

Robey Shull Records Saga Of The Hills Near Ancestral Home

By NANCY ALEXANDER

Robey Shull is as rugged and timeless as the granite cliffs that tower above his valley. From a wayside store at Shull's Mills he astutely records the saga of the hill country. His feet are anchored to a wheel-chair, but his memory soars wide and free, delving deep into the reaches of the past.

Mr. Shull's blue eyes mirrored his recollections as he stared across a swift cold stream into the wide green valley: "My grandfather Simeon Shull came into this country from Germany. He settled here and gave it his name. His mill was the first one built over these waters.

"My father J. C. Shull ran the first store ever opened in this place. The old building stands down the road a-ways.

"I'm 82 years old. When I was 11 or 12, I went to the first school taught in Shull's Mills. Professor Bland Dougherty, one of the two Doughertys who started Appalachian College, taught it. My father was on the committee that got him to come here. Then a Professor Francum taught it. Later I went to Boone and Cove Creek to school.

"I used to hunt all over these mountains. There were plenty of bears and deer in the Grandfather and there's still plenty of them there.

"I used to fish a lot, too. We had nothing but speckled trout in these streams and plenty of them. Now we have rainbow and brown. There's also a trout they call speckled, but it's not the kind we had then.

"I used to hunt down Boone's Fork. It was named for Daniel. You can see the place he camped. His little hut was there until a few years ago. People kept messing with it 'til they tore it down. You can still see the smoke on the rock there from his campfires.

"The rock is at the dam that Mr. W. S. Whiting built when he constructed a band mill here. It was a double-cut mill. He used to cut thousands of feet of timber here about 20 years ago.

"When I was a boy there was nothing but forests here. They held all the rain that fell. Now when we have heavy rains, they all run off into the valleys and sometimes flood them from hill to hill.

"Tweetsie, the little train, used to run through here, going from Boone to Johnson City. Two freight engines hauled the timber out of here.

"A lot of people traveled on Tweetsie. We didn't have any good roads in here then."

Not far from Mr. Shull's store a modern, wide highway leads thousands of tourists monthly through the hill country.

A large collection of antique clocks, in excellent working condition, hang on the walls of the little store. None is for sale.

"I've got 60 or more clocks, and I don't know how many watches.

"I used to be in the watch repair business in Boone and in

Elizabethton, Tennessee. I've been interested in clocks ever since I can remember."

While Mr. Shull reminisced, his son N. D. Shull, an engineer visiting from Maryland, was expertly repairing watches in a small cubicle of the little store.

"I've been running this store about 17 years," explained Mr. Shull.

In the old-fashioned glass counter was a tray of maple sugar candy.

"I used to make maple sugar candy," he explained. "Today I buy it from someone else.

"I'd tap the sugar maples about January. You bore a hole in the maple, cut out a trough and put in an elder stick—with the pith taken out—in it. Then let the sap run out into a bucket. Put it in an evaporator. Build a fire and boil the sap down.

"It first becomes maple syrup. Then you keep boiling it until it becomes grainy. Then pour it while still hot into a greased pan or mold of any shape you want and let it set until it hardens. It takes ten gallons of sap to make a pound of sugar.

"Maple sugar trees are the ones that turn red in the fall.

"After I was grown I went West for a while; but there were too many twisters and cyclones. I was in Kansas. If you saw a cloud in the sky, you'd

better watch out. Something was going to happen.

"I've done a lot of blacksmithing in my time. I shod horses, built wagons and buggies and things like that.

"My wife, Mamie Graybeal Shull, grew up in Ashe County and then moved to Cove Creek.

"We've seen a lot of changes in our time," he ended reflectively.

Attend Legion Auxiliary Meet

Officers of the American Legion Auxiliary who attended the 5th area meeting held at the Legion Hut in West Asheville May 2 were Mrs. Lionel Ward, 17th district president, Mrs. J. W. Norris, unit president, Mrs. Roy Ruffy, vice president and Mrs. Cleye Gross, secretary. Ninety members were present.

Mrs. T. L. Noe of Wilson, N. C. and Mrs. A. M. Scarborough of Greensboro, candidates for department president, were presented. One will be elected at the State convention in Charlotte June 30-23.

Legionnaire Brown, who is helping build schools in the rural area of the Dominican Republic, told of his work and ask those present for a contri-



SMITH HARMON of Beech Mountain in Avery county was the first student to enter Appalachian Training School after it became a state-supported school in 1903. Smith is seen here in a recent pose.—Photo by Dr. James Stone.

tribution for this worthy cause.

After an address by the State Department President, Mrs. Sam J. Welborn, a luncheon was served by the women of the West Asheville Memorial Post.

Those who drive under the influence often have influence in court.

Stevenson says U. S. prestige is high abroad.

CARD OF THANKS

We wish to thank our friends, relatives and Reins-Sturdivant Funeral home for their sympathy and kindness shown following the death of Mrs. Pam Rainey—F. W. Rainey, Linda and Johnny.

Zionville News Items

Mr. and Mrs. Mack Brown and Debbie of Alexandria, Va., are spending this week here with relatives.

Miss Becky Wilson and Miss Carolyn Wallace attended a week end conference at the C. H. M. Camp at Elizabethton, Tenn.

Mrs. Maggie Norris spent Saturday with Mr. and Mrs. W. K. Wilson at Boone.

Mrs. Lee Wilson spent last week in Cleveland, Ohio, visiting her sisters and brothers and their families.

Mrs. Burl Isaacs and children Gary and Carolyn of Rt. 2, Boone, visited Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. Henry Miller.

Mrs. Lillie South is visiting this week in Lenoir with her children who live there.

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'61 CHEVROLET IMPALA 2 door, automatic, V8, radio, heater, power steering, power brakes	'68 PLYMOUTH 2 DOOR V8, automatic transmission
'61 CHEVROLET 4 DOOR Belair, V8, automatic transmission, radio, heater	'57 CHEVROLET V8 4 DOOR 4 door, automatic transmission
'61 VOLKSWAGEN	'57 PLYMOUTH Station wagon, V8, automatic transmission
'61 FORD 2 DR. HARD TOP Radio, heater, automatic transmission, V8	'57 DODGE 4 DOOR V8, automatic transmission

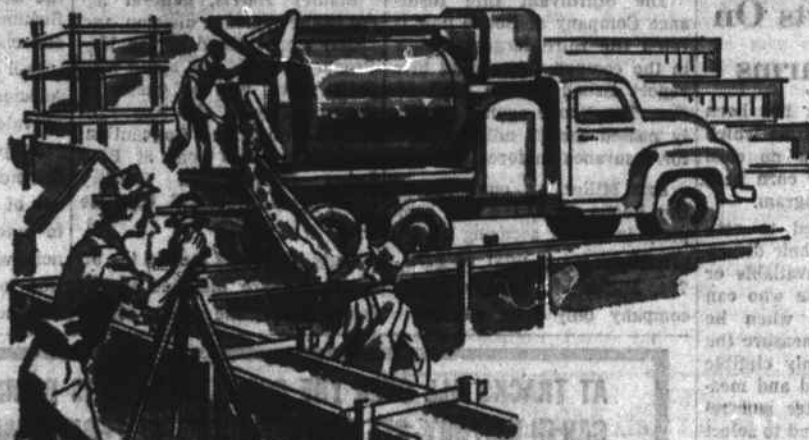
—TRUCKS—

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'59 DODGE 1/2 TON 6 cylinder	'59 INTERNATIONAL 3-4 4 speed, 4 wheel drive
'55 CHEVROLET 1/2 TON 6 cylinder	'56 INTERNATIONAL 3-4 4 speed, 4 wheel drive
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