

"Uncle" Amos Ledford - A Remarkable Individual

By JIM STORY
Amos Ledford, 103-year-old native of Yancey County, who has made his home for the past three years with a daughter, Mrs. Margaret Cole, in the Grapevine section of Madison County, is a remarkable individual. His brilliant memory makes him a most interesting conversationalist and he thoroughly enjoys visitors.

I discovered this last Thursday afternoon when I decided to visit "Uncle Amos" for an interview at the suggestion of another daughter, Mrs. Lora Parker, also of the Grapevine section.

As I approached the neatly kept and furnished 10' x 35' mobile home where he resides I met one of his granddaughters who lives in a home adjacent to the mobile home. As I started toward the trailer I asked if Amos Ledford lived there and she replied "yes, he's sitting inside." "Do you think he'd let me interview him?" I asked after introducing myself. "I'm sure

he would enjoy it very much. He loves company", she replied.

Although she was quite busy with her farm chores, she took a few minutes to introduce me to her grandfather. Also present was one of his sons, Roy Ledford, of Elizabethton, Tenn., who was visiting there for a few days. I was sorry that Mrs. Cole, with whom he resides, was not present. I was told she had gone for an appointment with a doctor.

Nevertheless, I could hardly believe that "Uncle Amos" was 103 years of age. Actually, he didn't look a year over 80. He invited me to sit down and "stay a spell" and that's just what I did - and enjoyed every minute of it.

He told me he was born in the Roaring Fork section of Yancey County in 1870. "Back then the crowd around Roaring Fork was pretty bad to fight and cause trouble but I never got into any real meaness other than a few fights and I've never seen the man I was afraid of", he said

with a twinkle in his bright eyes.

Amos likes to tell about his 28 years as a hard working logger on the railroad. "During those years I saw 18 loggers killed in the dangerous work", he said.

He was married to Miss Lillie Fender in February, 1902. Mrs. Ledford died in 1962. "She was a fine woman and I still miss her", he remarked. To this union were born nine children, eight still living. "Guess how many grandchildren I have", he asked. He then said proudly, "I have 360 grandchildren spanning four generations. They are scattered all over the United States".

He then drifted back to bygone days and said he was the second person in Yancey County to buy a Model "T" Ford.

As we talked I could tell he was enjoying the interview as much as I was. He said he was a Free Will Baptist and credited his good health and longevity to good good and



hard work. He goes to bed about eight o'clock every night and arises about 5:30 in the mornings. He has access to a radio and television and enjoys "every minute of the day". His vision is almost perfect and does not wear eye glasses. Asked about his habits, he smiled and said, "I chew a little tobacco but I quit smoking years ago".

As the above picture was made outside the trailer, he said, "Shucks, let me put down these two canes. I don't need them". He laid down the canes, crossed his arms, and said, "Okay, shoot the picture".

One of the recent thrills Amos talks about is a letter he received from Congressman Roy A. Taylor, who congratulated him on his long and useful life. "I sure was proud to get a letter from such an important person", he commented.

He insisted that I stay the rest of the afternoon but I had to leave. However, I told him I'd come back to see him soon.

And I expect to do just that. It is inspiring to talk to this good man who, although he never attended school, has more knowledge through experience than many college professors.

Walnut News

Miss America Capps, who has been living in Melvindale, Mich. for a few months, is visiting Mrs. Pauline Chandler and relatives in Weaverville, Asheville and in South Carolina.

Mrs. A. S. Reeves and Mr. and Mrs. Plumer Cody have had the following relatives from Port Huron, Michigan visiting them last week and part of this week; Mrs. Albert Reeves and daughter, Aubrey Reeves and Mrs. and Mrs. Harold Reeves.

The Rev. and Mrs. George Moore and two daughters, and Mrs. Gussie Ray and a friend from Reems Creek left on Friday for Mexico where they will attend a Bible conference for a week and then go on to the Grand Canyon before returning home.

Mr. and Mrs. Jack Guthrie and Mrs. Almarie Cody from Asheville spent Sunday in Gastonia with their sister, Mrs. Mae Carswell.

Mr. and Mrs. C. S. Chandler and their son in law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Vester Waldrop and daughter from Arden are spending this week in Myrtle Beach S. C.

Mr. and Mrs. Bobby McClure and son and daughter from Minneapolis, Minn. are spending this week with Mr. and Mrs. Chester Thomas and Mrs. Norman Pearson and children and visiting relatives in and around Walnut.

Mrs. Monroe Sawyer from Hot Springs visited her son in law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Cantrell over the week end.

David Metcalf of Charlotte is spending this week with his grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. C. R. Tweed.

Joyce Kilmer Forest Is Memorial To Poet

Deep in the North Carolina mountains is a 3,800 acre tract of wilderness designated as a memorial to the man who wrote "Trees".

Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest typifies the vast hardwood forests which covered the Southern Appalachians many centuries ago. It lies within Nantahala National Forest southwest of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and is preserved in its primitive and natural state except for access roads and trails which make it accessible to visitors.

The entrance to Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest is 15 miles northwest of Robbinsville, and accessible from U. S. 129 by a Forest Service road terminating in a cool glade where there is a picnic area.

There are more than 20 miles of trails that slice through the forest, and the hiker can explore one of the most impressive virgin forests in America. Primitive camping is permitted on the outer rim trails. U. S. Forest Service campgrounds nearby are Horse Cove Recreation Area and Cheoah Point Recreation Area. Private campgrounds are also located near the forest.

and herbaceous plants. Spring wild flowers take advantage of sunlight which will not be available after the hardwood trees are covered with shade producing leaves. Rhododendron, mountain laurel, and azalea bloom in the late spring and early summer. At many places on the forest floor are the remnants of massive American chestnut trees, which prior to 1925, composed a large part of the timber stand. The chestnut blight disease has now killed all of the mature trees.

Here in this protected area one may see animal life that includes: deer, bear, boar, fox, bobcat, raccoon, skunk, squirrel, mink, weasel and mice.

Songbirds share the area with ruffed grouse, wild turkey, owls, hawks and ravens.

Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest was dedicated July 20, 1936, which was the 18th anniversary of Kilmer's death in France.

Walking through the cathedral-like grove of giant trees it is quite easy to see it is a fitting tribute and a living monument to the memory of Kilmer.

On a plaque near the entrance visitors read the poem "Trees." On a trail beneath the giant trees in Poplar Cove is a bronze plaque bearing the inscription:

JOYCE KILMER
165th Infantry—
Rainbow Division
Soldier and Poet
Author of "Trees"
Born in New Brunswick,
New Jersey
December 6, 1886
Killed in action
in France France
July 30, 1918

The poem for which Kilmer is best known might well have been inspired by the trees in the forest which now bears his name. Some of the poplars, hemlocks, oaks, sycamores, beech and other varieties are over 100 feet tall and more than 80 inches in diameter.

In addition to the trees, there is an outstanding variety of shrubs, vines, ferns, mosses, lichens, liverworts

MONKEY BITES BOY
BAKERSFIELD, CALIF.— Eric Haddock, age 2, has begun rabies treatment after being attacked by a small spider monkey in the backyard of his home. The youth will have to undergo 16 rabies shots if the monkey was not found.

BRANDT RE-ELECTED
HANOVER, WEST GERMANY — Chancellor Willy Brandt has been re-elected chairman of his Social Democratic party by an overwhelming vote. Mr. Brandt received 404 of the 428 ballots.

BOYS BLACKMAILED
WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. — Two 9-year-old boys paid three classmates, who threatened to beat or kill them, nearly \$1,000 in extortion payments. One of the boys told his parents of the threat after taking \$100 from his father's wallet.

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| CURTIS MAYFIELD | JAN HOWARD | MEL HAGGARD | SOUL STIRRERS | DONNA FARGO | STONEWALL JACKSON |
| CHARLIE MCQOY | GEORGE JONES | LYNN ANDERSON | JIM WENDY | MEL TILLS | BOBBY GOLDSBRO |
| WILSON PICKETT | JOHNNY CASH | SAMMI SMITH | THREE DOG NIGHT | FLOYD CRAMER | JACK GREENE |
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Cattlemen's Field Day On July 10

There will be a field day held July 10, at the Buncombe County Fire and Rescue Training Center and Robinson's Polled Hereford Farm. Such interesting topics as the influence of bull power, nutrition requirements for reproduction, herd health, lowering protein and total feed cost, and the influence of feed frequency and performance will be on the program. These topics will be discussed by members of the Extension Animal Husbandry staff and several guest speakers. The day will conclude with a tour of Robinson's Polled Hereford Farm.

All persons interested in the cattle industry in North Carolina should plan to attend. For further information concerning transportation, etc., contact Maurice McAlister at the County Extension Office Phone 649-2411.

Hot Springs Health Group Meet July 23

Members of the Hot Springs Health Program will hold their annual meeting on July 23 at the Hot Springs high school auditorium at eight o'clock, it has been announced.

At this time there will be a report of the progress of the program and election of board members of the next year. Also, the public will have the opportunity to meet Dr. Reese Steen, dentist, and his wife, Lynn; Alex Morton, druggist, and his wife Sussane; and Susan Neil, new dental hygienist.

All members of the Hot Springs Health Program will be eligible to vote at the meeting. However, you must become a member at least ten days before the meeting. All persons who signed up over the past two years continue to be members and do not need to sign up again. We will send out personal letters to all members on our rolls prior to the meeting. Please bring that letter to the meeting to show proof of membership.

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