

NANCY ALEXANDER WRITES

A Trip To Buffalo Cove

By NANCY ALEXANDER

"If you smell anything that smells like a polecat, it is," declared Norah McGee, as we set forth in her bookmobile the other morning. "I ran over one accidentally the other day, and when the wind is right you can still get a whiff of it."

However the air was fragrant as we headed for Buffalo Cove deep in the mountains in a triangle of Caldwell, bordered by Watauga and Wilkes Counties.

Skilfully Norah handled the unwieldy, cumbersome vehicle. Hills were drifting with mists of white and pink dogwood, "sarvice" trees and redbud. Flowerets of white bloodroot and blue violets spangled the roadsides. Pink phlox or "thrill" cascaded along banks and walls. In fields farmers were busy turning and planting the rich, warm black earth.

The first stop of the bookmobile was a Cheeks Crossroads on the Patterson Road. The earliest customer was five-year-old Mark Miller, who was expectantly waiting and eagerly ran to summon his elders. His choice was animal books. Patrons enjoyed chatting with one another while selecting books.

Further along, we questioned Norah about her service with the bookmobile.

Norah McGee, the "Book Woman"

"You meet so many fine people in this job. If I work at it many more years I'll soon know everybody in this end of the state, said Norah, known simply as the "Book Woman," to many of her patrons.

"I've been doing this work since April 10, 1945. I travel four days a week and work in the county library on Thursday. It takes me three weeks to cover all the rounds and longer than that in the summer when the children are out of school. They love the bookmobile. Their parents get books for them in the winter. On my day in the library I alphabetize my cards and make reports, get the books in order according to author. I try to take books each time I know patrons wish.

Reviewing her life she explained, "I've done a little bit of everything. I was born at King's Creek. I taught school for eight years—one year at the Carlton School in Caldwell and seven years in Wilkes County.

"Later I worked at Broyhill's Lenoir Furniture Factory for two years doing zebra wood transfers. That was during the war when many women worked in the factories. I enjoyed it.

"Then I went to Blue Bell for a year or two. Mother got sick and I stayed at home with her for a good many months. Afterward I went to Blackwelder Hospital for 18 months as dietitian."

Patterson

The bookmobile pulled to a stop at Patterson, an age-old community, now revitalized by

the humming machinery of Cellu-Products factory.

Sleepy-eyed Shirley Johnson arrived, saying, "My husband works at night so I read then. I like nurse stories. I usually get 10 or 12 books at a time."

Maude Curtis, postmistress for 21 years, came in smiling and joking with Norah.

"I've seen many changes in the mails and post office since I took over. It was fourth class, now it's third."

Bright-eyed little Bryan Sud-dreth, dressed in cowboy togs, came in searching for cowboy books. With him were his little brother Joey and his boxer Duke.

His slender attractive mother told us about his latest escapade. "He put a cake pan on his head—one of those tube kinds, that you can take the bottom out of. I had everybody in Patterson trying to get it off. I was laughing and crying at the same time. I finally got a man with tin snips to clip it off."

As Bryan departed, with his arms full of books, he declared, "Daddy's going to take me groundhog hunting tomorrow. We're going to slash 'em with a gun."

Buffalo Cove

The bookmobile back-tracked and rolled along the Happy Valley road past Patterson School for Boys and onto the Buffalo Road which is being regraded, graveled and is to be finally hard-surfaced.

After joggling along for about 10 miles, beside the swift flowing Buffalo Creek, we took the Scuffletown Road to the back end of nowhere. At a small unpainted home of Joe Coffey we stopped. No television aerial protruded from it. In a sunny field the family was cutting old corn stocks loading them on a sled pulled by a mule. The men were working without shirts, their backs gleaming brown in the sun. The women went running to the house to bring their books.

Out they came carrying enormous boxes of books, 30 or 40 in each.

Slender, nut brown Hazel Coffey (Mrs. Carl) came bounding in, her eyes lively, her pony tail bobbing. "I have to get books for everybody. I try to

get what they like but they've all read so many it's hard to find new ones for them.

"I have to pick them out for my children. I have three. Two of them and I were all in the Greensboro Hospital with polio at the same time in 1952. Only Linda is still having trouble. She's to have an operation soon on her leg.

Mrs. Joe Coffey, Hazel's mother-in-law, also wearing jeans, came in to make her selections from among Grace Livingston Hill, Temple Bailey, and Norman Vincent Peale books.

The J. C. Todds

We stopped for a picnic lunch on a grassy greensward by Joe's Fork, in front of J. C. Todds' store.

Mr. Todd, a kindly person, came out to greet us and invited us into his neat white home to meet his wife. Youthful, pretty Mrs. Todd, is a vivacious lovely grandmother. She seated us at her table, poured coffee and served us some delightful tidbits from her kitchen. We departed the house with some of her delicious cottage cheese and a jar of Mr. Todd's golden sourwood honey.

Mrs. Todd led the way along the country road to the Buffalo Cove Baptist Church. Though established more than a hundred years ago, it has a new building, the pride and joy of its 125 members. The wide, welcoming doors were donated by the late R. C. Robbins, a native of the area. On the wall hangs the original hand-quilled deed, dated July 18, 1851, which says, "... Edward Day, David Campbell, and Nelson Roberts hath for and in consideration of the sum of one dollar to them in hand bargain, sell and conveyed and confirmed unto the said James M. Cottrell and Larkin Pipes a center tract of land containing one acre for the special use of Buffalo Cove Church."

On the way to the Buffalo Community building, Norah discussed the various families and aspects of the community. With all the patrons she exchanges news of the day, learns of the new babies, weddings and other important events in their fami-

lies.

At the entrance of the community building were stacked large boxes of books awaiting exchange. Inside preparations were underway for the morrow. Breakfast, beginning at 4:45 a. m., was to be served to trout fishermen, as it is the first day of the season each year, and meals were to be continued until nine p. m.

Beryl Bryant (Mrs. Jim) and her son, Jimmy, explained recent changes of the past year in Buffalo, which almost surpass the total of the past hundred years.

"Progress had passed the backwoods community by," said Mrs. Bryant. "Mr. Max Culp and Miss Ainslee Alexander, county agents, came up her and told us about the development program and helped us get organized. That's when things started changing, when we all started working together. We began cleaning up the area and working with our young people. We kept trying to get tele-phones and a good road up here, but we couldn't get anywhere at first.

"Our oldest daughter, Sharon," said Mrs. Bryant, "is hoping to go to Bob Jones College next fall. She has a partial scholarship, but she's got to have more money, if she goes. We can't help her at all with our large family of seven children."

"When the road is finished it's going to be just like Blowing Rock up here," he predicted.

After a final stop near the home of Mrs. Bernard Hawkins, who with her husband is active in the development program, we left the area, descending from the hills into the valley of home.

UNUSUAL FINE

Fairfield, Ill.—Unable to pay his fine, a convicted bootlegger has to pick up 1,000 beer cans along highways leading to this town.

Judge Harry Zeigler imposed this fine when Charles Gregory told him he was unable to pay the \$500 bootlegging charge. He will pick up the empty cans at the rate of 50 cents each until the fine is worked out.

Appalachian Hi News

The Appalachian High School Teen-Canteen will open Friday night, April 19, for local high school students. The Canteen, organized by the high school student council, will meet each Friday night from 7:30 to 10:30. Meetings will be held in the Student Center, a large room on the second floor of the agriculture building.

The Canteen will operate as a school club, with Jack Groce, assistant principal, serving as director, and parents of members as sponsors of the group. Parents have been invited to drop in for visits and to help with the club's activities. Each member of the high school group will purchase a membership card from the student council, which will entitle him to attend meetings when the Canteen is open.

Plans to open the Canteen have been made by the student council, with Donna Breitenstein as chairman of the planning committee. Members of the council have painted and redecored the room used as the Student Center. If the Canteen operates successfully during the remainder of the school year, the school hopes to continue its operation during the summer months.

An Advisory Committee of students, teachers, and parents

has been named to work with Mr. Groce, the director. Student members are Donna Breitenstein, Edward Brown, William High, Ronnie Smith, Sam Adams, and Jackie Greene. Parents on the committee are Mrs. Hadley Wilson, Estel Wagner, and Wade E. Brown. Faculty members serving with this group are Mrs. Margaret Graeg, student council sponsor, Walter Broyhill, and Robert Sneed.

Citizens Of The Month

In assembly Friday, April 12, Rosalind Covington and Glenn Triplett were recognized as citizens of the month. Rosalind, an outstanding sophomore student, is an active member of the Beta Club and is an assistant news editor on the High Life staff. She lives with her mother on the Jefferson Highway.

A member of Mr. Sneed's homeroom, Glenn is a strong member of the football squad. He lives with his mother, Mrs. Lillie Triplett, in Triplett.

Spanish students protest at U.S. Consulate. Kennedy to create Advisory Council on Arts. A.B.C.-TV plans \$100,000 quiz show.



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Joe C. Robinson Graduates From Air University

Maxwell AFB, Ala.—Captain Joe C. Robinson of Reese, N. C., graduated from the United States Air Force's Squadron Officer School at the Air University here Friday, April 12.

Captain Robinson was selected for the special professional officer training in recognition of his demonstrated potential as a leader in the aerospace force.

The captain, son of Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Robinson of Reese, attended North Carolina State College.

Captain Robinson, whose wife is the former Patricia C. Whaling of 1718 Roberts Road, Phoenix, Arizona, is being reassigned to Luke AFB, Ariz.

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