

STATE'S CHAMPION BLOCKADER RETIRES

Goes To His Native Mountains In
In Kentucky To Spend
Last Years.

Asheville.—At the mature age of 103 years, James Byrd Smith, dean of mountain moonshiners, is going into retirement, and has gone his way to spend what he calls "my declining years" amid the wild beauty of his native Kentucky mountains.

During the past 50 years or so, the centenarian operator of "mountain dew" outfits, has manufactured thousands of gallons of good "valley corn and pale rye licker," with hundreds of barrels of peach and apple brandy thrown in for good measure, but he is through now, Jim says so.

"I came up in these parts 29 years ago with the 'revenooers' hot on my trail, and now that all the trouble has died down back that in Kaintucky, reckon I'll go back," Jim told newspapermen here as he prepared to leave Asheville.

"I hain't tasted a drop o' licker in 25 years," Jim said. "Long about the time I was 80 I got to thinking it would take me to torment, and after that I was afeared and lost my hankering for any kinds of drink."

The interest of Kentucky officers in his activities which necessitated his sudden departure from the Blue Grass mountains did not necessarily mean that Jim would not practice his calling after he came to the North Carolina hills.

"About six months after I got up here," the old man said, "I made my last run of moonshine, but that didn't exactly happen in North Carolina. You see, I slipped back to Kaintucky on a little visit, and a lady that jist had to have some help, she had a whole run done almost, with the beer ready to bibe off, and when she asked me to do it for her, why I jist pitened right in and helped the lady out. It took me a little over a half a day, and we got six gallons of plum good whiskey."

The Kentucky trip almost ended the wanderings of the mountaineer. "After we got the whiskey juggled, I was plum wore out and went to bed," Jim related. "The officers got wind of my presence thar, and come to the house. The lady told them I hadn't been thar in six months, but they come right in the house and took a 'look' see. They got close to the bed, but I lay still, and soon they went off looking for another man. Then in the dark o' the night I slipped out and made my way back to Nawth Carolina. Them thar officers shore hurried my departure."

"I followed moonshining for many years, and had some close scrapes, but I never been caught. It's all died down now, and I'm going back to live with my daughter and have some peace," was Jim's farewell message to his friends here.

During his adventurous and thrilling life in Kentucky, the picturesque and interesting old man of the hills owned six farms in that state. However, he has disposed of all of them, and the money has been spent, leaving him only an "estate" of 40 forest-clad acres.

Jim has been married three times, and has 13 children living and 11 dead. He doesn't know where they all are.

One of his daughters in Richmond, Ky., sent him a railroad ticket, so he has gone back to live with her. In his own language, he and his present wife, who he married when she was only 18 years of age, "have dissolved partnership." Jim seems to know little about his children except that most of them have "big families," and are "hard up."

"I never done the family any good by staying here, so I'm going back to Kaintucky, whar I can send them something once in a while," was the way Jim outlined his plans to help out back home.

Domestic trouble and "revenooers" seem to have beset the mountaineer sorely during the past several years. However, the former caused him the greatest concern. "You know," Jim told his friends here, "the children by my second wife jist can't seem to git along with my last wife, and me and her has dissolved partnership."

No Questions Asked.

Brother Rastus was entertaining a preache, and the meal was a good one.

"In fact," said the parson, "dat's as fine a chicken as I ever et. Whah did you all get him. Brud-dah Rastus?"

"Well, now, Pahson," said his host with sudden access of dignity. "When you all preaches a special good sermon, does I eber ax whar you all get it? It seems to me dat's a mighty trivial matter, anyway."

Informed that his \$1,000 cow was dying, W. A. Drollinger, of Waussau, Wis., chartered an airplane for \$30 to take him to her. The animal recovered.

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