

Station Spotlight

To Move A Mountain . . .

The gold dome of the Capitol Building of West Virginia stands impressively by the banks of the Kanawha River, seen from a distance by motorists driving through the West Virginia Mountains and by air travelers approaching the city of Charleston.

The Capitol is a masterpiece of architecture and decor. Its marble halls are kept meticulously clean. The rooms housing the Senate and the House are red carpeted with rich wood desks and carved ceilings. And from the middle of the highest point of the dome hangs a hand-carved crystal chandelier which can be seen from any floor in the building.

Charleston, the city itself, gives a gracious background for the Capitol. Charlestonians pride themselves on their hospitality—a hospitality they say is completely natural and not cultivated.

They Levelled Mountains

The people of Charleston and Kanawha County are go-getters, too. They were willing to move mountains in order to have air transportation, and that is exactly what they did. The Kanawha Airport, three miles from downtown Charleston, sits on what used to be three mountain tops. The mountains were levelled off and the valleys filled to form a level area of 365 acres. 9,100,000 cubic yards of earth were moved for the total project which cost approximately \$8,300,000.

The airport, which now has one 5,600 foot runway and one 4,750 foot runway, was dedicated on November 3rd, 1947. Plans are now underway for

undertaking yet a bigger task: extending the runway for jet aircraft accommodation.

In addition to Piedmont, the airport is served by United, American, Eastern, and Lake Central. Piedmont, with 16 flights daily and an average daily boarding of 92 passengers, now holds the number two spot for passenger boardings at Kanawha. PI's heaviest travel out of Charleston is to Cincinnati and Roanoke.

The friendliness of Charlestonians affects Piedmont's agents, too, lending a congenial atmosphere to the airline's station operations. Agents have organized basketball and bowling teams. Each summer, a family group picnic is planned. Say the agents, "It's real nice. It rains every year, but . . ."

A coffee machine was purchased, and agents pay only a nickel per cup to cover the cost of supplies. "Everybody knows how to do just about everything," says Agent Ruth Shumate. "They're all well qualified, too, with an average seniority of five years." Station Manager Bob Hill and Chief Agent Paul Kelley both have 15 year pins, and Irene Kiser, Jim McCormack, Ronnie Abshire, and Bill Hanson are close behind with 10 year pins.

Kanawha is Ruhr of U. S.

From its earliest days—the county was created by an act of the Virginia Assembly in 1789 and was represented at Assembly by Daniel Boone in 1791—transportation has been a problem to the area. Located in the Appalachian Mountains, away from easily constructed roads and railways, air service is one

of the biggest boons to business in Kanawha County.

Salt making was the area's first industry. Today, the Kanawha Valley has been described as the "Ruhr of the United States chemical industry." It is here that Union Carbide, E. I. duPont de Nemours and Co., and Monsanto produce innumerable base chemicals needed by various manufacturers.

The chemicals made here are not primarily for sale direct to the public, but for transfer to a manufacturer who can turn the base chemical into a usable product.

For instance, until 1946, all of the world's hexamethylenediaminadipate came from Charleston. The long word, simplified, means a 6 methylene salt of an adipic acid, or in layman's terms, nylon! But the nylon that comes from plants in Charleston is a liquid made of coal, air and water. For hose, or lingerie, the nylon "salt" is shipped to a manufacturer where it undergoes a spinneret process in an acid bath. It thus becomes a thread which is later woven into a fabric.

In addition to nylon and other base chemicals made in Charleston, the production of natural resources—coal, gas, oil, and limestone—plays a major part in the overall economy.

And of course, with the state's Capitol in Charleston, the government itself brings economic benefits to the area.

Progressive Programs in Effect

Charleston, like so many cities in the United States, is now in the midst of an urban re-development program, based mainly around a new 12 story motel and a 25 story bank building. In addition, high-rise apartments are planned along the Kanawha River.

Unlike many cities, however, Charleston has been faced with some unique problems—problems which they are facing in a straightforward, progressive manner.

In the vicinity of the Kanawha Valley are many of the so-called underprivileged "hill people." A dichotomous structure results from this combination of highly trained technicians and government officials coupled with extremely impoverished and uneducated people living in the same area.

Two programs are underway in an attempt to alleviate the situation. One, the AAY—Ac-



The lovely, gold-domed Capitol building in Charleston overlooks the Kanawha River.

tion for Appalachian Youth—involves visiting young boys' homes and providing neighborhood training. Says Mayor John A. Shanklin, "This is the first contact many of these people have had with the outside world. Some of them have never seen a city."

Most of the boys are pleased with the program, not only because it is opening the door to economic independence, but also because it is giving meaning to their lives.

A second program designed for girls between the ages of 16 and 21 will provide dormitory living as well as job training for high school drop-outs. Part of the program will be to acquaint the girls with a higher standard of living in an attempt to break the conditions handed down from generation to generation.

Both these measures are a part of President Johnson's anti-poverty program.

Water Sports Are Popular

Charlestonians seem to have a knack for getting the most out of life. Friendly and happy faces appear on the streets, in the drugstore, even in the midst of a traffic jam. The whole city reflects a people pleased with life. And they have made the most of

their beautiful mountains and rivers, too.

There are several boating clubs, and during the spring, summer, and early fall, small boats line the rivers. Water skiers ride the wake. Several public and private courses are available to challenge any golfer, no matter what his handicap. Tennis is also a popular summer sport.

In the winter, snow skiing draws people to the nearby slopes. Coonskin Park, originally bought along with the airport land, now provides picnic and recreational facilities for all ages.

Charleston has its share of culture, too, boasting the Sunrise Art Museum and Cultural Center and an outstanding Civic Center. Plays, given with much of the aura of the old "Showboat," are held regularly aboard a river boat that docks along the Kanawha River.

Morris Harvey College of Liberal Arts gives an excellent opportunity for advanced education to Charlestonians and West Virginians.

The downtown area of Charleston is four blocks wide, several miles long, and "filled," say Charlestonians, "with lots of friendly people."



Checking on a military standby's chances are agents Ruth Shumate and Mary Coyne.



Busy on the telephones are (left to right) Tom Blackwell, Bill Hanson, and Phil Bostick. Not pictured are Irene Kiser, Paul Kelly, Charlie Welch, and Allen Perry.



District Station Supervisor Ed Best, congratulates CRW Manager Bob Hill on Charleston's excellent records.



Agents Ronnie Abshire, Darris Moore, and Jim Birthisel collect bags sent via the baggage chute from the ticket counter upstairs.