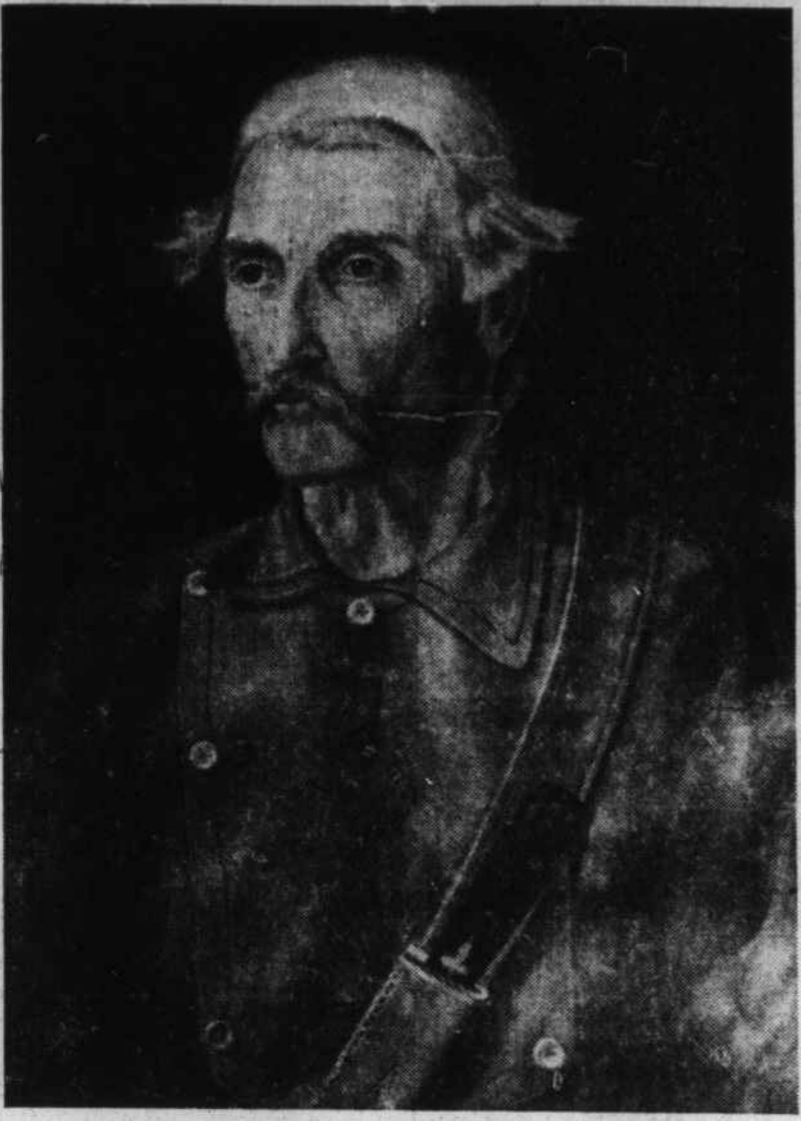


Medford Was 'Master Bear Hunter Of Balsams'

By W. C. MEDFORD

Lickstone Branch and on a spur of the lower spurs of the mountain, about five miles west of Waynesville, stood the home of Wid (Israel) Medford, the Master Bear Hunter of Balsams. There's little left of his handiwork — some of what he cleared, two or three apple trees and the cold spring which he fixed up in a wooden bucket and hung from a gourd. There is still left of the three-room log cabin which he built-dog-trot



THIS PICTURE of Wid Medford is from a painting of him done by Hal Morrison in the '80's at the request of James R. Thomas, Sr. Morrison was a guest at the White Sulphur Springs Hotel where Medford often acted as guide for the tourists. The painting is now in possession of William Medford.

with the "varmints" of Platt Balsam, Old Bald, Cold Mountain, the Pisgah range or elsewhere. And, although these tales sometimes seemed, figuratively, as tall as these peaks, Wid would get mad if the veracity of them was at any time questioned. With his knowledge of the woods and wild animals, together with a ready, naive wit and good mimicry, Medford, although he had no "book-larnin'," was an interesting talker.

"I have gone through la'r'l thickets whar I had to crawl," said he; "I've clum the Chimbleys (Chimneys), sometimes I've cut my way and brouged it through Hell's Half Acre, and cooned it over cricks."

"Cooned it—what do you mean by 'cooned it,' Wid?" asked someone.

"Why, jist like this, down on yore hands and feet — jist like you'de do, ef you made it across on a log."

"And, men, I've slid down the Shainies! Now do you think you'de hunt whar you'de have to slide?"

"I have hunted B'ars from Dark Ridge to the head-waters of French Broad—an' fit 'em too. Yis, sir, I say fit 'em."

"Now you see — what I don't know about these hyer mount'ns haint no profit to man or devil."

"Yes, an' I've been with Guyot and Clingman over ev'er peak from hyer to the South Ca'liner an' Georgy line—through a thousan' la'r'l thickets an' brier-patches, yis sir-ee!"

Medford's Narrow Escape

The hunt which he liked best to tell about was the one the time he had to drop his rifle and use his hunting knife on the "b'ar."

It seems that the shot from Medford's long-barreled flint-rock rifle failed to stop the on-coming bear. "He's a thick-skulled varmint, thinks I," said Wid. "On he come — didn't pay no more 'tention to me than if I'de been a stump. So I drapt my gun and puffed my knife. I drawed back a step, an' as he brashed by me I lent over him, grabin' the b'ar on his neck with my left hand—as I staubed the b'ar deep in the side with my knife in t'other hand. That's all I knowed fer a long time," he concluded.

"Did you faint, Wid?" someone asked.

"Faint!" sneered the old hunter. "You reckon I'de faint? Women faint. I reckon I was jist knocked out fer a while. You see, all the blood in me jumped over my heart an' into my head, an' o' course, hit finished me fer a time."

But Wid Medford had finished the "b'ar."

And Wid Medford (who "grew up on the trail") had deep mountain recesses where they were most abundant. He knew their tracks and trails; also bedded, when they habits and their likely being chased or run dogs.

For The Chase

Briefly after one big this tough, mountain was ready for the even at an advanced need, he went ready most of the time—hair, cook-skin cap and his. His hunting knife its place on the gun der strap. So ready we can imagine when dived and he cast his eyes in the direction west, Dellwood and Ad

Tate mountains, or eastward toward towering Lickstone, the urge was irresistible. Because these deep and distant solitudes had but one meaning, one voice for Wid Medford; in the language, to a hunter born, they were always whispering, "Come! Come!" It was the voice of his enchantress, his love—and to whom his heart is turned one must go.

In The Light of the Campfire

On the hunt, or acting as guide to sightseeing and tourist parties, this old mountaineer was equally "at home"; for, after all, was he not living the glorified life of the hunter, entertainer and guide?

By the light of the campfire, on these hunting trips, after that supper was over with, Medford's reminiscences of the hunt, dramatical-



NELSON AND NEAL, the famous two-piano team, will give a concert here Friday night for the benefit of the Library. This is the second of the group of civic concerts.

Famous Piano Team Will Give Concert Friday At 8 P.M. For Library Fund

Nelson and Neal, the Australian-American two-piano team, who will be heard here Friday night at 8 o'clock on the lawn of the old Ferguson home, are one of the most popular concert attractions ever to tour the United States.

Although still in their twenties, Mr. and Mrs. Neal have probably fulfilled more concert engagements during the past few seasons than any other two-piano team. The demand for Nelson and Neal continues unabated from year to year, since a great many of their performances are return engagements, either for the second or third season in a row.

During 1952-1953, the young couple made over 107 appearances in recitals and as soloists with orchestras.

Their program in Waynesville will consist of numbers by Bach, Schubert, Brahms, Copland, and a group of waltzes by Johann Strauss.

A combination of "rare musical genius, youth and charm" is the description given these artists by the Progressive Times of Australia. Metropolitan daily papers and small-town weeklies all over the country have been echoing this phrase for many seasons.

Nelson and Neal have made a real home on the road out of their "chariot" as they call their 32-foot mobile unit, although it looks more like a two-car choo-choo train. The front unit is a small van equipped with living quarters, including a sofa bed, a compact kitchen, bath, room for their baby and storage facilities for their wardrobe.

The back vehicle is a custom trailer carrying two specially matched concert grand pianos, which were presented to the couple by the Baldwin Company in recognition of their outstanding professional achievements.

Part of the young couple's contract calls for the sponsoring organization to provide "ten husky men" to help unload the pianos. Waynesville's Rotary Club has been asked to take on this task and has agreed to do so.

Nelson and Neal's appearance here is being presented by the Cul-



Former Rep. Monroe M. Redden said he is considering a bid for the U. S. Senate next year but has reached no definite decision.

Redden has been considered a possible candidate to oppose Sen. Sam Ervin, Jr. (D-NC), in the May 1956 Democratic primary. Reports in state political circles indicated Redden may have labor support.

A former state Democratic chairman from 1942-44, Redden served three terms in Congress from the 12th District. He did not seek re-election in 1952.

Mess Helps Church

WORCHESTER, Mass. (AP) — Perhaps one way to increase attendance at church is to tear up the streets around the church, says Rev. Oscar B. Anderson of Worcester's Belmont St. Baptist church.

Railway underpass construction began beside his church, causing the street to be closed and dug up, making the area a dusty mess and parking miserable, he says. But attendance went up—10 to 15 per cent in the church, church school and midweek service.

Bring Your Own Cushion

There will be 500 chairs available at the twilight concert sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce Friday night.

But more than 500 music lovers are expected for this top-quality two-piano program by the famed Nelson and Neal team.

A special area will be reserved "down front" where young people will have the privilege of sitting very near the stage. It is suggested that they bring their own pillows or blankets for sitting on the lawn.

Program begins at 8 o'clock.

U. S. production of coal in 1954 averaged 2½ tons for every person in the country.

When a four-lane highway is built through a rural area, every mile of road requires the equivalent of 40 acres of farm land.

Local Improvement Committee, which was set up by the Chamber of Commerce several months ago. Tickets for the performance, which will be held at the old Ferguson home on the corner of Boyd and Haywood Avenues, may be purchased for one dollar at the Chamber of Commerce office.

In the event of rain the performance will be moved to the auditorium of the new Central Elementary School building just a short

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Waynesville

Wid died about 1898 or '99. He was buried on Allen's Creek. And, as Stevenson says: "Here lies the hunter, home from the hills."

When the bicycle craze ended abruptly early in this century, some of the manufacturers turned to experimenting with the automobile.

SALLY'S SALLIES

"Out of college a week and now he's telling the Old Man how to run his business!"

THIS WEEK'S BEST SELLERS

FICTION

Something of Value, Robert Ruark.

Bonjour Tristesse, Françoise Sagan.

No Time For Sergeants, Mac Hyman.

Sincerely, Willis Wayde, John P Marquand.

The Good Shepherd, C. S. Forester.

NONFICTION

Gift From the Sea, Anne Morrow Lindbergh.

The Power of Positive Thinking, Norman Vincent Peale.

A Man Called Peter, Catherine Marshall.

Why Johnny Can't Read, Rudolf Flesch.

How to Live 365 Days a Year, John A. Schindler.

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