A STUDY OF THE FOLKLORE OF A MOUNTAINOUS SECTION IN SOUTHWESTERN VIRGINIA

by

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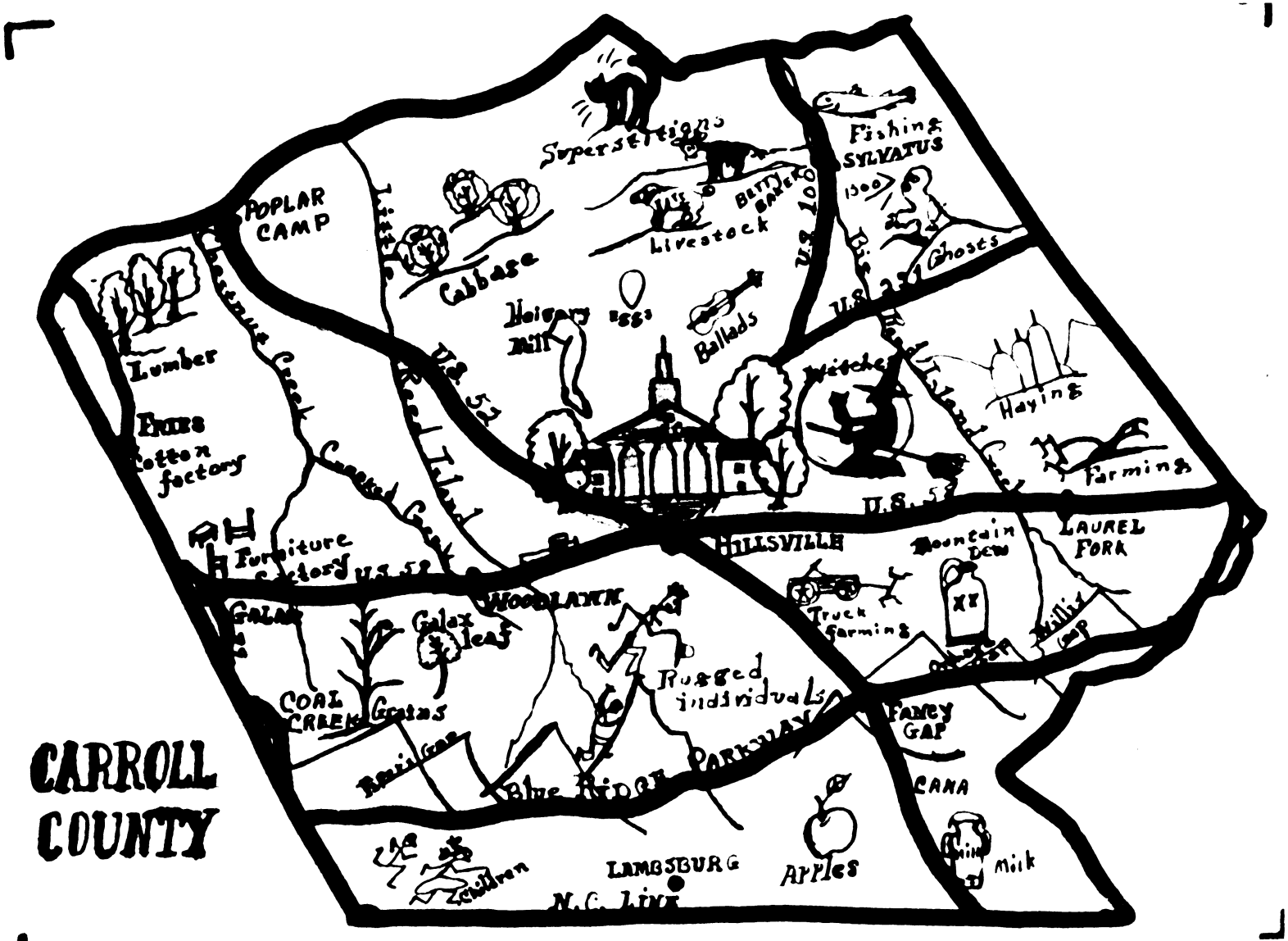

CARROLL COUNTY

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This writing is respectfully dedicated.

Ninevah Jackson Willis

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

God wrote a book of life and recorded it on living pages which He carefully preserved in Nature's vast library of time; in order that truth-seeking mankind might reassemble the feral chapters into a history of his vainglorious past. High on the list of important historical discoveries, stands that of the southwestern Virginia mountaineer; for it has been said that his are a people that are "nowhere listed." In finding him, there has been unearthed a potential source of historical folklore offering rare opportunities for educational research, which is just beginning to be tapped and brought to the attention of those who care; for, tucked away in the valleys and hills of southwestern Virginia, can be found the stories of the trials, the ambitions, the successes, and the bitter disappointments of a folk who chose those mountain fastnesses as their abode.

Too few, even southwestern Virginians, have any sort of understanding of what a magnificent heritage their region fully possesses. Many boys and girls have gone out of it for the purpose of going to college, or for other reasons, to find to their amazement that they

had actually been living folklore. Such a realization helped to create a desire to collect such fast-vanishing cultural treasures, in order that the mountain folk might be better understood; and that the way of life which they cherished might be made safe from oblivion and from the rude hand of its detractors.

Therefore, one purpose of this writing became that of portraying in an unprejudiced manner the cultural pattern of the Virginia southwest, into which has been woven so many and varied threads constituting the warp and the woof of a distinct heritage; in the belief that no people can be thoroughly understood apart from a knowledge of their peculiar ideologies.

A second purpose for this writing was to help obviate the many misconceptions regarding the so-called hill-billy; to interpret him in terms of his own philosophy and inherent culture, as he breasts the tide of modern civilization overflowing into what were formerly frontier and sequestered settlements. Thus, Chapter II is intended to preserve for posterity, especially for children in the public elementary schools, some of the typical folk-tales indigenous to Virginia's mountains; Chapter III contains some of the folk songs; Chapter IV includes legends of places; Chapter V gives some of the superstitious sayings based on former beliefs

of the mountaineers; while Chapter VI is devoted to folk ways. All are intended to give an awareness of some of the many converging, yet distinct, heritable strains to be found in the region studied. To do so was a well-nigh impossible task, since even neighbors in the mountains are different, each maintaining the customs of his own inheritance, even while such customs were being "doubled and twisted", blended, strained, and refined into a definite culture pattern peculiar to the hills and valleys of southwestern Virginia.

Because this research was intended to facilitate the study of the history of this section, Chapter VII gives suggestions as to how a teacher may incorporate the materials presented into the curriculum of the elementary school.

The final chapter is the record of an attempt to make generalizations regarding the significance and the worth of the folklore presented in this writing.

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To capture the vestigial remains of pioneer living to be found in southwestern Virginia and to attempt to assemble them into a meaningful whole has necessitated a fascinating but never-ending trek over hill and dale

in order to seek out the hidden lairs of folk traditions -- to "beard the varmints in their dens," so to speak -- by association with a great many inhabitants, by writing hundreds of letters, and by reading thousands of pages of manuscripts and printed materials.

In order to avoid duplication of previous publications this work has been compared with certain others which are listed in Appendix "A". Thus no tale, song, or legend was included herein if it might be found in certain specified sources.

All names used in this work are fictitious; however, the mountaineers' gift for unusual nomenclature, characteristic of these people, has influenced the selection of the names employed.

CHAPTER II

FOLK TALES

Southwestern Virginia is a recipient of folklore from all over the world and, for generation after generation, its old folk tales have continued to be popular with the children. Modern children are still spellbound by the magic of the old tales, and rightfully so, for their patterns may be just as incredible and just as hair-raising as any radio serial to which they may be listening.

Tall tales have long been assumed to be a peculiar form of folk tale. They flourished mightily in travelers' accounts of the marvels of the new country as outcroppings of their native optimism on entering a new land, of their overwhelming belief that southwestern Virginians could do anything -- and more, too! The biggest "whopper" is the best one, provided it is told with a poker face and with every similitude of truth. Such tales had their origin in the traditional oral lore of northwestern Europe, much of which appeared all through the latter part of the Eighteenth and throughout the Nineteenth Centuries in almanacs and newspapers. Thus, they gradually came to the notice of writers and the public.

The American myth, that honesty and hard work are means to success, is in direct contradiction to the

mountain folk tale in which the hero is a simple mountain boy who achieves success by one of two ways: by his wits, or by sheer luck, and not necessarily by conscientious toil. That trickster type of hero was very popular with the mountaineers, who saw in his annals, perhaps unconsciously, a satire on the way of life pursued by the "outlanders" whom they did not wish to emulate.

The picturesqueness of these people, the "homey" speech, the quaint superstitions, the beautiful old ballads, the legends and the spine-tingling ghost stories will soon remain only in papers such as the present writing. Properly told, they emanate an aura of terror to weaken even the bravest of souls. Inevitably, they lose much of their tang and flavor from being written down, for no self-respecting ghost will ever yield as much spine-chilling effect as he does when evoked by one's own grandfather, in the proper atmosphere.

The true story-teller tells his stories from memory, often capturing the mood and course of his story from the rapt faces of his listeners. If his ghosts, witches, and heroes, as presented in these papers, behave differently from those with whom others are acquainted, it must be borne in mind that such characters imitate their "hill-billy" ancesters.

Thus, it seemed necessary in presenting the folk tales of southwestern Virginia to switch from erudite to vernacular discourse in order to let words of homespun quality convey the exact ideas intended. The mountaineer has a rich fund of descriptive words; but, lacking the fitting word, he manufactures another, right on the spot.

Included in this chapter is only a smattering of the vast store of indigenous tales abounding in this region, in an attempt to include some from every type and from all strains of people concerned.

Now, for further words of explanation: As terms of endearment, it is customary in the mountains to address others as cousin, uncle, aunt, granny, or grampa; so that total strangers may be found thus addressed in these stories. Also, the names contained therein necessarily have to be fictitious, because of that tendency among mountain folk, at the drop of a hat, to coolly and very calculatingly drill new ventilating systems, from atop the sights of mountain rifles, in anyone who might in some way have offended their dignity or invaded their privacy; a tendency more pronounced respecting their own blood kin than would be the case with others not so related.


By
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One Time

"Once upon a time" is the way it is put into print but in the mountains, "One time they's a ___" is enough to gain the attention of a fair-sized audience, for the very tone is promising. Any story that starts off in this way is never called on for proof as it is just taken for granted that the fellow was there in person, or else knows someone who knows someone who saw the whole thing with his own two eyes.

> Well as I was saying, one time they's a old terbaccy barn way down in North Kerliney some place and ever time you pass there at twelve o'clock midnight you can heer a baby ist a cryin so pitiful like it will make the hair riz up on the nape of your neck like a window shade. For one time they's a old crazy womern who didn't want her baby so she jes up and took it by the heels and took it out'n behind that old terbaccy barn an jes pint blank bashed its brains out over a big old rock. You can still hear the pore little thing crying and don'tchu know that to this very day, you can go down there and still see the print of that little baby's head on that old big rock.

These stories are finished with a characteristic nod of the head and a blazing of the eyes that defies any voice of dissent, so naturally everyone shudders and listens for "the pore little baby" for there just doesn't seem to be anything else to do.

How To Shiver

Once there was a king who had only one son. Now this son was the apple of the king's eye, so nothing was too good for him and consequently anything which the boy desired was immediately forthcoming. The king was already planning for a brilliant marriage for his son and, subsequently, many grandchildren to brighten his old age.

Now a wicked witch lived near the castle who possessed three daughters. Two were hers and the youngest she had stolen from a duke whom she loved but who had scorned her and married a beautiful girl whom he made his dutchess. This so angered the old witch that she stole their beautiful baby daughter and changed her into an ugly hog-like child who never grew up, and took it to live with her. The old witch's daughters were very beautiful to behold but their hearts were as black and mean as the old witch herself.

Time passed and the prince grew to manhood. He was very brave and nothing could incite fear into his brave heart but his most earnest desire was to learn to shiver. He had heard strong men remark, "Oh, that made me shiver." So, he thought he could never be happy until he could shiver with the best of them.

The old king, who tried to give his son his every heart's desire, tried to give him this gift also. He sent for all his wise men, who in turn sent the prince into the forest where all the wild beasts were; but, as fast as he met up with them he promptly drew his sword and slew them. Then he went on saying, "Oh, if I only knew how to shiver."

At last the king sent out word that any girl in his kingdom, rich or poor, who could make the prince shiver would be welcomed to the kingdom as his bride.

Of course the old witch thought this an excellent plan to marry one of her daughters to the

prince. She sent for him and her eldest daughter cooked him a nice supper which he ate with relish until he came to the pie. When he started to eat the pie it was filled with poisonous snakes which hissed and darted at him. Without batting an eye he killed the snakes one at a time saying, "Oh, if I only knew how to shiver." When the eldest daughter saw that she had failed she was so angry that sparks leaped from her eyes and in a towering rage she left the room. Then, her youngest sister came in to try.

As they were waiting, two black cats with switching tails came in and sat by the prince. They hissed and spat, their eyes growing bigger and greener, their teeth longer and their growling louder. The wind began to blow and big sparks began to fly from their eyes in showers. At last the prince was about to slay them when with a fineal[1] hiss they rushed from the room and the youngest daughter with them, while the prince sighed, "Oh, if I could only shiver."

The prince sat by the fire until fineally he became warm and drowsy. Loosening his collar against the heat, he slept in his chair. Fineally, the little bewitched girl crept in and, seeing him asleep with his collar open, she said, "I'll make him shiver." Going to the river she caught a bucketful of slippery eely fish. Bringing these to the room she emptied the bucket of fish down his opened collar.

"Ugh," exclaimed the prince as he awoke with a start, "Now, I know how to shiver." On turning he saw the misshapen little girl but he said, "You are not beautiful, but I will marry you and make you my princess." With that he kissed her and then the most beautiful girl he ever saw stood beside him.

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[1] This word was meant to be final, but the mountaineers who used it said "fy'-nee-al."

His kiss had broken the witch's spell and allowed her to become a beautiful girl again.

Needless to say, they were married and lived happily ever after.

Angel Of Mercy

It was winter; the snow was more than two feet deep and the roads were impassable. The weather was cold, so cold no one dared to venture out. Our neighbor's wife died. The only way to get a coffin out from town was to take a yoke of oxen and sled and go after it.

Another neighbor man and I started to town. We hoped to get there and back before nightfall. We reached town, bought the coffin and started for home.

The snow was falling and the cold made travel difficult and we soon saw that we would not get home before night. The oxen went slower and slower until finally we knew that they could go no farther.

We lifted the coffin off the sled and began to carry it on our shoulders. Travel through the deep snow was a slow, tortuous process and we began to think that we would never make it to the house. After a long time we saw a light and knew we were nearly there. We called for someone to come and help us.

Seeing a light leave the house and come toward us we knew we would soon have help. When the light reached us we saw a woman was carrying the light. She turned and led us back to the house. We followed but were too tired to talk. As we reached the house the light from the window showed us the woman's face. It couldn't be true, but the woman carrying the light was the one that we had left as a corpse that morning. I kicked the door and it was quickly opened.

No one had heard the call and no one had come to meet us. Yet, we knew a woman had met us and had led us in with a light.

We went over to where the corpse lay - it was still there. It was then we knew that we owed our lives to the corpse and her light!

Witches' Crowns

Mrs. Rachael Simpkins was making the beds one morning and found two knots of feathers in a pillow, just as they grew on a fowl. She removed the two knots of feathers, stuck new pins in them and put them in the fire. She knew Peggie Cooper (the witch who lived about a mile away) had tried to put a spell on her house.

Soon Mrs. Simpkins saw the witchcraft lady coming down the road to borrow something from her. She saw that old Peggie was suffering and in a miserable shape, wringing her hands. As soon as she had put the feathers in the fire, two shoats began to run up and down the road, squealing as if in great pain.

The witch had come to the house wanting to borrow some soda. Mrs. Simpkins loaned her the soda and the spell was broken.

Mr. Jones

One time a mountain woman had a real bad cold and her nose kept a-running and a-dripping. Mountain people did not use handkerchiefs; women used their apron tails and as for the men, a honk and a flip of the thumb and forefinger would suffice.

On this day the preacher was a-coming to dinner, so the woman told her little boy, "The preacher is coming to dinner and I want you to watch me and when my nose starts to drip, say, 'Mr. Jones is at the door', and I'll go in the back room and blow my nose. Now mind you, watch."

The preacher come and Melissie was busily preparing dinner and at the same time talking down Hell-fire and Damnation with the preacher.

Walter made a few feeble attempts to speak but mother always said, "Be still, can't you see that we're talking?"

He became very persistent and his mother finally became aware of him and said, "Well, Walter, what is peskering you so?"

Walter feebly replied, "Mr. Jones was at the door, but never mind, he's done fell in the soup now."

The End Of Time

One time two little boys stole some walnuts. They almost got caught and they ran and ran. It was dark and when they finally stopped running they were at the graveyard. One said to the other, "Let's go in here where nobody will bother us and divide up our walnuts."

"Sure thing," said the other little urchin, "but first let's hide these two biggest ones at the gate and get them last."

They agreed and went on inside. At first they wondered if they should "stake" or "count out." To stake, you divide them in as many equal piles, or stakes, as you have people, then one turns his back while someone touches one of the piles and calls out, "Whose is this 'n?" The one with his back turned calls out a name and this continues until all piles are taken.

That was too much trouble, so the boys decided to count out. One boy counted while the other piled them up. He counted in rhythmical, schoolboy monotone, "You take this 'n and I'll take that 'n; you take this 'n, and I'll take that'n."

Just then two old men happened to pass by and, on hearing something in the graveyard, stopped by the gate to listen. They could hear the boys counting, "You take this 'n, and I'll take that 'n; you take this 'n, and I'll take that 'n."

The boys counted on for awhile and then they said, "Well, that takes care of all of these, now we'll go get the two big ones at the gate."

Those two men really left there in a hurry and went and told everyone they saw that the end of time was surely coming for they had heard the Lord and the Devil up in the graveyard a-dividing up the dead.

The Biggest Nigger

One time a big nigger and a little nigger went a-fishing and the big nigger caught a little fish while the little nigger caught a big fish.

Now the big nigger wanted that big fish and planned out how to get it.

When they got back home the big nigger picked up the big fish and said, "Well, Sam, it's like this, a ought is a ought, and a figger is a figger, and the biggest fish goes to the biggest nigger."

He went on home and left the little nigger scratching his head.

Big 'Fraid

One time a father did not like the boy who was going to see his girl, so he decided to scare him away.

He got him a sheet and waited by a hanted graveyard. In the meantime his little white dog

had followed along; so, just when the young man had got to the place and the father had donned the sheet, the dog, thinking it a game, grabbed the sheet. The father let out a yell and took out with the little dog right after him. The young man yelled, "Run big 'fraid, little 'fraid'll catch you."

A Phenomenon

One time a mountain preacher in the course of his sermon used the word phenomenon. After service was over and the hand shaking was going on, Man Sam sidled up to the preacher man and, with his tongue in his cheek, said matter-of-factly, "I say, that's a moughty fine sermon you sermonized on today."

Brother Bowman replied, "Oh, nothing extra. I just said to my wife, Tiny, this very morning, 'I wish I could ring down the fire of repentance to the folks over in Happy Hollow; they shore desarves it."

"That's fine, That's fine," wigwags Man Sam, "but that word, phenomenon, I don't believe I quite follows you there."

"Simple, simple," ejaculates the preacher man as he shifts from one foot to the other. "Well, you see -- well, ahem, it's the likes o' this here.

"I'm going along down the road when I see a cow. It looks like a cow, it acts like a cow, and it is a cow, but that ain't no phenomenon.

"I go along on down the road and purty soon I see a thistle. It looks like a thistle, it smell just 'zackly like a thistle and it is a thistle, but that ain't no phenomenon.

"I go on down the road a mite furder and I meets a bird. It looks like a bird, it sings like a bird, and it is a bird, but that ain't no phenomenon.

"I keeps on a-going on down the road and afore long I sees a cow a-setting on a thistle a-singing like a bird. Now brother, that wuz a phenomenon."

Old Joe

Did you ever hear the one about them two men that killed a man?

Well, one time they's two men that killed a man to rob him and get his money. Then they got skeered they would get caught up with, so they set him up between them on the wagon seat and tied him up so it would look like he was just a-riding along with them, just for fun.

They drove on a long ways till they come to a lonely stretch of woods when they decided it would be safe to stop and get a drink of water.

The spring was over in the woods a good little piece, and while they was gone another man happened to pass along. He saw the corpse in the wagon and decided to play a joke on the two men. He hid the body, climbed up on the seat and tied hisself up to look just like the dead man a-settin' thar.

By and by the two men come back, climbed up in the seat and drove on off.

Before long one of them said to tother one, "I'll do declare, Old Joe's a getting warm!"

The "dead man" spoke up and said, "If you'd a been dead and in torment as long as I have, you'd be a getting warm, too."

The two men throwed them lines[1] down and really lit out, they say.

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[1] Mountaineers always say "lines" when they refer to reins.

Old Raw-Head And Bloody Bones

One time theys a old man a old woman who allus left their little girl to do up all the work whilst they went skallyhooting and lally-gagging round the neighborhood.

One night when she was a-washing up the the dishes she got awful lonesome. She went to the stair steps and hollered up stairs, "Who'll come and stay with me?"

Something said in a wee small voice, "I'll be there in a minute."

When she was a-sweeping up the floor she got lonesome some more and she went and called up the stairs again, "Who's a-gonna come stay with me?"

Again the voice answered, "I'll be there in a minute."

When she had carried in all the wood she got lonesomer than ever before. She piled all the wood up in the corner by the fireplace and then she went and hollered up the stairs again, "Who's a-gonna come and stay with me?"

A loud voice answered, "Here I come," and sompin come a-rolling down the stair steps, bump, bump, bump, and landed at the little girl's feet.

"W- wh- who are you?"
"Old Raw-Head. You sent for me."
"Oh, my, what dreadful big eyes you got."
"So's I can see you better."
"What long fingernails you got."
"They're to scratch out your grave with."
"What long hair you got."
"To brush out your grave with."
"And what big teeth you got."
"To eat you up with."

When her Pa and Ma come home all they found was a pile of bloody bones over in the corner.

(This story was used as a bedtime story)

Dig, Dig, Dig, Dig! !

(This story is used with very small children. The child sits on the teller's lap facing him and he holds the child's head between the palms of his hands.)

"The old woman went out to work in her garden, dig, dig, dig." (With the "Dig, dig, dig" the child's head is made to go up and down as if digging.)

"She thought she heard somebody a coming." (The child's head is held in a listening position.)

"She looked this-a-way and she looked that-a-way." (The child's head is turned "this-a-way and that-a-way.")

"She didn'd see nobody. DIG, DIG, DIG, DIG! (The child's head nodded vigorously up and down on the "dig, dig, dig.")

Where's My Big Toe?

(This story is told with ghost-like gestures and intonations. The teller keeps inventing until the audience is all bug-eyed and expectant, then comes the "Boo" with proper gestures. The kids are so sure that Old Raw-Head himself has grabbed them that they emit loud hysterical screams and then say, "Tell it again.")

One time they's a old woman who's a working in her garden. She's ist a digging away when suddenly her hoe struck something. She squat down, pick it up and turn it round an around an around as she looked at it. It looked like someone's big toe, so the old woman jus said, "Humph!" and pitched it over the fence and went ahead a-digging in her garden.

That night when she pulled off her clothes and went to bed she heard something a scratching around and purty soon a fearsome voice said, "Bring me back my big toe." Just like that.

The old woman didn't know what to think, so she pulled the kivers up over her head and tried to go to sleep.

When she was just about asleep here it come again, "Bring me back my big toe."

The old woman she got up and peeped under the bed but she didn't see nothing, so she went on back to bed. Purty soon it come again, only this time it was louder, "Bring Me Back My Big Toe."

The old woman she got up, she peeped under the bed, she went and looked behind the door -- she didn't see nothing so she went on back to bed.

Purty soon she heard it again, "BRING ME BACK MY BIG TOE."

Again the old woman she got up, she peeped under the bed, she looked behind the door, she went over, doubled down and she peeped up the chimney and _____ "BOO!" It gotcha! ! !

Pat a Cake

(Mountain style)

"Pat a cake, pat a cake, baker's man." (The child's head is held between the palms of the hands and is rocked back and forth from one hand to the other like the mountain woman shapes her bread.)

"Roll 'em, an roll 'em, an roll 'em." (The child's head is rolled around in the palms of the hands, as she rolls cakes of dough to shape them.)

"And throw 'em in a pan!" (The narrator pretends to throw the child's head away.) Children love this game and want it repeated.

Most of the foregoing tall tales were intended mainly to make folk shiver. Here are some meant to arouse a different response:

Nancy Hanks' Sad End

One very hot, dry summer day in last Juvember, Bob Jackson was laboriously plowing his corn. The thermometer stood at a mere one hundred ten degrees in the shade, and the shade itself kept getting up and hunting a cooler place to lie. As Mr. Jackson followed the plow up and down the hills between the rows of parched corn, the plow followed Nancy Hanks, who followed her nose; for, being a sensible horse, she listened to no one.

The temperature suddenly rose one tenth of one degree due to the fact that the wind maker had to stop to rewind the whimididdle to the wind grinder and to catch his breath. This was enough to start the corn to popping right off the ears in the field.

Nancy Hanks rolled her blood-shot eyes from side to side when she saw the popped corn dancing around her feet and, thinking it was snow, she promptly laid down in the harness and froze to death.

The Hoop Snake's Doings

One day during "dog days" I was a-hoeing corn when I suddenly heard a loud noise that sounded like thunder and then went "swish, swish."

Looking up, I saw a hoop snake come a-rolling down the hillside straight toward me. I braced myself against the hoe and sprang to one side just as the snake bore down on me, striking the hoe handle with its poison fangs. The hoe handle began to swell up. It got so big that I had it sawed into cross ties and made a modest fortune selling them to a coast-to-coast railway company.

When "dog days" passed the swelling left the wood from which the cross ties were made, so I went into business with the Amalgimated Toothpick Corporation in Happy Hollow.

* * * * *

The power of a hoop snake's venon can hardly be exaggerated. One day I was driving an ox-cart when a hoop snake came a rolling along down the road and plunged his stinger in the wagon tongue. I couldn't think of any other safe way to get him loose so I just rammed my hand down his throat far enough until I could grab him by the tail, then I gives his tail a quick jerk, turning him wrong side out and headed in the other direction.

When I looked around, the wagon tongue had swelled so big I had to trim it down to size with my axe. Well, when I finally got it trimmed down to normal size I had seven cords of wood left over and a pile of chips as big as a hay stack.

* * * * *

When the Jacksons first came into Carroll County looking for a likely place to settle, they noticed many walnut trees growing along Bear Creek. Being part Scotch, right away they thought of a plan to make money, for black walnut lumber was high-priced. They just trained a couple of Carroll County hoop snakes to bite the walnut trees. This way even small saplings could be turned into logs five or six feet in diameter and worth a lot of money.

Hattie, The Handsome Bird Dog

I bought me a handsome bird dog from a mountain fellow at a right handsome price.

"Now, that I've bought her," I said, "is she any good?"

"Good? Why, man! Last fall, on the very first day of the season, Hattie and me went out to hunt some birds. I noticed her a-chasing around over the field and purty soon she stiffens herself in a perfect point. I readied my gun and up come a bird. I shot it and up comes another. This kept on until I had killed me a hundred and twenty-five birds. Then

Hattie comes over looking as if she deserves a pat on the head. I investigated and discovered that Old Hattie had chased the birds down a gopher hole and then let them out one at a time for me to shoot. Is that good?"

The Old Clock

The city slicker likes to outsmart his country cousin. During the antique-collecting fad, the slicker would go around the mountain homes buying up junk and reselling it at a handsome profit. News eventually gets around and one wily old hooger was holding out for a better price on an old clock.

"That's an awful lot of money for a clock like that, and besides, how do I know it's old?" argued the slicker.

"Old?" exclaimed the hooger, "Why, man! What more proof do you need? Just lookee thar, you can see for yourself, that clock is so old that the shadow from the pendulum has done wore a hole clear through the back of the case."

The Old Crow

Mountaineers are always bothered with crows taking up the corn that is planted in the spring. One old fellow hit on the idea of soaking beans in mountain "moonshine" and mixing them with his seed corn to protect his crop from the marauding crows. It didn't work! A few hours after it was planted all the crows in Carroll County had gathered in the field. One old crow was trading the other crows one whisky-soaked bean for five grains of corn and doing big business.

The Fog Slicer

The fog gets awful thick in the mountains. One night I was driving along in a brand-new 1920

Chevrolet pick-up truck, which wouldn't hardly pull the hat off'n your head anyways. The fog got thicker and thicker until it finally stalled the truck.

Slicing fog can be awful tedious on a dark night so I mounted the fan on the front bumper and started out again, the fan slicing the fog out of the way as I slowly made progress along the crooked mountain road to my home.

When I got home I found that the fan had thrown the fog over the front bumper and over the cab and I had me a whole load of sliced up fog. Next morning I added some sugar and flavoring and made me a lot of money selling Jello to my neighbors.

Aunt Viola's Eyesight

My Aunt Viola had the best eyesight of any one in the County; she could see the dirt on a person's neck one half hour before it landed.

Rugged Carroll County

All the cows in Carroll County are born with two short legs so they can graze on the steep mountain sides. The natives swing in and out on a grapevine after they roll in daylight on a wheelbarrow. Even the dogs have to dig out places on the mountain sides before they can set down to howl at the moon. The rabbit's ears grow longer so they can hook their long hind legs in them and slide down the mountain into the farmer's cabbage patch. Sometimes of a summer it gets so dry that you have to prime the mourners at a funeral to get them to start crying.

Jim's Turnip

One time Uncle Z. H. and several buddies were setting around the fire swapping tall tales when

Jim said, "Well, fellows, did I ever tell you about the big turnip I growed?"

Nobody said nothing so he just talks on:

"Well, one time I sowed me a acre of turnips cause the old womern just loves turnip and fat-back soup. So I goes out in the middle of my pasture field where my cows are a-picking and fence me off a acre to sow in turnips. But when I went to the house to get my seeds I couldn't find but one lousy old turnip seed. I knowed Suze would be a fussin and a fumin if'n I didn't tell her I'd sowed me turnips so I goes out in the middle of my one acre and plants my one measly turnip seed."

"Well sir, if I may live to tell you, that turnip come up and begin to grow and blamed if it didn't completely fill my one acre and push the fence down. It would of growed bigger but the cows took to eating on the edges."

After the laughter died down, Uncle Z. H. began calmly:

"Boys, you know, one time I made me a pot so big that when you knocked on one side with a hammer you couldn't hear the sound on the other side for a week."

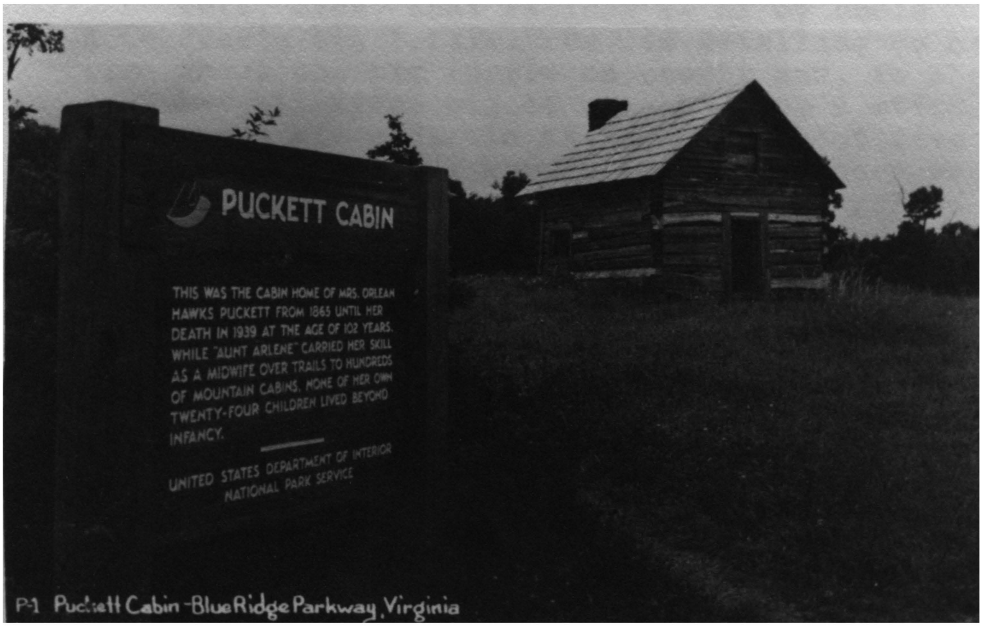
"Why?" asked his amazed listeners, "What did you want with a pot that big, anyhow?"

"To cook Jim's turnip in," blandly announced Uncle Z. H.

What Happened To Buck And Baldy

That reminds me of Old Buck and Old Baldy, as fine a yoke of brindle oxen as you could find in the whole countryside, then. One day I hitched em to the old ox-wagon, all the while I was a-thinking to go out in the big woods a fur piece and get me some kindling for the old woman to use in the kitchen stove. As I was a-going along I

"Hairing with Buck and Baldy"



P-1 Puckett Cabin - Blue Ridge Parkway, Virginia

took and seed a track there in the woods that looked like a big heavy log had been drug along.

I followed that track till I come up to a big hole in the ground. I looked about till I found me a great old big rock and I dropped it in the hole. In a minute I heard something begin to move. I backed off a piece and gazed in 'mazement as sumpin's head agin to come up outer that there hole. Its old head 'merged in the air for about ten foot and it hadn't even got down to its eyes. As I stood there it come up another five foot and still no eyes. With that I lit out for the house in a dead run; eyes bugged out and hair riz up on end.

After I got to the house, I 'menced to think I hadn't ought to'v deserted Old Buck and Old Baldy that away, so screwing up my courage, I went back after them. When I come up to the place, I saw the biggest old snake I ever saw in all my periodical-put-togethers. But he was deader than four o'clock! You see he had swallowed Old Buck and Old Baldy, wagon and all, but he had choked to death on the coupling pole.

Uncle Alamander's Turtle

Well, Zack, that reminds me of my Uncle Alamander's big turtle. He was a-telling me one time about the big turtle he caught and, to show just how all-fired big it was, he took a stick and drawed him a circle in the sand about five foot in diameter. I knowed Uncle Alamander was capable of stretching the truth till it yelled bloody murder, so I thought I'd go him one better. Taking me a stick in my hand I drawed a bigger circle to show I'd caught a bigger one.

"Hold on there now," yelled Uncle. "I hain't got mine done yet. That first circle was just my turtle's head."

* * * * *

Old Wise's Corn

The land sure is rich here in Carroll County, 'specially some people's land. One time Old Wise went out to feed his chickens, after a thunder storm. The ground was good and wet, the sun had popped out good and hot; it sure was a growing time. This was before the days of cornshellers and he had to shell the corn by hand. The first grain that hit the ground begin to grow. His little boy, Ben, was a-standing there watching his Pa, when that corn begin to grow so fast that one of the corn ears caught the little boy as it passed by. Old Wise was so skeered he run to get his chopping axe to chop the boy down but the corn was growing so fast that he couldn't hit twice in the same place. So the boy just set up there and eat roast'n ears 'till ten years later, when he got big enough to climb down by hisself.

* * * * *

Thus, the tales presented here give indication that there has flourished, in the hills and dales of Carroll and its surrounding Counties, many narratives which have enriched the imagination of countless children who passed their days therein, and have resulted in many entertaining hours. Such tales also have inspired in them various emotions, ideals, and ambitions, coupled with a sense of humor, which have served as springing boards to enable them to bounce back from adversities and frustrations; to attain satisfying goals in life, whether those goals be founded in "themthar hills" or in some "fur-piece-off."

CHAPTER III

LEGENDS

It is obvious that, although the settlers of this region had brought with them the culture of the historical moment, still they led a way of life in such isolated circumstances which, from the first, began to be affected by a process of evolution and therefore to diverge from its origins. Thus, an indigenous culture was imposed upon that which the mountaineer had introduced into the region with which this study is concerned, just as the Old World culture which he had carried thither was imposed upon that of the aborigines of the American wilderness. The mountaineer did not fit into the environment he found, so he altered it to fit his purposes.

Many pioneers settled in these mountains and many generations grew up knowing only that which their forefathers had brought with them into their humble cabins. Such settings created humble, great-hearted men whose lives formed a strong, invisible substance from which to fashion enduring corner stones for their culture.

As the mountaineer gazed upon the mountains, vast lumps of God's creation, he began to need names in

order to locate himself. Some places were named for their appearances; many were named for certain incidents and the names so chosen tended to outlive the incidents. As the men went on horseback or rode shank's mare[1] from one place to another, they gauged distances by stream crossings, or in terms of various animals' habits, or by reference to certain adventures with plants or animals. Thus, legends sprang up to commemorate the naming of the land.

Often, it seemed, some local character had done a great deed, famous or infamous. Then the story of that deed would be repeated often enough and with sufficient local variations and anachronisms to give it legendary quality; hence, the character concerned would achieve the stature of a mountain hero.

To get the most out of a study of legends, such as are presented in this chapter, one must drink deep,

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[1] Shank's mare is an ironical way of referring to walking, especially on the part of those who could afford no other means of transportation.

but drink slow, as the mountaineer does when imbibing his "double-run licker."[1]

* * * * *

Lovers' Leap

Before the white man came, Carroll County was the favorite hunting grounds for many Indian tribes. Game was abundant and the countryside was beautiful; so, when the old urge came, Indians just naturally thought of Happy Hollow.

One fine day a Cherokee tribe from the Holston River Valley just happened to find this place of abundance and peace. To them it was almost the Happy Hunting Ground itself, so they decided to make camp and spend the hunting season here.

In the tribe was a young brave who had just passed through the ceremonies that proclaimed him a man, so this hunting trip was most important to him.

At the break of day he took his bow, a quiver of arrows, and his hunting knife, and set forth to see what a "man" could do for himself.

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[1] Double-run was the term used by the mountaineers to designate illicit whiskey which had been run twice through the distillery, in order to produce a stronger, more palatable liquor for their own consumption. To run the liquid through twice was, of course, twice as hazardous: doing so would give the revenue man double the opportunity for apprehending the distiller in his forbidden activity.

Single-run, on the other hand, was a term of mild contempt for illicit whiskey produced in a hurry for sale to others who could not be classed as connoisseurs.

Before long, he saw "sign" of game and instinct told him to use every trick that he knew to stalk this game. He had not gone far when he became aware of the fact that his quarry also knew many tricks of the trade. At once it became a contest of wits, which made matters all the more interesting for the young brave.

He became so absorbed in the chase that he did not realize how far he had gone, nor where he was. Suddenly, the trail became very plain and he looked up. At first he saw only the twisted, jagged mountain.-- Then he saw her. She was standing high above him on the edge of a precipice, laughing down at him -- a soft, gentle laugh.

His first reaction was anger, anger at having been outwitted by a girl, and a Shawnee at that. He blinked his eyes and looked again, and then he realized that anger is mightily akin to love. She melted into the forest and he retraced his steps to camp, sullen and empty-handed.

The next morning he tried to hunt but his heart wasn't in it, and he found himself at the foot of the precipice once more. He slowly raised his eyes: Joy of joys! Be still, my trembling heart! He could hardly believe what he saw, but there she was, smiling at him again; only this time it was more like a challenge.

Try as he might, the mountainside was just too steep and too high to climb; the precipice was a wall of solid rock with no hand holds. He looked up in time to see her twisted grin of scorn as she turned her back and slowly walked away. Heart-broken, he went back to camp. His mother thought he was sick and brewed some bitter herbs which he drank to keep her from asking questions. His father, being wiser, only smiled.

Next day he was determined to avoid the precipice and took a different route. He killed some rabbits and a quail and that made him feel good. Now, if he could destroy something big, something big and beautiful, perhaps the black

gloom would go away. Just then he spied a pair of soft grey eyes peering at him through the leaves. That's it -- a deer -- that's exactly what he wanted most at that moment. He reached for an arrow and for his strong bow, but Cupid's arrows were quicker.

Thereafter the brave and his new-found love would meet everyday and she would lead him to the choicest game and the best of herbs.

One day as they raced happily through the forest, she suddenly stopped and motioned him to come. Silently he went to her, and there they were, on the very precipice where he first saw her.

As they stood gazing quietly down the steep sides of the jagged rock, someone came up from behind.

"So this is the one you have been eating your heart out over -- and him a Cherokee," spat her father, a Shawnee Chief.

"But, Father, I love him and I want to marry him."

"No daughter of mine shall ever marry a Cherokee. I have spoken. Now go."

She looked at the precipice and at her lover. He gave an understanding nod. They came together in fond embrace and leaped as of one accord over the jagged edge of the precipice, her eyes laughing mockingly up at her father as he stood frozen and helpless while she and her lover went down, down, down, and were dashed to pieces at the bottom of the ravine.

The precipice still bears the name, Lovers' Leap, and the story has many versions in memory of a true love bred in the mountains.

* * * * *

The Helpful Ghost

The Laurel Fork section of Carroll County, Virginia, was settled by people of an interesting type, hardy folk who brought with them a host of ghostly beings and superstitions which were inherited from their Scotch-Irish ancestors. To them, such supernatural beings were as real, or more so, than the far-away neighbor on the next farm.

This story was told by an intelligent, prosperous farmer, who though not professing belief, could not quite bring himself to disbelieve it; for, as he said, "It happened."

> It was one of those dark, humid, murky nights. It had been raining, but tonight was one of those quiet (too quiet) nights with fog so thick that it seemed one could scarcely breathe. It was especially gloomy at the Dalton home, for their youngest child lay dying -- dying unless a certain herb could be found from which a tea could be brewed that would break the child's fever. There was no doctor available to that backwoods section, so its inhabitants had to rely on a knowledge of herbs and potions in times of illness. They had used the last of their supply of the needed drug and more must be procured at once if the child were to live.
>
> The herb grew in a nearby swamp, so the father lit his old, battered, kerosene lantern and stepped out into a dripping, sodden atmosphere. Meanwhile, the underbrush murmurred with the sounds of countless insects which had been aroused to song by the dampness and closeness of

the night. The dense fog made a halo of light around the lantern and Father Dalton soon discovered that the light was of no help to him for its feeble rays could not penetrate the thick fog. He extinguished the light hurriedly and set out by blind reckoning in the general direction of the swamp, not once thinking of how he would find the herb even if he did reach the swamp. So urgent was the need of baby that anything was worth trying.

As he began to pick his way cautiously along the little footpath he suddenly realized that he was not alone. His mind raced back through the years to great-grandfather Dalton who had been killed in a fight at Quaker Ford, many years before. The murderer had been so enraged that he cut off his victim's head and hastily buried him in the mud and slime at Quaker Ford. Then, when a searching party had come too near the spot he had slipped back that night, taken the body, and carried it on his back to this very swamp, leaving the head behind.

Now, the father certainly didn't want anyone to interrupt his search for the precious herb, so he quickened his pace. It was still there. He slowed down; so did the presence. He could now feel it breathing down his shirt collar. He strained his eyes in the darkness but could see nothing. Presently a light began to glow. As it waxed brighter it began to take form, the form of the headless great-grandfather.

Beads of perspiration stood out on the father's brow as the apparition began to beckon to him. He wiped his blurred eyes and glanced again -- it was still there, beckoning as if it expected to be obeyed. Father's feet became very light and little prickles played tag up and down his spine. His mind raced quickly back to the little, still form of his favorite child lying so white on the pillow, smiling the little crooked smile that couldn't hold out much longer; back to his wife, Mary, who was standing wringing her hands in agony beside the still form and counting the moments till his return. He dared not run, so it seemed that there was nothing to do except to follow this compelling, beckoning, headless figure.

> The path at his feet became as visible as if it were in broad daylight, but whenever he raised his eyes he found nothing but sticky, enveloping, consuming darkness. As he stared at the path, the brightness began to move, slowly at first, and then faster, until it seemed that he would soon become exhausted trying to keep up with it as it guided him through the fields, across fences, around mudholes and along the familiar little footpath until at last he spied the precious herb growing in the middle of the swamp. He then began a frenzied digging, in his haste to get some before the light should move on.
>
> As soon as a sufficient amount had been gathered, the light began to move again. Father followed as if in a trance and soon found himself at his own front door. The headless figure rose swiftly, floated silently over the rooftop, and vanished into the swamp. The father rushed into the house, gasping for breath, but in time to save his baby son.

The family still tells the story of the night the father went for the herb, making the trip faster than anyone could, even in the daytime; of how his shoes were not the least bit muddy, even though he had gone to the middle of the swamp and back again.

This story remains one of the many unsolved mysteries of this section, credited to the supernatural and having no plausible explanation. It just happened. The sick baby is now more than ninety years old and is himself a great-grandfather.

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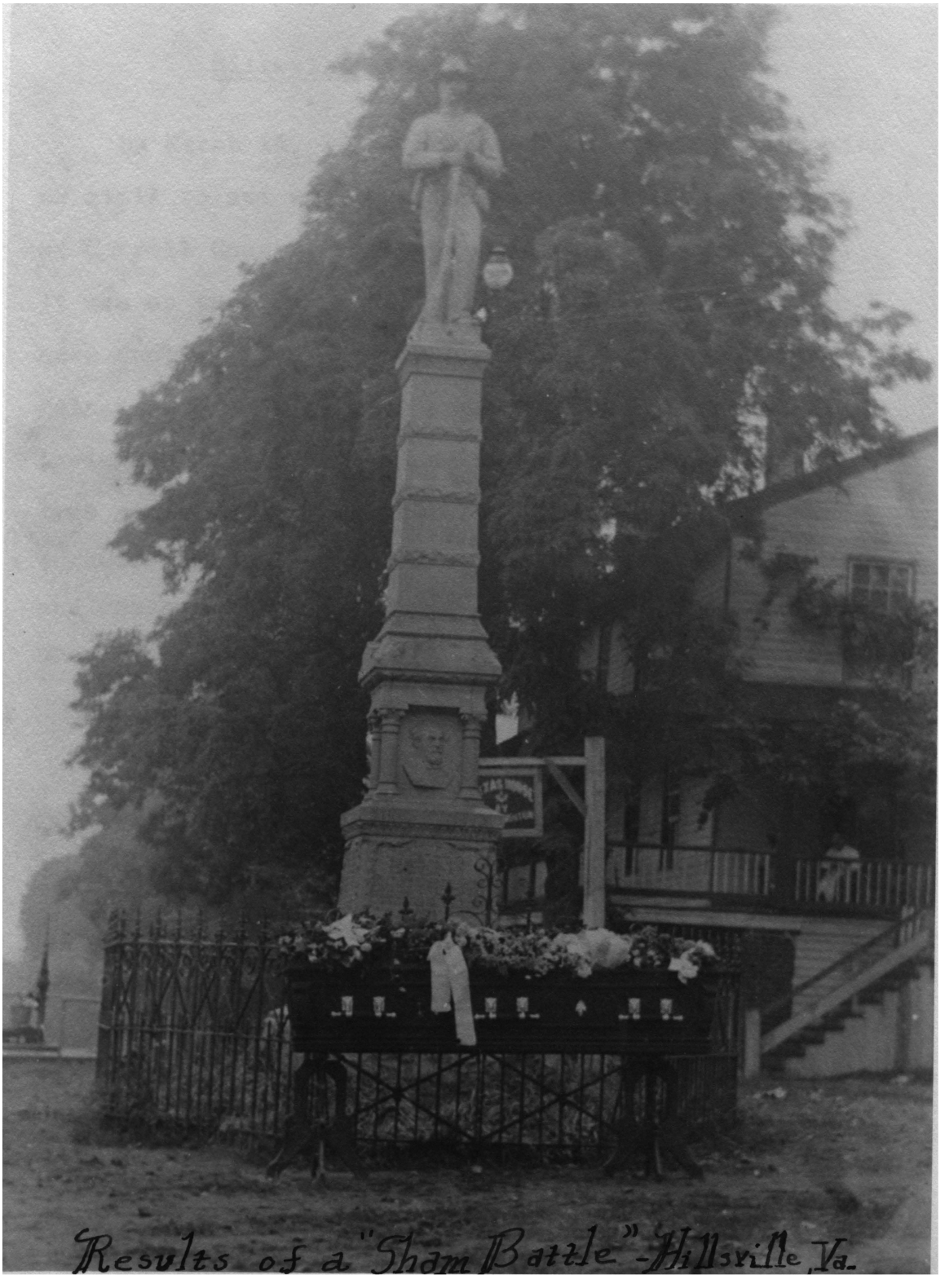

Results of a "Sham Battle" - Hillsville, Va.

Hillsville Courthouse Tragedy

On March 14, 1912, occurred a tragedy so shocking as still to set up vibrations among all the citizens of Carroll County, whenever reference to it is made. It was on that day that the Allens were alleged to have shot up the Courthouse. Since there are many relatives of men on both sides of this affray still living in Carroll and since no one knows for sure the true state of affairs that led up to actual shooting, I shall attempt to record only the facts concerning it and resist the urge to write a thrilling story based upon it.

> On a Saturday in the spring of 1911, at a small schoolhouse in Fancy Gap community, a quarrel started that caused the Allens, among others, to be brought into court.
>
> The story goes that one of the defendants in the case concerned with the schoolhouse disturbance was harshly treated by the sheriff prior to the trial. That treatment, in turn, aroused resentment which flared up later in a burst of gun fire directed at the court officials in Hillsville.
>
> During the fracas Dexter Goad was wounded three times and his clothing was pierced eleven times by bullets. Five persons were killed that day: Judge Thornton Lemmon Massie, Sheriff Lew Webb, Commonwealth's Attorney W. M. Foster, Juror C. C. Fowler and Miss Betty Ayers, a witness.
>
> Wesley Edwards and his cousin, Sidna Allen, escaped and went to Des Moines, Iowa, as Joe Jackson and Tom Sayers, Wesley's sweetheart betrayed them and led officers to them in return for a small sum.

> On November 7, 1912, Wesley and Sidna were tried at Wytheville by a jury from Grayson County. And, on November 22, they were sentenced to fifteen years in the penitentiary for the death of Judge Massey. On December 11, a sentence of five years was imposed upon them for killing Foster and fifteen years for killing Sheriff Webb. Wesley got a total of twenty-seven years for his share in the affair.
>
> Sidna Edwards surrendered to the authorities and served a prison term. However, Floyd and Claude Allen were electrocuted on March 28, 1913. While he was in prison, a medal was given to Claude Allen by a group designated as the "Ladies of Southwest Virginia." It was inscribed with the words, "For Bravery in Defending His Father." At his funeral, his casket was opened and the medal was presented to his sweetheart.

The facts in the case may never be completely uncovered; however the whole affair sounds very much like a western movie. It seemed to be a terse demonstration of a mountain feud between two powers: ignorance and brawn on the one hand and education and law on the other; the code of the mountain family against the law of the town dweller. It all went to show that two wrongs never make a right.

After a lapse of 40 years, almost all traces of this unfortunate affair have been eradicated. The court room was remodeled in 1926. That removed most of the marks that bore silent witness to the tragedy. Yet, the same chair in which the judge sat is in the court

room, also the same witness box. The only bullet holes to be seen are one in the third column from the left, one in the ninth step and one in the seventeenth step of the stairway on the right. On the wall at the rear of the bench in the court room are two metal plaques. The one on the left states: "Erected by the State Bar Association of Virginia as a memorial of the legal accomplishments, the fidelity to duty, and the courage unto death of Thornton Lemmon Massie, Judge of the 21st Virginia Circuit, who was assassinated while holding court in this courthouse of Carroll County, Virginia, on the 14th of March, 1912. To die in the discharge of duty is to live forever in the hearts of honor, courage and patriotism." The plaque on the right states: "Erected by the State Bar Association of Virginia in memory of William M. Foster, Commonwealth's Attorney; Lewis F. Webb, sheriff; Augustus C. Fowler, member of the jury; Bettie Ayers, a witness in the case then under trial who were assassinated in this courthouse while in discharge of their duty to the Commonwealth on the 14th day of March, 1912."

Not many of the school children of Carroll County can tell the story of that tragic day, but if one should go a-visiting in a neighboring state and, in the

course of conversation, happen to say that he is from Carroll County, Virginia, he would find it interesting to watch his hearers' expressions as they step back a couple of steps and say rather cautiously, "Do you know the Allens?"

The Buffalo

Two Indian tribes were fighting, an unusual thing for the hunting season, but the Cherokees had had a hard winter season and they were irritable; so, when they saw the Shawnee hunting game where Cherokees usually hunted, tempers flared and fighting began.

The peaceful Shawnee tribe was getting the better of the fracas when the Cherokees decided to high-tail it. This was too much for the Shawnees -- attack and then run -- so they decided to teach the Cherokees a lesson. The Great Spirit looked down on His children and He too, decided it was time they learned a lesson; so he began slowly to raise the land in an inclined plane until the Cherokees found themselves confronted with a high precipice while the Shawnees were closing in.

Rather than surrender, they leaped and were killed. Some say the Evil One saw them and set his kettles out to catch them as they fell, for he was in need of grease for his candles. Anyway, there are large holes in that place which bear the name, Devil's Kettles.

The Shawnees in this story noticed the resemblance of the mountain to the rounded shoulders and sloping back of the buffalo and said that the Great Spirit made the buffalo to save them, just as the buffalo had ofttimes saved their brothers from starvation.

True, or not, the mountain today carries the name, Buffalo.

Belspur

The mountain people decided to work together and build a road through the community. It would make travel faster and more convenient for the whole neighborhood. They set the date, and people gathered in from far and near to help work on the road.

They looked at the mountain and they looked at the wilderness and wondered how in the world they would ever get through.

One old fellow said, "The Lord never intended for roads to be built over the mountains or He would never have made them so high and rough." But the others were not so meek-hearted. One stalwart young man, John Webb, said, "Wait a minute, boys. Wait until I run home. I have an idea."

He was soon back with a cow bell. There were yet no compasses, or surveyors or modern equipment in the mountains, so John would start off in the general direction, climb the next mountain, or spur, as they called it, and would begin ringing the bell. The workers would follow the sound and work up to him, then he would be off again.

It was a long, hard, back-breaking task, but the people were proud of the road they had built. It was a great step forward in the development of the community, an almost impossible feat for them but for young John's idea.

Now, the road must have a name. Belspur clicked, and Belspur it still is, in memory of the ringing of John's cow bell from atop a mountain spur.

Possum Trot

Along about 1860, the people of the community got together and built a one-room, log schoolhouse, in which to educate their children -- "so's they

kin have it bettern their old Pap". The house was hewn out of the woods and erected right on the spot. Animals made trails through the forest, which mountain folk call "trots". Now, the new school must have a name, so the elders met to give it a name; the children, to look.

One excited, barefooted youngster exclaimed, "Lookee thar, she's built right acrost a possum trot."

So, Possum Trot it was. When the building was no longer used as a school it became a substantial part of a dwelling house that is still in use.

Now, perhaps we can better understand why schoolhouses in this section have such names as "Hog Waller," "Bear Creek," "Hard Scrabble," "Long Branch," "Friendship," "Gladesboro," "Sodom," "Roam," "Dugspur," "Crossroads," "Excelsior," and many others.

Little Country Store

Here's a token to the memory
Of the little country store,
Where you'll find the bums and loafers
And idlers, too, galore;
Yea, you'll find em by the dozen
And you'll find em by the score,
All sitting 'round the counter
At the little country store.

There you'll find the busy farmer
With his face all wreathed in smiles,
When he should be home a-helping wifie
Keep the piggies in the sties;
There you'll find the country urchin
Who should be helping with the chores,
But they're sitting 'round the counter
At the little country store.

You'll find grand-dads, uncles, husbands
All members of the unruly sex,
A-sittin' and a-wonderin'
What gossip is a-coming next;
The clerk knows all the latest,
And he tells em o'er and o'er
To the idlers 'round the counter,
At the little country store.

If it's dry or if it's rainin'
Some excuse a man will surely find,
When he thinks he needs diversion
Just to pass away the time;
I guess it gets to be a habit
And he goes there more and more,
Just a sittin' 'round the counter
At the little country store.

It's at horseshoes he'll be playin'
From break of day 'till dark,
'Till of all his manly energy
There isn't left a spark;
Then complainin' goes to wifie,
Who greets him at the door,
She who don't know 'bout the counter
At the little country store.

To cure his pains and hurtings
That's where husband wants to go,
For there's the paraphernalia
Of a travelin' medicine show;
If he's got the rheumatism
Or a corn upon his toe,
He'll find a "cure all" round the counter
At the little country store.

If wifie wants some groceries
Or she needs to go to mill,
Or she needs the cows or turkeys
From the top of yonder hill;
Sure, he'll be off in a jiffy
And you bet he won't be slow,
For it lies along the pathway
To the little country store.

There they sit around on nail kegs
Chew and spit and dip their snuff;
There they talk about the women
And all that kind of stuff;
When at last one starts to bragging
Then someone brags some more,
Feuds can start around the counter
At the little country store.

Ladies, if your husband is ambitious
And you want to keep him so,
Get your rolling pin in action
And just keep him on the go;
Keep him bringing home the bacon
Don't forget to love him, though;
Keep him 'way from 'round the counter
At the little country store.

* * * * *

In addition to the rustic poem and the stories about the helpful apparition and the Allens, thrown in for good measure, there have been presented in this chapter four legends chosen especially to give an idea of how various places in the land were named; so that members of future generations might better understand how certain names came to be. Thus, they might come to gaze upon such places as upon old friends, especially when they realize that their great-grandfathers had been at the bellows when such names as "Hard Scrabble" or "Hog Waller" were forged from mountain pig-iron; that such names had stuck because they were "fit'n."

CHAPTER IV

SUPERSTITIONS

The dominant strain of the mountain folk of the Appalachian region is that of the Scotch-Irish immigrants of the Eighteenth Century, but there is in them a large infusion of the blood of the German Protestants who migrated southward from Pennsylvania into the fertile Valley of Virginia and on to its adjoining mountains. Some few of their distant ancestors were Quakers; some French Hugenots. To those earlier stocks was added that of the pioneering English settlers who continued to push westward into the hill lands from Tidewater Virginia and from other parts of the eastern seaboard.

First to arrive, those transplanted Highlanders looked at the hills and vales about them, liked what they saw, and moved in. Thereafter, they closed the door to the teeming civilizations outside their mountain fastnesses and established for themselves the kind of life that they had known and cherished before the days of their persecution by James II in Ireland and, later, by the Quakers in America. The isolation of the mountains in which they found themselves aided them in preserving various traditions and customs belonging to earlier culture patterns. Among such

folkways were certain practices, such as magic and even sorcery, which many have regarded as associated only with primitive cultures, but which have come to be viewed as by no means confined thereto; but rather as belonging to all stages of civilization, even to the most advanced.

Belief in fairies is astoundingly widespread among Celtic people, particularly in Ireland and Scotland. Even when serious belief is gone, certain superstitious vestiges remain. Such is the case with the Highlanders of southwestern Virginia.

Because he was unable to comprehend all that he saw, felt, and suffered, the mountaineer understandably enough began to form certain beliefs which have persisted as superstitions. Such credences are widespread and are deeply embedded in the daily living of the modern progeny of those people who came early to the Virginia mountains. Their superstitions are those of a people who, against the harsh but beautiful background of the hills, developed as a primitive folk: warm and affectionate, yet at the same time, capable of hating to the utmost, even unto death.

The superstitions mentioned in this chapter, plus many others, were gleaned during a childhood spent

in Carroll County, from Connie Elizabeth Worrell Jackson,[1] Octavia Alice Bowman Worrell and John Carroll Jackson,[2] all of whom neither fully believed nor really dared to disbelieve. They in turn had acquired their beliefs from such solid citizens as: "Grannie" Emily Crigg Shennault Worrell, "Gramma" Octavia Hortense Reynolds Bowman Marshall, "Aunt" Annie Marshall, "Aunt" Emmie Largen, "Cousin" Hub Stanley, "Grand-dad" Thomas Jefferson Willis, "Cousin" Letithia Ann Ayers, Loudeller Ambersity Martin Jackson, Rhodoska Elooadie Worrell Bolt, Walter Wixley Woxley Webster Harrison Sylvester Nester, and "Uncle" James Knoxville Polk George Madison Dallas Reynolds, to mention only a few.

Here are some beliefs often heard among the folk whose names have just been listed:

> Nine swallows of water while holding your breath will cure the hiccups.
>
> A yarn string pulled through some mutton tallow and tied around your toe will cure a dew crack.
>
> A piece of lead worn on a wax string around your neck will keep your nose from bleeding.

---

[1] Mother of Ninevah Jackson Willis.

[2] Maternal grandmother and paternal grandfather of Ninevah Jackson Willis, respectively.

A live minnow swallowed backward will keep you from having the whooping cough.

Boneset tea will cause bones to set and cure colds.

Whey poured off buttermilk will cure a stomach ache.

Parched beet leaves will "draw a risin to a core."

A dirty yarn stocking tied around your neck and left over-night will cure a sore throat.

A buckeye carried in your pocket will keep witches away and bring you good luck.

Remedies for various ills are these:

Use catnip tea to doctor babies, especially if they've got the "go-backs" or the seven-months colic.

Take sassafras tea in the spring to thin your blood; also, sulfur and molasses to purify it.

Boil red-stemmed ivy and bathe in the liquor to cure the seven-year itch (if you live after the experience).

Take a hair from the tip of the tail of the dog that bites you and bind it in the wound so you will not get rabies.

Rub stump water on warts and accompany the rubbing with a certain ceremony to make them disappear.

Dip a red flannel rag in lamp oil and bite down on it to cure the toothache.

Wear assafoetida in a little bag tied to a wax string around your neck to keep diseases away (and people, too).

If a person has asthma, stand him up by a tree and cut his hair into the tree. When the tree grows larger than the person it will cure him of the asthma.

Boil a polecat and drink the grease to cure asthma.

To cure babies of the thrush, get a man who has never seen his father's face, then have him breathe in the baby's mouth and say, "Die away thrush, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

To cure thrush, borrow a baby girl's shoe; fill it with water; let the water run from the heel to the toe three times; then use the water to wash out the baby's mouth.

If someone witches your shooting ability, take a hair from your left armpit, cut a groove in a bullet and tie the hair in the groove. The spell will then be broken.

Draw a picture of a witch and shoot it with a silver bullet to break a witch's spells. In this connection, it should be remembered that the seventh child of the seventh child has power over witches. If the secret of such power is to be passed on, a man must always tell a woman; if he tells another man the power will be lost.

Take a hair from the tip of your dog's tail and one from the tip of his ear and bury them under the front door step, to keep him from running away.

If a baby has the hives, split a young white-oak sapling and pass the baby through the split; let the tree spring back in place. If it heals and lives, the baby will get well.

Some superstitious "signs" and beliefs are these:

If your right eye itches you will be pleased, but if it is your left eye you will get squeezed.

A child born with a "veil" has unusual powers of foretelling the future, talking out fire, and stopping blood.

Indians believed that, if you buried them on top of one another, they would go together to the Happy Hunting Ground.

If you find the hem of your dress turned up, kiss it and make a wish as you turn it down and your wish will come true. If another girl finds it and turns it down, that is a sign that she will be able to take your boy friend away from you. However, if she does, you can always get even: Just spit in your shirt-tail and tie it up and that will give her the toothache.

If your nose itches, a woman is coming. If the rooster crows on the front doorstep, a man is coming. If you drop the dish-rag on the floor, someone who is hungry is coming.

If you have warts, steal someone's greasy dish-rag and rub it on the warts; then take it to the forks of the road and throw it down. The curious person who comes along and picks it up will immediately get your warts.

If you kill a frog, your cow will give bloody milk and you will have to keep silver money in it to keep it white.

Count ten stars for ten consecutive nights and you will dream of the person that you will marry.

On a dark night at midnight, swallow a thimbleful of salt, then walk backward to the spring and get a glassful of water to set by your bed. While you are asleep you will dream that your future husband is coming to give you a drink of the water. You must not speak a word during that ceremony.

If the bottom of your foot itches, that means that you will walk on strange land.

While eating an apple, give the apple your boy friend's name. Save the seeds and count them off as follows:

> One, I love; two, I love, three,
> I love, I say;
> Four, I love with all my heart;
> And five, I cast away;
> Six, she loves, seven, he loves;
> eight they both love;
> Nine he comes; ten he tarries;
> Eleven he courts; and twelve he
> marries.

The number of seeds in the apple will tell your fortune. If you will press the seeds to your forehead, you can tell the number of kisses that you will get by counting the seeds that stick to your forehead.

If you start somewhere and meet a woman, you must go back home and start again or you will have bad luck.

If you spin a chair on its legs you will cause someone to die.

If a dog rolls on its back someone will die before the sun goes down. If you scare the dog up quick enough you will save a life.

If you call a person's name when you really meant someone else its a sign that person is talking about you.

If you stub your toe you must kiss your thumb and press it in the palm of your hand or something bad will happen to you.

When two people accidentally say the same thing at the same time, they must lock their little fingers together and make a wish; the first one through will say, "needles", to which the other replies, "pins." The first one says, "when a man marries;" the other replies, "his troubles begin." Then they say, "Put this wish on blue and it will come true," and they rub the

locked fingers on something blue. "Put it on glass and it will come to pass, and put it on black and it will come back." Unlock the little fingers and kiss them to seal the luck.

When you comb your hair you must either burn the combings or put them in your witch ball that you keep under the bed to keep off the headache.

If you hear death bells ringing in your ears, someone will die.

If you are eating and take out something, when you already have some on your plate, someone is coming who is hungry.

If you will trim your toe nails on the new of the moon, they won't grow so fast.

If you open an umbrella in the house, someone will die; put it over your head, and it will be you.

If you bring a hoe in the house, be sure to take it out the same door, or someone in the family will die.

If a bird comes in the house, it foretells a death in the family; especially if it lights on the head of the bed. The person who sleeps there will die.

If you pull up a pine tree and set it in your yard, you will die as soon as it grows big enough to shade your grave.

If you feel a chill, that means that someone has just walked on the place where you will be buried.

If you eat berries out of a graveyard you will die with the bloody flux.

If you walk on a grave you will be witched that night while you sleep, or else you will be carried away by evil spirits.

Gourd seed come up slowly, because they have to make 7 trips to the devil before they can sprout.

* * * * *

The superstitions of the mountain folk, similar to those cited in this chapter, are told today with a chuckle of disbelief; however, one has only to watch the people who tell them, as they go about their everyday tasks, to become aware of the subconscious effects of former beliefs on present-day living. The young mother, even in the year of Our Lord, 1954, will reach for her child and shudder if she sees him about to step on a grave, but it is doubtful if she could tell why. Watch the mountaineer when a black cat crosses his path: in his behavior there is invariably some reaction to that omen of misfortune, perhaps almost imperceptible, but it is definitely present. Many "dyed-in-the-wool" believers in superstitions still go to great lengths in order to placate the evil ones. Thus, superstitious beliefs still come to mountain children as devoutly and as earnestly as do any of the facts of life, only now they are prefaced with, "Old people allus said.....," which gives one the privilege of saying either, "Pooh!" or, "It always works, too!"

Anyone seeking to invoke the supernatural beings who haunt the hills of Carroll and Grayson[1] must do so tactfully, if he would be well treated in return. The reason for telling in whispers the many stories about them is that an evil spirit must never hear anyone call its name. Thus, superstitions are passed along in whispers and with much practiced ceremony.

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[1] Mountainous counties in southwestern Virginia.

CHAPTER V

FOLK SONGS

Nothing tells us more truly the history of a country than its people's singing, for songs are highways that lead right into the hearts of people.

America is often referred to as the melting pot of cultures. To this great melting pot has come folk music from many parts of the world; especially to southwestern Virginia, since so many virile streams of civilization have there converged to form a distinct culture.

Perhaps the earliest musical inheritance from other lands came to America in the Puritan psalms, brought over by the Pilgrims. Thus, the first book printed in America was the Bay Psalm Book, which was published in 1640. The best-known songs, taken from that book and still in use in the churches of the region with which this writing is concerned, are "Old Hundred" and "Dundee," the latter an importation which came originally from Scotland. The tune known as "Old Hundred" first appeared as a setting for religious words in the Genevan Psalter which was published in 1551,

wherein the words of the Hundredth Psalm were set to that air, said to have been a folk song originally.[1]

The early colonists who settled in Virginia and North Carolina brought many lovely songs from England, a nation said to have been one of the most musical in the world, especially during the Seventeenth Century. Those who came from Scotland and Ireland also brought many airs as their contributions to the musical inheritance of southwestern Virginia. One of them, "Auld Lang Syne," is sung as a pledge of friendship in all English-speaking lands. "Scotland's Burning" is said to be one of the oldest folk songs in existence. "Coming Through the Rye" commemorates the custom of the gallant swains who used to help pretty maidens across the stepping stones of the little River Rye in Ayrshire.[2] "Barbara Allen" is still sung in its primitive form by the Appalachian folk.

Musical historians express the view that the American people were too busy establishing their nation to compose much music in early days; yet, Francis Hopkinson, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, in 1786, sent his friend, George Washington, a set of

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[1] Marx and Anne Oberndorfer, New American Songbook, p. 7.

[2] Marx and Anne Oberndorfer, New American Songbook, p. 8.

eight songs and an accompanying letter in which he claimed to be the first native American to compose and publish music. His first song, "Beneath the Weeping Willow's Shade," was reputed to be Washington's favorite. Most popular with Washington's men was "Yankee Doodle," a song set to a very old air which can be found in many European countries. It was first introduced in America by Dr. Richard Shackburg, who made up the words of the song as a satire on the appearance and the equipment of the Continental Army. Still, the soldiers liked the tune so well that they took it as their own and saw to it that General Burgoyne laid down his sword to that music; also, General Cornwallis.[1]

The War of 1812 was mainly a war of the sea, hence songs of the sea became popular. Americans sang the sea songs of England as well as their own. During early pioneer days those who were seeking homes in the wild unknown regions thought with aching hearts of the homes left behind them and dreamed of the homes which they wished to establish; therefore songs of home were popular during the early half of the Nineteenth Century.

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[1] Marx and Anne Oberndorfer, New American Songbook, pp. 9-10.

"Home Sweet Home" was such a song, written by John Howard Payne, an American, and set to a Sicilian air. Many of the songs still popular came from the period of the old minstrel shows, such as, "Wait for the Wagon" and "Old Dan Tucker."[1]

The highlanders accepted the Indian as their enemy. Thus, they apparently knew little and cared less about the unusual music which he was capable of contributing to their heritage. They also tended to be oblivious of the Negro's contribution to folk music, in which the bond man made humble appeals to his Lord and Master; perhaps because the mountaineers frowned on anything related to slavery.

Modern Americans appreciate the inheritance which is theirs in the songs which were brought over by the colonists, in the sea songs and chanteys of early days in the merchant marines, and in pioneer songs which have remained among southwestern Virginians virtually unchanged since their early beginnings. Included in the musical inheritance of these folk were many such songs, contributed by a people who had brought of their best to pour into the melting pot of culture.

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[1] Marx and Anne Oberndorfer, New American Songbook, pp. 9-10.

Collectors have gleaned more songs than any other kind of folklore. The region of southwest Virginia abounds in folk songs. They have been collected, rewritten, rephrased and retuned to such an extent that it is difficult to tell the old from the new. Thus, it is only wishful thinking for a collector to expect to find a Gaelic crone sitting by every mountain door-step droning the plaintive melodies of her ancestors in all their purity. Still, such songs -- modified, to be sure, but authentic none-the-less -- can be had, if one has the proper credentials.

The songs included in this writing comprise only a few which are believed to be as yet unpublished. Hence, they do not represent the full variety of songs that live in the mountains of southwestern Virginia. To gain a full appreciation of the musical resources of the region it would be necessary to consult various books of folk songs.

To enjoy fully the selections included in these pages,

> Twang your nose to the proper key,
> Open wide your mouth and tune with me.[1]

---

[1] Composed by Ninevah Jackson Willis.

Whanktum Banktum[1]

There was a handsome lady, I heard the neighbors tell;
She loved her husband dearly, but another twice so well.
Tum-a-whack-to-lulu-lala, Tum-a-whack-to-lulu-lay.

She went into a grocery store to see if she could find;
Some kind of medicine to drive her old man blind.
Tum-a-whack-to-lulu-lala, Tum-a-whack-to-lulu-lay.

"Take these old marrow bones and crush them all in all;
The last of them that he does take, well, he cannot see at all."
Tum-a-whack-to-lulu-lala, Tum-a-whack-to-lulu-lay.

She took them old marrow bones, she crushed them all in all;
The last of them that he did take, well, he could not see at all.
Tum-a-whack-to-lulu-lala, Tum-a-whack-to-lulu-lay.

"Nancy, dearmost Nancy, it's don't you know I'm blind?
I would go and drown myself if I the way could find."
Tum-a-whack-to-lulu-lala, Tum-a-whack-to-lulu-lay.

"Jimmy, dearmost Jimmy, you shan't be led astray;
I'll get my shawl and bonnet and I'll show you the way."
Tum-a-whack-to-lulu-lala, Tum-a-whack-to-lulu-lay.

She got her shawl and bonnet, she led him to the brim;
"Devil a bit, if I drown myself, unless you push me in."
Tum-a-whack-to-lulu-lala, Tum-a-whack-to-lulu-lay.

---

[1] Sung to Ninevah Jackson Willis by her mother, Connie Worrell Jackson.

She got up the hill a step or two; she made
 a dive at him
He bobbed along to one side and she went head-
 long in.
Tum-a-whack-to-lulu-lala, Tum-a-whack-to-lulu-lay.

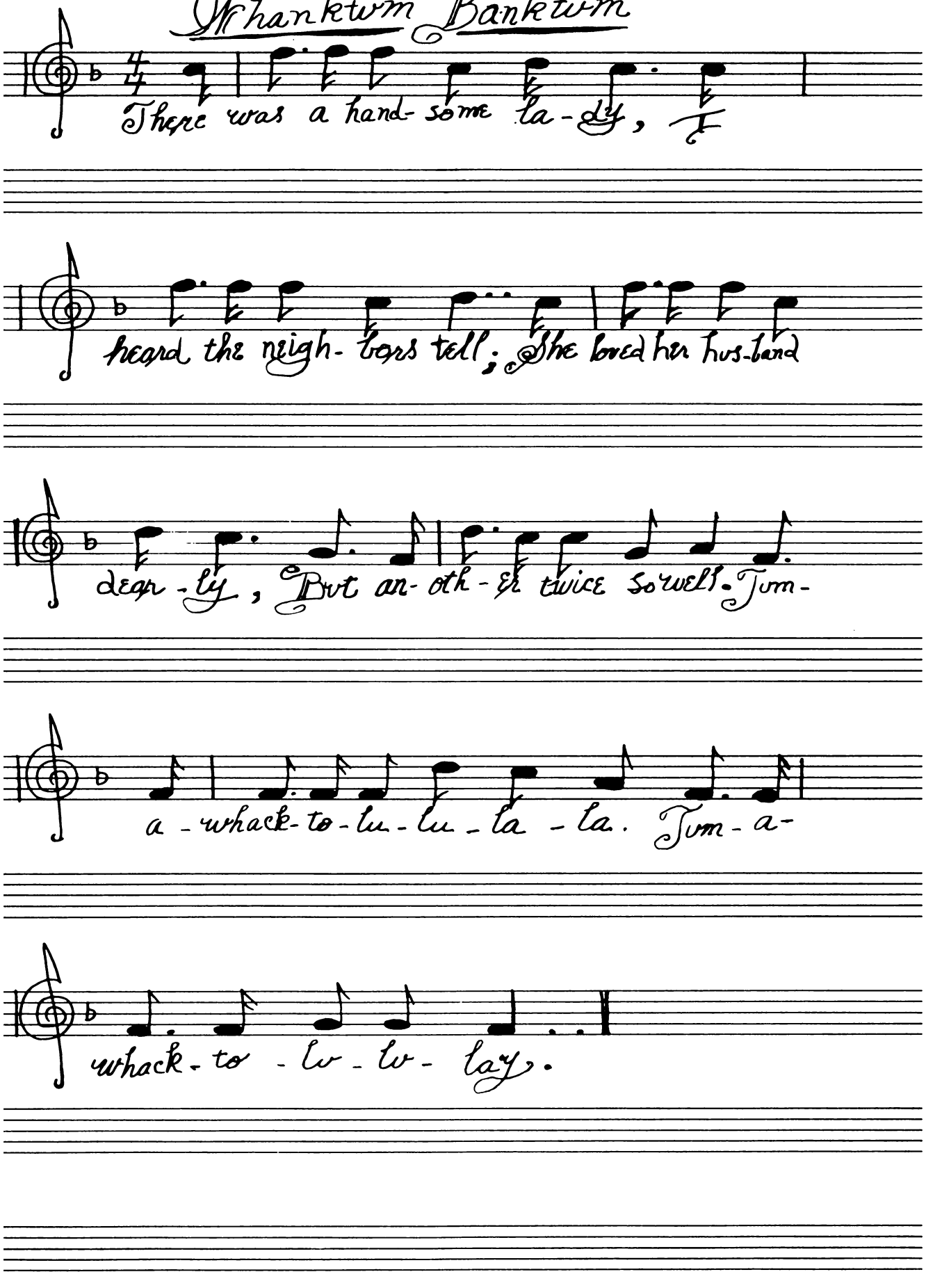
"Jimmy, dearmost Jimmy, just prove to me most
 kind."
"Nancy, dearmost Nancy, don't you know, my love,
 I'm blind?"
Tum-a-whack-to-lulu-lala, Tum-a-whack-to-lulu-lay.

"Jimmy, dearmost Jimmy, just pull me to the brim."
With that he got a long pole and pushed her farther
 in.
Tum-a-whack-to-lulu-lala, Tum-a-whack-to-lulu-lay.

Come all you kind people, I'll sing to you no more;
But wasn't she a blamed fool, she didn't swim for
 shore?
Tum-a-whack-to-lulu-lala, Tum-a-whack-to-lulu-lay.

The music for this writing was set down by a lady in Laurel Fork, Virginia, who, with characteristic mountain shyness, preferred to remain anonymous. She set it down just as it was sung to her by Connie Worrell Jackson, a lady who remembered many old songs which she had heard during her childhood. Because the characteristic mountain melodies were pitched much too low for ordinary singing, Jean Bird Einstein of Radford College transposed the music an octave higher the better to suit the high-pitched singing voices of children.

Ah hanktwm Banktwm



The Jolly Boatsman

Once there was a jolly boatsman, in London he
did dwell;
He had a pretty wife and she loved a tailor well.
Tum-a-row-dow-dow, Tum-a-rowdy-doody-day.

So early one morning, as she walked up the street;
The handsome young tailer, she chanced to meet.
Tum-a-row-dow-dow, Tum-a-rowdy-doody-day.

She said to the tailor, "Come and go with me;
I'm all alone, my husband's at sea."
Tum-a-row-dow-dow, Tum-a-rowdy-doody-day.

And the tailor, feeling both brave and strong;
Picked up his hat, and he walked right along.
Tum-a-row-dow-dow, Tum-a-rowdy-doody-day.

They hadn't been there but an hour, no more;
Till there came a great stamping, and a knocking
at the door.
Tum-a-row-dow-dow, Tum-a-rowdy-doody-day.

And the tailor, feeling both scared and sick;
Said to the lady, "Please hide me quick."
Tum-a-row-dow-dow, Tum-a-rowdy-doody-day.

Says the lady to the tailor, "I know where to hide,
Here's my husband's big chest, just jump inside."
Tum-a-row-dow-dow, Tum-a-rowdy-doody-day.

He hopped in the chest, as nimble as a deer;
"My dear beloved woman, there's nothing else to
fear."
Tum-a-row-dow-dow, Tum-a-rowdy-doody-day.

She shut down the lid, so snug and tight;
While her husband kept a-knocking and a-calling
for a light.
Tum-a-row-dow-dow, Tum-a-rowdy-doody-day.

She went down stairs to open up the door;
There stood her husband and several others more.
Tum-a-row-dow-dow, Tum-a-rowdy-doody-day.

"Sorry to disturb you out of your rest,
I'm a sailor from the sea and I've come for my
chest."
Tum-a-row-dow-dow, Tum-a-rowdy-doody-day.

Two jolly boatsmen, so brave and strong;
Picked up the chest and they walked right
along.
Tum-a-row-dow-dow, Tum-a-rowdy-doody-day.

They set him down, all for to take a rest;
Says one to the other, "The Devil's in the
chest."
Tum-a-row-dow-dow, Tum-a-rowdy-doody-day.

They sent for the captain and his jolly crew;
But none but the captain would the chest undo.
Tum-a-row-dow-dow, Tum-a-rowdy-doody-day.

He opened it up in the presence of them all;
There lay the tailor, like a pig in a stall.
Tum-a-row-dow-dow, Tum-a-rowdy-doody-day.

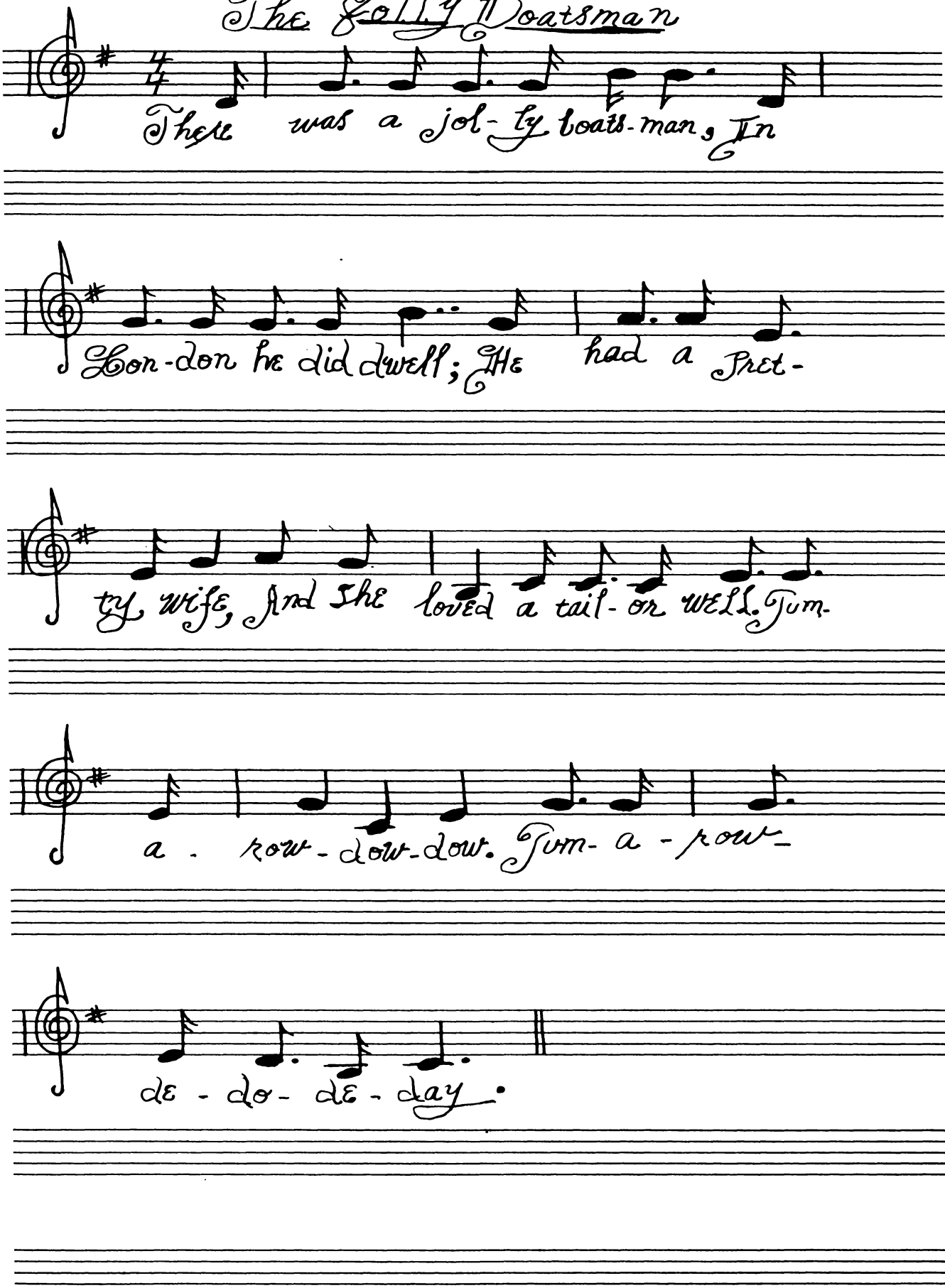
"I've caught you a prisoner, I'll take you to
the sea;
I can't leave you here, cutting capers on me."
Tum-a-row-dow-dow, Tum-a-rowdy-doody-day.

There's a moral to this story, as you can
plainly see;
"If the lady has a husband, better let the
lady be."
Tum-a-row-dow-dow, Tum-a-rowdy-doody-day.

Pat Malone

'Twas a dull and Irish town, everything was
running down;
And Pat Malone was pushed for ready cash.
He had for life insurance spent, all his money
to a cent;
And all of his affairs had gone to smash.
Then his wife spoke up and said, "Now, dear Pat,
if you were dead
Those twenty thousand dollars we could take."
So Pat lay down and tried, to make out that he
had died;
Until he smelt the whiskey at the wake.

The Jolly Boatsman



REFRAIN:

Then Pat Malone forgot that he was dead
And he raved and he shouted from his bed,
"If the wake goes on one minute,
Oh, the corpse he will be in it,
You'll have to make me drunk to keep me dead."

First they gave the corpse a sup, afterwards
they filled him up;
They laid him gently back upon his bed.
Next morning broke so gray, everybody felt so gay;
That Pat Malone forgot that he was dead.
But they took him from the bunk, yet alive but
awful drunk;
They laid him in the coffin with a prayer.
Then the driver of the car, said "Be-dad, I'll
never start,
Until I see that someone pays the fare."

REFRAIN:

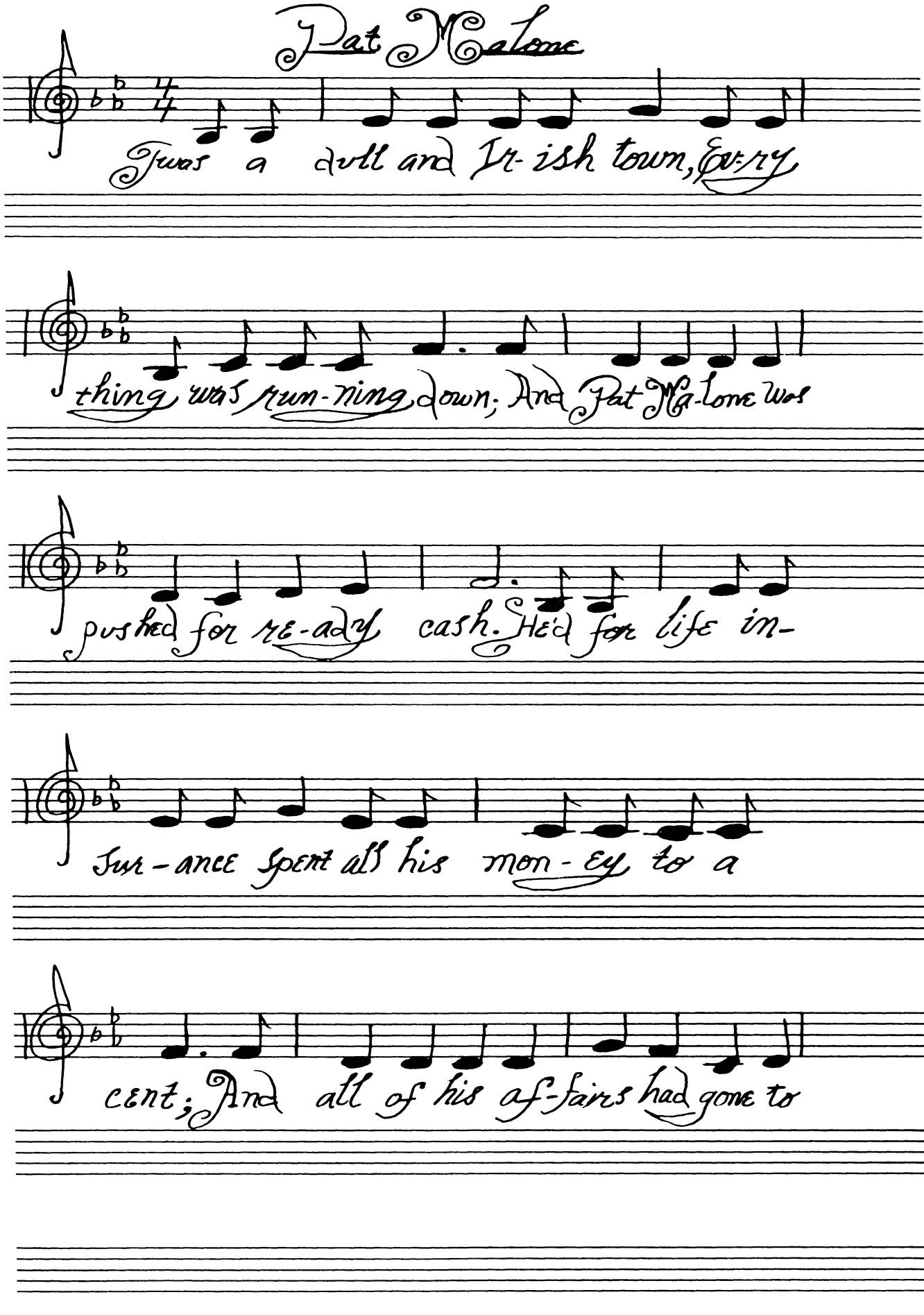
Then Pat Malone forgot that he was dead,
And he raised up in his coffin and he said,
"If you dare to doubt my credit
You'll be sorry that you said it.
Drive on, or else the corpse will break your head."

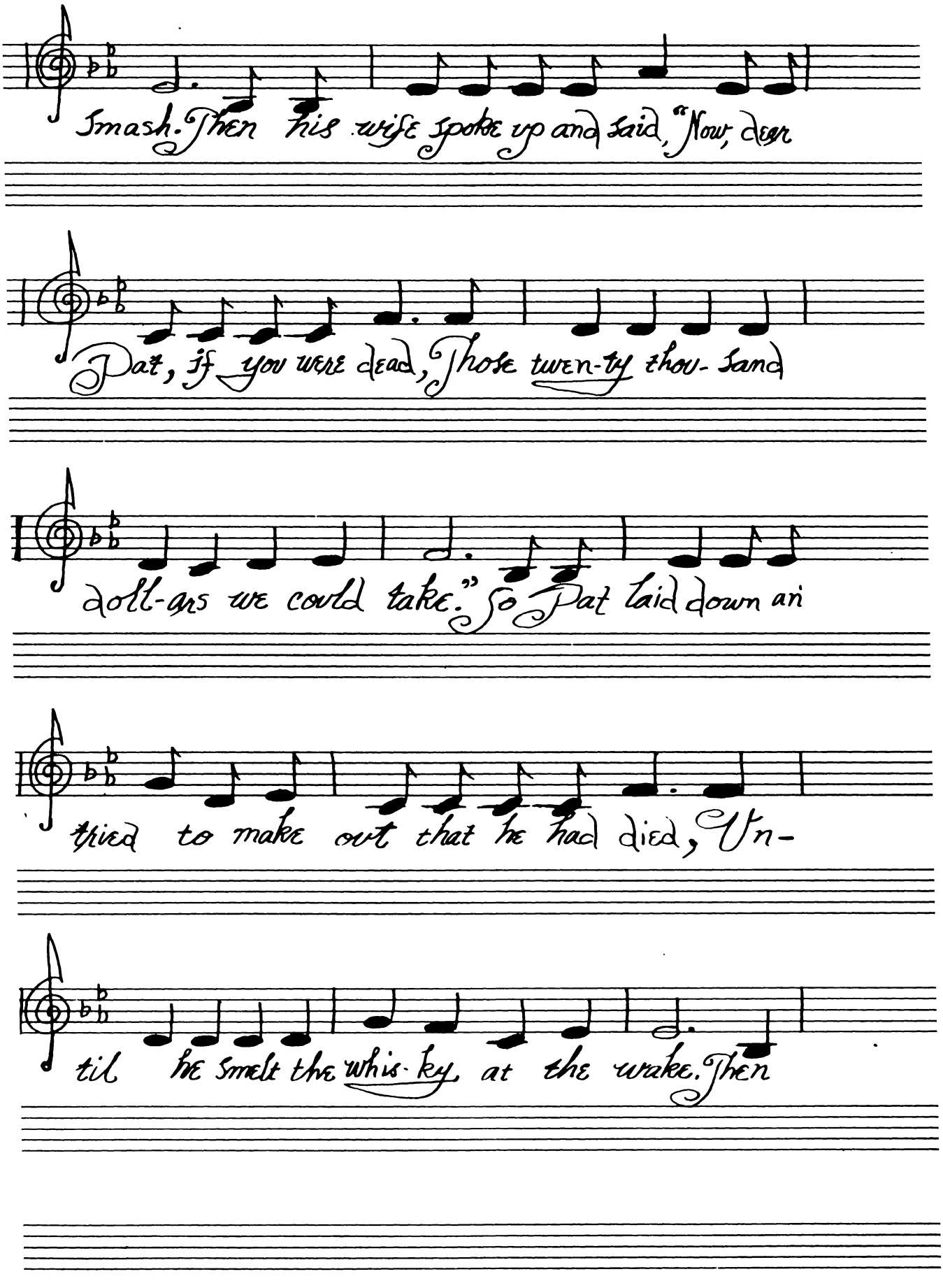
So the driver started out, on the cemetery route;
While the neighbors tried the widow to console;
When they came to the base, of Pat's last resting
place;
They softly lowered Patrick in the hole.
Then Pat Malone forgot that he was dead,
He had finally come to realize the end;
When the clods began to drop, Pat tore off the
coffin top;
And quickly from the earth he did ascend.

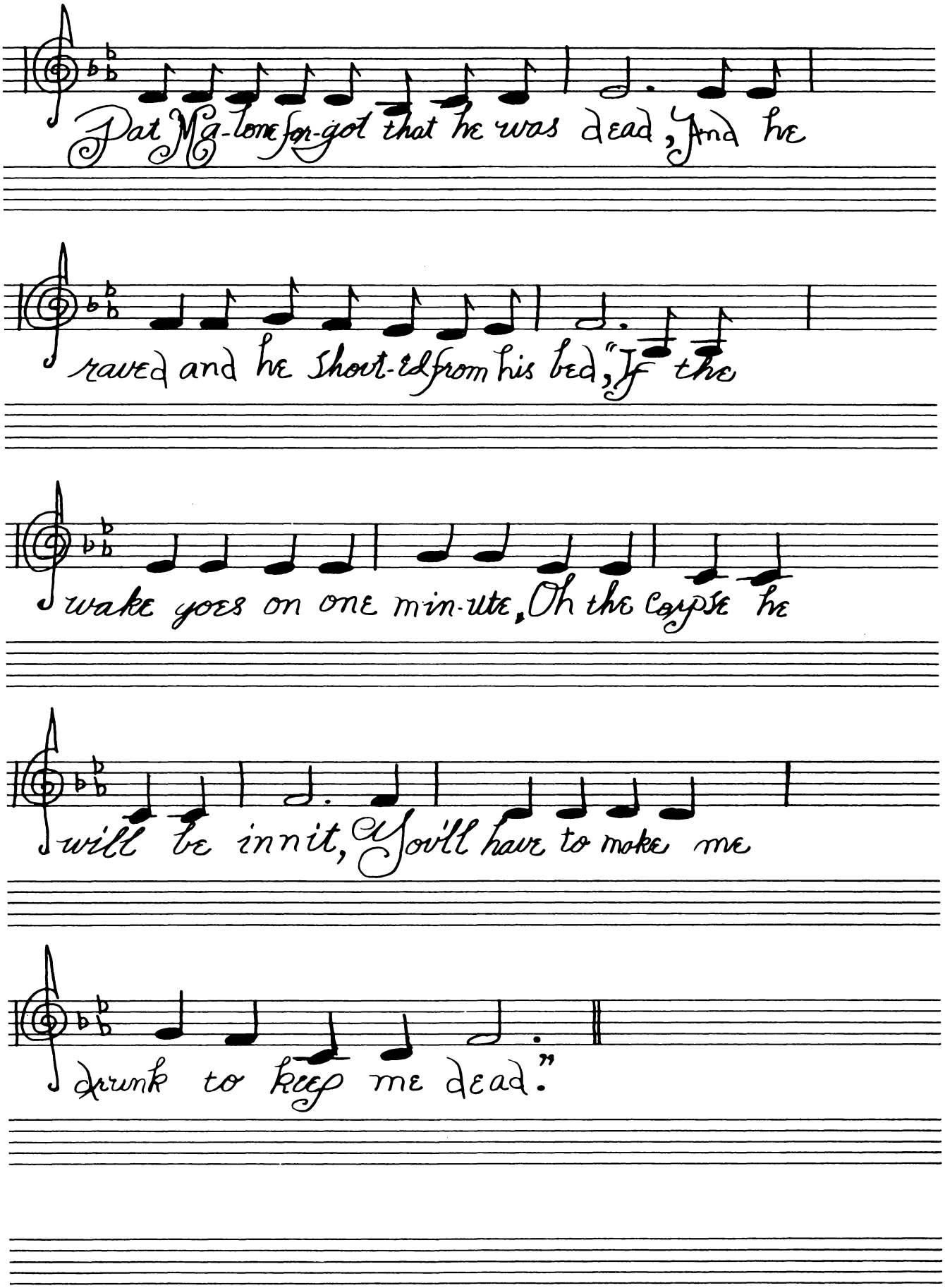
REFRAIN:

Then Pat Malone forgot that he was dead
And from the cemetery quickly fled;
'Twas a lucky thing, by thunder,
Pat came nearly going under,
When Pat Malone forgot that he was dead.

Pat Malone


'Twas a dull and Ir-ish town, Ev-ry
thing was run-ning down; And Pat Ma-lone was
pushed for re-ady cash. He'd for life in-
sur-ance spent all his mon-ey to a
cent; And all of his af-fairs had gone to


Smash. Then his wife spoke up and said, "Now, dear
Pat, if you were dead, Those twen-ty thou- sand
doll-ars we could take." So Pat laid down an
tried to make out that he had died, Un-
til he smelt the whis-ky at the wake. Then


Pat Ma-lone for-got that he was dead, And he
raved and he shout-ed from his bed, "If the
wake goes on one min-ute, Oh the corpse he
will be in it, You'll have to make me
drunk to keep me dead."

The Flower Boy

When I was a lad,
I had a bad Dad;
Who was mean
And cruel in his way.
Every dollar and cent,
For whiskey he spent;
Till death had
Called him away.

Chorus:

Buy flowers, bouquets,
Sweet flowers, I cried;
Sweet flowers, my friend,
I'll stick till the end
Till poverty calls me away.

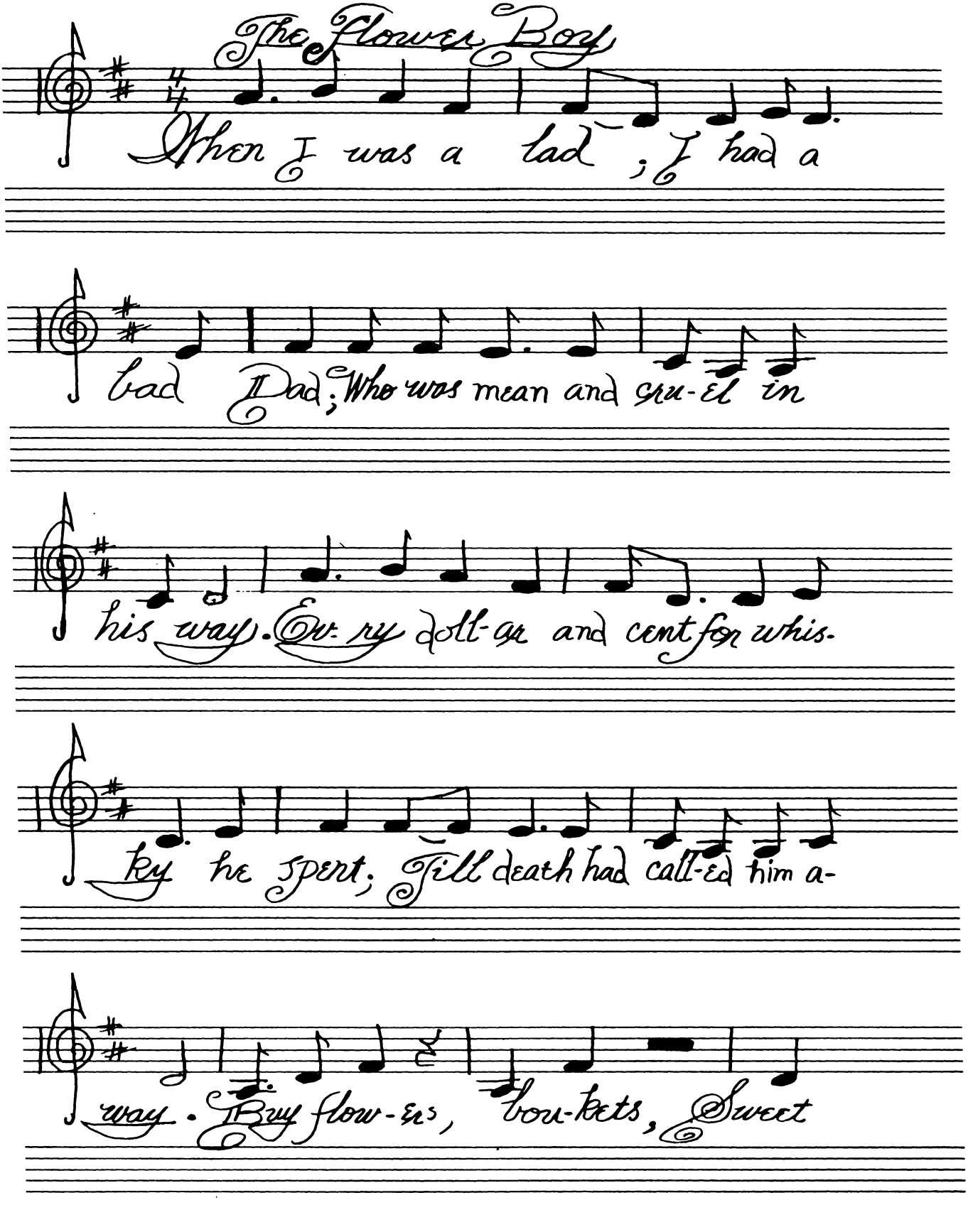
I went on the street
One penny to earn;
To buy my dear Mamma
Some bread,
And when I returned
My sad heart it yearned,
To find my old
Mamma was dead.

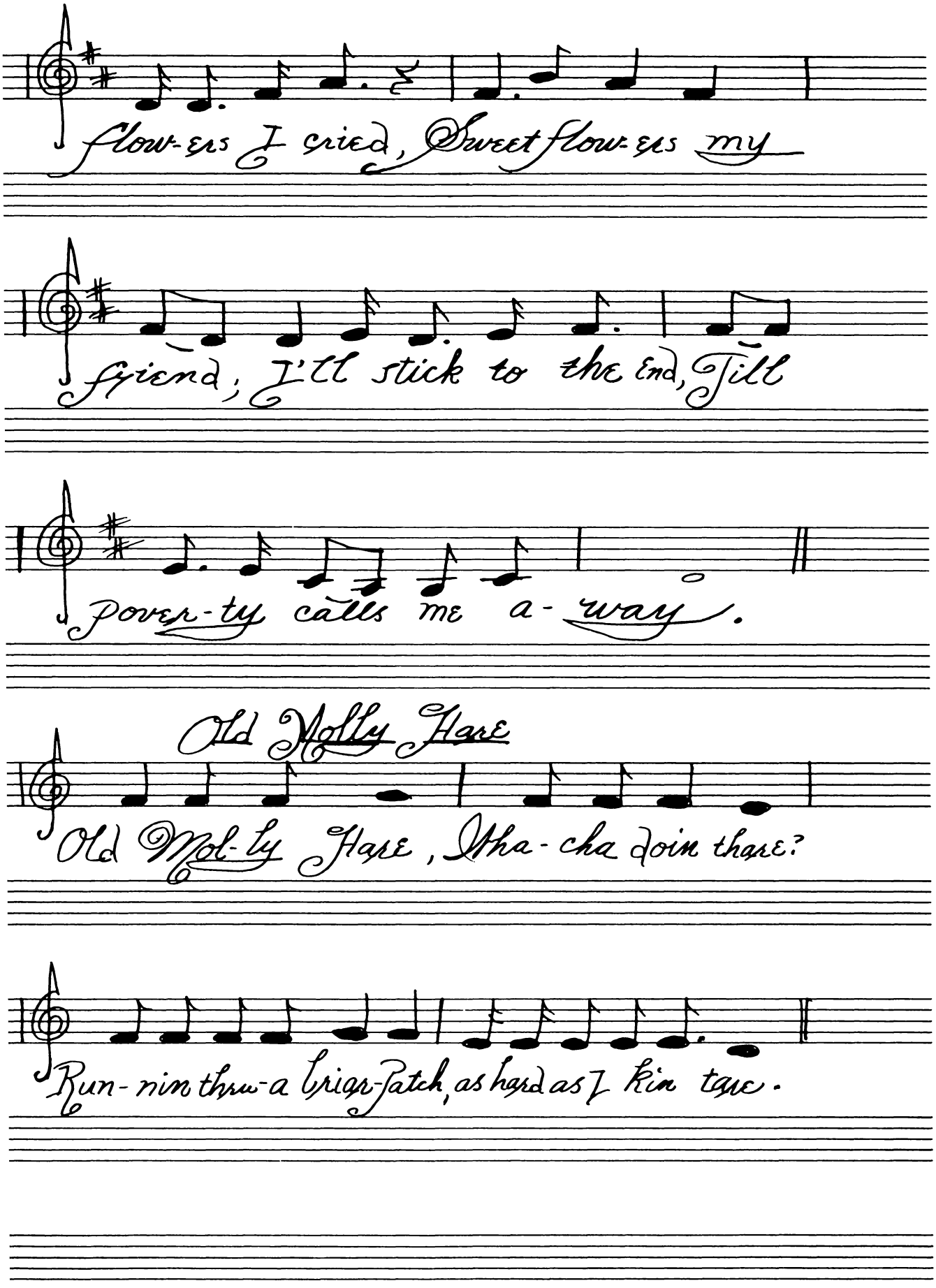
Grandma's Advice

My grandma she lives on yonders green
As nice an old lady as ever was seen,
But she'd often caution me with care
Those false young men to beware.
Tummy- i - tummy - um
Tum-tummy - um - a - taw
Those false young men to beware.

The first came a-courting was little Johnny Green
As nice a young fellow as ever was seen,
But the words of my grandma rang in my head
And I could not hear one word 'twas said.
Tummy- i - tummy - um
Tum-tummy - um - a - taw
And I could not hear one word 'twas said.

The Flower Boy




flow-ers I cried, Sweet flow-ers my
friend, I'll stick to the end, Till
pover-ty calls me a-way.
Old Molly Hare
Old Mol-ly Hare, Itha-cha doin thare?
Run-nin thru-a brier-patch, as hard as I kin tare.

Next came a-courting was young Allen Grove
Together we met in joyous love,
In joyous love you needn't be afraid
It's better to get married than to die an old maid.
Tummy- i - tummy - um
Tum-tummy - um - a - taw
It's better to get married than to die an old maid.

Thinks I to myself there must be a mistake
What a queer fuss these old folks make,
If the girls and the boys had always been so afraid
Grandma herself would have died an old maid.
Tummy- i - tummy - um
Tum-tummy - um - a - taw
Grandma herself would have died an old maid.

Christmas

Sing a song of Christmas-time, and all the joys it brings;
Games and toys and candy bags, and yards of pop-corn strings;
Santa Claus and Christmas trees and other jolly things.
Oh, welcome Merry Christmas Day.

Chorus:

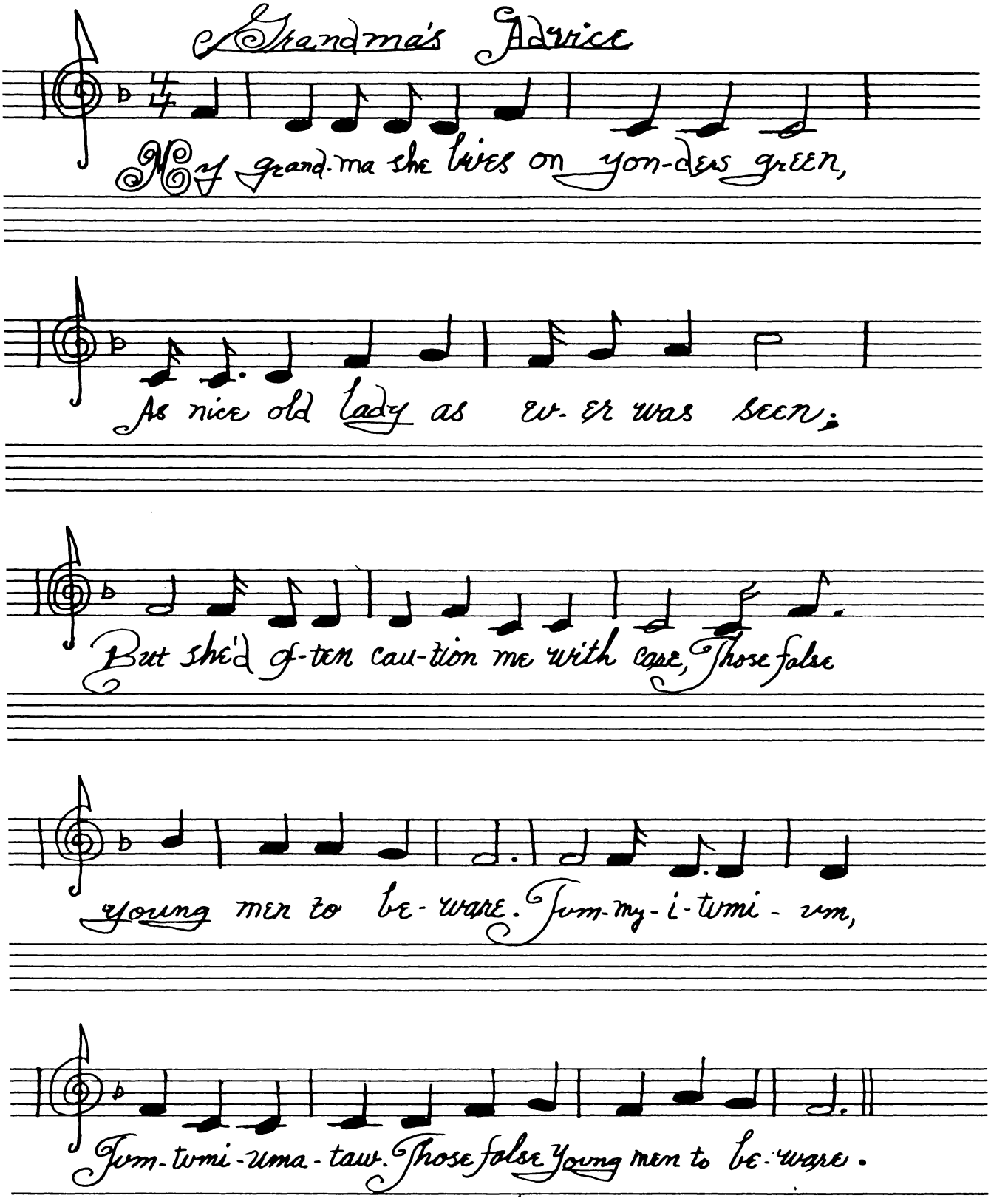
Hurrah, Hurrah, the Christmas day is here
Hurrah, Hurrah, the time of jolly cheer
For Christmas is the nicest day of all the coming year.
Oh, welcome Merry Christmas Day.

Many, many years ago, a little baby lay;
In the stable with the sheep, his bed upon the hay;
And angels hovered near the earth, that first glad Christmas Day
Oh, welcome Merry Christmas Day.

Chorus:

Hurrah, Hurrah, the Christmas day is here
Hurrah, Hurrah, the time of jolly cheer
For Christmas is the nicest day of all the coming year
Oh, welcome Merry Christmas Day.

Grandma's Advice



Out upon a lonely hill, some shepherds
watched by night;
And as they lay upon the ground, they saw
a wondrous sight;
There came upon it from the sky, a host of
angels bright.
Oh, welcome Merry Christmas Day.

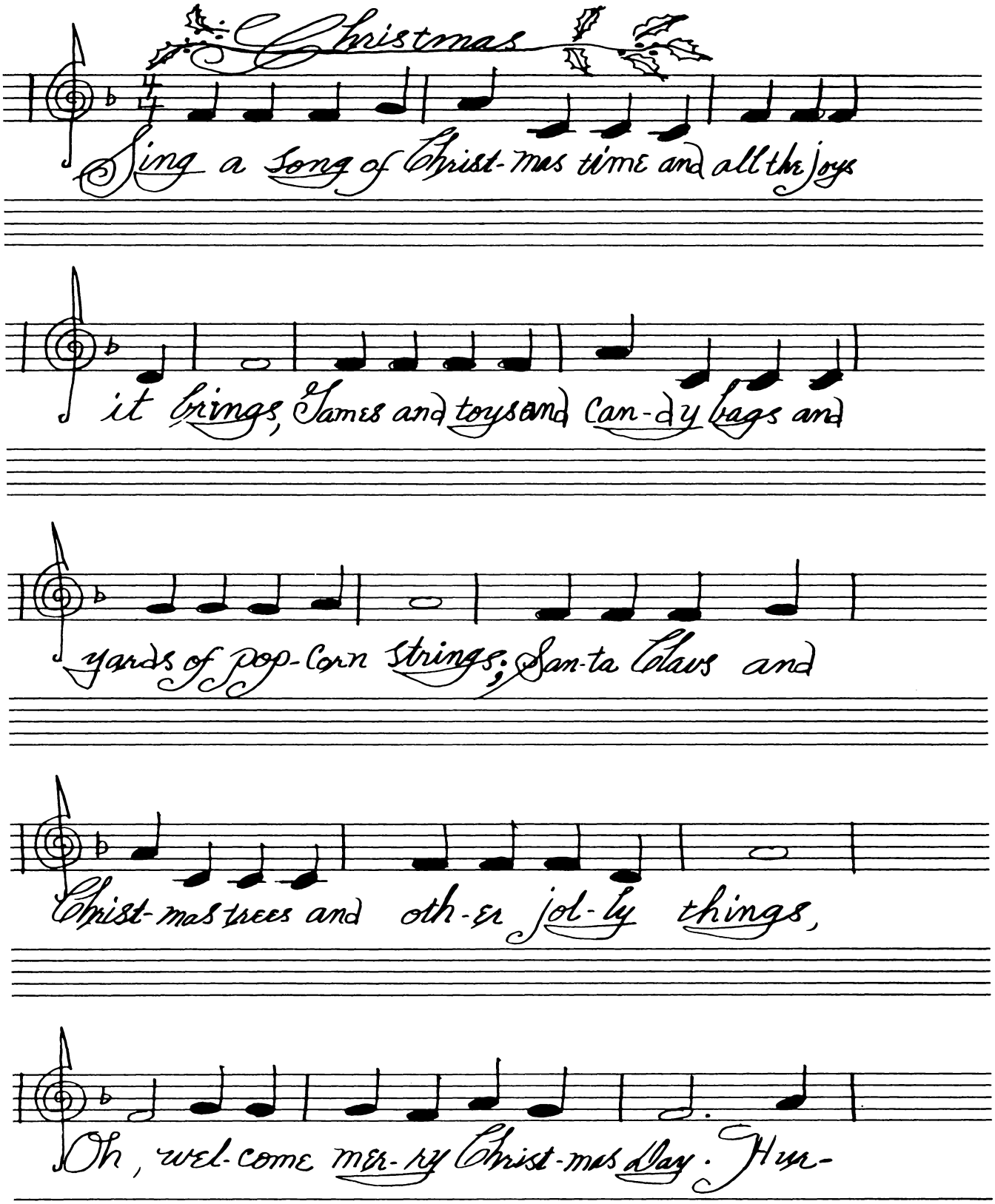
Chorus:

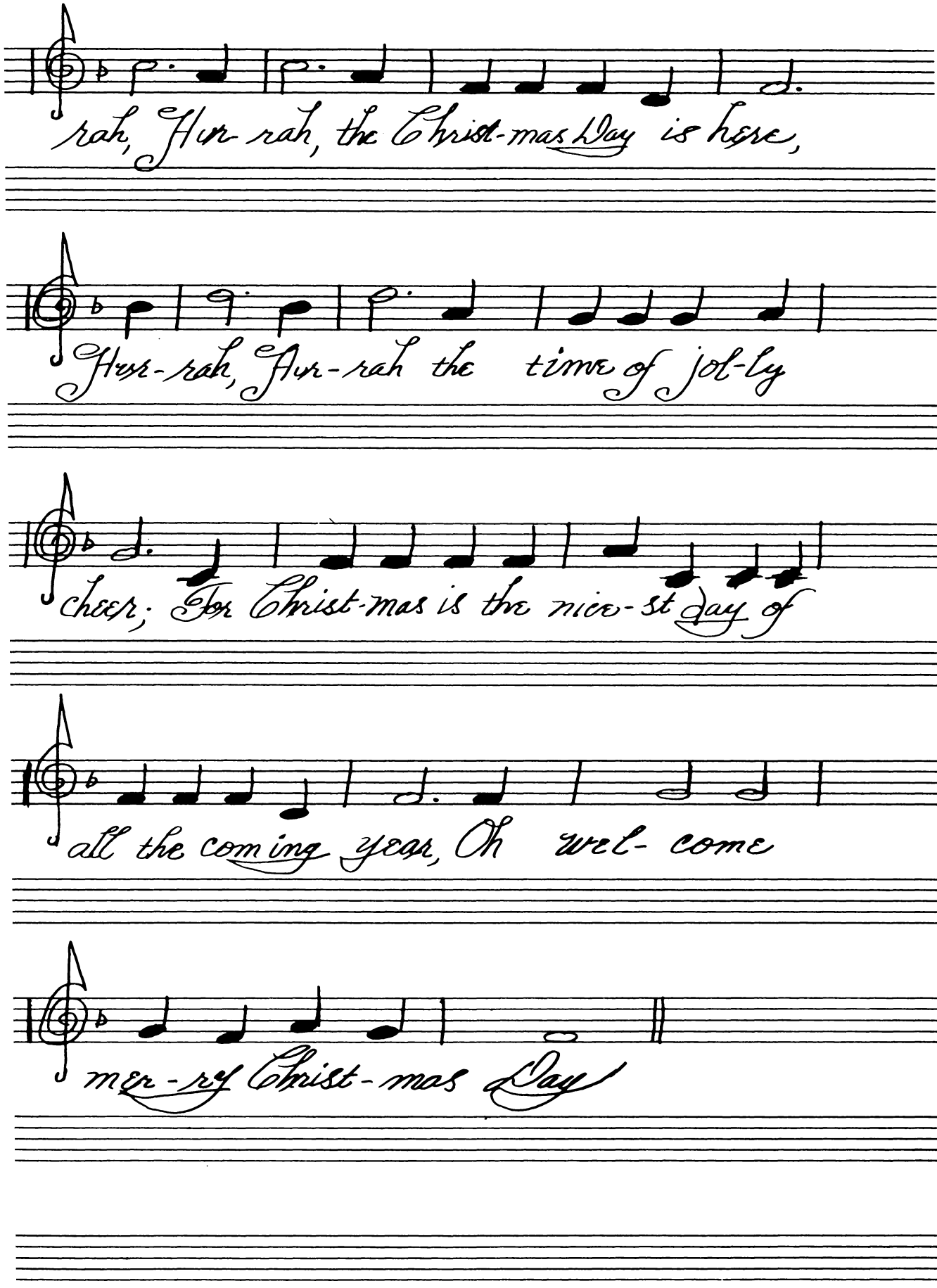
Hurrah, Hurrah, the Christmas day is here
Hurrah, Hurrah, the time of jolly cheer
For Christmas is the nicest day of all the
coming year.
Oh, welcome Merry Christmas Day.

Be not afraid, the angels sang, good news to
you we'll bring;
Of peace on earth, good will to men, let men
and angels sing;
And so all over this world tonight, the bells
of Christmas ring.
Oh, welcome Merry Christmas Day.

Chorus:

Hurrah, Hurrah, the Christmas day is here
Hurrah, Hurrah, the time of jolly cheer
For Christmas is the nicest day of all the
coming year.
Oh, welcome Merry Christmas Day.


Christmas
Sing a song of Christ-mas time and all the joys
it brings, Games and toys and can-dy bags and
yards of pop-corn strings; San-ta Claus and
Christ-mas trees and oth-er jol-ly things,
Oh, wel-come mer-ry Christ-mas Day. Hur-


rah, Hur-rah, the Christ-mas Day is here,
Hur-rah, Hur-rah the time of jol-ly
cheer; For Christ-mas is the nice-st day of
all the coming year, Oh wel-come
mer-ry Christ-mas Day

Had a Little Fight in Mexico

(A Frolickin' Tune[1])

Had a little fight in Mexico,
Girls and boys they would be to go.
Sing Fa-de-la, Sing Fa-de-lay,
Sing Fa-de-la, Sing Fa-de-la-de-de-day.

They came to the place where the blood was shed,
The girls turned back and the boys kept ahead.
Sing Fa-de-la, Sing Fa-de-lay,
Sing Fa-de-la, Sing Fa-de-la-de-de-day.

---

[1] Mrs. Connie Worrell Jackson, in a conversation in October, 1954, related that this song was used in her youth, in the following manner:

To start off, all the players are seated -- being in a circle works out better. One boy starts the whole thing by getting up and walking around the ring while everyone sings. He stops in front of the girl whom he has chosen for his partner when the singers come to that line of the song, "They came to the place where they did meet."

On singing, "So rise you up," the girl rises. The boy and girl join hands and promenade until the line, "Girls turn back and the boys kept ahead." The girl then turns and goes the other way and the boy goes on. At, "They came to the place where they did meet," the girl chooses a new boy. That boy puts the girl in front of him while he goes ahead of the first boy. The three march in single file until the line, "The girls turned back," when the girl turns back and the boys keep ahead. At the line, "They came to the place where they did meet," the new boy chooses a new girl for his partner; while the first boy goes on to promenade with his partner, the first girl. This pattern continues until everyone is in the game.

When everyone is in, it is then time to change the game to play "Rock Dolly," "Sweeping the Floor," "Old Hickory Head," or something like that.

They came to the place where they did meet,
Laughed and hugged and kissed so sweet.
Sing Fa-de-la, Sing Fa-de-lay,
Sing Fa-de-la, Sing Fa-de-la-de-de-day.

So rise you up, you're mighty in the way,
Choose your partner and come on and play.
Sing Fa-de-la, Sing Fa-de-lay,
Sing Fa-de-la, Sing Fa-de-la-de-de-day.

Teacher's Farewell[1]

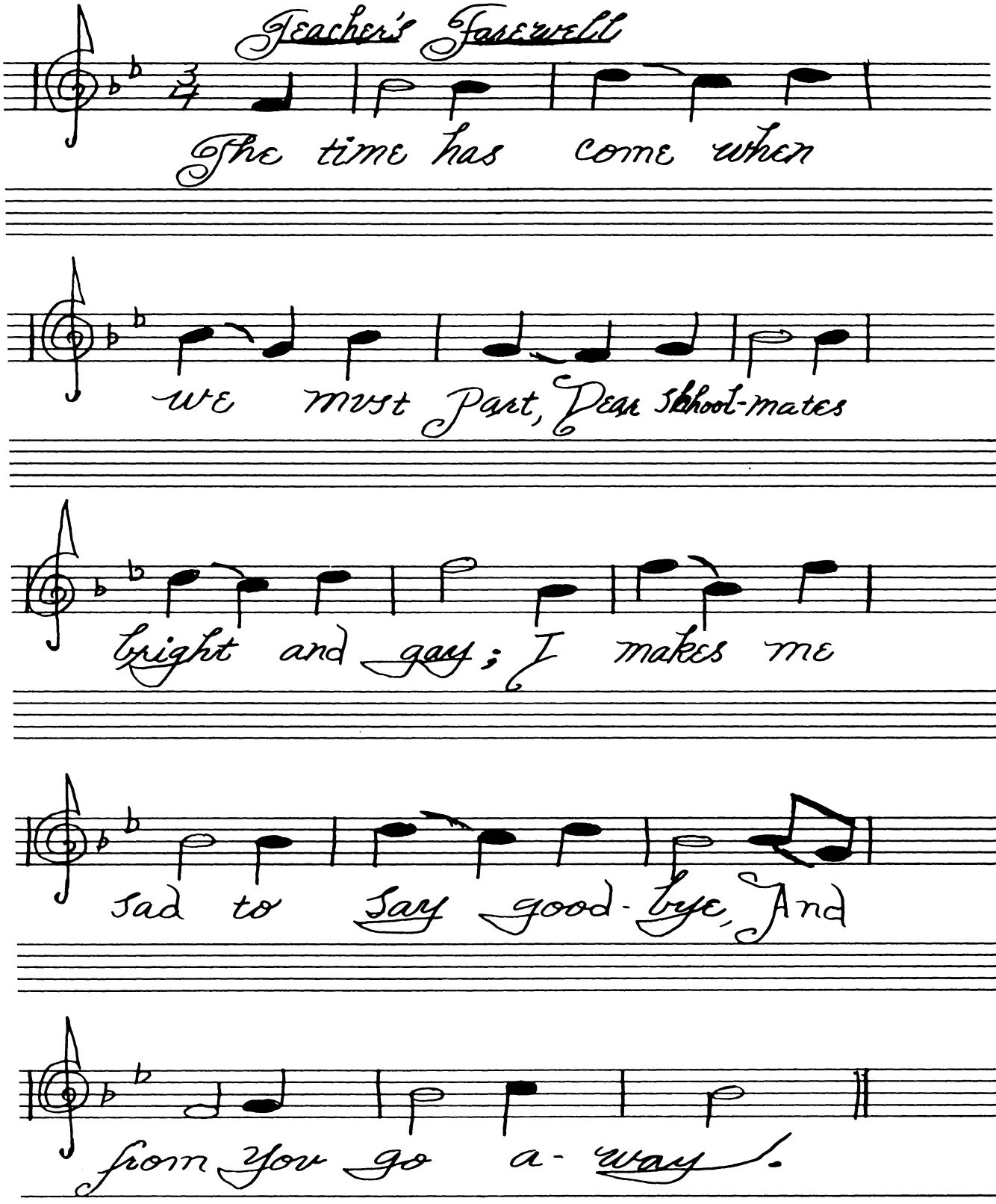
The time has come when we must part,
Dear schoolmates bright and gay;
It makes me sad to say good-bye,
And from you go away.

---

[1] This song was composed by Cornelius Bowman, who was born sometime near the year 1877, in Carroll County, Virginia. Bowman was a man who might have climbed far up the ladder of success had he but lived in days of greater opportunity. Of his early boyhood little is known except that he was an ordinary, fun-loving boy who grew up doing mostly the same things that every other mountain boy does. In one way, however, he was different from his fellows: he grasped every opportunity which his very meager surroundings afforded to learn new things and to get the best education possible. Thus, at the age of twenty-two he became one of Carroll County's few school teachers. How happy and proud he was then to be able to help other boys along the way he himself had so tortuously climbed.

Around the first of March, in 1899, he composed the song, "Teacher's Farewell," and sang it to his scholars telling them it was his last day ever to teach school. He asked one of them, Laura Hurst, to finish out the school term for him. After returning to his home he went to bed and asked the lady of the house to send for his mother. His death from diphtheria came soon after, on March 8, 1899, and thus was ended abruptly a promising career.

Even though the community had lost one of its most promising men, still it had his song which lived on and on. Until consolidation did away with "school breakings," no school in the County was considered properly closed without the singing of this song with its sad, mournful tune. At first, those who sang and those who listened would weep in memory of the kind, beloved master who had composed the song; in later years when its story was no longer fresh in their minds, they just cried.


Teacher's Farewell
The time has come when
we must part, Dear School-mates
bright and gay; It makes me
sad to say good-bye, And
from you go a-way.

Our lessons all will soon be said,
Our work will be complete;
And we must part and never more
At old Excelsior meet.

Five months ago one autumn morn
Together first we met;
Since then we've spent some happy times,
Those days I'll ne'er forget.

I'll never forget your faces bright,
Or merry voices sweet;
I'll ne'er forget each friendly word
Though again we may never meet.

Through winter storms and autumn flowers
To school we have often come;
With willing hearts and ready hands
Our work we have ever done.

No more for us the old school bell
Will ring so loud and clear;
To call us from our quiet homes,
On mornings bright or drear.

No more together we will sing
The songs we love so well;
But soon we'll hear the last roll called
And all must say farewell.

Some days we've met with cheerful hearts,
Some days we've met in gloom;
Some days we've seen the drifted snow
Some days the flowers in bloom.

Oh happy days, come back, come back
Your joys we never knew
Till fleeting time had passed you by
And you were lost to view.

But the brightest days must have their nights
And the loveliest flowers die;
And fondest pleasures have an end
And all must say good-bye.

May kindest fortune shine on you,
And all your steps be right;
And to your country and your home,
You'll prove an honor bright.

What fortune has in store for you
Time alone will tell
May we all hope to meet again,
And so we'll say farewell.

Farewell, good-bye, its hard to say,
The very thoughts bring tears;
May we all meet in that summer land
And live through endless years.

The Orphan Girl

(Tune: "Teacher's Farewell")

"No home, no home," said a little girl,
At the door of a prince's home;
She trembling stood at the marble steps,
And leaned against the polished wall.

Her clothes were thin and her feet were bare,
And the snow had covered her head;
"Oh give me a home," she kindly said,
"A home and a piece of bread."

Her father's face she never had seen,
And the tears had filled her eyes;
Her mother sleeps in a new-made grave,
While the orphan begs and cries.

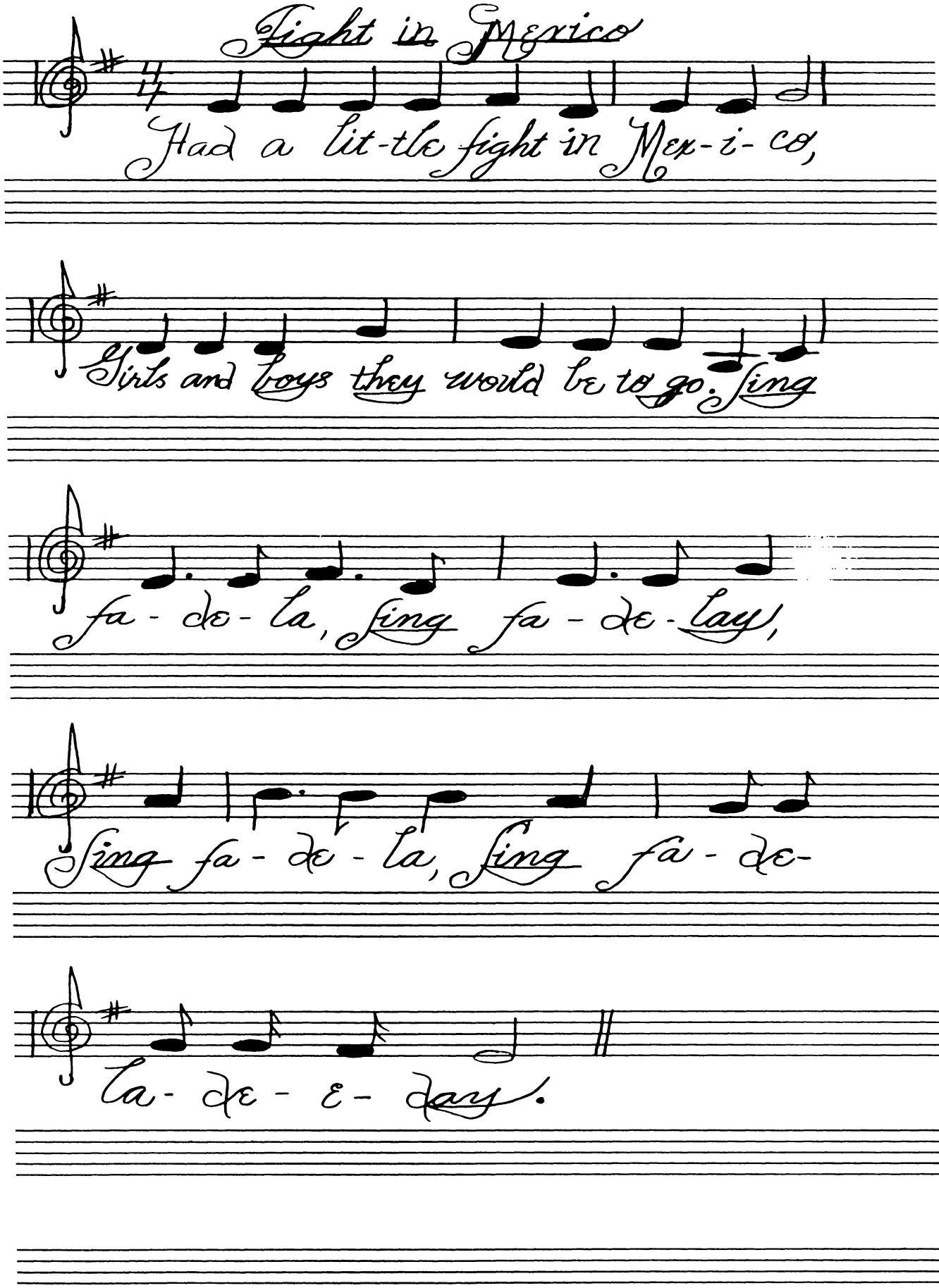
The night was dark, and the snow fell fast,
And the rich man closed his door;
His proud lips curled as he scornfully said,
"No room, no bread for the poor."

As she sank on the steps, she says, "I must pray."
And she tried to cover her feet;
Her tattered dress all covered in snow,
All covered in snow and sleet.

The rich man sleeps on his velvet couch,
And dreams of his silver and gold;
While the orphan lay on a bed of snow,
And cried, "So cold, so cold."

The hours passed by like a midnight chime,
Rolled out like a funeral knell;
The earth seemed wrapped in her midnight sheet,
And the drifting snow still fell.

Fight in Mexico



The morning dawned and the little girl
Still lay at the rich man's door;
But her soul had fled to its home above
Where there's room and bread for the poor.

No more will she stand at the rich man's door,
And cry, "So cold, so cold;"
But a crown on her head and a harp in her hand,
As she sings in a home of gold.

Two Sweethearts[1]

(Tune: "Jack and Joe")

A crowd of young boys one night at a ball,
Were telling of sweethearts they had;
All seemed jolly except a lad,
Who seemed downhearted and sad,
"Come now and join us," his comrade then said,
"Surely some girl has loved you."
Lifting his head, proudly he said,
"I'm in love with two."

Chorus:

One has hair of silver gray,
The other is just like gold;
One is young and useful too,
The other is aged and old.
But dearer than life are they both to me,
From neither would I part;
One is my mother, God bless her, I love her,
The other is my sweetheart.

My sweetheart is a poor working girl,
Who I'm determined to wed;
But father says, "No, 'twill never be so,
You must marry another instead."
When mother was young she knew how it was,
When she met Dad she was poor,
"Don't fret, don't fret, she'll be your wife yet,
For he will consent, I am sure."

---

[1] Sung to Ninevah Jackson Willis by Mertie Goad sometime in the period around 1930. The tune, "Jack and Joe," may be found in the Golden Book of Songs.

Chorus:

One has hair of silver gray,
The other is just like gold;
One is young and useful too,
The other is aged and old.
But dearer than life are they both to me,
From neither would I part;
One is my mother, God bless her, I love her,
The other is my sweetheart.

Ellen Smith

(Tune: "How Firm a Foundation")

Come all you kind people, my story to hear;
What happened to me, in the June of last year;
Of poor Ellen Smith, and how she was found,
Shot through the heart, lying cold on the ground.

My heart was quite broken, I bitterly cried,
When friends gently told me, how poor Ellen died;
Oh, who was so cruel, so heartless, so base,
As to murder poor Ellen, in so lonely a place.

I choked back the tears, when the people all said,
That Peter De Graff had shot Ellen Smith dead;
I saw her on Monday before that sad day,
They found her poor body and took it away.

They got their Winchesters, and hunted me down,
But I was away in the Mount Airy town;
My love's in her grave, with her hands on her breast,
While bloodhounds and sheriffs will give me no rest.

I stayed away one year, and prayed all the time,
That the man would be found, who'd committed the crime;
And while I had never yet made her my wife,
I loved her too well to take her sweet life.

I came back to Winston, my trial to stand;
To live or to die, as the law might command;
My poor Ellen sleeps, in a lonely graveyard,
While I look through the bars, and God knows it is hard.

The people may hang me, my fate I don't know,
But I'm clear of the charge that is laid at
my door;
And then, like a star, shall my innocence shine,
O, Lord, I appeal to thy justice divine.

Old Santa Claus

Who is it travels east and west?
Old Santa Claus, Old Santa Claus.
Who's everywhere a welcome guest?
'Tis good old Santa Claus.

Chorus:

Old Santa Claus, Old Santa Claus,
North, south, and east, and west;
Wherever little children are,
He is a welcome guest.

Who does our stockings fill with toys?
Old Santa Claus, Old Santa Claus.
With gifts for all good girls and boys?
'Tis good old Santa Claus.

Chorus:

Old Santa Claus, Old Santa Claus,
North, south, and east, and west;
Wherever little children are,
He is a welcome guest.

The Dying Boy's Farewell

(Tune: "Ship That Never Returned")

On a summer's eve, as the sun was sinking,
And the wind blew soft and dry;
A young man lay on a bed of fever,
As a tear stood in his eye.
"Oh, mother dear, come and listen,
As I talk awhile with you;
I have something e'er I pass the portals,
That I must confide to you."

Chorus:

"I am dying mother, I'm surely dying,
And Hell is my awful doom;
Come hold my hand and press it lightly,
For my heart is sad with the gloom."

The other night as I left God's meeting,
God's spirit bid me stay;
I said, "Not now, for next week only,
I must sing and dance with the gay.
And after that I'll go and get converted,
And become a Christian bright."
But, alas, too late, I see the folly,
Of saying, "Not tonight."

Chorus:

"I am dying mother, I'm surely dying,
And Hell is my awful doom;
Come hold my hand and press it lightly,
For my heart is sad with the gloom."

"Now mother dear, tell all my comrades,
Not to do as I have done;
But when God calls, do not reject him,
Or put him off in fun."
Then he took his mother's hand in his,
With the other raised on high.
And with tears rolling down his cheeks,
"Oh, it is so hard to die."

Chorus:

"I am dying mother, I'm surely dying,
And Hell is my awful doom;
Come hold my hand and press it lightly,
For my heart is sad with the gloom."

Then he asked his mother as his voice
 grew weaker,
If she for him would pray;
"For my eyes grow dim and its getting darker,
And I cannot see my way."
There she knelt and in a voice that trembled,
Asked God to save her boy;
But he cried "Alas, too late, I perish,
I am past eternal joy."

Chorus:

"I am dying mother, I'm surely dying,
And Hell is my awful doom;
Come hold my hand and press it lightly,
For my heart is sad with the gloom."

The Dying Girl's Message

(Tune: "Take It To The Lord In Prayer")

"Raise the window higher, Mother, air can
 never harm me now;
Let the wind blow in upon me, it will cool
 my fevered brow.
Soon my troubles will be over, soon be still
 this aching heart,
But I have a dying message, I will give before
 we part.

"Mother there is one, you know him, so I cannot
 speak his name,
You remember how he sought me, how his loving
 words they came.
Life has many weary burdens, sin goes down to
 deepest woe,
Wipe the cool drops from my forehead, they are
 death marks, well you know.

"Take this ring from off my finger, where he
 placed it long ago,
Give it to him as a token, that in dying I
 bestow;
Hark I hear the Savior calling, oh how sweet it
 is to die,
Mother meet your child in Heaven, one more kiss
 and then good-bye."

Through Dreary Scenes of Winter
(Tune: "Home Sweet Home")

Through dreary scenes of winter, through cold
frost and snow,
Dark scenes around me hover, while cold the
wind doth blow.
The little birds sing sweetly, on every bush and
vine,
My joys would be double if you were only mine.

I called to see my sweetheart, she grew so
scornfully,
I asked her to marry me, she would not answer me,
The night was swiftly passing, and near the hour
of day,
I am waiting for an answer, O, love, what do you
say?

Kind sir, if I should answer, I would choose a
single life,
For I never thought it suited for me to be your
wife.
So take this for your answer, and for yourself
provide,
I have another sweetheart, and you are turned
aside.

In the close of three weeks later, this lady's
mind did change,
She wrote me a letter, saying, "I am ashamed.
I feel as thought I've slighted you, I can but
hear you moan,
Here's my heart; come take it, and claim it as
your own."

I answered her letter, I sent it back in speed
Saying, "Kind miss, I once loved you, I loved
you well indeed.
But now my heart is for another one, more
fairer than you,
And since you grew so scornfully, I bid you
now adieu."

Sweet Marie

I've a secret in my heart, sweet Marie
A secret to impart, love, to thee;
Every daisy in the dell
Knows my secret, knows it well.
Yet to you I dare not tell,
Sweet Marie.

Chorus:

Sweet Marie, come to me, come to me,
sweet Marie
Not because your face is fair, love, to see
But your soul so pure and sweet
Makes my happiness complete,
Makes me falter at your feet,
Sweet Marie.

When I hold your hand in mine, sweet Marie
A feeling most divine comes to me;
All the world is full of spring,
Full of warblers on the wing;
And I listen while they sing,
Sweet Marie.

Chorus:

Sweet Marie, come to me, come to me,
sweet Marie
Not because your face is fair, love, to see;
But your soul so pure and sweet
Makes my happiness complete,
Makes me falter at your feet,
Sweet Marie.

In the morn when I awake, sweet Marie,
Seems to me my heart would break, love, for
thee;
Every wave that shakes the shore
Seems to say it o'er and o'er,
Seems to say that I adore,
Sweet Marie.

Chorus:

Sweet Marie, come to me, come to me,
sweet Marie
Not because your face is fair, love, to see;
But your soul so pure and sweet
Makes my happiness complete,
Makes me falter at your feet,
Sweet Marie.

When the sun tints the west, sweet Marie,
And I sit down to rest, love, with thee;
Every star that studs the sky
Seems to stand and wonder why
They're dimmer than your eye,
Sweet Marie.

Chorus:

Sweet Marie, come to me, come to me,
sweet Marie
Not because your face is fair, love, to see;
But your soul so pure and sweet
Makes my happiness complete,
Makes me falter at your feet,
Sweet Marie.

Never Marry a Drunkard[1]

I once loved a young man as dear as my life.
He often did promise to make me his wife.

He fulfilled his promise, he made me his wife.
You see what I've come to, I've lost my dear
life.

---

[1] This song is not to be confused with the familiar ballad, "On Top of Old Smokey." Even though its words are similar, it is believed to have an origin distinct from the other song. Furthermore, its tune is not the same.

My babe is a-crying, I'm sick in my bed.
My husband's a drunkard. Lord, I wish I
was dead.

I left my dear father, I broke his command;
I left my dear mother a-wringing her hands.

Come, all you young ladies, take warning
from me:
Never place your affection on a green-growing
tree.

For the leaves they may wither, and the roots
they may die.
And a young man can fool you, as one has
fooled I.

I'll build me a log cabin on a mountain so
high,
Where the wild birds can see me, and hear
my lone cry.

Come, all you young ladies, take warning
that's true:
Never marry a drunkard, whatever you do.

They'll hug you and kiss you and tell you
more lies
Than crossties on railroads, or stars in
the skies.

It's trouble, it's trouble, it's trouble all
the time.
If trouble don't kill me, I'll live a long
time.

The only peace I ever saw was at father's
door.
If I were back single, I'd marry no more.

I'm going back to Georgia, I'm going there
to roam.
I'm going back to Georgia to make it my
home.

Wild Rovers[1]

Come all you wild rovers, where ever you
may be,
Come listen awhile to the saddest of me;
Come listen awhile whenever you can,
For love has been the ruin of many a young
man.

When the young men go courting they want to
be smart,
They'll place their affections on a smiling
sweetheart;
Who's dancing before them their favors to
gain,
Then turn their fair faces in sorrow and
pain.

Young men will ride and spend all they have,
To see the young ladies that's all they do
crave;
And when they get there they'll laugh and
tell lies,
And keep the girls up 'till they're ready
to die.

The girls being weary they'll rise and
say, "Come
I feel very sleepy, I wish you'd go home;
You are so false-hearted, it's you I do
scorn,
And before you get home you'll lodge in
some barn."

Next morning you rise, you feel very trim,
Brush off the straw and start out again;
And when you get home you'll stagger and
reel,
Saying, "Darn all the ladies, how sleepy
I feel.

---

[1] Sung to Ninevah Jackson Willis by Rhodoska Eloadie Worrell Bolt, Winston Salem, N. C., in 1954.

When a girl gets married her comfort's
 all gone,
Farewell to her pleasures, her troubles
 come on;
Her children will cry, her husband will
 scold,
Soon make their fair faces look withered
 and old.

Here's a full flowing glass with bubbles
 around,
Here's health to the single where ever they're
 found;
Here's health to the single, I wish them
 success
And them that gets married, I wish them
 no less.

Somebody

Somebody's tall and handsome,
Somebody's brave and true;
Somebody's hair is curly,
Somebody's eyes are blue.

Somebody came to see me,
Somebody came one night;
Somebody asked me to marry him,
Of course I answered, "All right."

Somebody called for Mamma,
And Mamma went out to see;
When she came back she's a-crying,
Saying someone'd asked for me.

Somebody called for Papa
And Papa went out to see;
When he came back he was laughing,
He was glad to get rid of me.

Hand me down my bonnet,
Hand me down my shawl;
Hand me down my old gray dress,
I'm going to leave you all.

There's going to be a wedding,
It's going to be this fall;
Boys and girls get ready;
I'm going to invite you all.

Somebody's tall and handsome,
Somebody's brave and true;
Somebody loves me dearly,
His loving eyes are blue.

* * * *

The traditional ballad, as such, seems to have passed its heyday, but its influence will long remain in the music of the mountain people. Today, the same human emotions evoke the same artistic impulses, and today's children compose their music using the same notes and the same motifs as were used in the days of the ballad-maker.

The same responsive passions cause people to open their mouths, tune their vocal chords, and pour out to an unsympathetic world the very essence of their joys, their hopes, and their aspirations. Thus, the fancy of present-day composers of music reinterpret the same ideas and incorporate them into modern compositions, and doubtless will continue to do so as long as the world lasts, -- "and the rose grew 'round the briar."

FOLKWAYS

CHAPTER VI

FOLKWAYS

Little has been written about the real mountaineer of southwestern Virginia. It is as though many had come, peered briefly through the smoke-stained windows of his cabin, and passed on. Thus, the details of his culture, those things which comprise the very essence of history, have never been revealed to others. Because such has been the case, these great people have never been understood. The mountaineers of southwestern Virginia have remained set apart from all other folk, even from other mountaineers, by reason of their dialect and customs, their characters and their willingness to remain isolated from the world and from one another.

These people were among the first to break away from old ties and depend entirely upon a resourcefulness which was born of the highland spirit of unhesitating resistance to any authority that would attempt to enforce unjust laws or to coerce them in any way. Their Fincastle Resolutions constituted the first overt act leading to the establishment of a government of their own, in the New World, in defiance of the

English king. They were fiery and combative by nature, cunning and vindictive in their dealings with one another; still, they were intensely loyal to the flag which represented their own country. Southwestern Virginia in the Eighteenth Century was truly the rustic cradle in which was rocked that lusty infant, American Democracy, as she first began to open her innocent blue eyes to gaze upon a sorry world.

These are a God-fearing people to whom the Bible is the literal Gospel truth. As one old fellow put it, "I'd believe it, even if it ain't so." In that connection, it seems not only desirable, but essential, that any study of these people should include something of their religious ideals and practices, even though religion appears to have had but little effect on the mountaineer's everyday living. He tends to call himself a "Sunday Saint and an Everyday Devil," a tendency which is revealed in a story told about a respected preacher who was helping a man fix up some crooked papers relating to a corner tree.[1] Someone remarked,

---

[1] Titles to mountain were often written in terms of "corner trees" which marked the boundaries thereof, for lack of better indicators. Understandably enough, many mountain feuds had their origins in fights over corner trees.

Joel, ain't you a preacher of the gospel?" whereupon
e replied, "Yeah, but religion ain't got nothing to
o with corner trees."

The mountaineer's inclination to throw the
eavier burdens of work on the weaker sex, also a
naracteristic of the savage, is reflected as he sings,
I ain't lazy, I just don't want to work."

The mountain women go barefoot simply because it
eels better. Mountaineers believe that doors need
nutting only when folks go to bed. They are schooled
:om infancy to hide any real emotions. They have
emained rugged and hardy in spite of unsanitary condi-
tions and poor food, perhaps because they have had pure
ountain air and pure spring water. Theirs is a land
? "make it do, make it yourself, or do without."

Could the world but know them, it would forever
nerish the poignant stories which remain to be told
? a way of life which is fast receding into the
sts of time. Their folkways, exuding an eternally
elightful fragrance all their own, remain deeply
nbedded in fastnesses of the Virginia hills, which
neir inhabitants lovingly entitle, "God's Country."

The spirit of the mountain cabin seems reflected in the following poem:

Contentment[1]

Did you ever feel a feeling,
In the good old summer-time?
That there's lot of fun in living
And the world is mighty fine?
When the tasks of day are ended
And the evening chores are done;
Us kids just sit around our Daddy,
And has the mostest fun.

When Daddy gets to telling,
How it was when he was young;
All 'bout him and Granddad.
And how their work was done.
How he got up, oh, so early,
And worked 'till the lamp was lit;
'Till you'd think that our poor Daddy,
Never got to play a bit.

Then one day our dear old Grandma
Came to stay and visit us;
She didn't never scold us children
When we'd been so mean - or fuss.
And when Daddy starts to punish,
She just says, "Hold on, my son
I have never yet forgotten
How it was when you were young."

"Grandma, tell to us the story,
Tell me how it really was;
How Daddy shirked his duties
Didn't like to mind his Pa
That Daddy was a sure 'nuff boy,
As we all can plainly see -
And I love him - oh, much better -
'Cause he's really just like me."

---

[1] Composed by Ninevah Jackson Willis.

The mores of the mountain seems to be reflected in the following tale[1] which is said to be historically true, except for the fictitious names used:

Bloody Murder

"Oh yes, I remember old Joe Baldwin; he killed six or eight people. He killed a hog drover once, and buried him in the crevice of the Jumping-Off Rock. His bones are still there, too; you would have to lower a man by a rope to get him out o'there and they ain't never found anybody willing to go, yet.

"Old Chap Marshall passed there one night and heard him a-killing a man; he heard the licks just as plain and he heard the man yelling, 'Help, Murder!' until the last time when there was only a very faint groan, but he didn't go in there to help him none. He didn't dare.

"In them days people drove all their animals to market. Old Joe had nice barns and fenced-off lots, all fixed up nice for the drovers to use. He could afford to. He was powerful friendly to the men going down the country -- put up their animals for free and kept the men over-night. Then, of course, as they came back they would spend the night with the man who was so nice to them before. By that time they had sold their hogs and things and had money. Old Joe Baldwin would watch his chance and kill them and take their money.

"Joe Simpkins spent the night there as he was on his way to Norfolk with a drove of cattle. He said he heard Old Man Joe fighting

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[1] Told to Ninevah Jackson Willis by Robert B. Duncan, in 1953.

with the Devil all night long. The next morning the old fellow was awful nice to him, begged him to come back and all like that, but he never went back there again.

"Old Bill Brown was constable then; he warn't afeard a'nothing. One night it was just a-pouring down the rain, when he passed Joe Baldwin's house. Joe asked him to stay all night and, since it was a raining so hard, he decided to stay. He heard old Joe a-fighting with the Devil, too. Bill sat on the aidge of his bed with his pistol in his hand all night. He was scared to death, said if that door had even moved he would have let him have it.

"Lumm Palmer was a kind of a jack-leg tooth dentist. He had been off down in North Carolina sommers a-making teeth and he had all sorts of money. So, as he was a-coming up the mountain along by Belspur there, it was a-pouring the rain to beat everything -- just a-thundering and lightning -- and just as the lightning flashed, old Lumm saw something run acrost the road up ahead of him a ways. He seen it was old Joe Baldwin.

"Lumm hollered out, 'Joe Baldwin, I know you. Jest stop right thar.'

"Joe stopped, then he come on down to where Lumm was at, you know, and he said, 'I was just a-going over to see about some calves that waz lost over here in the bluffs.'

"Lumm told him, 'You was a-going to kill me for my money, just like you done all them other people. Well, Joe, there's the road, and here's my pistol. I'm going to count three and then I'm going to start shooting.'

"He said old Joe really lit out down the road, so fast you could have heard him a mile, a-kicking up the rocks. Lumm was riding in a sulky and he started too. He run his horse to the top of the mountain before he dared to stop and let it rest.

"They said old Joe was half Nigger. Anyway, if he warn't he waz dipped awful heavy, for cause, I'll tell you how I know. Bill Campbell, he went to the Old Man Baldwin's and there was a coal-black Nigger a-setting on the woodpile. Come dinner time, he come in and set at the table with the rest of them, and, come to find it out, it was Old Man Marsh's wife's daddy, and old Joe's granddaddy.

"I might as well tell you the rest, I've told you this much. Old Joe and his cousin, Jack, killed his Daddy and Mammy, too. His dad had lots of money. He went and got Jack to help him. They went on in and was just a-going to whip the old folks around a little and make them give up their money. But, Old Man Baldwin kept a lot of old cur dogs a-laying around, and, when the two of 'em started abusing the old folks, them dogs just about eat 'em up. I reckon they got scared and hit a little harder than they aimed to; anyways, they killed the old woman and the old man died in a little while. They still didn't find the money for the dogs run them off.

"When they found out the old man and old woman had died they packed it on Chap and Simmie Marshall and proved it, too! The court had already passed sentence and they was about to hang the two brothers when Chap and Simmie got old Uncle Connor Marshall and his wife to go down and swear that they was at their house at a log-rolling and frolic and couldn't a-possibly killed the old folks.

"The Baldwins kept their money under the hearth rock -- nobody put their money in banks them days -- they had about $400 saved up. They say Dukie Rogers got the money. He was a Nigger they took and raised. All he had to do was to lift up the hearth rock and git it 'cause he knowed where it was. He left the country and when he died he was worth about $75,000.

"Charlie Marshall[1] was the one that helped Old Man Baldwin kill the hog drover. He took the man's horse and went West someplace. They found the horse at the stock yards yonder at Wytheville but they never could trace who done it. Charlie, he confessed the whole thing on his death-bed. The confession was sent back here and read in Belspur Church. When they read it old Joe was a-setting in the front seat at church there, and he turned as white as a sheet. He got up and took to the road. If you had a-took and fired a rifle down the center of that road, it wouldn't a overtook him; he was going that fast."

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Strange is man's vision. He can look at a thing for years and years and then suddenly realize its value. A dull-looking stone is often a diamond in the rough. Such a friend and neighbor is Mrs. "Lizzie Ben" Bowman, who was born during the Civil War on June 12, 1863, and who is typical of the mountain women at their best. "Lizzie Ben" is alert, and far from feeble. She has fallen so many times and broken so many bones that she doesn't leave the house much, any more. Only once did a doctor set a bone for her; she set the rest herself and held them in place until they healed. She has a vivid memory of her early life, but says things are

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[1] Not related to Chap and Simmie Marshall.

sort of hazy on recent happenings. She will tell her own story:

Aunt Lizzie Ben

"I never knowed anything but hard work and saving to make things meet. My Pa was a cooper, he made things for people: barrels and churns and things on that order. He made me a little bitsy churn and, by the time I could stand up to it, I was a-doing the churning for the family. The churn was so little I had to churn twice a day while Ma worked out in the field. Ma told me to churn along about eleven o'clock and then she would take up the butter when she come in for dinner -- you see I warn't big enough -- then I churned again about five o'clock to have ready for Ma when she come in against sun-down. I remember one time my cousin come to see me and she wanted to do my job for me, but I wouldn't let her for Ma had said and I didn't dare to do different than Ma said.

"I remember how pleased I was when Pa decided to build a new house. I remember so well how the shingles was rived and joined. My brother's job was to hand each shingle to the joiner. He was just younger 'n me. One day Ma had gone to Sam Bolt's store at Laurel Fork, for there warn't many stores them days. She didn't expect Mr. Bowman to come to rive out shingles that day so she left me to keep water in the soup beans and keep them cooking 'gainst dinner time. They growed a little white soup bean then that really made the best kind of soup, just so thick and good. Well, he come to work 'n I warn't yet nine years old and I didn't hardly know what to do with Ma gone. Well, I flew in and got dinner, made cornbread like I had seen Ma do it and fixed the beans and a few little things. Ma was powerful surprised to find dinner cooked and already eat, with the dishes rid up, when she come in; for it was a good piece to walk and tote eggs to the store and vittles back. Ma she put at

Mr. Bowman that he ain't had much of a dinner. He told Ma that she ought to be awful proud, for it was just as good as if she had cooked it herself.

"I remember hearing my folks talk about Civil War days. I remember one of our neighbors called Pa a deserter; I was big enough to stand between his knees and I remember distinctly calling him an old Tory for I couldn't yet say 'deserter.'

"The Blue Ridge folks hadn't much heart for the War in the first place and when they saw it was hopeless and heard of the misery and suffering at home they would desert and come on back home to their families. Then they would have to hide out, for the Home Guard, made up mostly of our friends, neighbors, and kin-folks, would hunt for them.

"Most of the Home Guard said they would rather cover them if they found them than to uncover them, but not all of them felt that way. One time the Home Guard visited our house. Ma she knowed they was a-coming and had most of her things buried in a bank of dirt; she just kept out barely enough things to use. She knowed every one of them well cause they was our neighbors. They took everything they could carry or use and broke up the rest. They would rip up the feather beds and laugh as the wind blowed the feathers away. Feathers was hard come by and women hated to see them go. The Home Guards liked to talk big and rough to women and little children. The hardest thing to take was when they begin to break up the dishes. About the only really purty thing a little child had was a mug. It always had a purty picture on it. My baby brother fell across Ma's lap a-crying just like he couldn't live, that they had broke his deer. His mug had the picture of a purty little deer on it.

"The deserters got good and tired of the way their families had been mistreated and

decided they would do something about it themselves, so they banded together and hunted up some of them who they knowed was in on the dirty work. They just aimed to scare them up but once in a while they did hang one. One day they hung Jordan Ham for his misdeeds and on that same day they put the rope around the neck of one of our neighbors. He bitterly denied having any part in raiding the homes but they searched around the house and found cotton cloth which they had cut from the loom, a coffee pot and several other things. So they said, 'Now that we have proved you are the one, you might as well git the jar.' (I couldn't find out what was in the jar, for mountain folks only tell what they want told.) He wouldn't tell and they started on off with him. His wife got the jar from out of the branch where it was hid and follered along after them a-begging for his life. They was a-fixing to hang him anyway and Pa sorter felt sorry for her and cut him down.

"Later a road was built along this same place and Pa was so mad because he had to go so far to work that he called it Old Jar's Gap. The gap still has the name and the road is still there but many people call it Jair Gap and others who didn't know the beginning call it Jower's Gap. Nothing was ever wrote down in them days and people just said what they heard, for no one could write much.

"After the War was over they was all sorry for the part they had in it. They and the ones on the other side was ashamed a lots of times over it, for now they had to live as neighbors again. Sometimes it come hard, too. When they come around begging for volunteers for the army they told the people that the Northerners was so dumb that they didn't know one end of the gun from tother. They said it would soon be over and they would soon be back home if they would just come on and help them out.

"I have hired out all my life and worked beside the men in the fields. The highest wages

> I ever got was 25¢ a day. I feel proud when I remember that all who hired me said I was a peart mover. I could do more work than airy man but they didn't pay me as much. One of my childhood jobs was to carry the babies to the field at nursing time. It seemed like there was allus a baby to carry.
>
> "The 'Depression' done more to help us folks than any one thing. We was hard to change and because of it we had to change and fast. The reason our young folks seem so intelligent is that city folks got their minds numbed already with so much stuff and our boys and girls' minds are fresh and eager to learn."

In March, 1954, Aunt Lizzie's only remaining brother died. She went to his funeral and there contracted pneumonia, from which she did not recover. Her son eventually called a doctor, against her wishes, as she lay on the "best bed in the big house," but the burden imposed by the disease was too much for her tired heart.

She had prepared for her death many years before it occurred. She had her wedding outfit, kept miraculously white all these years, and worn only on three occasions: her wedding, her baptism, and her funeral. She had given specific directions to her best friend as to how she was to be bathed, groomed, dressed, and "laid out on a board." The barn door is usually used for this purpose, but Aunt Lizzie had

outlasted the barn door, so friends nailed up a sort of contraption out of some old planks they found lying around the place. This was covered with white sheets, and Aunt Lizzie's body, dressed in her white wedding outfit, was laid on it and placed in the way that she had specified: one hand by her side and the other across her breast. She looked surprisingly young and beautiful; her fine features spoke of a hard life but a wonderful one. One could tell by the faint smile, even in death, that not for the world would she have changed places with her old-world forebears, "a-living in their marble halls, a-combing their milk-white steeds." In her quaint old home with its old-fashioned surroundings, anything other than the rude accouterments she kept there would have looked out of place. Gazing on Aunt Lizzie, as she lay in death, made one feel as though he had stepped back into another century when Aunt Lizzie was still a young bride.

Native coffin makers were things of the past at the time she died, so her coffin was "store-boughten". The chagrined funeral parlor attendants from whom it was purchased did not understand why their services were dismissed as unwanted. Aunt Lizzie would have

preferred to have taken her last ride in a farm wagon but a neighbor's pick-up truck had to do. All funeral rites were performed by her neighbors as she wanted. She had already spoken for the preacher, several years ago, when Uncle Ben died.

After the services in the church she was brought back to the "old home" and buried beside her husband, under a lone pine tree by the side of the road where they had lived so long as friends of man.

Aunt Lizzie was truly one of the brightest pages in God's Book of Time, for her life and her death were both noble examples of a way of life. Her passing left the mountains poorer, for, as she went out, she closed the door on a glorious past, for all eternity.

Uncle Wilcher

Another of God's noblest pages is Uncle Wilcher whose life-span weaves together more than a century. At the age of 65, he learned to read from the Bible that he had bought for Rhoda when they were married.

The reason he learned to read was because he had to have a head operation and couldn't work. So, while he was sitting in the house, he picked up the Bible and taught himself to read. He then read it through

eleven times straight, and parts of it many times afterwards. That same Bible was one of his treasured possessions. A print of the palm of his hand is on the back where the binding has worn through, put there because he had read it so much. The pages are loose but there is not a smudge on them. "The pages are clean like my life, and when I die I want it placed under my head," said Uncle Wilcher.

He was married at the age of twenty-one. He and Rhoda started out housekeeping with a pair of scissors and a sifter. Their bed was made of planks laid across a bench to support them in front and pegs driven in the wall to hold it up behind. That made a solid foundation for the birth of twelve robust children.

Uncle Wilcher said he started out being just like everyone else, but then he had decided that, if Rhoda could leave a nice home and cast her lot with him, it was his duty to do the best he could for her. So he quit drinking, began to work and save his money, and bought a farm. He hewed his farming land from the forests that populated his hilly acres. Money came in slow and, after feeding his family, sometimes only a few sacks of potatoes or a few bushels of corn would remain to serve as a payment on the farm.

He "made a living" not only by farming, but by making saddles, saddle-bags and harness. He would plow with a wooden plow all day and then work with leather after supper, by candle-light, while Rhoda would weave cloth. He stayed away from home only one night in his life and that was because he had been summoned for jury duty at Abingdon and wasn't allowed to come home.

He cut three new teeth after nature had taken all his others. When he was ninety-seven years old he became seriously ill. He dreamed that he would walk again and one week later he was able to walk without a cane. This dream he believed to be a divine revelation. He was a faithful church worker and he and Rhoda would ride out to "meeting" every Sunday morning in their little black cloth-topped buggy pulled by faithful old Betz.

His page was full and running over when God finally called him home at the end of one hundred three years of service, years which had a profound influence in shaping the destiny of Carroll County, Virginia.

* * * *

"It's been a good life, Rhoda."

Some of the mountain folkways were tinged with superstition, as has been previously pointed out. The following tales, reeking of magic, were told by Hub Stanley, an elderly mountaineer who had, at one time, possessed a veritable mine of folk-lore which, alas, was beginning to be lost under the weight of time:

Witchkrafters

"One time when Old Bash Eden was a witchkrafter, Charlie Roberts put at him to get the rats out'n his store. Old Bash said, 'I sorter hate to do that; for, if I do, I will have to send them over to Old Man Jim Barnard's, and I don't want to, for I like him purty good.'

"Charlie kept at him and he finally 'lowed he would. He went along home with hisself and purty soon the rats 'gin coming out'n that barn 'thout looking to the right nor to the left -- 'jus kep' a-walking. Old Saunders Bowman and some of them was down at the river thar a-fishing. He said he had his line on the bottom when something 'menced to bother it. He pulled it out, and he had hooked a rat. That made him sorter curious and he begin to look around, and, sir, them old rats was just a-coming right on down the hill. They never even slowed up when they come to the river -- just walked right on through, on acrost the bottom of the river and right on out up the other bank a-heading torge Jim Barnard's. Old Jim said the rats just like to a-run them off the place that night, they's so many of them."

"Hubbie," said his wife, "Who was that that rubbed his hand on the duck's back and killed it?"

"Oh, that was Old Saunders Bowman. They axed him if'n he could put a spell on things. He said he could and just rubbed his hand on the duck's back and before night it was dead.

"Now, that weren't nothing. But one time Isom Pack was a witch-doctor, and Isom Barnard's girl was bewitched, so he put at Isom Pack to cure the witches. Isom Pack said that, if he did, the one that witched the girl would die the minute the spell was broken. Barnard said it was all right; he wanted her cured anyways. Old Pack went off and put something in a little bottle. When he come back he told them to follow him and, whatever happened, not to speak a word. They went on over through the meadow, and all the while Isom had the bottle in his hand. All at once the bottle busted in his hand and Old Pack said, 'You can go on home now, the one that done it is dead.' They went on home and, along towards night, news come that Isom Pack's mother was dead. Anyway, the girl got well.

"One time Georgie Bowman had the finest kind of a collie dog. One night it killed some sheep. The next morning, Jim Puckett, his grandson, come to kill the dog.

"George said, 'Thar he is. Take him on.'

"After he had gone a ways, Georgie went to the chimney corner and scratched around a bit and, when he come out, he said, 'Old Jim will never kill that dog.'

"Next morning the dog come in home and Jim never would take anything else off to kill it again."

At that point Hub's wife broke in to say,

"Ruth Kruthie used to come to our house to stay all night and she would tell them old tales all night. I reckon they really was witches back then wasn't there?"

> "Of course they was," rejoined the old man. "Who else could of done all them things? But they've all been done away with now, so nobody never sees them any more."

* * * * *

Many of the folkways of the mountaineers had reference to the celebration of Christmas. The following sketch is a composite of Christmas customs found to have been prevalent in certain[1] Carroll County homes, in the Nineteenth Century:

Many Christmases Ago

> Christmas was fast approaching, too fast for my Mother but too slowly for me, a five-year-old who had waited all the year for the happy occasion. My Mother had too much work to do, what with the chores and the approaching holiday. Her face wore a worried look and not as one anticipating a joyous holiday season. She was worried because her folks believed in having Santa Claus pay his visits, even if he couldn't bring much, while my father and his folks thought that the sentimental side of Christmas and Santa was a lot of tommy-rot. Then, too, there was not going to be much to put in a Christmas stocking that year. I would always hang my stocking by the fireplace, and Mother would see to it that there was a new pair of stockings to hang up, for Santa just wouldn't put presents in old socks. One year, though, there had been no new stockings and Mother had washed and ironed my old ones so that Santa couldn't tell the difference.

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[1] The materials for this sketch were obtained mainly from Robert Lee Jackson of Laurel Fork, Virginia.

And he couldn't, evidently, for he left my presents as usual. (In later years I knew why there were no new stockings, but when I was a child such details made little difference to me; my only thought was for what Santa would bring.)

The kitchen of our house was built off from what we called the "big house." It was large and it accommodated the family as living room, bedroom, kitchen, dining room, shop, and general living quarters, except when company came. Company was entertained in the "big house" which was connected to the kitchen by a long shed-like porch, often called a dog trot or wind sweep. The best things we had were in the "big house" but I was actually afraid to go there alone.

During Christmas week Mother and I would go to the woods and carry armloads of greens which we would hang around the big log kitchen. The decorations looked good and smelled wonderful, but Dad would only say, "Humph, such a lot of foolishness."

After supper was over and the chores were done, we would sit around the fire and roast apples -- almost roast ourselves, too. The wind whistling through the cracks between the logs would feel like saber knives as it would swirl around our legs, so the fireplace had been made large enough to accommodate a roaring fire which would roast one side of the person seeking its warmth while the other side would freeze. While Dad would shell corn Mother would tell me stories and help me write my letter to Santa. Usually we all helped shell the corn, for it was fun to take the 'specially prepared cob, called a sheller, and twist the grains from the cobs which were then piled in the corner for future use as kindling. Later, I would be allowed to fashion the cobs into log cabins, pig pens, and almost anything my fancy would choose. They made especially nice dolls, too.

But the time I am telling about was Christmas and I was writing my letter to Santa,

while Father sat silently by, apparently not listening. If I had thought he was listening I doubt if I would have spoken aloud; for, in our household, children were supposed to be seen and not heard. Somehow, in my childish fancy, I would always ask for the right things; perhaps it never occurred to me to ask for anything else, since no kid in the neighborhood ever got more than a few sticks of candy, two oranges, and a few nuts called "nigger toes." At our house, Santa always left a coconut and some article of clothing looking strangely like the ones Mother would make out of feed sacks. I found out later that Dad's turn would come after she had contributed those gifts; he would finish filling the stocking with firecrackers, Roman cannons, and sparklers. There was always a cap buster, too, but Dad would always give that to me the next day. I was a big girl before I ever got a doll, and that I kept until my own daughter prevailed on her grandmother to let her play with it. Soon after that, it was no more. (A more innocent pair you've never seen than my child and my parent, after the sad demise of my one and only doll.)

Santa would often write me a letter asking my permission to come to my house one night earlier than usual for I would always spend Christmas at my Grandfather Jackson's house and the old saint would be afraid he could not find me in all that mob, for all the rest of the kith and kin would spend the night there, too. It was strange how Santa would drive over in broad daylight, drop a note down our chimney, and be off before anyone could see him. Mother was the only one that ever heard him, too. I often would run to look, but all I could ever find was a piece of paper with some writing on it which Mother could read. If my parents were in a special hurry the letter might say, "Look on the portico of the b i g house." On such occasions, I would receive my presents there, but I always thought they were more fun when they came down the chimney.

Now for the big fun: It was time to be on our way to Grandfather's. I had no new dress to wear, but I usually had new, home-knitted, yarn stockings, smelling partly like sheep and partly like the vinegar used to set the dye, but smelling nevertheless. My shoes were called Elkins because they were made in Elkin, N. C. They were made of good leather for they had to last a whole season; in fact, the leather was so good and thick that it would refuse to bend when I took a step. Thus, being rather on the plumpish side from a winter diet of dried beans and sowbelly, I learned to waddle very much like a goose as I propelled my shoes across the floor. I was exceptionally proud when I was lucky enough to get a pair with copper toes. My but they were beautiful! (I can remember standing on the toes of my shoes to keep the holes from showing when they became worn, but now they make shoes with the toes out.) I can't remember what else I wore to Grandfather's except a red homespun petticoat for which the cloth had been woven by my own grandmother. I secretly wished I didn't have to wear it underneath my dress, it was so pretty.

By the time Mother and I were ready, Dad had the mules hitched to the wagon and had driven them up to the kitchen door. I was wrapped in a quilt and deposited in the back of the wagon, while Mom and Dad crawled in, facing the team. The mules were named Pete and Mary. My Father was very proud of them, for they were the pullingest team in the neighborhood. When he called them in from the pasture he would whistle and yell, "Cup Colie," whatever that meant. The mules evidently knew, for they always came trotting just as his sheep did when he called, "Quin - nannie," or as the cows did when they heard "Swoak pied."

Many wagons had spring seats and many people rode in chairs, but not my Scotch-Irish parents. Doing that would look too much like being soft, so they would sit down in the wagon bed and jounce happily along, forgetting they had a care in the world, especially me. When they did finally think of me, my legs would be almost as stiff as my

brogan shoes and they would have to stop at a neighbor's house to thaw me out. On that particular trip, the woman at whose house we stopped was dressed like all other married women and, to me, she looked old; but she must have not been for she is still living now. She gave me two bantam eggs, the first I had ever seen. After that episode, we next arrived at my Father's store where we all dismounted, country style, which in those parts meant every-one for himself. Father's was a very successful country store; you could tell by the goods and people sitting all over the place. Every nail keg, every feed sack, and every other place that would hold a human carcass was occupied by folks -- just sitting.

After we dismounted, my Father brought out a tow sack full of firecrackers and handed me my usual toy pistol and caps, whereupon we were off to a rip-roaring Christmas. Mother drove the mules the rest of the way, while Dad and I serenaded the countryside with firecrackers and toy pistol shots. As usual, Grandmother, when she heard all the commotion, would smile and say, "There comes Bob's." How in the world she could ever be glad to see that clan, I'll never know, for they were all just like my Dad, quiet and hard-working except at Christmas when they would let loose enough noise to wake the dead.

Soon after our arrival, all the noisy kin gathered in; Grandmother heard the last one whoop at the top of Hickory Ridge -- she knew them all by sound and began dishing up the supper. What a meal, and all cooked over an open fire.

Grandmother never used a recipe; she cooked by pinches, dabs, and wads, with an extra dipper of water for the gravy when there was company. Still, hers was the best food I have ever eaten. The men always ate first -- country style -- then the women, finally, the children. I was nearly grown before I knew a chicken had any part except wings and necks.

While the women folks washed the dishes, the men went off in the other room to play poker (for matches), and to guzzle mountain moonshine. Mountain men drank as much as they pleased, but their women were not supposed to touch the stuff. No one was ever a greater critic of women than the women themselves. I remember one of the women who had married into the family was not so particular; in fact, she carried her own bottle in her stocking top and drank as much as she pleased.

On this occasion that I am telling about, everyone sat up all night except the kids. We were put to bed on pallets made on the floor. (I have gone to sleep many a night with someone's feet in my face.) About midnight, the Christmas celebration really got into full swing: all the remaining firecrackers were lit off in volleys; pistols and shotguns were discharged into the air; and the prize of the evening, the dynamite blast which was to rival all the neighbors, was set off. All that clamor awakened all the kids whose howls added to the commotion. Soon the neighbors on Rich Hill, Hoot Owl Holler, Hickory Ridge, Shooting Creek and all others in hearing distance began to answer in kind. About that time, my whiskey-drinking aunt and uncle began to hate each other out loud, threatening to shoot one another and daring the other to do so.

Christmas was exciting in some communities, according to the ancestry of the inhabitants. I, for one, had to go to school before I found out that there was a "Christ" in "Christmas" and, strangely enough, the person who taught me that was my own father, the teacher.

All through the years, we mountaineers have been continually remodeling Christmas, adding to the customs brought into these mountains by our ancestors those that are more modern. Radio and television have done more than anything to make Christmas meaningful, a season that is satisfying, inspirational, colorful and really centered around the lives of little children.

* * * *

The following story is indicative of the mountaineers' attitudes toward Negroes:

A Negro In Carroll County

About one hundred years ago a Negro came to a ford on Big Reed Island Creek, at the head of a mill pond, and let it be known that he wanted a place to stay all night.

Because he knew how mountain people felt about members of his race, he attempted to gain sympathy, as he went to the home of Jackie McGrady, by crying and wailing at the top of his voice about his poor brother, Gabriel, who had fallen into the swollen river and had floated on down into the mill pond.

Neighbors gathered around and, feeling sorry for the poor man in his plight, made grappling hooks and dragged the pond. As the work progressed, the Negro began to get restless and tried to leave the crowd, so they became suspicious and set a watch. He became even more restless, and that caused them to believe he had lied to them.

They put him out before the crowd of searchers and made him confess that his story was all a hoax. That angered the workers who had been trying to help him, so they got their rifles. They told him they would give him a forty-yard start; they gave orders for him to leave there and never come back again.

He started running and they fired their guns over his head for emphasis. Believe you me, that black man was really a-picking 'em up and a-setting 'em down as he headed for the tall timbers.

* * * *

Some of the most distinctive folkways of the mountain people have to do with the burial of their dead, as the following tales attest:

Tales Heard While "Setting Up" With A Corpse[1]

I do reckon my Uncle Waller is one of the toughest men that ever lived. He shoulda been dead seven or eight times already.

Why, one time a mule kicked him so hard that his false teeth ain't been found till yit. He was awful high strung and one day his old mule balked on him. Uncle Waller just aimed to make him go anyways, so he cuts him a bresh and gives the old mule a warp or two acrost the back. When he did, that old mule sorter feisted around a time or two and let go with a kick that hit Uncle Waller in the head an' his false teeth flew out, an i-jacks, they hain't never found them yit.

One time he was drunk, an' a bunch o'fellers decided to kill him and take his money. He was a railroad man an' had money. They beat him around till he shoulda been dead, an' tossed him over in a gully, an' piled stumps an' rocks on top o' him an left out. Well, Uncle Waller just laid there till he sobered up, an' come a-crawling out, an' come on home.

Then there was the time the train run over him an' broke his jaw -- just scrushed the bones all up. The doctor set it the best he could an' Uncle Waller went on home. That night at supper-time he tried to swaller some soup an' he just

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[1] These tales might have been told anywhere in Carroll County. However, they were actually told at the home of Mrs. Lizzie Bowman, on the occasion of her death, in 1954.

rolled his tongue around in his mouth a few times an' 'lowed twarn't set right. So, he just retch up an' grabbed them wroppings an' jerked them off, an' went an' tuck an' set his own jaw, an' tied it up, an' it got well.

I'll never forget the time him an' Old Tom had a argument over a game of poker. Old Tom had a pistol an' just up an' shot him. They was a-settin' around a camp fire when it happened an' Uncle Waller had been a-drinkin' wine an' they saw the wine running out and thought he was a-bleedin' to death. They sot up with him several nights expectin' him to die, but he got well. I tell you, Uncle Waller was a rounder before he got to be a preacher; and after, too, I reckon.

* * * *

One time a man named Buck got shot in the head an' the doctor-man he progged around in thar an' never could locate the bullet, so the doctor paid him five dollars for his head to study, after he was dead. Well, old Buck took that five dollars, bought licker with it and outlived the doctor.

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That reminds me of Charlie Smith, who shot hisself. He jest put the gun agin his temple an pulled the trigger. The bullet went right on through an' come out on tother side. He got well an' someone axed Doctor Conduff if a man had any brains where that bullet went through, an' Doc said, "They're sposed to!"

* * * *

I reckon they's the shootinest people in the world over around the Buffalo an' down around

Lambsburg. Why, Bob Kyle an' folks like them, when they stepped in, the crowd stepped back. I remember one time when I was a little girl, we was a-having a Christmas program at school when they come in with their pistols an' just took over. We all had to leave out. I was scared to death. Why, they would shoot you at the drop of a hat, too. You could tell by the look in their eyes that they would shoot you.

* * * *

My Dad used to tell old witch tales amongst the rest of them. He really believed he seen them, too. Our house belonged to my granddad and he had slaves. They say it was a sight what really went on there.

There was a old woman that lived there that caused all the trouble. She put a spell on things. One time some of them asked her how you got to be a witchcraft woman. She said, "Oh, tain't nothing to it; you just throw a live black cat in a kettle of boiling water an' bile it till the meat draps from the bones. Then you take an' carry them bleached bones in your pockets. As long as you carry them, you can make anything happen."

One time Aunt Haley's meat disappeared. She looked everywheres for it, but couldn't find it; so they had to do without, except what little they could afford to buy. Upstairs they had a buckwheat box. All that winter they used out of the buckwheat box until they finally got to the bottom, and there was Aunt Haley's meat, every bit of it. It couldn't possibly be, but there it was!

My Uncle Matt once stayed all night at my grandpa's house. The way the house was built, it had a walkway from the kitchen to the "big house." The "big house" was hainted. I was scared to death to go in it, because people had

told me what awful things they had seen in there. Once my cousin and I held each other's hand and went in there and, believe you me, if anything at all had a moved we would a both just plum died, that's all. Well, Uncle Matt was a-going to stay all night and the company bed was in the "big house." Uncle Matt went to bed, an' along about one o'clock, they seen him with a quilt and a pillow a-going to the barn to sleep. He said he never slept a wink while he was in the "big house," for all night long something just kept a-raising the cover off'n the bed and a-letting it down, and just kept it going up and down all night long. Now, he was a preacher and was supposed to know what he was a-talking about.

My sister used to stay at Uncle Andrew's to help Aunt Mae with some old folks who used to live there. She tells this tale and there is not a more truthful woman I know of. She said that she waited on the old women and Aunt Mae fixed her bed on a couch in the room with them so she could look after them at night. When everyone else had gone to sleep my sister said she heard a noise like someone rattling chains and it grew louder and louder until it come in the room; then it took the form of lights in the shape of people. There was six of them and they glided around the room and looked at the six old women as they lay asleep. As they bent over each one they sang a song. My sister said it was some of the prettiest singing she had ever heard. Aunt Mae said my sister was a nervous wreck next morning and she didn't get over it for a long time, neither.

My Dad was coming home one night and he had to pass a hainted graveyard at Meadows of Dan. He looked over there and saw a great big old light just a-dancing on Old Man Shack's grave, and six or eight angels was a-dancing around the grave. Dad whipped up his horse and

liked to a rode him to death to get home, he was so scared. But, just as he got there, he thought, "Shame on me, a grown man. I'm a-going back there and see what that was."

So he rode on back, hitched his horse and crept up to the grave. There he saw a lantern a-setting atop the grave and eight of his friends, dog drunk, setting around the grave eating pork and beans and crackers. They said they was a-giving old Shack his last supper.

One time a man died who had something wrong with his back so that he had to walk bent double. Well, he died and the only way they could get him in the coffin was to strop him down. The people who fixed him up went on home and others come to take over, as was the custom, so no one else knowed he was tied down in his coffin.

They took him on to church and the preacher was a "preaching him to Heaven." He had just got to the part where he said, "An' Old Man Quessenberry shall rise up and walk on the streets of Glory," when the strap broke and the old man sat bolt upright in the casket. The people was so scared that they all bolted for the door at the same time and no one could get out 'cause they was jammed agin it so tight. About that time the preacher looked up and seen the corpse and he began to shout, "Brother, if'n you all don't want to use that door, get out'n the way and let someone through that does."

Quare things just kept a-happening up to Grandpa's house and one day one of the work hands said, "Well, this is one time I ain't going to lose my old hat." So when he set up to the table to eat he jammed his old hat right down on his knee. When dinner was over he retch for his hat and 'twarn't thar. They couldn't find it nowheres. Aunt Mae went over to the stove to take up the rest of her bread and there was his old hat, crammed in the oven. How it got there no one knows, for no one had moved away from the table and the stove was across the room.

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A "hardshell"[1] preacher died in the mountains in 1952. His illiterate sons and grandsons held an Irish wake for him. They all got drunk and got the old man up out of his coffin and walked him around the room and poured whiskey down his throat, "so's the old man won't git so lonesome."

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In 1931, the business section of Hillsville burned during the night. Many people saw the light in the sky and became excited about it. Lack of communication caused many isolated people to think the world was coming to an end and they were scared. There was much weeping and praying. One woman with her six children in tow, was running to her neighbor's to prepare for the end of time, when she met the local drunk. She stammered, "Do you see that light chander in the sky?"

"Shucks, Clara, 'tain't nothing," comforted the drunk. "They decided to move Hell back to Carroll County and that's just the first load."

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Memories of the days when the United States was convulsed in a fratricidal war are green in southwestern

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[1] "Hardshell" is a term frequently used to denote certain members of the Primitive Baptist sect, prevalent in the Virginia mountains.

Virginia. The following tales or others similar to them might be heard almost anywhere in Carroll County:

Civil War Tales

Once our boys were encamped near a good farm. The farmer had pretty fields and all kinds of animals so they decided to go out foraging, you know. He had some real nice geese and the boys began to plan how they could get one for supper.

The farmer had just gone out to feed his geese, so one of the men put a grain of corn on a fish-hook tied to a string. He kept a hold on the string and throwed the hook out amongst the geese.

Pretty soon a big fat goose swallowed that grain of corn, so he took out in a run, just a screaming every breath like the goose was a chasing him.

The farmer hollered for him to come on back, the goose wouldn't hurt him, but he made out like he couldn't hear and just kept a-running. He drug that old goose on into camp and they cooked it for supper. Matt Blanchett, a Baptist preacher was there -- he mought be some of your kin -- but, any-way, he wouldn't eat nothing that was stole that-a-way; he didn't believe in it.

They cooked that goose and was a-eating away when finally Matt couldn't stand it no longer. He passed his plate and said, "Boys, you can give me a little bit of the gravy."

* * * * *

Old Anderson Largen was a-standing right up thar on the breastworks, right in the thick of the battle. The old captain was a-hollering and

a-swearing for him to get down but he just kept a-shooting, until finally they shot the gun out of his hand. Old Anderson never batted an eye, just hollered back over his shoulder, "Boys, hand me a gun quick, I see another danged blue jacket."

* * * * *

Uncle Greene Mabry, who lived to be over one hundred years old, told about being discharged when the War was over. They were just turned loose wherever they happened to be, so the soldiers had to get home the best way they could. They almost starved to death. He said the best-tasting food he ever ate in his life was young tender chestnut leaves wrapped around a stick and roasted in the ashes. The disbanded soldiers sometimes got a chance to steal corn from the cavalrymen's horses. They would take that and parch it by the fire or boil it in water until it became soft enough to eat.

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Two of our boys were discharged in Atlanta, Georgia, and had to walk all the way home. When they got to Chattanooga, Tennessee, they were put in jail because the authorities there thought they had deserted. They told them they hadn't run away, they had just walked off, so they let them out. They come by Galax. It was called Bonaparte, then, and there wasn't even so much as a trail between there and Hillsville.

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John Jackson, who lived to be ninety-five, was only fifteen during the last days of the War. They come to get him to go fight and he was gone to mill.

He had to walk and it took all day and into the night. Then he had to walk to Hillsville. By the time he go there, word had come through that the fighting had stopped.

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Jonah Marshall, while training, tripped and fell in the mud. His captain was real mean. He bawled him out good and told him that, when they got to the next camp, he would have him court-martialed and shot. On the way, they met some blue coats and had a little skirmish. The captain was the first one shot. Jonah said he couldn't help but be glad to see him fall, for it saved his life.

* * * * *

Bill Tom Anderson got shot. The ball just passed on through the calf of his leg. The wound took infection and looked like blood poisoning, so Bill Tom headed for home. He would walk as long as he could stand it and stop by a cool mountain spring. He had a silk handkerchief in his pocket. He would wet the handkerchief in the pure water and thread it through his wound and pull it on through. He did this all the way home and the leg got well and he lived to a ripe old age. Bill, he had to hide out until the fighting stopped, or the Home Guard would have shot him for a deserter.

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Two neighbors were on opposite sides during the Civil War. When the War was over and they were coming home they met on a road near their homes and one pulled out his pistol and shot the other. Now, his tortured spirit walks up and down that lonely road every night. D. V. Redmond, Carroll County Librarian, was going along it one night and saw a man coming to meet him. A noise

> caused him to look away for a moment and, when he looked back, no man was there. However, Redmond didn't stay around to see if there were any bullet holes in him or not.

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Mountain lore is sometimes best expressed in the personality of an outstanding individual whose reputation and exploits tend to become legendary. Such a man is the Reverend Robert W. Childress.

"When there's big work to be done, God always raises up a big man to do it." There was, and is, big work in the Blue Ridge Mountains of southwestern Virginia; therefore, Childress, rapidly gaining recognition as the "Billy Sunday of the South," appears to have been sent to perform the mighty acts God wanted done in that region.

The Farm Journal for November, 1953, states,[1]

> At the Slate Mountain Church, it seemed that Billy Sunday came to life as we listened. "Teach us to pray," he began, and as he preached you felt the sincerity of his mountain upbringing and its humor, too. "The Lord knows you need crops," he said, "but he won't send down angels and yoke

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[1] Davids, Richard C., Help for Sleeping Churches, The Farm Journal, (Southern Edition, Volume LXXVII, Number 11), November Issue, 1953, pages 151 and 152.

> them to the plow of work while you sit in the shade sucking lemonade through a straw, and singing about the Promised Land." There was quiet in the church. You couldn't help catching the fire of Billy Sunday's faith.

Childress was born in a remote section of Patrick County, Virginia, in the year 1890, a boy without opportunity who grew to manhood, married, and then was finally able to attend Union Seminary in Richmond, Virginia, where he was a top-ranking student. While there he received many promising offers assuring him of fame and fortune, which he refused by saying simply, "You don't need me; I'm a hill-billy."

He returned to the Blue Ridge Mountains and began the task of bringing succor, sustenance and spiritual uplifting to a people whom he dearly loves; thereby giving his all and accepting nothing for himself. He has often been heard to remark, "I left home this morning without even as much as a polecat -- not a cent to my name -- but God provided for me."

He now has six churches located within a twenty-mile radius in three counties: Patrick, Carroll and Floyd. Each church edifice has been remodeled and rebuilt using native stones from adjoining fields, thus making them beautiful architectural structures which blend harmoniously with rustic hills and the

hill people. They stand today as testimonial monuments to a "hill-billy" preacher, a champion among champions.

Childress likes to tell jokes on himself, as well as others. Once he had to be absent from services in his mountain church and sent a friend of his, in his stead. When the service started, one of the local deacons made several remarks, among which was: "We are happy to note a new face among our little flock." Thereupon, a small urchin spoke up from the back, "Say, mister, that ain't no new face; it was second-hand when he got it." "Anyway," continued the deacon, unmindful of the rude interruption, "we are sad to miss the vacant face of our beloved pastor."

At one time, he was telling a lady visitor from New York about his early childhood; how he, his mother, his father, and nine brothers and sisters lived in a one-room log cabin.

"My," the New Yorker exclaimed in amazement, "weren't you awfully crowded?"

"No," he emphatically declared, "no, not at all, until Uncle Jake came to visit. Then it was a bit unhandy, for he had nine children, too."

The following is a verbatim record of an interview with Childress:

> Once a man, who was out gathering material for a book he was writing, came into the mountains

of southwestern Virginia. He had delved into the history of his forefathers and was just carried away with what he had learned. As he was winding his way along the narrow mountain pathways, he came upon two boys just a-fighting for dear life. He shouted to them, "Boys, don't do that, just think of your ancestors."

"I ain't got no ancestors," drawled one boy as he wiped his bloody nose on his frayed shirt sleeve.

"Oh, yes, you have, sonny, you have wonderful ancestors," reassured the stranger.

"Well, if I have I caught'm from him, 'cause I slept with him last night."

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A typical mountaineer once told me, "I allus wanted my younguns to have some larnin. I hain't never had me no chanct to git anny. My brother he went to school one half a day 'n chawed the back offn our speller. I went the other half a day and chawed tother back offn it. Now, I know a whole lot, 'n m'brother knows a whole lot, 'n I've got a girl in college down at Radford."

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In the old days people traveled through mountains by paths which were made along the lines of least resistance; when the need arose they widened the paths in order that sleds and wagons might go. When the first Model "T" came through the mountains, the driver with his companion, was trying to find out something about this mountain territory and its people. They came up to a mountain cabin and the old mountaineer was standing in the door. The driver stopped and passed the time of day and asked him if he had lived in the

mountains all his life. The mountaineer spat derisively and stoically replied, "Nope, not yet, I hain't."

* * * * *

Being isolated, without the benefit of schools, churches or newspapers, you would expect superstition to arise in these mountains, and there has been much of it and there is still some in certain remote sections. They (the mountaineers) fully believe that certain persons are "gifted" in the stopping of blood, or the talking out of fire. You can buy warts; or, if you start somewhere and forget something, you must make an "X" in the sand and spit in it before you go back. If you spill the salt, you must throw a pinch of the spilled salt over your right shoulder; or, if the butter won't come, you must whip the milk with certain switches; and there are many more.

These superstitions, so deeply imbedded in the lives of these people, just naturally flowed over in the realm of religion; so we come to a mountain version of religion, (to people) who call themselves "Hardshells," a variant from the Primitive Baptist. They did not start out to conform to any certain belief but are the natural product of the conditions in which they lived. They had no Sunday schools, not due to the fact that they didn't believe in them, but because the houses were so far apart they could not get together easily.

Their winters were long and rough; they had no doctors, no preachers or teachers, so they just had to make the best of what they did have. If a man could talk well, he was called on to "say something" at the funeral of a departed one. He frequently could neither read nor write, but he could talk for hours at the time, saying the same idea over and over again.

When the weather was exceedingly cold and some person died, a few neighbors would come in and bury the departed one without a funeral. Several months later, when the weather was good, came the funeral. Starting like this it is natural that they would expect a big occasion of it since they had waited so long. If it were an old person who died, then they would wait -- perhaps years -- until the other departed this life and then have a double funeral. For this momentous occasion they would have all the preachers they could get. They would have "dinner on the ground" and all the relatives would assemble from far and near, which made a big congregation, as they remembered kinship even to "thirty-second cousins"; and they all remembered a special occasion like a funeral, especially since the eats were furnished by the family of the deceased. The women came carrying their "ridicules" filled with baby "didies" and "sweet-cakes" to pacify the crying babies. The funeral lasted for six or eight hours; sometimes they would preach so long that it would become dark and they would have to bury the body next day.

I still remember the first sermon I ever heard when I was a little boy. A young man came home drunk, trying to kill his step-mother. The gun went off accidentally and he shot himself in the leg. With no doctor or hospital, the young man died for lack of treatment. His funeral was held six months later.

Seeing the mountains and the many wonders of nature, and knowing that a higher power had control of the world, they had accepted fully the sovereignty of God. And, since God was all-powerful to them, man therefore had no power of his own and was in no way responsible for his actions. So, they concluded that the young man, whose name was George, was predestined to get drunk and to try to kill his step-mother and consequently kill himself.

Since they were lacking in education and frequently found it hard to express themselves,

they added a tone to their sermons to make them more attractive (this was done gradually as the sermon gained momentum); and also, as they had nothing much to say, it gave the speakers time to think.

Since George was from a prominent family, he was somewhat of a challenge to a preacher to do his best. One of the preachers at the funeral said, and these are almost the exact words:

"God meant for poor George to do what he did - ah - and before the foundation of the world - ah - God could see - ah - that George must be born - ah - and - ah - that George would grow up - ah - and learn to drink - ah - and poor George - ah - without knowing anything about it - ah - himself - ah - learned to drink - ah - and because God had foreordained - ah - and planned - ah - and predestined - ah - that poor Georgie - ah - should get drunk - ah - and try to kill his step-mother - ah - all of which George done - ah - but God himself planned - ah - and now poor George is gone - ah - as God planned - ah - and he must be at this time - ah - walking on the streets of Glory - ah - because - ah - he fulfilled the plan and purpose - ah - of God - ah. It seems to us - ah - sad - ah - to see him go in the bloom of manhood - ah - so swiftly and so suddenly - ah - but his time had come - ah - as God had planned - ah - and he must go - ah - at the time and the way that God had planned - ah -. No man can leave this world - ah - in any way, nor at any time, except, the way that God plans - ah - and he can't die before his time - ah - for if he did, what would he do when his time comes - ah - would he die again - ah? Therefore, we look to meet little Georgie on the streets of Glory with all of them who has filled the purposes and plans of God - ah. Amen."

This is not all of their religion. Many of them did not have Bibles, even the preachers often had no Bibles; and, being unable to read, they

would preach mostly from experiences; which consisted of what they had felt, or some thought they had had on outstanding occasions, or some dream.

In receiving you into their church, you would be required to tell your experience or your dream that made you feel that you were "fit'n." They would never turn a man out of the church for getting drunk, for the preachers themselves believed in drinking. But he was honest, even in his drinking, and it was a common standard among the mountain folk, that they that made liquor must make it pure.

The only salary that the preacher received was frequently a jug of good wine or brandy. One lady once told me she had lost confidence in her preacher because he charged her and her old man two gallons of whiskey for marrying them and no one else had ever given him over one gallon, "and I jes hain't had no confidence in him sence."

All that has changed, though, in the course of time and progress.

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Large families were the style. They married young, so they would have time to raise large families. A family without at least eight or ten children was considered very small, indeed. The largest family I ever heard of had thirty-five children. A man needed his "younguns" to help in the fields or in the home.

The second largest family I heard of belonged to Johnny White. He had twenty-six children and lived near where your house is now. In those days, there was such little passing, all the children would crowd around the doors and windows and stare at the passers. One day a man drove up in his buggy, drew rein, and called out, "Hello there."

Mrs. White went out to see what he wanted, with all her twenty-six children following close behind. The man, not being used to mountain ways, tipped his hat and said, "I'm sorry I broke up your school."

Another mountain woman went to Hillsville, the county seat, which, after all, was a small village and many miles from her home. As this was her first trip "to town" she took along all her twenty-two children. She met up with a man who became annoyed as he tried to pass her on the muddy street. He spoke and said, "Are all these yours, or is this a picnic?"

With arms akimbo, she spat back at him, "I'll have you know they're all mine, and it ain't no picnic."

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The courting was done without any privacy. There was usually only one room in the house in which to entertain company and also for family use. So, the boy would come to see the girl and sit by her, sometimes holding her hand, in the presence of her father and mother and all the other children. On one occasion the boy was very much embarrassed because there was so much he felt and so much he couldn't find the words nor the courage to say in the presence of all her family, so he sat and worried and fretted because he couldn't speak. Before he left (just before they called "bedtime") he finally got up enough courage to blurt out, "They just wasted purty on you when they made you, didn't they? They made you as purty as they could and then pitched a shovel full in your face." With that breathtaking speech, he fell out the door. They were married the next Sunday.

The only place for young people to go was to church and there was no way to go except on horseback. If their courtship had advanced far

enough, she would ride behind him on his horse. Many romances blossomed and faded, to and from the "meetings."

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When the children were born, they never thought of having a doctor, if they had wanted one there would have been none available. (I have heard my grandmother tell how she had all eleven of her babies without grunting and how proud Reuben was of her.) Their babies were usually hale and hearty, but sometimes a baby was puny; which never failed to create a lot of excitement. One woman was telling about a friend who lived across the hills, who had given birth to a baby that weighed only four pounds. In the days of strapping babies, this was indeed a shame to his parents.

The other woman said, "Well I do declair, you know the pore little thing won't live."

"Well, I dunno, now," said the first woman. "It mout, for because, when I was bornded, I jes weighed three pounds."

"Well, I do declair for goodness. Did you live?"

"Yes, I lived. And done right well too, they said."

* * * * *

The men loved to swap horses, play cards and drink liquor for pastime. If one could read, he was looked up to as kind of a leader and was called on to write contracts and business papers that needed to be recorded. One of such persons received his first typewritten letter and he resented it, having been looked up to as a leader

in his community; so he answered it saying, "What made you write to me in reading? I read writing."

* * * * *

They would trade on anything they had except their wives and, on occasions, which were very rare, they have been known to swap wives.

Two women neighbors were living, one on one side of a mountain stream and the other on the other side, with two different paths leading to the two homes. It so happened that these two women decided to visit each other on the same day and, on taking different paths, didn't meet up. In the meantime, a storm came up and, as mountain streams always swell rapidly during a quick thunder storm, the foot log across the creek was washed away and the water was too high and turbulent for crossing.

Night was fast approaching and each man discovered that he had the other's wife in his house. They all met down at the creek and one yelled across the stream, "Hey, Tom, I got your wife."

Came the answer, "So I see, and I've got yours, too. What can we do about it?"

"I don't see no way but to swap."

"That suits me all right. How'll you trade?"

"Mine for yours."

"Mine's younger'n yours so she ought to be worth more. I tell you what, if you'll give me two bushels of buckwheat when the creek runs down, I'll trade." So they traded.

* * * * *

When it was found that women could get new "store teeth" from a dentist, one man walked twenty-five miles to see how much it would cost to "git Nance some chompers."

The dentist said that he would have to have at least ten dollars for a set, to which the grizzled old codger replied, "The whole woman just cost me two dollars when she had teeth." He refused to be cheated, so his wife was left to "gum it" until she passed away several years later.

Once a church ordered a set of teeth for their toothless pastor, thinking only to be kind. His sermons became so long that they just couldn't sit still so long, and he couldn't seem to quit talking. Just as the congregation was getting desperate, there came a letter from Sears Roebuck stating that they were sorry that they had made a mistake in filling the order and had sent women's teeth, and would they please send them back for exchange.

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The mountaineer has a sense of humor which has helped him to face the many hardships and problems of rearing a large family. If he hears a joke he loves to flavor it with his own flavoring before he retells it. If he can, he turns the joke to fit his wife. One mountaineer heard a group of people talking about someone who could talk to the dead, so he made this story and told it for his wife's benefit:

A man had died and as his wife was lonesome she wanted to get in touch with him. She wanted to speak to him to find out how it was with him since he had passed on to his reward. She found a man who claimed to have the power of speaking with the dead. They arranged a meeting to call her husband from the Great Beyond. The room was darkened and the man had a helper stationed in

the other room, so as to comfort the old lady and to extract some little money for himself.

In a few minutes he said, "Your husband is ready to talk to you now. Call out his name and he will answer you."

She called and he answered. She was so happy at hearing his voice, she called out, "Bill, is this sure nuff you?"

"Yes, honey, this is me."

"How is it with you Bill? Are you as happy as you were here with me?"

"Yes, honey, I'm a lot happier."

"Heaven must be a wonderful place."

"Oh, I guess so. But, dear, I ain't in Heaven."

* * * * *

Once another man was cutting wood when a neighbor came by and exclaimed excitedly, "Where's your woman?"

"She's back there in the house."

"Well let's git down there. I just seen a wildcat jump through the winder in your house."

The mountaineer just kept on cutting wood as he said, "I hain't got no time to fool. That wildcat will just have to git out the best way he can. I guess next time he'll look where he's jumping."

* * * * *

They loved to tell stories on strangers, too. A lady from Richmond, Virginia, came into the

mountains to get acquainted with mountain life and to do some work among its people. She found a nice clean home where they agreed to keep her for the summer. She was happy in her surroundings but she was subject to many jokes. She was carried away with everything she saw in the mountains; how they raised so much of what they used, so that they didn't often buy from the store.

One night there was a dish of honey on the supper table. Seeing it she remarked, "Oh, and you all keep a bee, too!"

She wanted to watch them milk the cows to see where the milk came from. After she watched awhile, they asked her if she thought she could milk. She said as she looked at the cow very carefully, "I believe I could turn it on but how do you turn it off?"

Then, on second thought, she said, "Maybe I'd better not start on a cow; I'd better learn on a calf."

While she was there a little calf was born and the mother cow called for it in the only language cows know. The lady from Richmond happened to have her back turned when the old cow bawled for her calf. She quickly turned around and asked, "Which horn did that old cow blow that time?"

* * * * *

Among all their experiences, some pathetic, some humorous, you can see through their experiences much that is fine and good and beautiful. When I first came into the community to do Presbyterian work, I managed to obtain a little log schoolhouse in which to hold services. I had a little folding organ and a nice lady who promised to play on it. We taught the young people songs and conducted night services for the

community. About seventy persons confessed Christ as their Savior, there in that one-room log school.

One man and his wife had parted. He had been on a drunk and whipped his wife, so she left him. They had scattered their children through the community and were planning to have them adopted. They were both at services in this little log structure and both made a profession of faith. After service, they made up and this is how they did it:

He walked up and said, "Martha, let's go home."

"All right, Sam."

They were so happy at getting back together and getting their children all together again that they wanted the preacher to come take a meal with them.

I went. There I found a one-room log cabin, except for an attic upstairs, where their children slept. Martha was mixing up dough for the bread. She dipped snuff, as did most mountain women. And as she walloped the dough, she entertained the preacher by telling the latest news. Each time she opened her mouth to speak a little of the snuff would drop in the bread tray. The preacher stayed and enjoyed the meal as best he could under the circumstances, but hoped he would not be called on again to partake of Martha's food. He was living in Richmond at the time, and before he went back to Richmond, he had organized a Sunday School and built a little church for them. Sam and Martha were faithful in attendance. The next summer when the preacher went back to the mountains, he was again called on to visit with the friend who flavored the biscuits with her snuff. He knew that he ought to go, so he went. He was much surprised and happy to find that, while they were just as poor as ever, Martha had cleaned up the house, washed the snuff off and the meal was just as good as any that could be found anywhere. But this does not end the story. The preacher left the country and a few years later received word

that they required him to come back and see them. He found his friend, Sam, dying and, as the old man was breathing his last, he asked to be raised up so he might see out through the little window. Sam had never been to school a day, but with a raptured face he cried out, "Ain't it awful purty out there? But where I'm a-going it's a whole lot purtier."

He continued to gaze until his breath was about gone. He asked to be placed back on his pillow and was gone.

Another man who had never been more than a few miles away from his home had found God in these hills. He asked the preacher to tell all his neighbors to come shake hands with him before he went to Heaven.

Ten miles across the country mountains there was another man who had lived all his life among the hills. He said to his wife one day, "Old womern, I won't be with you long. I'm going over the hill."

And she replied, "Bill, you go on over the hill, and I'll be coming to jine you afore long."

"Over the hill" to them meant the little family burial plot. Bill died and his neighbors came to bury him. His companion walked behind, being led by two young ladies. As she walked along behind his casket, she said, "This is the happiest day I've had in a long time. Me and Bill we went to school together, what little we went. Bill would tote my dinner. One day Bill axed me to marry him and I told him I would. Me and Bill got married and moved in to take keer of his Ma an' Pa, here in this same house where we raised all our younguns. And, after Bill's Ma 'n Pa died, we give all our strength in trying to make a living. The younguns din't live so long -- I don't know why, but we lost them all -- and each time when one would be taken, we would take it over the hill and bury it. Then we'd come back an set down, Bill holding my hand like he did in his courting days.

And, after we had cried awhile and talked awhile, we'd begin to work, for we had to make a living. And now Bill is going over the hill to be with the younguns and this is the last trip I will have to make 'til I go and jine up with Bill and the younguns."

* * * * *

The early settlers didn't do much farming; they mostly hunted, fished, and gathered that which nature provided. The woods was full of acorns and chestnuts. They picked up chestnuts to eat and to sell. They turned their hogs in the woods to eat the acorns. Each man placed his mark on his hog and turned him loose and many times they were not seen again until they were fully grown and ready for butchering. A man was telling all this to a friend and describing how they lived. The man was impressed but dubious and said, "Didn't it take a long time to fatten a hog that way?"

"Yes it did, but time ain't nothing to a hog, nohow."

* * * * *

Once a mountain mother always made her little boy eat an egg for breakfast because she had heard they were "good for you."

"Ma," wailed the boy, "there's something the matter with this egg."

"No there hain't nothing wrong with it. Eat it now and go on to school, afore I wear you out."

Silence for while, then from the kitchen, "Ma, have I got to eat his bill, too?"

* * * * *

A mountaineer's favorite pastime was getting drunk. He would get drunk every Saturday night; then he would come in home, rush over to the corner to

the slop bucket and vomit. He would be so sick he would nearly die. One night when he came in in this condition, his wife had killed a chicken for breakfast and left the entrails in the bucket. He ran to the bucket as usual and, feeling unusually sick, struck a match to see if he was really as sick as he thought he was. He saw these chicken entrails and thought they were his own. A little later he went to bed and woke his wife crying, "I done it, I done it."

His wife muttered a sleepy, "Done what?"

"Lordy, Mary, I done thowed up my guts just like you kept telling me I would. But, by the help of the Lord and that big long-handled spoon of yours, I finally got them all back. I ain't never going to drink no more. I promise."

* * * * *

A hill-billy couple courted and married. After they were married his ardor cooled off. Not understanding why, he was questioned by his young bride. "Why don't you kiss me any more like you used to?"

"Well, you see, since you made me quit chewing tobacco, I just don't feel like it any more. That's all."

"If that's all, then, here's a quarter. Go on over to the store and buy yourself a plug of tobacco."

The wife's mother, who had been listening from behind the door, called to her daughter, "Here's another quarter, Liza. Get your Pa a plug, too."

* * * * *

A Doctor Smith went over in the mountains to see a sick woman. He put his thermometer in

her mouth and, as it was awfully cold, he went to the fire to warm his hands before examining her further. Before his hands were warm, she took the thermometer out of her mouth and handed it back to him, saying, "Here, Doctor, I'm perfectly easy now. I sure wish I had me one of them things."

* * * * *

A trained nurse was in a home caring for a very sick woman and giving her medicine. One morning, when it was time for her medicine, she found her out on the back porch shaking like she had the palsy.

"Here, here, what is the matter? What are you doing?"

"Well, I read on that there bottle where it said to shake well before taking, an' that's what I'm a-doing."

Once a woman was cooking dried apples for supper. As they smelled so good her old man started eating them before they were done. Before long he took sick and said, "Old womern I'm a-goin a' die."

"No you hain't nuther. I'll just fix you up a little soda."

After a while he took worse and begged his wife to send for the doctor, but she just kept fixing him more soda, thinking the dried apples caused his pain by swelling inside his stomach. He kept begging and finally she gave in and sent for the doctor, telling him all the time there was nothing the matter with him. When the doctor arrived, the man was dead. He asked the old woman what was the matter with her husband. To that she replied, "I don't know, but I do know that, whatever it was, it warn't nothing serious."

* * * * *

Once a drunkard died. His wife was sitting with her children at the funeral. The preacher was eulogizing; he was almost knocking himself out telling what a good man the departed was: what a good husband, what a good father to his children. While he was talking thus, the wife slipped quietly from her seat and went and looked in the casket. When she returned to her seat she whispered to her daughter, "The way he was talking, I warn't sure that was Bill; but it was."

* * * * *

In the mountains it was customary to use this epitaph on gravestones because it sounded pretty to the hill people:

As I am now, soon you will be,
Prepare for death and follow me.

A fellow of doubtful character died and his widow had this verse inscribed on his headstone. The next morning, below the verse, was scribbled in charcoal:

To follow you I'll not consent
Until I know which way you went.

* * * * *

A woman had a mean husband. He treated her cruelly. Finally, when she could endure it no longer, she asked a friend what to do about it.

"Heap coals of fire on his head," came the comforting advice.

"Well," came the answer, "I'll try, but I tried scalding water and that didn't help a bit."

* * * * *

The people of the mountains talked a lot about fighting, but I reckon they weren't so mean. Why, the worst they ever done was kill somebody.

When Buren Harmon killed Freeda Bolt and the mountain folk were talking about what an awful thing it was, one old mountaineer spoke up and said, "He just ought to be sent to the electric chair and let him set on that for three or four years, and then I bet he'll think different."

* * * * *

Some people who lived in Indian Valley were very religious and hard working. They had a steer named Old Judidah. After he became too old to work they killed him for beef, as was customary. The folks never threw anything away, so they just kept a-cooking on Old Judidah's liver. One morning at breakfast, when they called on the hired hand to ask a blessing, he started out with, "Oh Lord they's three things that'll last forever: Heaven and Hell and Old Judidah's liver."

* * * * *

The doctor had just treated his patient when the man's wife, a old lady, said to him, "Doctor I want you to know how much I appreciate you coming so far to see my sick old man."

"Oh, never mind, I didn't just come to see him. I have another patient over the hill and I was just sorter killing two birds with one stone."

* * * * *

> In those days it was customary for a man to ask her father if they might marry. One day a young man in the community came over to where his sweetheart's father was splitting rails. He sat down on the rail pile and began to whittle. As he couldn't quite get up enough nerve to ask for his bride, he just kept whittling until he had whittled up the whole pile of rails and went on home. Another day the father saw him coming again. Before he could sit down on the rails once more, the father yelled, "I know what you come fir and you can have her; but don't set on my rails again."

* * * * *

> Homely as they are, these tales indicate to me the kind of life that the hills of Carroll County have produced: a life noted for its simplicity, for its earnestness, and for its faith. The typical mountaineer is about gone from our mountains but he has left a noble heritage.
>
> Now, you'll see cattle grazing on beautiful farms, with beautiful homes and fine cars and everything that human beings seem to need to make them happy. But, as I see our people, I wonder if they are happier than those who built their cabins close to their mountain springs and there reared their children; there finding peace, quietness, happiness and love.

* * * * *

Many of the folkways of the mountaineers had to do with their manner of getting food. Thus, distinctive customs clustered around the making of molasses. The following description of such an operation was made by a lifelong inhabitant of Carroll County and was

considered as typical of such occasions in the mountains:

Making Molasses

With the coming of autumn, the trees would be all decked out in their new holiday attire; there would be the tang of frost and the aroma of ripening apples in the air. That was the time for the good, old-time "'lasses bilin'." Every family had its patch of cane which was then stripped of fodder. The heads would be topped off, and the stalks would be cut to the ground and laid in neat piles to be hauled to the cane mill, on a sled drawn by a yoke of oxen, or sometimes on a neighbor's horse-drawn wagon.

The cane mill, owned by one man in the vicinity -- for the use of which we paid toll to the tune of one-eighth of what we made -- consisted of two huge steel rollers mounted on two logs. It was so heavy it took several men to lift it. Thus, the mill was usually set down in one place and not moved until the whole neighborhood was through making molasses. It was operated by a tongue which had to be pulled by a horse. A lead pole, called a sweep, was rigged in front of the horse's nose so as to guide him in a circle. Around and around went the horse, and around and around went the huge rollers. The cane stalks were forced between the rollers which mashed out the juice and caused it to run into a trough between the logs, and thence through a spout which was covered with a cotton floursack for a strainer, into all our wash tubs and all the tubs we could borrow in the neighborhood.

While we were getting the cane ready, neighbors who had come in to help us would be busy hauling in wood and building a furnace for the boiler, a homemade oblong vat holding more than 100 gallons of juice. The vat had smooth wooden sides which ran out at the ends to form handles, also a sheet-iron bottom which extended out on the sides to protect the wood from the blaze underneath. The furnace upon which the boiler was placed was made of flat rocks daubed with wet clay. It was shaped to fit the boiler and it had a rock chimney at the back to help carry off the smoke.

What a long day it was in school for the children! They would come rushing home the minute school was out, to take over the job of carrying off the refuse stalks which had been pressed dry of their juice and had been piled up behind the rollers, where they lay waiting to be carried off by the armload and deposited in a pile. So, by the time the children got home, there was usually a huge mound of them. What fun to dart in between the guide pole and the tongue, as the patient horse went round and round; seize an armful of stalks; dart out again; run to the mound and drop the load on the top; then give a big jump and come sliding down the far side in a wild though short ride, scattering stalks in every direction, and thereby meriting a good-natured reproof from Dad. We knew he spoke in fun, because everyone was too happy to begrudge the children a little fun, even though they would always tell us we were going to wind up with a broken leg and miss the 'lassy biling. But we never did.

Meanwhile, the boiler had been put on the furnace, filled as full of juice as could be expected to boil safely; a fire had been built under it and the 'lassy biling was on. As soon as it was dusk the crowd would begin to gather; whether in family groups or singly made no difference, for the whole family would come -- the women and small children to visit and talk about the latest happenings, swap patterns and the like; the older ones, as soon as the juice began to boil, began to skim off the green scum which would rise to the top, with skimmers fastened on the ends of long handles, made in the shape of a scoop from sheet-iron or bucket lids and provided with holes punched through the bottom to let the juice run back into the boiler while retaining the skimmings. The more the juice was skimmed the clearer and better-tasting the molasses, so the visitors and homefolks would take turns at skimming while the others sat around in the light of the lanterns hung at intervals on posts drove in the ground; whittling, telling tall tales, or doing a lot of good-natured joshing.

The children off at one side would have a game of "Tag," "Chicken and the Hawk," "Frog in the Middle" or some similar game. The young folks on the edge of the crowd would play singing games. Usually they would start off with "Charlie." That was a favorite with all. They would all select partners, the boys doing the choosing, of course; then, form in two lines, boys on one side with the girls on the other, facing partners. When they began singing, the head couple would join hands and promenade up and down between the lines two or three times, keeping step to the singing. Then they would separate, the girl to swing the boy at the head of the line, the boy to swing the girl at the foot; then to swing each other, usually twice; then on to the next until all had been swung. All would join hands and promenade with their partners in a ring until the second couple had got to the head. Then, they would separate, form lines, and start all over again.

The words of the song they sang are:

Come all you nice boys and girls,
Out in the morning early,
Hand in hand and side by side.
True, I love you dearly.
Over the river to feed my sheep,
Over the river Charlie,
Over the river to feed my sheep,
Rye, buckwheat and barley.

Don't want none of your weevily wheat;
Don't want none of your barley.
All I want is some good old wheat
To make a cake for Charlie.
Charlie's neat and Charlie's sweet,
Charlie is a dandy.
Charlie is the very one
That treats the girls on candy.

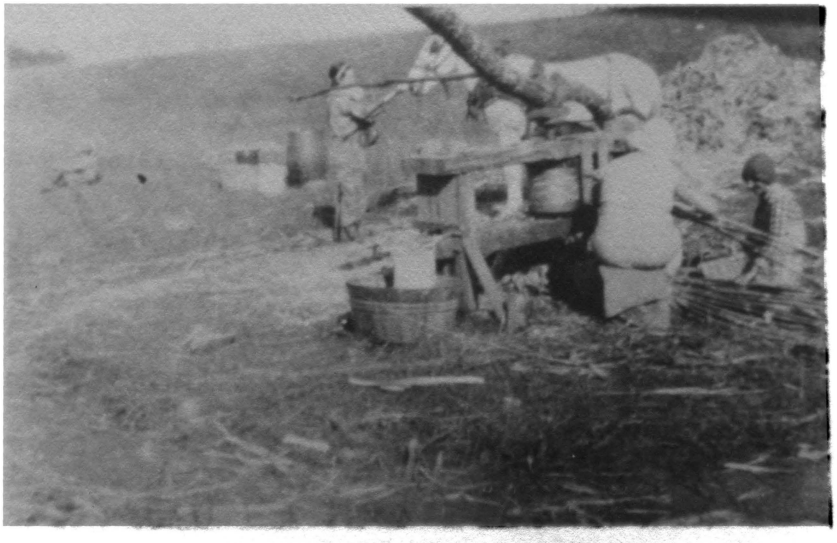
Wish I had a little more brick,
To build my chimbly high-yer
Every time it snows or rains,
Puts out all my fi-yer.
Passed a law in this town,
To neither kill nor slaughter
Every time you turn around,
Turn to your farmer's daughter.

Possibly there were more verses than these, but if more were needed there was always a budding poet or two in the crowd to supply them, and the new verses were always sung with the same gusto as was the case with the original verses.

By the time a few more games had been played a wave of excitement would surge through the crowd. Everyone would stop and gather around to watch the boiling juice thicken and change to molasses. When it would begin to boil, roll up in bumps, burst, and spread to meet other bumps all over the boiler, it would be about ready to take off. Old-timers called that stage "cuttin' buttons." Someone would have to do the "judging." In our crowd it was always Uncle Reuben who was called on to judge the molasses. He did this by stirring all over the boiler with the skimmer, getting molasses in it, holding it almost as high as his head, and letting the drops of juice flake off the side of the skimmer. When they flaked just right, he would say, "Now," and the four men who had hunted up a couple of poles and had placed them under the handles of the boiler, awaiting the word, would lift the boiler off the furnace and take it away from the fire. The molasses were then strained and measured and the toll was taken out, for everyone was honest to the 'nth degree. The molasses were strained through a floursack: the hot syrup was dipped into the sack, then one would hold the sack while two would place two cane stalks on either side of the poke (bag) and pull it down so as to remove the last bit. Nothing was wasted; even the skimmings were set aside for a taffy pulling -- but that is another story.

As soon as the boiler was emptied of molasses, then everyone would gather around to "sop the boiler" with paddles whittled out of wood and saved for that purpose year after year. Now it was time to go home, everyone walking in the group, leaving one here and one there at homes along the way, with a happy "'Bye, see you tomorrow night," until the last one was safe at home.

* * * * *



"Grinding Cane"

Molasses Making Time

"Bilin' 'em off"

The mountaineers lived close to the soil. Thus, their domestic animals were important to their economy and loomed large in the customs and ways of mountain life, as is revealed by the following incident which was told by an anonymous mountain girl in 1927:

Dad Tries His Hand At Milking

One day last summer our cows took a foraging trip into one of the neighbor's corn-fields. That didn't please him any too well so he set his dogs on the cows and chased them over tree tops, logs, stumps, and fences until they reached home, tired but happy over their dinner of nice green corn. But, alas, when Mother started to milk that night, she found that one of the cows had been hurt and objected to being milked.

"Dad," said Mother, "They've ruined our cow."

"Serves her right," answered Dad.

"But I can't milk her and she'll be ruined," wailed Mother.

"I can," asserted Dad, seizing the milk pail and some chop, and stalking off to the milking gap with Mother and me following. (Mother anxious about her cow; I eager to see the milking stunt come off).

Well, the cow seemed anxious to get her feed. Greedily, she ate and Dad milked. Everything was going fine as a fiddle, when, just as Dad was looking up at Mother with an I-told-you-so expression on his face, bang went the bucket, and splash went the milk, all in Dad's eyes and streaming down his chin and down his collar. Then away went the cow. Just as soon as Dad got the milk out of his eyes he sailed out after her, calling to our dog, Ted, to come and help him chase her back to the milking gap.

The cow would stand and look at Dad out of the corner of her eyes as if she were flirting

with him (Mother hadn't named her Cleopatra for nothing), until Dad was almost in reach of her when "Blaaa" she would say and be off to the other side of the field again. After they had chased back and forth across the field three or four times, Dad managed to get close enough to her to grab her by the tail. That frightened the cow and the race began in earnest.

Dad's feet were on the ground part of the time but they looked to me as if they were in the air most of the time.

There were only four or five acres in the field, so I had rather let Dad tell you how many miles he ran with the cow; I am sure I would be accused of fibbing if I told it as big as Dad would.

After a while Dad began to run around the cow and got her to going in a circle, finally getting close enough to catch her by the nose with his free hand. I ran up with a halter and, as I was slipping it over her head, I said, "We caught her, didn't we, Dad?"

"I'll say we did, with a capital 'W'," answered Dad. "But we'd have got her sooner if you'd a helped a little, instead of laughing like a hyena."

Needless to say, Mother finished milking the cow, but only after they had tied the animal to a gate post, and while Dad stood over her with a stick and threatened to make mincemeat out of her if she even moved a muscle.

* * * * *

That mountain people were fond of distilling wisdom as well as other things is attested by the following bit

Going sparking on Dandy's back_
Better than a Cadillac

Ye Olde Milching Gap

of verse composed by an anonymous bard:

The Candidate

All the people in the country
Sure are in a stir;
Their hands are all a-shaking,
And their heads are all awhir;
For the great election time
Soon will be a-rolling 'round,
When every sov'reign voter
Must be sought and hunted down.

So, if you go a-visiting,
Or if you stay close in;
You're in the field a-plowing,
Or a-chatting with a friend;
If you're in a limousine,
Or in a faded hack;
You'll soon find that all of the candidates
Are hot upon your track.

They always come a-grinning,
With a pat upon the back;
A handshake for good measure,
A cigar to top the stack.
Then you have to stop and listen,
While they blow a lot of wind;
Everyone a-telling you that
He's sure he's going to win.

Oh, they'll do just any favor,
For any sort of man;
When they didn't even know you,
A month before they ran.
They get you glad you're living,
Wouldn't everything be swell
If, when the election's over
They'd not crawl back in their shell!

* * * * *

Without question, the roles of liquor-making and liquor-selling in the mountains have been grossly exaggerated. However, the fact remains that the mountain man, in his fiercely independent way, could and did make whiskey and then sell it, on occasion, outside the sanction of the law; as the following colloquy indicates. For obvious reasons, what follows must be described as fictitious; however, it contains much truth relative to the ways of the hill people:

The Blind Tiger

"Granddad, what is that little house?

"That is my granary, but it once was Pa's 'blind tiger.'

"What's a blind tiger?

"The blind tiger was a dark room with a partition through the middle. In order that it be completely vision-proof, it was stripped and boarded, and then papered inside.

"But, Granddad, why must it be so dark, and what was it for, anyway?

"Well, it's kinda hard to explain to you modern young folks, but it was used for the purpose of selling whiskey. Folks that was kinda squeamish turned up their nose -- even then -- but whiskey, to the mountaineer, was a sort of necessary evil. The making and selling of it was a way of life, a way of making that extra spending money of which there was so little, for hard-pressed people living among these lean hills. It was both legal and illegal, at the same time, as you shall see.

"A potential customer would walk into one side of the partitioned room, rap on the wall -- long, long, short, short, long -- and call out,

Anticipation

"Revenoors, Beware!"

Mountain Still

"Hello, Mr. Santa." The fellow on the other side of the wall would answer, "Hello there, what will it be?" The customer would tell him what he wanted and would place his vessel along with his money in a drawer in the wall. The drawer was then pulled through the wall to the other side. "Santa" then would take the money, after which he would place the proper amount of whiskey in the vessel and then push it back through the wall to the customer.

"Well, Granddad, how could they get by with it?

"In those days the law was such that you couldn't indict a man for selling liquor unless you could see his face, because the evidence wouldn't stand up in court. A neighbor tried to prosecute Pa once by saying he peeped through a crack and seen him, but you could take a lantern at night and go all around the building and the light didn't show through no place. The only opening in it was that little drawer about waist high and, as you pulled it through the wall, the front of the drawer closed the slit and the same thing happened on the other side, so you see there was no way possible to see the operator.

"Didn't they have any laws then?

"Oh, yes, the law was very strict. You see the way they did it was to get permission to make and sell "stamped" liquor (government liquor). The Federal Government had an agent who would come and gauge the apples or grain pummeys for the alcohol content before the whiskey was made, so that there was no chance of cheating there, but Pa would allus have a little hid out in the woods that he brought in after the agent left.

The stamp cost a dollar and ten cents for a gallon and he was allowed to sell his liquor at two dollars a gallon, so you see there wasn't much profit in that. The profit came by seeing how much "bootleg" you could sell and still keep your permit. The State had no right to raid your buildings and the Federal Government sent a man

around two or three times a year to "gauge your barrel of stamped stuff." Every year Pa sold about a barrel of the stamped whiskey, for there must always be a little less in the barrel each time the man came.

"You see, the way it was the General Assembly had to pass a special law doing away with the blind tigers in order to stop that kind of traffic; so there are none now and that little building came to be a storage place for the grain that grows on our farm."

I remember very well one night when a neighbor and I helped Pa unload a barrel of moonshine in the front yard. We rolled it right through the yard, on down behind the house and hid it in a brush pile. The next day some fellows came, pretending to be rabbit hunting, but actually looking for Pa's liquor. Pa just grabbed up his old double barrel shotgun, ran down and stood on that very brush pile. He called to the men to scare it up that way and he'd get it. Sure enough, a little rabbit did run out and made straight toward Pa. He shot the rabbit and the men could do nothing but tuck their tails and go home; for no one crowds a Simpkins.

* * * * *

Among the customs of this section, not to be overlooked, are those associated with the observance of the Thanksgiving holiday. A native[1] of Carroll County

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[1] Contributed by Ninevah Jackson Willis, daughter of "Bob" and Connie Jackson.

describes the customs of her family related to Thanksgiving, in the following manner:

Thanksgiving in the Mountains

Kinfolks generally would meet at the home of one member of my family, who would furnish the dinner and the drinks for the crowd. After they had congregated, the men and the hounds would take off through the fields to hunt for rabbits, leaving the women to cook the dinner, invariably a noonday meal in the mountains.

Then, the men would come in at high noon to eat, guzzle, count rabbits, and relive each moment of the morning; to recount each shot fired and to describe the "big one that got away." The morning's champion would have but a short moment of victory, for he and all the rest would take off again after dinner to renew the contest, leaving the women to wrestle with a pile of dirty dishes. But don't think it all wasn't fun. It was one event of the year to be remembered always, since, with so many personalities around, something exciting was bound to happen, all of the time.

Late in the evening the men would all file back to the house, some heavy-laden, some empty-handed, but all body-tired and soul-happy, for various reasons. Then, they would divide up the game, consume what remained of the liquid refreshments, gather up their women and children, and all go their several ways, vowing to "go to Bob's again next Thanksgiving."

The way our annual Thanksgiving celebration got started was this:

It seems that Bob and his brother, Edd, as young men, had bought a farm in a certain section which was about five miles, as the crow flies, from their old home. To drown some of their

lonesomeness, they had invited their brothers, Noah, John, Ewell, and Billy to spend Thanksgiving with them, thereby starting an institution of considerable duration.

Later, Bob had married Connie, one of the neighbor girls, and had bought Edd's part of the farm. Bob's five brothers still would come to his place on Thanksgiving Day. Eventually, there were children and grandchildren who all kept coming. The little group came to include some fifty souls, none of whom would feel that he had properly given thanks unless he had been to Bob's. To all her guests, Connie continued through the years to be the smiling hostess, cordially saying to each departing guest, at the end of the day, "You all come again next year."

On one particular Thanksgiving it was found that, at a gathering such as has been described, one of those being entertained at the Jacksons' was Burris Upchurch, the champion "caller" for all the frolics held down around Lambsburg, Virginia; so, he was asked to tell about those occasions. The following is what he said:

Burris Upchurch and His Calls

"Well, to be right honest with you, I don't remember much about them, but let me tell you, there used to be a time when I could call them half the night and never use the same one twice.

"About the oldest one I remember is called 'Adam and Eve'. I've never heard or seen it anywhere's except in the face of the mountain down around Lambsburg.

"To play it, there is a circle of even couples. By that I mean two, four, six, eight, ten, or twelve or more couples. To start things off, the lady swings the corner gent; then, the lady; then the gent; then, her partner, as the caller yells,

'Swing Adam,
Swing Eve,
Ad again
Swing your partner.'

'Promenade (the old grand-rights-and-lefts) until you come to your own partner.'

'Break and swing.'

'Promenade, back to partner, lady swings first, she swings gent twice, the lady once.'

'Swing Adam
Swing Eve
Ad again
Swing your partner.'

'Promenade, back to partner.' (This time the gent swings; the lady twice, gent once.)

'Swing Eve,
Swing Adam,
Now Eve,
Don't forget your own.'

'Promenade, back to partner.'

'Break and swing.'

"Repeat from the first and turn it into the 'Grape-Vine Swing' in order to finish it up real pretty like. To do this, couples join hands and circle to the right. The leader and his partner cut a figure eight around the next couple.

'Break and swing.'

"The lead couple goes on to the next couple and each couple follows until every one has gone through.

'Promenade back to partner.'

'Break and swing.'

'Take her home.' That signifies the end of that set and the couples move to one side to make room for the next set.

"Another one we played was called, 'First Lady to the Right:'

"The leader swings the first lady to the right, then the gent to the left, then the lady to the right; swinging each lady twice, each gent once. This goes all around the circle and then the ladies swing, first the gent to the right, and so forth, until all ladies have been around.

"To wind this one up, the gent swings the lady to his back. Gents circle around the ladies until each comes to his partner.

'Break and swing.
Lead her right back.
Circle again.' (This time pass partner and swing next lady.)

'Break and swing.
Lead her right back.'

"This goes on until each gent comes back to his partner.

'Promenade,' (Then the ladies swing gents to their backs and repeat as above until each lady has swung each gent.)

'Promenade back home and swing.'

"Then we played, 'Bird in the Cage.' To start, the couples dance around in a circle.

'Break and swing.'
'Promenade, half back, half way around and half way back.' (Rights and lefts go half way back until each meets his partner.)

'Break and swing.'
'Promenade on in home.' (All the way around.)
'Join hands and circle four.'
'All the way around.'
'Half way back.' (Turn and circle back.)
'Bird in the cage.' (Leader's partner goes in the circle while the other three join hands and circle around her.)
'All the way round.'
'Half way back.'
'Hawk in, bird out.' (Gent goes in, lady joins the circle.)
'All the way round.'
'Half way back.'
'Bird in, hawk out.' (Other lady in.)
'All the way round.'
'Half way back.'
'Hawk in, bird out.' (Other gent in. This continues through all sets.)
'Break and swing your partner.'
'Now your opposite.' (This puts you back in a circle as in the beginning.)
'Dance around the circle.'
'Promenade to partner.'
'Swing partner.'
'Swing the girl behind.'
'Swing partner.'
'Thank the ladies and the musicians.'

"Another was called, 'Lady 'Round a Lady.' This also was played by couples in a circle. When

the leader said, 'Lady 'round a lady, gent so low,' the lady went around the lady in the next couple with the gent following her.

'Swing opposites.'
'Lady 'round the lady and the gent don't go.' (Lady goes around the lady and back to her partner.)
'Swing your own.'

"This repeats until all the ladies have been through; then it starts again with:

'Gent 'round the gent
The lady so low,
Gent 'round the gent
And the lady don't go.'

"When all the gents have gone through,

'Promenade to partner.'
'Swing partner.'
'Swing opposite.'
'Swing your own.'
'Everybody swing.'

"Everyone already knew how to play; but, of course, I always reared back and yelled because it made it go so much better. The progress of the frolic always depended on the mood of the crowd. You could add to or take out to suit the crowd. At one minute before twelve we always broke up to go home because at one minute after twelve we would have been breaking the Sabbath, you know."

Burris' dances were all very interesting to hear about, but very different from the ones played on top of the mountain, in Carroll County. Here are some of the favorites up there:

A Mountain Dance: "Rock Dolly"

To play this one, the couples would face each other in lines. The lead couple would join

hands and dance down between the lines to the foot and back to the head. The lady in the leading position would swing the first gent in the line, while the leading gent would swing the first lady in the other line, then they would swing one another. This would continue until they had swung all the way down the line to the foot. They would then take their places in the line at the foot, and the next couple would become the lead. Thus, they would "sweep the floor." The figure would continue until the first couple had got back to the head of the line once more.

"Promenade." (Up on the mountain, "promenade" meant for couples to join both hands and walk around in a circle to the starting point.)

"Swing partner."
"Four hands across and circle four."
"All the way around."
"Now back." (Change hands and circle back.)
"Break." (The lead couple in the lead set then dances the old-fashioned, flat-foot, buck-in-wing dance.)
"Four hands across. Circle four."
"Now back."
"Break." (The other couple dance.)

While one couple would dance, all the others would watch and, generally, clap their hands or pat their feet to the music. This would continue through all sets of four until everyone had had an opportunity to show off his ability to "flat-foot."

"Promenade."

"Put her in the shade." (This respite was generally needed after such a strenuous workout.)

* * * * *

The following description of a mountain courtship is given,[1] in order to reveal further the characters and personalities of the mountain people, as well as to provide another bit of folklore:

Mountain Courting

> An uncle of mine once carried on a rather lengthy courtship with the fair lady of his dreams. He would come to her home, regularly every Saturday and Sunday afternoons and sit on the back yard fence, where he would whittle on the top rail with his rusty one-bladed Barlow knife, while digging the big toes of his bare feet into the third rail and chewing vigorously on a rye straw; looking for all the world like an emancipated grasshopper. After a couple of years, he began to take courage and would wrestle in the yard with her brothers, as a means of showing her what a fine specimen of humanity he was getting to be. Rumor has it that she would watch from behind the curtain and would get the thrill of her life from such an ardent courtship.
>
> About a year later, when he had began to feel the pangs of manhood even more, he finally plucked up enough courage to ask his best friend if he would go and talk to the fair lady for him. The friend agreed to go, providing he would go along, too. So, one fine Sunday afternoon, the two started out in the general direction of her father's house. They had to go through some woods just before reaching her house and there Uncle's courage completely failed him. He refused to go farther and begged the friend to go on and play John Alden.

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[1] This description was made sometime in the Nineteen Thirties by Lee Marshall, a resident of Carroll County, Virginia.

> The friend proceeded to do as he was told, while Uncle concealed himself behind a fallen log to await the outcome. The friend was gone for about two hours, all the while Uncle's eyes almost "bugged out" from their sockets as he would peep, turkey-fashion, over the top of his concealing log.
>
> At long last, he was rewarded by the sight of his friend emerging from the house. Uncle was so overcome with ecstasy and anticipation that he quickly rose from behind the log and began to run, pell-mell, through the woods. He ran until he was completely exhausted and fell gasping into a pile of leaves before his friend could catch up with him to tell him that he had been accepted.
>
> The lovers were soon married and, in due time, they reared twelve bashful children.

* * * * *

From a source similar to that from which the preceding story was taken, comes the tale of another mountain courtship,[1] as follows:

> Among the young people living near Laurel Fork, Virginia, it used to be a custom for some girl in the group to give a party to which she would invite all her friends to come and bring all of their friends. Of course, everyone who heard about the party would come whether they had an invitation or not, which didn't matter too much since they all always would do something in the way of work for the party, before the fun would begin.

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[1] Related by her mother to Ninevah Jackson Willis.

> On one particular occasion,[1] the young folk were having an apron party. Each girl was to make an apron and leave it unhemmed, to bring to the party. When the boys, called "spiders" by their elders, had arrived for the evening's fun, they were to cast lots to see whose apron each would be permitted to hem.
>
> When all the guests had assembled, there was a young, tall, dark, and handsome stranger among them whom every girl secretly hoped she could draw. The lucky girl happened to be my mother. That was the first time she and the stranger had met, but you can rest assured it was not the last.
>
> When I would ask my mother how she met my father, and what transpired at that meeting, she would always smile and say that they had begun by talking about their "kith and kin"; that he had said, "Kin I kith you?" and that she had answered, "You kin."

* * * * *

Of course, social affairs such as the apron party just described served, for mountain youth, the double purpose of providing recreation and opportunities for courtship. Mountaineers were apt to call them "gatherings," and to use that term to distinguish them from the frolics, which were not only more boisterous in nature, but which were often attended

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[1] Described by Connie Worrell Jackson to her daughter, Ninevah Jackson Willis.

by somewhat older persons. Thus, the ways which marked mountain gatherings seem to deserve special attention in this writing:

No invitations were ever issued to a gathering. All that was necessary was for a young lady to go and stay all night with her friend and the news would spread by mountain "telegraph," so that, by night-fall, there would be quite a crowd gathered at the friend's house. Although it was not considered nice for the intending visitor to tell any one she was going to spend the night with a friend, still, by night, everybody would be there, boys and girls, from far and near. One might wonder how the young lady would have felt had no one come, but, apparently, such a social calamity never happened in connection with a visit of the kind being described herewith.

As the young folk arrived, the nice girls would all go into the house as soon as they arrived, but the young swains would linger outside, wrestling, foot-racing and otherwise showing off their physical powers, until, as if by a given signal, they all would begin to assemble indoors. The young gallants would then begin to select their partners. However, none of them would ever go at once to the side of the lady of his choice for the afternoon and evening; rather, each would depend upon a friend to contrive some

means of placing him there accidentally; he, protesting vigorously the while.

Well, once that ordeal was over, it was time for the fun. Games were started, always beginning innocently enough with such pastimes as: "Grandma Sent Me To You," "Going To California," and "I Seen A Ghost Last Night," but eventually leading into "Post Office," a game which would give the lucky fellow a minute alone with the girl of his choice. The proceedings would continue until nine or ten o'clock, when a parent would come in the room and say, "Bedtime! You all just stay all night with us." No one ever stayed; in fact, the invitation was just ceremony. Generous parents would allow their guests to play until ten o'clock, but only parents who were careless with their girls allowed the visitors to stay until eleven or twelve; if they were to do that, there would be talk, and that would be a serious matter for a young girl with a reputation to maintain.

With many an exchange, such as, "You all come," "Yes, I will; never so I can, and you all come over to our house," the girls would file out of the house laughing and giggling and start toward home. Again, the rustic lochinvars would linger behind, dividing up the spoils. When they had reached an agreement, often

by fisticuffs, as to which would escort whom, they would overtake the girls, who, of course, had not walked very fast. As he drew up, a boy would fall in beside the girl he had chosen and they would walk along together, sometimes holding hands, but more often not even side by side, for, once together, they both would become very bashful. It is related that one such couple was walking the two miles to the girl's home, one on one side of the road and one on the other, saying nary a word, when, it being a monstrous dark night, the girl tripped and fell. Whereupon, the young man continued to saunter on down the road, with his hands in his pockets, saying, "Fall down, old cow, and see if I keer." However, many were not so bashful.

When the two had reached her home, the boy would leave the girl at the gate. If he liked her he would say such thrilling things as, "I'll be seeing you." If not, he would say nothing.

As has been said, a gathering was not the same as a frolic; for one thing, a different type of game was played at each. The following is a list of games usually played at a gathering: "Meet The King And Queen," "Selling Sheep," "Mr. Letterfly," "Put," "Pin A Cup Of Water On The Wall," "Seeing The Seven Stars," "Going Fishing," "How Do You Like Your Neighbors?"

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since it was almost dark and the Fords didn't have foam-rubber cushions. The men had decided that the women were to have a real vacation, so they commanded their wives to stay clear while they pitched camp and cooked the supper.

All went well until about the eleventh hour; everyone was peacefully sleeping, dreaming of duck pillows and soft feather beds, when the scream of a woman in distress pierced the forest.

"What's that?"

"Oh, it's a sure 'nuff bear. Look!"

At that, we were all on our feet. Men tried to console screaming women and frightened children, talking bravely and each giving detailed instructions to the others as to how they should catch the bear. Meanwhile, that poor creature, if such it might be, found the commotion too much for him. With a grunt of displeasure, he made off, upsetting everyone and everything as he went.

"There goes our breakfast," wailed someone at the clatter of pans and broken dishes. Thereupon, two of our brave crew took up the chase. Just then, an automobile came around a curve in the road. The car's lights enabled us to see clearly the "pursued" as well as the pursuers.

There stood our "bear," just a plain old "razor-back" hog which had happened to wander down our way in quest of something to eat.

* * * * *

One of the findings of this study, to which reference has been made previously, was the tendency of the pioneers to reject the culture of their

predecessors in the mountains, the American Indians. In contrast with the French who came to the regions around the Great Lakes and along the Mississippi, the hardy Scots-Irish and Germans who settled southwestern Virginia mingled their blood but little with the aborigines' and adopted but few of their ways, despite the fact that there were, at one time, many Indians in Carroll County; a fact supported by the presence of many Indian camp sites, burial grounds, and relics, still to be found in that region at the time of this writing. Perhaps, because of the white settlers' adverse attitudes toward the Indians, those families of this section whose members had Indian ancestors were, until later years, unwilling to admit that such was the case.

How some of the mountaineers acquired Indian relatives was always interesting, if difficult to ascertain. One family[1] tells this story:

> About five generations back a young mountaineer and a Shawnee chief were playing poker. As the night progressed and the

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[1] The Willis family of which Ray Willis, husband of Ninevah Jackson Willis, is a descendent.

> "fire water" diminished, the old chief found himself with no earthly possession to stake except his young daughter, so he put her up as his next ante. The mountaineer won her. Having won her and not knowing what else to do, he married her. She made him a good wife and bore him a large family of children to all of whom she bequeathed, down to this very generation, her dark complexion; high cheek bones; straight, black hair; and her tall, wiry, handsome physique.

Another incident[1] concerning the relations of Indians and pioneers was found to be widely known in Carroll. It concerns the old Sparrell Huff place which was located near an old Indian camp site, as follows:

> It seems that old Uncle John Cox and some other man were hoeing corn when they saw two Indians peeping over from behind some bushes growing along an old fence row. The other man had a rifle sitting by a stump; he ran and grabbed it right quick and shot one of the Indians. His dogs caught the other one and cut his throat.

Tradition has it that the two Indians mentioned in this story were the last ever to be seen in Carroll County. They were believed to be Cherokee scouts who had come from some of their settlements in the

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[1] Told by Robert L. Jackson, who played on the spot, as a boy.

Clinch Valley. Thus, as a sort of memorial to them and their shadowy predecessors, the following stanzas are inscribed:

The Last Indian[1]

He stands on the brink of a flowing stream,
As he stoops for a drink he hears the scream
Of women and children and helpless babes;
Of soldiers, commanders, and Indian braves
Wielding the tomahawk, or firing the gun.
As he thinks of battles, lost or won,
In the struggle for the right of race dominion -
He stands draped in white -- the last Indian.

He rebuilds the forts of the white man's town,
And thinks of the ports of Indian renown;
Now he knows the feeling between white and red,
Now he knows thoughts that never were said;
He knows now why friendship never was grown,
Though the seeds for production were tenderly sown;
Now he understands the early Virginian,
But now he's a ghost -- the last Indian.

Had he but understood the white-skinned race,
Frightened in the woods when they saw his face,
There would not have been war, murder, and blood;
But cooperation for the common good
In harmony, peace, in love and quiet.
He sees the folly of the red man's fright
Too late, alas, for wrongs to be right again.
So he floats on his way -- the last Indian.

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[1] Composed by Ninevah Jackson Willis, about 1932, when a student enrolled in an English course taught by Dr. Virginia O. Hudson, at Radford College.

He gave no succor, asked none in return;
For real or fancied wrongs, he knew but
kill and burn.
Democracy then a headlong, beardless youth,
Who saw the savage red man as cruel and
uncouth;
While vengeful Indian saw a white robber band
Stealing his birthright, his game, and his land.
Had friendship prevailed, theirs not this sad
ending,
By which the first American became -- the last
Indian.

* * * * *

In the midst of his struggles with the red man and with nature, the mountaineer was not unmindful of God. As in everything else, he was fiercely independent in his religious views, defying the established Church as had his forefathers, and forming his beliefs for himself out of his own wisdom and experiences. Needless to say such individualism and non-conformity led to fierce religious disagreements among the hill people and gave rise to a considerable number of sects, each of which was marked by the full autonomy of its constituent congregations and, for that matter, of each member.

Many of the religious disputes which engaged the religious-minded folk of southwestern Virginia dealt with the proper mode of baptism, predestination, and

the observance of the Sabbath. An example of their interest in the Lord's Day is the following story[1] which, although it seems to have been told with tongue in cheek, reflects the concern of the mountain folk for religion:

The True Sabbath

One time in our neighborhood, with the advent of a new religion in the community, some folks got to arguing and a-arguing over which was really the Sabbath, Saturday or Sunday.

Well, I just holds my peace and listens. Thinks I, I'll just pay attention to Nature. Then, sure enough, along about spring, two old woodpeckers began hunting a place to build them a nest and I got interested as they flew about selecting their trees for habitation.

One decided on a tree near my barn and the other one a short distance away on Dewey's farm. Well, the one at my barn worked faithfully till dark Saturday evening, when he knocked off and went to bed. On Sunday morning he flew back and set by the hole in the tree where he was making his home. All day he set there, just resting, didn't even strike a tap; but I could hear the one on Dewey's farm working away steadily all day Sunday.

On Monday morning my bird went to work again, so I decided to check up on Dewey's bird. He was almost through and as I stood there and watched he took out the final chip to his door

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[1] Told to Mrs. Ninevah Jackson Willis by a 90-year-old relative who asked that his name be withheld.

and went in. And, do you know! That bird had chosen a tree with the top broken out and split off down one side; when he went through to look at his house, he found nothing. With a look of surprise on his face he flew all around and come through again. Still nothing! With a disappointed flip, he flew away.

As for my bird, he finished his home, raised a nice family of woodpeckers and they all lived and done well.

Ever since then I've been convinced that Sunday is the Sabbath.

* * * * *

Although it cannot be regarded as entirely true of the mountaineer's behavior and attitudes toward religion, still the following story[1] was deemed to have enough of truth, as well as humor, to give it a place in this writing:

Old Bruz

Old Bruz Bowman very reluctantly toted the lantern so Retchel an the younguns could go to the week's meetin' down at the meetin' house that night. When they go there, it 'menced to rain, so Old Bruz had to go inside, out'n the rain.

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[1] A composite of anecdotes told, in the main, by the Rev. R. W. Childress, Buffalo Mountain, Virginia.

The sermon was long and the bench was hard, so Old Bruz proceeded to light up his old corn-cob pipe and fumigate up the place sumpin awful. He had just settled back for a soul-satisfying smoke when he noticed the preacher-man a-standing afore him. The way the parson's mouth was a-wiggling and his ears a-turning red, Old Bruz decided he mout be trying to tell him somethin', so he opens up his earflaps to listen. Pretty soon it was coming through, clear and plain, "Bruz, we don't allow no pipe smoking in church."

Humph! I'll get even with him, thinks Bruz to hisself, so he assumed the appearance of one who is hard of hearing and said, "Eh? Oh yes, have a drink." He paused slightly and said, "Have anothern!"

But he hadn't reckoned with Bob Childress. That preacher-man just retch out and got him by the backsides an fairly heisted him out'n the doors. When they got out of hearing Bob said, sorter quiet-like, "Bruz, I'm a peace-loving man, but I aims to knock that pipe out'n your teeth."

He did.

On the way back to the meetin' house, Old Bruz said, "You know what, Bob, I wouldn't be a mite s'prized if'n me an the ole womern don't jine up with you, come Saterday night."

Now, Old Bruz was a right smart licker maker. He allus sold his'n ten cents on the half pint higher'n anybody else; but, man, it was wuth it, an more, too.

Well, he paid up all his debts with what licker he had on hand. He got sold out in time for him an Retchel to jine up Saterday night, shore 'nuff. He sold his still for twenty-eight dollars and bought him a twenty-three dollar Bible with the money. Nothing cheap about Bruz, I'm tellin' you.


"Shall we gather—"

> On the way back from the babtizing he drunk him a pint to sorter quit-off on. About that time he begins to see things. He told Retchel that, if'n she didn't quit drinking so much, she was headed right straight, straight to ____. Then he got afeared to go home becaus'n the Devil hisself was atter him. He told Retchel to listen to them there things keep a-telling him he warn't a-living right. He cried and took on terrible. It was a sight to behold.
>
> Just then they passed by an old mill pond and Bruz jumped in to drownd hisself and end it all, but a voice spoke to him and told him it twarn't easy to die, so he clumb on out and made a preacher, hisself.
>
> When you ask Old Bruz what church he belongs to, he grins an' says, "I 'longs to Salvation's Church."

* * * * *

Like most people living in the country, the mountaineer had trouble protecting his property from those who, somehow, failed to make a distinction between mine and thine, if for no other reason than that grain fodder and fowl could not be kept under lock and key at all times; also that rail fences are notoriously easy to climb or to take down. The following anecdotes[1]

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[1] Told expressly for this writing by Robert L. Jackson, as examples of the old tales mountain people kept in circulation whenever they would gather to talk about the "old times."

tell of the mountaineer's way of dealing with those whose respect for property was no better than it should have been:

Stop Thief!

Mr. Puckett discovered that his corn, stored away for winter in his corn crib, was going down faster than it should. On looking around, he discovered, also, a loose end to a slat on his crib. He measured and found that, with care, a man could just squeeze his hand through the crack and bring out corn, one ear at a time. A smile played on his countenance as he made his way back to the house.

"Old 'oman," he called, "fetch me my b'ar trap."

"What fer you want it, Rufe?"

"I aims to ketch me a varmint."

He set the trap just inside the crack in the crib and went on about his business as usual.

Next morning afore day, he went down to the crib, got him two ears of corn for his horse and went on around the crib towards the barn. There stood his neighbor with his hand in the crack!

"Why, good morning, Sam, you are out bright and early this morning." He spoke gaily as he went on towards the barn.

After he had fed the livestock, he came back by the crib. "Well, Sam, I see you're still here. Come in the house and let's eat a bite of breakfast; the old 'oman's got it ready by now."

"Now, Rufe, you knows I cayn't come," wailed Sam.

"Well now, I'll be hornswoggled, if'n you ain't gone and cotch your hand a mite. Wait a minute and I'll go in and git it a-loose for you."

He went inside and set the man free, took him in the house, and made him eat breakfast. Then he made him shoulder up a bushel of corn and take it on home.

Pretty soon he began to miss his turkey eggs, so he set the same bear trap in the turkey's nest. Next morning he hid in the woods to watch, and pretty soon he "cotch sumpin." He went on down to see what he had, and, bless Pat, if'n it waren't this same man's wife; stealing his turkey eggs. But, I reckon that broke 'em, though. I never hearn tell of them stealing nothing again.

* * * * *

An uncle of mine was teaching school for $25 per month. He had to board away from home, so he rode a horse home on week-ends. He had to cross Laurel Fork River at a place called Vinson Ford. The water was pretty deep and he had to slow his horse down to cross. Just as he started across, a man stepped from behind a tree and took his bridle rein.

He spoke in typical mountain drawl, "Aah, Edd, I been a waitin' a long spell fer you. School teachers is rich, I hearn, an' I 'lows now's as good a time as eny to take your money off of you."

Uncle reached back to where his pocket bulged out over his crippled hip, whipped out a pistol, and said: "I guess now is as good a time as any for us to part company."

The man jumped over a tree lap and left out in a hurry. This little episode was never mentioned by either of them as long as they lived.

* * * * *

Uncle John Tom, one night, was a-riding along in the dark. When he got to a haunted graveyard, two men stepped out from behind a tree, stopped his horse and demanded his money. He warn't afeard of nothing, Uncle John Tom warn't. He just grabbed his pistol and shot right over his horse's head. As he shot, the light from the pistol flash showed him who they was. They ran and, to this day, hit never has been mentioned.

* * * * *

One time Uncle Randold John had been off to West Virginia to work in the mines. He had him about $50 saved up, which was a powerful lot of money them days, so he quit and come home to stay. He showed his money to two of his friends. That night he went off a tom-catting around and, on the way home, he had to pass by a haunted place. They say a light dances around there on a foggy night, right over the place where old man McPeake buried that headless corpse from Quaker Ford. His money is supposed to be still buried there. Well, Uncle John came to the bridge and there was the light all right; but he warn't afraid and he soon found out it warn't no ghost fire, but a real fire. The minute he stepped into the light from the fire, a bullet whizzed by his head, clipping the hair from above his ear. As he rolled over in the bushes out of sight he recognized his would-be assailant. The

two have lived neighbors ever since and neither has mentioned that night.

* * * * *

Another time, Tom Jeff was a-losing his oats. Every morning, when he would go out to his oat stacks, there was mule tracks all around the stacks and oats scattered all around. He never could figger out how them mules got through the fence to his oats every night. One morning he just happened to think -- the tracks always went up to the stack, but they never went away -- so he hid that night to watch.

Along about midnight here come his neighbor, with a rope over his arm. He went up to the stack, pulled him out a back-load of oats and tied them up. Then he walked around the stack, scattering oats about. He then picked up his load and slung it over his back and backed away from the stacks the same way he had come.

When he left, Tom Jeff went and looked and, sure enough, there was them same mule tracks. The neighbor had had mule shoes nailed on his shoes, so old Tom Jeff would think mules was a-eating his oats up.

* * * * *

A neighbor of mine stole two hams from another neighbor one time. Time went on and the hams were never mentioned in the neighborhood. Curiosity finally got the best of the purloiner, Cousin Abb, and, after two years of silence, he could stand the suspense no longer.

The owner of the stolen hams had a little store, so one day Uncle Abb went to the store,

and, in the general run of the conversation, said sorter casual-like, "Well, Ben, did you ever find out who stole your hams, back yonder?

Ben, with his tongue in his cheek, replied, "Yep, have now. You know when I went out there that morning and seed my hams was gone, I never told nary a soul, not even Betsy. She allus thought I brung em to the store. No siree, nobody knowed about them hams being gone but me and the Lord; and, Uncle Abb, I know the Lord ain't talked. Now, you'll pay me for them hams before I stomp your guts out."

He did. As he left the store he said, "Well, Ben, you all come sometime."

To which Ben replied, "Yes, we will, never so we can, Uncle Abb, and you all come."

* * * * *

Among the folkways of the hill people, there were, of course, many which pertained to the education of the young. The following vignette[1] may yield some insights into the ways of Carroll County folk, which were related to schools and school attendance:

Remembrances of Laurel Fork High School

One October day in 1927, my mother got me up early and made me scrub my face until a fly could go skiing on my shiny nose; comb my

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[1] Contributed by Ninevah Jackson Willis, from her own childhood experiences.

straight hair, parted in the middle and slicked down the sides of my cheeks until it stuck like plaster; scrub my feet with lye soap to remove the stains of going barefoot; and put on my best outfit: black, patent-leather slippers that squeaked and cracked at every step; long, tan, ribbed-cotton stockings held up by a circle of inner tube taken from Dad's Model "T" Ford; long, black, sateen bloomers that bloused beautifully just below the knees; a pink dress; a blue coat; and a red hat. Since I had never yet become mirror conscious, I then had the comfortable feeling of being well-dressed.

Next, she packed my lunch. It was a pint can full of milk into which cornbread pone had been crumbled, and it was accompanied by a bent spoon.

Our preparations complete, we set out over hill and dale to get me enrolled in high school. The walk was only four miles and the reason my mother went with me was that I had never before been that far away from home.

(Besides fences, tree tops, green briars, ivy thickets, hornets nests, stinging worms, and, swamps, my only real hazard during my daily journey to school was a river which could be crossed only by means of a footlog. The only way I could negotiate that passing was to go on all fours, making a series of bodily contortions which made me resemble a human inchworm.)

After what seemed that first day as endless struggles with the terrain -- we had not seen light of civilization since starting -- we suddenly emerged from behind a clump of bushes, face to face with a white frame building that looked to me like a modern city skyscraper. (Actually it was only a three-room building having a steeple to house its bell. Furthermore, it had an imposing name to match its, to me, impressive appearance, viz., "Laurel Fork Academy." My first impulse was to run, but Ma was determined that I be educated, so she marched boldly on with me in tow. Her composed air gave me confidence, so I

marched behind, well-hidden by her skirt, (They made them ample in those days.) My mouth was wide open in awe, and eyes were bulging with astonishment for there were other children there. Of course none of them was so well dressed as I, for, since I was in a strange land, I had on my "Sunday-go-to-Meetings."

Wonder of wonders! Those children looked just like people and seemed to be enjoying themselves, so I ventured a smile. A girl smiled back and, right then and there, a friendship sprang up which was later to give me both the lice and the itch, not to mention a fund of knowledge which my protected childhood had not hitherto permitted.

By then, we were going up some sort of steps which seemed a mile long. That such was the case, I was later to learn was due to the fact that the land for the building had been donated -- some generous-hearted soul had had a piece of ground not fit for farming -- so it had been given for the sole purpose of erecting a school until such time as it might be no longer needed for a school, when it was to revert to the nearest heir or heirs; and thereby hangs a tale. Well, a school building had been erected on this gently (?) rolling hill and steps had been built all the way up from the road to the front porch. (Many pupils got nasty falls on those steps, but that was inevitable.) In fact, there were two sets of steps, one for the girls and one for the boys, and none but a few brave souls would dare ever to be seen on the wrong side.

As we neared the top of the steps, the teacher came out. Since that was her first school and my first day in high school, it would be hard to say which was scared the most. Ma said, "I've brought you a new pupil." I expected the teacher to be pleased, but she wasn't. She took me in and showed me

my seat, with no expression of pleasure. Once inside the schoolroom, I thought, how lonesome to sit in a seat with only enough room for me, when last year, there had been four of us sitting in the same seat. The teacher also showed me a little room between the two porches, called a cloak room. That room was for coats and hats and a few pairs of overshoes, worn by those who were smug enough to don such sophisticated articles of wearing apparel. There was a long shelf there for dinner boxes. (My milk-and-bread can looked so ill at ease among them that, next day, I, too, had a candy box within which to conceal my meager lunch.)

Ma went home. I wished I could.

Wow! What a bell! (Last year, the teacher had rapped on the wall when time came for "books.") Everyone rushed inside to his seat. Soon afterwards, I found that I was to study English, Latin, history and algebra (whatever that was.)

And so began the process of getting myself educated! Wonderful!

* * * * *

Some further understanding of the schooling of the mountain people may be afforded by the stories clustering around the personality and ways of a mountain teacher, famous in Carroll County, affectionately called "Old Fletch:"

Old Fletch[1]

Many's the person who boasts of having gone to school to Old Fletch Lindsey. He

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[1] Many mountain people, as of this writing, continue to speak of "Old Fletch," more properly called Fletcher Lindsey. The anecdotes given here were supplied by "Hub" Stanley, sometime in 1954.

was a good teacher and he was kind to his pupils. He taught "readin' 'n writin' 'n 'rithmetic" "to the tune of a hick'ry stick," in earnest. A strong man he was, but every strong man has an Achilles heel.

Every day after the noonday dinner, no matter how hot or how cold the weather, Old Fletch would pull his chair up to the fire. (The school was heated with a fireplace in those days.) As I was saying, he would pull his chair up to the fire, take off his boots and toast his toes before the cheerful blaze. Then, almost every day, he would go to sleep and sleep for an hour or two. On one of these occasions, while he was asleep, the kids wrapped him up real good, picked him up and carried him down through the field into a meadow and laid him gently down. When he awoke he was lying beside a babbling brook and wondering how he came to be there.

Fletch would let us have a spell "battle" every Friday afternoon; sometimes all day. Mollie and Sallie McCormick were the best spellers in school. After they had spelled the whole school down, they would stand for hours spelling against each other. Some of the kids said, enviously, no doubt, that the reason they spelled so well was because Old Fletch was too lazy to look at his book to see if it was spelled right or not.

We got head marks in spelling class for being at the head of the line when the spelling class was over. The one having the most head marks at the end of the year got a prize. We had ciphering matches, too, but I never liked them. Some days we had fun spelling the way our grandfathers did: spelling and pronouncing by syllables. About the toughest word Old Fletch had was "transmorgrifycandorbumshandygaff." You were supposed to spell it like this: "t-r-a-n-s, trans, m-o-r-g, morg, transmorg, r-i, ri, transmorgri, f-y, fy, transmorgrify, c-a-n, can, transmorgrifycan, d-o-r, dor,

transmorgrifycandor, b-u-m, bum,
transmorgrifycandorbum, s-h-a-n, shan,
transmorgrifycandorbumshan, d-y, dy,
transmorgrifycandorbumshandy, g-a-f-f, gaff,
that spells transmorgrifycandorbumshandygaff."

Sometimes when we all got tired of spelling and ciphering, the teacher would let us say speeches. Guida Nester always said this for a speech, every Friday afternoon:

"Old woman a spinning on a spindle
A cow and a calf, and that's half
A peg on the wall, and that's all."

I remember one time when Reece Antribus hadn't studied his speech and the teacher called on him, so he got up and said:

"Ladies and gentlemen, I'll tell
you what's a fact
The old cow died in a fodder-
stack."

One time the teacher told us to learn the one that begins,

"Hats off, along the street there comes, a blare of bugles and a ruffle of drums." Well, we all struggled along pretty good until it came Wise's turn. He got up and shouted, "Hats off! Yander come a bear!" and that was all he could remember.

Connie Worrell was good at that sort of thing, too, but she had already said all the pieces she could find, from "Annie's and Willie's Prayer" to "Seven Nights in a Bar-room." Friday was coming and she was afraid not to have a new speech to say for the teacher. She searched through her books: reader, 'rithmetic, and speller. In Merrill's speller she finally found one that had never been used, so, come Friday, she walked up to the front of the room, made her

bow and said proudly:

"Knock, knock, who's there?
Lift the latch and walk in.
Won't you take off your bonnet?
Cotton grows in hot countries."

On those never-to-be-forgotten Fridays, one little boy would always say:

"I warn't born in the mash
To be fooled with by trash
I'se one of the old blue hen's
chickens, I is."

The following was always Henry Terry's favorite and we would always laugh, no matter how many times we had heard it:

"When I was a little boy
'Bout six inches high,
The way I courted them purty
little girls
Made my Mammy cry."

* * * * *

Sometimes the teacher and children in a mountain school would undertake a more ambitious program than those held on Fridays; they would prepare an evening's entertainment for their parents, friends, and neighbors. On such occasions, they would, as likely as not, stage a presentation of an indigenous dramatic

"Taking off fat"
Hog-killing Time

"I wish I could live another hundred years."

One-room Mountain School

sketch, handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation, entitled,

Sister Freshair's Visit

Mountain Woman:

> "I'll be so glad when them ole Simmons boys move clean out'n the kintry. They jest torment a body bodashiously to death. Wy they warn't satisfied 'ith cuttin' off me ridin' nag's tail 'n mane; killin' the' lass duck I had on me spring branch; fillin' me spring full o' rocks an' sticks an' thowin' in a nole ded cat asides. No, they sot their dogs 'n me pigs, run 'em sodoms thru' t' crack o' th' fence an' tored 'em bodashiously up. Oh, sich a misery in me side! Well, me nose eeches an' thet's a shore sign sumbudy's a-commin'. Well! ef thar ain't Sester Freashairs. Cum een, Seester Freashairs, iffen ye kin git een fer th' tresh."

Sister Freshair:

> "Lawsey, womern, Ise youred ter tresh. To hum th' chillerns keap me house continnally in a litterment, purty nearly all a time."

Mountain Woman:

> "Taik a cheer. Here, wait'll I bresh th' dust off'n thissen with me apern."

Sister Freshair:

> "I ain't got time. I jess runned over t'borrer a few things. I brung back thet gourd o' salt. I wanna git a leetle dust o' meal, a pan o' flour, an' a hunk o' meat -- a streak o' lean an' a streak o' fat t' bile wimmy turnip greens."

Mountain Woman:

"I hain't got much, but I'le divide wiv ye."

Sister Freshair:

"Well, Seester Green, how's your rheumantics."

Mountain Woman:

"Poorely, poorely. Ye see, I'se a-gittin' along purty well 'till lass nite wen sumpin kum an' got atter me chickens. Me an' Mandy Ann Johnson got up an' went up ar an' sompin hed kilt a best ole settin' hen I hed, an' spilt nine or ten aigs. 'Twas a fearsome dark night, an' th' wind blowd me lite out; an' I run me haid sodoms agin a saplin', fell over th' woodpile an' kreened me side agin. Starts heer in me side, runs up me back an' purty nigh bends me double."

Sister Freshair:

"Well, Seester Green, I knowze whuts wrong wit your back! It's the mineral-gitis! An' th' bess thaing fer th' mineral-gitis is t' saterate a red flannel rag wit turpentime an' sot it on foire."

Mountain Woman:

"Well, I believes I'le try thet."

Sister Freshair:

"Seester Green, 's ye got enny nuze t' tell me?"

Mountain Woman:

"No, nun 's I know uf. Well, yes, thaires gonna be a weddin' in th' settle-ment."

Sister Freshair:

"Who 'n th' wide wourld?"

Mountain Woman:

"Prudence Emmaline Quallipins iza gwinna git married t' Jerimiah Littletop."

Sister Freshair:

"Who tole you?"

Mountain Woman:

"Oh, I heerd it."

Sister Freshair:

"But, who tole you?"

Mountain Woman:

"Didn't enybudy tell me. I jess dreampt it."

Sister Freshair:

"Well, Seester Green, duz your dreamin' it maake it sew?"

Mountain Woman:

"Well, you see, I didn' dream uv a weddin'; I dreampt uv a death, an t' dream uv a death's a shore sign uv a weddin. I dreampt Prudence Emmaline Quallipins wuz ded an' me'n Mandy Ann Johnson wuz a-settin' up wither remainders. But won't you hev a smoke, Seester Freashairs?"

Sister Freshair:

"No, I has me snuff along an' thet'll do jess 's well. I allus has t' hev me tobaccy 'n sum form, but I like th' good ole manufacture best."

Mountain Woman:

"Yes, I allus has t' hev me tobaccy, me snuff, an' me coffee. I've tried to make coffee outer beans, punkin seeds, an' everthing else, but notthin' comes up to th' good ole stuff itseff."

Sister Freshair:

"Yes, thet's right." (She dips and Sister Green fills her pipe.)

Mountain Woman:

"I usually lites me poipe wit a little coal o' foire, but seein' as to how you're in a herry, I'le lite it wit a maitch this time. Seester Freashairs, don't chu know, I'se kep a little chunk o' foire on me hearth fer gwine on t' thirty years?"

Sister Freshair:

"Wy Seester Green, th' saime ole chawnk!"

Mountain Woman:

"Naw, not th' saime ole chunk, but I mean I hain't let me foire go out'n all thet toime."

Sister Freshair:

"Speekin' uv maitches, whar in a wide wourld did ye git maitches?"

Mountain Woman:

"A stranger caime thru' hear tother day an' lef this little box; ben scaired t' death ever sense, 'fraid he'd come back ater em."

Sister Freshair:

"A stranger? Where wuz 'e frum?"

Mountain Woman:

"Wy, he sed 'e wuz from th' State o' Cincinnatti, from th' City uv Ohio, and 'e wuz a-tellin' a mouty quare thingt' me an' Mandy Ann Johnson. You kno' thet cold spell we 'ad awhile back? Well, 'e sed as how there's a man down hear in Geeo-gie's, th' occassion o' ever bit o' hit."

Sister Freshair:

"Well, how could 'e do hit?"

Mountain Woman:

"Well, hit's the loikes o' this: Whenever he seen fit, he'd go out'n the doors, hike hisself up on a ladder, an' poke out a cold rag."

Sister Freshair:

"Humph! Seester Green, has you got enny new quilt patterns?"

Mountain Woman:

"Yup, there's th' Weddin' Ring, th' Pine Burr, an' th' Fool's Puzzle. I beleave thet's all."

Sister Freshair:

"Wal, they're all purty an' I'le taike a pattern'm all, fer Jerusha's gwinna git married an' she'll need'm."

Mountain Woman:

"Well, I holp if'n she duz taike a fool notion t' git hitched, she'll settle down close by; an' not go traipsing way off sommers or nother, like my goil did, whar's ye'll niver see 'er agin."

Sister Freshair:

"Yas, I do, too. But speekin' o' nuze, I'se got a turrible piece o' nuze ter tell you, Seester Green!"

Mountain Woman:

"What'n th' wourld izzit?"

Sister Freshair:

"Th' wourld's cummin to an eand."

Mountain Woman:

"Well, I mout a' knowd sumpin' wuz a-gwinter happen; I ben a-hevin' sech quaire dreemz hear lately. Seester Freashairs, you mayn't beleave 't, but, no longer'n las nite, I dreampt th' wourld kum t' an eand by foire; an' it pestered me so, I got up'n sot'n th' door an' an ole skreech owl come right up to me front door an' I hed t' stick a shevel in th' foire t' maike hit stop hollerin'. But how'd ye heer it?"

Sister Freshair:

"Well, I'd went down t' git me ole man a grubbin hoe -- th' one 'e hed wuz wored complaitely out, so's I could hardly work wit' hit -- an I heerd th' men folkses a-readin' about hit in th' nuzepaper."

Mountain Woman:

"But whut did th' paper say?"

Sister Freshair:

"How as hit's a star with a great big ole long tail, an' hit keeps a-switchin' aroun' an' aroun' an' aroun', an' hit's a-gwine ter switch th' eairth out wit hits tail."

Mountain Woman:

"I'm so pester'd 'bout th' world a-kummin' t' an' eand."

Sister Freshair:

> "Pshaw, womern, thar ain't nothin' in whut th' papers say. You know thet much, shorely. Seester Green, has ye enny good ole saft soap to lend me? I'm clean out."

Mountain Woman:

> "Lawsy, womern, iffen I hain't sot here'n clobbered away till th' las bit o' me good ole lye soap done went an' biled over; but, come on, you c'n hev what's leff."

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In rendering the skit, "Sister Freshair's Visit," the mountain people obviously were caricaturing their own manner of life. Therefore, it seemed relevant to this study to record an actual conversation which involved two real mountain women, if for no other reason than to provide a comparison between actual mountaineers and the fictional characters depicted in that bit of drama. Thus, the following is as faithful a transcript as conditions would allow of a colloquy between an 84-year-old woman, Mrs. Letitha Allen,[1] who

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[1] Mrs. Letitha Allen expressly requested that her name be recorded. Therefore, it appears in this writing, in the form which her family and friends used: "Aunt Tisey," (rhymes with "icy".) All other names are fictitious, except that "Ray's woman" is Mrs. Ray Willis.

was regarded as typical of the hill folk, and another mountain woman who, although a number of years younger, was almost as well versed as her elder in what might be called mountain magic. The colloquy which took place[1] in the home of the latter, designated here as the "Mistress of the House," was substantially as follows:

Aunt Tisey's Reminiscences

Knock! Knock!

Mistress of the House:

Come in. Well, the lawsy me, whatever's going to happen! I never once dreamed of seeing you. Take off your coats. Just lay'm on the bed there. Pull you up a chair. A'nt Tisey, this is Ray's woman and this is her mother, who was Alice Bowman's girl, the one that married Reuben Worrell.

Aunt Tisey:

Yeah, yeah, my mother knowed all about you. I've hurd her speak of you all lots of times.

Mistress:

We're in the middle of hog-killing and I always love to get the lard stewed out first thing. A'nt Tisey take your chair on in there by the fire and set. You don't need to work all the time.

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[1] The visit and the ensuing conversation took place in the summer of 1954.

Aunt Tisey:

I tell you, I've did a heap of wuck in my day, but I'm gettin sorter feeble, now. I'm 84 years old.

Visitor:

You don't look that old, I hope I'll be that spry when I'm that old.

Mistress:

A'nt Tisey's killed herself with hard work. She used to do a man's work.

Aunt Tisey:

I had to wuck for the family atter Pa died. Me and Ma wucked together for 50 years atter he ware gone. Ma was 102 when she went. The funeral people had it she was 110, but she liked one month a bein' 102. I'm too feeble to ever live that long.

Mistress:

Now, A'nt Tisey, you don't know. It sorter runs in the family. A'nt Tempy was rubbing 100; Uncle Floyd is still alive and going strong; and one time Uncle Will said to A'nt Caroline, "When I'm gone I want you to . . .," but she butted in right there and said, "Tain't no use me hoping such, for just you look at all your kinfolks an' I'm a-thinking you won't never die -- you'll just dry up and blow away, or else, come Judgment Day, the Devil will have to run you down an' knock you in the head."

Aunt Tisey:

I don't take much stock in that sort a stuff. Ma waz peart all her natchel life. Me and her was happy at home there, I never aggravated her none. I treated her good an' now I ain't got nothin to study about. Me an' her wucked hard to keep the family a-goin'. She never was sick none. She

Little Country Store ↑

August Meetin' ↓

"A-hauling out logs"

Stacking Fodder ↓

never tuck her bed; only the last two days she lived, she laid down some. She even got up atter death had done struck her an' walked aroun'. She said, "I'm goin' to jes lay down, turn my face to the wall an' go to sleep awhile an' nen I'm goin' home." I knowed right then which "home" she was goin' to.

Mistress:

Many's the time I've seen A'nt Tisey walk up that mountain after she'd done done her things at home; wash all day for some one; go back by the store; shoulder up a hundred pound sack of feed with one hand; fill her apron with enough other stuff to pull her in two, to hold with the other hand; and then pull out down that mountain toerds home.

Aunt Tisey:

An' I've beat rock, too, mind you. I wucked for a womern, an' her old man run aroun' everywheres tryin' to git some man to beat rock for him. He went an' tuck an' hauled rock an' put 'em in the road an' they couldn't git their ox'n wagons 'n things over them good an' they's threatnin' to take him up over it. No one would tech'm, so I said, "Jes you get me a hammer an' I'll bust 'em." He brung a hammer an' I beat 'em all, come next day.

One time that apple man come down an' axed Ma if I'd wuck for him. She told him that I was wuckin' fer a man an', if they didn't get thru', I'd promise an' I'd go back there, for I allus kep a promise. He axed, "How much does she charge?" Ma said, "She allus gets fifty cents a day an' she allus 'pecks where she scratches!" (That meant I expects to eat where I wucks.) As it happent, we got thru' that day an' I went next day to wuck fer him. He tuck a hoe an said, "Come on, Tisey," an' he showed me how he wanted his taters hoed. I tuck an' hoed as best I knowed how. Against dinner time, when he come to tell me I mout come to dinner, he looked around the field an' said, "Thee hast done about

as well as thee could do thyself." An' I thinks to myself, what kind of Tom Fool talk is that?

I went back next day to wuck for him, an' I had to holler him out; he hadn't yet got up. He come on down an' said, "Thee makes thy hours long." 'Nen I said, "I reckon all hours is long." An' he said, "Thee maketh them long thyself," meaning I had come too soon. "Bein't thee are here, take thee thy bridle yonder an' go fetch in thy horse." That finished me, for I ain't never had no dealings with a hoss. I was a-feared, but I tuck the bridle 'way yonder an' found the hoss. I didn't know what to do, so I tried to ketch him by the mane; but he jes heisted his head out a reach. Finally, I jes open the bridle an' stuck it up an' that ole hoss jes poke her head in the bridle as nice as you please.

Them apple folks ain't never doin' nothin' like nobody else. One time he sent me to milk an' when I got down there I had no idee how to commence. About that time Cousin Walt come along and said, "I'll show you how he milks." He tuck up a bucket a chop an' draps a hanful at each place, an' them ol' cows jes poke their heads in their rightful places, an' he fastens their necks up, an' I sot on a stool. They never moved a muscle all the time I milked. I never could a got their necks fastened up like that. I heard tell the ol' apple man's even got his chickens trained, too.

Mistress:

Well, A'nt Tisey, I always thought there was something sinister about those old folks and where they lived. Do you?

Aunt Tisey:

I never liked to go there. I've wucked for him many a day, but it put a funny feeling

in you to go there. They come from 'way out Lord knows where, an' set out them apple trees an' built that fine home. He even had running water an' lectric lights like them city fellers. He put in the first pressure system ever used thereabouts. He had his pack house under the ground an' he'd tell them truck drivers just where to go an' then he'd say, "Don't come no fudder, I'll do the rest". He'd set them boxes of apples out to them, an' no one never saw inside.

Mistress:

I think it's a beautiful place, but it seems to have such a bewitching atmosphere.

Aunt Tisey:

You'd think so. He made his own coffin an' his wife's an' daughter's. They're jes a-settin thar in the house a-waitin' for them to get ready fer 'em. They ain't nary a rug or a curtain an' very little house plunder. They wear ol' raggedy clothes just like they didn't have any more, an' them being that rich, too.

Mistress:

I hear their girl acts kinda funny, they made her study so hard in college.

Aunt Tisey:

Yes, pore thing, she's been to the lunatics four times a'ready, but that ain't the cause a hit. She liked a boy an' he liked her, too, but her pa said he warn't good enough fer her. She had her things packed an' was going to him anyway, when word come that he'd been killed. She jes drapped off ravin' mad crazy an' they say ever time she goes off she hollers his name. They give away their next baby because it was a girl, an' he tells the woman that in twelve months there'll be another one to go with it. Sure enought the nextun was a girl. A quare religion they got.

Mistress:

Speaking of queer religion, there is another odd one that has a meeting place in the mountains where you live. Have you been there?

Aunt Tisey:

Lawzy me, many's a time I've snatched little babies out of their mammies arms, to keep them from getting killed; they carry on so. I knowed a woman, who hain't walked a step for years. They carry her to their meetings an' she can jump up an' down an' shout in the unknown tongue for hours. I ain't got no idee what they say, but I guess it ain't meant for no one to hear, for they're talking to God, they say. Some of them missed the point, I think, an' lean more toerds witchery. One time I went visiting an', on my way over, I met a man cutting wood. He showed me where he had chopped his knee open. Said it was sent on him 'cause he had laughed at the goin's on in that meeting. That night it rained an' Uncle Tom 'lowed as how we'd have the meeting at home since the preacher was there anyway. He come for supper. I was curious to see how they done, so I ups an' plays the organ for them. The preacher called on one of the women to pray, she started off sorter quiet like, but all at once she begin to shake an' climb the wall. That's when I sniggered. A girl settin' aside a me poked me in the ribs an' said, "You'll ketch it." Sure 'nuff, as I went over to play the last piece, I felt a sharp pain in my knee. My leg swelled an' pained all night. I was scared some. I went to their meeting once when a woman screamed and fell on the floor like she was dead. They said she had a devil, so they all gathered round an' pulled an tugged. 'Nen they fell back on the floor an' said he'd come a-loose. Then six or eight gathered around "him" an' took an' heisted "him" out'n the winder, they said. I didn't see nothin', but the woman got up as peart as ever.

I reckon it's jes for some people to see an' hear things while others can't. Jes afore Lou Em died, she saw a woman dressed in white, floating along up the Cloud Road.

Mistress:

Speaking of the Cloud Road, we used to hear so many ghost tales about that place. Once two girls and I decided to scare a friend, so just as we got to the gate of the Cloud graveyard I said in an eerie voice, "Looky, there's Old Jim Cloud!" Just then we heard a noise behind us. We looked around and Mark Bowman was coming home from the mill with a meal sack on his shoulder. All we could see was the white sack dancing along in the moonlight. I didn't run, but I passed three other girls who were running and we didn't stop until we got home and hid our heads under Ma's apron.

Aunt Tisey:

One time Will was goin' to call on his girl as usual on a Saturday night after the days wuck an' the chores wuz all done. It was pitch dark before he could get started, even though he hurried as fast as he could, knowin' he had to walk and knowin' the road he had to go on was known as the Cloud Road and said to be haunted. Still, tryin' to save time and with his heart droppin' 'way down to his shoes in trepidation, he started out. In his haste he had forgot about the big log that had fallen and was lyin' across his path. Comin' to it in the dark, he fell sprawlin' and, tryin' to save himself a fall, he threw up his arms, one of them goin' over the log and comin' in contact with a bearded face. It was a local feller who'd laid down by the log to take a nap. Both of 'em rose to his feet with his haar standin' on end. In the darkness they each could see the bulk of somethin', but neither one waited to see what. Each of 'em with a yelp a fright, left the scene without so much as a by-your-leave. It was a neck-and-neck race, since both of 'em thought the other was a haint tryin' to catch him. Each raced the other until they reached the girl friend's house and compared notes.

Dad was going along there once, when he saw a whole lot of wimmin all dressed in white, comin' down the road. They 'peared to be walkin', yet their feet never moved; they jes sort a floated along. They floated on acrost the creek and over to the meader. There they done a real purty dance an' jes sorter faded out. He figgered to hear of a death next day.

Most everyone in the old days believed in witches, signs, haints an' things. A'nt Litha Ann could allus tell when they would hear of a funeral at the church next day. She allus thowed her dish-water out the back door; and, if someone was dead, that night after supper, when she opened the door to pitch out the water, she could hear them throwin' down the shoulder load of planks they allus used to kiver the coffin in the grave. When she'd hear that forebodin' sound she'd say, "Tom, they'll be a buryin' tomorrow." And, sure enough, there allus was.

That reminds me of Charlie Bob, who built coffins for people. He could allus tell the night before when he was a-goin' to be called on to make a coffin the next day. Even though the table was cleared of dishes, in the night he'd hear a glass fall from the table, roll acrost the floor, and break. He'd say to his wife, "I'll have a coffin to make tomorrow." And he allus did. He made for everbody an' never charged a copper -- that is, till his own boy died. He couldn't make for his own, an' had to hire it made. That's when he quit, an' I can't say as I blame him neither.

Mistress:

Now, those things are true, but whether they heard and were warned, I cannot say. They could always foretell those things some way and no one else could hear the things they heard.

Aunt Tisey:

Well, it jes warn't for you to hear, that's all.

Mistress:

Well, I sort of believe in dreams myself. I dreamed of my brother's death, only I thought it was my mother. It was as plain as everything, even to the pebbles in the creek. They had a cloth around her head to keep her from getting out of the coffin. The next day, after I dreamed it, we started to Laurel Fork to the Fourth-of-July celebration, when we met them coming back with Jess. That night, when he was in his coffin, there were all the details of my dreams. He had a cloth around his head, for his head had been crushed under the wheel of an automobile.

* * * * *

Mistress:

I was going to tell you this old witch tale. One time Ma bought a fine cow -- she was just as fat as a butter-ball and give a big water bucket full of milk. All at once, she begin to go to skin and bones and didn't give a teacupful of milk. Will and Walt, from down in the mountain, passed along and told Ma the old cow was witched an' they would cure her. Ma said, all right, what must she do. They told her to go and milk ever drop the cow would give while they went to the woods for thorn switches. They come back and poured the milk in a trough and whipped that milk with them thorns until the last bit of milk was gone. Well, sir, that old cow never give another drop of milk and Ma had to sell her.

Aunt Tisey:

That's old stuff. Now, my Ma could really take witches out'n things. Once they was a cow witched an' she couldn't git up. Ma took some salt an' water an' went out thar an' worked with that cow. D'rectly, along come the men an' said, "Maybe we better go help that old cow up." And Ma said, "Tain't no use, she'll git up when she takes a notion." They looked and thar she was a-goin' acrost the hill, just a-picking grass.

Aunt Tisey:

One time Pa bought two pigs. They wouldn't do nothin' but stand at the gate and squeal. They just went to nothing and quit eating. Walt and Will come along one day and told Pa his pigs was witched. "Well," said Pa, "what can we do?" "There ain't nothin' to do but jes burn them witches out'n the pigs. Build you up a fire jes like I say, out'n them sticks."

They built a big fire an' Pa took one pig and Will the other and pitched 'em in the fire. Them pigs squealed and come out of that fire with their hair swinged and their tails afire, and they lit out for the big woods. In about two weeks them pigs come home; their tails had done dropped off, but they started in to grow and made the finest hogs you ever saw.

Like one time, Uncle Ben Floy's pigs took to dying. As they was a-settin' thar on the porch one evening, a little pig let in to squealin' and Uncle said, "Thar go 'nother one of my pigs."

Pa was a-settin' thar too, an' says, "No, Ben, not if'n you'll mind me."

"All right I'll mind you. What to do?"

So Pa told him how to take out witches. In the meantime, he musn't talk nor lend anything. Uncle Ben Floyd caught that pig an' took some haar out'n his ear an' some off'n the tip end of his tail. He come in the house speakin' nary a word an' got down on his knees in front of the fire. He took that haar an' rolled it up in a little ball, then dug a hole in the ashes an' kivvered it up. The children axed him what he was a-doin', but he went on out an' never said airy a word.

The pig died. Pa said, "Whyn't chu mind me? You lent somethin'."

"I lent some whiskey for sickness."

Pa sorter grunted and said, "No good ever come of lendin' a thing to airy witch. I'll bet Old Tom'll git on a good 'un tonight."

I stayed all night with a witch once. She petted us girls an' we put at Ma to let us go stay all night with her. We went an' she talked to us an' played with us an' all of a sudden she said, "Chillen, I'll show you the purtiest thing you ever seed in your whole life if'n you'll promise not to tech 'em."

O'course we promised, an' she went out an' picked up a apron full a chips -- bigguns an littluns all mixed up. She set us there in a circle, crossed our hands an tolt us not to move. She poured them chips out in the middle of the circle. When she did, they got up an run all around the room, crawled all over us, an' they's jes the purtiest little things. All at once, they went back to the middle an' was chips again, an' she swept 'em in the fire. We told Ma an' she wouldn't let us go no more.

She come to our house once an' told Ma that her baby was a-goin' to die; he's witched. O'course Ma said, what could she do. She said she'd stay the night an' cure us.

"Make me down a pallet in front of the fire an' let me sleep with the baby."

In the middle of the night, all the kids let in to crying so pitiful-like that Pa got up an' got all the kids away from her. Ma said, "You'll ketch it now." Pa rolled an' tumbled all the rest of the night in terrible pain.

One time me an' my sisters an' John's girl, Ella Mae, was at a 'lasses biling at Jim Tom's. We got tired an' started to the house an', as we passed the graveyard, we saw a white sheet, just like four people was holding the four corners an carrying something in it. We run back, scared to death. Some of the grown folks went back with us but nothing was thar. Will's boys tried to set us afire an' burn us up, so we run to Uncle Ben's an' stayed all night.

Next day, Ella Mae was a-grindin' cane an' stuck her head in between the rollers an' mashed

it flat. She was carried up that same road in a white sheet just as we seed it that night.

Mistress:

A'nt Tisey, tell her about that bear chasing Uncle Walt.

Aunt Tisey:

That hain't no tale; that's the honest God's truth. Walt stayed out real late one night, spidering some gal, I reckon. As he was a-comin' along home he hears a dog behind him. He stoops down an' picks him up a couple a rocks to skeer it back. As he thowed he seed 'twas a b'ar. He commenced to run an' that b'ar right atter him. He had to cross a lane that was fenced on both sides. As Walt cleared the second fence he herd the b'ar knock the top rail off'n tothern. He come a-runnin' in home. You could a heard him a mile. He didn't haf't holler for us to let him in nor nothing, for the door was fixed with a latch string a-hangin' out. Well, sir, he jes busted the door open an' shot it back right quick. He was so scared he couldn't talk. He finally told us a b'ar run him home. We went back next day an' found his track where he'd jumped a ten-rail fence an' never toch it.

Mistress:

One time Pa was a-going sommers on a horse. (Ever one rode horses them days.) He felt something git up on the horse behind him an' put its arms around him to hold on. He looked back an' couldn't see nothing. He tried to shoot it with his pistol but still it hung on. He was a-running his horse an' a-shooting until, all at once, he passed the Cloud Graveyard, an' the thing got off an' he rid on home.

Aunt Tisey:

Well, I must git on up to John's.

When Mrs. Allen said that, the visitors knew the spell was over, so they took her to John's and returned to their home.

* * * * *

With the passing of the old folks like Aunt Tisey, much of the lore of the mountain must inevitably be forever lost, for the hill people have been moving out into the world and the world has been coming into Carroll, Grayson, and the rest of the counties of southwestern Virginia, at a rapid rate. Thus, the repository of whatever may remain of the distinctive ways of their elders will survive only in the memories of the mountain people who are in middle life, as of this writing.

As an example of things past, of the kind of remembrances which some of the mountain people might evoke for the benefit of their children and friends, the following discourse, addressed to an imaginary child, is presented:

Remembrances Along The Way

Put on your seven-league boots and let's take a giant step back into another century,

for the sake of history, and look at some things that do not ordinarily get into print, for there is always a tendency to glorify the past. Mountain folk, too, have been schooled to speak well of the departed. So, let's pretend we are in bygone days and see what emotions some scenes of the past will bring up.

Hold on, children. We are now traveling back through time. Do you see that little child? That happens to be me at the age of eighteen months. My mother has already despaired of my ever walking and has decided I was touched in the head, or else witched; for I would only sit on one foot and go sliding all around the farm. My neighbor and playmate refused to learn to talk, so his parents resigned themselves to the raising of a witched child. However, they decided to teach him to work, so that he could be self-supporting. One day, when he was sixteen, his father was teaching him to build fence when the boy looked up and saw a bull racing toward his father and yelled, "Run, Pap." The father saved himself and then proudly addressed his son, "How come, son? All these years, and you just now speak?" To which the son replied, "Hain't had nothing to say."

Those funny looking clothes you see me wearing are made from flour sacks -- using such clothing is a habit of mountain folk that still persists. During the Depression, in the time of Red Cross flour, the "Not for Sale" sign had a curious habit of cropping up just anywhere on human anatomies.

Well, I did have one "Sunday-go-to-meeting" dress. It was made of white calico with red flowers in it. My grandmother had made it for me to wear when making my debut into the world; it was long enough almost to touch the ground when my mother held me -- one reason for making it that way was that it was stylish; another, that it could be worn many years before I would outgrow it. I still have the dress and the little matching bonnet made just like Grandma's,

in which I made my first public appearance for the neighbors to see the little "angel." (Sometimes I have wondered why people make so much fuss over going to Heaven if angels are all wrinkled, toothless and red-faced and have "squinched-up" eyes and howling voices.)

That stuff you see on my face is dirt, for mountain mothers did not have the washrag habit, at least on week-days. That scrubbed "holier-than-thou" look was reserved for church and special occasions. As one old lady said, "I don't see how these people stand to comb their hair two or three times a day. Why, I comb mine once a week and it nearly kills me."

Look at that man. That is my father. He secretly hoped I would call him Pa. He is not taking calisthenics; he has just purchased his first car and is winding it up. I have never been as proud of anything in my whole life as I was to ride home from school in that 1919 Model "T" Ford. As I may have told you, Father was a teacher. So, in order for him to go and get his first automobile, Mother taught school for him that day. The salesman just put him in it, and set his course toward home. Father came riding into the school yard about closing time with a dignity befitting a teacher. Then time came to go home, and Mother and I stood proudly by, while Dad began winding. He heaved and cranked and sputtered and his face changed from red to redder, while his pupils looked on in bug-eyed curiosity.

You guessed it. That gas buggy refused to sput one sputter. Being part Irish, my father was a pretty persistent fellow, but he finally admitted that he was plain stumped.

Ours was a one-room school which was attended by "scholars" of all ages, including some twenty years old and older. Thus, among Father's audience was a young man, a pupil, who had just happened to have seen his uncle crank a car. The onlooker finally ventured to suggest

that perhaps Father's engine might work if he would turn the switch key. It did.

There being only one door, Dad climbed in first and slid under the steering wheel; next, my mother mounted with all the dignity she could summon, hampered as she was by the high running board and her narrow skirt. My mother, because of her ample proportions, left me but little room; still, it was the most exciting ride I ever took.

* * * * *

Ah! Here we are at the gate of a modest little mountain farm, lovingly enfolded in the arms of the Blue Ridge Mountains. For the people who live here, the day is just beginning. See, in the house, the mother is just building the fire for the morning. I can tell that you are wondering where the father is. Well, strange to say, he is still getting his forty winks of beauty sleep. (I know that others will tell you differently, but such indulgence of extra rest is allowed the head of the house in this section.) Now look at your watch and you will find that it is only four o'clock. You will note also the absence of a time-piece in the home. Mountain people do not need clocks. I guess Mother Nature has given us many capabilities, like knowing what time it is, which civilization causes people to forget.

Early rising is a necessity, as you shall see, for there is much to be done before daylight. Notice how the mother pulls the smoldering coals from their bed in the fireplace, under the ashes, where they were placed for safe-keeping last night at bedtime. Now, she carefully places a pine cone or two on the live coals and crosses up some fine sticks of wood on top of them before she places a large stick, called a forestick, on what she hopes will soon be a good fire. Already there is a back-stick in the fireplace. It is a very large stick, sized to burn for perhaps a week. It is lots of fun when the backstick is laid, as you'll agree when I tell you about it:

To lay a backstick, the fire must be allowed to die down. As it begins to die out, the children roast potatoes, corn, apples or anything in season in the glowing embers. When the fire has cooled sufficiently for a person to get near enough to do so, a bed for the log is made in the ashes at the back of the fireplace. With much heaving and grunting the heavy log is centered at the top of the fireplace, then dropped with a thud, showering ashes and coals all over the house and on all who do not scatter quickly enough.

This woman we are watching is a very lucky one, for she has a set of dog irons on which to shape her fire. Her man has been ingenious enough to fashion them in his own shop from a few pieces of scrap-iron. Those that don't have fire dogs? Oh, well, two stones from the field will do just as well. Who cares?

Now she takes a turkey-wing fan from off a nail above the fireplace -- if she has no turkey wing, a chicken wing will do; if she has no chicken wing, she uses her apron; or else she uses what Mother Nature gave her, a good pair of bellows so she can puff out her cheeks and huff and puff -- to cause the whole mass to burst into flame. The room slowly loses its chill as the flames leap up the rock chimney.

But the newly kindled fire is not without its drawback, for mountain fireplaces have a way of smoking badly, as well as other bad features. Only when the room has become filled with smoke does one begin to feel comfortably warm. Usually, by that time, the smoke will clear away unless the day is going to be rainy and then the smoke will hang low.

When the fire has burned to the proper stage, the mother begins to prepare breakfast which will consist of cornpone, "granny" gravy, fried salt pork and a vegetable, if any be left from last night's supper. The eggs and ham

produced on the farm will not appear on the table; they are ordinarily sold to provide necessities. They are eaten by the family only on special occasions: eggs for Easter, chicken for Christmas, chicken or ham for the preacher's visit.

It will be interesting to look on either side of the fireplace, at the cooking utensils hanging on the wall. That large wooden tray has been in the family for many generations. It was carved from a maple log by a remote ancestor, in his spare moments, especially on rainy days. Mother came into possession of it at her mother's death, for one day grandmother had said to her, "Now, when I am done with it, I want you to have my dough-tray. It was made by my grandfather from that little maple tree that used to grow down yonder by the springhouse, the one that poor old grandmother used to set under when she churned." So, the legend follows the tray, now retired from daily use and hanging by the fireplace in a place of honor. Another one, in service now, sits on a shelf in the meal room, a little room built off the kitchen.

There is a song about "chicken in the dough-tray, a-peckin' out dough" that might give you a little insight into a way of living. Extra flour left over from making bread was kept in the tray, ready for the next meal's preparation. More flour was simply added each time the bread was made. Thus, there were always little gobs of dough in the flour in the tray. When not in use the tray was sometimes left on the porch railing. If the old hen found it and pecked out the dough, what of it? Flour was too precious to be wasted -- grandmother would just stir it around a little so the hen's pecking wouldn't show, then would add a little more flour, and make the morning's biscuits.

With a pinch of this, a wad of that, and a dab or two of something else, the biscuit bread is ready to bake so the mother takes a baker off the nail by the fireplace. Now, a baker is a

heavy, cast-iron skillet with three legs. The fire is just right by this time, or else she will wait until it is. She picks up an iron fire shovel, made in the shop for the purpose, and scoops out shovelfuls of the glowing fire coals and makes a bed of them on the hearth in front of the fire. She sets the baker on the coals and, when it gets hot, she greases it all inside with a greaser made of a meat skin which she keeps in a gourd. The greaser is used over and over until all the grease is used out and then a new one is started. Bread is much better when the greaser becomes almost black and well seasoned, for it imparts a never-to-be-forgotten fragrance to the room and to the bread.

Now, she is ready to shape the dough into pones for baking. She pretends not to notice, for there is a superstition about shaping the pones: if the first pone is larger, then your fortunes will increase; but if the first one is the smaller, you've already seen your best days. Knowing this, she takes a little more than half the dough up in her hands, shakes it up and down, all the while moving it from one hand to the other as she walks the length of the room from the tray to the baker. By the time she gets there she has a well-shaped, properly-kneaded pone which she puts in one half of the baker, pats it just so, and returns for the other. Now for the "kivver".

The baker has a bowl-shaped lid which has been sitting on the fire all this time, toasting its sides and getting red hot. The mother reaches in the corner of the fireboard where the shovel is kept and brings out a pair of "fire hooks" which she uses to lift the lid and place it on the baker. The bowl-shaped top is then filled with red-hot coals and left over the baking bread while she turns to other tasks. She lifts the "kivver" from time to time to see how the bread is coming on. This whole process of bread making and baking will be repeated when she comes in from her work in the fields to "git dinner". In fact, the noon meal is going to be very much like the one she is

preparing now, except that there will have been a pot of soup beans set on the fire, cooking, and some child will have been told to "keep water in the beans, keep the pot biling, and not let it turn over."

Breakfast is ready now, so the father is waked up with a rousing shake, if the smell of a hearty breakfast has not already roused him from his dreams of kings and queens, ladies fair, and milk-white steeds. Then, as if in retaliation for his sudden eviction from the land of fantasy, he bellows up the stairs, in a voice not to be mistaken by the assorted kids sleeping in the upper room three or four to a bed or on pallets on the floor. He may be many generations removed from his royal ancestors, but his voice carries authority, nevertheless. He is undisputed king in his own little realm.

Such a riotous breakfast you've never seen! The mother wonders how the meal she has just spent two hours over can disappear so fast. Breakfast over, each member of the household scurries to his assigned task; they must all "git the things done 'gainst daylight, for they's work to be done."

It has been said by mountain women that men want "a woman what never sets down; one that'll work all day in the cornfield without gitting tired, and be so rested when the day's work is over that she'll git the meals, tend the children, do the chores while he just sets, have a whole passel of younguns, and milk the cows -- for in these parts it's womanish for a man to milk." The woman we have been watching does all this and feels rewarded if, at the close of the day, he says she is a "peart mover and a right smart help to a man."

It is now daylight. There are twelve more hours in the day for this mountain woman. Are these the "good ole days" we hear about? Or, hadn't you heard that the mountain folk of

Carroll County only work eight hours -- eight before dinner and eight after!

* * * * *

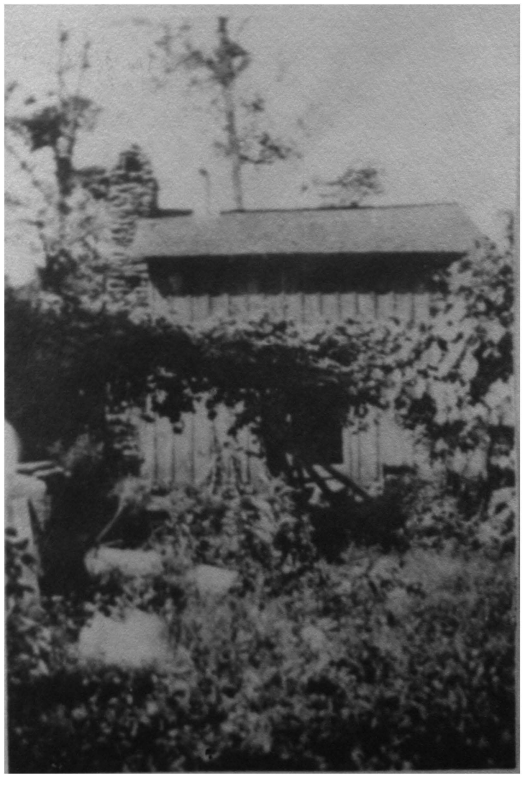
After viewing the early-morning activities of a mountain family, one might move on, in imagination, and sit down with some older inhabitant of the hill country, just to hear her musings about the past, as follows:

Down Memory's Lane

Memory goes back to the old, one-room, log cabin with its two immense oaks standing in front like sentinels, guarding the place with its large, merry family inside. The cabin was dark inside since its only source of light was one small window in the back of the combination living room, bedroom, parlor, kitchen, and nursery. In one corner of the room was a set of narrow stair-steps leading to a loft above, which had a hole sawed out for light and a board to fit in it when the weather got too cold.

Yes, if I could go back, I'd be willing to drink a cup of boneset tea to break up my cold. I can still see bags of the dried leaves we gathered and dried in the fall to be used for cold medicine in the winter.

In memory, I trim and fill the old ile lamps with ile toted from the store in the old ile can, with an Irish 'tater stuck on the spout. Sometimes the storekeeper would stick on a piece of dough candy. How happy I was when it come my turn to claim the candy off'n the spout. It tasted like ambrosia, even if a little oily.



This old house,
this bashful couple;
Twelve "stairstep" kids
all in a row; →
They combined two
streams of culture,
The effect of which,
there's none to know.
↓

I'd like to run, barefoot, to drive in the cows on a cold frosty morning. I remember how good it felt to thaw out my toes in the warm places where the cows had been lying.

I'd like to see sliced punkin rings strung on the quilting frames and swung up to the jists to dry and be out of the way till using time. I'd like to eat a mess of 'em boiled with salt pork 'til they're jes right, or else a mess of shuck-beans, leather britches, or dried apples that had been strung on strings hung around the fire 'til dried and then stored on a nail in the corner come winter time. (Vitamins and germs hadn't been invented then.)

I'd like to break the ice in the bucket on the water table on the back porch to wash in the old-time wash pan with the twine threads pulled through the rust holes to stop the leaks. I'd like to see Grampa whet his case-knife of steel on the tines of his fork to carve the meat that had been boiled with the black soup beans; eat a hearty meal; and then rise and get his tooth-pick made from a goose quill and kept sticking in a crack over the door jamb, or carried in his vest pocket when he would go abroad. I would also like once more to see him soop the butter-milk off his mustache as he ate his supper of cornbread, buttermilk, and green onions dabbed in salt.

If you've never eaten lye hominy, poor-do, cush, granny-sop or cracklin' bread with spice-wood tea, then you've never really lived; you've merely existed.

I'd like to see Gramma blush with shame when Grampa's jokes were a little off color and hear her scolding, "Be shame. Be shame."

You city folks 'll never know the joys of pokin' bumble bees in their holes in the daubings of the old rock chimneys; an I'll bet you've never sung a doodle-bug out of his hole, or whipped out a nest of yellow jackets with a willow switch -- just for fun.

* * * * *

The same voice that describes the joys of mountain home life might go on to tell about a mountain family which, for purposes of this writing are referred to as Old Man Press and his boys:

Old Man Press and His Boys

> Old Man Press and his boys used to make brick right here where Laurel Fork Schoolhouse stands. They had 'em a little mud mill, a whole lot like a cane mill. It was turned by a mule and it mixed the clay with water and then run it out in little wood frames -- four bricks to the frame -- to be baked in the sun. When the bricks dried, they shrunk a little, so them frames was just turned over and the bricks was poured out and stacked up. I reckon they made a little money at it, but it couldn't a been much.
>
> Press and his boys were awful skeery and allus saw witches and things; they was all time seeing things and hearing things climb the wall and stuff.
>
> One time Press's cows got bewitched so's he couldn't do nary a thing with them. He couldn't get no ways close to them to milk nor nothing. He heard of an old witchcrafter up close to Hillsville, sommers, so he walked all the way, about twelve miles, I 'low, and got him to take the spell off the cows. When Press got back home, his cows was as gentle as kittens.
>
> I heard this and Ma knows about this, too. Press and Jethero used to hear witches and dig in the ground and hunt for them -- they had little holes dug all in the ground about where they had hunted for witches. One time we bought us an organ -- they weren't many them days -- and

they heard Ma a-playing on it and thought it was witches and dug the whole hillside up for 'em. I don't know what they'd a done if'n they'd a found one. I know I wouldn't want to.

One time they was a graveyard down there before the woods uz cleared out. Someone in the neighborhood died and they dug his grave. A footpath through the woods went right clost to that new grave. It come night and the diggers went on home aiming to come back against day and finish the vault. Well, funny thing, Old Man Press he got drunk and was a-walking along that footpath towarge home when he staggered off'n the way and fell smack dab in that grave. He was skeered to death, he fit, and he kicked; but he couldn't climb out to save his soul from Hell, and he hollered 'til he plumb give out. Well, you know, Sam had been over to Ma's and she had made a bedsheet for Sally, so he was a-taking it along home. It was sorter chilly so he wropped it around him to keep out the night air. About that time he heard Old Press a-moaning down in that grave. He went and peeped in and saw who it was an said, "Jesst wait a minit and I'll come down there and get you." Old Press looked up and saw that white sheet, give a yell you could uv heard to China and he took out up the side of that grave and didn't stop running 'til he got plumb home, a-yelling to his folks to lock the door; the Devil was after him.

Old Press was awful baldheaded, you know. Well, one day, Plez met up with him and says to him, "Press, whyn't you sow your head in Rannal grass? They said it does powerful well in poor places."

* * * * *

Most of the mountaineer's time and effort were spent in producing food. Families were large and

appetites keen, so every resource of sustenance had to be exploited.

In the diet of the hill people, no item was more important than pork, and none more appreciated. Thus hog-killing time was always a red-letter occasion, such as the one described here:

Hog Killing Time

"John, Bob, Edd, boys, boys, time to be up and stirring. There's rocks, wood and water to carry."

Came the call up the stairs one cold frosty morning in the fall. We knew it was hog-killing time, also that it was only three o'clock in the morning -- the usual time of getting up was four o'clock, when the roosters crowed.

Oh, how we did hate to leave our warm beds up under the rafters; slip into our clothes; and, with frosted fingers, carry in the rocks as fast as our Dad could dig them loose from the frozen ground, and pile them up on what was soon to be the fire. First, a layer of wood consisting of broken limbs gathered from the woods would be laid, and next a layer of rocks, till the pile would begin to look as high as the Buffalo (Mountain) to us.

But soon it would be fun to stand around the roaring fire, toasting ourselves first on one side and then the other, till our numbed fingers began to ache as they thawed out. Away to the spring, then, for a pan of spring water to hold them in to "take out the frost."

By that time, two or three of the neighbors would arrive and the regular work would begin.

The hogs were always shot in the head with an old mountain rifle after a measure of powder had been poured in and tamped down with a wad of tow, followed by a bullet wrapped in a greasy rag. The proper spot to shoot was "right between the eyes," just one-half inch above center, and proud is the crackshot that can bring him down without making him squeal. The crackshot of the community enjoyed this task immensely; he would do it for the whole settlement and would brag, "I never made one squeal yet."

When the animal had given up the ghost, a sharp knife would be wielded by another expert, to open the animal's jugular vein and allow it to bleed freely; in order to have nicer, better tasting meat.

Never for one moment think that, with all the joshing, jokes, laughter and passing of the bottle of "eye-water" (I reckon the reason they called it that was because it was so strong it made your eye water to swallow it. Anyway, no bona fide, good-old, mountain hog-killing was complete without a little bottle to take a nip out of once in a while "to keep from ketching something, I never knew exactly what.) -- well, don't think that, in this confusion, the mountain people forgot to keep the meat as clean and sanitary as possible.

Then came the scalding -- in a barrel, if you were wealthy enough to own one that you didn't need to saw in two to make a couple of wash tubs for the old lady. If you were one of the have-nots, you simply dug a hole in the ground and used that. If you were Irish, no bother, you just borrowed from your neighbor. Uncle George went to borrow Uncle Rob's scalding box. He being a good neighbor said, "Wy, shure, 'tis down behind the barn; just help yourself." Uncle George drove his sled down behind the barn to load it on and when he got there he found that "it" was a hole in the ground. The two of them didn't speak for years after that.

Whatever the scalding receptacle was, it was first filled with cold water. How well I remember the gallons and gallons I had to carry with the frost nipping my fingers, and the endless trips back and forth to the branch until someone said, "Enough."

While the killing was going on, others of the crew would be taking the hot rocks from the pyre by means of hoes and pitchforks and dropping them into the water till it would roar, frizzle, bubble and roil. Then would come another community expert, the official water tester. If, on raking a forefinger through the water three times, it was so hot it almost took the finger nail off the third time, then it was "just right." So, with lots of heaving, grunting, and pushing, the hog would be hoisted into the hot water box. "Well, how about it boys!" the proud owner would boast, "I believe I've got Old Man Zack beat this year, don't you?" Of course everyone would agree, for they were expected to.

Old Barney, he was a personality, for hadn't he been the children's pet? (No wonder they put their fingers in their ears and cried when he was shot.) His carcass was twisted and turned in the hot water until the hair loosened and came out just right and, with a word from still another expert, he was turned out on a clean board. Whereupon all hands would fall to, pulling and scraping his body free from hair. Even we children liked to feel that we were helping with our scraping knives, but we were mostly in the way as we stood around claiming the tails to roast in the ashes.

"Careful," scolds Dad, as I reach in to help. "Save them good stiff bristles on the nape of the neck to sew shoes with." In those days the old razor-backed hogs had stiff bristles on the back of the neck, which were carefully saved and used for needles when making shoes by

hand. Mountain people have to make do, or do without.[1]

Eagerly we helped, or hindered, all we could, while we anxiously waited for the liver to bake on a hot rock. Then, when our appetites for fresh meat had been satiated, we would run to get the hog bladders. Each child would claim his from a special hog before it was killed and none of us would get the other's bladder. Each bladder would be cut off so as to leave a little stem to it. We would then proceed to blow them up, using a hollow weed for a quill. We'd fill our cheeks and blow and puff till they wouldn't hold any more; let the air out; pull and stretch and blow them up again till they were paper-thin and almost as big as our heads; then drop in three or four beans; and blow them to capacity again. Then we would tie the mouths and hang them up on a joist to dry. Once in a while, after they had dried we would get them down and rattle them awhile, always being careful not to burst them, for we were saving them for Christmas guns. Come Christmas, we'd get them down, dry them in front of the fire until they were as tight as a drum, then run outside, throw them down, jump on them with both feet, and make them burst with a loud bang that sounded like a cannon to our young ears.

I remember, once, tying my hog bladder to the old black cat's tail. When it started waving and rattling over her back, she lit out for tall timber, running here and there but all the time failing to rid herself of the "thing". Then, she must have thought of her refuge under the kitchen porch and made a dive for her favorite crack in the rail fence around the yard. She got through the fence but the bladder wouldn't go through.

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[1] This part of the narrative is, of course, not to be taken too seriously. This exaggeration concerning the bristles was regarded as a bit of mountain humor.

You know that when an irresistible force meets an immovable object there is always an inconceivable commotion, and so it was: the old cat wouldn't stop; the bladder burst with a loud bang; and the old cat jumped ten feet in the air, emitting a loud squall as she hit the ground running. Gaining the sanctuary of the porch, she remained in hiding for the rest of the day.

Mother and the girls were on hand at hog-killing time, too. Mother was always looking for the toothache bone. When the head was cut open, she would take it out, wash it, and lay it up to dry. Then she would wear it on a string around her neck to ward off the toothache.

Then, too, the women and girls had the job of taking the fat off the entrails. It was carefully cut and picked off and saved to make lard for later use. The cracklings that were left after the lard was squeezed out were saved to make crackling, or short'ning bread.

The paunch, emptied and washed, was saved for tripe. The large intestines were cleaned for chitt'lin's, the smaller ones for sausage casings; or else they were ripped open, washed, and hung up to dry until spring, when they would be used in making soap.

Thus, everything about the hog was saved except the squeal and that was saved too, I reckon, if the crackshot had brought him down without losing the squeal.

* * * * *

Because Laurel Fork, Virginia, was regarded as somewhat typical of mountain communities, it was deemed relevant to this writing to include the

following comments[1] on its history, its people, and their ways:

Laurel Fork, Virginia

Laurel Fork, in 1954, had a population of about twenty souls. It was situated in Carroll County, in the Blue Ridge Mountains, at an elevation of about 3000 feet. It was formerly known as Bolttown because a Doctor Bolt and his relatives had settled there. Because the Bolts seemed different from the common run of the neighborhood, some of the mountain folk living nearby said that the people in Bolttown had the "big head," and they sneeringly referred to the settlement as "Little Cincinnati."

"Doc" Bolt owned the first automobile in Carroll County. When that vehicle was heard emitting eerie, ear-splitting sounds as it coughed and sputtered and bounced along the narrow, rutted, country roads, the people, both young and old, would run long distances to get to some vantage point from which to watch that "devil's buggy spitting Hell-fire and damn-nation."

In politics, the settlement was predominately Democratic, whereas the rest of Carroll County usually "went" Republican. It is told that, on one occasion, a citizen from this community went to the county seat, and, after considerable tasting of his "eye-water," forgot that he was out of his own neighborhood. In his exhilaration, he shouted, "I can whoop any Republican in Carroll County." Just about that time, he found himself in a prone position, sifting out teeth from the road dust between his tongue and the roof of his mouth. Slowly extricating himself from a maze of legs, belonging to those who had

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[1] Contributed by Ninevah Jackson Willis.

gathered "to see the show," he rubbed his aching head as he spoke in his characteristic drawl, "Wall, horizontally speaking from a vertical standpoint, I think I done kivvered too much territory."

The presence of a Democratic stronghold in the heart of Carroll gave rise to a good many clashes, some more of wit than of arms. It is related that two good friends, Liscoe Shockley and Walter Marshall, were mowing in a meadow when darkness overtook them. They hung their scythes on an apple tree limb and went on home. Next morning they came back to finish the job. When they reached to get their scythes, they found that Marshall's scythe was not there. Marshall, knowing Shockley's politics, said, "Liscoe, some rascal stole my scythe, and from the looks of things, it must have been a Democrat." Shockley thought for a minute and replied, "Yes, Walter, I guess you're right; for if it had been a Republican he would have taken both of them."

After a number of years, perhaps because people had begun to realize that common folks are what remains of "big heads" when the nerve has been killed, they stopped calling the settlement "Little Cincinnati" and commenced calling it Laurel Fork, no doubt because of its proximity to a creek of that name, which took its designation from the profusion of rhododendrons growing nearby and called "laurel" by the mountain folk.

In the Laurel Fork settlement, until the middle 1900's, farming had been a way of life springing from necessity; not a business. That such had been the case had given rise to certain underlying currents in the social structure of the community: All day Laurel Fork people might toil in their poor, steep fields until the very marrow in their bones would ache, but, in the evening as they would sit around their comfortable firesides, they would dwell with kings; they would see parading before them brave knights and ladies fair with lily-white hands who rode upon milk-white steeds, as they would tell the old tales and

sing the old ballads, remnants of another way of life. Thus, each family fully expected the day to come when its members would be proved to be of royal birth and the heirs of a great fortune left to them by some former king or nobleman. And, sure enough, the Worrell family had been traced clear back to Edward III, but no fortune had been forthcoming, although it was pretty certain that there must be a fortune accruing to them as Plantagenet heirs.

For the mountaineer, a large family was essential. Otherwise he could never have worked that rugged land where, as it has been said, "going up, you can might' nigh stand up straight and bite the ground; going down, a man wants hob-nails in his pants." The story goes that, once upon a time, a farmer made a small trench through his cornfield and, as he and the boys shucked the corn, they would pitch the ears into that depression. The field was so steep that the ears would just slide through the field, on down the valley, and into the farmer's crib; thus saving them from "cyarting it in on a slide." One day the old man stumbled as he aimed with an ear of corn, threw himself bodily into the ditch, and ended up in his own corn-crib with a broken leg and a badly shaken ego.

Farmhouses were located near the barns and sheds and were often used in the care of animals or the crops. Orphaned baby animals were often kept therein as pets; any crippled animals were brought in for shelter and almost always there would be a pet of some kind behind the kitchen stove. However, more fancy than truth lay in the report that one family kept the pet pig under the table, in order that they might throw it table scraps as they ate and thus dispose of two jobs at once: "ridding up the table" and "slopping the pigs".

Often, when one would go visiting, he would have to climb over, walk around, or sit on the field crops which were being stored in the house until they could be disposed of by being consumed,

traded, or sold. When the visitor would knock on the door, the flustered housewife would say proudly, but apologetically, "Howdy, come on in if'n you can get in for the trash." Men would manage to enter with an unseeing eye, while women would reply, "Lawsy, woman, I'se used to trash," meaning, "We've got just as much as you."

All the nice things the mountain family has are kept on display: pictures of the grandchildren, grandpa, grandma, and the dead baby all hang at various vantage points on the wall, along with almanacs, calendars, seed catalogues, and cooking utensils. (Even in the age of electricity, one is likely to find both the washing machine and the son's college diploma, together, in the living room.)

Mirrors were rare in early days. There is a tale extant that once a mountaineer found one in an old attic. Upon looking at it he remarked, "Hm-m-m, a picture of my old grandpappy, I'll just take it home and hang it on the wall." Later his wife stared at it disdainfully and spat, "So that's the old hag he's been a-messin' with." More credible than that story is the report that when there were mirrors to be found, they were generally so cracked or imperfect that they would give one the appearance of a three-headed monster -- if he were vain enough to look, in the first place.

James Knoxville Polk George Madison Dallas Reynolds had a wife, "Aunt Haley", who quarreled incessantly -- day and night. Dallas, as his relations called him for the sake of brevity, was always thinking up things to make her quarrel all the more. He got Hub Stanley to go to Sam Bolt's store, later called Laurel Fork, and get a whole stack of Ladies' Birthday Almanacs. By pre-arranged plan, Hub got them and came back to Uncle Dallas's and told him, in Aunt Haley's presence that Sam Bolt wanted him to stand on the road to give them out to all passers-by, thinking to rile her and cause her to reject the whole business. Instead, Aunt Haley grabbed them to

see "what Tom-foolery Sam had sent". As she thumbed through them she began to grin and, as the chagrined conspirators reported, "T'rectly, she began to hang one on ever' nail in the room. When she got them full, she fetched the hammer and driv more nails 'til she had hung up ever blessed one, she was so pleased with 'em." Dallas couldn't "open his mouth," but went next day and paid for the almanacs.

Seed corn was hung behind the kitchen stove along with the dried beans, the dried apples, and the dried pumpkin. The garden seed for "next year's crap" would often be found drying on pages torn from a Sears Roebuck Mail Order Catalogue, under the kitchen stove. The churning was done by "turning on the hearth," usually with a silver quarter inside the churn to "skeer off the witches". "Play purties" for the little ones, consisting mostly of corn-cob dolls and truck wheels, all homemade, were strewn on the floor. The baby could be seen sleeping peacefully in a trundle bed, while flies would play tag across his sticky face. "Purties" were torn from the colored pages of magazines and suspended on the wall by one pin, an arrangement which had the advantage of allowing the heat to draw all four corners toward the center and thus protect the picture from smoke, grease, and fly specs. The walls and ceilings of most dwellings were papered every spring with pages from The Atlanta Constitution and mail order catalogues, or with wall-paper samples which had been saved for the occasion or begged from the neighbor who could afford to buy wall-paper.

The mother and all the children of mountain households would turn out to help with the farm work. The littlest child would play in the furrows while all who could would drag hoes. However, the husband and father did not feel obligated to help with the housework. Woman's work included milking the cows, caring for the livestock, totin' the roughness for the animals, getting the wood, and keeping up the fires. The

mistress of the house was also expected to "git up fust an' build the fire of a morning." A mountain witticism had reference to that particular folkway as follows:

> A boy once ran into a neighbor's house and exclaimed, "Did you hear that Old Man Fariss beat his wife up this morning?" "Why no, how did he do that?" "Oh, he just got up first and built the fire."

In the mountains around Laurel Fork, according to custom and tradition, the husband has the authority in his household -- a king in his own little realm. He insists on a high degree of morality in his wife and kids but that does not necessarily apply to him. Many tales relating to his behavior are better forgotten. Husbands, besides eating, drinking "moonshine", and swearing, sit on nail kegs around the central heating stove in the little country store; there, they swap yarns and practice up on their aim while emitting streams of ambere[1] in the general direction of the box of sand in which the stove is placed. A screaming hiss, resulting when ambere meets hot metal, denotes a miss, and brings down shame upon the would-be marksman. Husbands hunt, fish and trap thus adding to the family larder and spending money -- if they choose; otherwise, they may keep their gains for themselves. The man of the house may plow the garden, but his "old woman an' younguns" plant the seed and coax the dinners into reality. Children are many times given tasks too hard for them. The welfare of the family is often sacrificed for the benefit of the farm. Frugality stems from necessity and then gets to be a habit, so that a high income does not insure a high standard of living.

Along that line, the story goes that Wise Bowman, with thousands of dollars to his credit, once came

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[1] Tobacco juice.

> walking through the snow with his big toe exposed to the elements. A neighbor asked him why he didn't buy a pair of shoes. To that he replied, "I can't afford to throw these away; just look, the tops are still good as ever."
>
> At one time, Carroll County was famous for its "mountain dew," poverty briars, and cabbage -- about all it was able to produce. Making a living required continuous labor, from the wee sma' hours of the morning until late at night. In that connection, a visitor once remarked to a mountaineer, "Well, Reuben, are you making a living here?" "No", came the reply, "but I'm a-livin' on what I'm a-makin'."

* * * * *

From humble circumstances, such as have just been described, many worthy men and women have emerged to make their marks in the world. As one descendant of the hill people said during the course of this study,

> Many mountain children have become successful simply because Mother was a wonderful woman who sensed ideals and cultural values from intuition rather than from education.

The English, Scotch-Irish, German, Dutch and Welch came into the hills of southwestern Virginia and settled among the Indians. Mingling, they gave rise to a blended people who are potentially intellectual; yet, because of a characteristic pattern of behavior which they have assumed, they

appear as "mountain hoogers." They assume the posture and guise of ignorance, indolence, and suspicion which stem from the very reason why they are in the hills, in the first place -- from their desire to be let alone, to be free, and to live their own lives. Mountain children will not talk to strangers perhaps not because they are dumb but because they do not want to tell on their parents. A descendant of the Worrells, when asked why the Worrells came to Southwest Virginia, replied, "They came to the mountains to get lost to keep from serving in the King's Army and they have been lost ever since."

Much could be written on the sociological background of this section; many are the true stories about the mountain people and their ways, still circulating which might be recorded. As one thoughtful mountaineer remarked,

> If these things are not recorded soon, they will be forever lost. Times are changing so fast that were you to visit Laurel Fork or a similar community today, you wouldn't be able to see much sign of the old ways; yet those ways are there and they still influence opinion and daily living. A people cannot be understood apart from their inheritance.

As one views their past, it seems to many that the hill people have, once awakened, made tremendous

advances. Today there may be found among them modern consolidated schools; women taking their places beside husbands and brothers as equals; and electricity catching hold like wild-fire and bringing in its wake stoves, water pumps, water heaters, bathrooms, radios and television receivers into almost every household. Yet, there are still vestigal remains of an older way of life which can be found, after some careful searching.

In a burst of pride, thinking of both the past and the present of her beloved people, a proud daughter of Carroll once said:

> I throw out my big Scottish chest, as gracefully as an Indian, as politely as a German, as neatly as a Dutchman, as stealthily as a Welchman, as soberly as an Englishman, and, in my best Irish brogue, I tell of my people in the hills as proudly as an American; for the blood of great-hearted folk flows in my veins and there bears witness to their worth.
>
> When it emerged from its chrysalis state to find itself other than a beautiful butterfly, mountain culture hung its head in shame; but when it beheld itself in the mirror of time, held out to it by civilization, it came to realize that a moth is often more handsome than a butterfly and, moreover, twice as rare. Then, it was that mountain culture raised itself to full majestic stature, inflated its chest, and exclaimed proudly, "I'm frum 'em 'air hills, myself, I am."

Viewed all together, the various anecdotes, sayings, and vignettes of mountain life, presented in this chapter, seemed altogether inadequate as means of providing a comprehensive view of the behavior and institutions of the people of Carroll, Grayson, and the other counties of rugged southwestern Virginia. Yet there seemed to be no better way of bringing their lives into focus than by glimpsing such bits and fragments. Hence, it is hoped that both young and old may be able, in future times, to recreate the culture of the hills by picking up and piecing together these shards from the desert sands of Time and thus may get a vision of the mountaineers both as individuals and as component parts of what may well be called Americanism. If such be the case, then the hill folk may well come into their own and be recognized as belonging to the truly great of earth.

CHAPTER VII

FOLKLORE IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

One of the responsibilities of the school is to transmit the cultural heritage. Thus, it seemed relevant to this undertaking to explore the possibilities of using the materials presented earlier in this writing as means of accomplishing that purpose. Accordingly, a jury of educators[1] was asked to rate each of the tales, legends, songs, poems, anecdotes, and superstitious sayings given herein as to its suitability for use in the school experiences of members of the following age groups: Kindergarten, primary grades, upper grades, high school, and adults. In responding to that request, they were asked to use the letters "A," "B," "C," and "D" to indicate "highly suitable," "suitable," "hardly suitable," and "unsuitable," respectively.

As might have been expected, the members of the jury did not agree entirely as to the degrees of

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[1] Samuel Lee Abbott, Jr., Associate Professor of Education and Psychology, Helen Marie Creasy, Assistant Professor of Education and Supervisor of Directed Teaching, and Blanche Wilson Daniel, Assistant Professor of Education and Director of the McGuffey School; all, of Radford College, Woman's Division of Virginia Polytechnic Institute.

suitability or unsuitability which should be ascribed to the various items, in respect of the five age levels specified. Thus, it seemed necessary to devise a scheme for selecting a symbol for each item to which all three jurors might consent, in relation to a given age level. Accordingly, each judgment of "A" was awarded an arbitrary weight of four; "B," a weight of three; "C," of two; and "D," of one. By having such weights it was possible to compute arithmetic means of the judgments for each of the items. Thus, if two jurors each had awarded the letter "B" to a certain item, in respect of a certain age level, whereas the third had awarded a "D," then the total weights given in that instance was found to be seven. That total was then divided by three, resulting in a quotient of two and one-third. Since that particular quotient was nearer to the weight given to "C" than to any other, a composite judgment of "hardly suitable" was then recorded, in any such case.

All the computations such as that described in the preceding paragraph appear in this writing as Appendix "B."

A study of the table in Appendix "B" discloses that very few items were adjudged to be at all suitable

for very young children. Composite judgments of hardly suitable for Kindergarten were made respecting "How To Shiver," "Angel of Mercy," "Witches' Crowns," "Where's My Big Toe," "Pat a Cake," "Had a Little Fight in Mexico," and "Making Molasses." A judgment of suitable was awarded for "Old Santa Claus," and another of highly suitable for "Dig, Dig, Dig, Dig;" both, for that age level. All other items were marked unsuitable for use in Kindergartens.

Fewer items were marked unsuitable or hardly suitable for children in the primary grades, hence somewhat more items were rated as suitable or highly suitable for children in those grades. However, the actual number to which favorable judgments were given, respecting suitability for younger elementary-school children, constituted only about one-sixteenth of the total. Specifically, the following were regarded as suitable for that age level: "Dig, Dig, Dig, Dig," "Where's My Big Toe," "Pat a Cake," "Christmas," and "Hog-killing Time." "Old Santa Claus" was the sole item judged to be highly suitable.

Thus, the tendency of the jurors was to reject the collection for very young children, even though, in actual fact, many of the stories and songs had been

used as bed-time diversions for little children living in the mountains.

When the various items were viewed by the judges as their suitability for children in the upper elementary grades, they were awarded somewhat different decisions. Nearly two-thirds of the judgments pertaining to that group were either "suitable" or "highly suitable." Then, when the items were evaluated for high school pupils and adults, nearly all were so considered. Apparently, the judges felt that, to appreciate mountain lore and to benefit from it, one must somewhat mature.

After the work of the judges had been viewed, consideration was given to the manner in which the materials in this writing might be used. In that connection it seemed relevant to state that folklore is the accumulated culture of a people told in simple everyday language; a mirror reflecting a way of life which reveals their thinking, feeling, believing and behaving. When so viewed, the potentialities of using folklore seemed to be considerable.

Much of modern learning is promoted through carefully-planned, consciously-directed activities which tend to increase understandings and develop socially constructive attitudes. In so doing, the

schools are concerned with helping children to assume the responsibilities which a democratic society places on them. One way of helping children to learn and develop as they should is to let them come in contact with their own cultural inheritance, so that they may understand how they came to possess many of the advantages which they now enjoy; so that they may interpret both ancient and modern ideas and fancies in the light of unchanging truths.

Most teachers doubtless know many uses for folklore but it may not be amiss to remind them that its greatest appeal to children is its exciting action; therefore, its power of entertainment is a prime reason for using it. Its strange language is so poetical that it may help prepare children to enjoy and understand music and poetry.

The use of folklore in social studies classes may be a way of developing a common bond between conflicting social groups. The members of such groups might compare the lore being studied with "the way we heard it." Further discussion might lead to explorations of the region of southwestern Virginia, so that fancy might be related or contrasted with fact relevant thereto. Thus, insights into folk ways and group loyalties might well emerge.

Story-telling as an art was developed among the Anglo-Saxons centuries before printing. It was kept alive among people who could neither read nor write; therefore, folklore themes might be used in English classes to develop story-telling abilities for use in common, everyday talk. The conflicts involved in some of them make them highly dramatic; they might become good material for puppet shows for older children and adults.

Since no one knows the exact dimensions of "Old Raw Head" or of a fairy god mother, they might make good subjects for art classes.

Ballads lend themselves to choral speaking because they were originally written to be rendered in that way.

Folk tales, with their exciting action, rich imaginative qualities, and their orderly and exact form, satisfy some basic human needs.

Teachers may well select from the many collections of folklore, including this one, only a moderate number, since, as fantastically delightful as they are, they still should be used in balanced proportion with more realistic stories and more informational discourse. Perhaps their best use will be on those occasions when

children -- or adults, for that matter -- are bored and restless. It is then that the teacher may be thankful that he can resort to some old folk tale or song, just for sheer diversion, knowing full well that such lore contains potent magic to beguile away many a trying moment.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND INTERPRETATION

At its inception, the purpose of this undertaking became that of portraying the culture of southwestern Virginia by means of its folklore; conversely, that of obviating some of the misconceptions extant concerning the people of that region. In keeping with that purpose, various chapters in this writing have been devoted, successively, to the tales, legends, superstitious sayings, songs, and manners indigenous to the mountainous counties of the Old Dominion, especially to Carroll County. Thus, there has been collected for posterity, and in particular for the schools, certain fast-disappearing products of a culture deemed to be unique in many respects; in the hope that what has been collected, while by no means complete, may lead to a better understanding of how all society has developed. Perhaps, by musing over these remains of other days, those who read them may be able to go back into the past and see how their own cultures have evolved from masses of cultural impacts, both human and environmental. If so, they will see a phenomenon similar to the damping of the mountaineer's

fire when a great, new backlog would be thrust upon it; followed by a quickening thereof when it would blaze forth anew, brighter than ever, because of the addition of the fresh timber.

It may be that some who read will be disturbed by the conflict and violence manifested in these writings, and well they may be. If so, those readers must remember that such was the life of the highlanders transplanted into the Virginia mountains. They must remember that the hill folk were thrust into conflicting situations which threatened to envelop and destroy them; into situations from which they were able to emerge as conquerors only by the help of those valiant servants of theirs: imagination, ingenuity, vindictiveness, cunning, tenacity, and -- when nothing else availed -- that old escape mechanism, black magic!

Readers will discern not only conflict but touches of uncouthness, vulgarity and frivolity, all related to the raw, unbridled emotions of a young and growing people. Even so, those traits of lightheartedness, despite their rudeness, served the mountaineer well, in the midst of adversities and deprivations which might otherwise have robbed him of his courage.

Thus, those who study the culture of the mountaineer must remember that he did not seek his habitation in response to those finer emotions which make for good reading. In spite of his fine European heritage, he had become something of a drifter, searching for peace of mind which he thought could be attained only in his mountain retreat. As he found happiness in the fastness of the lost valleys and hills of the Southwest, he became more and more content to let the world go by, leaving him in isolation; prone to chuckle to himself when the world outside began to judge him as "quare."

Another point, deemed useful for interpreting the mountain people and their folklore, is that folk tales are usually created at early levels of civilization, thus causing them to manifest striking similarities even though they may have originated among different peoples and in different parts of the world. Wherever people live away from books, newspapers, telephones, or other contacts with the outside world, they tend to produce such tales and ballads. Thus, farce, comedy, crime, tragedy, romance, superstition, fantasy, witchery and ghostly anecdote tend to abound in regions such as southwestern Virginia.

As a conclusion for this undertaking the following statement is made directly to the reader, not because it is deemed to enhance the value of the research already reported, but as an expression of feeling which has stemmed from an endeavor ranging far and wide over the hills of Carroll and the Virginia Southwest; from a feeling which may capture others and cause them to dig deeper into the treasures to be found there:

> Read these stories and sing these songs! Together, they will give you a better understanding of yourself and of other people. You will find yourself looking at the world through the rose-colored glasses of a poet, wondering how many milk-white steeds your ancestors may have ridden; or, better still, peering behind veiled expressions for that spirit either of nobility or of selfishness which determines a man.
>
> Remember that folklore is good for children to grow up with; for, as a whole, such lore shows how good or evil forces act according to certain laws, and teaches that courage and humbleness are rewarded; that evil must be conquered at all costs; and that grace and strength are bestowed upon those who try hard enough to be honest, kind, and upright.
>
> Most of all, try to see the nobility of the hill people. "I will look to the hills from whence cometh my strength," must have been their watchword. How else may we account not only for their survival, but for the host of great men and women and the galaxy of great ideas which have originated among them.

Finally, if you should brand this whole thing a flagrant lie, then you pay me the highest kind of compliment. Then I will know that I am indeed worthy of my hill ancestry; for you will then have to read it again. Thus, I will surely make you discover the gems of truth which lie hidden under exaggeration and falsity, which will be for me a true mountaineer's accomplishment.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX "A"

BOOKS CONSULTED TO AVOID DUPLICATION IN THIS WRITING

1. Arnow, Harriet, Hunter's Horn.
   New York, N. Y.: The Macmillan Company, 1949.

2. Bagby, George W., The Old Virginia Gentleman.
   Richmond, Va.: The Dietz Press, Inc., 1948.

3. Botkin, B. A., Southern Folklore.
   New York, N. Y.: Crown Publishers, 1949.

4. Chase, Richard, Grandfather Tales.
   Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1948.

5. Davis, Arthur Kyle, Traditional Ballads of Virginia.
   Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1929.

6. Fox, John, The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come.
   New York, N. Y.: Grosset and Dunlap, 1903.

7. Lenski, Lois, Blue Ridge Billy.
   New York, N. Y.: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1946.

8. Lomax, John A., Our Singing Country.
   New York, N. Y.: The Macmillan Company, 1949.

9. Lomax, John A., American Ballads and Folk Songs.
   New York, N. Y.: The Macmillan Company, 1946.

10. Peele, Alfreda M., Witch In The Mill.
    Richmond, Va.: The Dietz Press, Inc., 1947.

11. Sandburg, Carl, The American Songbag.
    New York, N. Y.: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1927.

12. Stuart, Jesse, The Thread That Runs So True.
    New York, N. Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951.

APPENDIX "B"

COMPOSITE JUDGMENTS RENDERED RESPECTING THE SUITABILITY OF THE VARIOUS FOLK TALES, LEGENDS, SAYINGS, SONGS, AND MANNERS, INCLUDED IN THIS WRITING, FOR INSTRUCTION AT CERTAIN AGE LEVELS

LEGEND: "A", highly suitable; "B", suitable; "C", hardly suitable; "D", unsuitable.

PAGE	ITEM	KINDER-GARTEN	PRIMARY GRADES	UPPER GRADES	HIGH SCHOOL	ADULT
a)	Chapter II, Folk Tales:					
14	One Time	D	D	D	B	B
15	How To Shiver	C	C	B	B	A
17	Angel of Mercy	D	D	C	B	B
18	Witches' Crowns	D	D	C	B	B
18	Mr. Jones	D	D	D	C	B
19	The End of Time	D	D	B	B	B
20	The Biggest Nigger	D	D	C	B	B
20	Big 'Fraid	D	D	C	C	C
21	A Phenomenon	D	D	B	A	A
22	Old Joe	D	D	B	A	A
23	Old Raw-Head and Bloody Bones	D	D	C	C	B
24	Dig, Dig, Dig, Dig!	A	B	D	D	D

PAGE	ITEM	KINDER-GARTEN	PRIMARY GRADES	UPPER GRADES	HIGH SCHOOL	ADULT
24	Where's My Big Toe?	C	B	B	C	C
25	Pat a Cake	C	B	D	D	D
26	Nancy Hanks' Sad End	D	D	B	A	A
26	The Hoop Snake's Doings	D	D	B	A	A
27	Hattie, the Handsome Bird Dog	D	D	B	A	A
28	The Old Clock	D	D	B	A	A
28	The Old Crow	D	D	B	B	A
28	The Fog Slicer	D	D	B	A	A
29	Aunt Viola's Eyesight	D	D	C	C	C
29	Rugged Carroll County	D	D	C	B	B
29	Jim's Turnip	D	D	B	A	A
30	What Happened to Buck and Baldy	D	D	B	B	B
31	Uncle Alamander's Turtle	D	D	A	A	A
32	Old Wise's Corn	D	D	B	B	B
b)	Chapter III, Legends:					
35	Lovers' Leap	D	D	B	A	B

PAGE	ITEM	KINDER-GARTEN	PRIMARY GRADES	UPPER GRADES	HIGH SCHOOL	ADULT
38	The Helpful Ghost	D	D	C	A	A
41	Hillsville Court-house Tragedy	D	D	C	B	B
44	The Buffalo	D	D	B	A	A
45	Belspur	D	D	B	A	A
45	Possum Trot	D	C	B	A	A
46	Little Country Store	D	D	B	B	A
c)	Chapter IV, Superstitions:					
49	Entire collection of superstitions	D	D	B	B	B
d)	Chapter V, Folk Songs:					
64	Whanktum Banktum	D	D	B	B	B
67	The Jolly Boatsman	D	D	B	B	B
68	Pat Malone	D	C	B	B	A
74	The Flower Boy	D	D	B	A	A
74	Grandma's Advice	D	D	B	A	A
77	Christmas	D	B	B	B	A
82	Had a Little Fight in Mexico	C	C	B	B	C
83	Teacher's Farewell	D	D	C	B	B

PAGE	ITEM	KINDER-GARTEN	PRIMARY GRADES	UPPER GRADES	HIGH SCHOOL	ADULT
38	The Helpful Ghost	D	D	C	A	A
41	Hillsville Court-house Tragedy	D	D	C	B	B
44	The Buffalo	D	D	B	A	A
45	Belspur	D	D	B	A	A
45	Possum Trot	D	C	B	A	A
46	Little Country Store	D	D	B	B	A
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64	Whanktum Banktum	D	D	B	B	B
67	The Jolly Boatsman	D	D	B	B	B
68	Pat Malone	D	C	B	B	A
74	The Flower Boy	D	D	B	A	A
74	Grandma's Advice	D	D	B	A	A
77	Christmas	D	B	B	B	A
82	Had a Little Fight in Mexico	C	C	B	B	C
83	Teacher's Farewell	D	D	C	B	B

PAGE	ITEM	KINDER-GARTEN	PRIMARY GRADES	UPPER GRADES	HIGH SCHOOL	ADULT
124	A Negro in Carroll County	D	D	D	B	B
125	Tales Heard While "Setting Up" With a Corpse	D	D	B	B	A
131	Civil War Tales	D	D	B	B	B
134	Interview With Childress	D	C	B	A	A
156	Making Molasses	C	C	B	B	B
160	Dad Tries His Hand at Milking	D	D	B	B	B
162	The Candidate	D	D	C	A	A
163	The Blind Tiger	D	C	C	B	A
166	Thanksgiving in the Mountains	D	D	B	B	B
167	Burris Upchurch and His Calls	D	D	B	B	B
171	A Mountain Dance: "Rock-Dolly"	D	D	B	A	A
173	Mountain Courting	D	D	C	B	B
179	Camping Out	D	C	B	B	B
183	The Last Indian	D	D	C	C	C
185	The True Sabbath	D	D	B	B	A
186	Old Bruz	D	D	C	B	A
189	Stop Thief!	D	D	C	B	B

PAGE	ITEM	KINDER-GARTEN	PRIMARY GRADES	UPPER GRADES	HIGH SCHOOL	ADULT
193	Remembrances of Laurel Fork High School	D	D	C	A	B
196	Old Fletch	D	D	B	B	B
200	Sister Freshair's Visit	D	D	B	B	B
207	Aunt Tisey's Reminiscences	D	D	B	B	A
219	Remembrances Along the Way	D	D	B	B	B
227	Down Memory's Lane	D	D	B	B	B
229	Old Man Press and His Boys	D	D	B	A	A
231	Hog-killing Time	C	B	B	B	A
236	Laurel Fork, Virginia	C	C	B	A	A

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