins has dispatched his men and machines into 12-hour shifts, seven days a week in the battle against constant drifting, trying to keep roads open to one-lane traffic in the event of emergency.

Jenkins, himself a native, like his neighbors in the Albright section of the county, is wondering, indeed, if West Virginia is the "Almost Heaven" of the popular song.

Perhaps it's the bitterness of the weather that prompted Thelma DeWitt and Marilyn Metheny, of Cranestown, to write in a letter to the editor recently, that those "county roads may take you back, but not if you live in Preston County."

There is bitterness over the weather, to be sure, and at state government for failure to supply adequate snow removal equipment to the county. But the winter is not without its bright spots.

"If there's one good thing to

come out of this," said publisher Hopkins, "it is the helpfulness of one man toward his fellow man. People believe in their neighbors up here, and will go every extent to ensure his welfare."

For instance, Ken Myers, of the Brandonville Pike section, thought to "snowmobile out" and look in on his neighbors, the Stockwells, last week, simply to see if the family needed anything. It did. Medical help.

Howard Stockwell, 77, and his brother Budgie, 71. Howard's wife Nellie and a 18-year-old grandson had been without fuel and food for several days, and were stranded without communications in their home.

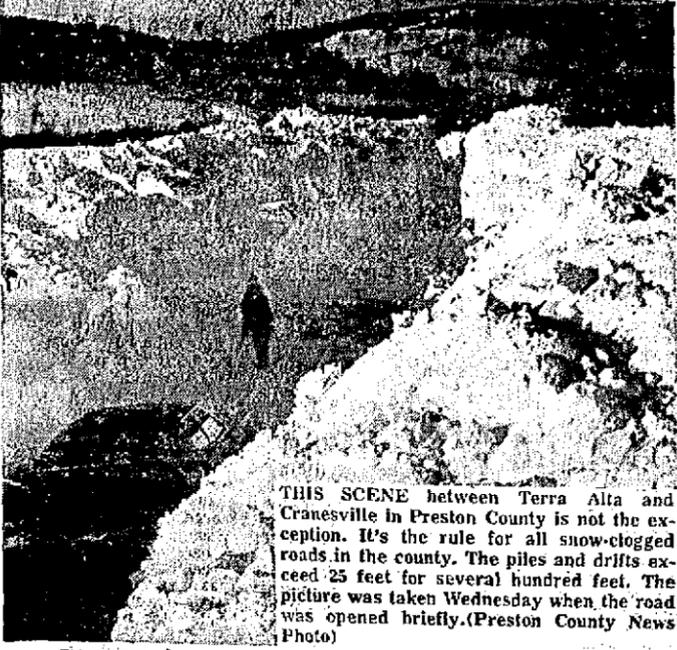
Myers called in local physician Dr. William Harrison who immediately contacted the National Guard, which removed the family to Morgantown for emergency treatment for frostbite.

When rescuers found the family, the temperature in the house was just 28 degrees.

In another instance, a seven-year-old girl from the "Backwoods" on a snowmobile. She had broken her leg and was in need of medical attention.

The real "goodness" hasn't arrived yet, in the estimation of most residents. The "true" good of this winter, will be spring.

But, then, in publisher Hopkins' words, "The story then won't be the snow, but the floods on the Cheat River."



## Kings Road Singers Slated For Harvest Chapel Service

FROSTBURG — The Kings Road Singers will appear at the Harvest Laborers Chapel Services Thursday in the community building of Frost Village at 6:30 p.m.

The local group is comprised of a family with several others assisting. Formed approximately one year ago, the group has sung in area churches as well as in West Virginia and in Pennsylvania.

The group comprises Mr. and Mrs. James Miller, their son, Jimmy, and daughter, Debra; Donald Pfaff, Harold Shaffer and Willie Unger.

Services are conducted

each week at the community center by lay persons from all area churches.

T. William Preston is chapel leader and announces since the services began on November 4, providing residents of the village with a church service, much interest has been shown in the project.

Churches represented so far have been Frostburg United Methodist Church, Welsh Memorial Baptist Church, Mt. Savage Methodist Church, St. George Episcopal Church, First English Baptist, First United Presbyterian Church, Frostburg Church of the Brethren, Trinity

Assembly of God, Frostburg Church of the Nazarene, Seventh Day Adventist, St. Michael's Catholic Church and Frostburg Assembly of God Church.

Special music has been provided by the host church as well as congregation hymns.

The services were initiated for the residents of the village who were unable to attend their own church services due to lack of transportation, the weather or not feeling able to attend an entire service in their own church. The services have proved to be well accepted and residents of the village look forward to Thursday evenings.

## FROSTBURG-KEYSER And Tri-State Area News

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SNOW ON THE FARM — Butch Upole stands by a barn wrapped in snow on his Garrett County dairy farm. Upole and his wife, Janet, take care of 60 milk cows on the 100-acre Nayburtee farm, the hard winter doubling their work. (AP Photofax)

## 'Little' Snow Doesn't Stop Bittering Dairy Farmers

BITTINGER — Up on Nayburtee Farm, just below here on the road to Swanton, you can't see the barn for the swirling snow.

When the icy wind whips across Meadow Mountain and down into Butch and Janet Upole, hurling tons of snow in front of it, the barn filled with dairy cattle might be in another world, not the actual 100 feet away.

Under the best possible conditions (say, spring or summer), the chores about the Nayburtee farm are enough to keep four people busy, let alone the Upoles, who work the 100-acre farm themselves. Under assault of the worst winter on record, milking and feeding 60 Holsteins is a major struggle.

"You're up at 5 in the morning and don't get to bed before 10 at night," Mrs. Upole said, sipping a cup of coffee in her kitchen. "You're in the barn 10 hours a day. You get tired. Depressed. And there's no relief in sight."

"Knowing you have another month of this depresses you more. Because, if you get it (the work) done one time, you just know that you're going to have to go out there again."

But the Upoles brave the fierce winter waiting for the spring thaw.

"Like my dad said," Upole recalled. "You have to take some of the bad with some of the good."

The Upoles bought their farm along Maryland 495 in Garrett County five years ago. Before that, Mrs. Upole, 32, worked as a receptionist in a hospital in her hometown of Oakland.

"I knew nothing about a farm until we came here," she said. "I never milked a cow. I knew they lay and gave milk. There's a lot more than that, I'm telling you."

Farming is nothing new to her 33-year-old husband, who grew up on his family's farm near Oakland. But even Upole admits that the cold weather, coupled with the snow and high winds, "makes a tough job really tough." The brutal winter "doubles the amount of work that you'd normally do," he said.

Take feeding the cows, for example. Twice a day, Upole climbs a ladder to the top of a 60-foot silo to chop up frozen hay. Once loosened, it passes through and unloading machine that shoots feed to the cows. In the summer, all it takes is a flick of a switch.

There are other problems. The water pipes are constantly freezing. And, because there hasn't been a thaw in months, the level of

water in the farm's wells is very low.

"That's the big problem the whole county is facing now," he said. "Right now, we're starting on the fourth month without a thaw and that's the same as four months without any rainfall."

The Upoles are trying to sell their farm. But don't get the idea that the winter is driving them out of farming. It's just that Upole wants to raise beef cattle and sheep on his family's farm.

"If it weren't for us crazy farmers up here," he said, "people in the city would have a hard time eating. It's a fact."



REV. DAVID D. HENRY

## Rev. Henry To Assume Pastorate

FROSTBURG — Rev. David D. Henry, of Akron, Ohio, the new pastor of the Eckhart Baptist Church, will conduct the regular Sunday services February 13 as he begins his official tenure.

Pastor Henry holds a degree from Bryan College, of Dayton, Tenn. He continued his studies at Dallas Theological Seminary, Texas for three years, and was graduated from Grand Rapids Bible Seminary, Michigan, with a master of divinity degree.

He was ordained in the Brown Street Baptist Church, Akron, where his father, Rev. Dean D. Henry, has served for 35 years as its pastor, and where he served five years as assistant pastor.

He is well experienced in the various activities and responsibilities incidental to pastoral leadership.

Pastor Henry and his wife, the former Miss Elizabeth Henry, have two children, Jennifer Lee, aged 3½ years and Sara Denise, aged four months.

Mrs. Henry is a native of Tennessee, and is a graduate of Bryan College where she received a degree in elementary education.

The new pastor succeeds Rev. David W. Clark, whose resignation followed his acceptance of an appointment of the Baptist Mid-Missions Board to serve in the teaching ministry in its Bible Seminary in Australia.

## Lions Help Blind To Ski

McHENRY — The fame of the world's Lions Clubs in working for sight conservation is legion.

But even where sight is gone, at least one Lions Club is still active.

The Deep Creek Lake Lions Club will this week conclude another successful season of teaching blind students to ski at the Wisp Resort here. For the past three years, the Garrett Lions have used proceeds from the Winterfest in March to support six students of the Maryland School for the Blind in Frederick every week for five weeks in their stay at the Wisp Resort.

In all, 30 students from the Blind School will have learned to ski this season alone.

"But that's only half the fun the kids get while here in Garrett County," said Lion member and Wisp promoter and part-owner Bill Thoman.

"They get out into the homes in the community and are taken for snowmobile rides and are given a chance to make homemade ice cream in addition to skiing here at the Wisp," Thoman said.

On the slopes, Thoman said, the blind skiers have an advantage over sighted beginners.

"The view down a hill from the

top often psyches out a sighted skier where a blind skier is not handicapped by that first look," he said.

And, he said blind skiers often advance faster than those who can see. "At the end of two days many of the blind can use the chair lift," he said. "You can't get a sighted person in a chair lift in so short a time."

Nancy Geisler, one of the two instructors, says there must be constant voice contact with the students. "Otherwise, if they are totally blind, they can lose orientation," she explained. However, she said it is also important that the student look away from where the view is coming from since the instructor is usually uphill from the student.

"It is a natural reaction for a blind person to turn his body toward the sound of the voice," she said.

Miss Geisler continually coaches the students on how to position their skis and providing such tips as how to keep their skis straight. By the end of a day's lesson, some students even manage to do the snow plow, which allows them to descend the hill slowly.

Although teaching blind students and sighted students to ski

is similar, Miss Geisler said it's hard to teach the blind students about the rope tow because it is so hard to describe.

The students are taught about the rope tow, a constantly moving rope which pulls skiers to the top of the hill, on the second day.

It is up to the instructor to tell the student when to let go of the rope tow, according to Ann Elliott, another instructor.

There are precautions which must be taken to protect blind skiers.

One is to protect the eyes of the partially sighted students from the sun glare off the ice, Thoman said.

"You know what it is like to come inside after being out on a bright day," he said. "Well, that problem is magnified on the snow for a partially sighted person who is legally blind."

After the skiing lessons are over, Thoman said continuing interest in blind skiers is lacking. "Once the students get out of the School for the Blind, they need someone they can turn to for continued skiing," he said. "I feel it is unfair to drop it because most can go out and ski again."

## Frostburg Youth Ski Trips Successful

FROSTBURG — Ski trips, sponsored by the Frostburg Recreation and Parks Department, to the Wisp at Deep Creek Lake have been well received by the public, with over 130 persons attending the three previous outings.

The department sponsors ski trips each Wednesday evening as long as conditions allow the sport. The bus leaves the Community Center at 5 p.m. and returns at approximately 11 p.m.

The \$7 fee includes transportation, lift tickets, skis, poles and boots. Lessons are available for an additional charge of \$6, or \$4 if a group of ten or more express interest.

Conditions of the slopes have been excellent and have offered the best skiing in the area for a number of years.

Registration is currently for this week's trip being

conducted. All age groups are eligible to attend.

To register or for additional information, contact the department at 689-3957.

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