

# Appalachian Memories

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sick. You will still find the people friendly. They will ask you in to take a meal or spend the night. It used to be a little farming community with a lot of activity around the house. Now Seminary is quiet, for most of the family are away working in plants with not even chickens to sing around the house, and the children go by bus all the way to Marshall to school.

From Seminary, we drove across the mountain to a little community called Devil's Fork, on a creek called Rocky Broad. At one time, this little community had a mission station run by the Presbyterian U.S.A. board. We could easily see how the people missed the station, and they were proud to tell us about the good work that used to be carried on there.

A few miles down the creek, we came to another of the Presbyterian missions, one of the largest carried by the Presbyterian board, Rocky Fork. It was under the supervision of Jennie Moore, one of the early pioneers of the East Tennessee mountains, not far away. The people loved her and respected her. There were a few doctors at that time, and Miss Moore worked hard until she got a nice building for a clinic. She knew what she wanted in a nurse: the nurse must be able to drive a car over almost siled roads, and when the way got so rough that she could not drive, she must get out and walk the rest of the way, whether hills, valley or mountains. She must roll up her sleeves and fix any part of "Lizzy," the Model-T Ford. It was said that the nurse, Miss McDougle, delivered more babies than any two doctors. She was jolly, and could almost make a joke out of a tragedy. The people always looked forward to her coming.

At Rocky Fork were a teacher's cottage, a church and a larger elementary school. It was a sad day when the mission doors closed, but it was one of the rules of the Presbyterian church to move on to a more needy place as soon as the people were able to take over for themselves.

There are so many boys and girls Miss Moore sent out to further their education who came back to Rocky Fork to carry on what the Presbyterian Board had started.

From Rocky Fork, we drove across Sugar Loaf Mountain to a little community called Carmen, where the Presbyterian Board had also had a mission station and where we later worked.

There was a nice teacher's cottage that stood at the foot of the mountain surrounded by tall pines, rhododendrons, laurel and other trees. Large rocks were in the yard, where children loved to play, and a little stream called Mill Creek

was there. It had trout in it. There was always one woman missionary to carry on the work. It looked a lonely place, but it was far from being lonely. A preacher came in twice a month to preach.

Those doors are closed now, the cottage almost down, and the little church changed into a dwelling house.

On our journey to the past, we then followed the Big Laurel River about four miles, and again the wagon road had been changed to a hard-surfaced road, wide enough for cars to pass. The cabins had vanished, and you saw no more farm animals. Every family used to keep a hog, cow, and mule or horse. Now, nice automobiles are standing in the yards, instead of sleds or wagons. Children are almost glued to TV, instead of carrying water and wood. People have their electric stoves and all the push-button things, and go to work in plants, often miles away from home.

We reached White Rock, which used to be near the big lumber mills with all the timber cutters. White Rock was the largest community station operated by the Presbyterian U.S.A. Board. It had a modern hospital, teacher's cottage, manse for the pastor, church, store and post office.

Dr. Packard and his nurse operated the hospital. At first, they traveled by horseback to reach the people throughout the mountains, traveling day and night. I have heard Dr. Packard talk about falling asleep on his horse, and old Dan would take him home.

Before the hospital was built, one of the men had an acute attack of appendicitis, and Dr. Packard put him on the dining table and performed the operation. He had hung a hanging lamp over the table, and just as he removed the man from the table, the lamp fell right where the man had been lying. Dr. Packard began in earnest right then to work for a hospital for men cutting timber in the mountains and for the men working at the big saw mill.

There were many accidents, and the injured would be put on the logging train and taken to Ruinon, on the railroad that led to Asheville and a hospital, but often they would get there too late.

The big hand-saw mills that sawed the logs were at Ruinon, on the main railroad line. They used cross-cut saws and axes to cut the timber down, then they would ball-shoot it down the mountain-side. They would put the logs in a big dam of water, and twice a week, they would open the dam, and the logs would go thundering down the river, knocking everything out of the way. They called it a splash. It was so inconvenient for the people, for they could hardly keep foot-logs across the river. We had to wade or ride

'Appalachian Memories: A Simpler Time' was written by Lillie McDevitt Clark, a native of Madison County, with the assistance of members of the Reems Creek Homemakers Club and the Appalachian Room of Mars Hill College. Members of the Homemakers Club are selling the book at a sale price of \$3.50 per copy. The book will be available at Ingles on the Marshall Bypass on Friday, July 20 from 1 until 4 p.m. At other times, the book is available at The News Record office on Main Street. Beginning on Aug. 1, the book will be available for \$5 at the Mars Hill College bookstore and from club members.

The book is the autobiography of Mrs. Clark, who grew up in Revere and later returned to Madison County as a Presbyterian missionary in Carmen.

The News Record will present a second excerpt from the book next week

horseback in order to cross. Usually when traveling any distance, people rode horseback, because the roads were so narrow and rough.

When the timber was all taken out in the White Rock area, the mountainsides looked like a tornado had struck them. The scars still show, and it will be years and years yet before we have large trees again as all the small trees were destroyed. And that meant that the doors to another mission station were closed. What a great work Dr. Packard and his nurse Miss Rich did! He was with my father just a few minutes before he passed away.

Still on my way to my old home, we left the Laurel River and took a hard-surfaced road to Chapel Hill and Guntertown, two more small communities, all the time getting closer to my birthplace and all the time excitement growing.

We came to Rice Cove, where there used to be another mission station, and where I would sometimes go over to help out. From there on to my old home was three miles, with only a gravel road now. As we rounded a curve, I would look for a hill covered with broomsage that we used to slide down on our homemade sleds with many spills. I could see the hill, but no broomsage; instead, small timber was growing. I knew that our old house was at the foot of the hill. I kept looking and finally I saw the top of the house, almost covered by bushes and weeds. It was a two-story house, built of logs, weather-boarded, and sealed with broad white pine boards. It had a lovely chimney, made of brick my father and his neighbors, and the broad logs had been hewn by can axe called a broadaxe.

Could this be it? Memories flooded my mind so fast, I almost lived over my childhood days in those few minutes!

## Walnut School Reunion Set

A Walnut School reunion is being planned for Saturday, August 11, 1984, beginning at 3 p.m. The reunion is not limited to graduates and is open to anyone who attended Walnut School. Former teachers and principals are also invited.

Plans are being made for an assembly in the gymnasium at 4 p.m. for a short program and possibly some entertainment.

A hot dog supper will be held between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m., sponsored by the Walnut Community Development Club.

Anyone who has ideas or information that will be of help in planning this reunion are asked to contact Ernestine Plemmons at 649-3816 or R.J. Plemmons at 649-3364 after 5 p.m. or on weekends.

## Court

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Craig Austin Young, Danny Eugene Laws, Luther Edward Fore, Carl Albert Carter, Richard Wayne Pressnell and James R. Hensley were continued until the Aug. 30 session of District Court.

The court dismissed a charge of unauthorized use of conveyance against Darryl Scott DeVane.

Douglas Hue Pressnell failed to appear to face charges of driving while license revoked, impaired driving and failing to give information concerning an accident. Judge Van Noppen issued an arrest order for Pressnell and ordered him held on \$1,000 secured bond pending his court appearance. Norman Eugene Flynn failed to appear to face DWI charges and was ordered held on \$300 secured bond.

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