



We



Well

Remember



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We Well Remember

by

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A product of

OUR RED CLAY ROOTS
Oral history project for Iredell County

Conducted through
Mitchell Community College
funded by
The North Carolina Humanities Council

ABOUT OUR TITLE

We well remember the evenings after a day in the fields or in the kitchen when grownups gathered to visit around the fireplace and children listened.

We remember those Sundays when we came home from church to Grandma's fried chicken and a swing on the porch.

We well remember those long walks to school that started before dawn and those sweet potato lunches.

We well remember that fringe-topped surrey, cars with curtains and lamps, and red clay roads with deep ruts.

We also remember washtubs and washboards, spring boxes and milkwells, and whitewash.

We remember box suppers and singings, school closings, revivals and brush arbors.

We remember too well castor oil, catnip tea, Yager's liniment, mustard plasters, and Cloverine salve.

We remember long absences caused by poverty and war and the sweetness of reunions.

But, most of all, *we remember* those friends we have met on this journey and those we will not see again until we greet them down by the riverside.

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Sarah Cheek
Project Director

CONTENTS

Introduction	ix
Slavery and the Civil War	1
Home	17
Family and Community	31
Gathering Times	41
Courtship and Marriage	49
Childhood	65
Morality and Discipline	81
Religion	95
Education	119
Clothing	149
Food	157
Music	162
Holidays	172
Work	181
Health Care	203
World War I	224
The Great Depression	230
World War II	238
Transportation	249
Electricity and Other Conveniences	257

Changing Times	264
Other Recollections	270
Interracial Relationships	281
The Interviews	289

INTRODUCTION

Our Red Clay Roots is an oral history project that was funded by the North Carolina Humanities Council. One purpose was to explore the period in the history of Iredell County that extends from the end of the Civil War to the end of World War II, 1865 to 1945. At the end of World War II, dramatic changes took place in Iredell. For the first time, many rural homes had access to indoor plumbing, electricity and telephones. In addition, many rural roads were paved, and new industries arrived. Self-contained rural communities faded or lost their identity, and the quality of life changed forever. To illustrate the gap that we were trying to bridge, one nineteen-year-old interviewer, unable to visualize a world without television, much less electricity, asked, "Grandpa, did you have color TV when you were growing up?"

Another goal was to discover how our ancestors coped without things we consider to be necessities and endured major world calamities. In particular, we wanted to know what has kept so many families here for hundreds of years, in some instances. Our project is entitled *Our Red Clay Roots* for a single reason. It is our conviction that those who have lived here the longest have done so because of their attachment to the soil. It has not only been our livelihood, but it has, we believe, also shaped our character. This red clay has been called unforgiving. It is difficult to till, requires a vast amount of additional nutrients for a decent crop, and it will not be removed from clothing. There was more than one reason that floors were made of wood and rugs were linoleum in those days. But in their determination to eak out a living here, our ancestors displayed strength, tenacity, and resourcefulness. We believe that it is this stubbornness in the face of adversity that really earns us the right to be called "Tar Heels."

Another belief that we hoped to demonstrate was the importance of the community. We asked about relationships within families and communities, but often the information was given voluntarily and indirectly. Other interview questions focused on home life, such as values education and discipline, and community activities, such as school, church, work, and social life. We wanted to know about traditions, such as courtship and marriage, folk and traditional medicine. We asked how families were affected by world events, like the Depression and the World Wars, and by the advent of modern conveniences and paved roads. We also needed to know how the Civil War affected our ancestors and where they think we are now in terms of interracial relationships.

All twenty-one of the interviewers were volunteers, and they chose their own subjects. Frequently, the subjects were family or close neighbors of the interviewers. In other cases, the interviewer was assisted by a person close to the interviewee to encourage as much candor as possible. Six of the interviewers were Mitchell Community College students, and at least three of them were students at Mitchell College. Six subjects are Mitchell College graduates. The majority of the interviews were conducted by Iredell County teachers (active or retired), and eight subjects are retired public school teachers; a ninth is still teaching here. Forty of the interviewed are female, and all but eight of the fifty-seven subjects grew up in a rural area. One-fourth of the interviewers and one-third of the interviewed are black.

In addition to numerous volunteers from the community, there are many individuals on the Mitchell Community College campus who have helped to make this project a reality.

Prominent among these are the members of our library staff, our printing department, and our business office. Faculty members Bill Moose, Jean Rivers, and Joseph Bathanti invested many hours in listening to tapes, reading transcripts, and helping to select passages for inclusion in this composite. They also served on the Project Committee along with Margaret Rankin, who also provided secretarial support

There were several problems that we did not anticipate. For instance, many people responded that they didn't know any history. The basic problem, of course, is that they think that history, to have real value, must be written down in a book with a lot of dates matched up with events. Another problem stems from modesty, a trait that we observed so often that we decided it must be genetic. Frequently, an individual referred us to someone else. "Roberta, you oughta interview her," said Olena Winford. "She's a long rememberer!"

O. C. Stonestreet, III, helped us to keep things in perspective. He reminded us that history has been called "a collection of lies agreed upon." We might add that history is written primarily by white males, about white males, and for white males! Oral history is inclusive and therefore has great validity. It is told by male and female, rural and urban, poor and wealthy, laborer and artist, educated and lacking in formal education. It is relevant to all because all are represented. It also has great credibility because it is "written" by those who experienced those happenings. And it is truthful as well as factual because we learn not only about events but how those events affected people. It is not only about what we have done as a people but also about who we are and how we became who we are.

Our targeted audience is, as it is for all teachers, our students. Few of them know very much, nor feel the need to know a great deal, about history. For them, it is mostly about boring people in remote places taught from books that weigh too much by people who talk too much. They need a stronger sense of identity and a sense of community, of connection to something bigger than themselves. Oral history can give them that. If students can be made to see that history is made by people like them, they may discover that they are where history comes from. Perhaps then they will want to become involved in their communities so that they might have a positive impact on their own history.

We learned so much more than we bargained for. We were reminded often of Oscar Stradley's words which he shared with us at our opening forum, words borrowed from Mark Twain: "With every older person who dies, we bury a library." Most of those we spoke with have lived over three-quarters of a century of Iredell history, and many possess a larger vision of that history.

The tapes themselves have certain qualities which make them irreplaceable. There is no substitute for hearing the language as it is spoken by "the real people of Iredell." The accents of some were less touched by time, and their voices are remarkable for their purity and charm. Today's youth may need a translation for terms such as "milkpit" or "spring box" or "pressing club," but "a milkwell with a windlass" has the ring of poetry just the same.

The tapes are also enhanced by other sounds. The striking of a grandfather clock and the squeak of a rocker as more than one person "got into" a story add another dimension to the words. Some sounds send a message, such as those from passing cars and

18-wheelers, sounds which emphasize Beulah Myers Glass's point that the highway has encroached upon her property as well as intruded upon the world she is reflecting upon. Harry Brawley was interviewed in St. Paul Lutheran Church, of which he had been a member for eighty years. At the end of his interview, the whistle of a passing train from the railroad where Harry's father had worked when he was born tells us that Harry's life has come full circle.

Most of the recent photographs were taken by the Project Director. As the project progressed, they added another dimension by helping us to place the subject and the visitor in a time and place. Russell Cowan is photographed at his beloved Mt. Tabor, and Kate Sigmon is at a homecoming at St. Paul. Louise Dalton is shelling peas in her kitchen, and Barney Dalton proudly displays his first tractor, which he bought in 1945. In a photograph in our photo exhibit Lou Ray Cartwright is standing in the door of Liberty School where her mother was teaching when Lou Ray was born. Bertha Westmoreland, who left 182 descendants at the time of her death in January 1996, was photographed on her porch with one of her great great great grandsons. The vintage photographs in this book and in the exhibit were shared by some of our subjects and interviewers as well as by a number of people we met on our journey.

We invite each of you to visit our collection of tapes, transcripts, and photographs which will be housed in the Iredell History Room in the library on the Mitchell Community College campus. Copies of our book *We Well Remember* will also be in our library and in the public libraries in Statesville and Mooresville.

We challenge the reader to keep the flame alive. There are many individuals, each a local treasure, whom we could not reach in time. We have other names on our list, and each one of you knows someone we need to hear from. We have discovered dozens of topics which need further research, such as the history of black churches in Iredell and the identity of Aaron York, CSA, who is buried in North Iredell under a tree surrounded by junk and vines.

This project is just a beginning. We hope that it will grow and become a community resource. Those who become involved in local history benefit in a very personal way. They find that it is a vehicle for unlimited personal growth. They also quickly learn the wisdom of the words spoken by Maya Angelou in her poem "The Human Family." We really are "more alike, my friends, than we are unlike."

Slavery and the Civil War

"We're free! We're free!"

Amelia Kennedy

North Carolina was not known for her large plantations, as were sister states Virginia and South Carolina, and those she did have were largely in the eastern part of the state. However, there were a few farms in Iredell County like those of the Allisons and the Daltons that could justly be called plantations. As most of the subjects we interviewed were born in the early 1900's, there were no first-hand accounts of the Civil War period, but many people remembered grandparents who were born into slavery or experienced the Civil War and Reconstruction.

Then, as now, there were individuals on both sides of the issue. Carl Cook's grandfather Andrew Wilson Cook was a soldier in the Confederate Army although his family did not own slaves. Linnie Sue Morrow Cook, Carl's wife, descended from grandparents who objected strongly to the idea of slavery.

My mother and father didn't believe in people owning slaves, and they never, of course, owned any, and I don't think any of their people did. They didn't believe in slavery. I've heard my mother say several times, I believe, her Grandfather Brown almost lost his mind because his sons had to go fight for somebody else's slaves.

Although Gaynell Freeland's grandfather, the same Andrew Cook, fought in the Civil War, she says this.

We were taught by our parents that blacks, and that was all we had back then, and the whites were people too. I was always taught that we had to acknowledge them. God made them the same as he did us.

Lou Ray Cartwright in Harmony tells us about her grandfather, James Mullis, who fought in the Civil War. He was visiting his uncle in Georgia, and he wrote a letter to his brother Richard near here in Iredell County.

I would like to be back there to go with you all into service, but I'm going to go ahead and join up down here in Georgia. I don't want to carry a gun, so they're going to let me be a fifer.

Lou Ray adds that when her grandfather came back from the war, he and others started having Quaker gatherings in the homes. These families

included the Yorks and a man named Beason Baity. She tells us these were the people instrumental in starting Winthrop Church.

Oliver Campbell was an avid historian from the North Iredell area. He shared this story with his interviewers, John Kent Robertson and Victor Crosby:

Gus Reid was a kind uv a turncoat. He deserted the South an' went ta the North, supported the Northern Army. He was supposed ta be a Yankee soldier. He drawd a Yankee pension all the years that he lived. An didn' have ta pay taxes on that b'cause he bought it with Yankee money.

Another soldier who fought in the Confederate Army was Thomas Reason Trivette's Grandpa Parris, who lost his little finger at the Battle of Gettysburg.

I remember Mama sayin' that one of the best night's sleep he had while he was in service was when he slept under a brush pile an' it come a big snow. He wrapped up in his blanket an' crawled under a brushpile. It snowed that night an' covered him up.

Thomas's grandfather William Trivette was stationed at least part of the time at the Confederate prison in Salisbury where he was a cook.

Several stories from our subjects revealed the impact of the war at home. Lawrence Patterson told us about the cotton mill in Troy in North Iredell that was burned by the Union Army.

One of Sherman's troops (General George C. Stoneman) when he marched through the South burned it. My mother's aunt or great aunt, I don't know which, was there. Her name was Josephine, and she had married a Cooper. It was a textile mill there...and the foundation was made out of rock. Some of the people worked there said it was about 30 feet wide and 70 feet long, and they had water from Hunting Creek to get them power to operate the machines.

From what I hear from my aunts, the lieutenant told her Aunt Josephine that he wouldn't hurt her. She was there with her one baby and a colored man. All he did was burn the mill, and (he) left the house standing. I can remember the house, what it looked like. It had a balcony on the second floor which ran all the way across it, and it had gingerbread on the balcony, which was popular in that day.

Willie Mae Tulbert 's father told her that he remembered where he was sitting on the woodpile when his father came back (from the war). Her husband, Clyde Tulbert, heard his mother say she remembered the salt that drifted off the meat onto the dirt floors was picked up to be boiled to get

enough salt for their food because things were so scarce. "It was terrible," Clyde emphasized.

Clyde 's mother also told him about the cotton mills.

She told me about her mother working in the cotton mills. See the cotton mills (were) all around every creek. One at Eagle Mills, one at Buffalo Shoals Mill, and one at Troy. And that was when the North and South was burning everything as they come, don't you see. I know when she talked about her mother working, they'd come by and tell those women to get all their belongings out of there. We're gonna burn it! And they did! They'd wait until they got all their belongings out, and then they'd set the fire and burn every one of them down...she said that they'd hide their meats, you know, or they (the Yankees) would take it, don't you see. They (homeowners) would bury it in the ground in places they (Yankees) couldn't find it.

Black people as well as white people worked for both of Constance Aronson's grandfathers, but no one was ever treated as a slave, she emphasizes. When the Yankees came through both areas (Iredell and Wilmington, where her grandfather Solomon Baer settled and enlisted in the Confederate Army in April 1861) her family gave their valuables to the black families for safekeeping so that these valuables would not be stolen by the invaders. She adds that the black people were not paid enough for their labor. Constance added that her family took care of "Aunt Mollie" when she could no longer work.

Mary Douglas Warren's Grandfather Halyburton served as a surgeon during the Civil War, and her grandmother, Margaret Sharpe Douglas, grew up on the Sharpe plantation. Mary shared this memory.

We always had good black (families) out there in the cabin, a house built especially for them. They saved our lives I expect in a lot of ways. The women would do the rough work and the washing and ironing. There were families there before I was born, as long as my dad was alive. That was a carryover from the slave plantation (the Sharpe home) about a mile from here (Midway Drive in West Iredell). Mandy Keaton was living here and her three daughters. They got married and had children. I remember when Mandy's mother came. She was actually a slave! And my mother went out there to be with her and took food for the whole neighborhood. I was a little bit afraid of her. I was very young. She was just a darling old Negro with that brown light parchment-colored skin.

This experience made such a lasting impression on Mary that she wrote the following poem:

TIME TOUCHING

"Come closer, my child," said the aged voice,
 "Come closer so I may 'see' how big you are."
 Her wrinkled hands, not her eyes, reached out toward me.
 Closer to my mother I wanted.
 Instead, her soft hands gently pressed me toward the Old One.
 Then from the top of my head all down my childish frame,
 The Old One sized me up.

Little did I know how difficult her trail had been
 And how her once strong body had served well.
 More than a century the parchment-like gingerbread skin had lived.
 Through troubled times and hard labor she had come.
 Fields of cotton and many children kept her busy all her earlier days.
 She had seen her country change from days of slavery to freedom ways.
 Now, chairbound in the twilight,
 She was at the mercy of others' care.

Time, boundary lines crossed
 There on the farm cabin porch.
 My mother's warmth and caring reached out to her,
 This special centenarian human soul.

Most of the individuals who were interviewed from the black community made some reference to an ancestor who was "out of slavery." Olena Winford, who lives in the Shinnsville area in South Iredell, said that they didn't talk much about it, however. "Tell me about your grandmother," asks Olena's interviewer, granddaughter Gail Hooper.

When my mother died, my grandma came to live with us. She raised us. Her name was Laura Clark. She was in slavery, some of it. She come outta slavery. She would tell how they had paddyrollers on the road at night and they had ta be in a certain time. Some would stay out all night!

Gail: What's paddyrollers?

Sumpin' like the law, I reckon. She said if they'd ketch ye out at night, they'd whoop ye.

Gail: Did she tell you anything about her mother?

No. I don't think so. They sold parents. They sold people ta diffrent people, you know. I mean they took 'em an' raised 'em outta slavery. So she was in slavery time.



Margaret Sharpe Douglas

Margaret was born in 1837 on her father Silas D. Sharpe's plantation. She married Julius Perkins Douglas in 1857, in spite of her father's strong objections to her marrying a poor school teacher.



James A. Mullis

James Mullis served as a fifer during the Civil War. He was also instrumental in founding Winthrop Meeting House, a Quaker church in Harmony.



Dr. Thomas C. Halyburton and His First Wife

While he was a surgeon in the Civil War, his wife and infant twins died, in addition to a son (age 18) who had tuberculosis.

We know that there was an active slave trade in North Iredell. Evidence of local trading in slaves can be found in past editions of the *Record and Landmark*. In December 1858, a subscriber submitted a notice that he wished to purchase "15 or 20 Likely Young Negroes" for which he promised to pay "the highest cash prices." In the same edition, a \$100 reward is offered by an individual 10 miles north of Statesville for "a negro man, called Isaac" who is described as "very likely and may be considered a No. 1 negro." And on February 9, 1859, "a public sale of Land and Negroes" was advertised to be held at the residence of "Placebo Houston, Deceased," including 1600 to 1800 acres and 18 Negroes "most of them young and likely, including 2 good blacksmiths."

Five members of the Dalton family were interviewed in North Iredell as part of this project. Louise Holmes Dalton recalled the following:

My grandmother was a slave. Her name was Winnie Dalton. She told us that the Kennedys or Daltons bought her mother. I don't know how long she lived, but there is a Dalton graveyard back over in there...around the cornfield...a family cemetery, beautiful place in the woods. A real nice place. She could be buried there.

From Leona Patterson Dalton and her sister Elsie Patterson Turner, we heard this account.

Right offhand I don't remember anything, only my grandmother telling how they made her parents work in slavery time. They would have to turn the washpots over their heads so the boss couldn't hear them singing and praying. I don't know why. I've heard Grandmother tell stories about that's the way black people was treated in slavery time. I heard my grandmother say they'd just freed the black people when she was old enough to remember good, but she had heard them tell about it. Other than that, I hadn't hear her say anything about it other than just work.

Amelia Kennedy's grandfather was Christopher Houston. When he moved to Tennessee along with her brothers, her great grandmother stayed behind to take care of Amelia's father, who was sick. She moved across the creek, and they built a log cabin.

That's the log cabin that's up in the yard, but it used to be down at the end of the walk. I know records...say they started with a log house and then they started getting a few slaves. As I understand it, there was a row of cabins back behind their house.

I know now slavery's a bad thing, but my grandmother, my great grandmother, when they (the slaves) were sick, she opened her house to the sick. They had yellow fever or some sickness like that, and she lost brothers with that. The children were

buried out in the woods over there. She brought 'em right into the home and nursed them.

You might not want this recorded, but I'm going to tell it. When the carpetbaggers came down and the word came that they were free, my great grandmother, the story goes, had one (slave) she was having a lot of trouble with. They just said "We're free! We're free!" And her remark was, "No, you're not free, I am!" Because of the responsibilities. They had to make their clothes, and they had a loom room (house). And they had a garden at the creek, and she had to provide for all these people. She said she was the one that was free! That was one way of looking at it.

But these fine Dalton people came out of that.

And interviewer Lou Ray Cartwright added, "I think that says something, too, when those Daltons who were your family's slaves have turned out to be such fine people and leaders in the Houstonville community."

A few pictures are more than enough to depict for us the grim realities of slavery. Gladys King's great grandmother was a hundred years old when she died. Gladys shares this recollection of a story her great grandmother told her.

Her master when she'd get up from a child, having a baby, (she wasn't married) he'd make her plow, and blood would be comin' outta her veins. (Pause) That's the way they treated 'em. That's the reason I don't take nothin' offa these crackers. I don't take nothin'. I tell 'em in a minute. I mean I'm not nasty or nothin', but when they get outta order, I give 'em back....

Millard Knight admits to reading "just a little bit of history." He tells this story of how justice was administered.

Back in them days...there wuz a fellow that had done wrong to John Howard, and the sheriff brought him to John Howard's, give him so many licks with a hickory in the presence of John Howard. Anybody else that he'd wronged, he would take him to their house and whip him.

Bill Williams's mother's family were freed as slaves in North Iredell in the area called Snow Creek. His mother's grandfather was named Lafayette Fate King, "and he used all three of those names at different times," Bill adds. His mother's great grandmother was freed in Mecklenburg County and came to Iredell in her early years. She was born about 1829 and lived to be about 112 years old. Bill has traced his family back five or six generations in some instances. He tells us this about his ancestry:

My great grandfather had three sisters. That family were BLACK people. When I say black people, I mean COAL BLACK ! There was no question about their being descendants of Africa. And those girls, three of his sisters had children that were almost white. There was no way that a black man could have fathered those children. I heard my great grandmother say one time many black men were beaten, but they didn't know why, but the wife did.

I asked my great grandmother if there had ever been a lynching in Iredell. She said not to her knowledge. She told me of some instances when people had threatened to lynch a black, but for whatever reason, the person always got away.

She said a black man here in Belmont shot the sheriff in the hand. He came to arrest this man. At that time, they didn't have locks on the doors like we have now. It would be a hole in the door and you would just reach your hand in that hole and turn the latch. This man came to arrest him and called to the black man. He said he wasn't gonna come out nor was he gonna let him in. And the sheriff stuck his hand in that hole and the black man shot.

Well, a group of Belmont leaders got together and carried him to the jail and had him to give himself up. Then the rumor was that the whites were going to gather there and take him out of the jail and lynch him. The men went back with their guns and sat on the porch of the old herbhouse which was across the street, and I can show you in the *Record and Landmark* a picture of Court Street. At the end of Court Street, there was a tall building. I remember that building very well before they built the hotel. They sat on the porch of that herbhouse all night every night with their guns.

In the meantime, the blacks met and they said if they started lynching...most well-to-do families would have a little cabin or something in the back where the maid would stay...they (blacks) were to get their kerosene cans. If a member of that family left to go help lynch this black, the house was to be in flames.

She said what really made 'em realize that this was no joke, one afternoon the fire alarm went off and it started blowing so that they thought the fire alarm was a signal that they were there at the jailhouse. When the people came back, they realized that the black women were standin' out in the street with their kerosene cans. She said it was amazing that somebody didn't start a fire.

They realized then that the blacks were sincere, and when they tried the man, they turned him loose. Didn't even give him any time.

Bertha Heaggans Westmoreland grew up on the Amity Hill Road. In an interview with this writer, she discusses her own ancestry and the matter of duplicate names in black and white families, a situation that makes difficult the tracing of family lineage.

See there's two sets of Westmorelands, white and black. His (her husband's) grandfather back in slavery, Grandfather Monroe, Mr. Wash Westmoreland was his

grandfather's mahstah, and when they was freed, he didn' change his name back into who he was. He just still kept the white Westmoreland's name.

He was freed to be on his own, but he still stayed with the Westmorelands. He lived in South Iredell on the hill. They let him live on they land until he bot some land. I don' know just exactly where he lived, but he lived over there and worked for the Westmorelands till he died.

A lotta the blacks when they was freed, if they lacked they white mahstahs, they didn' change, and they didn' go nowhere else ta work. They just still work fer 'em, excep' one! They lived right there in our community up there on the hill in Shinnsville. Grandmaw was seven years old when they was freed. But she said she never knew nothin' about slavery herself. She was just treated like she was treated now! Grandmaw, she didn' work fer nobody but yo' grandmaw. She didn' work out. She worked for Miss Vernie (Mills). She washed an' arned, an' her an' her would go fifty-fifty on everthang. When they cleaned up, Miss Vernie would hep her, an' she would come home about 2:30.

The only little girls I had ta play with was Nellie Hoover, an' she was white, an' Margaret Westmoreland, an' she was white, and your mother, who was Grace Mills. We would all get together, all four of us...The children would be below the house there playin', an' Miss Vernie would call. She would call Olena, my first cousin, an' she would send us a bag a butter and jelly biscuits and then a poke fulla baked sweet potatoes...an' we'd be just playin'.

Bertha's grandmother was married to Connor Allison. Grace Mills remembers her as Aunt Susan, whom she loved dearly. She remembered Aunt Susan telling her this. As a very small child, Susan was one of two children whose task it was to carry the skirt of her mistress as she walked to church so that her dress would not get dirty in the dusty road. The dress was made of crisp taffeta and rustled as they walked down the road. The two children took gravel from the road and threw it up on the dress and laughed to see and hear it rattle as it fell down the back of the dress into the road. Susan told that story to Grace many times, and she laughed again and again about it.

Effie Marie Bailey from Shinnsville tells us that her parents and grandparents didn't talk to them about slavery, but she did know this:

Grandmother said she was a slave...Mama's mother. She ran away. They sent her to the spring to get water, and she kept going. She said she could hear them calling her name, "Lou!"

Apparently Louise, Effie's grandmother, was one of those whom Bertha spoke of who voted with her feet and left the Shinnsville area.

It is obvious that the shadow of slavery still hovers over us. Within families, there can be individuals who are worlds apart in their feelings about people of other races. Mrs. Page Beatty tell this story with help from her husband.

O.B. Davis, black man, was workin' fer my daddy when we got married. Then he moved..

Well, he got married. When I went to Grier's, he went with us...but he was still workin' fer your daddy. (Mr. Beatty)

They had a baby in February, 'fore Elaine was born in May, and (Mrs. Davis) had her one maternity dress cleaned and brought it up there fer me to wear. I just couldn't make myself do it. I would now. She's a nice person...just as nice as she can be, Alberta and O.B. Davis. They's here at our fiftieth wedding anniversary.

I got a brother got mad at me over that (an incident at their celebration that Mr. Beatty considered to be a joke).

They (the Davises) own a farm, maybe worth a half million dollars. They got a nice brick home. They got six kids and ever one of 'em are sumpin'. They went to college an' they're preachers, lawyers, teachers, or sumpin'. Every one of 'em.

It is easy to see that the Beattys and the Davises have gained mutual respect and affection from their years of living and working side by side, a relationship that Mrs. Beatty admits has grown through the years.

It is painful for all of us to look back upon a past that is stained by the blood of our ancestors. When we do so, we can see that we have come a very long way. We also can see indications that there is still so much to be done. Many have said, "The Civil War is over. Let's move on!" But unless we look first and honestly at where we have come from, it will be impossible for us to go anywhere together.



Sarah and Joseph A. Cook
with Ora, (unknown), and Jodie
(above).

Joseph was the great uncle of interviewees Carl and Dick Cook, Ralph Cook, and Gaynell Freeland. He was also the brother of Civil War veteran Andrew Wilson Cook. Joseph wears a snow-white beard like the one worn by Andrew. Andrew's beard was a feature that all who knew him remarked upon. His grandchildren told us that his wife managed to keep his beard clean in spite of the fact that he chewed tobacco.



Mary Douglas Warren



Gaynell Cooke Freeland



Bertha Heaggans Westmoreland



Olena Clark Winford

MAMA, TELL ME

Mama, tell me what it is that bled upon the ground.
What awful thing has left its mark and never made a sound?

Mama, what's that fearsome crack, that gaping, craggy hole.
What lightning struck our fertile soil and opened up our soul?

There came a storm that made men fear 'twould wash away this clay.
It left a breach so wide and deep that we must close today.

Sabers slashed and cannons roared; men stumbled then were felled.
Their blood spilled o'er this broken land; our grief, it rose and swelled.

For four long years, the fury reigned. 'Twas nothing left to take.
Grief and hunger, pain and death spilled over in its wake.

A century since we laid to rest our loved ones, white and brown,
Has told us all in death are one when laid into the ground.

White crosses and grey stones are there where blood-stained fields once stood.
Green grass has graced the broken land that we must mend for good.

SBC
Dimensions, 1994

Home

"We didn't live in no mansion."

Amy Lou Mitchell

It is easy to understand why we in Iredell claim that there is red clay in our blood. Generations of families have tilled the red clay soil on the same farms in Iredell County for centuries. Newspapers bring evidence of that fact on a regular basis. Recently, *The Charlotte Observer* reported that the Allison family homestead, which the Allisons have owned since the 1770's, had been designated a National Historic Site. The Douglas Homeplace in West Iredell, which has been designated a North Carolina Century Farm, has been a working farm owned and occupied by that family for over 210 years.

Summer in Iredell brings a constant stream of family reunions, which are held on these farms, in local churches, or in other designated public places. In 1993, the Hoover family held its 80th consecutive reunion. The log cabin built by Archibald Hoover in the 1800's still stands. He raised his six children near Hoover Road in Troutman. Each year since 1904, the Troutman family has held perhaps the county's oldest reunion. They meet on Troutman Farm Road beside the family cemetery and in sight of the one-room schoolhouse purchased in 1925 and the Troutman Depot, which was moved to that site when the Atlantic, Tennessee, and Ohio Railroad ceased to operate.

Though many of the homes that we discovered in search of our red clay roots varied in style and in state of repair, each is a valuable piece of family history. Some also preserve a bit of local history. The Jericho School, the two rock chimneys of which are barely visible through the vines that cover it in summer, was for a time the home of Henry Dalton, former slave and grandfather of John Henry Redmond, whose mother was a Dalton. The Sharpe School on East Monbo Road is the home of Clyde Moore, and the Ed Murdocks live in the beautifully maintained former Ostwalt School.

The home in which Flake Messick grew up was explored by a team doing research for North Carolina State University. The Messick's tobacco barn also stands on that beautiful hillside in North Iredell. Flake provided this description of the property.

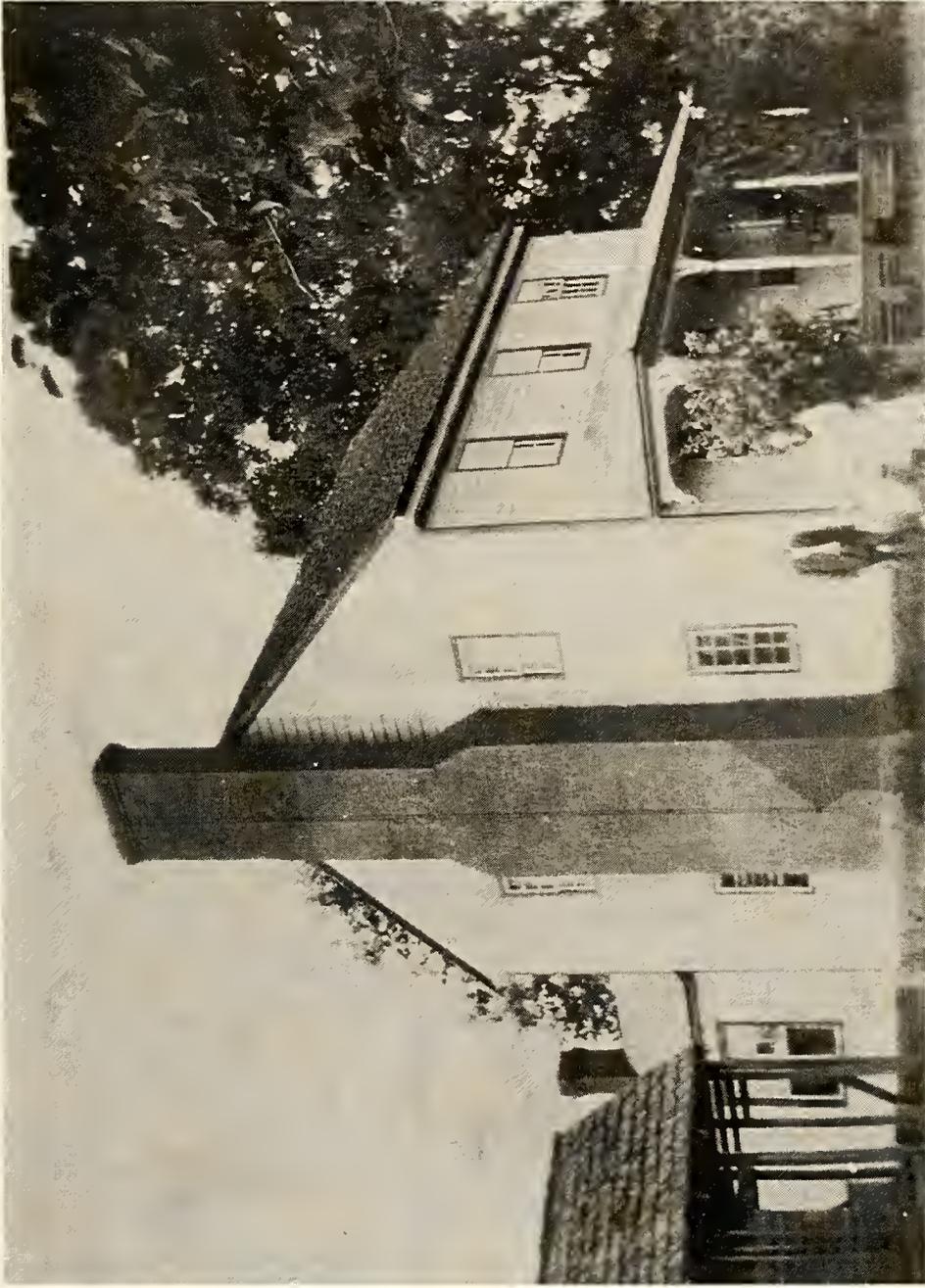
...they used to have, so they say, a place to do their cooking out in their yard, another little building. There was nothing built back yonder in the 1800's only the three-story part of this house. All the rest has been added. I remember when the dining room was added, and then the kitchen on yonder side. A porch was made

all the way around it. I remember when that was done. A whole lot of peg work a lot of hand work was in (the house). It was intended to have three stories, but the top one was never finished.



Recent photographs of the Messick home (above) and their tobacco barn (right).





The Messick Homeplace

The Messick home was built around 1885. The date of this photograph is unknown.

Arnold Lawrence Patterson described the Francis Young house, which his grandparents inherited from their grandparents. During the Revolutionary War, Thomas Young, Patriot, built the house for protection from Tories in the vicinity.

Probably after Francis Young, there's been as many as two other owners before my family obtained it. Francis Young was given a grant for the property, and across the creek from the home was a place called Young's Fort. I can remember the building. It was made with large logs. The doorways weren't there, but beside of the doorways there were holes in the logs. The story was, true or not, that they would shoot the Indians through there if the Indians attacked them.

The home was owned by the Angles, parents of Lawrence's mother, Katy Bell Angle. The Angles came here after the Civil War. The house was used for a time by quail hunters.

I can remember, faintly, hunters coming from the North down here to shoot quail, but by the time I was eight years old, the quail population had dwindled in Iredell County...so they quit coming.

They were rich people that came to Statesville by private railroad cars. They didn't have roads like they have now. In the early days, they came with horses from Statesville to Houstonville.

They (the hunters) lived in our house, and we fed them and kept them warm. We had cooks, people to help with the dogs. One time Mother said they had a dog trainer and a kennel to keep the dogs in. Part of it's still standing.

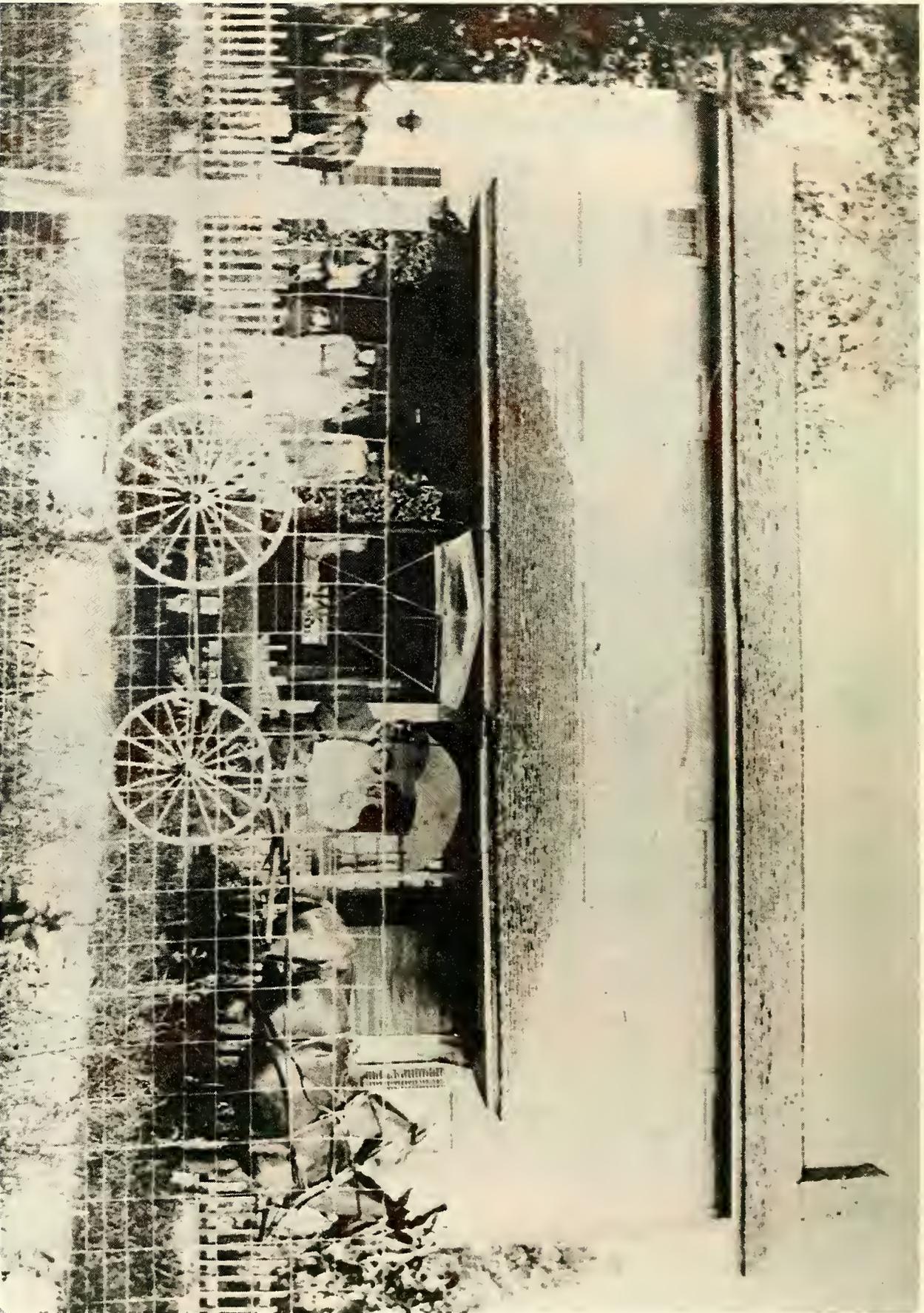
A story was going around at that time that you could eat a quail, one a day for thirty days, and that you wouldn't get tired of them. I can remember then they would come in with their quail in the good years. They would string them on this thing and hang them up in the cold, probably to get the game flavor out of them. They would run this skewer through their heads, and they would be all in a row, just hanging by their heads.

The Fraley House, later bought in 1905 by the Alexanders, parents of Ruth Crosby, was used as a tavern because it stood at a crossroads in North Iredell. It also served as the civic and social center for the town of Williamsburg. Ruth remembers also another farm of about 300 acres that her family owned on which they had lots of tenants. Among them were John Henry Redmond, an interviewee, and the parents of Louise Holmes Dalton, another interviewee. French Holmes and his wife helped with the cooking. Before that, Ruth speculates, the slaves probably prepared the meals. She recalls that there was a big kitchen that once stood outside the house.



Hunters at the Hunting Lodge in North Iredell: 1870 - 1910

One of the gentlemen in this photo, a Mr. Webb from New York, was related to the Vanderbilts.



The Fraley House

This house, in the former North Iredell community of Williamsburg, was used as a Civil War training camp and as a tavern. In 1903 it was purchased by the parents of Ruth Alexander Crosby. They are holding Ruth's younger sister Thelma, born in 1907.

(The farm) was cut up in several different pieces, and a lot of different families moved there and built houses. That was a tobacco farm, and it had some of the biggest tobacco on it that you have ever seen. So when the Civil War people came through, they were burning certain people's houses. They didn't burn that house. Now Pa was a Mason, and they weren't burning Mason's houses.

Daltonia, the present home of Dr. Amelia Kennedy, was built in North Iredell in 1857 by Mary Cecilia Houston Dalton and John Dalton. Amelia's description follows.

There are eight rooms in the original house, and then they had a section behind it that was a kitchen, which was the custom, you know. Then the dining room and what they called a servants' room upstairs, that was added in. And the old kitchen fell out from under us, so we built it brick...Daddy said so he would be warm in his old age. But it was built just like the old kitchen. It isn't built as conveniently. If we use the dining room, we've got to carry things all the way through a little sitting area, but Daddy wanted it built with the western and eastern exposure so he could look out either window because the house is set right by the sun.



DALTONIA
Home of Dr. Amelia Kennedy



Log home used by the Daltons and later by their slaves

Amelia gives her grandmother the credit for the house's orientation. She says that her great grandmother went out and changed the stakes in the night and moved it back from the road. "She was a smart lady. They said if she hadn't been a woman, she'd been Governor of North Carolina," Amelia continues.

The land was a king's grant, you know, just like all the other land. It was all "granted" just where they could spread out and start anew. We were told it was six thousand acres. Christopher Houston was on the Catawba River first, and then he moved to Houstonville about 1776. He was the first settler here, and he was my great grandmother's grandfather. Her father was Decibal Houston. This is where Houstonville got its name.

The Douglas Homeplace was obtained in 1784 by Captain William Feimster, Revolutionary soldier, in grants from Col. John Purviance. The farm has remained in the family and is now occupied by 10 families of descendants. Mary Douglas Warren, an interviewee, writes this description.

The farm has had two different main house dwellings, three different barns, three playhouses for daughters, many old log buildings, a smokehouse, washhouse, gear shop, blacksmith shop, mill house, granary, corncrib, house for pigs and hogs, and so on.

Three secondary paved roads with historic names (Midway Drive, Antietam, Road, and Liberty Hill) run through this farm leading you anywhere, to Scotts or Scotland, and then they lead you home again.

Down in our meadow was a homeplace with beautiful fresh-smelling roses and all kinds of beautiful phlox and some apple trees. We think it was down in this meadow about a fourth of a mile, maybe not that far. My dad remembers it when he was a young man. It was a beautiful place with a branch running by there. I remember my dad taking my younger brother David and me walking and pointing out those things. Liberty Branch started down here at the foot of our hill and would eventually go into the Little Yadkin River close to where my great great grandpaw lived in a big big old house with a walk-in fireplace. It was huge! I remember seeing that when I was a child. We had four fireplaces. This is how we kept our house warm.

Julia Fowler grew up in Statesville. Her Grandmother Julia Tomlinson Tribble lived about ten miles north of Statesville. Her people had a beautiful old home. They came to Statesville to live in 1893. They bought the property on East Sharpe Street that was sold this year (1994).

In our dining room we had the prettiest peacock feather flower bush. It's just a great big flower bush made out of peacock feathers, and they are perfectly beautiful. To put them together, you have to be a real artist, and I'm sure that the courier took the feathers from the farm up to Philadelphia to have them made. We used to keep them in the dining room.

None of our ancestors would dispute the fact that in some homes warmth was harder to come by when they were growing up than it is now. While each of the homes described to us had a special character, others had an added advantage: they helped to build character. Maggie Phifer remembered vividly the home in which she grew up.

We didn't have a lot of fine furniture, but we were pleased with what we had. Now today, you have springs on your mattresses. Back then, you just had ticks (straw mattresses) on it (the bed). When thrashing time would come, that's when they would be done. We would wash (them) out and fill them up full with new straw. Of course, you were always glad when time came to fill it up because you had it year round, and it would be messed up. It would be hard---like you were just sleeping on a flat tire. You would fill that thing full of straw and sew it up and put it back on.

Gladys King remembers her Uncle Saul and Aunt Hannah.

They lived in one room down Old Salisbury Road. We'd go down there and get apples. They cooked on the fireplace. She cooked beef dumplings in a big ol' coffeepot, an' he smoked a pipe. They had shutters. They had one or two windows. They didn' have

no windowpanes. They lived to be way old in age. Aunt Hannah kept chickens in the house and gave them names.

Amy Lou Mitchell answered our question about home this way.

I was born in 1904 down here right where Arthur lives across the branch (in the area of Grassy Knob). I lived over across the creek in a little shack. That's where we were born. We turned it into a granary later. Right there (on the mantle) is the picture. Looks pretty ragged, don't it? It's the most beautiful location. Oh, we wasn't born in no mansion, you can see that!

Thomas Reason Trivette gave us this account of his family's homeplace.

Grandpa Trivette moved to North Iredell and bought a tract of land with a house on it when he was a young man. The house was old and needed a new roof on it. It was made of logs. The old house he later used as the kitchen separate from the other house which he built. It was also log. That's where all the thirteen children were born. My father was the thirteenth child. And my father and mother lived there for some time after they was married. My two older brothers, Horace and Frank, and my sister Esther were born there in that house.

Around 1914, my father finished the new house a short distance from the old one. He cut the logs, forest pine logs, the length of each room so that there wouldn't be any joints in the rooms. He sawed 'em, finished 'em up, and built the house. I was born in that house in 1922. It was a large frame house with eight large rooms, an upstairs and a downstairs. A few years back it burned down. Seems like it was around 1970.

Lex Sloan's father and mother and eleven brothers and sisters lived in a house about a mile away from his grandparents. Lillie May Christopher says there were nine children and her parents living in the home she grew up in.

It was just a plain plank house with a handcut shingle roof. It had three big rooms downstairs. Daddy and Mama slept in the same room with separate beds. There was always some of the kids, little ones, sleeping at the foot of their beds. The big ones had to go out on the porch and go upstairs. There were two rooms up there, one on the right and one on the left. One was called "the boys' room" and one was called "the girls' room." In the girls' room, there was two wires hanging down from the ceiling, and they run a pole through it to hang our clothes on. In other words, it was just a plain country home. The boys' room it had a closet in their room, but the shingles...the snow would blow on the shingles when it come a snow, and the boys would have to get up in the girdy (the attic), and they'd have to take a shovel and a tub to get the snow out from up there so it wouldn't melt down on us.

We had to go outdoors to go to the bathroom, and we had what we called the washhouse where Mama done her washing, and we actually went out there and took baths in a bathtub, an old timey washtub.

We had a telephone and my daddy built a room outside and put up a bunch of batteries, and he had them connected so he could put lights in the house. We had electric lights that ran off a motor...it was a generator. We had about the first cars that come out, the first radio, and things of that nature. But Daddy had to work awfully hard though. He'd be out from sunup to sundown.



Lillie Christopher: born 1922

It was not uncommon for several generations to live in one house. Kate Sigmon says that "...we lived way over yonder in a ol' log cabin. There were nine children in my family. We lived upstairs." Kate names a long list of uncles who lived downstairs with her papa and grandma.

Rose Huie Brown McCollum described the house she grew up in.

We had three rooms. Two bedrooms and a long hall and a kitchen. There's a great big kitchen, and we eat there. You could sleep in there and dream for a bed. Fireplaces in two rooms. And he (Father) had an orchard on each side of the house, and he had all grades of fruit of any kind...(we had) grapevines, cherry trees, peach orchards, and apple orchards.

The house was high on the under part of it, and the stumps was still in there. We had to clean that all 'cause there's where the chickens run out. My mother would have us to clean that out. She'd give us some boards and some old clothes to put on. We hated it, but we had to. Around the house it was just dirt and what you'd call regular ol' house grass, yard grass that come up itself. And there'd be white parts in it, you know. Of course, we swept that with a house broom. Sometimes, it was a brush broom. (You) go out and get branches off of tree and tie 'em together to sweep the yard with.

Olena Winford was born "over there at Shinn's in the house on top of the hill comin' from Shinn's store. Right down in there behind that store there's a little ol' house." She remembers it vividly.

Back then, we used lamps, and a wood stove. We canned. Had a farplace. We had a hollow down there from the house, that's the old place over there. There's a place over there we'd dig out white stuff, looked like whitewash. We'd git dat an' mix it up an' put it on da harth an' it'd be jus' as pretty'n white.

We slep on straw ticks, no mattress er nuttin' like that. Dey cut da wheat an' we would be glad 'cause we got a new tick....No rugs on the floor...just a screen porch.

For the family of Vera Fleming Saddler, home and work were a package deal. Mobility was also a fact of life for them.

When Daddy was home, we lived with Dr. Moore. He furnished us a house because Daddy worked for him. The house is still standing. We lived in Mooresville a while. Then Daddy had a farm, but we didn't live in that farm because Daddy left home. From there (we went) to Shinnsville.

Rose McCollum and her husband had some help from their families.

Instead of going to the sawmill Monday morning, he give him the wagon and a team a' mules. Back then there was a dressing machine (for finishing lumber) down at the branch, and they went ta haulin' lumber, and he hires up ol' Johnny Campbell, an' they put us up a little three-room house. 'Course they had stuff, stoves, things like that they give us enough to start out with. Then she (Mama) learnt me to quilt. My mama let me and Cleo (sister) piece two quilts in the blocks. She said that's all we'd need.

Mary Kimbrough and husband Arthur made some sacrifices in order to own their home. Mary describes their experience in building their home.

While we were building the house, there were no doors, and a big hole was where the fireplace was to be. We lived upstairs one winter as we worked on the house. We had a little oil burner for heat. Our daughter stayed with my sister; Edward stayed with his grandmother in Asheville.

We had two calves, six big fat hens. They came in the house to lay on the boy's bed. We had a little pig in a box in the kitchen and a cow. We went over to Pop's house to milk twice a day. When the doors were up and on Sunday morning the chickens couldn't get in, they would raise cain on the roof till we let them in.

Building a house has its own way of building character, particularly when you build it yourself and in increments. From the Page Beattys, we heard this story.

We bought this place in '56. We lived in that house eighteen months and it burned down...the two-story white house. I's workin' at Sherrill Furniture Company then. Her daddy had a sawmill 'n we cut the lumber. Got somebody to dig the basement. I's workin' over at Sherrill's 'n I'd pick up a truck 'n bring a load a' blocks home ever evenin'. And I got enough blocks to build a basement down there, 'n I laid the blocks myself. Got the lumber cut. I just kep' buildin' while we lived in the basement. I built the barn, then the tool shed.

His parents were farmers, and his mother sold milk and butter and paid for their home. His daddy built it. His mother churned butter and sold it. For fifty cents a pound, (Pop) raised cotton and sweet potatoes. He first hauled that buttermilk and stuff around in a horse an' buggy an' then in a Model-T Ford. He sold ("the stuff") to the Sherrills and the Hollands and the Slanes ("rich people"). They made one payment a year until the home was paid for. It was part of the Wes Sherrill farm.

Margaret Scott has had four children born in the house that was her mother's dream. The house was built in 1926 near the present Interstate 77 in Statesville and moved to its present site in 1957. It took her parents twenty-four years to pay the mortgage.

In the remaining years, my children and I have added on and remodeled as we could afford to. We have had our share of joy and sorrow, but through it all, God has blessed and enabled us to continue...to keep the old homeplace in the family for future generations. At the present time, I am blessed to share the old homeplace with four generations of family.

When our interviewees spoke of the homes in which they grew up and the ones that they built for their own families, they spoke with pride and emotion, regardless of the appearance or size of the home or the number of people with whom they shared it. Amy Lou Mitchell's smile belies her words: "You can see we didn' live in no mansion!" Others also spoke with ill-concealed pride of "the ol' log cabin" or "the plank house" in which they were born. Often there was displayed in the home a picture of a parent or grandparent standing in the cabin door. It is obvious that "home" means more than a house. Home means shared experiences, and these we well remember. It is this that keeps Iredell families coming back year after year.

HOMEPLACE

Home is not a house that people live inside.
Home's a family place where warmth and love abide.
The family, long since gone, lie sleeping on the hill,
But in our hearts and minds, their love is with us still.

SBC
Dimensions, 1992



Margaret Scott

Family and Community

"It was really wonderful to be back in where the neighbors were!"

Lillie Christopher

There is no way that the topics of family and community could be dealt with in separate chapters. Families lived so close together that they often formed the nucleus of an entire community. There are good reasons for this. People were much less mobile because of poor or non-existent roads and inadequate means of transportation. And many were destined to live their entire lives in a single spot in part because there were no jobs to entice them elsewhere. Therefore, where a couple chose to build their home and rear their children was a critical decision. For most, it was an easy decision. Proximity to family was everything. Sue Morrow Cook put it simply.

My mother wanted to buy the old Chambers place in Elmwood, but my father needed to be near my grandfather for hog killings and such things.

Bill Williams pointed out another good reason for families remaining close together.

I was the only child, and my mother died when I was approximately ten. I was reared by my great grandmother. She also reared my mother because her mother died when she was young. Our houses backed up to each other. We lived on Old Salisbury Road. I was born right here in this house. Basically, they lived in Belmont. The (Civil) War was just over when my great grandmother was born. When she was growing up, there were three black communities: Baptist Hill, Belmont, and Rankintown. Other communities came along in later years.

Other children were orphaned by childbirth. Carl Cook's mother, for example, died when her seventh child was born, so his sister Martha was reared by Carl's Aunt Vern, who lived about three miles away. She had three daughters of her own but had just lost her only son to diabetes. There is no way that the rest of Charlie Cook's children could have survived without the help of Ada Gray, a neighbor from the black community who "became a mother to us," said Carl and his sister Helen. Helen was fourteen and still in school. Ada would come in and cook and clean for the family. She was not paid for any of the work that she did. She had no children of her own, and she simply took upon herself the responsibility of caring for those six white youngsters.

Lex Sloan and his wife, in addition to three children of their own, have raised twins of his brother Avery. Their mother died after a fall in the hospital when the twins were less than a week old. She bled to death in five minutes.

Rose Huie Brown McCollum learned the value of having close neighbors very early. Her father passed away when he was just 34 years old, leaving her 30-year-old mother with five children, one only a year old. Without family and neighbors, her life would have been very different. Rose defines a neighbor as "Anybody we knew that was close."

They was gonna put us in an orphan's home, and they had a man to come up there, and then they talked it over. We got up our stick dolls 'er whatever we had, corncob dolls, and thought we'd take 'em with us. We was thinkin' about leavin' home, waitin' on them to take this one (or that one). But they wouldn't allow us to go nowhere. (The man) would help her and leave us there.

My Grandpa Jurney would get the neighbors around there, you know, if it come a snow or anything, and they'd all come out and cut wood and put it on the porch. Mr. Bob Walker, he stayed there day and night until he (father) passed away and waited on him. And the women folks come a lot at night and (would) dress chickens and things, you know, for my mother. They had a new barn and wasn't nothin' in it, and so we would go down there and Manuel Walker would keep us down there...to keep us quiet, you know, and they would send our dinners to us.

Clearly, not all children in need of a home were fortunate enough to be adopted. Orphanages performed a valuable service. This notice taken from an old copy book is evidence of at least some local support for the orphanage at Oxford.

NOTICE

GRAND MASONIC PICNIC AT TROUTMANS

August the 28 1886

for the benefit of the Oxford Orphan Assylum

Addresses will be delivered by

Rev. W. P. Williams, J.G. Ramsay, and Others.

The Iredell Blues of Statesville

Cornet Band are expected to be in attendance.

EveryBody is cordially invited to come

and bring a Basket well filled for the benifit

of the Orphans of the State of N.C.

Mattie Jane Fleming, mother of Harry Brawley, did spend some time at Barium Springs Orphanage, which, fortunately for her, had been moved there from Charlotte in 1890. Mattie's father, John Motley Morehead Fleming, died in 1897 when she was twelve years old. He left her mother Laura Patterson Fleming with twelve children. Unable to feed them all, her mother kept the youngest and oldest children, those who could help or were of marrying age, and sent the middle children to the orphanage. Mattie stayed there, according to her youngest child Harry, "...until she got her some clothes and got married " (in 1901), a connection that he apparently thought needed no explanation.

Mattie and John Brawley also knew the value of having close neighbors. "I was the baby," Harry recalled, "and Mama had to have some help. They didn't have enough milk fer me, and they had to buy milk, and it was just sort of a struggle like." The family borrowed a cow from a neighbor, Doff Barkley, Harry explained. Their neighbors also saved the day when the 1918 flu epidemic struck. So many people died, Harry emphasized. Neighbors brought wood and food to the door, "But they wouldn't come in, and I don't blame 'em," he said.

Rose McCollum had a similar experience:

I remember we went over there (Grandpa Journey's) one time and we all took the flu. And I don't know how long it was 'fore we got back. They went and got the cow and brought it over there. And Mr. Pet George, he fed the hog. And people would come and help ya. S _____ would come to the window where we were at. Two had to lay in the bed together because everyone took it 'cept S _____ and Grandpa.

We got so homesick we'd look over there. We could see an ol' dead tree. Well, Uncle Houston (Journey) took us home (finally). He walked ahead of us and walked the cow. Forded the creek with her. He headed up to the house and said, "Don't go to school today, now." Mama, she got dinner. We eat that dinner and up that hill we went. We went to school!

Thomas Trivette shared this information and offered his own observations:

Around here, neighbors helped neighbors. Very few people had a automobile. They walked or rode a horse or in a buggy or wagon or sumpin' if they went anywhere. Just a few cars. They didn' have no modern conveniences, and they seemed to have more time than they do now. Neighbors visited regular. If you got anybody sick or anything, neighbors come an' helped out.

Hamptonville, where the post office was at the time, was a small village, and the well was in the middle of the road, and the people of the community came there, and all draw'd water out of that well.

Lillie Christopher offers her own impressions of what community was like when she was growing up. She also introduces the topic of shared work.

Back then, a relationship in the community was something beautiful. People had to work to get things. My mom would have quiltings; the ladies would come and help her quilt out a quilt. We'd have corn shuckins'; they'd help us shuck corn. They'd have cotton pickins, pull off cotton and come help do that. When Mama would go visit her neighbors, us children would be tagging along with her, and if they had anything in, like any fruit in or turnip greens, they were always dividing it up. And if anybody came to our house, Mama would do the same thing. It was really wonderful! Just wonderful to be back in where the neighbors were!

Sadie Martin describes similar events which were common in the Central School community, providing many details and emphasizing the social value, as well.

At a quilting, you'd invite ladies in all day. We'd prepare lunch, and they would quilt several quilts and have an enjoyable time. We'd have lunch and go back and quilt some more in the afternoon. Then each fall, they had the corn shuckings. In some communities, they'd cook up a big supper and have supper during the evening. They would shuck awhile and come to the house and have supper and go back and shuck some more. We in this community just had shuckings; we didn't have the meal.

In the summertime, we had the threshings, and you had a big meal there. The threshing machine would come by with this work horse, and the neighbors would come in to help out. Each one would exchange work with his neighbor and have the whole crew that went with the threshing machine, plus all the neighborhood. Our two big times then were corn shuckings and the quiltings.

Amy Lou Mitchell talked about another work-related social event. The key word here is "invite".

We used to have apple peelings and invite people to come, and they'd peel apples. Some of 'em would peel while the rest of us would slice 'em, and somebody'd cap (cut off the stems). We would put 'em out on a scaffold to dry and sell 'em.

And Rose McCollum added another shared activity to our list.

They cleared that 68 acres of land; it was all in wood and he had it cleared, and they had to have a log burnin' to set the house down...roll the logs a'burnin', and

neighbors would come in and help him till they got the house built. It was cross-cuttin' with saw and axe. And gettin' those stumps out, that was something else. The stumps was still in there (under the house).

Growing up in Iredell in the days when sharing and combined labor was a way of life had an influence on the young people. Amelia Kennedy has always been impressed by the community-mindedness of her parents, their generosity and their humanitarian nature.

It's outstanding to me, and it always was from my parents, and I know it was handed down from their parents to treat everybody like you'd like to be treated. I've heard both of 'em say that the people in this area...Iredell County, Salisbury, and North Iredell are special, and Daddy was a commissioner for 22 years. Mama would say, "You need to be on this farm." You know, she wanted him to do that too, but somebody had to represent North Iredell.

Mama was just plain, but she just had a way about her....She knew which person liked what, and if she knew of something they liked special and she had it, she'd always make sure they got it.

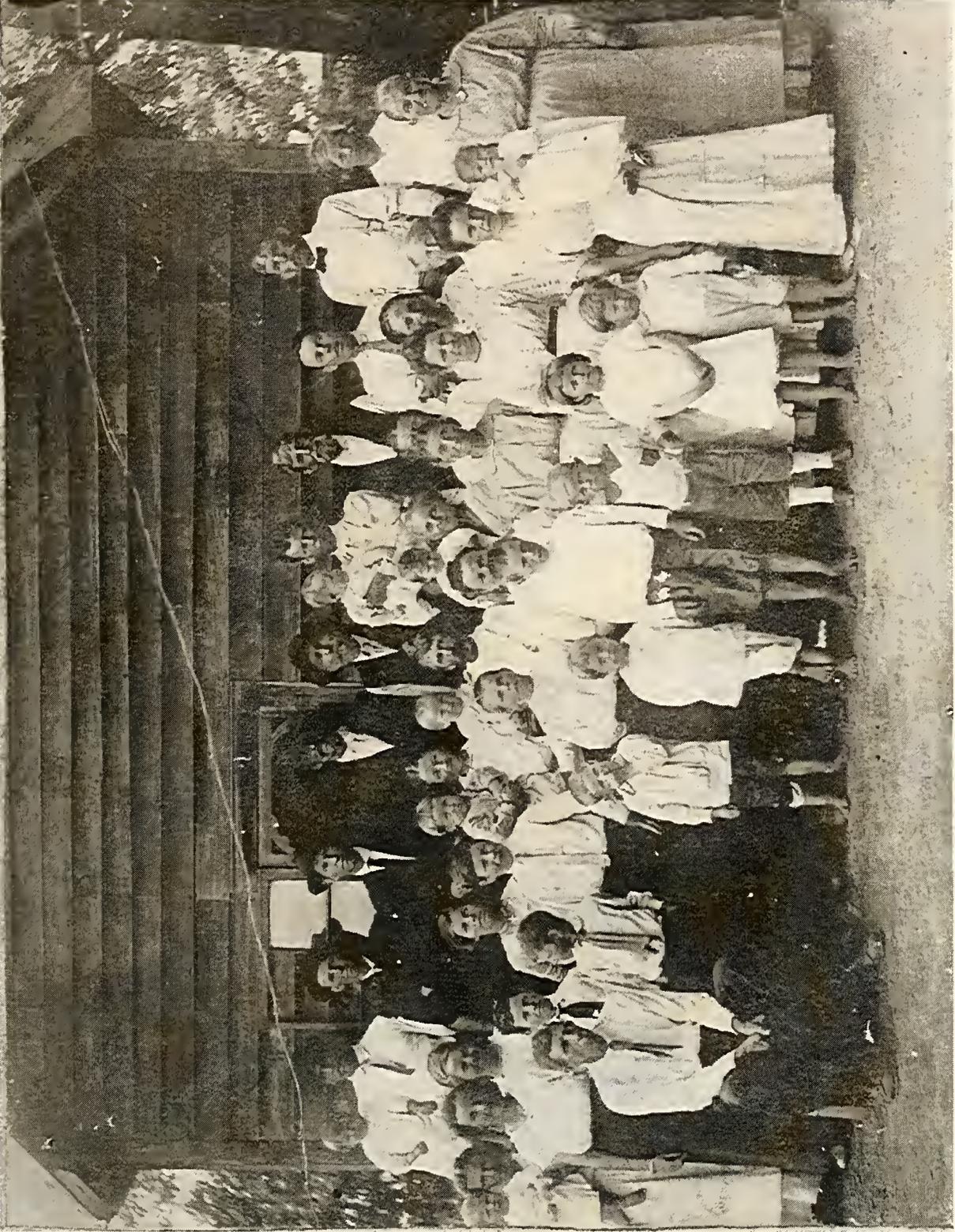
Amelia's father, it seems, was the one who stopped along the way to deliver those "special things" to someone her mother knew. Amelia also remembers him as a generous person who, she says, "was one of the commissioners who brought dairy into this county."

Fleecy Griffin is a shining example of what can happen to a person who grows up in a community-minded environment. Even though she was not a nurse, she took care of the entire family...her mother, father, brother, and sister-in-law during her infirmity. This was what was expected of unmarried females in the first half of the twentieth century. And Fleecy Griffin never hesitated. She is also a retired 45-year veteran teacher in the Iredell County Schools as well as a lifelong member of Mt. Pleasant A.M.E. Zion Church where she is an active member and generous contributor. Iredell County is justly proud of Fleecy Griffin and all of the other daughters like her. They are living definitions of the meaning of community at its highest level, and we salute them.



William C. Mullis Family: 1900

Susan and William Mullis, Chloe, Mary and Harvey Mullis, are photographed in Georgia, where William worked for five years helping his uncle with his horses.



The Bost Family Reunion: 1915

Harry Robert Brawley (far right, front row) and his sister Mary Brawley Walker stand in front of their mother Mattie Jane Fleming Brawley at a Bost family reunion. Harry was the grandson of Robert Leroy Brawley and Mary Bost. His brothers, Thomas, Eugene, and Mott, are probably on the front row, also.



The William Gaston Kimbrough Family

Doll Allison (far right front row) churned butter for the family. Nannie Pearson (beside her) was mid-wife to all of the Kimbrough children. The gentleman at the end of the back row lived with the family while teaching two older brothers barbering. Mary Kimbrough (interviewee, born in 1916) sits in front of her grandmother, Mary Hudson (in chair).



**Robert and Connie Kimbrough Spicer with daughter Alma
1946**



The Marcus Lloyd Troutman Family: 1931
Marcus Lloyd Troutman married Julia Studie Steele in 1911. They are pictured here (left to right) with their daughters, Julie, Beatrice, and Christine (on her father's lap). Daughter Julie was the mother of Jackie Peeler Conkey, interviewer.

Gathering Times

"That used to be a great experience to thrash, you know!"

Theodore Wallace

With so much work to be done, work that for the most part was extremely physically exhausting, it is amazing that anyone had the energy or the desire for any recreation at all. But Iredell families did not "live by bread alone." The need to stay in touch with neighbors and families was overwhelming. Reasons were frequently found for gathering with friends, neighbors, and family. The most popular and the easiest for them to justify was to accomplish a task that was too big for a single family. Often, some incentive was built into the task. For example, the one who found a red ear of corn at a corn husking got to kiss the girl of his choice, Theodore Wallace reminded us. Often the work became a competition to determine physical strength, skill, or dexterity. Perhaps it was the latter reason that caused Theodore Wallace to enjoy wood cuttings so much.

We used to cut wood and go one neighbor to the next and have wood cuttings, you know, to have wood for another year. And to clear your land with an ax. It was right interesting for me to see who could get the ax real sharp and see the chips fly!

Interviewer: Were you pretty good?)

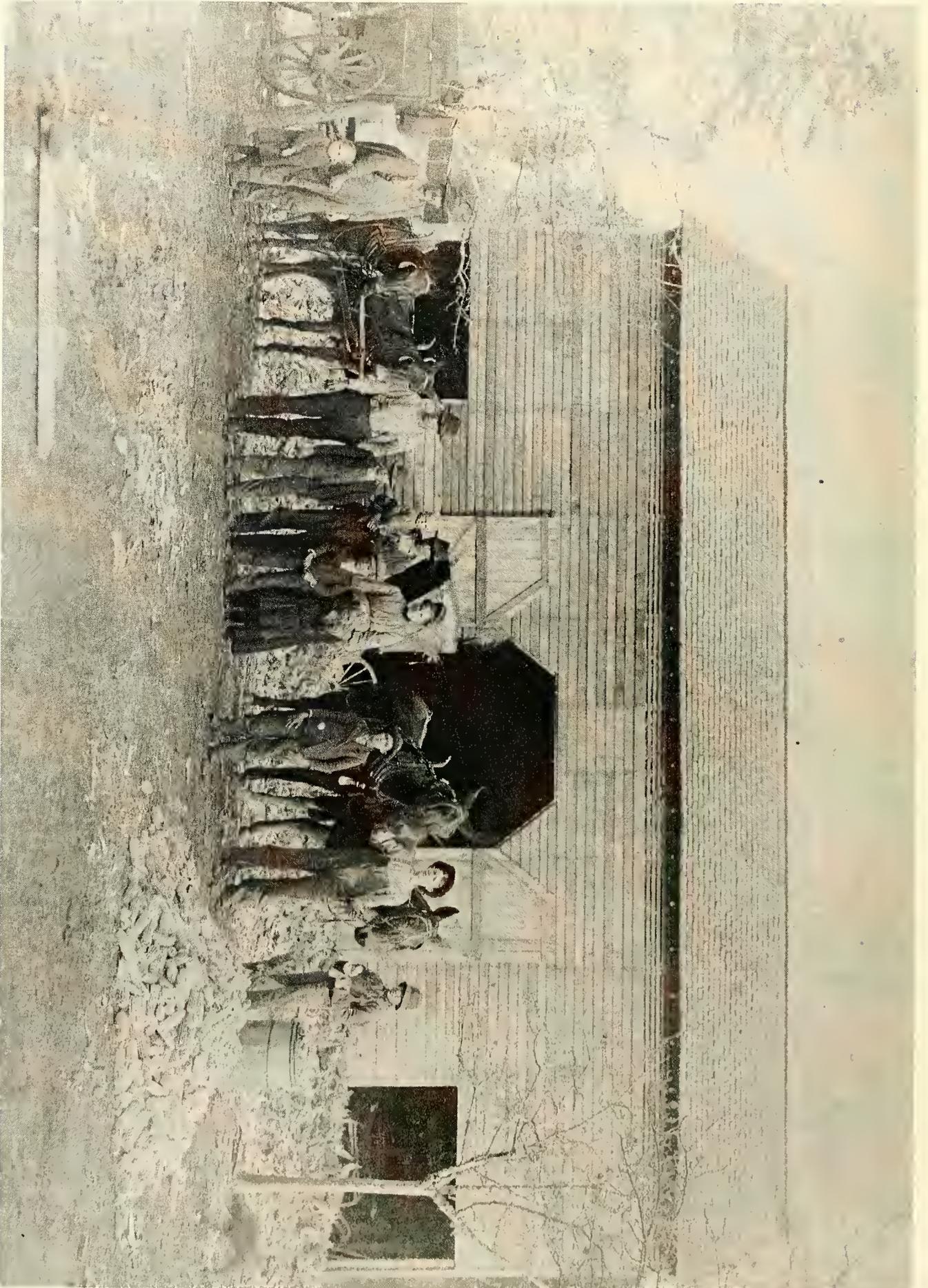
I was pretty good, but I wasn't the best.

Log rollings were another version of this activity. Clyde Tulbert described them:

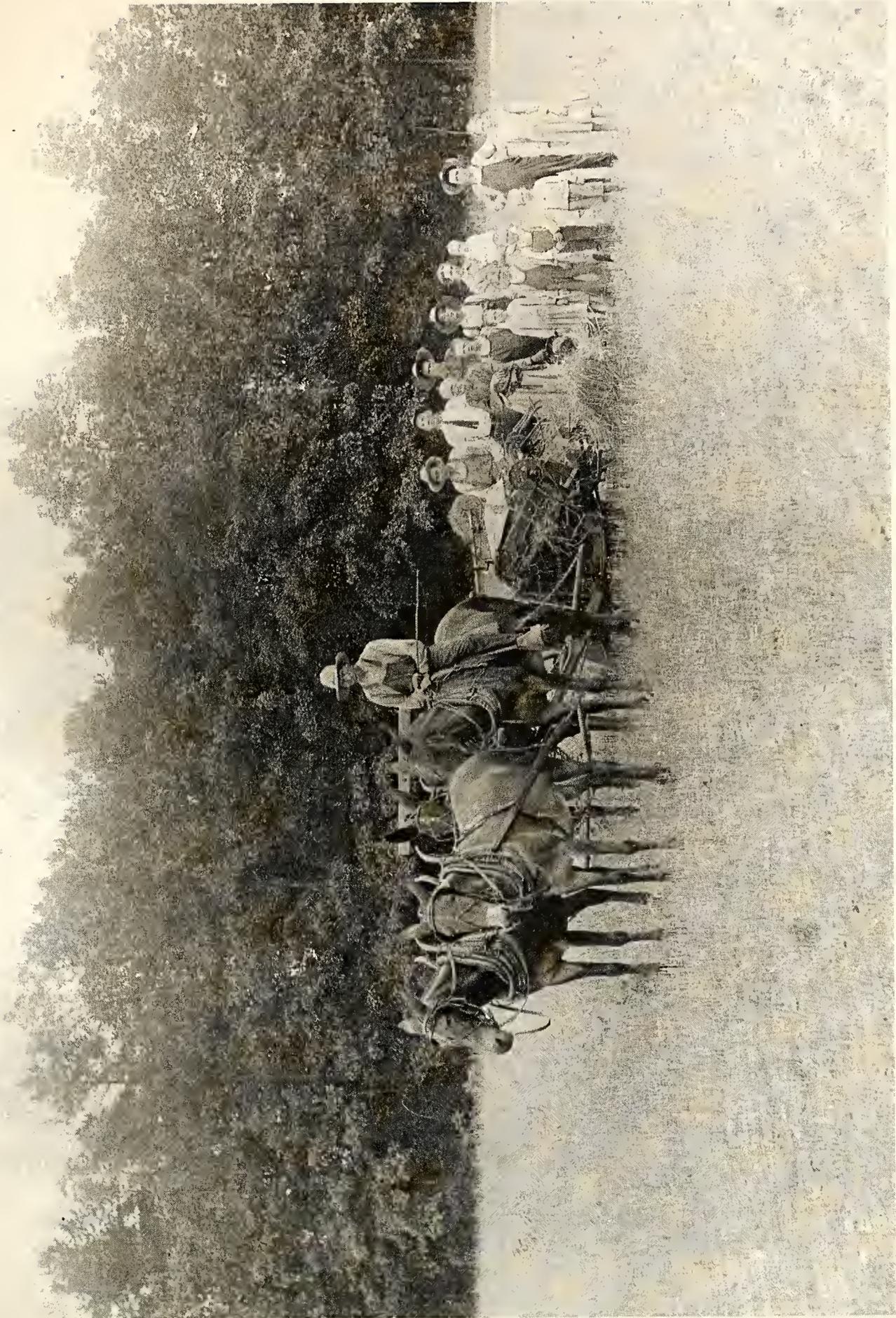
Well, we would cut (them) down. And then we would pull them to where they had like a gully, you know, or something like that. We'd kind of roll those logs up in there and burn them, don't you see, to clear the land. Why, we cleared up enough timber---I can remember, when I was a child, logs you wouldn't believe. The land wasn't cleared; we had to clear it to make a living. Grow something on it.

Perhaps the most talked-about such events were the wheat threshings. Theodore Wallace was asked about "thrashing runs."

That used to be a great experience to thrash, you know. I'll never forget cutting with a cradle at home and shocking wheat. We never had a reaper at that time. My grandpaw would let me use it (the cradle) once and a while. Lots of time we (cut it by hand...only have five, six acres, but that was a lot to cut (with a cradle).



The Douglas Family gather for a cornshucking.



Threshing Wheat on the Douglas Farm

In spite of the work they required, threshings were even popular with some of the women, and they were universally loved by the children. Ida Tharpe spoke of them enthusiastically.

That was almost like a picnic whenever all those men would come in to eat. They would have to do a great big old cooking like some cafeteria or something like that almost. The day or two, or however long they thrashed wheat at your house, mother and my sister would have to cook a big dinner for them. They would all eat at our house. They would eat at whatever house they were thrashing for. I didn't ever go out and see it only from a distance. It was messy, you know, all the dust and everything.

Edna York looked forward to those ice cream suppers that were held at Windsor's Store.

You know, up there, Mr. Windsor run a store, and he'd have these ice cream socials on Saturday night. People went far and near because there wasn't any other around, you know.

The most popular social event by far in rural areas of Iredell County at this time was the box supper. Dozens of interviewees spoke fondly of this custom. Amy Lou Mitchell describes the ones that she remembers.

We'd have pie suppers, and the girls would take a box pie or something. They'd have different things in that box. Sometimes they'd call it a pie supper, and they would just take a pie. And then other times they'd take chicken and different side dishes. And the boys would buy the girl's box and get to eat with who they bought.

Sue Cook remembers box suppers that were held to raise money for the Amity School when she went there as a student. She told us this.

Each girl would decorate a box, and they'd have enough food in it for her and whoever bought her box. It was just more fun than anything!

Sue added that she could recall "a good many" romances that had developed at these events. The details that Beulah Myers Glass provides tell just how these socials were conducted.

The boys went out to picnics and ice cream suppers. But we girls were left at home. My father didn't approve of the girls going at all. Once in a while, we would steal out and go. School would have box suppers. So much fun!

They would have a meeting and singing, and then they would sell the boxes. Each girl would fix a box with food and somebody would auction the box, and whoever bought the box would consume the box supper with the girl that brought the box. That was really a picnic. No tablecloth in those days. This usually took place in the schoolroom. Each one would pick out a desk, and the girl would spread the food out on the desk.

Ella was ten years older than me. She would really do the cookin' and I would help. She thought a lot of Sherrill Madison. He was an awful tease. He always got hers. The boy wanted a certain box, you know, that went with the girl. If the others found out about it, they'd run the price up on 'im. Anyway, he would pay all sorts of prices fer hers. I went along with her because she wanted the company. When my box went up, one of the boys got mine, and I didn't like him no way! She an' Sherrill sat there all through the supper an' talked about us. He'd wink at me, and I couldn't stand it. That one time...that was enough for me.

Several other activities were popular with other families. Gaynell Freeland had a lot of singings at her house. Sue Cook was allowed to attend these "most every Saturday night." Special occasions for Gladys King included picnics, ballgames, family reunions, and hikes. Maggie Phifer mentioned parades.

Sometimes we'd get to come to town and watch a parade or something like that. Most of the time we'd have to walk. Sometimes, we'd get a chance to ride in the wagon.

The subject of card games drew mixed responses. Sarah Turlington emphatically pronounced cards a "sin." Bertha Westmoreland referred to cards as the one thing that was not allowed in school. Sue Cook's mother was difficult to convince, also.

Finally, as we got older, we wanted to play Bridge. Bridge was the game coming around, and my mother said, "No. No cards." My older brother that was at State College, when he came home, he said, "Well, I think it would be better, Mama, to let them play something here in the house, than to be out riding around, don't you?" So, we were allowed to play Bridge.

Carl Cook adds that they started out playing Rook. "There was always something going on."

An automobile was indeed a luxury for any family, and it was a special treat for a young person to be allowed to use it. Sue's family, the Tom Morrrows, had "an old Reo automobile." The car was sold in Statesville by Jim Deaton, who later owned the Ford Company.

When I was thirteen years old, they taught me to drive it because when Papa drove, he drove too fast. Mama wouldn't ride with him when my brothers and older sister went away to school.

The automobile made other entertainment, such as movies, more accessible. It also provided some enjoyable Sunday afternoon outings.

Sam Price was fortunate to grow up in Mooresville in the days when movies were common, and the price was ten cents. He went to the movies on Saturdays when he wasn't working at the drug store.

I didn't get to go a lot because Saturday became the day when all the farmers came to town in their wagons and horses. They would park on a lot right next to the drug store. That lot now has a building on it which is owned by the McNeelys. The farmers would come to town, and that was when they would get their medicines, and they would go all over town and buy other things, and they would stay the whole day; consequently, I didn't get to know the names of movie stars like most people do now.

Lawrence Patterson remembers the movies in Statesville very well.

The first two movies that I remember were the Crescent and the Broadway. The Crescent was near where the pet shop is now. Across the street from there was the Broadway. The Crescent and Broadway were silent movies. Then, I think it must have been just before the Depression or right after the Depression, they built the Playhouse, a new modern theater, and that was the main movie there. During the war, there was another movie that I never went to. It was across the street from the post office. I saw a lot of good pictures at the Playhouse. It was sound pictures.

There were a lot of cowboy pictures which I don't remember much about. Tom Mix and Ken Maynard were famous cowboy stars. I remember Friday was bargain day. You could go to the Playhouse Theater for ten cents to the matinee and fifteen cents at night. Most of the time, we would go in the daytime. My dad would go to town for something he had to get, and I would go to the movies and spend the afternoon while he was taking care of his business. When I went to Mitchell College, I was in Statesville five days a week.

Another event held great interest for Lawrence Patterson.

The fairs are recent. I was maybe a teenager by the time they had fairs. But before that, I can remember in front of the Harmony School near where Dr. Grose had his office, a thing called Chautauqua would come and stay three days. They would have a matinee performance and an evening performance. It's the first time I had ever seen a magician. At the matinee performance, there were a lot of kids. The magician was always in the matinee performance. Then they would have plays, one act plays. They'd have what you might call an artist, and while somebody played the piano,

somebody would be in front of a big blank piece of paper and draw a picture with colored chalk. They had various other kinds of entertainment like music and singing. For that time, it was very nice to have something like that for rural people. They traveled and had several units in the southeastern United States and probably the Middle West, too.

Dancing is a topic that was viewed differently by those who spoke to us. It was generally disapproved of in many rural areas. Olena Winford said that her family believed it should be reserved for married couples. Lawrence Patterson says that there weren't any dances or proms in high school in those days.

Barney Dalton told us that they used to have dances on Wednesday and Saturday nights. "We had a big time picking them banjos and playing the fiddle. The boys and girls were dancing; they had a big time. Effie Mae added, "They called a dance 'playing on sets'." They were held in an old house if there was one unoccupied, in particular one log house that stood near the church. They called that a "bash". The next week, it would be held somewhere else.

The social scene in Statesville was very different. Alice Fowler depicts this very well with interesting details:

Statesville (in 1925) was famous not only for having the most beautiful girls in the state, but it was also famous for having the best dancers in the state. We had orchestras coming here from everywhere---Jan Garber, Weivermire, and Howard Pence. All the good orchestras came here and put on dances at what was then called Yount's Hall. It was a vacant space over the top of Bunch Furniture Company.

The main reason they came was because Hugh Mitchell lived here, and (he) belonged to the same fraternity that most of these band leaders did. I think it was S.P.E. to be exact. But Hal King and Jan Garber and all those boys belonged to that. They had met and knew him at Carolina---except Jan Garber, of course. But he was in the same fraternity as a lot of these boys. They were wonderful!

Hugh Mitchell lived on the street just before you get to Mitchell College, Mulberry Street. He had a sister named Flo, and his mother was very famous. They called her, Sis Mitchell. I don't remember exactly why she was so famous. But, anyway, Hugh was a galloping doughboy; he knew how to arrange things, and he had the best dances. They charged five dollars apiece to go to those dances. Right unusual, wasn't it? They were great orchestras. I can remember that's when they played "Yes, We Have No Bananas." Ted Range was another orchestra. Kaye Kaiser, Hal Weivermire, Jan Garber---all the good orchestras came to Statesville.

(We were unable to verify the spelling of names in this passage.)

Dancing was frowned on in many rural communities at least into the next decade in Iredell. No one mentioned square dances or cake walks or even hay rides, all of which were popular in the 1950's. High schools celebrated graduations with junior-senior banquets instead of senior proms throughout the '50's in rural areas.

While young people who grew up in rural areas of Iredell experienced, in general, more social restrictions, everyone remembered fondly many gatherings and shared experiences in their community. The frequency of these gatherings is remarkable given the limited transportation available to them, the poor roads, and their work schedules. Both adults and young people seem to have depended more on social events than we do today. In the absence of other forms of entertainment, they provided a much needed break and cemented the bonds between people as well. Another bonus was that they strengthened their "safety nets" and gained a greater sense of community, as well.



Courtship and Marriage

"Courtship wasn't nothing like it is nowadays."

Gaynell Cooke Freeland

For many good reasons, those we interviewed did not reflect, in general, much awareness of the world intruding upon their lives. In most cases, they were far more likely to argue about religion than politics. People had less access to public information, for one thing, and they were far too busy for another. Therefore, many were like Russell Cowan, who had no idea how old he was or what was happening in his life during various world events. He simply had not thought about that. He measured time according to whether or not events occurred before his wedding day or after it. That was his focal point. That he was interviewed only two months after the death of his wife may have emphasized that awareness, but it is unlikely that he would have answered differently if she had been living. A large silk arrangement from her funeral still sat in his living room when we returned two years later. The loss of a mate after a lifetime of shared joys and sorrows is indescribable. Like the majority of our subjects, Russell and Virginia Glaspy Cowan had known each other and had been together almost all their lives.

We had no trouble getting answers from anyone on the topic of courtship and marriage unless, of course, there was nothing to tell, which happened a few times. Our interviewees painted a picture of courtship and romance that contrasts sharply with today's customs. To say that our forebears, in their youth, led more innocent lives than today's young people is an understatement. Codes of behavior were extremely narrow and strictly enforced. Nevertheless, young men and women managed to fall in love and get married, and those marriages proved to be very durable in most cases.

"Courtship wasn't nothing like it is nowadays," says Gaynell Cooke Freeland. "No kissing and hugging going on. That wasn't allowed. We just talked and played games and talked." Her husband Harvey was older than she; in fact, he was a friend of her father's. Gaynell remembered sitting on Harvey's lap when he visited in their house when she was a child. He died leaving Gaynell alone for many years. She never considered marrying again.

Effie Bailey told us this:

The man I married was the only boy I ever went with. We just talked a little. We went together three years, and we got married. Freddy died in January (1994). We were married 67 years.

One reason that people did not go anywhere is that there were few places for them to go. Another is that they had to walk to get there, and a hard day's work left them with little time or energy. In addition, with homes a good distance apart, the suitor often had a long and eventful trip. Harry Brawley was going home one evening on a three-mile walk through the woods, and he had to cross a branch after dark. The moon reflecting off the rocks guided him until he made a misstep and fell into the water. His parents were equally strict, and his father always chastised him for coming in late. Harry (pictured below) said that he thought the fact that his parents knew the Mills family and his father was distantly related to them would be taken into consideration, but that made no difference. A stern lecture from his father awaited him.



Millard Knight had a similar problem. When courting, he had to "be gone from the girl's house by the time the sun went down," not only because of the parents' rule but also because he had cows to milk. "I may be there at two o'clock in the afternoon and stay till time to do up the work, and I left out."

Edna York's parents "were so strict they would not let her be up at night. They (suitors) had to always leave before night when they came. No setting up a'courting after night." Louise Holmes Dalton's parents were very strict. He came to my house. We did not go out."

Church and school were common places for young people to meet. Linnie Sue Morrow and Carl Cook (below) knew each other both at Amity School and at Bethesda Presbyterian Church before their marriage in 1934. They celebrated 62 years of their marriage in October, 1996.



Linnie Sue Cook credited box suppers at church for starting many courtships that ended in marriage (Chapter on "Gathering Times"). Olena Clark Winford and her husband had a similar relationship.

Goin' ta school together. An' we went to church mostly. You know, everybody went to church then. You don' go to no church now ta court. We didn' go to no dances. You had to be married...to go places like that.

And from Fleecy Griffin, we heard this:

I don't know! (laughter) I didn't have much fun. Daddy didn't let us get out and do anything. I went to the church activities and school activities if we had anything. We were allowed to have parties here at the house.

Rose Huie gave us a detailed description of how she felt about courting at a church function:

We wasn't allowed to go nowhur only ta church, 'cause we was so young. And they had tado's on Sunday night, you know....They'd hold it like...at Olin, at Union Grove. I remember us takin' our fellers and a'goin' there. And if Cleo couldn' go with me, why I know (mother) stuck Hoyt (little brother) in with me. We were young, you know. We'd go together. Will Bonnet and his wife was married. I think she said she was 15. Me and her set together and talked and whispered some. I know I was ashamed. We had to ride up before dark with that little ol' brother stuck in there. People watched their children in those days! We was at a tent meeting at Houstonville, and you had to go before dark....Certainly be nice to be that way today.

Lillie May Christopher's laughing response to "What was courtship like?" was similar, yet different.

That was a real curiosity. Like we'd go to the singings and the boys would walk home with us. After a few years, now they'd get their old cars, and they would get out and ride around. It's quite different from what it is now because we was out in the country, and we would just get out and ride in the moonlight.

Clyde Tulbert also enjoyed singings. He describes his "courting days" thus:

She was crossing the road one day, and I just stopped and started talking to her. And that's how it got started. (They went) to singings in one place and another as well as to quite a few shows....We went to a lot of cowboy movies back at that time. You didn't see anything but good movies back then. They were clean. A lot cleaner than they are today, I can tell you that!

Ralph Flake Messick referred to the lack of money as yet another restriction.

Back in the old Model-T days, I didn't get to Statesville too much. After I got a better car, we went to Statesville to shows on occasion, if we had the money to go to Statesville. A whole lot of the time it was a Western, probably John Wayne. But I remember back when I had that first Chevrolet coupe. I could take a dollar and do pretty good on it, on the weekend. Gas was 15 and 18 cents a gallon. You see, I could get three gallons of gas if it was 20 cents a gallon...and have enough to get a sandwich if you wanted to stop at a cafe. For 10 cents, you could get a pretty good sandwich. (Flake liked "comical shows" but Annie liked "Gone With the Wind.")



Clyde Leon Tulbert and Willie Mae Tulbert
1936

Gladys King mentioned yet another problem. Sometimes she would have two dates in one night. "We didn't have no phone, and sometimes they'd come the same time. So I'd sit an' talk to both of 'em."

Dancing is a topic that was viewed differently by some. Ida Tharpe, who also said that there were plays in different places they were allowed to see, said that "Some people had dances. Just in the community in homes. They don't do that now, do they? People would go, and it was fun, I guess. My sisters and brothers went, but mother didn't approve of it after I came along." Ida also went to "different church meetings" and sometimes to a movie, but "not often," she added.

On the other hand, Alice Fowler, born in 1907, had a delightful time at dances in Statesville. She gave us this lively description:

I was fifteen years old when I came to Statesville, and I met a whole lot of young girls around here...Sally Lester, Jenny Moore, Rosa Steele. Lots of cute girls were here. In fact, Statesville was supposed to have the prettiest girls in the whole state. Faye Foster...anyway I met all of these girls and boys, too, after I came here as a kid. Really, it was so much fun in those days because boys would get in cars and ride around...old Fords with no tops on them. They'd ride around and go to see the girls that had a date. They always made sure the girls had a date or they wouldn't go to see them. The ones that had dates, then the other crowd of boys would come and pile in your house. My stepmother had never seen such carrying on as that, and she didn't approve of it at all. She thought it was very ugly for all these boys to pile in your house. But they went everywhere...she didn't realize that. They didn't stay but a few minutes, and they would go on to the next one.

There was a girl that lived up the street from me named Margaret Pendleton. She was so pretty! She had big brown eyes and brown hair and was the best dancer. So they went to Margaret's, and then they come on down the street to where I was on Kelly Street.

In our chapter on social life, Alice talked about the wonderful bands with well-known band leaders that played for dances in Statesville. "I'm sorry you missed all them," she said to interviewer Jackie Conkey. "Your generation missed it. By the time you all lived, that was just the time they were getting so they danced with one boy all the time, and everybody went with one person. At the time I'm talking about, the more different dates you had and the more different people you danced with the better it was. (In your day) they had just one beau that they went with all the time. Boring, I would think!"

Sam Price, born in 1929, grew up in Mooresville, and he remembers dating in high school. One of the girls was very athletic and they spent

time "playing tennis, shooting pool, and bowling balls. "She could beat me at tennis and bowling balls, and at pool. She was a pretty good athlete!"

Sam attended Chapel Hill where he "did date on campus." He was in the concert orchestra, and sometimes he "thumbed" in his tuxedo to Greensboro for a date or a dance on a weekend.

There was remarkable similarity in wedding customs during these years. In determining the date of their nuptials, many gave the matter serious consideration. Sam Price, Jr., had always known he was going to college and that marriage would have to wait until he completed his education. But postponement could mean a missed opportunity, as we learned from Fleecy Griffin.

I had a boyfriend in school, James Young. He was nice. That was at Lincoln Academy, and he asked me to marry him. I wouldn't because I wanted to finish my education and all. He's dead now. William Douglas was my last boyfriend. I didn't have but two boyfriends. He was a nice gentleman...but he got sick and died. So that's that, so far.

We were not told how many of our teachers failed to marry because of plans to complete their education or take care of an ailing or aging parent, but we know that there were many of them, like Fleecy Griffin, who faced this dilemma and made the same decision.

Bill Williams added yet another reason for postponement. "My wife and I were childhood sweethearts. We met in grade school. After I came out of service (in World War II) we were married," he explained. The World Wars just as certainly moved up the wedding date for many couples like Edna and Bill Allison, Flake and Annie Messick, Bertha and John Sipes, Sr. (World War I), and Martha and John Sipes, Jr. (World War II).

The place chosen for the ceremony varied only slightly from couple to couple. Gladys King says that there were no church weddings during her time, and Bill Williams was "almost grown the first wedding (he) attended." Louise Dalton was married by a Justice of the Peace. Lillie May Christopher "slipped off and went to Mountain City, Tennessee, and just went to a magistrate's office and got married."

Clyde Tulbert remembers "one couple getting married up here at the edge of the woods at Windsor's Crossroads," but the Tulberts were married at home like so many others. Ida Tharpe was married in her home, also. "We had a good-sized living room, but by the time my family got in there....We didn't have anybody 'stand up' for us....It was more or less family."

Edna York gives the following account:

We were married at Preacher McSwain's at Harmony. The first wedding that I remember being in church, at our church, was James and Betty Parker. They thought they was slipping off, you know, so they wouldn't have a crowd, but the word got out and by the time they got there, we were there.

They always had to serenade them. They picked a time and gathered up at night to serenade them. Then when they married that night, they usually cooked a big supper and invited friends in.

Carl and Sue Cook had only the third wedding at Bethesda Presbyterian Church, and the church was 87 years old at that time. Their wedding was postponed because Carl's mother died when he was fifteen. As the oldest boy, he felt he had to wait until his five siblings finished school. Sue and Carl were married in 1934, by Walter E. Furr, their minister. "I've forgotten what we paid him; we weren't able to pay very much. But every year after that on our anniversary, we tried to do something for Mr. and Mrs. Furr. You know, as we went along and had a little more money," said Sue.

Daniel Clay Tolbert described the wedding day of his parents, Daniel Obrey Tolbert and Ollie Eugene Arthurs.

My mother was a beautiful woman, a beautiful bride. It was December 26 in 1903. On this day...there was a big wedding at what we called Grandpa Arthurs. Now Mama told us about that great occasion. She an' my daddy was married by a Methodist preacher there in the afternoon. An' she told me "All mornin' long...Mammy an' all my sisters were busy preparin' a great meal." And in that big dinin' room, they had two tables together. She said that they were covered up with food.

An' I said, "Mama, what were you doin'?" An' she just used one term. She said, "I was 'primpin'."

Dick and Vivian Cook had a similar account that included a complication that made the day even more memorable. Dick was 19 and Vivian was 17 when they were married at Vivian's home in Amity Hill on December 22, 1929. Vivian has the details, including a list of those attending, in an account written in their family Bible. A photo of the couple was taken at the home of Dick's Aunt Vern when they visited for a meal during the next week. They are pictured in their wedding attire standing in front of Vivian's father's 1928 or 1929 Dodge. Vivian tells the story:

That mornin' we got up an' it started snowin'...I went on an' got the cook ta cook the dinner an' put her in the kitchen. She worked and wouldn't let nobody in the kitchen. She said, "Git outta here! I don't want nobody around!" She took a great big ol' ham. I never will forget it. The crowd gathered...thirty-one people were there. Preacher

Young was to do the job because we didn't have a preacher at Bethesda. It was gittin' colder an' worse all the time. An' finally 4 o'clock came an' the preacher wadn' there. It was impassable 'bout. The ice pegs was big as posts! They jist froze so fast! We didn' think the preacher was gonna come, but ever'body else was there.

But he did come at 5 o'clock, and the ceremony was performed. A lot of 'em didn' stay fer supper because it was so late an' so cold. I thought I was a nervous wreck, and then the preacher was kindly upset too because it was gittin' so late an' he wadn' there. An' then all at once he dropped his fork. We just left the fork in the floor, an' I don' remember now what happened after that."

Interviewer: This note, "Scared half to death.?"

Yeah, that was me!



Dick and Vivian Christy Cook: December, 1929

The Page Beattys "went to the preacher's house over there on North Center Street and got married. The preacher was the one who was excited because he forgot to sign our marriage license! He's dead now."

"So you're not legally married?"

"No, after 50 years!"

Rose Huie Brown McCollum had yet another problem. She told us this:

There were no church weddings. I got married down there by Dr. Morris's. They had a parsonage back where that Baptist Church is there. First, we went to Statesville. Well, we couldn't get married there. We was too young. I was and he was too, but people had found it out...and they was all down there to see us, so he just got me by the arm and said, "Well, there's one at Harmony. We'll stop there. I didn't know his name. I still got the certificate. (Cleo and Will went to South Carolina in a horse and surry. Fanny and Ross went to Preacher Bentley over here.)

Not all marriages went smoothly. Rose readily admitted that she was too young and too ignorant to take on married life. Rose didn't know how and would not cook, and she wouldn't have company over. "Cleo would, and she learn't to milk. But I knew nothin'. I just didn't want to do nothin' about the house. (My husband's mother) learned me. She helped finish raisin' me."

And the economy of the times certainly did not make things any easier. The Beattys were married in 1939. They said, "We didn't have anything. I had a little ol' bay mare my daddy give me, a little ol' colt. I got her broke to work, and Grandpa give us a buggy, and that's what we rode in." In spite of obstacles, their marriage proved to be very strong and durable. The Beattys are approaching 57 years of marriage, Carl and Sue Cook have celebrated 62 years and Dick and Vivian, 67 years together.

In spite of the youthfulness of some couples, most family members were supportive. Most, but not all. This story came to us through Harry Brawley from a cousin of his wife, Grace Mills. In an earlier year, about 1890, George R. Mills had grave concern when daughter Emma, a "very young" girl, ran away with Will Watson and was married. He admonished Will upon their return to his house never to set foot on his property again. To this, Will replied, "That's fine with me. I already have the only thing you own that's worth a damn!"

We also have heard that Kate Sigmon's father objected so strongly to her choice in a mate that she did not come home for three months after she got married. She tells part of her story here:

I never had a date, no Sir. Papa wouldn't let us date nobody. We went down to the river, and Henry'd be there. We stood there an' talked, an' he'd stay a while, but I didn' say nothin' about it....I got married over at the river...at Aunt Mag's. I was workin' down there, an' I run off an' got married.

Kate's story had a very happy ending, but not every marriage succeeded. Vera Fleming Saddler met her first husband at a prayer meeting and was married at age 20. She learned after they were married that he drank, and he never helped to support her or their son after their separation. She remained single a very long time before remarrying. Yet, upon the death of her second husband, she took back her first husband who was ill and nursed him until he died.

Walter Cook, Gaynell's uncle, was described by Ralph Cook as "a rounder." We know that he drank. He died from blows to the head, possibly with a poker from the fireplace. The sherriff sat on their front porch until he died. There has been considerable speculation about the circumstances of his demise, but Ralph tells us that before he fell asleep Walter had beaten his wife and her mother with a buggy whip.

Those we heard from had much in common and related similar experiences. Parents were strict, courtships were usually short, and marriages generally survived in spite of hardships. The reasons are obvious. Courtships were short because the couples usually already knew each other well. Marriages were long, probably for the same reason. "That's the way it was," said Bill Williams.

A final note may be of interest. Because people, for good reason, married those whom they knew and families were large and remained close, people knew a large number of relatives. People often married distant kin, and relationships became complicated. It was common for siblings in one family to marry siblings in another family, creating sets of double first cousins. Dick Cook had double first cousins, and Dick and his brother Ross married Christy sisters, creating a second generation of double first cousins. We were not too surprised to find this announcement in the *Record and Landmark*, June 19, 1882;

Robey Tucker of Sharpesburg Township has four sons and J. S. McLelland, of the aforesaid township, has four daughters. Three of the said sons have married three of the said daughters, and the others they have fertilized to have them large enough to marry by fall.

To complicate things still further, frequently when a spouse died, as happened all too often, the one left behind would marry a relative of the departed loved one. Some years after the death of her first husband, Leona Patterson married his brother Eugene. They were carrying on a local tradition. Harry Brawley's grandfather, Robert Leroy Brawley, married first cousins, Mary Bost and later Malinda Hoover. Harry's parents, John and Mattie, had a large wedding. They each had four attendants.



John Harvey Brawley and his groomsmen: 1901

John is on right end of 2nd row. First two on front row are Flemings. Charlie is in center.



**John and Mattie Fleming Brawley
1901**



Alice Goodman and Ira Hefner: 1928



**Walter and Mamie Winford Hooper
1947**

Mamie is the daughter of Olena Winford, interviewee,
and the mother of Gail Hooper, interviewer.

CHILDHOOD

"Those were glorious days!"

Clay Tolbert

For the children who grew up during the first half of the twentieth century in Iredell County there were many "golden moments." Yet, they are forced to look back on their youth with more than a degree of ambivalence, as those years for them were also filled with pain and hardships. For instance, when children were very small, both they and their parents lived very restrictive lives. Imagine life with two working parents and no daycare and you have a glimmer of an idea. Add to this equation the necessity of making a living in the cotton field or tobacco patch, and the picture becomes clearer. The Tulberts told their story very graphically.

You didn't have babysitters. You took your children with you to the fields. You took a box or a crate and set them under a shade tree and got out there and picked cotton or things like that. I mean you stayed in sight of them.

Wasn't no babysitters, Honey. I remember...my mother was chopping cotton right up here at Windsor's Crossroads, and I was too small to chop that cotton. I think Levi (Clyde's younger brother) was probably a year old. My mother had him in a box, you know, a wooden one. It was about that big square, and about that high. He was big enough that he could pull up, you know, and she took that out there, and she put Levi in there and she took a hoe handle and marked a circle around it and dared me to get out of it.

Well, Mr. Stephen Denny sat his house right below Windsor Crossroads, and Jessie and Paul and all was out in the field with my dad, and they couldn't figure out what that fire was about, and so they started running to see where it was as they knew it was somebody's house burning down, and I got out of that circle to see what I could see. And Mama seen me. And she came out of there and I got back ...there wasn't a...where's Levi...I want you to know I got warmed up at that time!

Mary Douglas Warren was more fortunate than most children. Her family solved the problem of entertaining her and keeping watch at the same time by building her a playhouse.

My daddy had one for my two older sisters, who were right much older than I, and then it had crumbled down by the time I came along next to the end of nine children, and he built another one for me and put wooden furniture in there, a bed, a cabinet, and a wooden chair, and everything that I needed. I believe we used the organ stool for a tea table, and my mother would come out there and have tea with me. And the

neighborhood children played there all the time. It was the playground. When Douglas Anne (Mary's daughter) came along, it was time for another playhouse, so her Grandfather Warren furnished the material for her to have this one right out here in the back. And it was the neighborhood playground. We knew where they were and they could have fun and it was safe. My daddy loved children, and they loved him. I have a degree in early childhood education, and my daddy taught me far more than I ever learned about that in school.

Lou Ray Cartwright was an only child, and she had to become very inventive. It was a bonus sometimes that she lived in a very large house. Her favorite room for play was the "junk room." And the house had a lot of steps.

I played a lot on the steps. I can remember playing church. I wish today that I had as much imagination as I did in my early life...imaginary playmates that I had and things like that. Everything had to be imaginary back then. I played school a lot.

Lou Ray did have cousins who lived less than a half-mile away, but they did not visit a great deal. Her grandmother lived with them, and often Lou Ray went there to be with her.

Grandma told us a lot of stories. I can remember so vividly that she would gather the four of us (Lou Ray and her three cousins) around, and we would beg her, "Will you read to us?" My Grandmother Mullis read the Bible to me, and she was a very devout Christian. I guess that also helped me because she talked to me a lot when I was just a small child about what a Christian was. She always went to church. My Grandmother Cartwright did also. They both did, but Grandmother Mullis was the one who really instilled. She encouraged me to read and memorize the Bible.

Mary Warren also loved to listen to the stories told by her grandfather, one of the best storytellers that she ever listened to, she says. This skill he, no doubt, put to good use during his years as a teacher. Both Mary and Lou Ray, who also loved to listen to stories, became teachers. Sadie Martin, another who devoted her life to teaching, spent most of her public school years in a first grade classroom. Like Lou Ray, she often pretended that she was teaching school when she was a child, particularly if her brothers would cooperate, which they rarely did. Also, she would get small dishes and her brothers would get an old plow or something and they would play house-keeping. "We improvised a lot," said Sadie.

Even routine activities could be turned into fun with a little imagination, as Amelia Kennedy illustrates.

They used to have this great big tub. I remember they mixed seed in it in the springtime, but they bathed us in it in the winter. He would put all of us in that tub. (We had modesty, but we didn't know any better.) We were just children, and Dad would help bathe us right in that big tub in front of the fireplace in the kitchen, and I remember that he always helped to dress us and see that we were (warm).

One of the special things was a snow we had...ice everywhere out here...but at home in those deep snows we used to have when we were growing up...there were deep snows. We had a triangular sled-like thing he made to open up paths to the house and all, and, after he'd get all that done, then he'd let us get on there and take us to Houstonville and get us some candy. We went all the way to Houstonville. No traffic, you know!

When Harry Brawley was asked what he did for fun in his youth, he answered simply, "Visiting!" Rose McCollum knew how much fun that could be.

Mama would sew every night. We'd go to sleep with her sewing. And after our father died, our Aunt Swanee and S_____ Jurney would buy cloth and make us clothes. And Aunt Marie Sloan did (also). You'd go stay a week. You'd have enough cloth to make a dress, and I'd play with Jewel. It'd be every evenin' when she wasn't doin' nothin' else, you know. You'd stay a week to get that dress made. Of course, they didn't charge nothin' and didn't charge nothin' for your board. So there you went.

There was a lot of visitin' back in those days. I mean, people just went and stayed for a while. We'd stay all night with people, me and my older sister Cleo, and Addie and Annie come an' stayed with us. I know they came one night, and of course, back then you didn' have no diddle daddles to eat or nothin', and we got hungry about eleven, and we decided we'd go to the garden and take the washpan and get us a pan of tamaters. And we washed them 'maters and we eat tamaters. They tasted good! We wasn't used to them. Get ya a biscuit and some onion or something. They tasted real good.

Of course, one time we decided we'd eat some sugar while Mama was gone, and so we put us a little pot on the table, and all got around the table and we would lick it up with our tongue. See, you had no candy, I remember that. And we loved batter of a cake, so one time when she was gone to see Miss Ivy York, we decided that we'd make that all up, and we'd get enough of that. But we got too much flavoring in it, and we buried the rest of it in the woodpile under the chips and stuff.

The creeks provided a gathering place and offered a variety of interesting things to do. A.L. Patterson talked about that.

Everyday we went in Hunting Creek, I did and my brother. Sometimes my daddy would go with us. Rain would come, and we'd go seining. (A seine is a net to catch fish in).

Lex Sloan loved to go down to the creek for a swim in the summertime. He remembers playing at the creek. In the wintertime, they would "grow a walnut tree to get out of a Sunday meeting. We'd crack walnuts! In the spring, we'd grow cherry trees. We didn't have no way of traveling back then. We didn't have a car. We just played around the creek."

Beulah Myers Glass describes eloquently her childhood playground:

There are some beautiful rocks down below my home. We used to slide. There's a place as far as across this room, I guess, where the water run over them. The water was deep out there for kids. We used to go down there for our baths in the summertime. All of us. The boys went and then the girls would go. And that was right there just below the house a short ways from the bridge. The rock wall was about a quarter of a mile from there. It went across the bridge.

I played with my brother more than I did with my sister because I was closer to him. He was quite a huntsman all his life, from a kid on. He loved to fish, even if it was a little creek, but I think there's more water then than there is now. There was another creek from Dinah Mitchell's that come down and met below my Uncle John's.

My dad grew corn in the field down there a lot. Below the rock wall was a big meadow, and he cut the grass for hay to feed his cattle in the wintertime. And we used to play all up and down there and come up the other creek at the Mitchell's. The cows were not trained to come up, and we had to go after 'em. I've been all over those hills many a time. And below the rock wall was a piece of woods where the kid was put, and below there was another field next to Uncle John. Dad used to grow wheat down there. In the summer, my father had it all fenced in and we picked the meadow up there. There was a little stream of water that come from up there...and Marvin and me would play below the rock wall. We'd just spend the day up there. He was a great one after fishin' for turtles.

Some of the games that children played and the places that they played them were less than safe. Lillie Christopher and Sarah Reeves would go down to the railroad and play, for instance. Sarah loved this so much that she went every day, even though she knew that she would be punished if anyone caught her.

The long distances that separated neighbors created other problems, particularly when events went on into the evening. Rose McCollum told us about two of her favorite activities.

I well remember pound suppers we used to have. Let's see, we made the cakes, the women did, and we just took the table out there, and parents would come with their children. The men were supposed to bring candy. Candy and cake and pickles is all I remember we ever had. I know we didn't have nothin'

to drink unless we wanted some water. And we'd play Tap and things like that. They'd have it first at one house and another so we could all be together. I know'd Sloan and Purdue walked home 'fore dark got there. They walked home with us 'cause they had to cross the branch, you know, so they wouldn't be by themselves.

We'd have cotton pickins 'cause everybody had cotton. And Mama had aprons for me and Cleo made out of factory cloth. The Purdues would walk and come to our house and walk with me and Cleo and Hoyt. And when we got the cotton picked we'd get out if it's a light night or anything, and we'd play Tap. Run into a clothesline one night, I did, hooked it right under my chin. I didn't see it. Tried to get out of the way so they wouldn't catch me.

And children left alone for any reason could make much mischief. We have heard about this already from Rose McCollum, who continues.

We'd phone on the "grapevine phone" (party-line phone). It was a ring, ring, ring. You had to ring so many rings. I remember when our mama would leave; she'd go visit a lady that lived in the neighborhood, and just leave us children there. Well, we learn't ta get in there and ring the phone. And we'd put our hand up on there and it'd shock ye 'n run from hand to hand. We'd all just die laughin'. We coulda got hurt, I guess, but she didn't know it.

Thomas Trivette tells this story about his older siblings.

My mother was sick and she was in the bed. My two brothers and sister were much older than me. Ethel was fourteen when I was born, and she was nearest to me in age. Anyway, they decided they was gonna have chicken. They killed the chicken and dressed it and put it on ta cook. Mama said she heard 'em a laughin' in the kitchen. She hollered an' asked 'em what was goin' on. One of 'em come in there with the chicken on the plate with its feet a'stickin' up and it still had the toenails on. Mama probably felt like the Mom on TV when she saw that trouble the family was havin', and she decided it was time ta get well!

Page Beatty's idea of fun was more than a little risky. For fun, he says, he would possum hunt, rabbit hunt, or find a yellow jacket nest.

Us boys 'd find one through the week, we'd get us a brush on Sunday 'n we'd see who could whip 'em out 'n stay the longest. That's the truth! Or who could climb the biggest tree.

Farm animals could provide children with both fun and companionship. Amelia Kennedy had a pet lamb when the mother would abandon one, and

her father helped the children ride ponies. We heard from Maggie Phifer about her pet animals.

Kids didn't get toys like they do now. I would have a pet chicken or a pet cow or pig. I remember I raised a lot of chickens. I'd just grab one that I called pet. I'd catch it and put his head under...and that put them to sleep. They lay there and looked dead. That's what you call putting a chicken to sleep.

But animals were often a threat to a child at play or at work. It was the task of some children to tend the animals. Frequently they escaped and wandered into a play area, often chasing a child.

Harry Brawley was one of those whose job it was to "graze the cow." He remembered that one day the cow got away and got hung on the barbed wire fence. He and his father had to push the animal over the fence, a risky task for a small child. Amy Lou Mitchell's sister used to ride the horse as they came in from work. One time she was riding the horse, and it ran into the stable, and she had to duck to prevent being hurt.

Dick Cook's mother died in childbirth leaving his father the single parent of seven children. His father spent much of his time in the fields, and there were times they were left to amuse themselves. Dick was more venturesome than most children. One of his tricks was to ride two horses at once, standing with a foot on the back of each:

Horses tied together like. I don't know how in the devil we kep' from gittin' killed. If that ol' horse had a made a stumble, we'd a got it!

And fire posed a serious problem for everyone, children in particular. It was a necessity for cooking and for warmth, and many homes had an open fireplace and kerosene lamps for light. Amy Lou Mitchell's brother Gurney had a tragic injury that led eventually to his death. He was fifteen months old when he fell into the fire and burned his head. He was about nine years old before it ever healed, and he wore a little cap her mother made him for protection.

Elsie Patterson Turner and sister Leona Patterson Dalton told an even more tragic story of a sister who was burned to death:

We just worked all the time. (Rainy) days like this, we'd be glad to see them. We'd crawl up under the bed and go to sleep. They tell me there was fourteen of us, but there was only five of us lived to get grown. I think my oldest sister got burned to death. We were living over there across Hunting Creek. It had to be in the winter-

time. This white neighbor came by, and she had given us some apples. Mama was somewhere, and I guess Daddy was somewhere working at the steelhouse or sawmill or something. They had a fire in the fireplace; they didn't have no heater. She had put the apples down to the fire to warm them in front of the fire. They said she (sister) had on this little flannel dress or something, and it ketched a'fire. I think Mama said she was down at the spring washing or at the branch. Pearl and Lyle wasn't old enough to know what to do. It was trying to run to get to Mama, and they said it swallowed the blaze about the time it got to Mama. Mama just picked it up in her arms and wrapped her apron around it and put the blaze out.

In the absence of toys, there were still many games that children could play safely. At home, they played games of running and chasing and hide and seek. Gladys King says they also played with marbles and jumped rope. Russell Cowan describes "handkerchief snatchin." He explains, "We 'd put a handkerchief, or a rag, (there wasn't no handkerchiefs) on a peg and see which one could get there first and pick it up. " They also had dominoes and checkers, he adds, and marbles "that we used to shoot a little bit." And many inventive children created toys from objects around them. A grapevine could easily be turned into a hoop, "and you could turn in that."

When schooldays arrived, still more games requiring larger numbers were possible. Edna York lists a few of them: "Baseball, Tap, Tag, Snakecat (that took four)." There was also Bullpen:

They got this big round ring, and everyone that wanted to play got inside of that. One was on the outside with the ball, and he tried to hit one inside, and they are always trying to get away. If he hit one, he had to come out and take that one's place.

Amy Lou Mitchell used to play "Fox and Goose," "Ring around the Roses," "Bullpen," and baseball. "We used to enjoy it. We called it "Round Bat." Someone else mentioned hopscotch.

Millard Knight emphasized that "We didn't have nobody to play with outside the schoolhouse. He described the popular "Kitty Wants a Corner." "You stand on your base and say, 'Kitty wants a corner.' You try to get across to another base and keep running in circles, you know. (For Stray Cat) four plays that game. One stands here and one stands there. One behind each one and they throw the ball, and they knock it and if they miss it, the one behind grabs it up and throws it back. It's like playing ball, you know, except four can play it."

Jessie Lee Troutman well remembers playing ball in the field in front of the Ostwalt School. There were, of course, other games.

We would go to the woodshed, the girls would. They had wood piled up in the woodshed. We'd go in there and make a bed, put a log for chairs, and play babydoll for a while.

We usually played in what we wore (to school), but one time (playing softball) we slipped out and put our dresses down in our bloomers. (They were black or navy or brown with some real bright elastic around the leg.) And I'm sure a teacher wasn't with us or she wouldn't've let us do that. That wasn't ladylike. My mother wouldn't've liked it either!

Clyde Tulbert said that "We just played town ball mostly or mumbly-peg." In town ball, he explained, you had four bases and whoever knocked the ball the farthest got a home run. Mumblypeg was played as follows:

You had a stick and hit the peg...like a peg you sat tobacco with, you know, and wherever it flew then you could do it again. If you got to the post before the others did, you won.

Bertha Westmoreland mentioned several other games and elaborated on a few of them. She also hints at her own ability as an athlete, which she passed on to some of her family. Tyrone Westmoreland of South Iredell High School, who was an all-state football player at South Iredell, is an outstanding example.

We'd play "Gone around da Mullabe'y Boosh" and "Little Sally Walker." Dat's a game that you form a line around ya an' you be in da middle an' they tell you whoever you love the best an' you'd go to whoever you love the best. We'd play pickin' up patata an' see who could cay' (carry) it on dat spoon an' drop it in a bucket. An' see who could eat a piece a pie da quickest...a half a pie. An' Lawd, patata pie'd choke (you). You'd git ta racin' eatin' 'tata pie. My mama'd always fix a big ol' juicy egg custahd. Whateva kind a pie you bring. A *pie*, you got two crustes ta swalla, an' egg custahd, you jus' swalla 'at bottom cruss.

We used ta git in sacks, put dat sack up around ya, about six or three from dis school an' three from our school. South Iredell'd win. An' den jumpin' taahs (tires) you walkin' on 'em taahs. Two rows. We played a lot a little games. Only thang our teachers wouldn't 'low us ta do wuz play cahds. We didn't play no (cards).

An' then we'd run track. Another school from another county'd come on a Fridays, you know, an' the one that could make it up yonder to that mark would win the game. It was so many feet you run, an' I always generally run it.

Interviewer: Were you good?

I was good. Yeah, I was good! I'd take my shoes off an' shoooooo! And then we played ball mos' a da time. Da good girls! We didn't play dis (gestures throwing underhanded) softball. We played baseball. Never went nowheres an' come back beat at South Iredell.

Barney Dalton enjoyed competitive games, and he was also a gifted athlete. He described some games and activities in detail.

A lot of times we played a game where you would put down potatoes. There would be so many feet, maybe twenty feet a fellow. You'd put down potatoes, and we'd have a line across here. We'd all stand on this line---at least three of us. The potatoes would be on that line out yonder twenty feet or more away from us. We'd all get ready to go, and we'd see which one could go out yonder and pick a potato and get back quickest. That would be the winner.

Then, we used to run about a good fifty yards to see who could run the fastest. The line would be out yonder, and we'd all get set and see which one, when they said "Go", could get out there and run the fifty yards the quickest. We had a line out there, you know, to see which one could cross that line the quickest. I won it. I could run. Yeah, I could. Houstonville and Piney Grove used to have contests. (Do you know where Nelson Gaither's store is? Well, Piney Grove is in back of that, I guess about a mile and a half or two miles.) They would bring their school up there in the time of year called May Day. You would have a contest, and we'd match 'em and see which one could outrun the others at fifty yards. I remember a boy I used to run against. His name was Davey Lee Sharpe's brother Rueben Sharpe. Me and him would just about tie up, just about tit-for-tat. That's the way that was.

Then we used to have spelling contests to see which one was the best speller from this school. Piney Grove, they'd come and they'd match us. I never did win that. I knew it, but it just wouldn't come to me till it got by.

A.L. Patterson described some unusual games.

I can remember one. It was a board. You would flip this thing like pool, and it slid on it. You would flip it with your fingers, and it had four pockets like a pool room. Also, we had a ouija board, and you could do your ouija board readings with it.

Then, we had toys. One was called a sandmill. You would fill this hopper with sand, and this little cart would come up with a weight and would trip, and sand would run out of this hopper. When it became heavier than the weight, it would go down to the bottom of the track and dump the sand. When it dumped the sand, the weight would pull it back up. I wondered why they ever went out of fad. It was a nice toy.

Then you had your electric trains, which ran with batteries. You had your erector set to make things with. They were like channel iron with holes in it or straight pieces of metal that you would put together with screws and nuts, and you could make things like derricks and stuff like that.

There were a lot of toys. One toy we had that I still have (I forget the name of it). You would put a sheet of paper over a set of pins. On one side, it would be questions, and on the other side, it would be answers. So, if you wanted an answer to a certain question, you'd put an electrode on it and touch the terminals on the answer side, and when it buzzed, that was the answer. It was an interesting game.

When we got older, we played cards, setback, Rook, and things like that. Then when we got a little older, we could play Poker. Then we started listening to the radio.

On the subject of toys, several girls mentioned dolls. For boys, the toy of choice frequently had wheels. Tricycles were extremely popular. Frequently in photographs, children were seen showing them off. They were often captured on film with other prized toys, as well, much the same way that their parents might display a new car. The latter was common, even as background for a group photo. Wagons were also popular toys, as well. Barney Dalton became proficient in the art of wagonmaking.

We'd make us an old wagon. We'd take us a large tree, a good-size tree, and take the crosscut saw and slice off a wheel about that wide, you know. We'd cut all four, and then we'd take a boring augur at the center, take a piece and put an axle in there, and we'd make us a wagon. We'd go down the top of the hill. We put us two strings on there to guide it with, and we'd roll down the hill. Then when we got down to the bottom of the hill, we'd pull it back up to the top of the hill. There wasn't no cars or nothing to interfere. We'd get there on top of the hill and have the string tied to the axle on each side. It might be what you called a steering wheel, you know, to guide it with. Down the hill we'd go! We was all happy! All happy!

Harry Brawley was extremely fond of his wagon, but his all-time favorite toy had to be his bicycle. We have saved his description of that unusual, well-worn vehicle, as well as his account of how he came to possess it and the accident which cost him more than his pride, for the chapter entitled "Other Recollections."

Barney Dalton needed no bicycle. He found better things to ride.

We used to ride our horses and mules. Mom and Dad didn't mind, so sometimes our friends would come to see us on Sunday. Their mom and dad would let them ride their horses and come over to see us, you know. We'd get our mom and dad to let us ride our mules and horses. After we got out of sight, we'd race. We had a big time riding them horses and mules. They had horses, and we had mules. Of course, the horses could outrun the mules!

Clearly, Barney did not win as many of those races as he did the track events he excelled in at school.

Yet another activity had a timeless appeal, at least for John Henry Redmond. He relived some of those moments for us.

Pitchin' horseshoes, that was one of 'em I really enjoyed. I tell my kids I didn't know what professional was. There was no such thing back then, but I was a pro-

fessional at pitchin' horseshoes. It got to where we pitched every day after work, dinnertime, and after we quit if we weren't too tired. We even pitched some on Sundays (games on Sunday were seldom heard of). I could ring that shoe every time I threw a shoe. I would ring!

But it was baseball that reigned supreme! Russell Cowan played it "just for fun."

Oh, yeah! We played ball. We'd take a bath on Saturday and put on our little clean britches, and we'd go play ball with the neighbors, or they'd come to our house and play ball. That was about the biggest thing. We played softball and baseball. We had a place there in the field next to the barn somewhere.

The idea of taking a bath and putting on clean clothes to play ball might seem unusual, but then it *was* Saturday, and Russell was taught the importance of keeping his clothes clean, no matter what their quality, he emphasized.

A.L. Patterson gives us a better idea of the role that baseball played in the community. This was his reply to the interviewer's question about the center of life in his community.

There was no center. You had churches. You didn't have anything but what you provided yourself. You had baseball in the summertime and went to school in the wintertime. All the schools had baseball diamonds; some churches had baseball diamonds. In the summertime, Paul Joyner organized the Houstonville-Joyner's team, and every Saturday, we'd go play somewhere down at Center, near Mocksville, over at Bethel in Yadkin County, up at Houstonville, Harmony, and places like that. Every Saturday we had a ballgame. It wasn't softball. In those days, you never heard of softball. We'd play baseball.

And Ralph Messick added this comment.

Oh, yes, we had a little ball team. They didn't know basketball, just plain baseball. We had a little team and went over and played Joyner's High School. There was a colored school right down the road here, and we'd go down and play them once in a while. That's about all there was to it that I know of.

Sarah Turlington remembers very well what it was like growing up in Mooresville. As she was born in 1907, she emphasizes that there were no movies. She does not even remember when she went to her first movie, but she had plenty to do, just the same.

I had loads of dolls, and I had a cat. I had paper dolls. We played Carums and

lots of games like that. Cards weren't played. (They were a) *sin!* I read a lot. I climbed to the top of the tree to read my book so nobody knew where I was. We had a tennis court in our yard. I played tennis, but we played winners, and I sat out most of the time because I didn't win. I had chickens. I had a garden. Everything was in the back---the tennis court, the chickens, the garden.

And I went skating, and I rode a scooter and a bicycle. There were a few paved sidewalks when I first remember.

In the summertime, everybody had to rest in the afternoon whether you wanted to rest or not. You rested. In hot weather, they closed all the blinds. You didn't open the blinds until the sun went down to keep the house as cool as possible, and you had to rest.

There was a swimming pool, Brown's swimming pool. We would ride our bicycles. Then there was a swimming pool in the north end of town. It was near 801.

After school, we used to play paper chase, chalk trail. You ran, you'd climb fences or go under fences, and climb barns.

Interviewer: You used your imagination!

And your legs. My best friend lived on McLelland Avenue. There was an alley called Peach Street between West Center and McLelland. Then some people came along and closed it. But when we were growing up, my best friend and I would walk home from school and up and down that alley many times in the afternoon.

I had a good friend, Virginia Boyd, who lived over there (by Eastern Heights) and Sarah Brawley, who lived near there. We would go down to almost where Brian Center is now. There was a stream, and we would get peanuts that were being dug up, and we had a tin can that we filled with water, and we'd boil peanuts, and we'd swing on grapevine swings and eat our peanuts. Somebody over there had a little jenny mule, and we'd get about five of us on that poor little mule, and somebody would slide off. Mary Moore Deaton was one of my friends who lived over there. That was about my world, from Eastern Heights to where I lived on McLelland Avenue.

As I remember, there was a candy kitchen. A Mr. Patterson made fudge and things like that that drove me crazy when I went by. I loved candy! Next to that, was a flour mill. I loved Mr. Ed Brawley, who lived across the street. He used to let me slide down the flour mill on the grain.

There was a man named Uncle Martin Campbell, a black man. He drove a wagon, and he would sing up and down the street, driving the wagon. We called him Uncle Martin. He would sing "It's me, it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer." I remember Uncle Remus Phifer who was on the ice wagon. He was just so nice. He would let us plague him by standing on the back of the wagon and eating his ice. Then on Saturday afternoon, I would take my little wagon and go to Johnson's and get more ice. I was the only kid on the block that had a wagon, so I pulled a lot of ice for a lot of people.

Well, it was a fun place to live!

It is obvious that life for a child in Mooresville was very different from life in rural communities in the early 1900's, and yet Sarah declares that Mooresville was itself rural when her parents moved there before she was

born. Sam Price was born in 1929. When he grew up in Mooresville, there were movies, at least. He also had a few more toys.

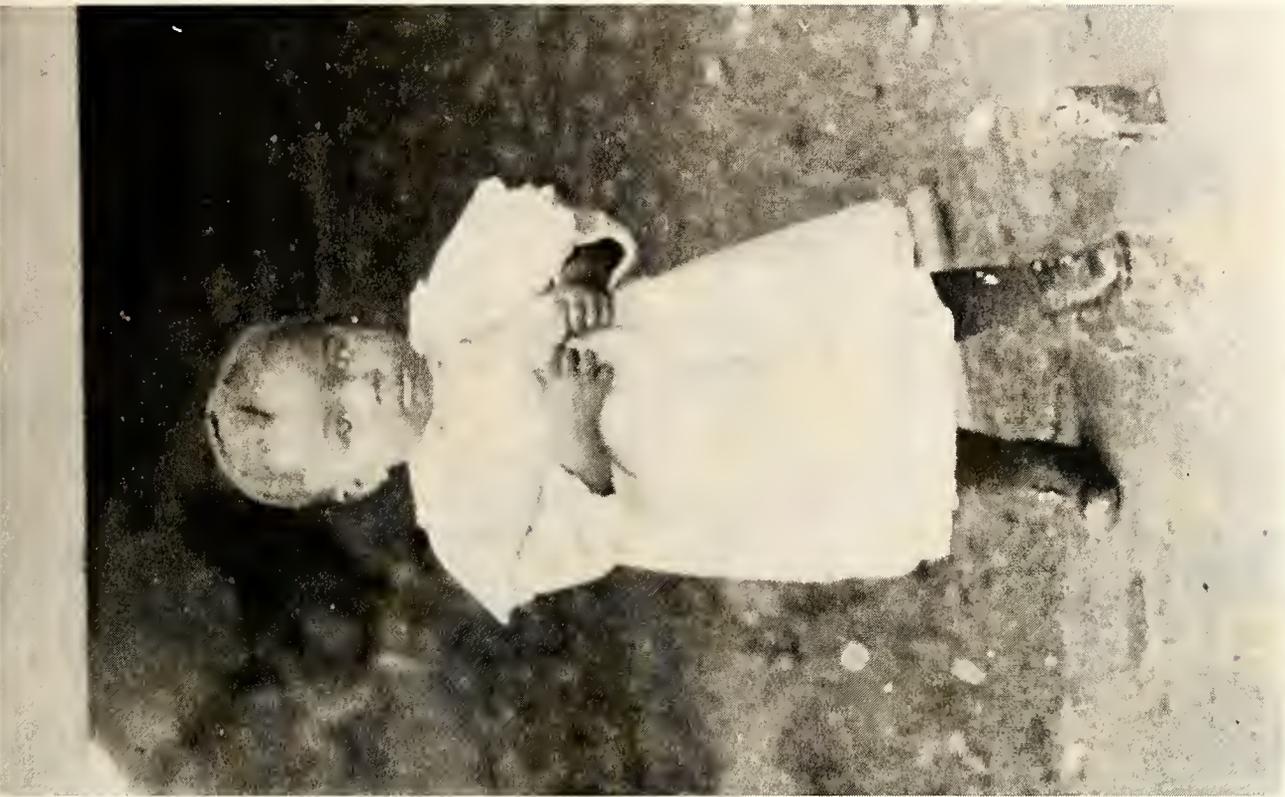
I liked to play with little cars when I was much younger. But when I got my little cars and the little roads made, I didn't want to stay there. I didn't want to play cars anymore once I had the roads built, the tunnels, and the little houses they were supposed to go to. That made it boring for me after that.

Oh, my gracious, I had a lot of fun in my life. I liked to swim. I liked to play baseball in the backyard. It was strictly backyard baseball, the old country style.

Actually, I didn't know there was such a thing as a vacation and travel for us, for quite a while. I think it was probably the latter part of the thirties that we decided to take a car and go visit a friend of my mother's that had moved to Pennsylvania. That was a very lengthy trip, it seemed like. It was a very tiring trip. We had to stop on the way up there to spend the night somewhere, and that was very difficult in those days. You'd have to go by a house in the city. Most of the roads went through the city anyway, and you would see a sign out front "Tourist Home". We would get a room for the night there. They were very nice to us. Usually, they'd have us a little breakfast in the morning. But I don't remember more than one or two trips like that in my childhood at all.

In the forties, we did go to the beach. It was just before World War II. We would go down to the beach maybe for a week, and we would probably go in one car. I don't see how we all got in that car, but we weren't very large; we were all very thin. We had a little trailer where we hooked on our baggage. Food, we would take down there---even live chickens that we'd eat when we got down there. These were very happy days though. I had a job working at Miller Drug Company, I could not go down for a whole week. I would have to go down on a bus, and that took all day long to go to the beach on a bus. Those were happy times in my life!

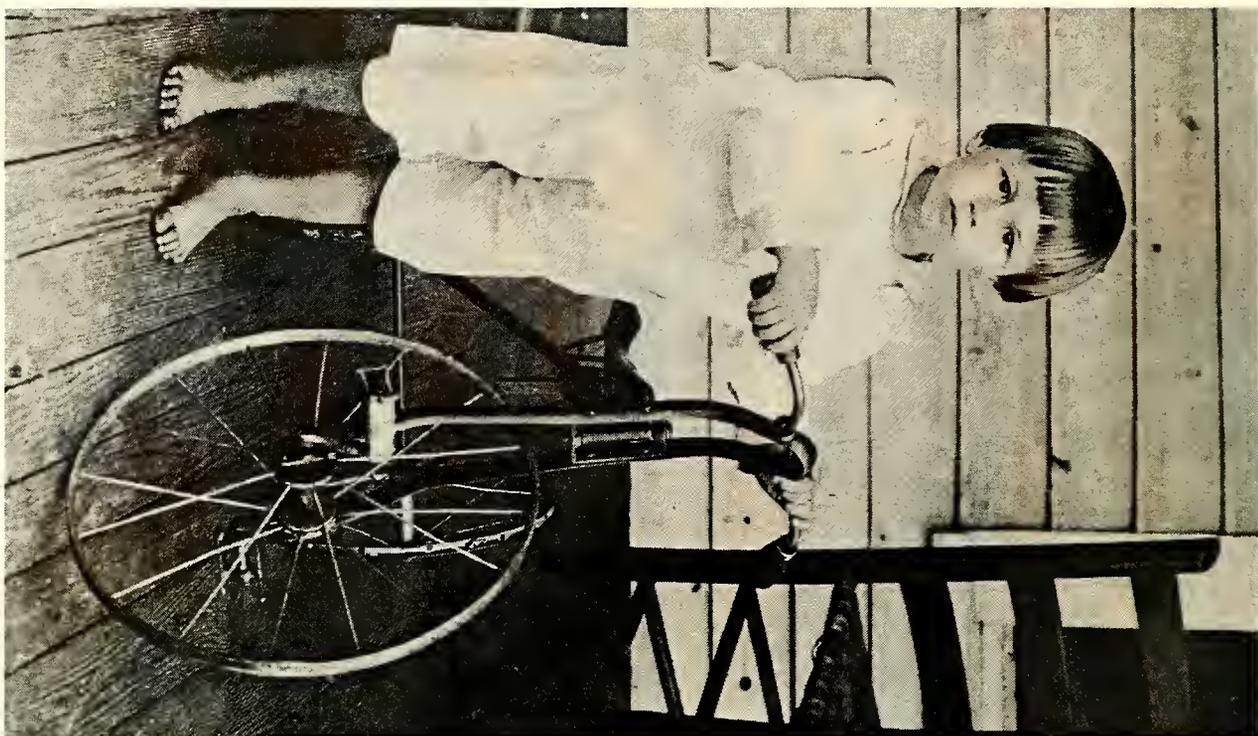
Those who spent their childhood in Iredell County during the first half of this century, for the most part, have told us that these were happy years. Where there was little money available, invention took over. Creative children had no trouble making their own fun, even when there was no one else to play with. If there were hazards in the making, there was a bonus in the physical exercise, the problem-solving challenges, and the social skills that these activities promoted.



A relative of Elmer Phifer



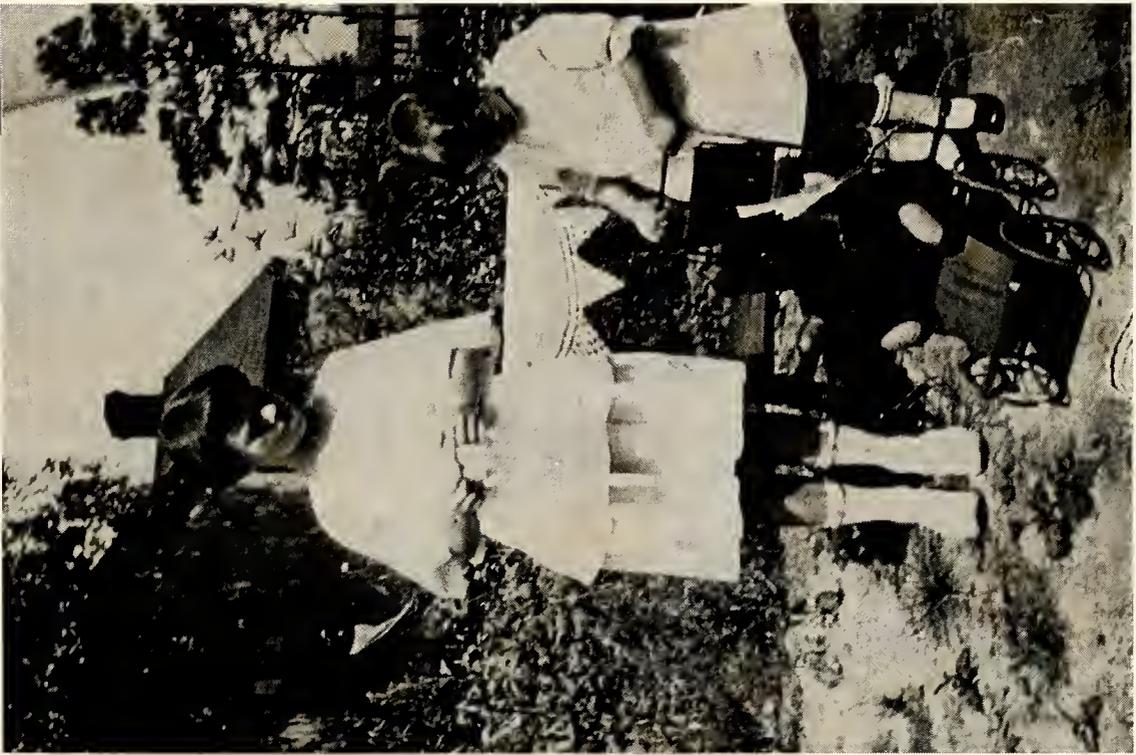
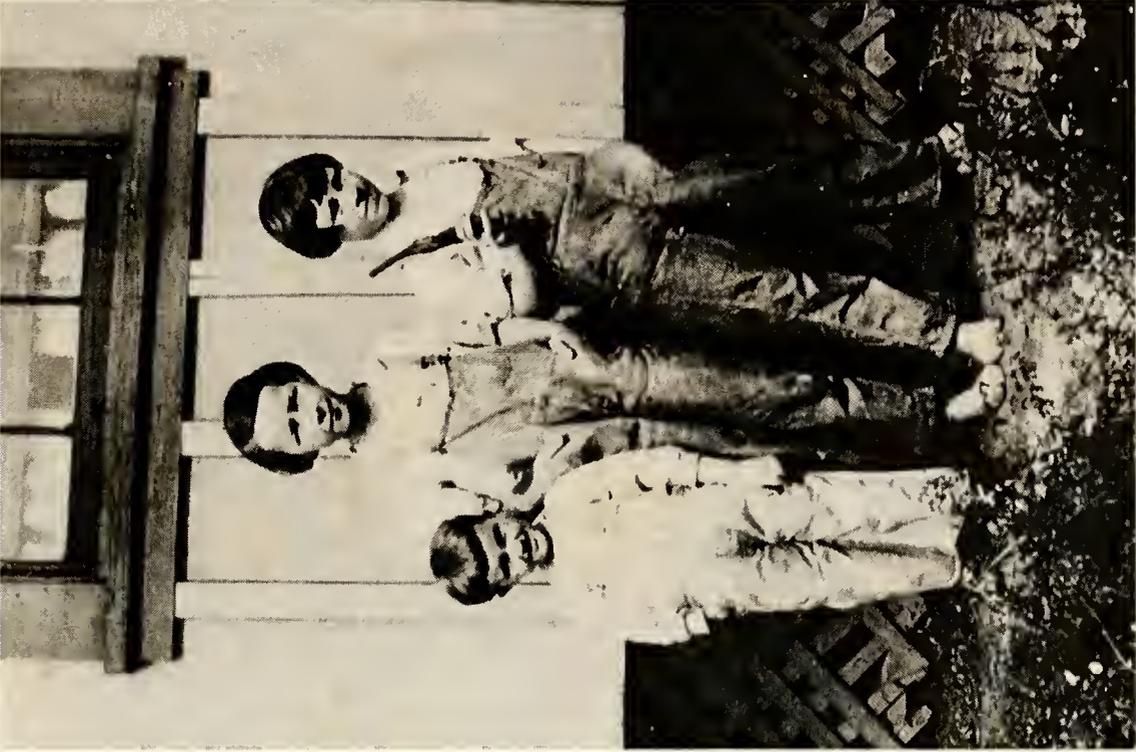
Elmer Phifer (1914-1977)
Son of Dillard Phifer



Bill Watson: 1917



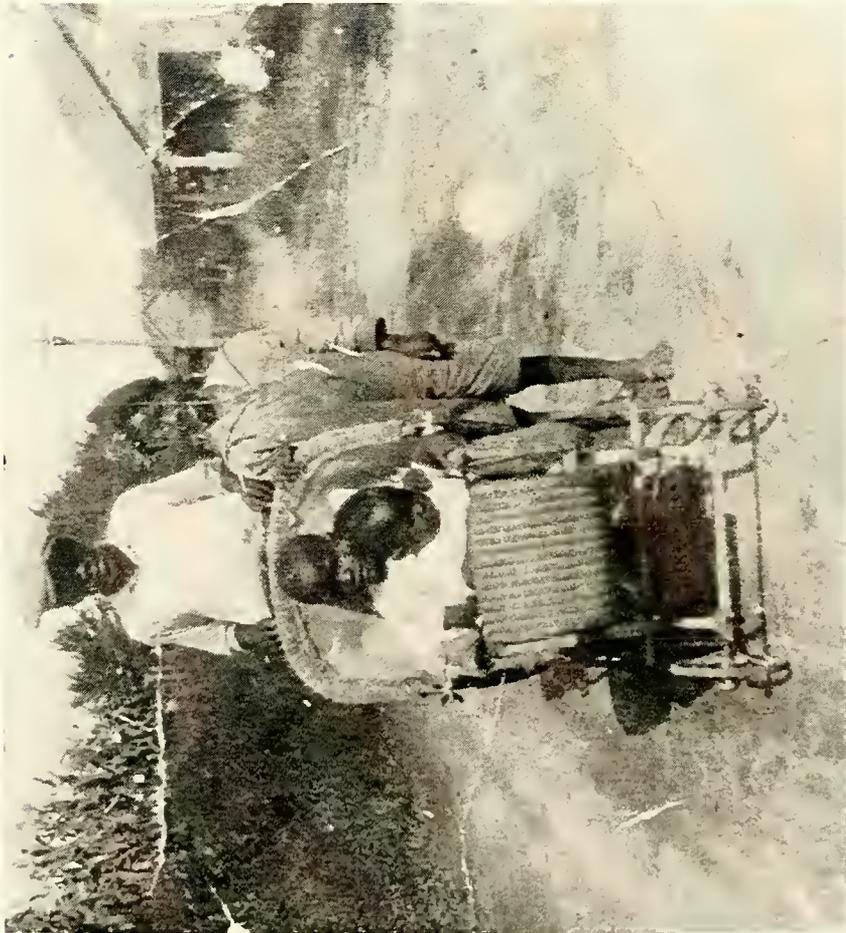
George Frank Watson: 1919



These sisters are equally comfortable on a Sunday stroll or in a weekday shoot out.



Cortez and Jackie Spann and Eddie Sloan
Statesville: 1930's



Dillard Phifer and Grandsons: 1937
The Phifers on Kelly Street in Mooresville.

Morality and Discipline

"You kids don't know nothin'."

Maggie Phifer

The community adhered to the belief that the parents' primary responsibility was to teach their children the value of initiative and hard work. The parents themselves took to heart the admonition of the old hymn, "Work for the Night Is Coming," and children were taught to live by their example.

Clyde Tulbert put it succinctly once again when he was asked, "What did most boys do? How did you know what line of work to go into?"

"Farm," he answered.

"Did anyone help you get started farming? Like they have extension agents?"

"No. Your parents were your extension agents!"

Olena Winford was crystal clear on the role of work in developing character, as she described her experience in taking care of the Shinn children while their parents worked in the mill. She made her point this way:

Calvin, June, Francis, they'd come over here an' stay with me. I'd be workin' in the field till they (their parents) come home in the evenin'. I'd have 'em in the field pickin' cotton. Calvin would be settin' up there on a sack. I'd say, "Get offa dat sack an' go ta pickin' cotton."

He'd set up there an' he say his daddy didn' raise no cotton. He didn' raise no cotton! His daddy didn' have no cotton! Dat's why dey grow'd up with no sense! Oughta put 'em in da field an' made 'em work!

Olena knew first-hand what she was talking about. The day for her started very early when she was a child, almost as early as it did for her grandma, which was usually before sunrise.

My grandma would git up early. She'd call, "Calvin, Calvin, Ole, Ole." Daddy would git up too early in the mornin'. Finally, she'd say, "FI-YER! I bet they come down here! She'd say, "I been callin, an' callin' fer ye ta git up!" That wuz sumpin'!

The day started early for other children, as well, but no one started earlier than Barney Dalton.

I was born right up here beside the road there. My daddy bought a little farm over here joining Baxter Holmes, and that is where I was raised at. When we grow'd up later, my daddy worked for Mr. Henry Hunter...at the sawmill. My daddy rode the

mule to the sawmill, so my brother would go one morning, and I would go the next. We'd get on the mule behind my daddy to go to the sawmill to take him to work. Then, we'd ride the mule back home about four miles each way. We'd eat breakfast and walk to school after that.

Rose McCollum had her share of chores in the morning, also.

They'd give me breakfast dishes to wash before we went to school, and I was to wash 'em at breakfast 'cause we was close to the schoolhouse. And if Mama made mush to go with hogmeat gravy, you know, I'd get the dishes washed and sit that pan behind the stove while she was a milkin', and I'd be off to school when she come in. I didn't want to scrub out that ol' iron skillet with that mess in it.

Gladys King said, "Oh yeah, I had to bring in the potties and the wood and chips an' draw the water." Bill Williams also had to get in the coal or wood if it was cold and they needed to keep a fire all night, as well as wash the dishes. Lillie Christopher and her sisters took turns doing dishes, carrying wood and water, milking cows, and helping to clean the house. "We sure had jobs," she emphasized. Maggie Phifer was less fortunate; she was an only child and had all of the jobs to do herself. "Yes, I had my jobs, I'm telling you! I had to go to the spring and get water and come back across the creek on a footlog, and one time I fell in."

Louise Dalton is one of nine who survived in a family of twelve children. Her family had 25 acres to farm, and she was hoeing cotton at age six. She could tell us nothing about play whatsoever. "When we wasn't hoeing, picking berries, canning, you know..." Amy Lou Mitchell maintains that she helped to gather sixty bushels of peas in one season. She came home at 12:00 and picked peas. "We'd pile 'em up on the porch. Somebody would come with a pea thrasher and thrash 'em out for us."

Perhaps Theodore Wallace gets the prize for hardest job! "When I was growing up, I helped my dad clean up the farm we had up there. We cleaned it up from the start. We didn't have any bulldozers; we just had a mule. We cleaned up grubs. Oh, we cleaned up about thirty or forty acres. I'll never forget that!"

The Tulberts had cows to milk and chickens to feed. They also had a breeder house, so there were lots of chores. Millard Knight talked about taking care of farm animals and cultivating and breaking land. "I wore out two corn planters, planting corn and cotton. We grew a lot of cotton...and tobacco. Cuttin' wood for curing tobacco was a 13-month job. It kept you working 13 months a year. Always something to do with that tobacco."



Clyde Tulbert: 1927

Clyde Tulbert, age 10, in North Iredell.

Of course, all children were not adept at all things. Lex Sloan says that his daddy predicted he would learn to drive a car before he'd learn to milk a cow! There were more than a few hazardous chores, also. "You had to be a pretty good, stout person to draw that water. Occasionally, we'd let that handle loose and get hit in the head with it, and we'd have bumps on it, but we survived," said Gaynell Freeland.

Children were also taught very early the value of a nickel, and they were ambitious enough to find ways to earn money. "My brother used to fox hunt and possum hunt. He used to catch possum and skin 'em. We used to set rabbit and have to get up on a frosty morning and go to my rabbit haunt," says Amy Lou Mitchell. Lillie May Christopher earned money in the summer picking fruit and drying it, picking blackberries and selling them. They would even pull morning glory vines and "lay them up to dry up and sell them."

Ruth Crosby raised turkeys when she was eight or nine years old. She had about 50 baby turkeys at one time. "We would have to go down in the woods and hunt the eggs when the turkeys was running loose. Under the turkey pen, we'd build a coop and put her under there so foxes couldn't get to her. We had this all fenced in and kept the turkeys in there until they got so big. Then we would turn her and all the little ones out to go look for grasshoppers. We never did eat one turkey. We just figured that was for the other fellow. Eggs were too valuable, (also). I saved my money and when we got married, why I bought our first car with my money. I had a cotton patch, too."

Conservation was almost a religion for this generation of Iredell citizens. Maggie Phifer put it this way:

One thing that followed me all my life was that my mother taught me if somebody gives you something, she said, "It may be worth something, or it may not be worth carrying home, but you take it home and appreciate it. Then, later on, they'll give you something that you really can use, and I'll grant you that!" A lot of times you'd get something, and I'd say, "What can you do with that?" but I put it up and later on I could use it for something.

Bertha Westmoreland made the same point in almost that exact language.

John Brawley took his son Harry into the yard when Harry got his first job and gave him this advice:

Look around. What do you see? How do you think I got what I got? (What he had was a 60-acre farm on the Salisbury Road.) When I started to work (for the railroad) I made a dollar and twenty-five cents a week. Every week, I saved something if

it wadn' nothin' but a quarter. Some weeks, I saved fifty cents; some weeks, I saved a dollar; and some weeks, I saved a dollar and a quarter. But every week, I saved something!

Harry's father-in-law, Lon Mills, did much to re-inforce this lesson. Lon, also known as A.G., was born in 1875, the oldest of five children. When he was fourteen, his parents were about to lose their farm. His father was busy running a country store on the Amity Hill Road. His mother borrowed \$1002 from her brother, Walter Morton. Lonnie and his mother plowed together without a mule, taking turns pulling the plow, and raised the money to pay back every penny of the loan, even the two dollars. Throughout the rest of his life, Lonnie never again borrowed as much as a penny from anyone.

Young people in Iredell certainly learned two important lessons having to do with survival. One of them was the work ethic: "If you do not work, you shall not eat." Another was the necessity of saving for tomorrow because tomorrow would bring its own needs and possibly leaner days. There were, in addition, other lessons of restraint that were well taught.

Children were made to conform to strict standards of acceptable behavior that varied only slightly from home to home, community to community. Amelia Kennedy referred, for example, to an accepted dress code for young girls and women. "They wore the long dresses. I have long clothes myself. I like to see them long, over my legs. I can tell you when we went to school...." Jessie Lee Troutman mentioned also the disapproval with which her teachers and mother would have viewed their stuffing their skirts in their bloomers so that they might more easily play softball.

Beulah Myers Glass lived in a home where cards were forbidden. "Nobody knew anything about cards. Dad was terrible about cards," she said. Dancing was also forbidden in many homes. Olena Winford was one interviewee who told us that young people had to be married to go to a dance together. Drinking was strongly condemned. Gaynell's father, Will Cooke, encouraged young people to gather in their home for singings, but he insisted that they were not allowed to come "with liquor in you or on you." She says, "It was always a clean affair." Ruth Crosby's father was a staunch Methodist and a rigid opponent of alcohol. She told us this story:

That peach orchard way back on the back side had just started bearing, and the bootleggers found it. They took trucks in there and got them all in the same night. My daddy said, "They won't do that anymore." And he dug every one of them up!

And Ruth emphasizes that they picked their peaches and sold them from the back of their car, she said. Apparently, convictions were more important than economics to her father.

Public behavior was yet another area with its own set of rigid rules. That children were to be seen and not heard was the custom. Maggie Phifer draws us a picture in the following description.

When you had company, it's not like it is now. You'd get over in that corner, and you would sit there. They would be talking, and you just sat there and made no noise. If you turned around and looked at them, they'd give you that bad eye! If they looked at you a second time, you knew what was coming after the company left. I'll tell you another thing, if something was bad going on, they didn't tell it in front of us. The same things are going on now as they were then, but you didn't know anything about it. If they told you to go out and play, you stayed out there until they told you to come in.

If a child misbehaved in church, consequences were inevitable and swift. Kate Sigmon gives the following testimony.

Worst whoopin' I ever had, I laughed out in church. Papa looked over there an' said, "I'm gonna give you a whoopin' when you git home." I thought maybe he'd fergit it, but boy, he didn' fergit it! I never laughed out no more in church!

Maggie Phifer shares two other lessons that she learned very early.

One of the main things was you didn't talk back to them. I learned to be obedient and never sass an elder. I feel that all the elder people sees your parents (in you).

Um hum. No, you didn't play with no boys. You'd be out there talking about playing, and you would see one of the elderly people peaking around the corner. They would watch you and check on what you were doing. You didn't get out here and...go stay at night with sister so and so. No, no, it was out! Even after I grew up, that kept me out of trouble.

Acceptance was the attitude a child must adopt. Perhaps Sam Price expressed this best.

I remember, too, there was no question about obedience in those days. The father and mother were the ones in charge. Their word was the word we had to abide by, regardless, and we didn't question it at all. Sometimes, we would maybe do something wrong, and we would have to be called before the carpet, but, actually, we respected the authority of the father and mother. Obedience was very important in our lives, and we felt like we had committed a sin if we had disobeyed them in any way.

Although codes of behavior were generally uniform, the disciplinarian and the method of discipline varied with the household. In Sadie Martin's home, her parents shared the responsibility.

Each of them did what they deemed necessary to train us in the way they wanted us to go. With me, it was just merely saying...never any corporal punishment or anything like that.

Russell Cowan seems to have been blessed with an enlarged circle of disciplinarians. His Aunt Maggie Cowan was one of them although he did not live with her.

They lived in the house beyond the *old* grandfather's house...Great Grandfather's house. She was just like a mama! They whooped us too if we did anything that wasn't right. My mother and father and grandmother and them taught me to mind. But she helped. She was just like a mother!

Louise Dalton also remembers the discipline her grandmother provided, obviously with great affection.

She was strict! (As they were back then.) She was lovely! I was real close to my grandmaw.

Maggie Phifer also gave us another lecture on discipline when she was asked how she got along with her parents.

Oh, we got along sometimes good. Sometimes not. (Laughter) You kids don't know nothing about the way we come up because it was rough. They would go out and you know what dogwoods are? Yes, M'am, and they would pull out about half the tree, and you talk about something tough, and they would whip you until they would break that thing almost up! You know you would be good! Then they would sometimes get a piece of...and you would get a dose of that.

Maggie adds, "I tried to be good not to get a whooping," she explains. Her father usually applied the punishment, and "He made up for both sides," she said.

Mrs. Lex Sloan "...caught a lot of switchings at home. Of course, there was a big family of us, six boys and three girls, and we thought they picked on us, you know. But we'd get a switching every once and a while, but it didn't amount to anything."

On the other hand, she added, "Oh, I never ever whipped one of mine. I wouldn't let him (Lex) if he had wanted to. No, they were real exceptional."

Lex offers the following: "My mother would worry when some of them were gone. She'd walk the floor until they all got in for the night. She worried about 'em." And there were twelve for her to worry about!

Stern discipline was practiced in most of Iredell's homes, and it was accepted much of the time without resentment. Amelia Kennedy said, "We used to tell Mama and Daddy we love you and we don't mind whippings because we are stubborn Scotch Irish, and they had to show us the way, you know."

Bertha Westmoreland was grandmother to over a hundred grandchildren, whom she disciplined, along with her own children. One of her children presented her with a different kind of challenge. She told this story.

I gut a grandson, Barnette's boy, when he comes ta see me, he'll come in an' say, "Big Mama, now tell me sumpin' I don' know." He's the only one (who asks this), an' I haf ta tell 'im sumpin'. He wanna know how did I raise his daddy. An' I tol' him his daddy wuz seventeen yeahs old, an' he gut off da bus one evenin', him an' a little boy, an' I's in da yahd sweepin', an' I tol' 'im ta shut up an' come on to da house. He said some purty ugly words, an' I's sweepin' da yahd wid a brush broom, an' when he gut to me, I said, "I tol' you da shut up." An' I jes' switched da paht dat I suz sweepin' with an' turned butt end an' hit 'em in da calf uv da leg an' knocked 'im down an' da bus wuz standin' out dere' an' I jumped on top uv 'im', took my fists. I's just beatin' on 'im, an they say, "Whut did he do?" I say, I never had no mo' trouble out of 'im. When he married, I didn' have none. One (lesson) was enough, an' he wuz a good boy then till married. (He wuz) taller'n I wuz. Looked up at 'im. But I knocked 'im down.

Bertha has always been a tiny person, and Barnette would have had no trouble defending himself but, to his credit, he did not.

Physical punishment was not the only method used to control behavior. Lou Ray's Grandmother Cartwright, who was well-known for being protective of all of her children, used her wit and imagination.

My Grandmother Cartwright was afraid that we might slip off and go from one house to the other. The way we would have probably gone was through the woods because there was a road through the woods. She told us, "Don't ever go out of the yard because Hairy Head and Bloody Bones live down in those woods down here, and if you go down in the woods, Hairy Head and Bloody Bones will get you. I grew up with the fear of Hairy Head and Bloody Bones. I'd say, "Grandma, what do they look like?" There was an old fellow, sort of an old hermit, who lived down here on the branch, and his name was Rob Dobson. She said Rob Dobson was probably the way Bloody Bones looked. There was another old fellow who lived down the road, and his name was Verge Shores. He had a long white beard, and she said, Hairy Head would probably look a lot like Verge Shores.

Bertha Westmoreland's Grandmother Susan had her own variation on the "scared straight" theme.

We et suppah at 5:00, an' she would go milk her cow, git her water in, her wood, an' put us chaps in tha cohnah an' talk to us...tell us about da Lord. An' we tole "stories an' we knowd dat we done somethin' an' we say we didn' do it. Well, you's tellin' a... she wouldn' say it. She'd say, "You know whut you tellin' is not true. Well, da Booga Man 'll git ye. An' he gut howns, an' he gut a pitchfork." Well, we'd git skar'd Honey, an' we wudn' do nut'n dat nex' day wrong! An' she would whoop ye, she would whoop ye, get her peach tree hickory an' she'd weah dem feet out! Never heard her say a slang word or bad word in ma life. None of us! An' it wuz ten grandchildren, Uncle Walter's four an' Mama's six, an' we had ta say "yes, M'am" an "no M'am." It wadn' "Huh?" ur "What?" No. You had ta be *straight*!

Parents with large families and dozens of jobs to do would have had more difficulty keeping their children out of trouble if they had not had what you could call "an ace in the hole." Neighbors in the community could save the day. This story comes from Gaynell Cooke Freeland.

When I was little, we had two stores. I remember the Templeton Store well. One time, I went out there (Daddy had sent me out to Grandpa's) to get the muzzle...he'd left his horse muzzle at Grandpa's. On my way out there, I decided I wanted some chewing gum. I thinks, "I'll just run on down to the store and get me some chewing gum," because they were good about things like that.

When I got down there, I was red in the face like I am now (It was a hot day.) I think it was Miss Oleen that was in the store, and I asked her for some chewing gum, and I says, "I'll bring the money out here next time I come. " She looked at me, and she said, "Did you run off?" I told her, "Yes, I did. Daddy sent me off to Grandpa's to get his horse muzzle, and I decided I wanted some chewing gum, and I run on down here to get it." She says, "Well, I can't let you have any chewing gum because you run off." So she gave me a stick of candy, which was far better than the chewing gum would have been, but yet she wouldn't let me have the chewing gum because that's what I was want'n. I remember that, and I was just a little feller...I don't know ...eight or nine years old, probably.

Rose McCollum had a bit more success in her search for chewing gum, but it wasn't all that she had hoped for.

My mama sent me to the store after sugar. You had loose sugar in buckets, and so we was out. She sent a hen (for payment). He wanted to know if there was anything else I wanted. It was Eddie's Uncle Richard. I said, "Yeah, take some chewin' gum," and I did. He oughta knowd better'n that, but he didn't. So she took it away from me and kep' it locked up, I remember just exackly (where) till we got ready ta

go somewhere. She got us out a stick a piece, and it lasted! He'd give you a due bill now, and you could take that back what the hen was worth. We was outta things. That's what I oughta done, but I was a 'wantin' some chewin' gum.

Religion was a powerful tool to use in training a child. For Vera Saddler, there was a dramatic experience in which she learned the wisdom of her mother's teachings. Since then, she has felt protected by faith.

Mama taught us not to steal, but after I got married, a lady told me to steal and I did. Nothing happened to me, so a lady asked me to come and help her for two weeks. She sent me to the store to get some sugar and stuff. I got her sugar, and I got me a pack too. I didn't have sense to know she could see that on the bill that I got two packs of sugar. I didn't take but one pack home, but I didn't think about that. I just didn't have the knowledge to know. Well, lightning played around me all the way home. I said, "Lord, if you forgive me, I'll never do it again." That broke me to never steal again. Today, I praise. I was by myself when the storm came up. I woke up and got on my knees and prayed and asked the Lord to let me go back to sleep. You know, I didn't hear Hugo!

Children learned at home the value their parents placed on faith and that it could be a real comfort to them in a time of crisis. The Depression provided many with a test of faith and endurance. Sam Price told us this:

I remember that, particularly during the Depression time, we had to turn to our Lord Jesus Christ for help. We needed that very much. We realized it! My father would have a devotion every morning. He had a little table that he put a Bible on. Nothing else was supposed to be on that table but the Bible. Every morning, he would have a devotion. He would read scripture and we would have a prayer at breakfast time.

Music was a powerful reinforcer of a code of behavior. It was a reflection of the ethics of the times. Gaynell Cooke, Sunday School teacher for over seventy years, lives by the words to a favorite hymn. "One I think about a lot and have for some years is 'Yield Not to Temptation'. That has always entered my mind when I was faced with some problem or something. Being tempted is not a sin, but yielding to it is a sin." This selection from a children's songbook also illustrates the point.

Water is free, and whiskey is dear, And you have your choice, 'tis true;
So whether you live like a man or a brute, It all will depend on you.
Labor is plenty, wages are sure, For him who is willing to do,
And whether you waste or save and get rich, It all will depend on you.

Those we spoke with told us in simple words of the deep respect they have for their parents. Kate Sigmon volunteered this observation about her father, who we could agree was extremely strict. "Papa was a mighty good man, I know that. If he told you anything, he meant what he said."

Theodore Wallace said that both parents taught him his values and how to treat people. His admiration for his mother is obvious and is reflected in the love and respect he shows for his wife. He says simply about his mother that "She was the workhorse of the family." He elaborates on this in the chapter on work.

A common theme with those who spoke to us was strong disapproval of the offerings of today's media. Sam Price had the most to say.

Unfortunately, today, our morals have dropped a lot due to, probably one of the biggest things, the obscenities on television. We don't listen to radio much any more. It's unbelievable some of the shows you see on television...all related to sex. This is the destructive part. (Sam and others named TV soaps, specifically.)

Unfortunately, most of our homes are getting to where the mother and father are not living together any more. When we were young, there were hardly any families that didn't have a mother and father. We have yielded to our own pleasures by deciding what's better for us instead of what's better for our families. But, thank the Lord, we still have the Bible as a base to go by...."

Mary Kimbrough reflects on the value of the discipline she received. She grew up in a family that stayed busy and did things together.

Life was good. We raised all of our family with strict discipline. We all ate at the same table. All had a job to do, stayed busy and went to church every time the door opened. Before breakfast Sunday morning, Bible and prayer. We were up at five o'clock, cleaned house, had breakfast and went to school. In high school, the same thing, and walked two miles to school every day.

Sarah and Ruth Reeves were brought up with the motto "Do the best you can." Perhaps this advice alone says enough. It's the code our ancestors lived by. History is already judging them by the quality of the families they produced. The individuals who were interviewed for this project bear witness to their success.



**Sudie Steele Troutman and daughters Julie T. M. Troutman (with book) and Beatrice
About 1920**



Lillie Christopher and daughter: 1940's

Lillie, grandmother of interviewer Rose Casey, is seen here with Rose's mother.



Louise Holmes Dalton



Barney Dalton

Religion

"We went to church ever' Sunday in the wagon. We had chairs in the wagon. We had a mighty good life!"

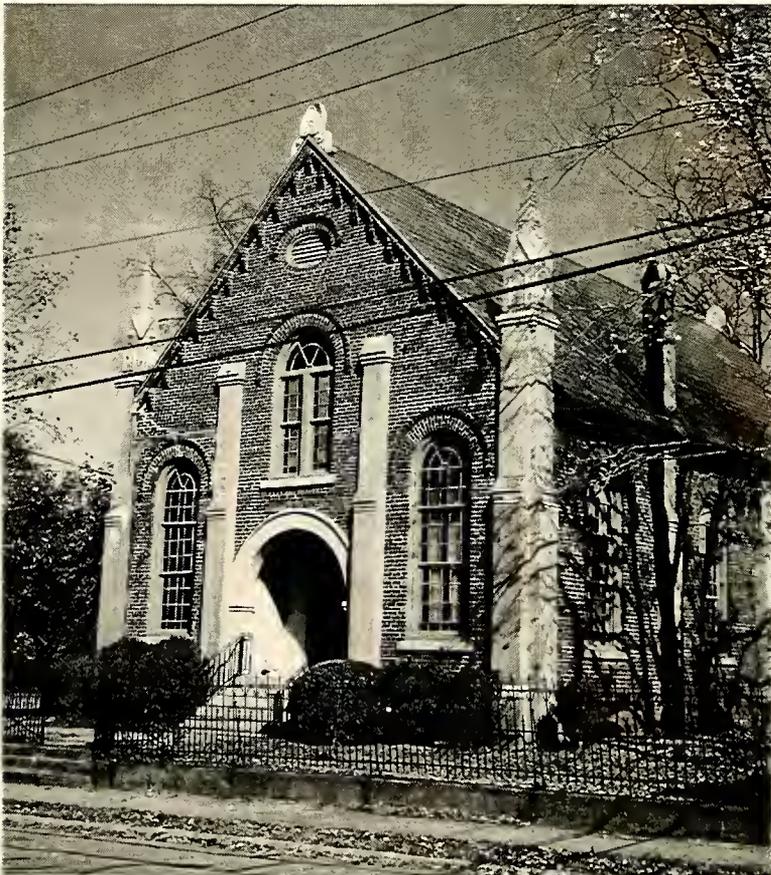
Rose Huie Brown McCollum

Religion was the most central ingredient in the lives of our ancestors. In fact, it is impossible to research the history of some families and not become immediately involved in the origin of a given church. The reverse is also true. An exploration of the history of an early church, reveals a pattern of family names that is impossible to miss. "Go to the cemeteries. There you'll find the families you are looking for," Belinda Hurmence told us. And we did just that. We visited more than twenty church cemeteries and several family cemeteries as well as the public cemeteries Willow Valley in Mooresville and Oakwood in Statesville. Occasionally, family cemeteries became church cemeteries, like that of St. James Episcopal Church in Shinnsville, which originated in the garden of the Charles Nathaniel Mills home. These cemeteries of Iredell remain as silent sentinels of the passage of time, forming a link to our past and preserving much of our history and culture.

And our cemeteries are threatened by changing times. A major problem of some of them is their location. As churches had to be rebuilt because of fire or expanded because of growth, for instance, cemeteries were sometimes separated from their original churches. For example, the Blue Door Cemetery on Highway 115 near Shepherds stands alone on a narrow piece of land between the railroad and the highway. "It's called the Blue Door Cemetery because the first church they had there at Vanderburg Methodist Church somebody painted the door blue," says O. C. Stonestreet, III. St. Paul's Lutheran Church Cemetery stands on a hill between the Holiday Inn and Gordon's Iron and Steel Company. The church now lies three miles to the east on the Salisbury Road where it was moved because of noise from the railroad, church history says. Bill Williams has researched the history of that cemetery and that of Shiloh A.M.E. Zion Church, which is nearby on the Old Salisbury Road. He too emphasized the fact that family history and church history are inseparable.

Many families came to Iredell bringing with them remnants of their church. The family of Charles Mills and his close relatives came to western Rowan County from Maryland after the Revolutionary War, bringing with them the Episcopal Church into western North Carolina. St. James Episcopal Church was organized in 1800 in Shinnsville in South Iredell.

St. James Episcopal Church



Temple Emanuel

The first Jewish congregation in Western North Carolina was brought to Statesville by the Isaac Wallace family. In that home, which stood where the Wachovia Bank is now, the first Jewish services in this area were held. This, the second oldest Jewish congregation in North Carolina dates back to 1883. The synagog in Wilmington, their port of entry, was built in 1885. Temple Emanuel was constructed in 1891 across from Fourth Creek Presbyterian Church in Statesville. It is the fifth or sixth synagog in North Carolina.

The Douglas Homeplace has never seen a time when there was not a church on that property. First, says Mary Douglas Warren, there was Amity A.R.P. Church, which was established in the Abner Feimster home. Feimster was the son of Captain William Feimster, the first owner of the land. In 1847, it was referred to as "the Amity tract of the Feimster land." Mary wrote the following:

Right above our red barn now in those woods they had an arbor...I think that church was established in 1848. The blue-blossomed periwinkle covering the ground in the woods just east of Midway was then the setting for Amity's outdoor arbor with Amity Church east of the arbor.

Some members of the new organizational group were at the time already members of Trinity or Stony Point Methodist Churches. Some were descendants of members from Old Center, an early 1833 Methodist Church located about 1/2 mile west of Captain William Feimster.

These organizers sought to establish a new Methodist Church in their midst. In 1911, Midway, called the "new church at Amity," first appeared in the Quarterly Conference Record.

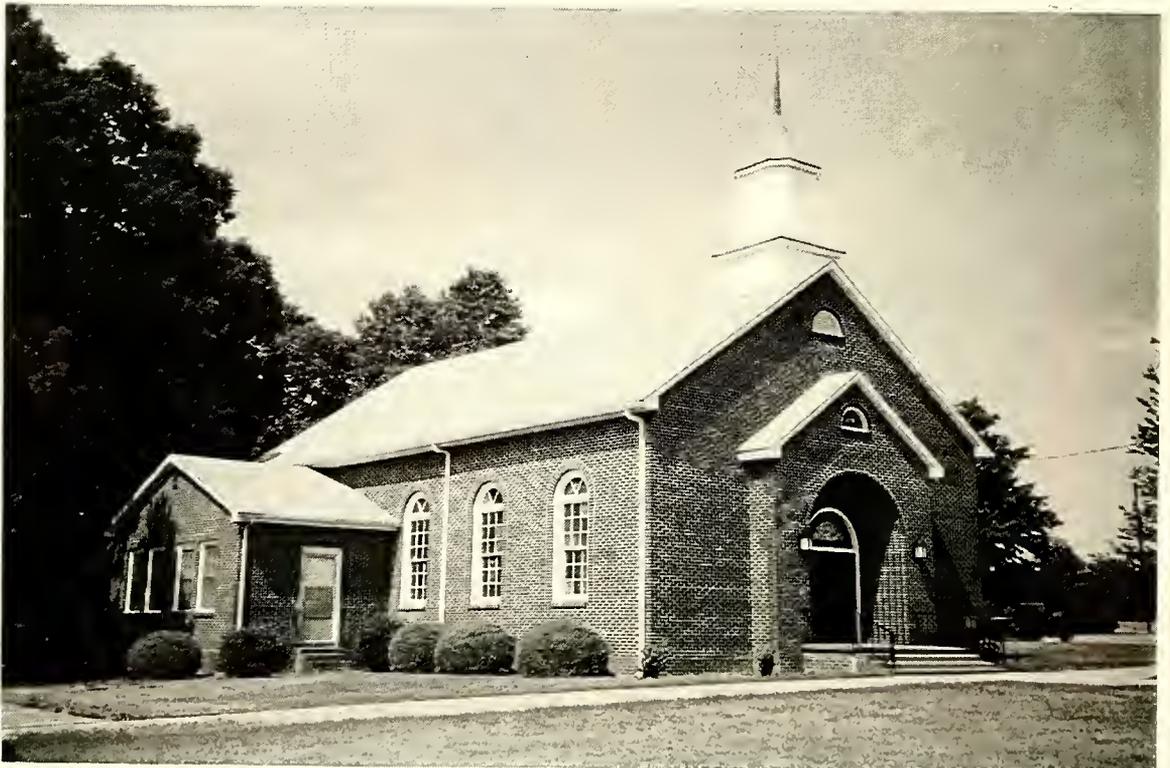
We heard from Lou Ray Cartwright in Chapter One how her grandfather, James Cartwright, was involved in the organization of Winthrop Church, the Friends congregation in Harmony that was established following the Civil War. Ralph Flake Messick also told us about that.

Winthrop Church was well-attended. Quakers back then, I reckon they still do, had women preachers a whole lot of the time. You don't see much of that anymore.

I can remember when they'd be so many at church they'd have to go get chairs and set down the aisle 'cause everything would be filled up. They don't do it today!



Shiloh A.M.E. Zion: Statesville



Winthrop Friends Meeting House: Harmony

Flake adds that "There was also a good congregation of Moravians in this community (Houstonville), but it didn't last. (The preacher) held tent meetings out there, put up a tent part of the time and had it outside. After he died off, nobody else ever came to the church and it just died right there."

The history of black churches in Iredell is a fascinating topic that needs to be researched. Many churches already have a recorded history that should be published. As many as one-fourth of the first members of our oldest churches were black. Most of them were slaves. They sat in slave galleries above the sanctuaries at Centre Presbyterian, Bethesda Presbyterian, and at St. James Episcopal, for instance, and were buried in those cemeteries, often in unmarked graves. Many white churches made a serious effort to keep their black membership after the Civil War, but black families chose to organize separate churches. Ruth Crosby, who attended Macedonia Methodist Church, was asked about the slave gallery there and where black members were buried. "We went over to Nebo (for burial)," she explained. Mt. Nebo Baptist Church was organized in the late 1860's. According to O.C. Stonestreet, III, the official date is 1870.



Macedonia Methodist Church



Mt. Nebo Baptist Church

Mt. Tabor United Presbyterian Church was organized in 1867 and its new sanctuary was built in 1970. There are found numerous ancestors of Russell Cowan on the church roll. We visited Mt. Tabor with him in 1994.



Russell Cowan at Mt. Tabor



Mt. Tabor Presbyterian Church

Mt. Tabor stands on the Rowan County line a few miles from the town of Mooresville. O. C. Stonestreet, III, Iredell history teacher, who was interviewed by Dan Woody, another Mooresville history teacher now retired, provided us with an interesting view of the early churches in that area.

The role of the Presbyterian Church cannot be overemphasized. The original people who came in here, the oldest church in the area would be Centre Presbyterian Church of Mt. Mourne, and the next oldest church in the area would be Coddle Creek A.R.P., Associate Reformed Presbyterian. The Presbyterians, the Scotch-Irish came down the Great Wagon Road, and they were the first in the area. There were a lot of Germans who came here too and settled up near Troutman and also in Rowan County and in Catawba and Lincoln County...and, of course, there were Lutherans. Right where Mooresville is the Presbyterians were real thick.... This was a little enclave of Presbyterians in a sea of Germans right here. In fact, that might be one reason Iredell broke off from Rowan. We had more Presbyterians and they had more Germans.

Whether one was Presbyterian, Methodist, or Baptist became less important than where one lived in this period in Iredell history, however, according to our subjects. In fact, just getting to church could become an adventure! Rose Huie Brown McCollum gave this description:

We'd watch and we'd pray that it wouldn't rain, in our child's way, you know. My Uncle Houston Journey had to come get us. He had a car. A lot of people got to takin' wagons, ya know, and would come by and get us. And we'd go to one or t'other's church, just like Mt. Vernon or Union Grove. Mr. Ansil Purdue got a truck and you could walk down there, everybody that wanted to go and ride that truck. We went to church ever' Sunday in the wagon. We had chairs in the wagon. We had a mighty good life!

Elsie and Leona Patterson remembered walking everywhere. This meant that the younger children didn't get to go to church as much as the older ones. Elsie explained:

It was so far, and we didn't have but one mule. Part would take that, and they couldn't take all us young'ns along with them. Mama and Daddy would go and leave the young'ns at the house and come back and tell us what was going on at church.

Fleecy Griffin had another kind of "ride":

I belonged to Mt. Pleasant (later Center Street) A.M.E. Zion Church. As long as my daddy could carry me, he would carry me to church. He was a short man and my legs were drawn, you know. He would carry me from here to there walking 'cause you see I would get tired. I was young, so Daddy would just pick me up and carry me and take me on to church. I had a real good daddy!

Later, we got a car. I taught Sunday School for a while and I sang in the choir.



Center Street A.M.E. Zion Church

Sometimes the trips were hazardous. Maggie Phifer had to cross a branch, and she always carried a lantern if she went to night services.

It wasn't deep (the branch), and when you got ready to go to church, you would wash the dust off your feet and go to church. You always carried that lantern. You would start early before dark, but it would be dark before we got back.

The Lex Sloans pointed out another complication:

We walked to Mt. Vernon Baptist about a mile down the creek where we lived. I remember sometimes there would be a long one (service) and you'd get out about one o'clock. We'd be starved to death by the time we walked a mile to get home.

Clay Tolbert and Russell Cowan explained that the Baptists would "hold" longer than the Presbyterians. But hardships such as distance, lack of transportation, and long sermons rarely interfered with involvement in church activities. In fact, many relished the services and savored their Sundays. Vera Saddler was one of them, even as a child. "We liked it! They had preachin' in the morning, preachin' in the evening (afternoon), and preachin' at night. I would run to get to the church!"

Gladys King took part in all aspects of church life also. "We had revivals and dinners like we have now. We had Bible School and Sunday School."

Louise Dalton went to Sunday School every week, but church services were only held once a month, at which time they had two services, and she says, "Then it would be morning and evening and you would be at church all day."

Church attendance was not an option in most homes. Bill Williams told us about that.

You knew you were going to church. When I came along, Shiloh was my great grandmother's church. My grandfather attended Scott's Chapel, which was in Belmont till 1912. It was moved to Chambers Street and (they) changed the name to St. Love's Methodist Church. I went with my grandfather. I was fascinated sitting there listening to the trains run up and down the track. Sunday School was held at 1:30 in the afternoon.

Every Sunday Harry Brawley sat in St. Paul's Lutheran Church on the Salisbury Road not far from Belmont listening to those same trains.

Every Sunday! And I remember one Sunday it was so deep, the snow was so deep it

would push up in front of the T-Model Ford, and we couldn't go but a little piece. And ma daddy was determined ta go ta church. And I said, "Do you reckon there'll be anybody there?" He said, "Well, we will." So here we went walkin'. And we walked all the way to the church, and, sure enough, there wadn' nobody there, but *we was!* So we turned around and came back home.

And church attendance was not the limit of one's obligation to the family church. There were many ways to serve. Ruth Alexander Crosby performed a service that was frustrating and often thankless:

I always cleaned that church (Macedonia) every time it was cleaned. Me and another girl. We'd take our brooms and go and sweep it up. Mostly, we had dirt roads then, and they had big double doors, and they blew open with the winds so fast. When they did that, all that dirt would come in.

We took five-gallon milk cans of hot water and washed those benches. I didn't know any way to get the dirt off 'em. You know how dirt looks when it's smeared around? It didn't all come off. But that's the way it was.

On our journey through the cemeteries we met Ralph Alexander Wilson, whose self-appointed job has been to take care of the cemetery at Damascus since he was married in 1938. The headstone for himself and his wife is already in place in the front row.

Bill Williams, like his mother before him, played the organ at church. He remembered his first song, "Jesus, Lover of My Soul."

The first funeral I played I only knew two songs. I was so excited. One of them was the one they used for a recessional, and someone had to come and shake me to tell me to stop because I was pumpin' away and playin' that song. I was afraid to take my eyes off the music. I knew I'd get lost!

There can be little doubt that the church was the center of social life for the community. This is how Vera Saddler answered the question about social life as a teenager.

I enjoyed church. I enjoyed Sunday School. I enjoyed going to the conference and things like that. I really enjoyed that!

When asked if church was the center of social life in the community, Clyde Tulbert answered emphatically, "Sure!" And Ida Tharpe agreed: "We looked forward to going to Sunday School and church on Sunday. And they would have revival meetings, and we would go to other churches, too. We were always busy doing something." Maggie Phifer was asked, "Did you go

anywhere special for vacation back during that time?" She responded, "All the vacations we had were camp meetings...and boy that was something big!"

Even when people were asked about favorite songs, the responses had a familiar refrain. "Church songs, religious songs. Mama would sing those for us and try to teach them to us. The first one I ever remember Mama trying to teach me to sing was 'In the Sweet Bye and Bye'. It was a church song," said Sadie Martin.

Sunday School was the place where children learned and achieved recognition as well. Maggie Phifer explained:

See, I went to Sunday School. The children always played a part with their speeches, you know. Sometimes three or four verses. It was so difficult in a way. Sometimes I look back and some of it was good and some of it was bad. My mother used to say, 'Sometimes you have to take the bitter with the sweet.'

Lex Sloan remembered his aunt as a Sunday School teacher. "And she would give us little cards every Sunday. We proudly got them little cards."

Theodore Wallace fondly remembered church and Sunday School:

Yes, we'd have a lot of people. The church back then we would have two hundred in high days. Then it boiled down to about sixty. People just quit going to church. I remember going to Holly Springs...James Gatton over there, they asked him to read, and he came to a big word he couldn't pronounce, and he said, "Oh, buttermilk!" I never will forget that!

I'll never forget this either. They asked Mr. Lambert to read and he said, "I can't even see if you're white or a black man, I just can't see." I'll never forget that, you know. Over in Holly Springs I'll never forget some things there. We had a boy over there he could get you laughin' in church. He wouldn't do a thing, you know, we would just get to giggling, you know. No, you ain't supposed to do that in church, I didn't want to, but that boy would get us tickled. You know, like little old boys are. I'll never forget how he didn't do a thing wrong. He'd get us... Oh, Lord...!

Theodore Wallace reminds us that children sometimes received unwanted recognition in church. The twinkle in Theodore Wallace's eyes and his irrepressible grin tell the tale of a boyhood full of good fun. Olena Winford told us that she had a problem controlling her laughter, a problem complicated by a friend who could "hold hers." Katie Sigmon, caught laughing in church, was given a promised "whipping" by her father ("Discipline").

Even though Sunday School was held in most churches each Sunday, many had preaching only once a month, and, thus, people attended multiple churches. Sadie Martin explains:

In my early years, Papa was Baptist, and we attended a Baptist church part of the time. Mama was Methodist, Pisgah Methodist Church, and we attended there part of the time. In those early days, we didn't have services every Sunday. Damascus Baptist Church had services on Saturday and Sunday, the first Saturday and Sunday of each month. Pisgah had services the first and third Sunday of each month, so you could really attend both churches, and that's what we did.

Sarah Reeves also attended two churches:

We went all the time, and it was the Episcopal Church right here in front of our house. We went to the Episcopal Church at 9 o'clock and Center Street Church at 11 o'clock, and (then for) Sunday School, back to the Episcopal Church at 3 o'clock, and back to the Methodist Church in the evening. Both churches all day!

The choir at the Episcopal Church was made up of children. Everybody on our street went to the Episcopal Church (also) and between the two churches, I was the only one that joined the Episcopal Church. Everybody else joined the Methodist Church.

We wonder if it is possible that Sarah chose the Episcopal Church because she liked to sing in the choir. She would not be the first to choose a church for such a reason.

Bethesda Presbyterian also did not have services every Sunday, but Gaynell Cooke Freeland went to church elsewhere on those occasions. Her visitation list included Amity Lutheran, Shady Grove Baptist, and Knox Chapel Methodist, but "We were in church somewhere about all day on Sunday. We had morning services, Sunday School and preaching, and afternoon Sunday School and preaching. Then at night, prayer meeting and preaching or young peoples' meeting. That kept us busy."

And there was unanimous respect for Sunday as a day of rest and reflection. Mrs. Page Beatty cooked her dinner on Saturday.

Back then, I never did anything I didn't have to do on Sundays. I fixed my green beans and potato salad on Saturday and fried my chicken. We killed our own chickens and everything. We had cake and Jello.

Harry Brawley remembered Sundays this way:

We had mush every mornin' fer breakfast, and on Sunday mornin' we *always* had somethin' from the store. It was veal steak or a chicken. It was always somethin'

special on Sunday mornin'. Every Sunday mornin'. (Sunday noon) We had beef stew. She always tried to put somethin' on to cook that would be already cooked so we wouldn't have to work when we come home from church. Man, she reminded us over and over "Now this is the Lord's day!" And she said when she was in the orphanage (Barium Springs), Mr. Boyd wouldn't even let them roll a hoop on Sunday.

Cooking for Sunday often meant cooking for a crowd. When asked about special occasions in her family, Lillie Christopher put going to church and people visiting them at the top of her list. "Mama would cook up dinner for different ones and things like that... We would have company."

Flake Messick's mother was also strict. "My mother didn't believe in too much activity. Most of the time, it was visiting amongst our kin. The Mayberrys mostly was our closest kin, and the Holmes over here. Visiting most on Sunday after preaching service was about all. Until I got old enough to go out on my own, most of the time I was over yonder in the creek somewhere playing in the water."

Vera Saddler wasn't allowed to throw a ball, go to the store, or buy anything. Sue Cook adds, "We were not allowed to play ball or anything. Mama would take off and walk with us down to the branch and let us wade in the branch in the summertime. But we never did play ball until we were grown and the grandchildren came along." Carl Cook says that "You went to church and back home and behaved yourself. We could play a little out in the yard, but we didn't get to go nowhere on Sunday. I remember Mr. Lee Stikeleather lived over there across the orchard, and he had him a path across the cotton fields, and he'd come by and talk to us."

Millard Knight added an activity to the list. "Visit some. You git together and sing. Jim Grant's family, Mollie Grant would come down home and set out there in the yard, set out there in the yard in warm weather, under the shade tree and sing."

Perhaps boys, at least in some homes, fared a bit better than girls. Theodore Wallace described his Sundays thus:

A lot of the time us boys would get together and play ball on Sunday afternoons. Because you just didn't go to church much on Sunday night because you had no way to get there. Now sometimes, you would go especially to the big meetings we called revivals, you know. We'd go then, of course. A lot of time you couldn't go. There was just one service a month. On a Saturday. Preacher Wyler, even after we got married, had nine churches at one time.

Theodore Wallace, as always, was most appreciative of the labors of the women in his family and community. "I always thought the women had hard times on Sunday." Although the work was hard, he adds that it was a rarity to have fried chicken and gravy on Sunday. "You didn't have it often; we didn't have enough chickens."

Religious instruction did not stop at the church door. Harry Brawley recalled that his parents made certain of that.

We had a portion of the Bible read every night or the Sunday School lesson and The Lord's Prayer, among us *all!* And I thought some time when we was tired or had company we could go to bed, but it didn't happen! We had it, it makes no difference who was there. We had it *every night!* The same time because we went ta bed pretty much the same time if company was there or they wasn't because we had ta work so hard we just had ta have the rest.

Clyde Tulbert also remembers Sunday School, but preaching was held once a month on Saturday afternoon. Willie Mae adds this: "They always had their business meetings on Saturday afternoon, and we'd come from church, and he would either sit by the fireplace or on the porch, in the summertime, and he would read the Bible to us while mother was fixing our dinner. Things like that you remember. Those things that were taught to you."

Our interviewees agreed that church homecomings were the most significant events of the year, with preparations going on for days. Rose Huie Brown McCollum remembered them well.

My Uncle Houston would go around and invite people to eat dinner with us. We had a table at Union Grove they called the Journey Table, and it stayed there all the time. They had the best old dinner, and then we'd get in the fields on Monday and wish we had some of that to eat. I can't understand now though, how we never carried plates. Just knives to cut your pie with...and your cake. If we had any vegetables, I don't know. I remember 'em goin' to the well and gettin' water. The menfolks would, and they would tend to the baby ones while you set the table. And we had napkins, cloth napkins, that they tied around the babies to keep from dropping anything on 'em. Wasn't no such thing as a paper plate. I don't remember a cup of coffee. You couldn't have fixed it 'cause wadn' no liquid. You drunk water.

Rose's recollection in the above passage reminds us that our parents and grandparents had no electric stoves, refrigeration, or running water, much less an educational building where they could escape the ants, flies, and the hot sun overhead. Sometimes there was shade or even a breeze. Harry Brawley

says there was even a lemonade stand and homemade ice cream that cost a nickle so that St. Paul's could raise a little money. Harry was the one who usually volunteered to go across the road to the well at the railroad to bring back the water for the reward of a free lemonade or serving of ice cream. People stayed all day, and there was usually a ball game (baseball) in the evening (afternoon).

Vera Saddler remembers no homecomings, but they did have revivals. "I remember that because we would go to the white church and look in the windows when I was large enough. They (white folks) would come and look in our windows when we had 'em (revivals). They don't do that anymore."

Edna York spoke fondly of such times. "Big Meeting was a time! Back then they didn't have one less than one or two weeks. They'd take off that much to go to church, and usually everybody was walking, everybody that wasn't in buggies." Rose Huie Brown McCollum said revivals were in the fall when "skupadines and things get ripe" and they would take them and watermelons to the gatherings.

John Henry Redmond remembers camp meetings at Zion Baptist Church. These went on for a week. "People would come in horse and buggies. Lots of people came and brought their dinners. Some churches' visiting ministers were asked by pastors at local churches to come and run the week's revival. The visiting minister would stay with some of the members.

Sadie Martin also attended revivals at a Baptist church:

Damascus had an arbor, and they had their protracted meeting or the beginning of their meeting on the first Sunday in August. Everybody in the whole country came to Damascus on the first Sunday. The whole hilltop was covered. Some preacher, usually an educated preacher, would preach on Sunday morning, and then Sunday afternoon they'd pick up somebody else, and he'd mostly tell his experiences, things of that sort. It was more of an exhortation than a sermon, you would say.

Then during the week they had what they called an experience meeting. People would get up and tell what the Lord had done for them. or they wanted "so and so" prayed for or something like that. The regular revival services at Pisgah were just regular revival services, just preaching and prayer service before services began. It was quite a contrast between services at Damascus and Pisgah (Methodist). I got exposed to both denominations.

Zion Baptist Church



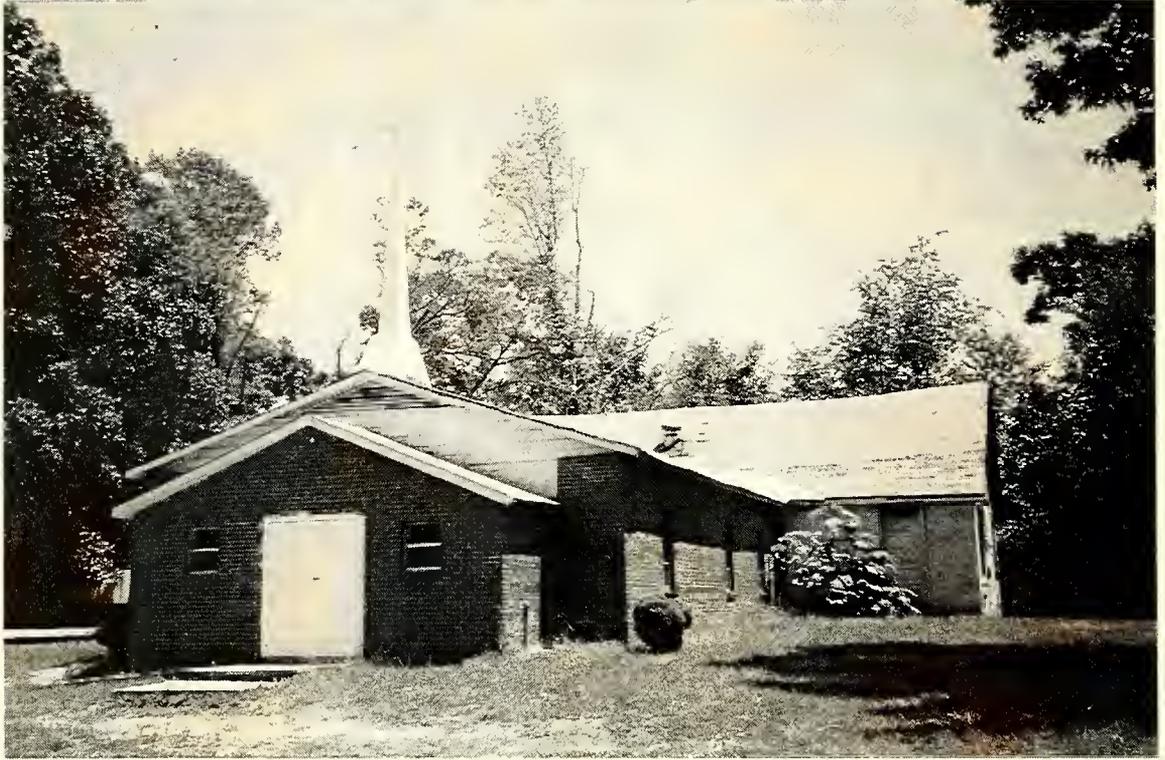
Damascus Baptist Church



Amity Lutheran Church



Wesley's Chapel Methodist Church



South Iredell A.M.E. Zion Church

Bertha Westmoreland described the event at South Iredell A.M.E. Zion:

The revival meetin'! Everybody dat belong ta dat church, every woman dat belong and some dat didn' belong would bring a big basket an' set dat table. We didn' have no place ta cook. We didn't have no facilities in da church. You cooked it at home. Dey got (water) from a spring an' put it in a big bahhel (barrel). Dey'd have a spiket and drop dat in 'ere.

The first Sunday in August wuz always our revival. We would cook 'bout all day Satday...pies an' cakes an' patato salad. Dey would wait till 'bout 12 o'clock at night an' fix it up. An' dumplins, dey'd git up an' fix dey chicken 'bout 4 o'clock in dat great big ol' shiny pot fulla pastry an' a big hen...might nigh everybody would fix dat 'cause everybody lak'd chicken 'n dumplins. An den dey'd bake ham. Papa would boil ham in a washpot, an' Mama would get up Sunday mornin' about five an' she'd bake it. Didn' have no tin foil. Everything is so different now than it wuz back when I wuz comin' on.

We'd start Sunday evenin'. The man dat wuz gonna run da' meetin' all week till Friday, he would stay over, an' somebody would keep 'im...an' dey'd give 'em breakfast. One membah'd invite 'em ovah ta they house fa dinnah, an' suppah somebody else would take 'im, an' everybody else would pop in an' help, an' it'd just be same as a gatherin'. Maybe two sisters would go hep you to cook, an' maybe her family would come or maybe they'd jest cahhy (carry) sumpin' frum home. Den on Fridy night

dey would pound da preachah. Everybody'd bring a pound a buttah, a pound a sugah, a pound a coffee, an just whatsoevah.

Theodore Wallace remembers the revivals that were held for a week in September at Zion Church and the baptizings at Charlie Partridge's Pond that were conducted by Grady White, who baptized him.

One of the topics that fascinated Clay Tolbert, and there were several, was the old country church and the old country preacher. The memories he shared painted such a complete picture that to extract a few sentences would be to spoil the piece. Therefore, the following descriptions appear exactly as delivered by Clay in his interview, which was conducted in Clay's former chicken house that he had converted into what he called "the world's cheapest museum."

There was an old Baptist church up above Amity called Shady Grove. Mr. Pleas Deaton's granddad gave an acre of land there. He raised a family just beyond going west by Jimmy McNeely's. The first wagon road it takes to the right goes down to a lake. The remains are still there of the old original Deaton homesite where Mr. Pleas Deaton's daddy, Mr. General Lee Deaton, grew up. He was the first settler. I'm thinking around 1886, T. J. Rook was moderator of South Yadkin Baptist Association. On many nights, he came to Mr. Deaton and got permission to hold a revival in the woodland there where the cemetery is today.

In those days until a few years back in all those churches, the preacher didn't carry his Bible under his arm. He used the old pulpit Bible. He opened it up, read his text, closed it up, got down on his elbows, and went to work. If he came to your home, he didn't carry a Bible in. He expected you to have a Bible dust free to read and to have prayer. That's the old-fashioned preacher.

Under a tree that just recently died, he did at least one week and probably two weeks' preaching. You called that a brush arbor. Mr. Will Cook told (that) as a young man he led the singing there in that revival. Coming out from that revival, four families from up above what was then the Blair community four or five miles on above the Statesville Road, and four families from down on this side, eight families joined and organized the original Shady Grove Church. There was a Bass family, an Overcash family, a Howard family...Down here, it was my daddy's daddy and mother, Daniel and Isabel Tolbert, Mr. Bob Brown's mother and daddy, and James Crosby and his family.

In those days in all the four churches, there as well as the neighbor churches... it was three miles to Wesley's Chapel and four miles up to Shiloh...no church would schedule a revival when another one was holding a revival. When we got through laying crops by, we got through work, it was time to eat watermelon, pitch horse-shoes, swim in the old pond, go to singing school, or else go to preaching. In those days, we started preaching along about dark and we stopped when we got through. Those were glorious days!

I was the last white person baptized using the Baptist methods (1930). Mr. Clyde Yates baptized me. On the Lib Brown land there is a fall. It's a beautiful rock that runs down about 20 feet with an angle on it, and the water and the gravel has run over that and cut a trench about that deep. The farmers came in and built a pond across that and dammed that up. The candidates for baptism stood over here on this rock till the preacher preached his sermon, and then he got ready to go down into the water.

Over here on the rocks stood a group of candidates that had been presented for membership in Shady Grove Church. All the revivals would last nigh to cotton-picking time. People forgot Methodistism, Presbyterianism, Baptistism, and all went together as one group for one purpose, to worship the Lord and to win souls. They was some preaching and singing...singing like you've never heard! Sing an hour, preach an hour, and call mourners an hour.

The Chairman of the Board of Deacons and the preacher put on his second suit and second tie, and they stood over here, and the preacher preached a sermon...The people didn't say "The meeting's closed at Knox's Chapel." We said, "She broke." "Did she break last night?" "When's the big dipping?" The preacher took his text and said, "Open your Bibles to Romans 6 and we'll read our doctrine for baptism. "Buried with him in baptism to arise again and walk in the newness of life."

After the sermon, the preacher walks out in the water up to here, and this deacon brings forth. They started with the youngest female up through the mothers, then the youngest boys up through the daddies. The preacher said, "In obedience to the command, we baptize this our brother, or sister, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen," and the whole crowd would say, "*Amen!*"

"How long have you been a Quaker?" Lou Ray Cartwright asked Millard Knight. "All my life," he answered. The same could be said by most of those who talked with us. Carl and Sue Cook and his brother Dick and wife Vivian are notable examples. Carl and Sue have been a part of the Bethesda congregation for a combined 180 years; Dick and Vivian share only a few less years. Their cousin Gaynell Freeland age 92 is Bethesda's oldest member. Carl sang in Bethesda's choir for over 70 years, and Gaynell taught Sunday School there even longer. The same is true for our neighbors in the black communities. Olena Winford described her grandmother's last wish:

My grandmother she b'longed ta Mt. Tabor, she did. I remember the las' time we went down there. We sit together. She was the best soul! She would fix her a basket. Uncle Jay, he would git her an take her ta Mt. Tabor. Time went on an' she got sick. "You know," she sayd, "I dreamed we went ta Mt. Tabor an' from there we went ta' South Iredell. An' we had a time!" I said, "We'll go agin an' have a nice time."

She took couple more drinks an' say, "I don' want no more," an' wouldn' drink no more either, ...and by mornin' she had passed.

The lessons learned in church and through Bible reading at home changed lives forever. Rose Casey asked her grandmother, Lillie Christopher, what she loved most about life, and she answered this way:

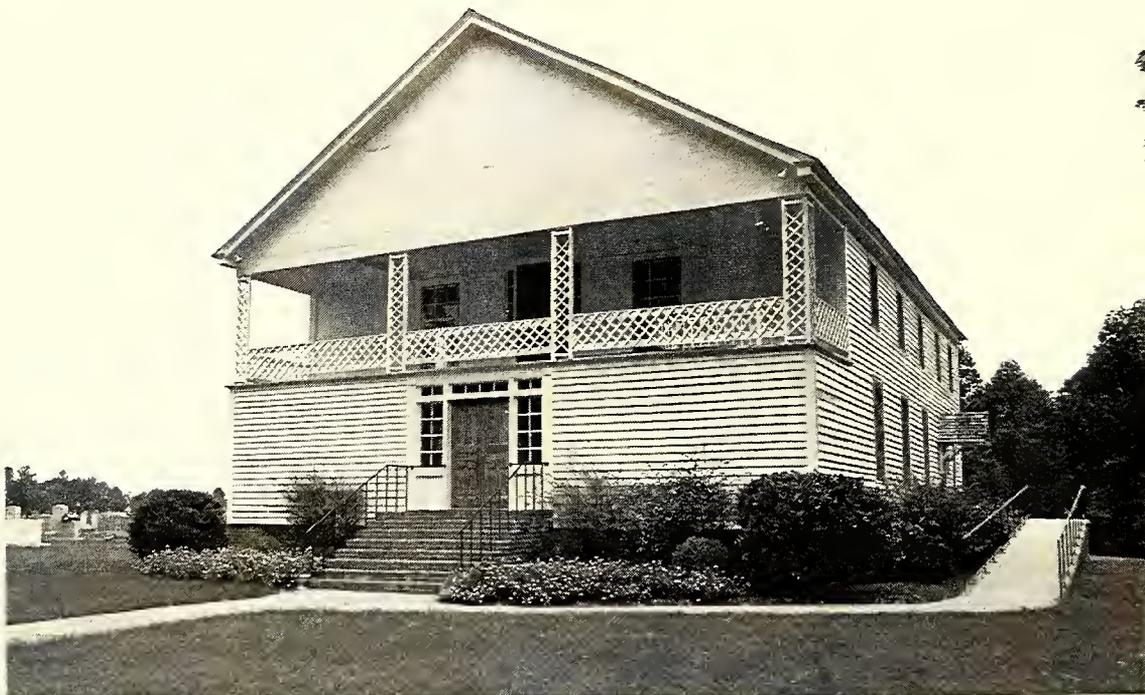
I love God! That would be my first love; after that it would be my children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren. Oh, I love to see the pretty sky, the sun, the moon. I love the snow. I just love to see the flowers and all the pretty things.

I don't think going to church is a pastime. Life's really good if people would just go thank God for everything. In other words, we all ought to put that first because it's going to catch us. We're gonna all, one of these days, be going to either Hell or Heaven; we'd better have that foremost in our minds. I've enjoyed this interview, and God Bless each and everyone of you!

The church was the central institution in the lives of this generation of Iredell citizens. It was their community center, a gathering and a sharing place, and it was often the one tie that held families together. It was their history. So many, like Olena Winford, remember attending church and sitting beside their beloved grandmother or grandfather. Many original church buildings have been replaced by larger and more comfortable sanctuaries; some of them have added educational buildings. Other churches like Shady Grove have faded into history, but all of them we well remember.



Shady Grove Baptist Church: 1984
Photo by Neil Wilfong

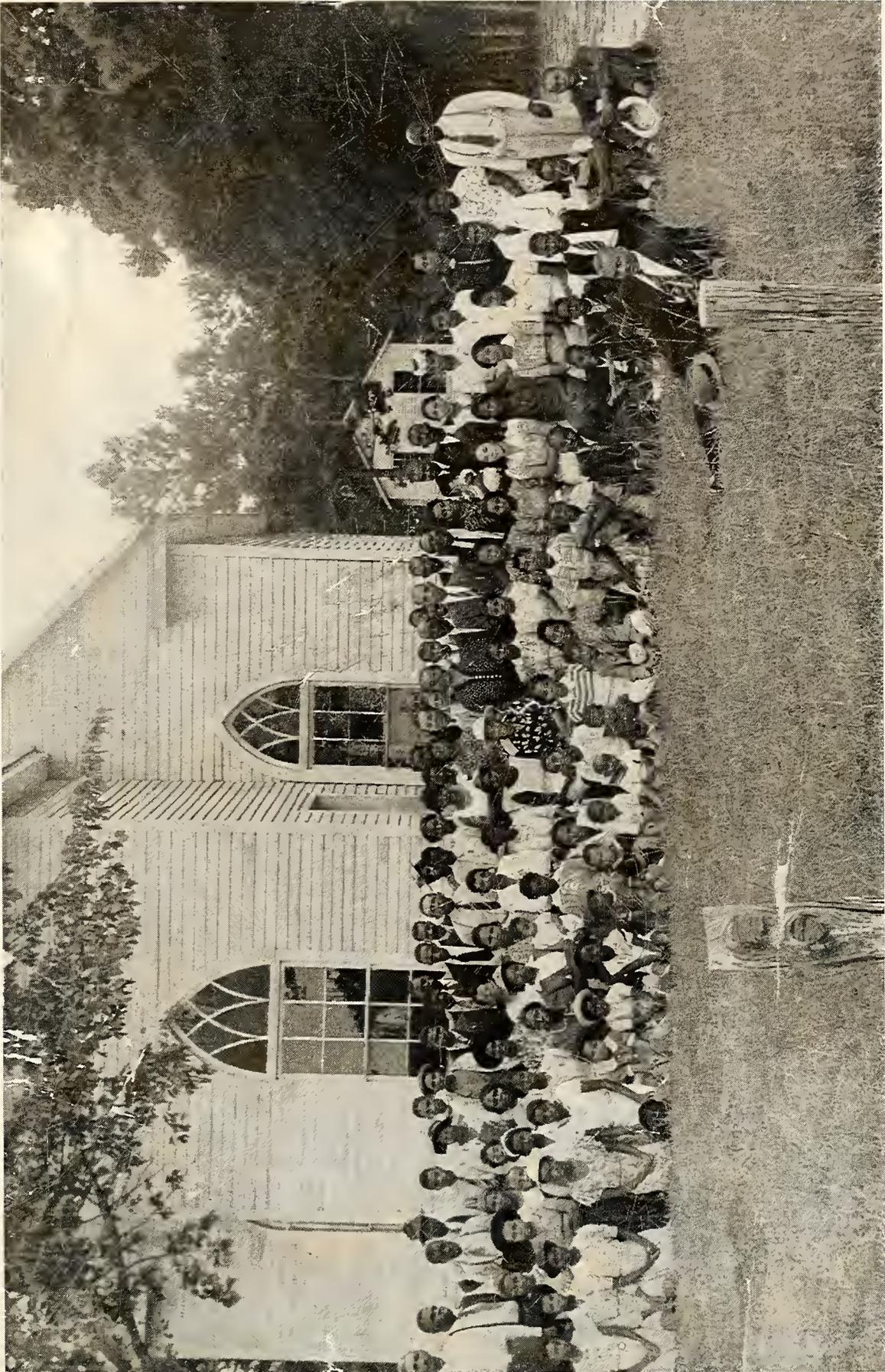


**Bethesda Presbyterian Church
(1987) after its restoration**

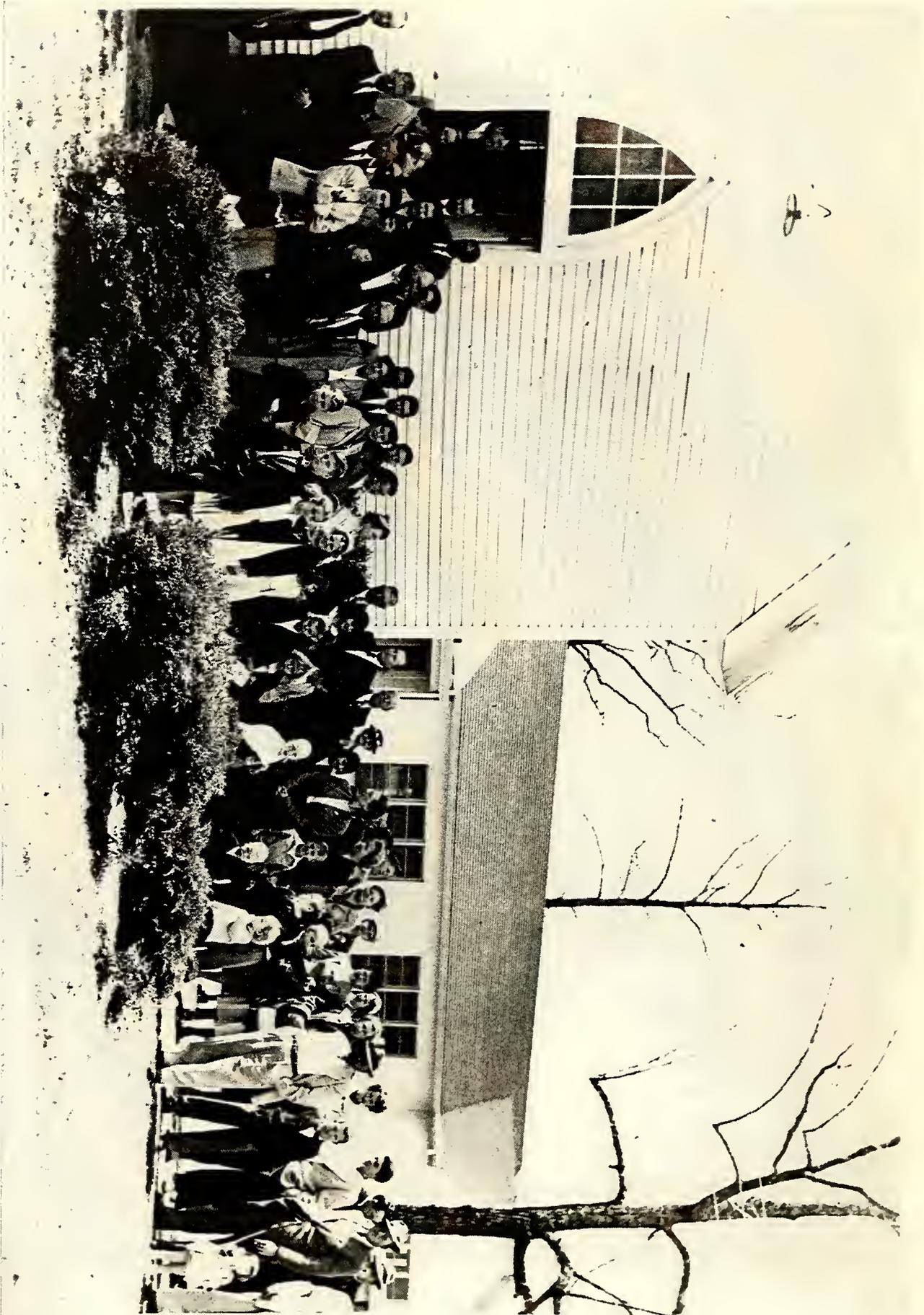
**Rev. J. Harper Brady
1891-1969**

Left Bethesda for mission work in Japan. He is seated by a Japanese man in the town of Nakamura on Shikoku Island (1920's).





Bible School Closing at Mt. Tabor United Presbyterian Church: 1940's



St. Paul's Lutheran Church Centennial: 1940

Education

"We had a variety of teachers, some of them very well-educated and some no education at all to speak of, but we got by."

Sadie Martin

The public schools were one of three institutions that were responsible for teaching and instilling values into the youth of Iredell. First and foremost, was the family, followed by the church. When the child came of age, the school became the primary vehicle for transmitting knowledge. The earliest documents located in our research are concerned with the role of the public school teacher. One is in the form of a contract on November 29, 1852, between A.F. Morton, teacher, and John Cook and Rial Mills, School Committee. It follows in its entirety.

Know all men by these presents that I A.F. Morton do hereby obligate myself to School those committed to my care in the following branches of biz (business): Spelling, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, English Grammar, and Geography to the utmost of my ability, five days in each week at the rate of fifteen dollars per month, school to commence about 9 o'clock in the morning and close at a reasonable time in the Evening.

We the committee on our part obligate ourselves to cause to be furnished a sufficient quantity of fire wood for said school and also to give said Morton an order to the Chairman of the Board of Common Schools for his money at the expiration of the School.

On the back of the document, which was handwritten on lined paper, were the names of the children in attendance. Most of the page was torn away, but 13 names remained. No child is shown as attending more than 14 days. As the year began in December, the school year probably spanned no more than two or three months. It is interesting that A.F. Morton was not to be paid until "the expiration of the school." With the kind of winter weather that many spoke of, 14 days could have been the total attended, in which case Morton's salary for the year might have been no more than \$15. His first child Julia, Carl Cook's grandmother, was born that same year.

Mary Douglas Warren produced the other document, which was dated two years later in 1854. Two public schools, Old Amity School and Midway School, were built on the farm of Mary's family during the ownership of Margaret Sharpe Douglas. Her husband, Julius Perkins Douglas, was employed by the school committee: H.R. Hall, James F. Bell, Jr., and M.F. Freeland. Instead of a contract, he was issued a certificate which was effective for one year only and was valid only in Iredell County. Douglas was evaluated on his ability in spelling, reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, and geography. The subject of history is missing from both the 1852 and 1854 lists.



Midway School: about 1907
Midway School was established in 1897 near the center of the Douglas Homelace.

These were in every sense of the word "family schools". A.F. Morton, John Cook, and Rial Mills were related, and the mother of Julius Douglas was a Hall. Given the size of families during this period, it is easy to see how a few of them could easily populate a school. This pattern continued into the 20th century. As late as 1919-1920, half the students at Ostwalt School in East Monbo were Troutmans, according to Jessie Lee Troutman Parker Brawley.

Many of the early schools were located in churches. Lou Ray Cartwright told us that one of these schools was established by the Quakers in the Winthrop Church in the Harmony area.

A group of Quakers up in...Maine decided they would send some people down here to see how the South had fared after the Civil War. In 1877, they came here to Liberty (among other places), and they said, "...conditions are very bad. The people are in need. They have enough food to eat, but they need clothes, and they need help. They are intelligent people, but they need education." They sent a lady named Hannah Bell down here to start a school, and it was where my meeting house is today.... They built a log school for use during the week, and on Sunday, the Quaker group began to use it for their meeting house. Granddaddy Mullis...remembered...going to school up there at Winthrop.... First, was a log school, second was the meeting house. The third, built in 1923, was larger and has been bricked.

According to historian O. C. Stonestreet, III, the county school system was established after the Civil War during the period of reorganization and the adoption of a new state constitution. Many of the early historical notes are missing, he added, but he places the date in the 1860's or 1870's.

Interviewer: (The county school system) is older than Mooresville's?

Considerably so. I've got references to a Brawley School in operation in 1888, and they had these one and two-room schools, literally hundreds, all over the county. Just in the Davidson Township alone (SW corner) we have 16 schools. There were 13 schools for white children and 3 schools for black children just in that township...That's about 256, that's a lot of schools.

One of the early attractions of the town of Mooresville was the Mooresville Academy, founded by Stephen Frontis. After teaching at Prospect and at Coddle Creek, Frontis became the representative for South Iredell in the state legislature, where he introduced the law that separated the school boards from the county commissioners, giving local officials the power to set the budgets.

In Statesville, there was a male academy until around 1910, and there was also Concord Female Academy, which opened in 1856 (now Mitchell Community College). There were other academies in the county, like the one in Olin which admitted both males and females, and others in surrounding counties. Many of these were attended by the youth of Iredell. Thomas Trivette gave us the following personal history.

Great Grandpa Trivette went to school at Louisville Academy, which was north of Yadkinville....I remember he said when he started to school, his oldest brother took him to school in the buggy....He stayed for some time before he come home for a visit. His brother asked him if he had any money. He said "No," so he gave him 50 cents, and he still had a dime of that when he come home.

Everyone has heard stories of how our grandparents walked miles to school in the snow. Here is what some people told us:

I walked to school about 3 miles on all dirt roads (in Shinnsville).

Interviewer: When it was bad weather?

That was the main days we went to school. When it was wet and bad, you couldn't work at home, so you went to school. Snow, too, if it wasn't too deep.

Russell Cowan

I started school in a one-teacher, one-room schoolhouse in Williamsburg. I walked a good mile and a half on dirt roads about 4 months a year, but I didn't go every day. In the 4th grade, they consolidated and I completed through 8th grade at Houstonville.

Louise Dalton

I didn't go to school until we came out to the Grassy Knob School. I started when I was 5 years old. Walked across the mountain. It was five of us. My brother kept goin' till he was 16 and he quit school. The old building, a one-room school, was made of logs, (and) had a great big old fireplace. (They) taught through the 7th grade. My Grandma Fletcher...used to knit stockings, and she pulled them stockin' up over our shoes to come up above our knees when it was snowin'. It's the way we kept warm. And we'd get to school and we'd take our stockins off and stand around the old wood stove. We had a fireplace in the first, one-room log building, and then they built another one (two-rooms in that one).

Amy Lou Mitchell

The first remembrance of coming to Houstonville to school was they had a fireplace in the schoolhouse. I can remember walking up there to school from back over there on the Richardson farm. They said it was five miles from there to Houstonville. (Elsie wasn't old enough, but we would bring her along, Laura, me, and Max. My daddy would be at the sawmill, and my mama would be helping the white people to work.) We would walk up there in the morning and walk back in the afternoon from

the school. When we would leave home, it would be so dark that we would leave with a lantern. When we would get so far in the woods that it would be light enough, we would put the lantern out and hang it up on a bush and come on to school. When we would get back to that place, it would be getting dark enough for us to light the lantern and go on home.

Mr. Hal Blackburn, (our teacher) would walk over there sometimes and the snow would be so deep, and he would have these fertilizer sacks tied around his shoes. Poor fellow, he would come in there and he would be so cold. Well, we would be the same way.

They had a recess in the morning and a recess in the afternoon. It would be almost time for the first recess when we would get there. Then, they'd have lunch, and when the next recess come, we'd have to leave to start home.

The way they got my age in the Bible, I lacked from the second day of July to the second day of August of being 20 years old. I didn't think I needed to go to school any further. I had just been promoted to the seventh grade that last school term.

Leona Patterson Dalton

When Rose Huie Brown McCollum went to Campbell School, they lived close enough for her to walk and go back to school to play after she washed the dishes at night. But when she went to Union Grove, "You had to walk or get you a buggy," she said. "I know the teacher drove a buggy." In our chapter "*Other Recollections*," Rose told us about a near mishap when she was given her only ride to school in a buggy. "And that stopped that," she concluded. Rose "walked till the whole road was full with the Sloans and the Walkers. You'd have a good time walking and cutting up." She added these details:

I don't know how the Walkers all finished. There was a crowd of 'em, and see they had to cross the creek. And if the creek was up, you had to ford it. Then their daddy would come an' meet 'em. If it was a'snowin' and things like that (and) if the creek was up they had a footlog they walked. And if they couldn't cross it, they had it fixed that they'd stay at our house. We'd have a lot of fun...had cornbread and milk for supper.

Mary Kimbrough attended high school for four years and walked every day. "Sometimes the weather was very cold and snowy. I had a classmate's dad drive by and never pick us up. Sometimes if the freight train was slow, we might catch a ride."

Jessie Lee Troutman's father sometimes took her to school on a mule. We asked if anyone laughed at this. She said, "No, they didn't have a ride of any kind." Jessie Lee gave us her impression of the Ostwalt School in East Monbo:



Oswalt School: 1924-25
Of 34 students at Oswalt School, 18 were Troutmans. Jessie Lee Troutman is tallest on front row.



Closing Day at Ostwalt School: 1919 or 1920
Jessie Lee Troutman stands in center in front of mother, Delia Troutman, in straw hat. Teacher, Ruby Troutman is in window wearing a hat.

We had two rooms. We had a partition in the center. We pulled 'em, you know, (to separate the rooms). She had different classes. We had writing, reading to the teacher, and spelling, just studying, that was about it. We had a wood stove in each room, and blackboards...we used 'em a lot. We had a special boy that sharpened all the pencils. He could sharpen 'em *so good*...with a knife; we didn't have sharpeners.

We had this desk on legs about this tall (chair height) and all this up here was books. That was the only library that we had. We had textbooks...reading, spelling, and geography...they had hardbacks and did real well, but by the time they got through my family, they were kindly threadbare. (Jessie was the youngest of 5 children. She was at Ostwalt from 1st through 7th grade.) I loved it! We played a lot! We really didn't study like they do now. We just didn't have to.

Seven of our interviewees attended Amity School, Clay Tolbert among them. He used his excellent memory for detail and considerable carpentry skills to build a model which he used as he described to groups of school children his memories of Amity School. Gaynell Freeland said that the school was "built in an 'L' shape, and the teacher had a platform in the center so that she could look back here at the boys and look this way at the girls." Boys and girls were separated in most early schools. Several people told us they remembered sitting in a desk for two students.

Sarah and Ruth Reeves in Statesville attended Morningside School, of which Sarah, an artist, built a model from the original bricks. On the back, is part of a blackboard from the school, and the signatures of the teachers are written there. "Most are dead now," said Sarah. Morningside was supposed to be a carbon-copy of D. Matt Thompson, which now serves as the Continuing Education Center for Mitchell Community College. Sarah shared several photographs of school groups, including the Class of 1912, the first to graduate at Morningside. C. W. Foushee, their teacher, also appears in the photograph.

Ruth added that the two schools were supposed to be built just alike in 1940 "to keep the peace," or to delay integration, in other words. We have heard comments that indicate ways in which Morningside was not equal to the standards of D. Matt Thompson, however. For example, there was no gymnasium at Morningside, as there was at the white high school.

A. L. Patterson talked about schools for black students in North Iredell:

I went to two schools...the Houstonville School, diagonally across from Mayberry Store. That was a one-room schoolhouse. I went with my brother a couple of times, and I would sit there and listen until he got ready to go home. Then they built the Virginia Dare School, a three-room school. After they consolidated the schools in Harmony, they turned that over to the colored schools. Then they built their own school, a

modern school out of brick with a cafeteria . The original colored school was up the road from Houstonville on the road from Williamsburg. It was at the (point) where one road branches off to go to Williamsburg and the other branch goes to Troy.

When they consolidated the schools, John Henry Redmond went to Houstonville, a three-room school. He then went to Virginia Dare, three teachers, "a teacher to a room with (sliding) paneled doors so it could be one big room. It was heated with a wood stove." He rode a bus no more than two years. The school day was 8 o'clock to 4 o'clock.

Ralph Messick also went to Virginia Dare when it was a three-teacher school. Then he went to Harmony for about one year. "I'm a dropout," he commented. They learned "just plain arithmetic, geography, history, and English."

A few were fortunate enough to be able to walk home for lunch, but not very many. Millard Knight "Took a lunch. Fried apple pies. Mother would dry fruit and put it away, and she would make fried apple fritters. If I had one in my dinner box, I had a good dinner."

John Henry Redmond added the following:

We'd have a little bucket we'd put our lunch in. If it was a family, some would have it all in one bucket. They'd have to sit together so they could eat together. We'd go up behind the schoolhouse in the woods and we'd get in the shade and eat if it was warm. We didn' have that much. Mother would make cookies. We had beans and peas. If we had a hog, we had biscuits and sausage or sweet potatoes and biscuits.

They made little lunch boxes you could buy at the store for those who could afford it. Some would have one handle and some would have two that you pulled down.

Jessie Lee Troutman's family carried boxes or bags or buckets which they would take out beside the schoolhouse and trade for whatever they wanted from the others...a piece of apple pie, a sausage or ham biscuit, and a sweet potato. "Then we would go across the road and play ball. The boys if it was cold, they would go down in the woods and carry the wood up and put it in the big long stove."

Thomas Trivette carried his lunch in "a little tin bucket...big biscuits with ham...One time my grandmother had those big pear preserves, you know, and a big biscuit with butter. I can remember eating them going up the road." Sometimes, he said some of the students would get into their boxes. And he added this note:

When my father taught school, they had some little gallon buckets he used to take his milk in and one to take his lunch in. They had lids that fit on 'em. One mornin' by

mistake, he took a bucket a' walnuts which my mother had picked up, so he had walnuts for lunch that day.

Sadie Martin started out at Central at age six, a one-teacher school which quickly grew to a two-teacher school. In 1914, the schoolhouse roof caught on fire and the school burned. Her brother built a schoolhouse with a front porch, vestibule, and closets on each side of that. The two rooms had a partition so that they could be put together for programs. By the time she finished the 9th grade, they had more rooms, and it became a junior high school.

To finish high school required going to boarding school. Sadie went to Scotts. Others went to Harmony and boarded in private homes or in the dormitory. Harmony had 11 grades. Lou Ray Cartwright and Sam Price, Jr. graduated in the class of 1947, the first to attend school for 12 years, finishing at Union Grove and Mooresville, respectively. There was no graduating class for 1946.

Amelia Kennedy informed us that "Harmony had the finest high school in the country." Ida Tharpe boarded there for two years in a private home. Her husband John was in the boys' dormitory. Students could also go back after graduation for additional courses. A. L. Patterson went back and took typing and bookkeeping. Others took teacher education and earned a teacher's certificate. "That was discontinued...about 1928 or 1930," he said.

Ruth Crosby was active in the 4-H Club in which she learned canning, raising turkeys and cotton, sewing and home improvement. She earned so many points ("It's in the record books.") that she was awarded a trip to Chicago. Her mother accompanied her. On the trip, she met her husband Victor, who was playing in his high school band which had placed first in the country.

There were some who mentioned sports. Rose Huie Brown McCollum was one of them:

I learnt basketball. Swanee fixed me a suit like hern (hers) so I could play. You had a middy blouse and the things was made like a bloomer (with) elastic around the knees. And it was black and you had a yellow tie. The thing made kind of a sailor collar, best I can remember.

Bill Williams told us that he played ball at school and was in the Glee Club (chorus), but he couldn't play basketball because of his paper routes.

Sue Morrow's father felt he needed to send them to Mooresville High School so that they could later go to college. Her friends went to Harmony, but she took the car and drove to Mooresville. She graduated there in 1924.



A Mock Wedding: 1929

Martha Mills (bride), Margaret Morrow and Mary Frances Deaton (bridesmaids), and Jacob Deaton (preacher) are dressed for a program at Shepherds School. Dresses were made of paper.



Eighth Grade Home Economics Class: Troutman, 1927

These students made their uniforms, including the hats. See old wood range in background.

Sue graduated at Mitchell College in 1926 with interviewees Alice Fowler and Gaynell Cooke. Julia Fowler was in the Academy at Mitchell that year.

Sarah Turlington walked to North School in Mooresville, which became Parkview. Then she walked to Central School "where Mitchell College sits across from the Methodist Church." She added, "Now I walked down Academy Street, and it was not paved, to the school up the hill...from the first grade to the eleventh. (Black) students after they passed the seventh grade had to go to Statesville to (Unity) High School".

Clay Tolbert emphasized the importance of the arrival of the school bus. He said that it changed everything for him and others who would have otherwise had no chance for a high school education.

The next great thing that happened in the '20's was the county for 6 of the 8 months had a T-Model school bus. I went to Troutman 8th grade on a T-Model school bus. One of the students was paid \$6 a month, or something like that, and we got to go to high school. Prior to that, some of the high school (students) went off and boarded at Mooresville or to the Farm Life School at Harmony. My daddy sent my brother off to Appalachian to Boone to finish high school. There were about 6 kids about 1926 that took week about driving the T-Model to Troutman to high school. I would never have gone to high school if it hadn't been for the T-Model school bus. (Some students also boarded in Troutman.)

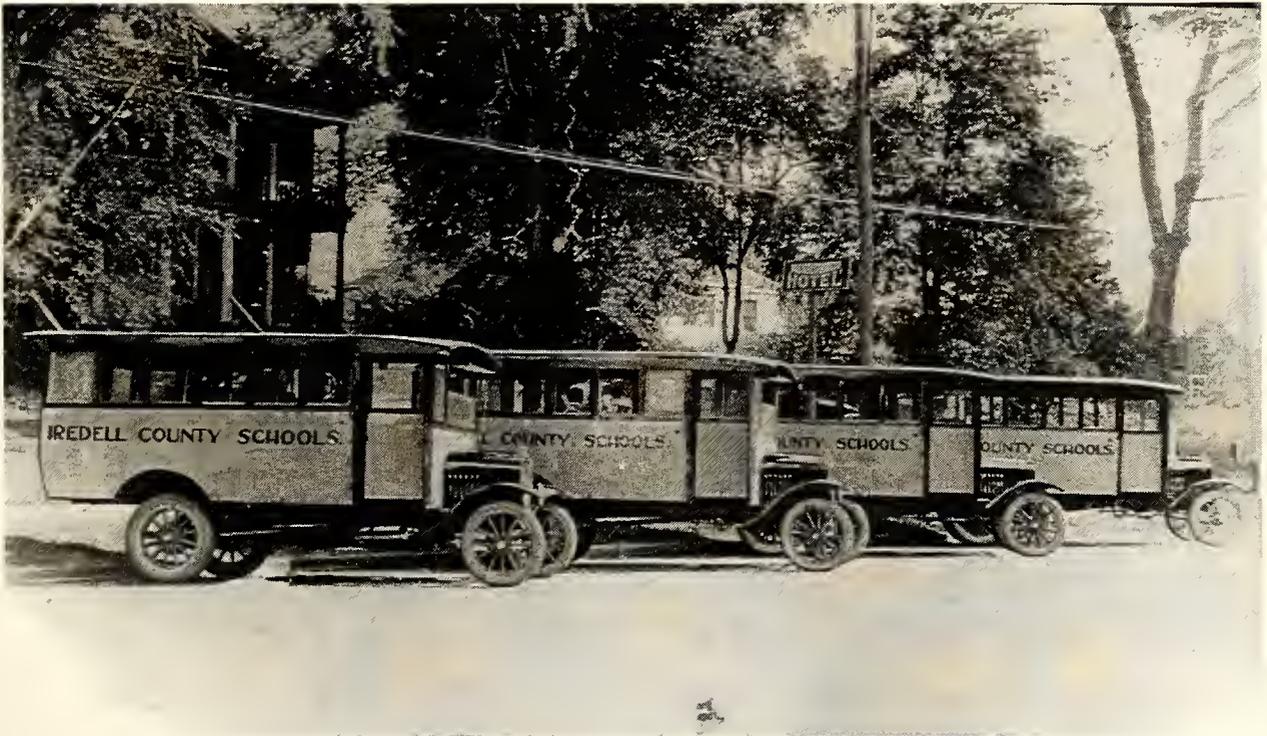
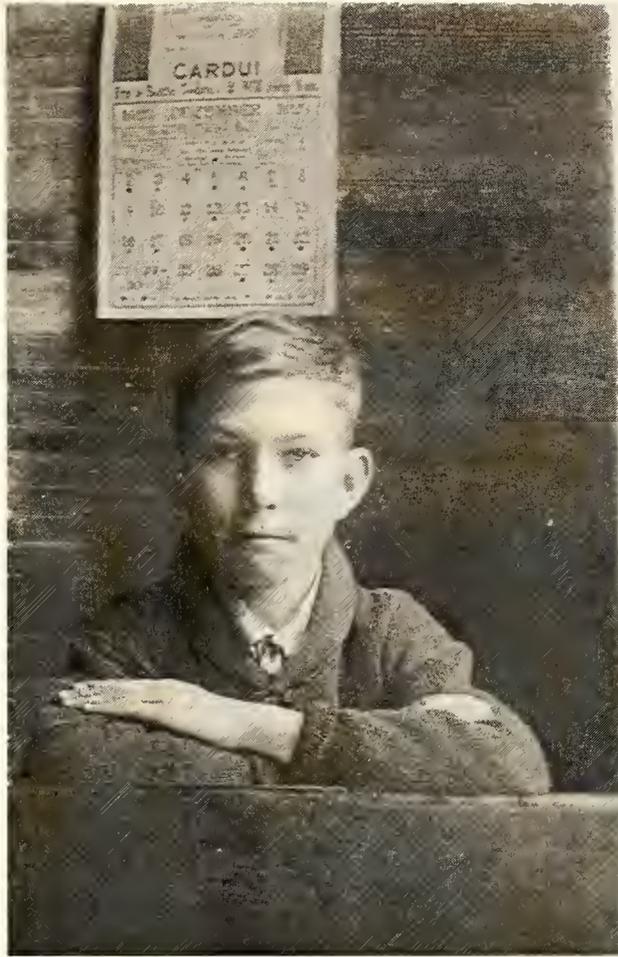
Lawrence Patterson remembers riding in one of these early buses. There were curtains that had to be opened and closed instead of windows. Ralph Cook, born in 1910, remembers driving one of these buses at Amity School.

The country school is one of the topics that fascinated Clay Tolbert. To him, its value could not be overstated. Clay claimed that he learned ninety percent of all that he knew from his years at Amity School (1919 to 1936).

When I entered there, I didn't know A from B or 1 from 2. But after eight years, I learned an enormous amount of English, history, mathematics, a healthy way of living, and many other things. Those Christian teachers would teach the Bible and would have us memorize Scripture, which you cannot do now.

There was a Literary Society, a Cotton Club, and a Pig Club. They even held a mock trial. "That was a thrill for a little fellow like me that had never been any farther away from home than Amity School. Country schools were really the seat of democracy, a wonderful thing. We didn't have the junk that's in schools now. We never heard of drugs. In the spring of 1922, there were three students that finished the 10th grade at Amity. These things are unbelievable...the school meant so much to me and to others!"

**Ralph Cook (age 13)
Amity School: 1923**



Iredell County School Buses in Statesville

The one school event that was remembered best was school closings. Mary Warren's picture of Midway School probably was taken on one of these occasions. (She points out the boys in coats and ties.) Jessie Lee Troutman shared a picture of the closing day at Ostwalt School, with their picnic tables and lunch boxes stored underneath. The entire community enjoyed these events. (See photos in this chapter.)

Gaynell Cooke Freeland described the event at Amity School:

The teachers and children always put on some program and invited the parents and the community. We built a stage at the school, outdoors part of the time, at Amity, and we put on our plays there. Statesville got to having a day in the spring (when) all the schools come...and paraded up and down. Most of the schools had a certain way they dressed, and we marched and carried our banner. I remember we girls wore white middie blouses and blue skirts, and the boys had on blue overalls and white shirts. One year, Daddy carried the banner for us. He...had something to do with the school board.

And Millard Knight, when asked about stories he remembered, shared a school recitation. "People would have dialogues and music. People that could recollect what they'd read would get up and say pieces."

Of all the things that lives in or moves in woodland marshes,
Flies there or creeps around, the funniest is the frog.
You see him sitting on the pond just above, muddy deep.
You feel him climb, look before you leap,
You raise your cane to hit him, his ugly-looking mug,
You get it half way up to hit him, and he goes "kerchug."

It came as no surprise when Amy Lambert, Clay Tolbert's daughter told us that he graduated first in his high school class. He was one of many who recalled verses memorized in their early school days. Clay recited Longfellow's "The Village Blacksmith" almost verbatim from beginning to end, only one of many ways in which he demonstrated his remarkable memory.

The Page Beattys had very different experiences at school. Page was 17 and in the 10th grade when he quit school. His wife was 15 when she graduated third in her class. "He was so mean they just started passin' him!" she said. Page said that he spent most of the time sitting in a desk beside the teacher. He continued:

If you hadn't been so smart and me so dumb, we'd a never met. I was do *dumb* I went four years before I ever got outta the second grade, and she went one year an' they put her in the third grade. I never did learn. I can't read yet to do no good.

Kate Sigmon said that she enjoyed school, "but Lord we didn't learn nothin'." Olena Winford "played" and said she "shoul'da went more. I never did learn fractions." But she enjoyed spelling bees even though the Gambles would always "beat us all." One of her friends went over to Ostwalt School where they had "meetin's an' thangs, an' they had a spellin' bee over there an' she won over there." Edna York was another who didn't like school and didn't go very much. "I don't know if I'd learned much if I'd went. I don't remember having any grades from it." She went to school at Eagle Mills.

Millard Knight gave us this insight.

I went to Liberty and we would have subscription school at Winthrop. I'd go maybe a month to subscription school. Rosie Bean was the first and then Lucille Alton come to teach. They would just get folks in the neighborhood together and they would build bird houses and carpenter work and such instead of teaching the fundamentals that you learn in free school.

(At Liberty) we had a certain time, 8 o'clock, to be at the schoolhouse. We had to get up and milk the cows and feed and go off to school and be gone all day and come in at 4 that evening. We put in 8 hours with recess of the morning and dinner time in the afternoon. I taught school for three days. It snowed one morning...about nearly knee deep...Gus Frazier drove up in the yard. He said, 'We don't expect many to be there; you just go ahead and take over and teach school in Emus (Cash's) place. Knowing how sick he is, he'll not be well enough to be there tomorrow. You just go ahead and teach till he gets back.' I taught school three days in my life,...and I never did get a thank you.

Millard added that they could have asked Ross Frazier, the assistant, but they would have had to pay him.

Russell Cowan said that he had *very* good teachers but you had to listen to what the teacher told you.

If you didn't, you may get a whippin'. Then you'd get another 'un when you got home if they told 'em about it...if you acted disorderly. Not like children are now. You get into trouble with the parents now if you correct the children. That's the reason we have so much trouble now with children.

Interviewer: Did you ever play hooky?

Did I what?

Interviewer: Stay out of school because you felt like it?

No! They wouldn't've stood for it!

On the subject of school discipline, Dick Cook deserves his own chapter. Dick and his wife Vivian told his story together:

Interviewer: Did you have a long school day and school year at Amity?

Dick: Seemed like a long time! Seemed like six years, not six months!

Vivian: I told him he carried his book till he wore it out. An' he got expelled, too. The whole school made it up on April Fool's Day we wadn' goin' ta school. An' everbody stayed out, an' they went over there in Gene Blackwelder's pasture. An' that's where we stayed fer a long time, an' then some of 'em got scared.

Interviewer: Why is it Dick was expelled?

Vivian: Because he wouldn't come back in the school. Up towards dinnertime everybody decided they better go back to school, they might be expelled.

Dick: We set out there at the Amity Lutheran Church, up there in them trees.

Vivian: Him an' Oscar Cook, Edward Moore an' Ray Cook. About 5 or 6 of 'em. They stayed it out over there in that tree all day. An' the teacher kep' tellin' 'em an' warnin' 'em. Said, 'If you don't come on in, I'll have to expel you.' So she did expel 'em.

Int.: But you did get back into school later on?

Dick: Aw, she didn' mean ta expel us; she just let on like she was.

Vivian: Yes, she did too!

Int.: Would you have been about 14?

Vivian: He was about 16.

Int.: Were you close to graduation?

Dick: Oh, I done passed that.

Vivian: He graduated when he got expelled!

Weeks later, Dick's father found out about this by accident. He came in from the field one day and said, "Somebody's been over there plowin' in that field, an' I didn' plan on plantin' over there." Dick said, "It was me!" He had been bored staying at home with nothing to do.

Clyde Tulbert also knew about school discipline. "If you didn' stay quiet, you got hickory," he said. "Doris Madison was my first (teacher), but I remember one thing about her. If you talked or whistled, she'd pin a tag on your back...with a pin. It said, 'You told a story.' I went home and mother seen that on my back and she just about went over and tore Doris up!" Clyde never thought about taking off the note!

Millard Knight told us about Hope Johnson who walked on crutches. They were attending the subscription school at Winthrop.

The teacher had a rule when they rung the bell, they wanted everyone in the house. He would stand at the door and anybody that was late, he would spank them for being late or tardy. So Hope, he was late. He had been off down there in the woods and the bell rung, and he's late gettin' back. As he come around the schoolhouse, the window was up, and he just rose on his crutches and stuck his feet in at the window, slid inside and sit down in there and the teacher out at the steps waitin' fer him to come around building. He wuz done settin' in the house.

There were some children who got into trouble more easily than others. Olena Winford admired her teachers, Mr. and Mrs. Parrish, Mrs. Holly, and Mrs. Wilkins, but she said, "Ethel would get me in trouble. She could hold hers and I'd laugh."

Sam Price, Jr., also gets an honorable mention in this category. The principal at South School, Mary Greenly, was very strict. One day the teacher sent Sam out of the room for talking. There was a little flower stand outside that they tried to make flowers grow in. When the principal came by, Sam started playing in the flower bed as if he was working on it so that she wouldn't know he had been sent out of the room because "he had done an infraction...."

"Most of the time, I was able to avoid being caught," said Sam, but he admits getting into mischief. Once he was put in a typing class temporarily while they were waiting for a chemistry teacher. "That wasn't my cup of tea, and one day I got disgusted with what I was typing and picked up the typewriter and threw it out the third story window....I think you're the first person I've told that to. That's been a good many years since. I think the principal is deceased now."

Ruth Crosby remembered Celeste Henkel, who rose to the rank of Superintendent of Iredell County Schools. She had a wooden leg and walked with a cane. "I remember her coming into school and watching how we did, and how teachers performed. We were looking forward to seeing her."

Maggie Phifer was born in 1901 and started to school when she was seven. She remembered when the teacher asked her mother to write her age, she wrote down "a little over seven years" and "I carried it to school." When asked about any important building she remembered, Maggie said, "I do remember the little one-room schoolhouse," even though the school was so far away that she missed the whole year. Maggie's early experiences must have made a vivid impression. She was one of many who grew up to become a public school teacher.

One of the first teachers we heard about was the grandfather of Russell Cowan, who was old enough to have been a slave. Very few black people were taught to read. Most likely he taught himself, yet he was a teacher in five different schools in Rowan and Iredell County. Russell named several of them:

He taught at Mt. Ulla, a school that's still standing but has become a house, and at Knox School before I went there. He was over here in Mazeppa. I'd take him over

there on Sunday or Monday in the buggy and I'd go back and get him on Friday. He had ...a niece he lived with...on the Craven place.

For those who sought higher education, Mitchell College was the answer. It was an academy where people could complete high school in addition to a two-year college where people like Sue Morrow could complete two years of their post-secondary education. Linnie Sue completed her Class A teacher's certificate through Lenoir Rhyne College. Sue named seven other friends who were either a year ahead, a year behind, or graduated with her at Mitchell who also became teachers. Sue spent one year with her sister Kate who lived in town; her senior year she lived in the dormitory. Students were not allowed to go beyond the Circle without a chaperone. As one of the handpicked seniors, Sue was given the responsibility, or the privilege, of going downtown with students in the Academy, among whom was Julia Fowler, interviewee. Sue also remembers making Alice Fowler's graduation dress for a project in a sewing class.

Lawrence Patterson, who attended Mitchell College a few years later, shared this history.

Mitchell College was a Presbyterian Institution at that time. Most of my religious training was gotten at Mitchell College. Before, it was a girl's school. In the early '30's they started letting boys go there as day students. When I went there, there were possibly 30 males there and the rest were females...about 150...boarding students and day students. The regular A.B. course in those days...English, one language, Bible, chemistry, algebra, solid geometry. We had a basketball team, and we played various little colleges like Wingate, Lees McRae at Banner Elk and at Hickory. Sometimes basketball games were played over at the high school (D. Matt Thompson). They also had football, and that's when softball started.

I went to Mitchell because we didn't have enough money for me to get an education. That was during the Depression. I intended to go to State College for engineering. I drove the family car. Sometimes I would ride with Miss Daisy Nicholson. She taught at Statesville High School.

Lawrence attended North Carolina State College for four years. He feels that he was well-prepared by his courses of study at Mitchell, but only a few things from high school helped him.

Lou Ray Cartwright went to Mitchell College for another reason. When she graduated from Harmony in 1947, she had led a "very protected life." She said her mother talked to Mrs. Reid, one of her favorite teachers, and they agreed that it would be best for her to go to Mitchell "until (she) got acclimated into college life." Her teacher said that it was going to be a big

change for her. Lou Ray and Becky Mayberry, best friend and daughter of one of her mother's high school classmates, lived in the dorm the first year.

There was only one catch to that. We went to Mitchell the year the veterans came back and entered Mitchell, also. We had a real eye-opening experience. We had a WAC who lived nextdoor to us in the dorm. She had led a pretty interesting life in the army. Becky lasted the first semester and then went home. I think she drove to school the rest of the year. I lived with my aunt and uncle on North Center Street a while. Then I lived in an apartment for a while; the last semester I drove the car to Mitchell.

Lou Ray also went to Women's College in Greensboro (now UNC-G) with a friend of hers that her mother had met and liked. Her friend's mother and Lou Ray's encouraged them to become roommates, which they did. After graduation, Lou Ray's first teaching job was in Harmony.

This was quite an experience. Those were the longest days I ever put through, the first year I taught. Then by the time I had taught 3 or 4 years, they were the shortest days because I couldn't get in all I wanted to do, and it was that way till the end. I never had long days at school.

When I started teaching, I doubt very seriously that I had more than 2 or 3 students who did not live on a farm. No one's daddy was going into town to work. All it would have been would be someone at a store, a doctor's child or something like that. Television was in existence, but not many people had televisions. They had work to do in the afternoons after they went home.

Gladys King also became a teacher. She told us how difficult it was for her to go to Salem College, which became Winston-Salem Teacher's College (now Winston-Salem State). "It cost \$30 to enter, and I had \$25. Mrs. Phifer helped me to go to college. I had to wait on tables, clean classrooms, and wear leftover clothes." When she started teaching in 1937, her salary was \$32 a month. Because of her income, she said that her grandfather's retirement check was cut from \$12 to \$8 a month.

Her first school was a one-teacher school. After one year, she went to Unity and then to Houstonville. She served 12 years in Iredell County and 8 years in New York, serving part of the time as a type of resource teacher.

I taught all of 'em all the subjects. I taught the first grade, second and third grades, fourth and fifth grades down here. When I had the first grade, we'd get out at two o'clock and then go over to the high school to teach art appreciation to the 8th grade.

In New York, Gladys taught kindergarten through eighth grade. She said, "It was rough at first. We were rejected, the blacks from the South."

Fleecy Griffin graduated from high school at Lincoln Academy at King's Mountain, and later had two years at Fayetteville State, followed by summer school during which she completed her Master's Degree from Livingstone. She taught 45 years in Iredell County, serving at Scotts, Unity, and East Iredell in that order. She enjoyed Unity and East Iredell equally and had no problems with anyone, even though students were in racially mixed classes. She liked Mr. Campbell at Unity, and Mr. Miller, principal at East was nice, "and he was white," she added. "At East there were open rooms at that time. Before I retired, I taught special education students, about five at a time."

Amy Lou Mitchell went to high school in Union Grove and then to High Point College. Even with some help from her brother and her mother, money was scarce, and she stopped going to school and began teaching, finishing her degree in summer school and by correspondence from Women's College in Greensboro (UNC-G). She also completed her Class A certificate but not her degree. Amy Lou began teaching in 1929, first and second grade, and she taught for 39 years. She is proud of the fact that she has taught two doctors, five ministers, and numerous teachers, like Winona VanHoy. Amy Lou also taught with Winona and with Homer Kever, Iredell historian. "I said if I ever wanted to know any question about English or anything like that, I'd depend on Homer. I was in school with Alta, his wife. She was homesick when she came to Union Grove and she'd come to my room cryin'. The principal's wife graduated with us. Amy Lou also taught interviewer, John Kent Robertson, of whose ability she spoke very highly.

Sarah Turlington also attended Mitchell College. She taught school during the Great Depression when she was living in a dormitory at Lee's McRae. She taught American history, world history, and civics. "I certainly knew it was hard times," she said. "We were paid fifty dollars a month and room and board, which consisted of food the students brought in to pay their tuition."

Julia Fowler, graduate of the Mitchell Academy, became a librarian. Her interviewer Jackie Conkey remembered her well from her high school days in Statesville. She set up libraries in a high school and an elementary school here and another at a school in Florida.

O.C. Stonestreet, III, graduated from Mooresville High School, where he also played in the high school band. He taught history at Brawley Middle School for many years before his move to Celeste. He is also well-known

for the courses in Iredell history that he teaches for local teachers through the Continuing Education Division at Mitchell Community College. His contribution to this local history project has been noted in our Acknowledgements.

Mary Douglas Warren is a veteran teacher who is now retired from the Iredell County Public Schools. She has also been a valuable resource for this project. Mary's roots in our public schools go back to her grandfather, Julius Perkins Douglas, who was one of the very first to teach school in Iredell County, as we reported early in this chapter. Mary claims that it was he who taught her more about early childhood than any course or textbook could. He also taught her to value history and collected hundreds of valuable photographs, some of which are included in this book.

Another veteran teacher, Sue Cook, began her work in 1928 and continued for 42 years in Iredell County. Almost all of her experience was at the 5th grade level at Cool Springs. She said this about the addition of a 12th grade. "Classroom teachers advised that a grade be added prior to first, a public kindergarten. Instead, the decision was made to add the year at the eighth grade level. "The higher ups have never listened to those who teach in the grade schools."

Sadie Martin also emphasizes the problem of the lack of preparation for public school, and she speaks with knowledge as almost all of her years were spent in first grade. She said that, "some of them didn't know anything. A lot of them didn't know how to turn pages...or the first of a book from the last...Some of them had no idea that you started and looked across the line to read." Sadie gave us one example of another gap in preparation.

I had one little girl to come to Troutman from somewhere up at Wilkes or Ashe. Anyway, they hadn't had electricity. So, when we had ice cream time, she wanted to get a popsicle. She ate part of it and she took the rest and put it in her locker. She wanted to take it home to her sister.

Sadie taught for 40 years, starting as the principal of a two-teacher school. "The thing that I believed in was to be right there with those pupils. When they went out to play, I went out to play." Sadie always knew that she was born a teacher. "As far back as I can remember, I had school with my dolls...and my brothers too if I could get them to cooperate." She adds that her mother and aunt were teachers. Her younger sister Cora also became a very fine teacher at Troutman High School and later served as a guidance counselor at South Iredell.

Sadie's students participated in operettas, dances, and toy orchestras, special activities that she planned. Her biggest thrill was to see an under-prepared child succeed.

Some were ready to come to school. Some wanted to be home with Mama. Some of them cried. I found out later, if I'd had a bigger lap so I could have gotten more of them on my lap, I'd have gotten along better, but two or three was about all I could accommodate at one time. By the time that I retired, most of them were at least partially ready for entering school. They made rapid progress, I would say.

Sadie could write her own book on school discipline. As a matter of fact, she did write at least a chapter in her interview.

Discipline was strongly encouraged; it's supposed to be. They more or less walked the chalkline. In all of my years of teaching, I very seldom took a child or had to have a principal to intercede. I'd maybe isolate them. I drew a circle and put their chair in it and told them they were on a desert island, and they couldn't have anybody to associate with...until they could find somebody they could get along with. That would get things back to normal about as quick as anything.

The important thing was to have the child's interest. If I could see that they were losing interest, I'd maybe just change over or stop and maybe sing a song or something and get their attention renewed *for myself* as well as for them. Then I could go ahead and have classes.

One year at Central we were working on an operetta. They had a habit of going around to the basement and looking down the steps and I said, 'If you go and look down in that basement, I'm just going to spank you when I get you back.' When I came back in from practice I hadn't planned to ask if they had looked because I figured one or two had. One of them said, 'Miss Martin, I looked down.' Another one said, 'I looked down, too.' I said, 'All right, anybody who did come up here and stand in a straight row across the schoolroom.' Well, it just about filled the whole room. I got so tickled that they'd tell all that when I hadn't even asked, that I had to go out in the hall and laugh a while, and then I went down the line and gave each one's backside a pop...not a hard one. I learned then never to tell them what you were going to do if they did "so and so".... I've learned (also) that the same thing that will do with one child or one group of children, won't do with another one.

Sadie Martin disciplined by staying in touch with her students. With her varied activities, it is easy to see how she kept their attention so well. One of her most outstanding attributes is her ability to read and respond immediately to any situation. In Sadie Martin's hands, discipline became an art.

Sadie Martin summarized public education during her day this way:

A typical day started around 8 o'clock. You had morning recess, lunch, and afternoon recess. You recited at the recitation bench, you had your class, then you went back to your seat and studied and listened in. If you were younger, you learned a lot before you even got up to the grades ahead of you. We had a variety of teachers, some of them very well-educated and some no education at all to speak of, but we got by. Several of us went on and finished high school and college, so I guess we got a pretty sound foundation, even though we had a small school and some unprepared or uneducated teachers.

Sadie Martin understated the impact of our early schools. And she did not mention salaries. Clearly, there were many like her who taught for reasons other than money. They are among the finest teachers Iredell will ever produce, and they gave their lives to their students for up to four decades. It should come as no surprise that, because of their influence, some of their students chose careers in education and, thus, became role models for other soon-to-be teachers. Seventy years after they began their work, their very long shadows continue to grow. These early public schools could not have left us a finer legacy.



Sadie Martin

Linnie Sue Morrow Cook

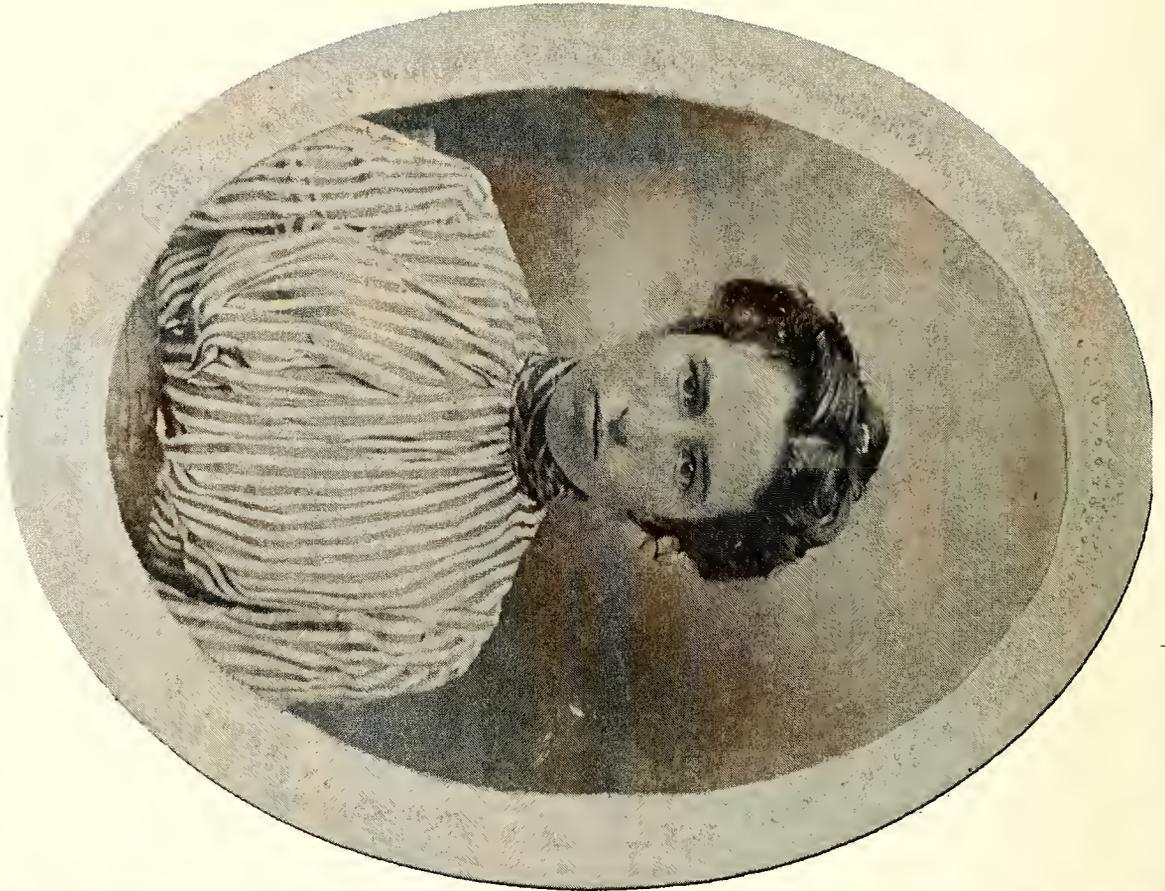


Amy Lou Mitchell



Gladys King: 1938:39

Gladys, born in 1916, in her first year of teaching. She is at Unity High School.



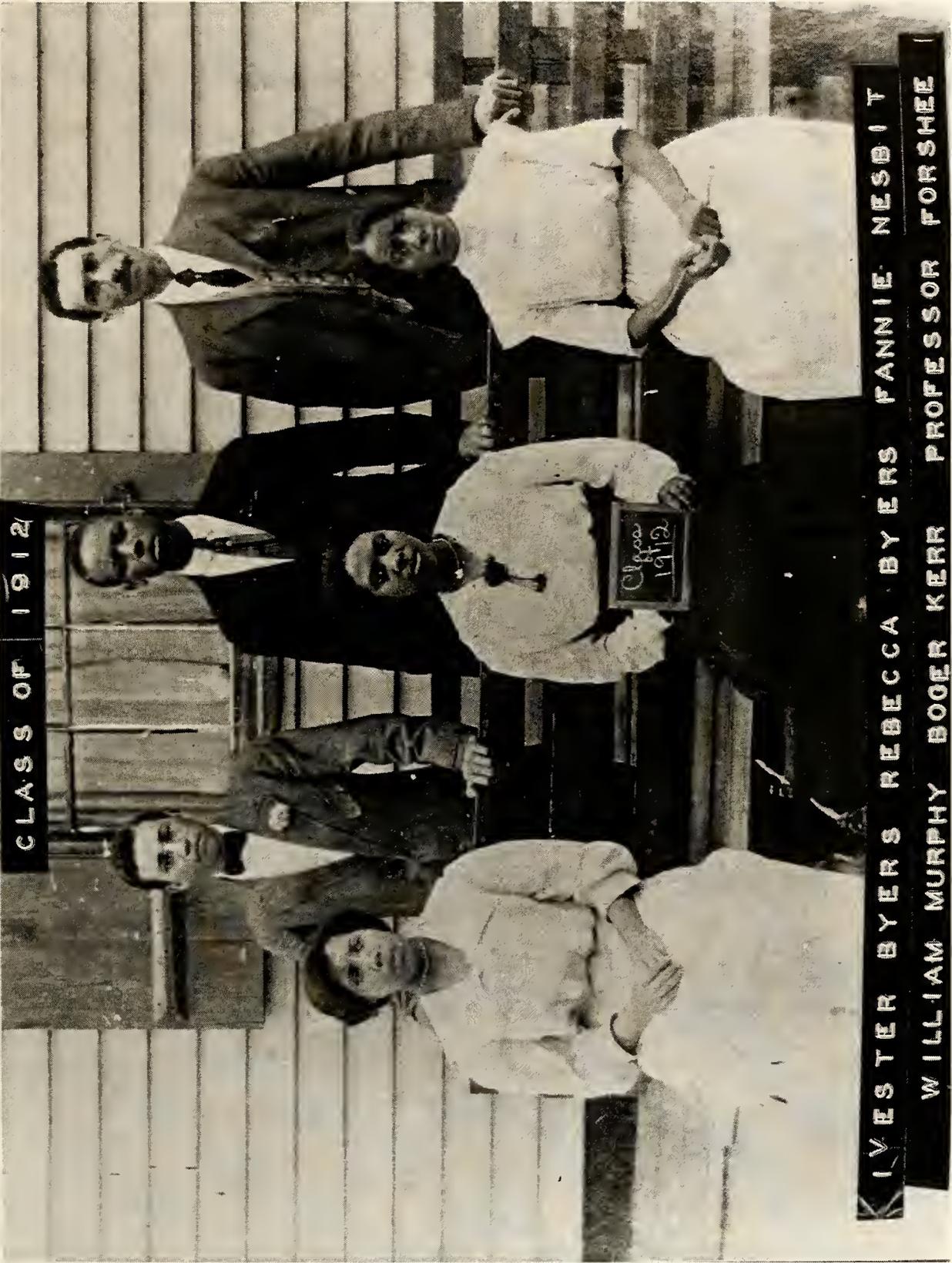
Cecelia Holmes Messick: 1882-1938

Mother of Ralph Flake Messick and teacher before he was born. She was born in the Messick homeplace pictured in Home chapter.



Lawrence Patterson: 1930's

Born in 1915 in Houstonville, attended Virginia Dare School, Harmony (where he rode in a Model-T bus they called "The Mayflower").



CLASS OF 1912

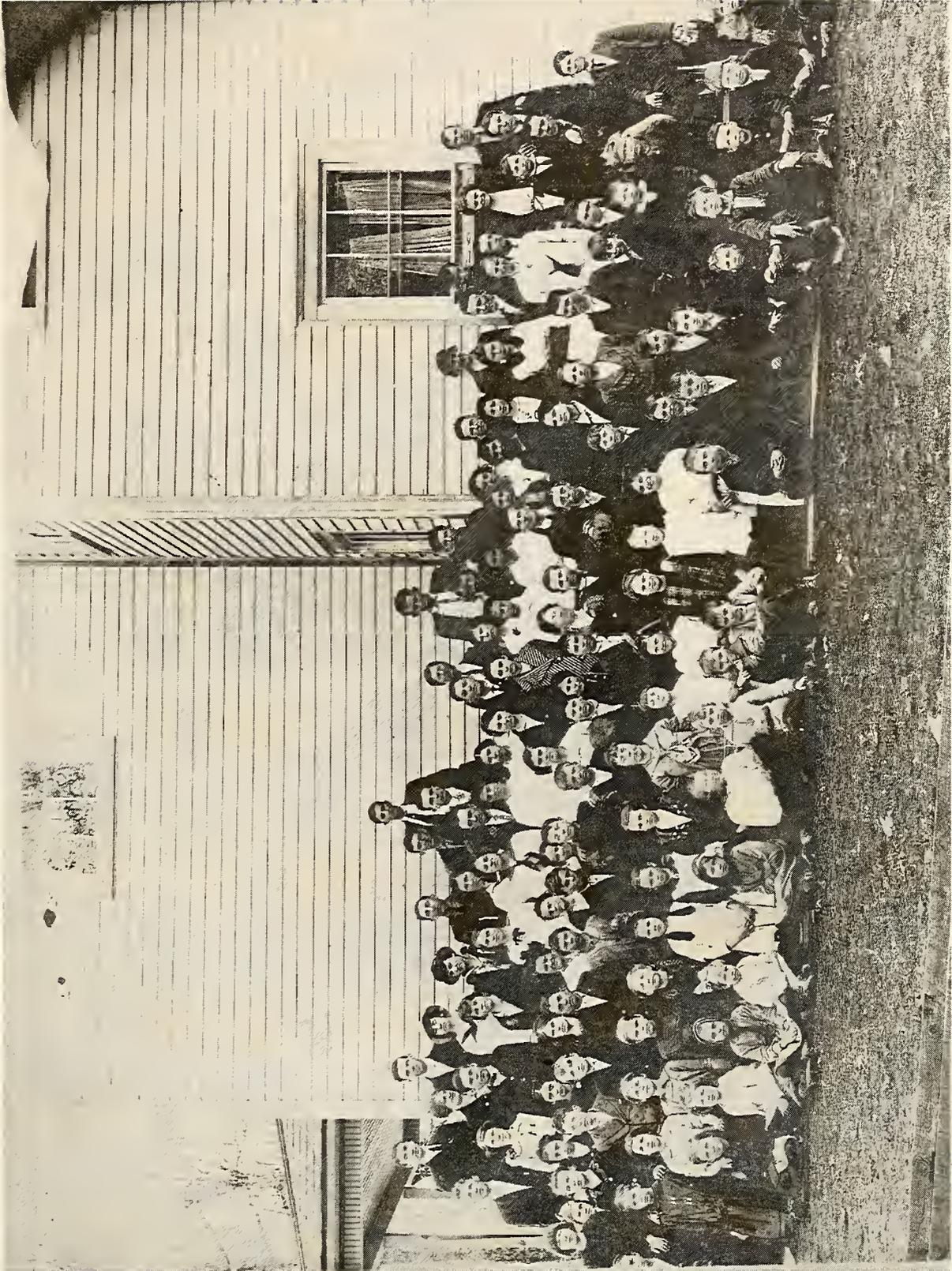
WESTER BYERS REBECCA BYERS FANNIE NESBIT
WILLIAM MURPHY BOGER KERR PROFESSOR FORSHEE

First class to graduate at Morningside School: 1912
Photo courtesy of Sarah Reeves



Morningside School

Teacher Ruth Gray Renwick with a class that includes a sister (Genevieve) and a cousin (Harry) of the Reeves



Harmony High School
James Brady and Harvey Nicholson (left end back row) and Muriel Hendren (fourth from left back row)



Mitchell College: 1926
Interviewees Sue Morrow Cook, Gaynelle Freeland, and Alice Fowler were graduates of 1926. Julia Fowler was in the academy.

Clothing

"I didn't wear any fine clothes. They kept us covered."

Fleecy Griffin

The people of Iredell chose their clothing more for its function than style during the early decades of the twentieth century. Most of them described their clothes in much the same way as Fleecy Griffin did. She wore, "Common, ordinary clothes. I didn't wear any fine clothes. They kept us covered. Underwear, you know, long drawers. They weren't no fine clothes, just ordinary everyday clothes. Daddy would buy us Oxford shoes, that kind of stuff." And regardless of economic level, everyone dressed for warmth. Amelia Kennedy says, "They had to wrap us up. The only heat we had was from the fireplace or the kitchen stove. That's why we were raised in the kitchen...I still live in the kitchen! (We wore) one thing, (black bloomers and cotton stockings). It was cold weather, and we (wore) union suits to school. And the children complain now about air conditioning and all. It was a lot colder than it is now!"

Sadie Martin adds a few details for us. She walked to school all her life, to Central and later to Scotts, unless it was bad weather, in which case her father would take them in the buggy. There were wood stoves in each room at Central, and in those years, she wore "home-knitted wool stockings, dresses and coats and things. In the new building, it was warmer, and we wore wool skirts and a middy blouse. I guess that was during World War I. Whatever the fashion, my mother was an excellent seamstress. She could look at a picture in a magazine and sit down, cut a pattern, and make a dress by it. We always had very nice clothing. She bought the cloth, in warmer weather, cotton, and in colder weather, wool skirts or wool dresses. We always dressed to suit the weather." Amy Lou Mitchell's Grandma Fletcher also used to knit stockings. "She pulled them stockin's up over our shoes to come up above our knee if it was snowin'."

Most clothes were made at home, for boys as well as for girls. Millard Knight says, "Mostly I had good clothes; my mother made my clothes." So did Gaynell Cooke's mother, Fannie Sigmon Cooke. She even made suits for her father and brothers. "We girls all had homemade clothes. You couldn't buy 'em; there wasn't very many clothes in the stores that was already made. We bought the material, and Mother made her own patterns a lot of times. You couldn't buy patterns."

Learning to sew was an important part of a young girl's education. Linnie Sue Morrow's mother made shirts for her brothers and taught her to make buttonholes when Sue was very young. "We didn't have a buttonhole maker on the sewing machine. Even when my youngest brother went away to State College in 1930, she made his shirts, and I worked the buttonholes before he left." Sarah Turlington's mother also made her clothes with her help. "She treadled it, and I would help her pull the treadle so she didn't have to work so hard."

There were always items which could not be made at home, so a trip to town was necessary "maybe two or three times a year." Jessie Lee Troutman used to go to town with her father in the wagon before they got a car. "We'd take a day to go to Statesville to buy winter clothes for school. One day, for everybody...sweaters, shoes, we didn't buy coats. We used to buy sweaters at Belk's. The wood floors were oiled with something. All the sweaters on the left counter, a big *long* row of sweaters...they smelled *terrible!*"

The Tulberts went mostly to Elkin or Statesville. There weren't any clothing stores in Yadkinville. Leona and Elsie Patterson remember buying clothes, material, and shoes in a grocery store in Harmony. Elsie also remembered one across the creek in the "Lone Hickory" settlement. Gaynell Cooke shopped with her family in Mooresville two or three times a year.

Harry Brawley's family went to Statesville for the "one cloak a year" that he was allowed. "My daddy gave us a choice, We could have a coat or a sweater, and I picked the sweater. (We had) two pairs a overalls and two pairs a union suits. We wore each one a week." While Harry was born in 1911, Sam Price was born in 1929 and grew up in Mooresville. His clothes came from "John Mack and Sons, that was a very old store in Mooresville. My mother liked to trade there. We wore knickers, which were pants going down to your knee with a little tight area that kept it from going down further, but it actually wouldn't go much further if it could go down." Vera Saddler's mother also got her clothes at Belk's in Mooresville, but her brothers' clothes came from the Turner family.

Shoes presented a special problem. They must be extremely durable as most, like Maggie Phifer, "only got shoes once a year. I had replacements every year." Sue Cook agrees, "My mother hitched the horse to the buggy and took us to Mooresville and bought us a good comfortable pair of shoes every fall. We wore them to school all week, and on Saturday afternoon we polished them and wore them to church. Same thing for church."

Leona and Elsie Patterson heard their father and grandmother talk about how their father used to make their shoes.

They'd take cowhides and dry 'em, horsehides and dry 'em, and then they'd cut 'em out and make shoes out of 'em. I don't know what they made for the bottoms and the heels. I guess they used some of them hides and stacked 'em up enough to make them heels and soles for the shoes.

Jessie Lee's shoes came from Sherrill & White Shoe Store. Amelia Kennedy told us about earning money for her shoes:

I remember one time I had a piece of cardboard in my shoe, but I couldn't do without getting it mended. It was seventy-five cents in Harmony when I was in school, to get new shoes. But we had jobs to do like feedin' the chickens, and in later years I always helped with the dairy.

Harry Brawley got one pair of shoes a year until he was "around fourteen years of age. And we bought 'em at Belk's. Line Brand Shoes, and later we got Elk's Tough Hide."

They were all good shoes! Sunday and every other day they were worn until I was about fourteen years old, and I filled up fertilizer fer Mr. Cloyd, a neighbor, and I got 50 cents a day. 'Course, I didn't spend a whole day, but he still gimme 50 cents. My daddy said, "Take part a that back because that's too much."

And I got me three 50-cent pieces, and I bought me a dollar and a half pair of tennis slippers, and *boy, could I run!* I didn't have to watch my feet then. Before... (shakes his head). They were wore out by spring. When it got warm enough, I'd go barefooted. Except when I'd go to pick blackberries. I'd put on them ol' *hard* shoes. I'd go barefooted the rest of the time.

But *man*, when I got those tennis slippers, they had a ball on the side of 'em. That was the decal. *Man, I'm tellin' you I could run! I could go!*" I felt just as light...*woooo!* I was just floatin'!

Lex Sloan also knew how his shoes and clothing were acquired." Cotton was the main crop that would bring you shoes and overalls in the fall," he said.

Bill Williams counts his blessings: "I consider myself lucky because I was a little more fortunate than the average child. All of my clothes were bought. I had a Sunday suit. I also had Sunday shoes. My family worked at an industry, and we were able to do rather well."

There were other ways to get clothes, of course. Edna York doesn't remember ever having any "store bought" clothes. "Back then, older people made a lot of their own clothes and cloth, too. I have seen the looms my grandma made them on," but Edna herself never used one.

Elsie and Leona Patterson remember their grandmother's spinning wheel that she used to make thread. "She could take that thread and make the cloth, and then her and Mama would put it down on the floor somewhere and cut it out and sew up the garments for us to wear....It would be one color, but years later, they would use different kinds of thread, and it would be different colors in it. They would have to put all them different kinds of thread on that wheel and get it hooked up some way or another so that they could run it. It would be gingham, calico, and percale. They'd take the last picking of the cotton (she had something that looked like curry combs...two paddles), and she would fuzz that up and make thread. That was what they would make the underwear out of."

There were many children who seldom wore new clothes. Although Vera Saddler did so, she told us that her brothers wore hand-me-downs. Gladys King said that her family "mostly got them (clothes) from the white people they worked for because they couldn't sew." On some special occasion, her mother would have her a dress made, for school closing or Easter. Page Beatty's sisters gave his wife what clothes she had. "We didn't have anything to buy with. Once in a while, I had sumpin' of my own, but mostly hand-me-downs." Olena Winford's uncle came to her rescue:

We didn't have many clothes like you have now. Uncle Gene he come from Mr. Tom Morrow's down the hill over there. We wuz playin' down at the branch killin' snakes, water moccasins, and things. He would say, "The Devil's gonna git on these kids!" Later on, he got me a pair a shoes, and he got (sister) a pair a shoes. I forgot what the boys had. That started us all goin' ta church an' we walked all the time then. Walked from Shinn's over ta Mt. Tabor an' Antioch (five miles away).

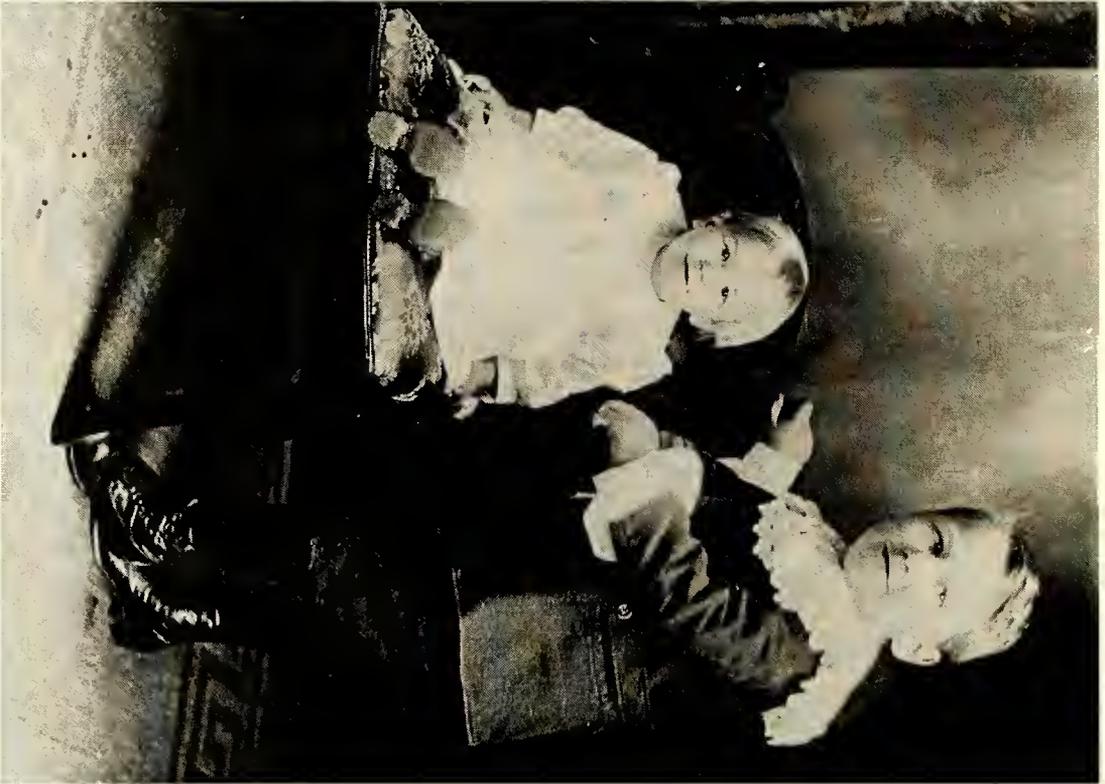
Sue Morrow says that her sister Kate had beautiful clothes which she gave to Olena's sister, Robbie Lee Clark, who preferred Kate's clothes. Beatrice Westmoreland and Nora Hoover, white women Bertha Westmoreland's mother worked for, made clothes for Bertha when she was a child. She also had help from white families in feeding and clothing her ten children.

I'd buy lotta second-hand clothes, and I had two friends dat I didn't know who dey wuz. Onc't a month, I'd come in from work an' at my do' undah da winda, ther'd be a great big sack a clothes stahched an' ironed an right in front a da do' would be a great big sack, girls' an' boys' an' babies' clothes. An' people would call me, people we worked for, ...we had nothin' ta buy but sugah, soda, salt, flavin, an' coffee.

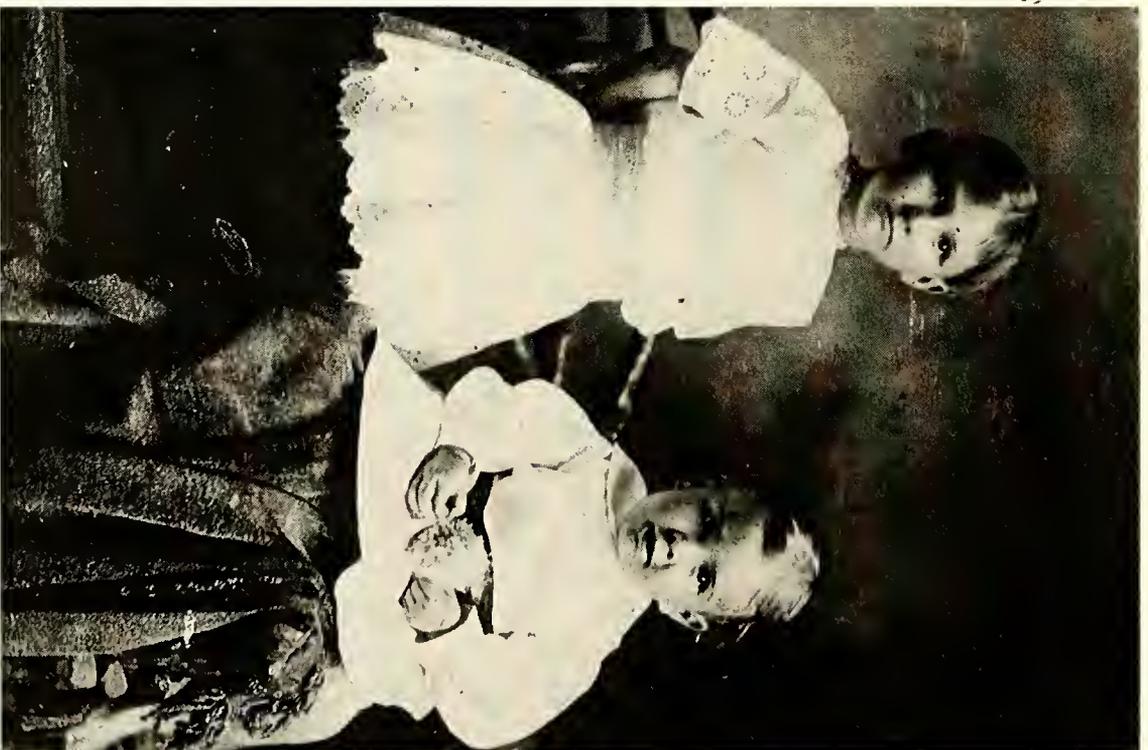
The women of Iredell clothed Iredell families out of sheer grit and ingenuity. In no other aspect of life were women challenged to be more creative. They gave new meaning to the term "conservation." And some of their work rivaled the best of today's designer creations. Children who paid close attention learned from the best, and some of them put that knowledge to use in their own families. Jessie Lee Troutman became a professional seamstress, working for years in alterations for John Mack and Sons in Mooresville.



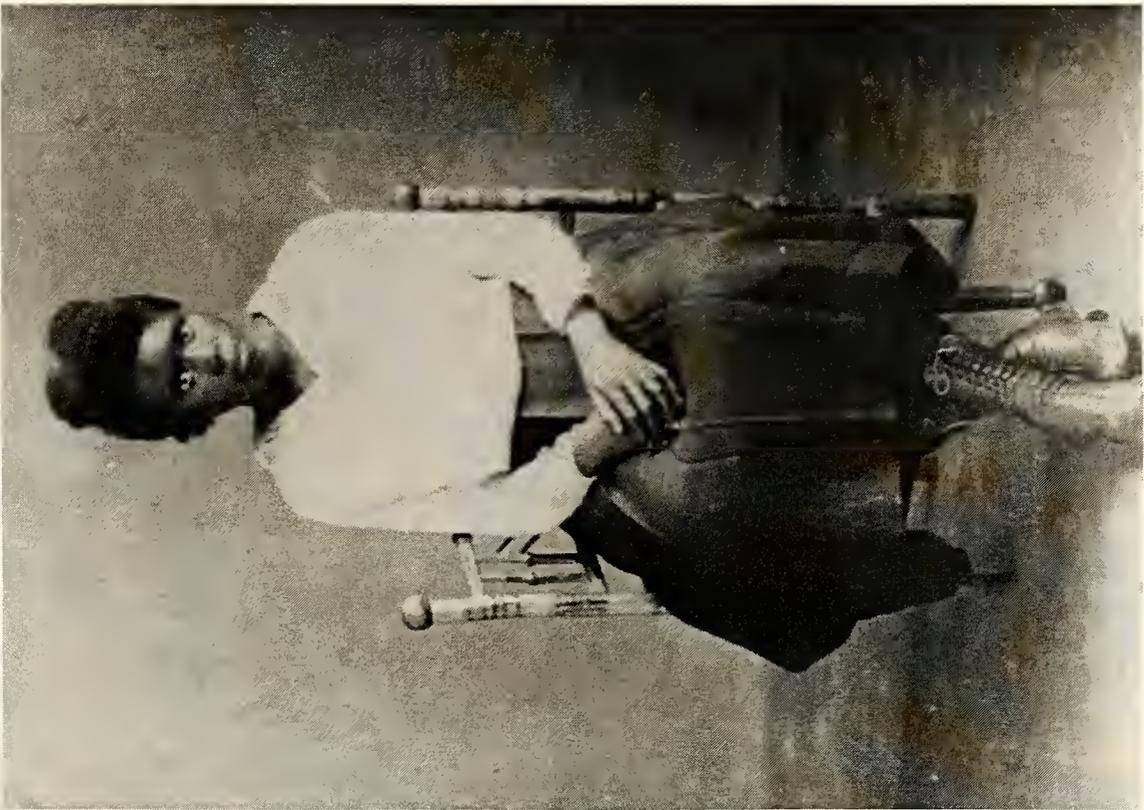
Pearl Cook: about 1900



**Jessie Lee Troutman Parker Brawley
and brother Leon Troutman: 1917**



**Rachel (born 1907) and Ralph Cook (born 1910)
Children of Betty and Harvey Cook**



Photos from the Phifer family in Mooresville



**Eliza Watts, great aunt of Sarah and Ruth
Reeves: Statesville**



**Roberta Bradshaw, sister-in-law of Ruth
Reeves, grew up in Troutman.**

Food

"Anything I Could Git Enough Of"

Bertha Westmoreland

The question "What were your favorite foods?" elicited curious responses, and it usually had to be repeated. Did we mean "What did you *like* best to eat?" or "What did you eat the *most* of?" seemed to be part of the confusion, but some thought it was a pointless question. Bill Williams was very direct. "That sounds like a white person's question," he offered. But whether the responder was black or white, the foods mentioned were much the same. A few examples follow:

All of 'em! I like chicken. I like fish. I like eggs and bacon scrambled, jelly, vegetables. I can eat almost any vegetable.

Fleecy Griffin

I didn't have any special foods. No, whatever they cooked, you ate it. I know we used a lot of cornbread and milk. We'd put butter on that cornbread and boy! (Laughter) I liked my cornbread and milk!

Maggie Phifer

All of them! What mostly we liked to eat was potatoes. Sweet or mashed potatoes. And, of course, we grew a lot of beans and peas, too. We had roas'n ears, peas, dried peas. We always had turnips. We lived off the ground.

The Tulberts

Anything I could git enough of!

Bertha Westmoreland

There were, of course, on the farm special times that yielded their own bounties. Hog killing time was one of them. The sausage was made according to the favorite family recipe, baked and placed in a crock that Mama could "save over till summertime. That was one of the best things besides the vegetables we raised," said Sue Cook. Her husband Carl, who has made a lot of sausage, explained, "You put a weight on it, then grease would rise up on top, and that sealed it. It would stay good."

We certainly hope that Beulah Myers Glass enjoyed sausage and livermush, also, because both were plentiful in her home.

Dad was a great one for butchering hogs. Some years it would be way up in the teens. I remember him boasting about one that weighed about 600 pounds. 'Course,

he fattened 'em. I don't know about competition, but it was sumpin' that Dad delighted in. He loved his hogs! He started raisin' pork back when he had a lot of slop from makin' whiskey.

Cooking was a theme in many families. There were some women who were magicians; they could turn a simple dish into a culinary perfection. Several women admitted, when pressed, to being very good cooks, like their mothers.

Cakes, cornbread, pies, and biscuits. I wish you'd seen my yeast bread! It would rise and be just as brown an' crisp.

Olena Winford

My grandmother made teacakes, but I never did make them. I made gingerbread with homemade black molasses and brown sugar and milk. We didn' have no raisins then. They called it "gingin" or "molassy cake."

Gladys King

Chicken pie, chicken dumplings. She'd make especially like for thrashings, she would make big containers of chicken pie and homemade rolls. (Sometimes) she would make the loaf and slice it. Egg pies! Everybody loved my mother's egg pies. You don't know what a egg pie is? Egg custard then. I can remember I feel like I just almost can taste one right now. I cannot make one like her. I don't know why they don't taste like hers. Everybody used to talk about mother's egg custard.

Ida Tharpe

Vera Saddler liked to make cake, egg custard, lemon custard, chocolate custard, and things like that. "Yes, I used to make cakes and sell a lot of them. I used to make good white bread...for Belk's. I'd sell it cheap back then. Fifteen cents a pound, or something like that."

What one ate might depend on who was coming to dinner and how many came. When he was a boy, Millard Knight liked chicken. "You know, preachers love chicken for dinner. Of course, Wade Adams come to my house. Wade, he just dished in and got him a plate full of chicken. I wuz awaitin'.... Say cold taters an' waitin'! So I wuz standing in the other room watchin' him, and I told him to save a piece of chicken for me, Wade!"

Some things, like stew beef, were harder to get than others, so no one took them for granted. Louise Dalton said, "No one had markets back then. A little later on in the fall, someone would kill a beef and peddle it around." Other things were scarce on the table because they could be turned into ready cash. Harry Brawley said he never got enough eggs in his life, a fact that he demonstrated every Easter! And for the opposite reason, he never

did develop a taste for Irish potatoes.

The Page Beattys appreciated the value of food as money. His mother churned butter and sold it and paid for the house. She sold it for 50 cents a pound. She paid for the house sellin' butter and buttermilk. "She always had a rectangular mold that would mold a pound of butter. It would put two little designs on one side when you pressed it out. She would wrap it in standard paper and put it in the refrigerator, and my dad would take it to Statesville to the market. I noticed other people in the country when they made butter; it usually was a round mold because they didn't have to sell the butter by the pound. They used their own butter."

There was a good market also for chickens. Flake Messick's mother sold eggs and a lot of young chickens to Mayberry's Store.

Somebody would come by and buy young chickens in the summer down at the farm. A fellow, Lovette, from Wilkesboro was the one who established the Tysons. It used to be Holly Farms. He used to come from farm to farm down here to Mayberry's Store. He'd drive out here and get 'em. Then we'd keep two or three cows part of the time. She sold a good bit of cream. Don Moorefield over here picked up cream, sour cream, hauled it to Mooresville to the creamery, and it was made into butter, cheese, or whatever.

Flake's mother also sold sorghum, in addition to chickens and eggs. They had a sorghum mill and a cider mill.

We ground fifty gallon barrels, a couple of 'em full of apples, and let it ferment in wooden barrels. Some people would come around here and get gallons of cider to do pickling with. The old cider mill...John Mayberry's got it down there yet...it's sitting down here at the store. It took maybe three or four months to ferment. You couldn't have put it in metal barrels; the acid-like vinegar would have been poisonous.

Gladys King's family also had a big apple tree in the back yard, and they made cider. "All the neighborhood made their cider back then." John Henry Redmond made molasses. "I helped someone at the molasses mill grind the molasses. There was a horse and a mule that went round and round." Russell Cowan says his family made molasses "for the public." It sold for 60 cents a gallon. "I think it got up to a dollar a gallon when I was younger. People would come here and get it. We'd keep it in barrels in the smoke house, a log building out there...."

Lawrence Patterson added flour to the list of home-grown products even though wheat they grew had to be taken to the mill to be ground into flour. "You'd feed it to the hogs. Now these days, you feed it to yourself 'cause

it's supposed to be good for you."

Mary Kimbrough summed it up. "All of the food was 'home grown'. We raised everything. We had cows, milked, churned butter. We raised all food. Fruit trees. We canned everything in jars....meats, too."

Fruit was an important basic diet ingredient. Mary Douglas Warren spoke glowingly of their beautiful orchards. Some of her father's family migrated to California and Texas and sent home trees "that fed all this family and everybody who wanted food from that orchard. It was an *enormous* thing! I've heard them tell about it. It was California plums, and where this magnolia tree stands now, there was an apricot tree when I was a child. There were apples and red plums that looked like prunes when they were dried."

Flake Messick was familiar with his mother's dry kiln.

We had fruit...what the old folks used to call horse apples, old-timey horse apples, June apples, Queen apples. We had trees down here at the old house. There was just an orchard that completely covered that place... There was a lot of peach trees, but they was these here small size, little old-timey open stone. My mother dried worlds of fruit in the summertime. I helped her with that a whole lot. We had an apple peeler you turned to peel 'em...I done the peeling. We would dry them by the sackfuls. During the fall, Fraley brothers from Statesville would buy that fruit. We'd load up the old T-Model and go to town. Fraley Brothers' Wholesale place bought that fruit. It was dried in the sunshine. We had a dry kiln. You could put it in there, if it was rainy wet weather so that the sun couldn't dry it, and build a fire under it and dry it. Three or four days in the kiln to dry it. We had drawers that'd slide in a place. We'd have a scaffold and dry 'em by sun. That was her way of making a little extra cash.

I don't believe the health department would stand for that now. You know, there's a lot of bees that would suck on it. Of course, the flies were around. Now, we'd say that was very unsanitary, but it didn't kill nobody back then. Some of the things that they say now done your health harm... I know a lot of people that lived to be old age then.

In the days before refrigeration, preserving dairy products required a well-devised plan. Some used what they called "a spring box," a box in the spring where the running water would keep it cool, and occasionally the owner would put a lock on the box. Others told us about a "milk pit" or a "milk well" like the one described here by Flake.

A milk well dug in the ground about 10 or 12 feet deep. Fixed on a windlass, you'd let that milk down in there, and it would stay cool. That was the cooler we had till you'd draw it up, and it would be pretty cool for

dinnertime. That's where she kept her cream and stuff, down in there, the milk well. You had to keep it covered up, or bugs would fall down in there and get in it if you didn't keep it in a tight dish or something. That milk well was used for years.

There are some things that no one didn't like. Lawrence Patterson gives a description of one of them.

One of the things I remember was when you had snows in the wintertime, you would go out and get some of that snow. There was cream always in the icebox (which a few families had), and you could get some cream, put some sugar in it, mix it with the snow, put vanilla flavoring in it, mix it all up, and you would have vanilla snow cream. That was a novelty, and it tasted great!

If you had ice cream in the summer, you would make this custard and put it in a metal container. It would go in a wooden barrel, and you would pack ice around it and put salt in to lower the freezing point. It had a beater inside of it, and you would turn this cylinder and mix all the stuff up, and it would finally freeze. So you made your own ice cream.

Sweet potatoes must have been everybody's favorite snack as they could be eaten cold, if necessary. Easily, the most common offering in the school lunchbox was a biscuit and a sweet potato. One young man, curious about what his teacher was having, climbed up to peer into the window to discover her working at her desk eating her biscuit and sweet potato.

The men and women who shared these memories with us are continuing the conservation practices they learned in their youth. Louise Dalton was interviewed in her kitchen where a bowl of freshly picked peas sat on the table. Bertha Westmoreland was too busy peeling buckets of apples to be interviewed on one of our scheduled visits. Some of those apples could have come from Harry Brawley; he dried and froze them and picked them up and delivered them to neighbors, family, and friends. He was also well-known for his apple pies.

Certainly, there was a more limited selection in foods than we experience today when restaurants are so plentiful and convenient, but we heard no complaints from our interviewees. We attribute this to the talents of the cooks who fed several generations of citizens in Iredell. They spent much more time in doing so, but many accepted this responsibility as a challenge, turning a simple meal into a feast and food into dollars. In their kitchens, the ingenuity of the women of Iredell once again took center stage. But they did not do this alone. Young boys as well as girls learned about food preparation, preservation, and conservation, and some still practice their art.

Music

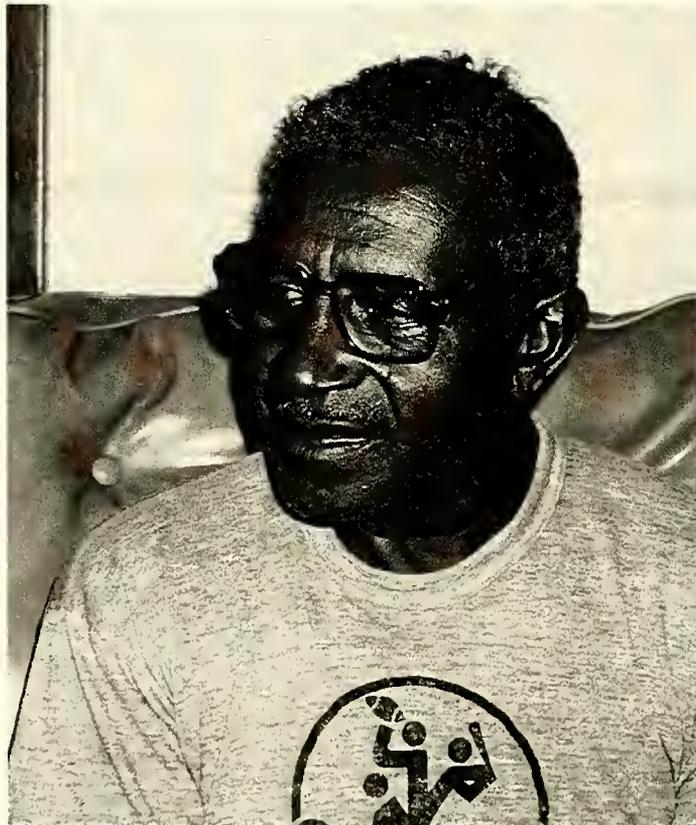
"Singing! Lord, I love it!"

Bertha Westmoreland

Without question, the chief and most widespread form of entertainment was music in all its various incarnations. Perhaps music was more an integral part of lives in rural areas because communities were more spread out, and it gave people another reason for gathering. Whatever the reason, music became a vital part of everyday life. And as popular as string music was, perhaps the most popular and simplest form of music-making was the "singings." These were informal gatherings of families and friends at a home in the community where they simply sang together their favorite songs.

Gaynell Cooke says, "We had the community. People would come over here from over there at Shiloh to our house. People would come from all around, and we'd just sing. String music, banjo, guitar, violins. The Brawley boys had a string band, and we were together once a week or maybe two or three times a week. We'd sing, and they'd play."

In many families, singing was a tradition. John Henry Redmond (below), who claimed he had "been trying to sing all his life," was taught to sing by his grandfather, who he said was "a great singer."



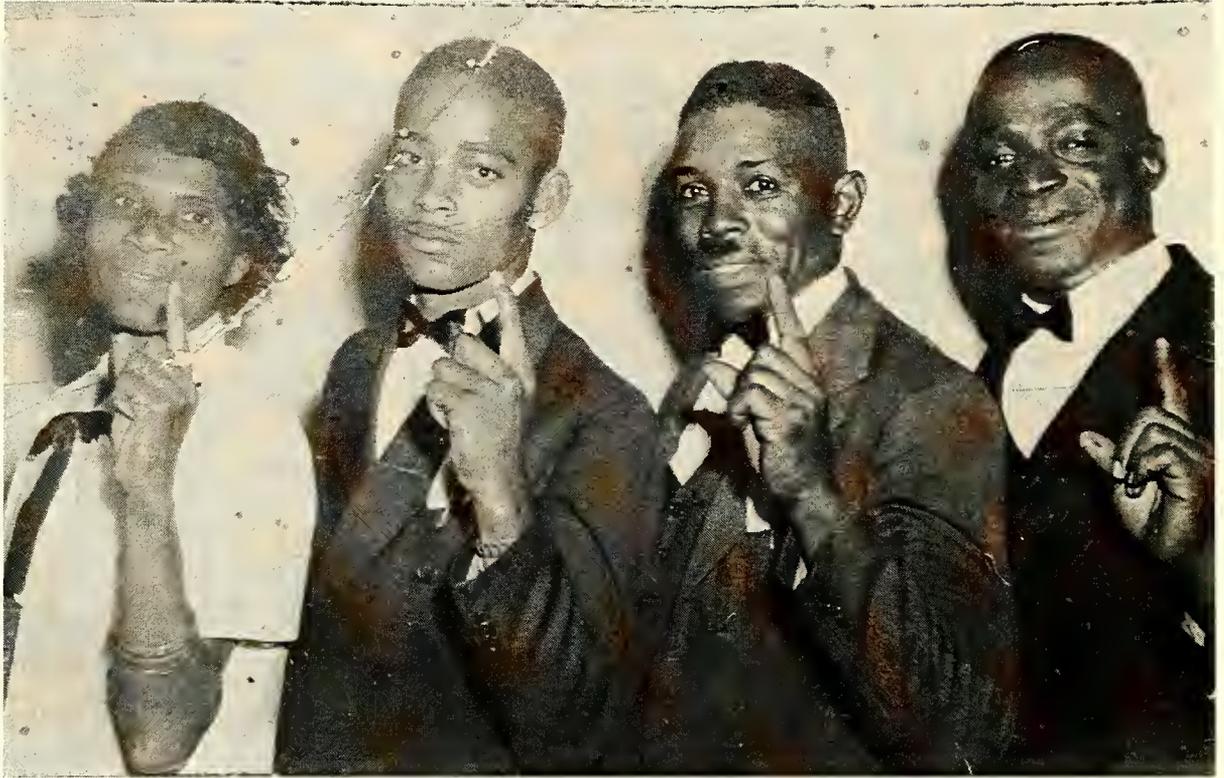
John Henry was descended from a slave, and for a time, his parents lived in Jericho School. He sang all day as he worked in the fields. "I guess I just sang so loud everyone could hear me. Church songs, all kind of Christian (songs)... 'Amazing Grace'..." And he laid back his head and softly sang a moving version of that timeless hymn.

"I been singin' all my life. Can't sing, but that's what they trained me to do," said Russell Cowan, from his home in Shinnsville. "My aunt taught me the notes, Maggie Cowan. I learned to sing note music. You could sing most any song that the leader pitched if you knew how to rise and fall. We practiced every Sunday evening. They'd go from house to house on Sunday evening and practice. I can't control my voice like I used to. It's the love of music that makes it worth it."

Carl Cook seconds the family involvement and maintains that people in the various communities also related to one another through singings. "It was mostly my family and the Beavers... Forney Beaver's. We'd get together and sing without an organ or anything 'cause I could pitch it. If I missed, I could move it just a little. We sung together for a long time. We sung at Amity, Knox Chapel, Bethesda. We didn't use instruments."

Quartets were often formed at these singings. Carl sang with his father and sister Helen along with Forney Beaver as a quartet. Clyde Tulbert gave this explanation: "It was all church songs, you know. We had two quartets down here at Zion. We went to lots of places and sang at different churches. That was the only place we went... to other churches." And, even though he admitted to forgetting recent events occasionally, he had no such trouble giving the names of each member of those two quartets!

Some singers became involved in competition. Carl told us about the choir that he organized one Sunday afternoon which won first place at a singing convention at Lenoir Rhyne College. Another family even made a couple of records. Thomas Trivette told us about his mother's family, the Caseys. "Mother an' her sisters loved to sing. Even in later years, they sung together quite a bit. They was up in the high sixties (in age) when they made a couple 78 LP's which I still have. Sally, my mother, Mary, Ruby, and Nettie, one of the young ones, they sung in the old style with one of the old hymnals they used when they was young girls. No music, just sung, which was something you do not hear nowadays."



**First Quartet at Mt. Tabor Presbyterian Church: 1940's
Lizzie Glaspy, Willie Culbertson, David Glaspy, and Arthur Ellis**



**The Shinnsville Four: 1940's
Sloan Westmoreland Roy Winford, James Heaggans, and Guy Harris**

Clay Tolbert, local Amity historian and avid singer himself, put the popularity of singing into perspective for us: "In the evening after you had supper, the only thing you had to do was pitch horseshoes, eat watermelon, go visitin', or go to singin' school." To demonstrate his knowledge of local music history, he declares that Carl and Richard Cook (another cousin) are the only two basses ever to come out of Amity Hill.

Natural talent and family involvement were important factors in creating a music-saturated environment, but there were also singing schools to cultivate interest. "Mr. Jeff McLain came down and taught singing schools about 1923 or 1924," says Carl. Sue Cook says that they were in grade school when they had them. They were in the churches, and they would go every summer, even though Sue claims that she doesn't sing at all. Russell Cowan also attended singing schools. "I learned under Scott Patterson and Oscar was his son. I learned to sing note music under them. Anybody that was large (old) enough and interested enough (could join in)."

Although Russell said he hadn't seen a shape note book in a long time, he had no trouble producing two well-worn books of favorites. He referred to each selection by its page number instead of by title. And upon request, he sang the bass line for the following:

Am I a soldier of the cross, A follower of the lamb?
And shall I fear to own his cross and blush to speak his name?

Today, on the fifth Sundays, there is a joint hymn sing for the black and white churches of Amity Hill. They might meet at Russell's Mt. Tabor, at Bethesda, at Knox Chapel, at Amity Lutheran, for example, or even at the old fire station in Amity Hill. Their voices may be older, but their enthusiasm for the music has increased through the years. It has become one of the "ties that bind."

There were also instruments played in homes where families could afford them. Millard Knight became a professional choir director.

I had a mandolin one time, and when me and Talmadge wuz going to school in Harmony, they would call on us to have the program of the morning to open up school, and we'd go up on stage, and he'd play the violin and I would play the mandolin. And then we worked with Miss Greenwood. She was the teacher that played the piano, and then Miss Arnold, she'd have us a'playin'. So we wuz occupied musically pretty well. I sang too...I directed the choir up at Winthrop about 62 years. Me and my father, between the two of us, led the singing there for 124 years. I still have the

tuning fork in the bureau drawer.

Interviewer: That is what you would hear so you could pitch the song. I can remember that very well when you used to do that. That was a show to me to see you hit that and put it up to your ear.

A lot of people would laugh and say, 'How can you do that?' A mighty simple thing!

Russell Cowan tells us that most of his family liked music even though "There's some like me that can't sing." Some of them went to great lengths to study music.

The first teacher had a autoharp, and the neighbors had a piano. I had three or four cousins that took music in Cleveland. They walked back and forth from where we lived to Cleveland, I don't know how many days a week and took music from a lady called Jane Parker. My uncle and aunt sent them to take music.

Some who had no instruments made them by hand. Leona Dalton told us about Henry Dalton, her uncle, who "would go down on the creek or branch, and he would cut these reeds and cut notches in them. He could make pretty music like that. These reeds were hollow inside. He called them quills. He could make the prettiest music blowing them!" Louise Holmes Dalton's father made himself both a guitar and a banjo, crafts passed down from his father and grandfather.

Thomas Trivette makes dulcimers, which he plays. He also sings. He is descended from a talented family of singers, as we have already learned. His mother could play a guitar and an autoharp "real good. She could even tune it by ear without any tunin' instrument, somethin' very few people could do, I believe." Thomas also plays an autoharp, guitar, harmonica, as well as the dulcimer. He says that his mother's talent came from her grandpa, a music teacher who taught all six girls to sing from notes. His sister Esther could play a piano and sing after she had a stroke. She couldn't remember, but she could play and sing."

Leona Dalton remembered also her uncle Brawley Gaither and his son making music.

They had a fiddle and a banjo. I remember at the school closing in the spring of the year they would come and make music. We would make speeches and sing and they would make the music. They could dance; his son could dance. Those younger Gaither boys that lived down there, all of them made music, too. They had a fiddle and a banjo and a French harp, something you put in your mouth and it had little holes in it. That's what they would blow to make music.



Thomas Reason Trivette

Thomas made this dulcimer, which he donated to a Wesley's Chapel Methodist Church auction.

Amelia Kennedy says that both her mother and father descended from musical families. Her mother played the piano with "a little band, you know. I guess they'd call it a big band now. They played their fiddles and all."

Rose McCollum's family also had talent.

Mama had a guitar, and she would play that, and she bought an autoharp. It was just a three-bar that you mashed. We learn't that, me and my older sister and oldest brother, that night she brought it home 'fore we went to bed. And I learn't to pick the guitar, and we would take that autoharp and that guitar, and we'd go to neighbors' houses and make music...and people give back then a whole lot. We had our songs that we sang and played.

There were other ways to enjoy music, of course. Listening to it could also be pleasurable. The reply of several people to the question "Did you have any musical instruments in your home?" was "We had a Victrola." Olena Winford remembers gramophone music. "Had a big horn to it an'

rollers on it. They don't make 'em now. They make flat ones." Rose Huie Brown McCollum said that there were neighbors who had gramophones. "Anybody had a gramophone, you'd stop, and they was old and we'd stop coming from the store, and they'd play records fer us. They had patience with ya, and they'd be old people. They'd wind that thing up and play records fer ya. And folks would come to our house and make music for us." Gladys King remembers a Victrola when she was growing up. "You grind it up and we had blues, spiritual records and jazz." She claims her favorite tune was "Jadda, Jadda, Jing, Jing, Jing." Lillie May Christopher remembers people singing in the days before her father bought a Victrola that also had a radio. Her favorite songs were religious ones such as "When the Roll Is Called up Yonder."

The importance of the arrival of the radio cannot be overemphasized. The one owned by the Page Beattys was very special because it was their only luxury at that time.

When we first got married, we had an ol' battery radio, and we sat and listened to the Grand Ol' Opry. It was on weekends that it came on. We ate in the bed and listened till 11:30 or 12:00 at night. We had a fireplace in our bedroom, and we had a fire in there and used it for a light. We didn't have no electricity. That's all the music we had was that little ol' radio. He had give me an electric radio before we got married. He worked two weeks to get enough money.

Sarah Turlington's Uncle Clarence had "a beautiful Victrola. We didn't have anything like that. He always had beautiful records, and we would go over there. That was Mr. Clarence McNeil. Gold Seal were all classical records. My mother played hymns. We had a piano. I guess I was ten, when the Chautauqua came to Mooresville every summer." Sarah enjoyed the special music, the beautiful plays, and the magician. There was something doing all day long for children. We participated in all of those things." In the winter, there was a lyceum course, "and they brought three plays to the high school auditorium."

Sam Price liked classical music at an early age. He loved "peppy, band music by John Philip Sousa" also. When he was in ninth grade, he got a clarinet and played in the Mooresville Band. Later, he learned the saxophone when one was needed. He played the saxophone in the Davidson College Concert Orchestra. O. C. Stonestreet, III, also in the Mooresville High School Band, still plays his trumpet for special events, such as weddings. Lou Ray Cartwright is still an active church musician.

Music has always been a part of our history. Slaves sang in the field as did John Henry Redmond, grandson of a slave. Bertha Westmoreland, granddaughter of a slave, was a living monument to the importance of music as a family tradition. She used music to motivate her large family to stay together. The "Westmoreland Family Singers" still travel and sing for events in churches in this area and in other states. They have performed in as many white churches as they did in black churches in Maryland, Tennessee, Georgia, and South Carolina. Since Bertha began singing with her sisters in 1925, her family has grown and their singing group increased in size. Bertha herself has been singing as long as she could remember:

I remember I was six years old when I had started talkin' and one Sunday mornin', I asked Mama...tole 'er I wanted ta sing. And Mama said, 'What 'er you gonna sing?' I said, 'By and By, When the Mornin' Come, All God's Childern Will Be Gathered Home'. So she tole da preachah an' after da offerin', dey stood me up on da table...da money table, sumpin' like dat (indicates small table in the room) and I sung it, "By and By, When da Mornin' Come" and I been singin' ever since! Lord, I love it! We'd sing...well, I don't go like I used to but we used ta start ta singin' on a Friday night, Sadday night, Sunday evenin', an Sunday night. Everywhere! All at church. We sang fer somebody sick; we sang soft. My family. I'm on ma fifth generation singin', and we're goin' da Salisbury tanight ta sing at Long Street, Reverend Miller, his revival's goin' on. I ain't got but nine ta go, but I don't need but two!

Bertha, at age 89, still sang with her family as often as three times a day when called to do so. And she conducted her family choir with great energy. Bertha was living proof of the old truism "Once a musician, always a musician." Three weeks before she passed away in January 1996, she led her family in a performance on at least two occasions.

Singing has never had a greater advocate in Iredell County than Clay Tolbert. He loved singing all his life, and he emphasized its importance in the community. He never missed a community singing as long as he was able to get there. Clay Tolbert passed away in the fall of 1995 sitting in his chair reading his hymnal.

If proof of our devotion to music is sought from beyond the grave, we have that too in a message that is engraved upon the tombstone of Thomas A. Ellis in the cemetery of St. Paul Lutheran Church. Even in death Thomas proclaimed himself to be "A Grate Lover of Songs."

Music was, more than anything, a family affair. Most didn't need nor want an audience, merely someone else to share their music. Edna York said that "Back then, we didn't gather up and play like they really do now. Back

then, they'd maybe one or two get together. My daddy played the guitar, and then I had one brother that played the violin." Lillie Christopher's mother played the autoharp and sang folk songs. She was also the family storyteller. "I wish I had a list of (the songs). Us children, we would get around her on the porch, and she was really good at reading those stories and blowing the harp. In other words, she was a wonderful mama!"

Mary Douglas Warren's living room hearth was the scene of happy times when "My dad, his brother, his sons had a string band, and they made some beautiful music right in this room. We were surrounded by music all the time. We loved it. My dad taught me my first tune, 'Mary Had a Little Lamb.' I depended on my ear. It might not be right, but I liked to do it."

There are dozens among our interviewees who, like Mary Warren, could tell you today the name of the first song they learned, who taught it to them, and where they learned it. They could also sing it or play it if asked to do so, and it would be right. They would love it, and so would you. Lillie Christopher longed for a list of the old songs, and Olena Winford and others we spoke with lamented that people don't sing them as much as they used to. The old songs need to be written down, a worthy project indeed. Their words and melodies could soon be lost forever.



Carl Cook leads a singing at a homecoming at Bethesda Presbyterian Church: 1985
Carl's sister Helen Cook Brown and Clay Tolbert (interviewee) gather around the piano.

Photo by Marianne Mills Cheek

Holidays

"It was almost like heaven then."

Russell Cowan

By late twentieth century standards, holidays were spare, yet cherished nevertheless. With them came a bounty, a surplus on all fronts seldom seen by families whose chief strength during the rest of the year was their mettle to do without.

Christmas, for instance, was, quite simply in the words of Russell Cowan, "almost like heaven then. You got more things than at any other time of the year. You got about all the fruits you wanted to eat. All kinds of goodies. They saved money for that. And cake. Everybody cooked cakes. You know, you'd eat cake for breakfast sometimes." Jessie Lee Troutman's mother "Made at least five or six cakes, and pies..." She also remembers "oranges and apples and raisins in a big ol' bunch." Christmas was the only time, when I was real, real young, when I would see apples, oranges, raisins, bananas, and grapes," says Leona Dalton. "We wouldn't see no more till the next Christmastime." Clyde Tulbert "was tickled to death to get one stick of candy." And raisins were very special as "they were as expensive back then as they are now," he added.

Christmas usually also brought families together. Rose McCollum had another reason for celebrating with her grandparents. Her father died when she was very young, leaving five children for her mother to raise.

After my father died, why Mama'd take us to her daddy's, our Granpa Journey's, and they would fix our treat. They'd make us dolls, and they made the boys horses out of pasteboard and crayon. And there'd be a block or somethin' to 'em you could stand them up, the horses. And it seems like they'd fixed a curly-haired doll. All they had to buy was some stick candy 'cause he had his apples put away, ya know. He furnished them. I don't remember gettin' any oranges....she made the cookies, Granma did. And they hung our stockings up.

We walked from here down to the old schoolhouse (Henderson School). We'd go down there at commencement and go out to your store (Cartwright's). They'd have Christmas trees, you know. We'd go down there and buy something and exchange gifts so we'd get something. The Christmas tree would be at the school, so they'd buy a gift at the store to have something to exchange.

"They had candles on Christmas trees in those days, if you were foolish enough," explains Lawrence Patterson. "There was a clip on the tree and there was a place to put a candle in it. Some of the clips had a little chimney

you could put on it with colored windows around it, and it would make colored lights. Then you'd light the candle and pray you didn't set your house on fire." Trees were also decorated with popcorn strung with a needle and thread. Leona Dalton remembered the trees the schoolhouse used to set up and the children exchanging gifts. "We raised our own peanuts. We'd put pokes of peanuts under the tree; that would be the gifts. Exchanging gifts would be a bag of peanuts."

The myth of Santa Claus was as popular then as it is now, and he was received in a variety of manners. Two of these bear specific mention. Jessie Lee Troutman told us "We would put shoeboxes on the dresser Christmas Eve in my mother and daddy's bedroom. And the next morning, we'd go down and, oh, it just smelled so good. But maybe we got one toy, and that was it. I usually got a baby doll."

Annie Messick recounted a fascinating family custom:

When we were just little girls, we all got baby dolls. Then we got little dress shirts. The boys would get play guns, hammers and things like that. I'll tell you how we did at home. I know we wasn't the only family that did it. We would take the dining room table, and we would set our plates just like we eat and spread a white linen tablecloth over the plates. The next morning, we'd get up before daylight to see what Santa Claus had brought us. We didn't have lights then, so my oldest brother would carry the lamp and go first. Then the rest of us would come on in. That tablecloth would be sticking up, and we'd just holler and scream. All of our Christmas would be under that tablecloth in our plates."

Santa Claus came to Maggie Phifer's home also, but a big problem for her was waiting for the surprise.

Now you didn't see anything you got until you did your chores, had breakfast, and did anything that had to be done. Then you could see if Santa Claus brought you anything. Now that was the part I didn't like. (Laughter) Nothing I could do about it! It was just the rules. This girl across the road, she was older than I was. I'd say something about Santa Claus, and she'd say, "There ain't no Santa Claus; that's your Mama and Daddy." "That's not so!" "Yes, it is!" I finally found out, but you had to do all of that before you could see your gifts.

Giving clothes as gifts to children is a custom that has always been extremely popular with parents, and Flake Messick's mother was no exception. However, he had it better than most children because, as he said, "There wasn't but one of me."

You might say anything that was going I got it. I didn't have to share it with nobody. Of course, old Santa Claus would come around, and I would usually get some new clothes of some kind. My mother was awful bad to have me to get clothes; she didn't believe in spending money for toys too much. I did have a tricycle back then and one of them little roller coaster wagons. That's about all until I got big enough to have a bicycle and I bought it myself.



Ralph Flake Messick
1917-1918

Although Thanksgiving marked the beginning of hunting season, it was prominent mainly as a celebration of the harvest. This made for large family gatherings in some homes. "My mother's house was a boarding house," said Clyde Tulbert.

"Did she take in boarders?"

"Yeah, children and grandchildren, uncles and cousins."

Holidays also marked the cooking season for women and girls. And whatever the gender, the eating was memorable. Amelia Kennedy attests to that:

It was big to me! All the families on my mother's side and on my father's side... anybody that wanted to come was invited. She just cooked that much more and put tables around, and we'd run in shifts if we had to. There was always plenty to eat. My mother would always fix a fruit cake, which was very special. We couldn't wait to get a piece of that fruit cake. Fruit cake and boiled custard was the dessert at Christmas. And coconut cake. She had one old spoon that was bent, and I can see her by that fireplace and she would be sitting scraping it. Lots of ladies did scrape it, and that would give a real fluffy look to (it). And then, of course, she used the milk for the cake, and my father said she could make the best coconut cake he'd ever eaten 'cause he had to use a spoon. (Laughter) She scraped every little piece; it just made it fluff up just beautiful!

Hunting was the main event at Thanksgiving and Christmas for young boys like Flake Messick.

Daddy used to rabbit hunt, and I had some relatives out of Winston Salem that would come up here Christmas and Thanksgiving. Before I got old enough for them to let me carry a gun, I'd follow along, you know. That was a big Christmas and Thanksgiving Day...hunting. Usually, some of them relatives of my daddy's down there at Winston would bring me some kind of a toy when they come up here Christmas. This cousin wanted to bring me an air rifle, but my daddy wouldn't let him. He said I was too young to have that; I'd be shooting out the windows!

After I got big enough, I'd go rabbit hunting. Then, in the fall of the year, I'd possum hunt. I had an old dog trained to tree possums. I'd possum hunt in the fall of the year, too. Believe it or not, I eat them things. My mother would cook 'em, and they was pretty good. I'd put him up in a big ol' box down there and feed him sweet potatoes and milk to get all the wild stuff out of him. Clean one of them things up, and it was pretty good. She'd fry 'em...parboil 'em and then fry 'em like chicken. I loved 'em. Mud turtle was good, too. I'd catch them. A mud turtle has some awful nice meat in it when you clean it. Parboil it, roll it in flour I believe, fry it like chicken.

Although other holidays paled in comparison with Thanksgiving and Christmas, they were not forgotten. Clyde Tulbert said that "On Halloween

children went "boogering," the equivalent of modern day "trick or treat." Rose McCollum remembered bobbing for apples at Halloween parties, which were held at school. Flake Messick celebrated Valentine's Day when he was a child by making Valentines at school. "You didn't buy many. You could buy this box and make your own, or you could make your own with crayon and paper. You gave people in the school Valentines."

The Messicks also recalled Easter. Annie talked about her family's method of dyeing eggs.

We dyed eggs a little bit, but we didn't go to the store and buy coloring. We dyed them with onions, the hull of onions. Mama would put it in a pot and boil that and then put our eggs in that, and it would make a pretty brown, not real, real brown, but a right pretty color."

And Clyde Tulbert remembered lots of egg hunts.

We'd look our mother's eggs and save them for a week or two and then take a tin can or pot and boil them and eat them."

If Christmas and Thanksgiving had any competition at all, it would have been the Fourth of July. For many families, it simply meant a gathering of neighbors. For others, there were more organized events.

Up home, all the young people would get together. Papa had an old wornout buggy, and...there was kind of a hill down the road a little piece. Us neighbors would just push it and ride in it and all. We'd play with that old buggy till we'd get so tired, but we had fun doing it.

Annie Messick

Always the Fourth of July they had something at Windsor's Crossroads. They'd have ice cream and lemonade, and they'd sing, and things like that. They had it last Fourth of July...we had hamburgers and hotdogs, and things, and they don't charge anything. You just give when you wanted. They made more money by donation than if they charged.

The Clyde Tulberts

Lawrence Patterson describes the following unique celebration at Harmony School: "They would have a greased pole, and people would try to climb up the pole and get the money that was on top of it. They had lemonade. It was probably the Fourth of July. I can't remember May Day

celebrations around here. In the city, they probably did it in some schools like Mitchell College."

The Lex Sloans talked about the Fourth of July celebration that was started in the early 1940's at their mill. It quickly grew into a major event.

We sold stuff to other stores, and we were going to invite them in to have a supper. When word got around everybody would come! (Laughter) We didn't have enough food to go around! We just had (enough) for the ones that we invited, but they found it out and just covered us up! We were ready for them the second year. It didn't happen no more! After that we got to selling the food. Ice cream and hotdogs and chicken. There was horseshoe pitchin', bingo, gospel singing, and string music.

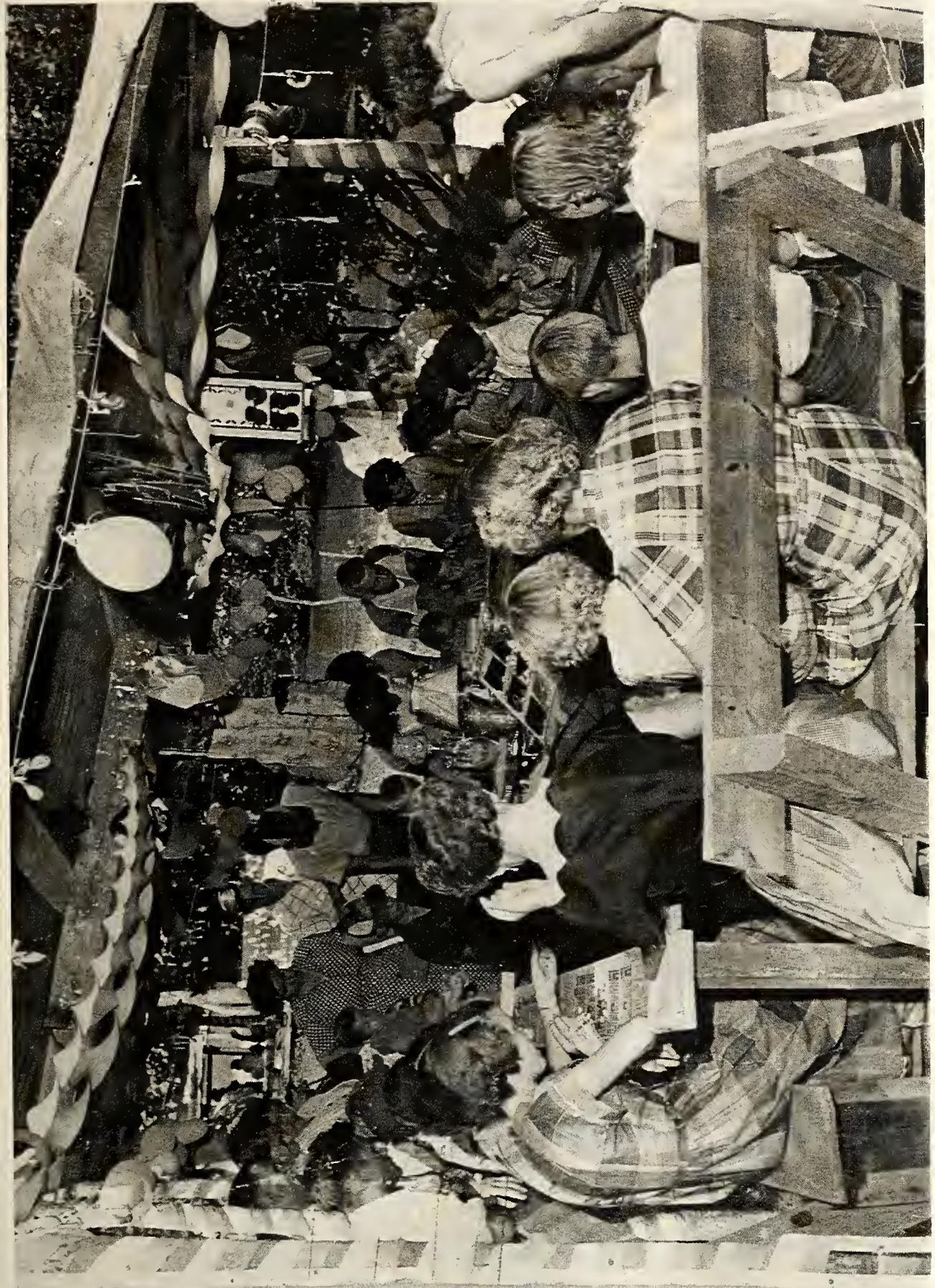
One person mentioned Juneteenth, the day that freedom for blacks was celebrated, but no one described this event. More needs to be said and written on this topic. This would be an excellent project for any group of young people.

Holidays for Iredell families were welcome events, not just because of the foods and gifts, but because these were times when families and neighbors could come together. Whatever was available to them, someone found a way to present in a way that made the occasion more special. Traditions varied, but the important thing was to have a ritual that was familiar to all, that all might look forward to sharing again. Anticipation, the pleasure of the expected and the unexpected made for a delicious combination.



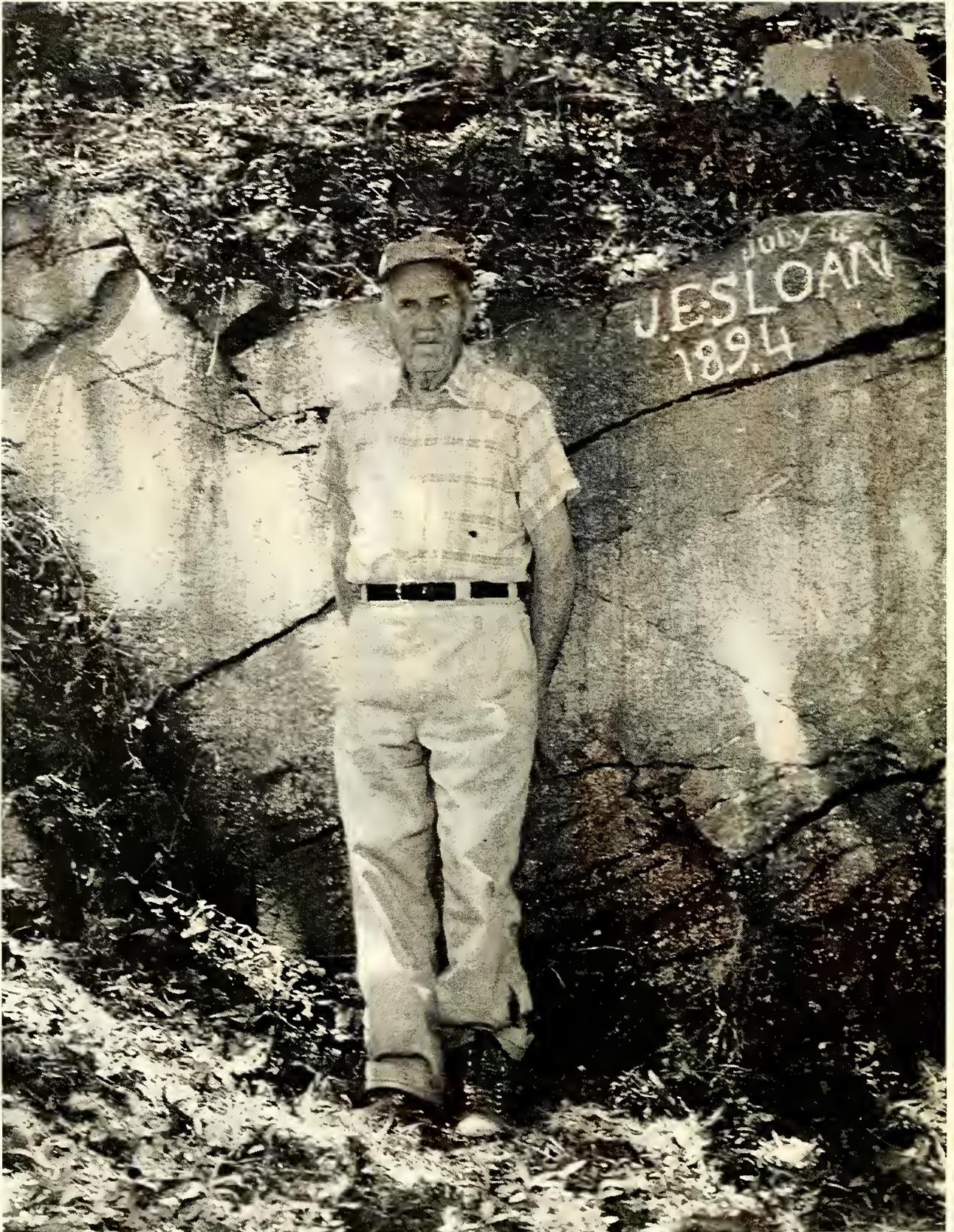
Sack Race at Sloan's Mill: 1952

Photo courtesy of Lex Sloan



Bingo Game at Sloan's Mill: 1952

Photo courtesy of Lex Sloan



Lex Sloan at Sloan's Mill: July, 1994
A few days later, Lex added his initials to those of his grandfather.

Work

"There was none of this machinery running around then. You dug with your hands, oxen, mules, and horses."

Elsie Patterson Turner

"Did you go on vacations in those days?" the interviewer asked Clyde Tulbert. Clyde, a man of few words, answered simply, "No. Very few. Our vacations were spent in the field." "They were spent working then?" "Yes. I guarantee you!"

Hard work and clean living never had a stronger advocate than Katie Sigmon's father, or Katie Sigmon for that matter. So protective was her father of his children that Kate never had a date. She ran away and got married, causing her father much grief and anxiety. Kate tells her story this way:

Somebody tol' Papa that Henry was a drunkard, that he wouldn' work 'er nothin'. Papa just worried to death. Mr. Charlie Dagenhart over there, he said, 'Mr. Wilkerson, I guess you're gonna like your new son-in-law.' He said, 'No, I don't. They tell me he won't work.' He said, 'Let me tell you sumpin', that's the finest man ever lived. He works day an' night almost. He's out at sunup in the field plowin', comes in ta eat dinner, lays down to rest, goes back an' works till sundown, comes in, eats his supper, an goes ta bed.'

Papa said, 'Do you mean that!' He said, 'Yes, Sir, he don't drink, he don't smoke, he don't chew. He's a hard worker. Uncle Bob wants him ta go out an' get 'im a job because he can't pay 'em enough. You're not satisfied with 'im?'

Papa said, 'Yeah, I'm satisfied.'

I went back home. I hadn' been home in three months. Lord, they grabbed me an' kissed me, an' hugged me! Papa's so proud ta see me!

To Kate's father, it was not cleanliness but industry that was next to godliness. And we can understand why her father valued hard work so highly. Farming was grueling labor, and conditions were primitive when Kate was growing up. Elsie Turner put it this way: "There was none of this machinery running around then. You dug with your hands, oxen, mules, and horses." Amy Lou Mitchell's brother had two mules and a turning plow. "We didn't have a tractor," she adds. But with simple tools, they accomplished a great deal. Kate's father built his own home, including the chimney. He was a carpenter and a brickmason. "I's a brickmason, too. I built chimney flues," adds Kate.



Katie Sigmon

Kate, Elsie, and Amy Lou are not the only women to show appreciation for the difficulty of farming without modern tools. Mary Douglas Warren showed us a picture of an "old-fashioned" binder for harvesting the wheat. "This is when they used the mules and the horses and the slow machinery. You had to use a slow plow before the days of the tractor. You had to use your animals to pull that plow. You had to have some people to hoe; the black people did a lot of that.

Even with a threshing machine, Sadie Martin tells us why harvesting wheat was no picnic.

When I first remember, and as long as we had threshings, they had the power to do threshing furnished by a traction engine, they called it. They put wood in the furnace, and you had your boiler, and they'd have somebody to chop the wood and keep the fire going in that to heat your water to furnish the power to run the threshing machine. The farmer usually hauled in the stalks of wheat and had them stored in the barn. Usually, it was a neighbor that would throw down to the bandcutter. You'd have

somebody standing there with a knife to cut the band. Really, it was several straws put together and knotted, but it had to be cut before it was put through the threshing machine. Then somebody else would stand down there and feed that into the threshing machine. It went on through, of course, and the grain was down here, and one had to get down there to take care of getting the grain and pouring it into the sacks and things of that sort. The straw and the chaff went out...the other end. So, it took quite a few to keep things going. If things broke, which they often did, they'd have to go to Statesville or Charlotte or somewhere to get repairs. I know, one night they had to go from here all the way to Charlotte to get repairs for the threshing machine.

And some occasions were especially hard on women. Ruth Alexander Crosby did not exactly look forward to the arrival of the threshers as did some others.

Well, I had to help can a whole lot. Pick peaches. Cook for the thrashers. Don't forget that. That was a week's job! Murt and me, we'd pick the beans and dig the potatoes. I was always in the kitchen so the women folks would cook. We had a screened-in porch and we had about twenty people to eat at that table. We cooked eggs for the breakfast, and Mama was a good breadmaker. She'd make a lot of biscuits. And pies. Peach pies.

We killed a lot of chickens at a time. We'd kill four at a time. We couldn't get anyone to cut their necks off, so we had to wring their necks and hang them on the clothesline until they drained all the blood out of 'em. Whoever worked here...just laid them on a log and cut the heads off. Then you'd pick the feathers out and singe 'em and get the little black hairs out. Then you would cut them up and fry them. Green beans, corn and potatoes...it was warm that time of year for sweet potatoes. We raised beets, but we didn't serve beets. I do believe we served cucumbers. Mama would bake a cake if she didn't bake a pie. They were here a whole week at a time. A young man down the road said, "We're here now, and we're gonna break down and stay a week." And they sure did!

The lack of conveniences did not make the day's work any easier for women either. Even sweeping was not a simple task. Ruth Crosby's sister decided one day she was going to make a broom like her mama did. "See, we raised our own broom corn, and you break the top down and leave enough to get the wire down and then you clean the seeds off of it. Then you plant those seeds next year."

Even food was not easily come by. Take flour, for instance. Leona Dalton remembered wheat, rye, and oats. "Then there was a kind of grain that they called buckwheat...it seems like they would have the dirt in it some way or another. I don't know whether they pulled it up by the roots or what,

but the flour would be real, real dark...It grewed closer to the ground."

Washday still brings back strong memories from men as well as the women we spoke with. Some of the men had to chop the wood for the fire under the washpot; others helped their mothers to make lye soap. Kate Sigmon drew us this picture:

Aunt Mag lived down at the river. We had 17 boarders. We had to carry water about a mile to wash with. My pore mama, she had a hard time. She had to warsh at the branch fer all them people. There's a warshboard. The only way we had to wash. I was down 'ere an' watched Mama washin'. The pore ol' thang, she'd have to starch clothes stiff's a board. Whites first an' arn 'em.

Gladys King knew that black women worked hard often doing washing for white women and then their own when they got home. She watched her mother walk to and fro to work each day with clothes on her head to wash and iron. There were flatirons for ironing and wells for water, if the family had a well.

Many farms in Iredell had a washhouse built in a location not too far from the well. Jessie Lee Troutman showed us her mother's washhouse, which housed one of the first Maytags in the area. But even a Maytag (after the arrival of the Delco Plant in North Iredell) and a windmill couldn't make washday simple for Ruth Alexander, her mother, and sister.

Mama had a Maytag washer. They had it in Harmony and wanted it up here. Everybody down there was scared of it. Mama said she wouldn't be afraid to use it. "Bring it up here. I'll buy it!"

The windmill was built in 1938 or 1935. It's wrote on the cement. Wash day, if the wind blew we had a water spigot. We'd just catch it out of the water spigot and put it in the washpot. We had two big washpots which is still out there. One is bigger than the other...one to rinse and one to wash. We heated the water in the pots. It had a furnace under it. I put the water in the Maytag and got it the right temperature. We used homemade soap. Mama made the soap, and we'd shave it off into the water. We washed the clothes and had three tubs to rinse in. When we got three running, we'd run it through the wringer and catch it on the other side and hang it on the line.

When we got through washing, my sister brung her crowd down here and washed. She had all those kids, and she'd come down the road with all those dirty clothes in a wagon. Then she'd wash after we did.

The Page Beattys didn't have a washing machine until they started working for Mr. Grier. For them, washday could be an adventure.

He (Page) had a horse that would run off, an' I didn't have no washin' machine. This was before ever we had Elaine. He had an ol' horse named Pearl, and I'd take my clothes down to Mother's and we'd all scrub 'em on an ol' scrub board. One day, we was goin' down there and that horse decided to run, and we got just past the mud home and she rolled me in that mud. I was on a sled...She dumped me off in a mud hole. He was standin' up guidin' her. It was just big enough. I was sittin' down holdin' my sack a dirty clothes. That's some way to make a livin', wadn' it? Goin' to git your clothes washed and they're rolled in the mud.

Even seemingly routine activities could be quite hazardous. Amy Lou Mitchell's mother used to drive her grandpa's horse and buggy.

That's how she went to the store. And if'n she'd leave here and that horse was jumpin' up and down, she'd have her lines and she'd beat it to keep it goin'. This horse that Mama drove was kindly wild, but she wasn't afraid to get in there and take up those lines, slap the horse with the lines and go up the road just runnin' away it looked like. She had lots of nerve!

Amy Lou's mother also used to take straw in the fall of the year...light it and hold it up the chimney and burn it. "Burn the chimney out. And now people'd call the fire department. You know they get people to clean chimneys now."

Amy Lou Mitchell's mother was also enterprising. She used to raise pigs and calves to sell and pick blackberries and dry fruit. "That's the way she made a lot of our spending money. We didn't have many conveniences like a cherry pitter, but I do remember climbing cherry trees...some of those sour cherries, small ones. I can remember pickin' those."

Many women worked in the fields as well as in the home. Kate Sigmon was one of them. She claims she worked hard when she was a girl.

I plowed, hoed, worked in the field, cooked, everthang anybody else could do. I worked about 22 places in my life. My first job I worked on cars. I worked on tractors, I built chimney flues; I was a brick mason. I worked in the old cotton mill, and I worked for John Stikeleather, Gray Nance, and for other families that needed a baby-sitter at night. I worked at the Tatum place and at Beaver's store.

Theodore Wallace is the best advocate women could ever imagine.

My dad worked too, but...my mother would get up in the morning and cook for dinner, and then come in about eleven o'clock to cook the bread.

Interviewer: Come in from where?

From work, hoeing cotton, hoeing corn. My mother worked just like a man. And

sewing. I'll tell you, the Lord ought to bless women. The history books don't reflect what they do.

Interviewer: They don't yet!

I think my wife here does more work than I do. Most women have a harder time than men because they work while us men are sitting in the chairs. (He grins.)



Theodore Wallace

These words were more remarkable because they came from a man of amazing industry. Theodore Wallace gave us a cameo of his own work history:

First, I just carried groceries and things. Then I built the store that's out there now and moved over there to the block building; that's a pretty large building, 40x40, or something like that. Me and my wife, we ran the store and a dairy all at the same time, and a farm. Then I bought this little farm and paid for it the first year that I put out tobacco...this here 56 acres. I did that and then I went into the dairy business, and I was in debt until I sold it. Oh, Lord...We were in it 25 years, I guess. Now, I'm a'growin' beef cattle and hay, and I have 40 acres of soy beans.

Interviewer: How much land do you have now?

Two hundred twenty-five acres is all. I've had some interesting life with the dairy and my store. I used to run the store until 10 o'clock at night. We didn't have paved roads, but we had roads. Most people had some kind of car or wagon (in 1940). Several folks came in a wagon to buy feed...for chickens and cows. I had a good line of people for a store. I had people come from different counties. I had a FCX dealership. I made some money there. During the war, they had things like nails and roofing; people needed them real bad. During the Truman administration, that was about the best time I was in the store business.

I cut I don't know how many heads of hair on a nail keg....I ordered me a pair of clippers from Sears Roebuck. I'll never forget 'em. It's easy to cut hair, you know. My dad and my brother they worked on me after I came home from school until plumb dark tryin' to cut my hair. Oh, Lordy, I'll never forget that! I thought I could do better than that. They were over there reading the instructions! I remember cutting someone's hair for the first time; it's something else! I started out cutting for 10 cents a head. Finally, I was getting a dollar. But I made a lot of money. Lillie May would have to go out and run the store while I cut hair. We had a lot of experiences.

The Theodore Wallaces have obviously found the secret to having a successful life. What is required is a partnership between two equally strong people who appreciate and respect each other. And it is clear that Theodore Wallace has enjoyed every minute of his life and the partnership.

But not everyone was fortunate enough to have a partner, and children had a very hard time in those homes with a missing spouse. Rose Huie Brown McCollum was one of five children her mother was left to raise alone at age 30. Charlie Cook, Carl's father, raised six of his seven children after his wife died. Louise Dalton was the oldest girl in a family of 12 children, nine of whom survived, and she hoed cotton when she was 6 years old, but that was not the greatest difficulty she had to face.

Interviewer: What is the hardest job you have ever had to do?

Probably raising my family after my husband died. My baby wasn't but 6 years old. At that time, I had five in school, so it was pretty rough. (There were seven children in all.)

Interviewer: Did you work for other people also to survive?

Yes, day work.

It took more than one child for a farming family to survive. Ruth Crosby told us about her father's tenant farmers.

It was according to how many was in the family. If they could work 10 acres of cotton and 10 acres of corn, Daddy would let them have it to work. We had mules and one tractor. They'd break the land with the tractor and then take those mules and

get the ground ready to plant. It was set up that if you furnished a third of the fertilize, you'd get a third of the crop. If you furnished half of the fertilize, you'd get half of the crop. We had to go to Statesville in the wagon to the old railroad to get a load of fertilize.

Frequently, farmers had second or third jobs in a store or cotton mill. Flake Messick worked for 5 years at a cotton gin and for nearly a year in Statesville hauling baled cotton from the gin to Cooleemee.

They had a cotton mill down there that used baled cotton. There was a cotton baron in Statesville, Mr. Grier. He run that bonded warehouse over there. He bought cotton, and he'd offer it out to mills in South Carolina. I hauled a lot there. I worked for 6 months for a fellow in Statesville who bought cotton seed, and I worked in a chair factory before I went in the army.

Flake declared that of his many jobs he enjoyed driving a truck the most.



Annie and Flake Messick

Vivian Christy Cook's father owned and operated a cotton gin. "They would bring it (cotton) to the gin and he would take they called it a toll. So many pounds out of a bale (500 pounds) of cotton. I don't know what that would amount to. During the Depression that really hurt. Cotton didn' bring over five cents a pound."

Russell Cowan became a poultry farmer.

I sharecropped the year after I got married in 1939. I worked some cotton here on my own land after I moved here. I raised some wheat, some hogs, and I even had my own egg business about 17 or 18 years. I had a 320 foot chicken house and egg room together. I put 7000-8000 (chickens) in there. That's the way I got my start to accumulate a little bit of something.

Interviewer: That's hard work!

Oh yeah, you had to work 7 days. I went to church every Sunday, but I'd come back and the nest would be full of eggs if they were layin' good.

Lillie May Christopher's parents farmed and also ran a sawmill. "A dress machine is where you run lumber through it. It would dress the planks for outside the house. It could cut tongue and groove lumber." Lex Sloan also told us about sawmills. Lex's grandfather, John Sloan, left his initials (J. E. Sloan) out on the rock at Sloan's Mill near Union Grove. His grandfather was running the mill in 1894. When Lex graduated from high school about 66 years ago (1930), he couldn't find a job in town, so he began working at the mill.

They had a blacksmith shop right here. They shod horses. Had a grocery store up here. My grandfather used to make caskets when we lived up here on the hill there. When somebody would die, they'd come up here with the measurement stick and tell him to make a casket. He also made homemade chairs out there too. There was a carding machine factory (for cotton) down the creek. Cotton was their main thing. Grew cotton and corn when I was on the farm. I plowed with a horse. I didn't have a tractor back then.

Many farmers developed other skills to supplement the farm income. Edna York's father was a farmer as well as a blacksmith. Jessie Lee Troutman's father, Francis Marion Troutman was never idle. On rainy days, says Jessie, he would bring in a stick of wood and carve an axe handle, smoothing it with a piece of broken glass, which made a handle much smoother than a knife would have. He was the only one Jessie knew anywhere who made axe handles.

Sue Cook was one of nine children, all of whom helped with the family dairy business.

I got up at 5 o'clock and helped my father to feed the cattle, and then we milked 16 cows. He would cool the milk and put it in 10-gallon cans in the back of an old automobile. I took it to the creamery on my way to high school in Mooresville.

Interviewer: What creamery was that?

It was a creamery that was formed by my father and the Harris brothers and several other men. The Harris family's grandchildren still run that dairy in Mooresville. They live in the old Harris family home on Coddle Creek Road.

Carl Cook started working for the county when he was 18 years old. He claims he wore out two road machines. Carl worked for the County Highway Department for 8 years before he went into business with Mr. McHargue selling chickens. He later bought the Statesville Livestock Market. The city had an abattoir (for butchering) and asked Carl to take it over, which he did until he retired in 1970. "By then," he explains, "stores had their own butchers."

Bill Williams' grandfather worked at the Steele Foundry. "My great grandfather, Lafayette Faith King, whose parents were freed as slaves up in North Iredell, walked approximately 12 miles to town and got a job with J. C. Steele's Foundry. That was around the time when Steele's was just starting up (about 1890). He worked a week or 5 1/2 days and walked back out there after he got off from work and brought one of his brothers with him. He had a job for him too. They worked a week or more, and then they went back and got the rest of the family. They moved the family to Statesville after that. It wasn't too long after that he met my great grandmother." Gladys King adds that her grandfather also worked at Steele's. "He went in a buggy; he had a buggy and a horse. He retired with 12 dollars a month."

Another Statesville business was making cigarettes. Alice Fowler started her interview with the following information:

I bet you didn't know that the first ready-made cigarettes were made right here in Statesville (Indian Girl Cigarettes) before R. J. Reynolds or any of the rest of the tobacco companies ever had a ready-made cigarette. Up until that time they used what they called "roll your own". They had little cigarette papers and they would pour tobacco into it and lick it, seal it up, and that was how their cigarettes were made. Indian Girl Cigarettes were made right here down on Wallace Street. My father was hired by Indian Girl Cigarettes to come down (from Virginia) and travel for the McElwee Tobacco Company down on Wallace Road.

One family in Statesville established two thriving businesses.

Constance Aronson from her home on Stockton Street in Statesville shared documents and photographs that include her grandfather Isaac Wallace and his brother David, who together established the Wallace Mercantile Business and the herbarium. The latter made Statesville "the herb capital of the world" at one time. Homer Keever wrote that "By 1890 they were shipping annually a million and a half pounds of dried roots, bark and leaves of over 2300 different varieties of plants...." Constance added this:

It was located where the Plaza stands today. Gensing was so valuable that we had a safe to keep it locked up. (\$17 a pound by World War II). We sold maypop, cherry root bark, and poison ivy leaves. There was a black man who was not allergic who worked with the poison ivy. Children picked chickweed and brought that in.

Constance remembers playing in the herbarium and the smells that penetrated the air which floated into the street because there were no doors.



Constance Aronson

The Wallaces were also the number one distributors, and Iredell was the number one county for distribution of whisky from 1870 to the early 1900's. Farmers discovered that it was much easier and a lot more lucrative to transport corn in a jug than on the cob. Whisky was made in numerous places in Iredell before Prohibition. One distillery business began operating in 1886. The contract was signed on July 13 by D. F. Watson and J. L. Holland, both of Iredell County, and it was witnessed by G. R. Mills, in whose country store we believe much or all of the products were sold. The partners agreed to manufacture and sell "all Kind of Brandies during the Season for making it" with each to provide one still, half of the tubs, and half the work of "repairing and fixen up distillery....Said Watson fills the Bond for making said Brandy and (was) to hold all the Brandy Liable for Tax and sell said Brandy with consent of said Holland and divide the profits Equally between." The profits after expenses they agreed "they will equally devide...between them shear and shear alike." They agreed to "Count up Every Saturday night and make a settlement of all expenses Contracted during said week."

This contract was a handwritten agreement that was found tucked into an old book of records from George Mills' store. A note was found in which Holland agreed to sell to Watson for \$100 his interest in the distillery on January 1, 1887, and in another note he paid to G. R. Mills \$50 "for value received with interest at 8 percent until (remaining debt) was paid." No other record of these agreements was made, and no one knows when or if they were honored. It is safe to assume that they were, as trust was the way in which business was conducted in general. We know that two of Mills' daughters later married two of Watson's sons.

We also noted that the partners agreed to pay no more than \$2 a day for hauling wood for the distillery. Gus Gray and Monroe Westmoreland, former slaves according to Bertha Westmoreland, were paid up to \$3 at a time for cutting or hauling wood. A gallon of whiskey sold for a \$1.25 a gallon and brandy (no amount given) for \$.50. Entries on the same page show salt for \$.10, 7 lbs. bacon at \$.66 1/2, and coffee \$.50. The largest purchase was by Lowenstein for 50 gallons of whiskey. Constance Aronson informs us that Lowenstein was a member of her family connected with their merchantile business, probably purchasing the whiskey for resale

Country stores were a necessary part of life during this period, and there were probably three of them within walking distance of every citizen. Lou Ray Cartwright's family operated one of them in Harmony. James and Laura Barron Cartwright moved to Iredell from Yadkin in 1904. Their son

Barron was born in 1903. James operated a mill with a gasoline-powered engine to grind grain, and Laura operated a little country store that was opened in 1906. The present building was constructed across the road. It was in continuous operation by Laura and later by Baron until 1988.

In South Iredell, Templeton's Store was mentioned by Gaynell Freeland. Clay Tolbert says there was no need whatsoever for anyone from that area to travel to Mooresville for goods or supplies because everything they needed could be found in Amity Hill. Clay was astounded at the disappearance of this thriving community. Another such place was Troy. Thomas Trivette's grandfather, William Trivette, worked at "the store and saw mill in Troy, a small village with a saw mill, cotton mill, general store, flour mill, at that time an up-and-coming little village. There was even a post office, and the town appears on old atlases." The cotton mill was destroyed by some of Sherman's forces during the Civil War, Thomas informed us, causing the downfall of that particular little town. "Troy and Eagle Mills was part of the same place," Thomas added.

In Statesville, W.G. Kimbrough owned a store of considerable size. It also housed a barber shop, which was operated by two of his older sons, and a cafe. Everyone in the family had a job to do in the store.

Cafes were very popular. Hefner's Cafe in Statesville was well-known. Carl Cook worked there part-time (photo on following pages). Flake Messick talked about the popularity of Hefner's Cafe with young dating couples in another chapter. On Washington Street, Bob Reeves' Cafe was a thriving business in the 1930's. Daughters Ruth and Sarah helped with the work, Ruth in the kitchen and Sarah waiting tables. "I was the dishwasher," Sarah added. Ruth helped her father in the cafe and ran it herself for a long time after his death. She says, "Most of our business was from the factory in front of us (photos on following pages)."

Bill and Edna Allison also operated a store and cafe. Vera Saddler ran a store by herself after her husband left. Stonestreet's Cafe, operated by O. C.'s grandfather and father, was known throughout the state. Travelers through the Mooresville area made a point to stop there. It was located near the cotton mill and workers going and coming to the mill kept them very busy. They stopped to get a newspaper and coffee on the way to work and for a hotdog or hamburger when they went home.



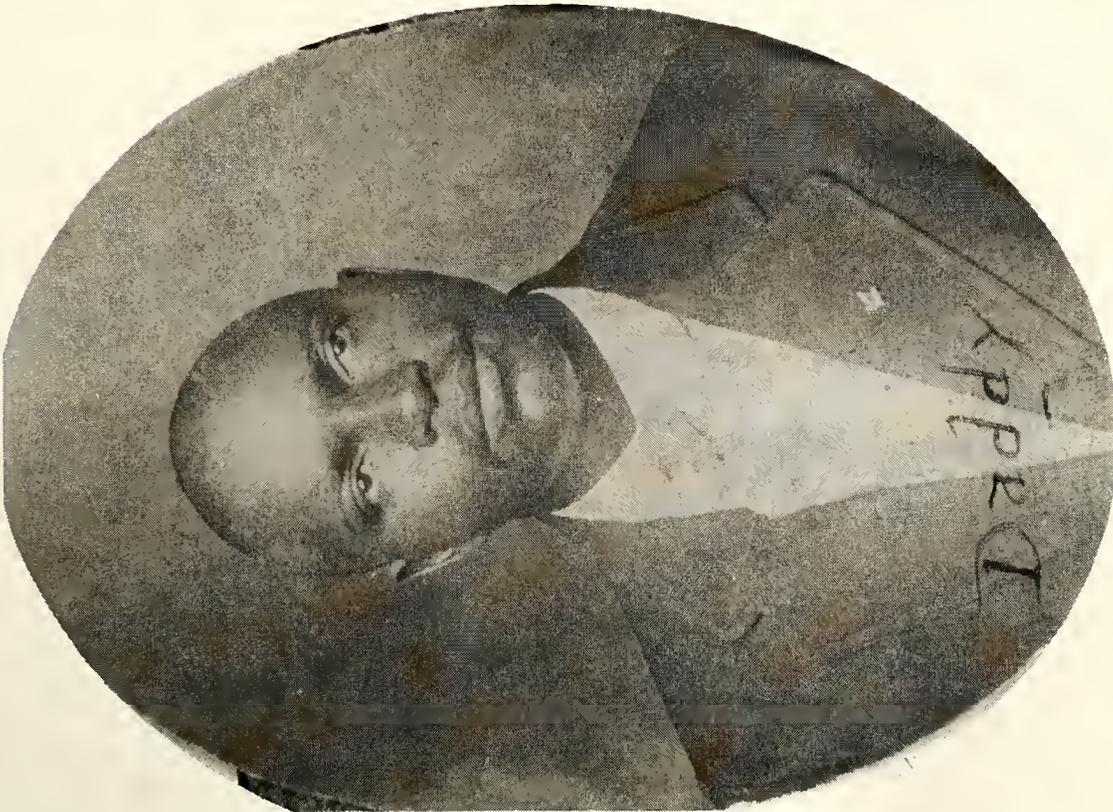
William Gaston Kimbrough: 1940's



Clara Van Sciver Kimbrough: 1890

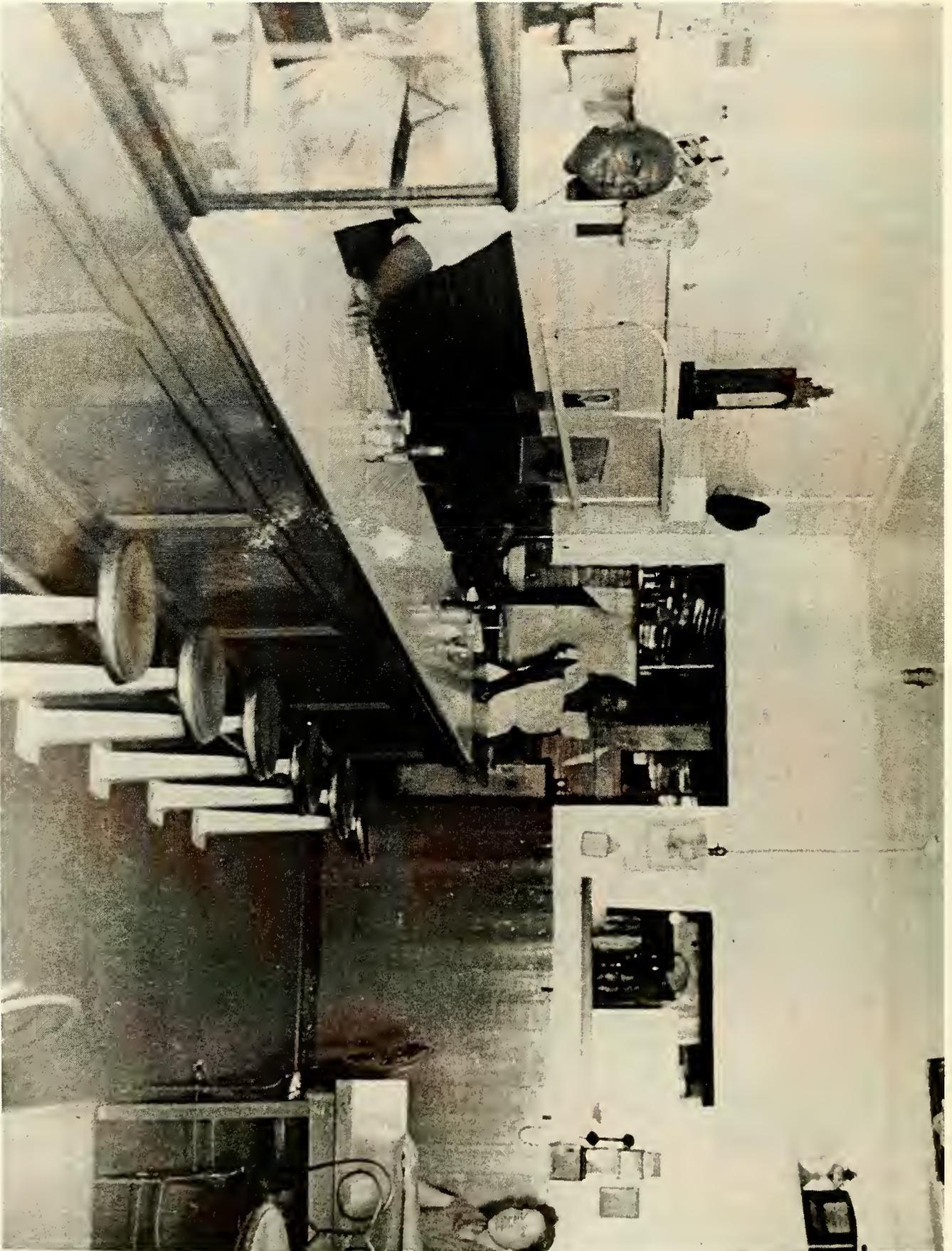


Sudie James Reeves
1890-1934



Robert Reeves

Bob Reeves, owner of Reeves Cafe on Washington Street in Statesville with daughters Ruth (end of counter) and Sarah





Dillard and Julia Troutman Phifer: 1937
 Dillard (b. 1897) and Julia (b. 1912) worked
 36 years for Dr. A. B. Sloan, Mooresville.



Carl Cook (2nd left) and the Hefner's: 1928
 Carl worked for a time in Hefner's Cafe.

Sam Price, born in 1929, was working at Miller Drug Store when he was 8 years old and too short to reach the counter. "A little automobile would run up in front of the building and blow their horn, and we would have to go outside and see what they wanted. If they wanted a 5 cent Coca-Cola, we'd go in and get it and take it out to them and collect the 5 cents. I was too short to ring up money on the cash register, but they eventually put a Coca-Cola crate there so I could reach it." Sam's father, who owned the store in 1930, was a licensed pharmacist; Sam was licensed in 1952 and continued working there until his retirement. He talked about the movies and the fun he missed out on with his friends because he had to work, but he shares a good story in a later chapter. Sam's wife Liz, a retired art teacher, is also the daughter of a pharmacist.



Elizabeth and Sam Price, Jr.

There were other professionals among our subjects. Sarah Reeves completed her degree in chemistry, biology, and physical education at Livingstone in 1945. For 12 years, she worked at Rutledge and Bingham Funeral Home as an embalmer.

I enjoyed it! I went to school and everything like that. It was a lot of fun. I remember one evening it was raining after school, and none of us wanted to go home, so we decided to go into the basement and work on some of the bodies that they kept there. The janitor had cleaned up the place and was on his way home and happened to see a light on in the basement, and he came back. He had locked us up in the building.

Sarah Turlington's father was a lawyer. "I believe it was in August of 1900 that my father came to practice law after studying at the University of North Carolina. I think the first year he practiced in Mooresville he said his income was 300 dollars." Sarah was born in 1907 at her grandmother's house on Main Street near the present library. There was no hospital at the time, she pointed out. "I go back to the Dark Ages," she claims. Later, when she was "in a baby carriage," they moved into their house on West Center Avenue.

Let me tell you what I remember about West Center Avenue. Mr. Mills had a department store on the corner. There was a millinery shop...there were all kinds of things that you bought: thread, needles, and everything you needed to sew with. On the opposite side of the street, there was a candy kitchen. As I remember, a Mr. Patterson made fudge and things like that that drove me crazy (I loved candy) when I went by. Next to that was a flour mill...a huge flour mill, and I used to slide down on the grain. Then, there was a cotton gin on the corner before you get to the...the Will Cooks lived there when I was growing up. Between Pam Schuler's house and Broad Street was the cotton gin, the flour mill, and the candy shop. Mr. Johnson's grocery store was close to Mr. Patterson. The ice wagon went by the house, and you went out and got the shavings of the ice. The ice man brought in the ice.

Annie and Flake Messick talked about the few jobs available to women outside the home. "There was a hosiery mill in Statesville and this cotton mill...or a job in a restaurant...I reckon that's about the only places," said Annie. "There were more places like furniture factories (but) not many women worked in them. Mostly (it was) in cotton mills and hosiery mills (Stimson Hosiery Mill)." Annie worked at Statesville Cotton Mill for 12 years, and after Flake came home from World War II, she got a job at a mill owned by C. V. Henkel. "It's J. P. Stevens now," she explains. She worked there for 25 years.

But for black people, the "pickins were slim." They worked in food services or in white homes, primarily. Several worked for doctors. Leona Patterson Dalton and her second husband Eugene were married in 1932. Her father worked at a sawmill, and they kept bees and made molasses. Husband Eugene was the driver for Dr. Robertson. Leona cleaned his home and office, sweeping up the pills he dropped, she said. They worked there for 40 years. She did housekeeping for the Renegars after Eugene died.

Bertha Westmoreland's first job was working for Beatrice Westmoreland in Mooresville. "When I stahted ta workin' out, I had 10 children. I'd git off at 3 o'clock an' go home an' ahon (iron). I worked fa her 25 years, everyday but Sunday. I'd go Sadday mohnin' an' dey'd take me ta town after I washed dishes an' mopped da kitchen, an' dey'd buy my groceries. I worked 6 days. I don' wuk fa nobody da seb'nth." Bertha had numerous other "day jobs".

Her cousin Olena Winford used her God-given talents and natural inclination to hard work and love for children to make a place for herself in the cafeteria at Amity School.

I went down there as a helper. See I cooked at home an' everthang. All them teachers down there, it was a black school. Didn' get much fer pay. I worked down there for 23 years. Gertrude Brown was the manager then. I enjoyed it! Then they went to intergratin' an' makin' a mess. Everythang just went on out! I was da oldes' one so they let me go, you know. I made cakes, cornbread, and the pies and biscuits. I did all that.

Effie Bailey was the exception to the rule, as she found a job working in a public place. On September 13, 1945, she "went to Belk's and worked there till I got sick...43 years, 'bout near. I was the only black person that worked there. I ran the elevator...one of those crank elevators," she told us. Her husband worked at the sawmill and then at the "meathouse" in Salisbury.

There can be no doubt that there was plenty of work for everyone and that endurance was a necessary ingredient for survival. Ingenuity and conservation were also required components in the absence of equipment and supplies and adequate salaries. Large families shared the tasks, but older children both learned the most and carried the heaviest burden. Education was inaccessible for many, particularly for girls, limiting their career opportunities. Vera Saddler's dream of becoming a missionary was only that, a dream. A significant number of those we interviewed became public school teachers. Two of them became nurses. These women contributed to our chapters on schools and medicine. Regardless of the level of education they

achieved, our parents, grandparents, and great grandparents each made a valuable contribution to their communities, and they did so with minimal complaint about hardships and discrimination.



Ruth and Victor Crosby



Downtown Statesville: 1890
This is the site of the former Purcell's Drug Store. Note that there are no women in sight.

Health Care

"They didn' go to no hospital back in them days. They didn' have no hospitals."

Millard Knight

Professional medical care was a scarce commodity in "the good ol' days." There was neither the knowledge nor the medicines we have today, and what they did have was often too far away to be of much use. People were affected by these conditions from before birth to their graves.

Pregnancy and childbirth are a prime example. These were difficult times for the entire family. Julia Fowler takes us back to her grandmother's day with this story of her difficult pregnancy.

She got pregnant and had such a hard time that he said he was going to take her to the top of Brushy Mountain until she could be well again. So they went up near Wilkesboro and bought property. He owned a store (with a) post office, and I don't know what else. She had all her children up there. She had seven, and one of them was my mother...Martha Rebecca Cooper.

Millard Knight was very familiar with the topic of midwifery. "They didn' go to no hospital back in them days. People called midwives in the neighborhood, Louise Reed and Katie Mullis wuz called on when Talmadge and Omie wuz born. The one that died, Lonnie Clarence, they wuz the ones that wuz called on. They didn' have no hospitals back then."

Louise Dalton's seven children were all born at home with the assistance of her grandmother, Carrie Steele, who was midwife to "Most people around here...oodles of 'em," said Louise. John Henry Redmond, a relative, and his eleven brothers and sisters were among those delivered by Carrie. "I don't think she got paid for this," he said. "She did this just out of goodness."

Edna Allison says that midwives were called "grannies." Her Grandma Burrell was a "granny" for a long time. Edna and her sister Merle, whom she refers to as Aunt Merle for the benefit of her interviewer, were "sent away."

I declare, old folks was something, but you abided by their rules. The children were born at home, but you (other children) wouldn't be in the house. We would call Aunt Ev 'cause Creole was going to be born that night. Mama made me and Aunt Merle go out to Aunt Mame's. Me and Aunt Merle wasn't going to stay all night, (but) Mama made us go right back out there to Aunt Mame's.

On the subject of childbirth, Bertha Westmoreland would have to be

considered an authority. She was married at 17 (in 1923) and had her first child when she was 18. Bertha's tenth and last child was born just days before her fiftieth birthday. "I had 'im lack...Sunday night (through) Monday night (her time in labor). (The following) Friday I was 50 years old. Bertha had a midwife for the births of her first 9 children, first Aunt Sally Sloop from Mazeppa and then Dora Gray, who lived on the Amity Hill Road. She had to go to Dr. Taylor at Lowrance Hospital with her last child, Barnette.

Thomas Trivette, who was interviewed in Hamptonville, was born at home, but he was delivered by Dr. Trivette, second cousin to his father. His story reminds us that childbirth was riskier then for more than one reason. Dr. Trivette was "a couple miles of where we were." Earlier, Dr. Somers "was mostly the family doctor," he added. Thomas was born on January 27, 1922.

It was a bad snowstorm that night. There were several neighbors come in. I remember one neighbor said it was snowin' so hard she took one step and went back two....When my oldest brother started to crank up the Model-T Ford to go after the doctor, it was cold and didn' wanna crank. The old Fords was bad to kick the crank back, and when he tried to crank it, it broke his wrist. So he had to have the wrist set when the doctor got there. It was quite an adventure that night!

Sue Morrow Cook told us that Dr. Taylor was the doctor "that came out" (to the home) for her younger sister. "There were so many of us (nine in all) I can't name all the doctors, but Dr. Brown from over at Mt. Ulla was the doctor for some of the later ones." Husband Carl said the first doctor he had was Dr. Brown, and later they went to Dr. McElwee from Statesville.

Sarah Turlington was born at home in Mooresville in 1907. "There was no hospital," she reminded us. Sam Price was also born in Mooresville, and he told us the following:

There were just two children in my family, my sister and myself. My sister was born in 1928 on March 28th. I'm almost sure she was born in what was then the old hospital on West Center Avenue. Actually, it was behind the house where we lived, but you had to go around on a old, rocky dirt road to get there. I was born August 1, 1929. I don't remember this myself, but I was told that when my mother was ready to deliver me, she called the hospital, and they sent one of these little wagons they put people on just to roll them...into the emergency room, a stretcher. They rolled her on that rocky road on the back street to the hospital where I was to be born, but I think the rocks were pretty severe at that time, and I think I bounced out of her before she got there!



Dr. William Trivette: 1931
Opened the Trivette Clinic, first medical facility in North Iredell.



Dr. L.P. Somers, Sr.: 1890
Born in 1864. Trained William Trivette.

O. C. Stonestreet, III, told us about the earliest hospital in Mooresville.

Lowrance was the first hospital in Mooresville. It was named for Samuel A. Lowrance...Confederate veteran, one of these men that I guess after the war, they had seen so much destruction. Almost every white family in the South, or in North Carolina, had at least one person in the military. I think when the war was over instead of destroying things they wanted to build. And Mr. Lowrance donated land where his home was for a hospital for Dr. McLelland to have a place to practice, and that was about two blocks from here (Mitchell's Mooresville Center on Academy Street), the original site for Lowrance Hospital. The site they have today on Statesville Avenue was called Eastern Heights; that was built I think about 1935, and then later it was bought out. It's now owned by a corporation; it's not locally owned any more.

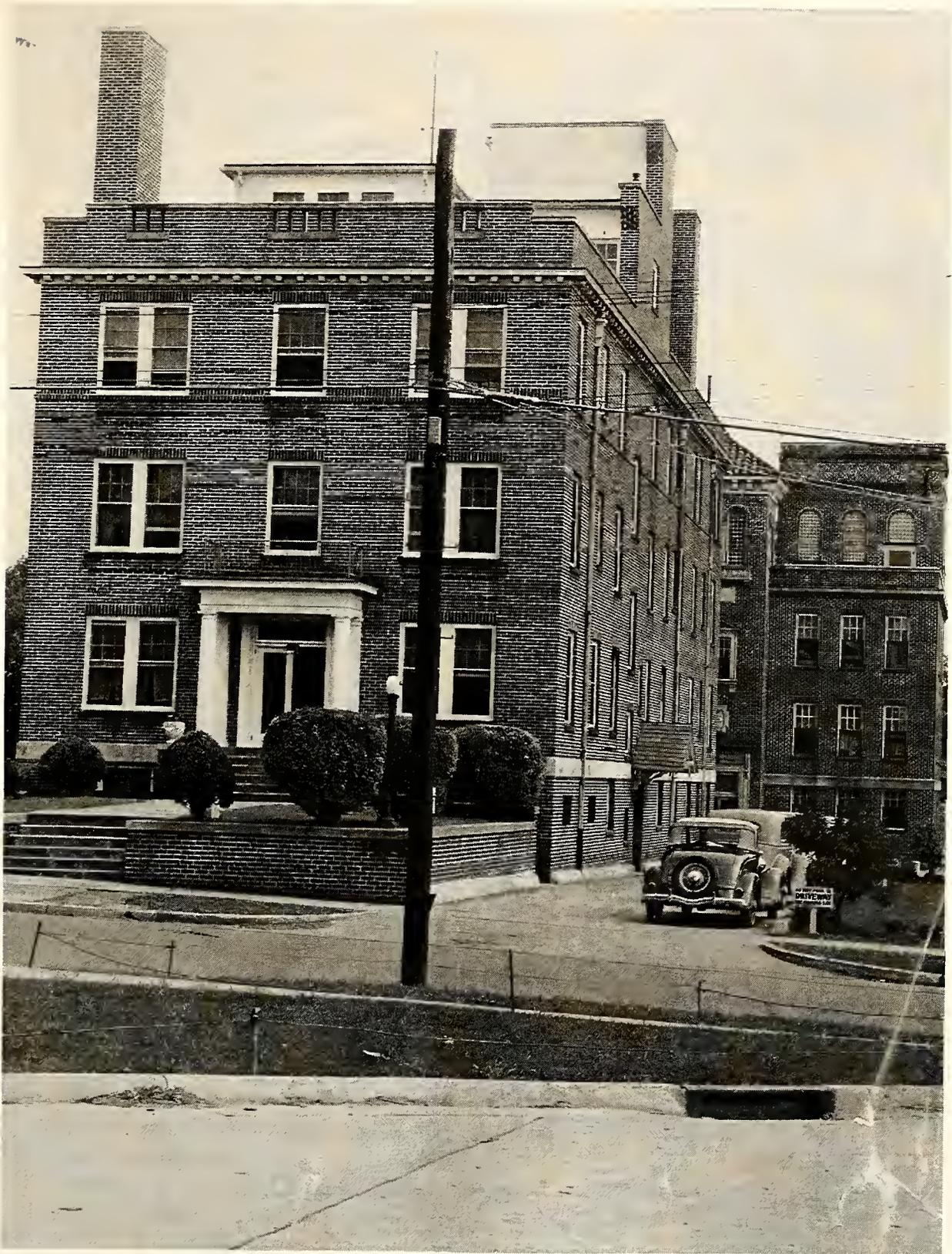
Bill Williams gave this account of how black families fared in Statesville:

The first child was born at home. The second and third child were born at Davis Hospital, and that was quite an experience. You carried the patient there. They put 'em in the spare room and watched until delivery time, and they carried 'em upstairs, delivered the baby, brought 'em back, and you had to put 'em in an ambulance, which was a hearse, and bring 'em along. You delivered and they rolled you right on home.

The fourth and fifth child were born at Iredell Memorial Hospital. They too were brought home, but not as quickly as you did at Davis. You had rooms at Iredell at that time. We integrated the hospital. Long's Hospital was financially in trouble.... The Billings family had left funds for the blacks to build a hospital, but because of the rising costs, it was inadequate to build a hospital and do the things that needed to be done. So the community, all of Statesville, rallied to add to that fund. It still was not enough. The white community realized that Long's was going to go under if something wasn't done. Davis Hospital and the staff made it known that they didn't want blacks. The preference was that they didn't have any. It was the black and the white community who said, "We have money and you don't. Why don't we put the two together and build a not-for-profit hospital?" Davis was private and Long's was for a time. Long's became a county not-for-profit hospital. Just for the first year, the county had to subsidize Long's Hospital.

Medicare brought change to Davis Hospital. They didn't want *any* Medicare patients, and the patients were leaving and finding new doctors. Then the doctors started leaving.

Even after hospitals were available, many preferred to have their babies at home. Lillie Christopher told us that until 1944 when she had her youngest daughter, her children were born at home. Only her last son was born in the hospital.



Davis Hospital

Infant deaths were common during this period. Almost never did a family manage to raise all of their children. Lula Allison was an amazing woman. Her niece Bertha Westmoreland told us that Lula gave birth to ten children, only one of whom lived. Yet Lula was midwife to numerous white as well as black women in the Amity Hill community.

Leona Patterson Dalton and Elsie Patterson Turner were two of five survivors from a family of 14 children. And Leona had problems herself. Her first child and two children from her second marriage were still-born. Only two daughters, both from her first marriage, survived.

The death of infants had a profound affect on the other children in the family. Beulah Myers Glass talked about the two dead siblings between the first five and the second five born to her parents. Even though she was born in the second five, she still remembers the two who died before she was born.

One was a still birth; another lived a few days after it was born. It was a girl and a boy. The graves are in the old cemetery at Grassy Knob. I asked the man that had markers did he think I ought ta put new markers up, and he said no, he didn' think so. I said, 'Will you clean 'em?' But he said he didn' think they'd take it. But he got one so you could read it on there, 'Son' or 'Daughter'; you can read that yet.

Mothers also died in childbirth, often leaving other children to suffer without her care. Carl Cook was sixteen years old, the oldest of six children when his mother died one night giving birth to her seventh child. Everyone knew she would have an extremely difficult time because the doctor had told her she could not have any more children. Dr. McElwee made frequent visits to her home during her pregnancy. Ava, Mattie Cook's youngest child, was somehow afraid of the doctor, and she used to hide and watch as he came to visit her mother. The night the baby was born, the children were sent to spend the night with their Uncle Harvey and Aunt Betty Cook, parents of Ralph Cook, interviewee. When their mother died around midnight, their father sent for the children because he needed to see them. Ava was not yet five years old. She insisted, "My mother's not dead!" She told herself that she would feel her mother's feet to see if they were cold, and then she would know the truth. While no one was watching her, she lifted the bedcovers and felt her mother's feet. "They were cold as ice," she said.

Charlie Cook, with six children to raise alone, realized there was no way he could care for an infant, and he reluctantly agreed to allow his sister and her husband, who was his wife's brother, to raise his daughter Martha. She was therefore blessed with two fathers and two sets of siblings as well as a

mother, Vernie Cook, to care for her, but it was still difficult for her. It was more difficult for her siblings. Even though they visited often in that home and their aunt sewed for all of the children, they were torn by the loss of their mother and having to share their sister. Carl is now 90 years old, but that experience still causes him grief. He asked more than once during his interview, "Did I tell you about Martha?"

Children who survived childbirth often did not survive childhood. Bertha Westmoreland had a sister who died when she was a baby.

She had measles and yo grandma (Carl's Aunt Vernie Cook) tol' Mama, "Now, Gertrude, you goin' out too early, an' dat chap's jes had da measles. Now, if you go to dat wake, and it look's like it's gone rain, don' chew go, you leave dat baby wid Susan "(Gertrude's mother).

Well, Mama thot it wadn' gone rain. Dey wen' in da wagin down to Will Moore's to ma daddy's mother's an' wuz gone leave da baby dere, but she got wet in da wagin' an' da next seven days she was dead.

Often there were illnesses about which doctors had no knowledge. Amy Lou Mitchell lost a sister in this manner.

My sister had anemia. We didn't know what was wrong. Dr. Somers called it the old timers' liver complaint. She'd have to sit down a lot when she come in from school, ya know, coming from across the mountain. Aunt Dora and Uncle John wanted Evelyn to go home with 'em. Thought maybe the doctors there would know more. And they did. They found out it was anemia. She was getting along pretty good, and she took pneumonia and died in 1919. Could've got over the anemia if she hadn't taken pneumonia.

And Rose Huie Brown McCollum lost her husband when he was 34, as much from his own refusal of treatment and the distance factor as from medical inadequacies.

Jim had Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever. They claim that it was caught from cattle then. I know we'd look him, and Mama'd help. We'd all help, and we never found no tick. Betty Williams had it at the same time as Houston at Davis Hospital; if he'd a went there, they mighta saved him. But, you know, Browns didn't believe in hospitals. And, of course, he didn't want to go.

But Dr. Robinson said if you'll just go and take a blood test, they can bring ya right on back and I'll doctor ya right on. But he give up the ghost. He got out of his head before he got back home. I rode with him. He wanted something to drink and I remember Bruce Reavis stoppin' right before you go into the town of Statesville where the oil and lights is now. We stopped there at a little service station. It seems like he got him an Orange Crush. His fever was so high. And you couldn't bathe him down. I

said bathe him in alcohol, but he made out like he couldn't stand that. We just bathed him down in tap water. And he come down just a little bit and right back up he'd go. It stayed at 104.

Edna Allison lost her Uncle Espy, "Mama's baby brother," when he was 28. He found work away from home, and when he returned he was ill with tuberculosis. "He lived in a log house with Granny and Grandpa, who was also sick. He (Grandpa) had the dropsy." Her grandmother was devastated when her son died. It was in a hospital that, "He just slipped away from me. Standing over my baby, he died. There was nothing we could do...The doctor was shocked." Years ago they had taken him to a hospital in Huntersville, and in a few days, "Our Lord healed him up. When the doctors went to check him, the disease was gone...he was just there three days and he didn't need no wheelchair. He walked out!"

Very few people had any memory of attending a funeral, but we heard a few comments. Carl Cook was eleven when his grandfather, Civil War veteran Andrew Wilson Cook, died at age 95 in 1918. "I know my daddy drove a horse and buggy, and he took me up to Bethesda." Vivian Cook, Dick's wife, also remembered him. "He had a long white beard. I remember his funeral. I never had seen nobody with a long beard like that."

Because children did not understand death, funerals created fears and anxiety in them. This probably accounts for the fact that Fleecy Griffin was not allowed to go to funerals as a child. Sue Cook remembered the impact of her first funeral.

That night when we went to bed, I called to Mama every hour till I don't know how long, "Mama, are you asleep?" She said, "No, I'm not asleep." One time I heard Papa say, "I declare, we just ought to get up and spank her for calling." But, I just couldn't sleep.

Vera Saddler went to the funeral of a teacher who "had passed. I didn't know the lady. They were all up there crying, and it scared me. (They) took me up to see the lady. They had money on her eyes, and I'll never forget it! She had a dime on her eyes. I never went to any more funerals."

Mrs. Page Beatty tells this sad story:

I guess the first funeral ever was my little brother. I was 3 years old and he was 18 months old. He was taken to the church in a Model-T Ford in the back seat. We didn't use a hearse. I guess they had 'em. His body was so little, they put him in a little casket. I wondered why Mother kept cryin'. Somebody had told me he was just asleep. He had what they called colitis; diarrhea, nowadays.

Rose McCollum lost a best friend. She was May Parks, sister of Clara-bell Parks. "Me and her set together at school. Then you set in a desk for two. We would play together and we'd sit together, you know. We were always so foolish over one another. I know I'd go to bed at night after she was buried, and I'd get her on my mind and she'd just stay there."

Superstitions did nothing to allay the fears of anyone, especially children. Rose continues with this story:

I know if there's a death or somebody we knew died, that would linger till another one had to die, if it was a year or two. There's an old feller that lived down below us that Mama done his washin' and patchin' of clothes, and he gave us a little dog. The man died; his name was Tom Feimster. Well, we wanted to go outdoors, and Mama says, 'Go with her. She's afraid.' And my brother just opened the door and says, 'Come in, Tom Feimster.' He was thinkin' the same thing I was. We was scared if somebody died.

Clyde Tulbert had an even better reason to be afraid. He and Mae talked about embalming and funeral homes. Clyde said, "There was funeral homes up toward Winston, but there wasn't much around here." Mae said, "They embalmed them in the home, a lot of them." She was working at the Trivette Clinic where "they gave them a bath and everything. That's been thirty years, no fifty something."

Clyde gave this account:

Let me tell you a little story about when we were doing some plumbing down here at Reeves Funeral Home. We had to go by this little basement...it had a crawl space. It had a leak under there, and we had to crawl way back. Don Suggers was working with me, and I sent him out to get some fittings for the galvanized pipe. Well, whenever he crawled out to get it, they must have put a body down there. It had a cement floor, and that's where they washed them with a hose. Well, he came flying back out! (He laughs.) I'll never forget it as long as I live. He said, "I ain't going back there and getting nothing!"

Willie Mae says that she doesn't know how many years it's been since funeral homes started "furnishing someone to dig the grave." Clyde has dug graves for various people himself. Willie Mae's father died in 1934 after digging a grave by himself. The community was busy with threshing time, she explained. "He didn't want anyone to help. It came up a cloud and they (the deceased) were buried that afternoon. He got wet digging up that grave and he took pneumonia that night. He got so sick and died." Dr. William Trivette wanted him to come over there, but he had said he wanted to die at

home. "It was in July, the hottest time I've ever seen. It hadn't rained, and then it came up real bad. Thunder clouds that night or two before he died."

They rang the church bells to announce a death to the community. It was common practice for the deceased to "lie in state" in the home, usually in the living room or parlor, and the wake, if any, was held there. The funeral often took place in the home as well. John Henry Redmond gave this account:

People in the neighborhood, it wasn't like now. People were scattered. People would come and help sit up at night and do their work when there was sickness. I remember a lady died. They hauled her to the church on a wagon...just the box on a wagon and installed something on the bottom of the bed. They'd have a wake. the coffin would stay in the home. Friends and neighbors from all around would come in and sit with the family all night.

Lou Ray Cartwright talked about a black family, the Williams, who lived nearby. They had a son who was her dearly loved playmate. They also had a little girl, about 3 or 4 years old, who sucked a piece of apple down her windpipe and died. Lou Ray described the wake:

I can remember going out there to the house...and it was just full of people....I sat right down in the midst of all of the other boys and girls and...I hate to say...I enjoyed it very much because there were so many at the gathering.

The blacks back in those days, they would mourn for the dead. You could hear them when they mourned....It would go on for several hours....It was a crying and a moaning that they did. Everybody brought food in for them.

I can remember my mother telling about in the summertime...you could smell the...body decaying. Somebody went in and prepared them. It would be a friend...or a member of the family. They would immediately begin to build a coffin, or Turner Jennings store up here sold coffins. When they cleaned out the attic up there in that store, they found a record of all the coffins that had been sold. I suppose that's down at Statesville in the library. I know it's down in Salisbury in the McCubbin History room in the Salisbury library. My daddy went in three or four instances to get the coffin at Turner Jennings Store. They always put down who came to get the coffin and who it was for. He went in a wagon and got the coffin.

Then, of course, embalming came in. People used to be brought back home, and somebody sat up with the casket all night, usually a neighbor. Neighbors came from far and wide to the home.

I remember a child not far from here. It was a big family. They had a big five-gallon bucket they used to slop the pigs, a slop bucket. The child was maybe a year or two old, and it leaned over to look down in the bucket for something and fell in...and it drowned. I remember going to that house. I remember a lot of homes where people had died.

And this memory of a funeral was shared by Millard Knight:

Well, now, I got a recollection of John Sharpe's wife when she died. I was there on Sunday evening before she was buried, and she'd made a request to be buried as late in the evening as they could leave the church and get back home before dark. ...It was sorta raining that evening. I wuz there and Jim Campbell wuz there, and Bruce Campbell and Henry VanHoy and Henry wuz her brother, so they left and went to the graveyard, and me and Jim Campbell and Bruce stayed there at the house while they wuz gone till they got back. They had me to sing. Me and Arthur Grant's widow, Edna Grant, and one of Ezra Mullis' daughters and me sung, and John played the organ. Then they left, and she wuz buried at Union Grove Cemetery.

Willie Mae Tulbert tried to get into nursing school but could not because she was only 15 years old. Her uncle, Dr. Trivette, needed her so she worked "like a nurse's aide" night and day for four years before she married. "It was on-the-job training," she said. Later, when anyone was needed to give shots or vitamins or such, Willie Mae was called on. "If anyone was dying, they said, "Get Willie Mae."

I just seen so many people in the community that I was there when they passed away. Mrs. Lynch was a diabetic, and he said, 'She will probably just go. You may take her water or a bed pan, but the next time you go back there she might just be dead.' He said, 'Don't let it worry inside of you.' So that was the way it was.

If they passed away you gave them a bath and changed their bed, and everything, you know....People...mostly older people would have their dresser where they would have their gowns and their sheets that they wanted you to put on their bed when they were laid out, you know.

And Clyde continues:

Well, Honey, at that time back yonder, they didn't have nothing really. Back then Dr. Somers and these old doctors, they didn't have anything to cure anything. They had nothing to help prevent...from taking the measles or whooping cough. There's no drug in this country that can really help anybody. Back at that time diphtheria was really bad. It would kill small children right quick like!

But there were a few miracles that gave people hope that they too might recover. Annie Messick survived typhoid fever. She said that the doctors would allow her no food, and she had to stay in bed for several weeks. "I got so hungry. I got so hungry!" she emphasized.

Rose McCollum also told us about the practice of withholding food

as a remedy for serious illness. She may have had typhoid, but this treatment was also used for appendicitis.

Dr. Trivette and Dr. Somers, they wouldn't let me have nothin' to eat only what they wanted ta give me. And I'd ask 'em every time if I could have some cherries. I'd have 'em bring me a bunch and hang 'em up over the mantle so I could look at it. And I'd say, 'Mama, you walk 'em to the door and ask 'em when I can have somethin' ta eat.'

And I said, 'I want some watermelon.' He said, 'I'll have the first ones...you'll get one of 'em.' I kept that in mind. Mama'd go out and I'd cry and cry for something. And she'd go to offer us a drink of water. Bring a glass and a dipper and pour it in there. And if'n she'd not got outta my way I'd a knocked her out, I wanted to eat so bad. Oh, Lord! I told a lot of people I knew what starvin' to death was. All I got was a beat-up egg, a glass of milk and some flavoring. That's all I got!

Ida Tharpe survived a ruptured appendix when she was attending the Farm Life School and boarding at a home in Harmony. She was afraid and would not tell anyone that she was ill. She took her turn at the switchboard that night, and by 2 o'clock in the morning they heard her vomiting and crying. Her mother was called, and she called the doctor who didn't send her to the hospital until the next morning even though he thought it was her appendix. When she got to the hospital, her appendix had ruptured, so they operated right away. She was in the hospital 20 days.

The most valuable service performed by those in medical practice was in the area of immunization. Clyde Tulbert remembers vaccinations for diphtheria and whooping cough that were given at the schoolhouse. "They'd set a date far ahead (and) people would come, young and old." Flake Messick remembers the vaccinations Dr. Somers used to give for typhoid fever. "He was the meanest old rascal...rough, I mean rough! He'd just get you there and wham!" Said Annie, "He was good, but there wasn't any fun about him. Dr. Trivette's line would be long, and Dr. Somers' line would be short!" These vaccinations were given at Turner Jenkin's Store near Union Grove and at Houstonville.

A. L. Patterson remembers being vaccinated for typhoid by Dr. Robinson and his wife in the summer across from Mayberry's Store by two big oak trees. They came every Saturday for three weeks. But there were no whooping cough shots then. He only took the smallpox shot at age 18 before entering State College. He met several people whose face was scarred, but no one he knew had smallpox. In 1939, he went to ROTC Camp for all colleges except the Citadel, which had a bad polio epidemic. When the Salk

vaccine came out, everyone lined up in Harmony's "old gymnasium" for the cube of sugar with a drop of the vaccine.

Of course, there were no vaccines for influenza, which took so many lives. Harry Brawley described his family's experience during the epidemic of 1918. Their doctor was Dr. Cloaninger from out of Statesville, but there was little anyone could do.

I went to school one day, all of us did, and the next day, *nobody* went! The school was closed! Everybody was sick, and we was all in bed except my oldest brother Thomas and my daddy was up and down. And the neighbors would cut the wood and bring it to the porch and put it there, but they would not dare come in! They said they wouldn't, and I don't blame 'em!

Interviewer: What did they give you for it?

I don't know, but it couldna been much, maybe aspirins or something because in that day they didn't have much. They just let it run its course, and *so many died!* How we survived I don't know because my daddy was sick, and he was up givin' medicine, and it was comin' back up and *man* he shook his head and it was just about more than he could stand. It musta lasted two or three weeks. I remember the first thing I eat was butter and biscuit. And it tasted like wood.

We was in school one day and two boys was sent home because they'd had the chance of the flu that day. If I remember correctly, they never took it, but everybody else in there did. Just about everybody took the flu *in one day!* I sat with Pete Kyles, and I must of got a load of it! *All of us*, as I said, but my brother Thomas who said he wasn't gonna take it. (Thomas was known to be very strong-minded!)

Flake Messick said that Dr. Journey at Turnersburg and Dr. Trivette made home visits. Annie's doctor was Dr. Somers at Union Grove. The family physician in Troutman and South Iredell was Dr. John Talley, whose office was in his home, now the Talley House Restaurant in Troutman.

Several of those we interviewed found careers in the medical field. One of them was Amelia Kennedy, who was led into chiropractic medicine because of a health condition. She wanted to become a social worker in her senior year at Pheiffer. When she came back after Christmas break, she couldn't breathe. She was diagnosed with bronchial asthma. After 30 penicillin shots, she was sent back to the classroom, which was filled with smoke. She was told she would have to leave school. She went from doctor to doctor for treatment. When she could not sleep at 4 o'clock in the morning, her mother said, "For my birthday, I'm going to take you to Dr. Scott (a chiropracter). He discovered that Amelia had injured her neck and told her mother what to do. After her treatment, she wasn't to eat anything until the next morning. Amelia awoke to find her mother standing over her bed crying in

relief. That was her first night's sleep in months, and her breathing was very regular.

Leona Dalton also worked in the health care field. She began by staying with the sick and dying and with women who were giving birth. Then her second husband drove for Dr. Robertson as a "bill collector". He picked up livestock the doctor received as payment. And Leona "shared in the profits." She said, "They would kill a beef and fill up a freezer, or we'd cut a ham, and it would be ham three times a day until that ham was gone. It would be chicken three times a day till the chickens give out. I'm telling you that was a joyful life!" Leona continued:

He would go to see a patient and say, "Mrs. Robertson, you and Leona come on, let's go." It would be night. A lot of times she would drive, and he would feel like she weren't going quick enough. He'd say, "Let me drive." Over top of gullies, sticks, and fields, we'd try to get there. She would scream and holler, "Doc, you're gonna kill us!" But he would get there.

Two of our interviewees, Mary Kimbrough and Beulah Myers Glass, chose nursing school for very different reasons. Mary wanted to go into nurse's training immediately after high school graduation, but money for her schooling was a real problem. Her parents, William Gaston Kimbrough and Clara Van Sciver Kimbrough, had been called home (to Statesville) to take over the family store after the death of W. G.'s father. There were only three children when they arrived, but eventually the couple had fourteen and two who died as infants. "Life was good," said Mary, but money was scarce.

It cost \$35 to enter. I needed a trunk, shoes, and other things. I went to school with \$10. Out of that (came) train fare and taxi and very little left, but I was accepted. I went to Greensboro to nurse's training with \$10 and a promise. It only cost \$35 for the whole course (3 years). They gave us shoe fare once a month (\$.35). One girl, the smart one, called a strike and caused everyone to get sent home. They fired the supervisor and house lady.

I wasn't assigned to anything, so I went to the children's ward. No one said anything to me. They didn't think I could make it. I was small, only 16 years old (in 1932). Everything worked out fine for two years, and the school was closed. Nurses did not make much money. People just didn't have any money.

While Mary was working in Asheville, she met a young man, and everything changed. They were married in Greenville, South Carolina, and they got along even though "Life was still rough," said Mary.



Beulah Myers Glass



Mary Kimbrough

Beulah Myers got sick every year that she was in school at Harmony, and the last year she had pneumonia. Dr. Journey was her family doctor. He told her father, "Mr. Myers, if you want to raise this girl, you'll have to keep 'er at home and take care of her."

I told my mother that I was not gonna stay home and cook for Dad's laborers! I would not do it! Mother said if I got sick (in nursing school), I'd at least be in hospital where they could take care of me.

Beulah graduated in 1927 from nurses' training at Asheville Missions Hospital and worked for a while in that 125-bed hospital. Then she went to Michigan University and worked there for a while. She had some cousins in Detroit. The hospital at the university had 1500 beds. Beulah said, "The Depression didn't affect me so much, because there's always openings for nurses. My problem is I was inexperienced and didn't realize the position I was in. So I didn't have a lot on the ball like older girls. I thought I would see the country. That's how come me to travel around like I did."

While jobs may have been "plentiful" for nurses, conventional medical help was unavailable or it was unable to provide solutions for the majority of people. Therefore, this could correctly be called the era of "folk medicine." People looked to natural substances to alleviate some symptoms. John Henry Redmond's mother had her own remedies. "My mother would make the medicine. When we'd have a cold, she'd go to the field and there was a little grass, we'd call it 'scrubby grass.' She'd make a tea out of it that was just like you buy, but it was...stronger....For croup, she would grease us (with) ammonia salve. We'd take her medicine and it would work us out. It wouldn't be long before we'd be going."

Elsie Turner's family also used various herbs for home cures.

They would go down on the branch, and there was an herb they would get, wildall and wild cherry...and sassafras. There was a weed; they called it bonesilk. There was hoarhound and catnip to make teas out of. These holly trees...there was a certain side on the holly trees that you go and peel the bark off of. What was that for? Babies when they were cutting teeth. They'd make a tea out of that...that was good for fever too. Then there was a yellow root...real yellow, they would make tea out of when I was real young. It was just handed down from one generation to another. They would know how to get it themselves and use it. They used part of it and sold (the rest) in the stores to get their food with."

Elsie's sister Leona explains "...they called this bush that grows in the

woods blackhall. They would dig the roots up, peel 'em off, let it dry, and take it to the store and sell it to buy groceries or whatever, shoes and things."

Millard Knight's family used spicewood tea as a curative. "They was a kind of tree that grows down here on the branch...called spicewood. You break the twigs off and put in water and boil it. It had a tinge to it. It tastes ...no smell I know of. Spicewood tea."

Page Beatty tells the story of "Ol' Man Jim Green":

He went to some ol' doctor up here in the mountains and they cured him and his face was drawed sideways. He couldn't hardly talk. He lived to be old. The doctors couldn't stop it. He said, "Well, y'all ain't doin' me no good," and he went to some herb doctor, and he got it stopped."

Clyde Tulbert and Flake Messick knew how to remove warts. Clyde's brother Jesse took a knife and shaved the wart off close to Clyde's leg, and it wouldn't quit bleeding. Paul went about a quarter mile to their home, used the "crank phone," and called Dr. Somers. He said, "Ain't you got some rag-weeds?"

"Yes," he said. "Take and beat some of them good and take your hand up there, hold it, and it will stop it." It did. It stopped the blood flow.

Flake said that a person could take green persimmons for warts. "I got 'em on my hands, but I don't remember handling toad frogs very much. You cut green persimmons and put them on there. My aunt learnt me that. I followed it for a pretty good little bit, and the warts went away."

Flake Messick's strongest memory was familiar to many. "Boy, I didn't like that Castor Oil! The way they gave it to me was to mix it in a cup of coffee. Oh, boy! It came up to the top floating around. I drank it, but I was 20 years old before I'd taste a cup of coffee because of that....Every time I'd see somebody drink coffee, I'd think of that Castor Oil. *Terrible!*"

Flake had an unusual use for Sloan's Liniment. "If you had a toothache in a hollow tooth...cram it down in that hollow. It would burn the fire out of your mouth, but it would stop the toothache. I don't know what it was...the burning causing you to not know the toothache was there maybe."

Maggie Phifer had many remedies that she learned from her grandmother, who seems to have been something of an authority.

Now they gave you turpentine for belly aches, but you're looking to put in sugar. After that, go out to a peach tree with leaves on it and pull the leaves off and boil them. It would be green and bitter, oohh! You'd have to drink it for a belly ache. If there

weren't any leaves, you would take the bark and boil it down. I hated that stuff!

They'd make castor oil and yuk! I hated that stuff! You'd have those big old fireplaces with a hearth, and they'd keep that stuff hot. They'd put some ginger in it and a couple of drops of turpentine. They'd keep all that in a cabinet. You got all that in you, (laughs and stamps her feet) I'll tell you that stuff was nasty, but kids were healthier. I gave my children some of that stuff.

Did you know that you can take mineral oil and put it in a frying pan and put your chicken in there and fry it and it gets good and brown. You can't taste it either. It's real good!

My grandmother, now she would hear a baby crying, his liver was going or something like that. Grandmother would walk in and take the baby and take all its clothing off and grease it down all the way down real good and pick it up by its heels and shake it. I never did understand it and I never did try it. She wouldn't say a word. She'd just reach for the baby, undress it, grease it real good, shake it, dress it, and put it down.

If a baby's cutting teeth, you take burdock, cut it into nine pieces, small ones that you can run your needle through and put it around a baby's neck. Or you put buttons around it. Babies with colic, we would take a spoonful of meal and that's what we would give our babies. You wouldn't go buy medicine. If you were nursing a baby, you would take that meal and get some out with a spoon. We never would go to the doctor. We would take Castor Oil or Epsom Salts. That's some of the old remedies, and they all worked, too. Every one of 'em.

Edna Allison also had some suggestions:

Mama would make different teas. The old folks would give you medicine and rub you in Vick's Salve; they called it pneumonia salve. I remember Mama had a cloth, and she'd rub your chest at night in the bed. We used to have red flannel like you would wear when the baby was born. They used to wear red flannel and it would hang way down. Red flannel would help our cough.

My daddy used to could cure the toothache. People would come to Daddy's house. It was a secret. I have had the toothache so bad, and Daddy would want to take me to cure my teeth. I wouldn't let Daddy cure my teeth 'cause I'd say I'd tell what Daddy done and maybe my tooth would go to hurting again. Seems like I let Aunt Ree cure my teeth later on in years. She learned from Daddy.

We heard about one young woman who was bitten by a rabid cat, and she had to go to Raleigh for treatment. That's where they gave the shots. There were also stories about the "mad stone". If the bite was rubbed with the stone that certain people in the country had, the rabies would be cured.

We would have been a surprised if a certain home remedy had not been mentioned. The following comes from Lou Ray Cartwright and her interviewee, Amelia Kennedy.

My Grandmother was a very strict Christian woman if there ever was one, but when we got sick she fixed us sugar, water, and a little whiskey. You know, when you were sick that used to be the medicine. I mean nobody thought of it as you were going to become an alcoholic or anything. I remember, I thought it was a jar of water under my mother's clothes in the closet. I wondered why Mother kept that quart of water under her clothes.

Lou Ray Cartwright

That was the way we thought of that too, medicine. I wasn't too fond of it, but I took it because she said it was medicine and it would make me feel better. (They took it to improve) Circulation. Back in those days, they had a toddy every morning.

Amelia Kennedy

My Grandma Mullis made blackberry wine, and it was for medicine, also. That was the only time you could have it, if you were sick. I was sick every time I went because I loved blackberry wine. I would say, 'Grandma, my stomach just hurts, could I have some blackberry wine?' She could tell the difference!

My mother told me this. People would take sheep balls...it's what the sheep passed ...and make a tea out of it to make you break out with the measles. I used to think that was not true, but I have found that was true, and it worked. When people couldn't get the measles to break out on them, they would do that.

Lou Ray Cartwright

Vera Saddler's family also used Castor Oil for a real bad cold, and they mixed sulphur and molasses and gave that to children. "That was good," she claimed. Vera offered this comment: "It seemed like children weren't sick like they are now because they used plenty of cow milk and butter. And the cows had plenty of herbs and things that they drank, and I think it was healthier for the kids."

Maggie Phifer agreed: "You know children were much healthier. Now, you have to bundle them up and take them to the doctor."

We have to wonder if children were really healthier or if they complained less because they knew the remedies in store for them. It is certain, however, that some families enjoyed amazingly good health. Bertha Westmoreland is a good example. Her Grandmaw Susan was born into slavery, and she was seven years old when they were freed. She died in 1929, 70 years later, and Bertha told us that "She wuz just a little woman about a hunderd an' twenty pound an' never seed 'er sick not a day. An' everybody loved her."

Bertha obviously inherited her good health. She bore nine children before she was ever sick enough to need a doctor. She was close to fifty years old when she went to Dr. Taylor with a stomach ache.

Because I ate some cabbage...it give me da indigestion and he sayd I had drunk a lotta watah and it had sour'd dem cabbages. I never eat no moh cabbage as long 's I lived 'cause dey might not make it back ta me da nex' time. I ain't et no cabbage in...thirty-eight years.

Bertha lived the last two years of her life with cancer, but she remained active in her music ministry until the last two weeks. She was also instrumental in building South Iredell A.M.E. Zion's new church. If we seek the secret to good health and longevity, perhaps we need look no further. In Bertha's lifestyle and attitude toward life, we may have the answer.

We learned a great deal from our subjects about how they managed to enjoy their health for so many years. It is clear that we owe a tremendous debt to the midwives who birthed so many generations of Iredell Countians. Throughout the first 70 years of history in this study, children were born primarily at home with their assistance. Other paraprofessionals also played a vital role. The family physicians did yeoman's work, often with little or no pay. But most of all, it was our parents and grandparents whose fortitude and ingenuity made intolerable situations bearable and who, through a combination of resourcefulness, determination, and prayer, gave us so many "miracles."



Leona Patterson Dalton: born 1904
Leona and husband Eugene worked forty years for Dr. Robertson.

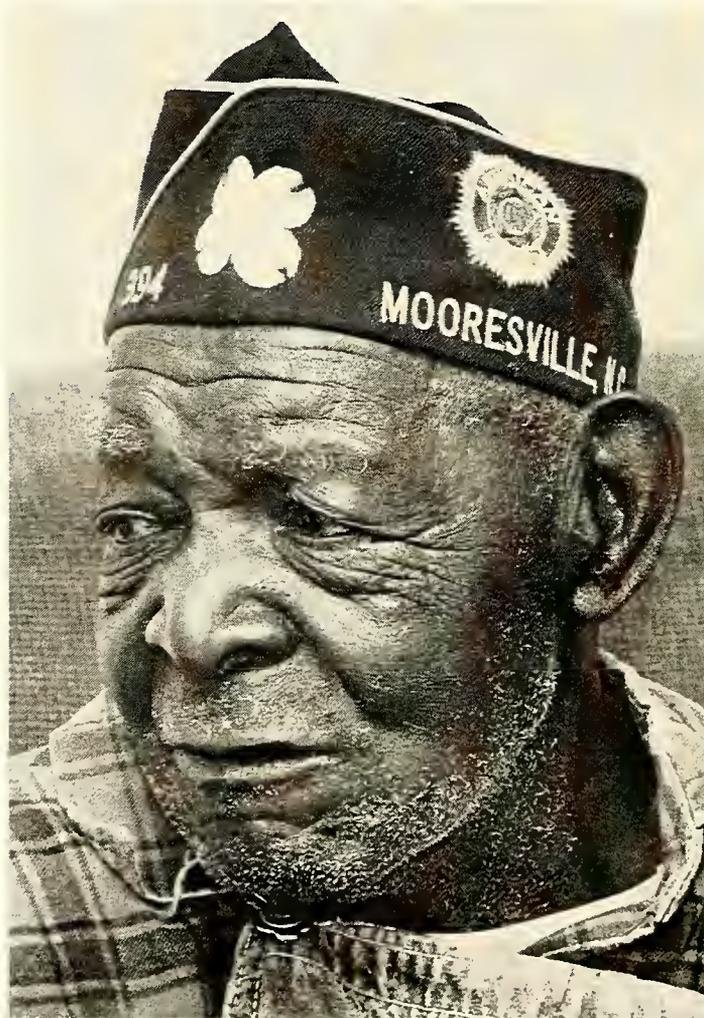
World War I

"Papa would read stories...and I would just see blood flowing everywhere!"

Linnie Sue Morrow Cook

At the time of his interview in 1993, Henry Miller was perhaps the one remaining veteran of World War I in Iredell County. Mr. Miller served for two years before his return home at the end of the war. We have this information from interviewer Dan Woody:

As I said, he was born in Cabarrus County in 1895, moving to Mooresville as a young man. He farmed, and when World War I came along, he was in service. He went to France, to England, and ultimately to Germany before coming home.



Henry Miller

Photo from The Mooresville Tribune

Among those from the Mooresville area who served in World War I were Rowe Phifer and his younger brother Dillard Phifer. Other members of the black community in Iredell County organized a group of volunteers that included 83 privates and 43 officers, with Captain Richard Alexander as their leader. Mary Kimbrough has the document which lists those volunteers.



Rowe Phifer and his wife Alice

Some families did not accept military service as a fact of life. Lou Ray Cartwright says that her grandmother was known to be very protective of her family. Lou Ray gives this example.

The first World War was about to break out. Quakers could be conscientious objectors and not go into the army. She decided that they should join the Quaker Church, so they went up to Winthrop and joined up there. But, my daddy and my uncle, both, went in the army, so she didn't convince them to become conscientious objectors. They did switch from the Baptist up to the Quakers back in probably 1915 or 1916 or maybe even later.

Many of the memories shared with us were from the families of those who served. From Rose Huie Brown McCollum we heard this.

Uncle Houston would write me. He put 'To My Belgian Rose'. I kept that card a long time.

Linnie Sue Morrow's family also got messages "from the Front". This account illustrates one of the problems created by the censorship of letters that were sent home.

We took *The Charlotte Observer*, and Papa would sit around and read stories. He said, 'I declare, Europe is just drenched in blood.' To me, I could just see blood flowing everywhere after he'd talk like that. My oldest brother was in that war, and I remember one time Mama received a card from him when he was on the Front. The card was printed out, you know, and he had marked out--just drawn a line through--the things. So she read, "I have been wounded and have been moved back to somewhere." Well, that part was marked out and she began screaming. Some of us went and read the card and said, 'Mama, he's marked that out. He said, "I am safe. Will write later."' That's the message.' When they were at the Front, that was the only way they could send messages.

Leona Dalton and Elsie Turner had a graphic second-hand account of one family whose son did not return alive.

Leona: I remember a lot of the people going to World War I when we was living back over there. One of the Richardson boys went, and he didn't get back. What was the other?

Elsie: Earl, I think. Earl Richardson.

Leona: I think it was the Mitchell boy who didn't come back. After the war, they sent his body back and Mr. Mitchell would not accept it. They said he couldn't open it, and he would not accept it. He would not accept it being his son. He said his son had some kind of crooked tooth in his mouth, and if he could see in his mouth, he

would accept that body would be his son. They said the law wouldn't let them open it. Anyway they did open it, and when the air hit, the flesh was just quivering... They said Mr. Mitchell got down over that body with spoons or something to pry his mouth open till he could see that tooth in there. He said, yes, he was satisfied that was his son. So they closed him up and buried him. They said a lot of people...they would send the body back. They told them they couldn't open it; they wouldn't know whether there was a real body in there. They'd just talk all this stuff--maybe it would just be a nice casket they would send back over here. The family wouldn't accept it and go ahead and bury it.

Sam Price, who had an uncle in World War I, made this observation.

He was in France. Things were not nearly as easy for soldiers in those days as they were even in World War II, and they hadn't gotten much better as time went on. It seems like we in World War II had better access to getting food to our men. But back then the people were farmers and were used to doing the best they could with what they had, and I'm sure that they didn't know the difference---they got along fine. I do remember there were a lot of soldiers fighting in the trenches.

Several people told us how the war affected those back home, even those who had no relations in the war. Sarah Turlington was one of them.

We had a lot of people who came to talk at the high school auditorium about the war and there were men who trained in Mooresville. I don't remember the company, but I remember the training and marching up and down. I remember that...eggs were scarce...white flour was scarce. I remember my mother saying she hoped she never had to eat another piece of rye bread. Everything was costly. My father worked in the war effort, and whatever he did he didn't get paid for.

In 1917, I guess I was in the fourth grade, and we walked out to the country and picked cotton and sold it, and the school bought thrift stamps. It was to help win the war.

Sadie Martin remembers the war songs she learned in her youth.

"Long Way to Tipperary", "Sweetest Girl I Know," all of those were war songs. Just whatever was popular at that period of time I guess we listened to it and participated the best we could.

And, of course, everyone celebrated the end of the war. Ida Tharpe had a brother who served overseas in World War I, but he was not wounded and returned home safe. She has this vivid memory.

One thing I'll never forget was, you know, on Armistice Day when Mrs. Bream called my mama, and she just screamed over the telephone, 'Hooray! Let's celebrate Armistice Day!' She said she just screamed it. She knew Mother would be happy over it too. But Mother said she never heard anyone scream it out like she did.

Jessie Lee Troutman tells us that they all got together and walked down the road singing when the war was over.

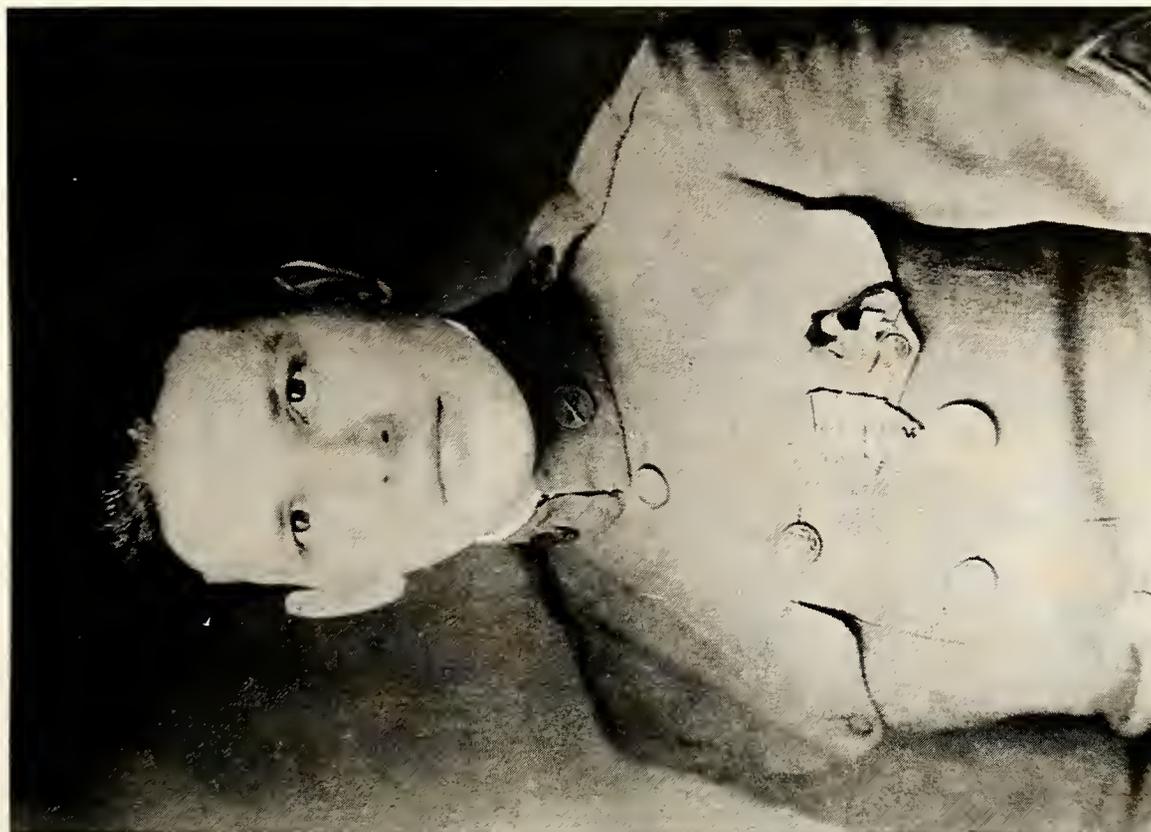
I was five years old. And I remember our nextdoor neighbors, which was the Ostwalts, came out and we all walked all the way down to the creek which was a mile and a quarter. We were happy! The whole neighborhood went down there. I remember that very well.



Parade on first Armistice Day in Statesville: 1918



Bertha Mae Troutman Sipes: 1920



John Lee Sipes, Sr. : 1920
Private 1st Class, U.S. Army, 1917-1920, served in France.

The Great Depression

*"You would see people comin' from town to the country.
They'd be acarryin' a suitcase, headin' for higher ground."
Millard Knight*

It has been said that the only thing worse than dire poverty is the fear of it. Many of those we visited would declare that the author of that statement had never been really poor. The Great Depression redefined the word poverty for this generation, regardless of how their own families fared. Its effects were visible and dramatic. And its impact was lifelong.

To set the scene, we need to understand the value of the dollar at the time of the Depression. During the first fifty years of the period we are exploring, land prices, although still low, rose dramatically. As we saw earlier, a very small piece of land in Amity Hill was purchased in 1852 for 5 cents an acre. We learned the following from Thomas Trivette:

Before 1920, a bit of land was for sale. There was no timber on it. It was sawmilled over. It seems like it was \$1.50 an acre, real cheap. Dr. Somers told me that he wanted ta buy it, but he didn' see how he could pay that much. At that time, a dollar an' a half was a lotta money.

Thomas knew the value of a dollar very well. His father was a farmer, a schoolteacher during the week, and a circuit-rider preacher on Sundays. Preachers were paid "sometimes in money, sometimes in taters (or) beans; sometimes they give 'em canned stuff. They give 'em whatever they had. It might be a chicken, sometimes eggs, or whatever." Thomas continues:

Nobody really had much money. Here in 1927 we had our own chickens and eggs and raised our own garden stuff. We had wheat and corn and took that to the mill and had it ground an' made bread. If we needed some coffee or sugar, we'd take a few eggs or a chicken to the store and buy it. We didn' have much money hardly, but didn' need no money 'cause there wasn' nothin' ta spend it on.

Thomas's father raised cotton on his farm in Iredell. An average crop yielded them "a couple hunderd dollars", but he added that amount "would last you a year." For comparison, he said that a new car could be bought for \$300 to \$500. Obviously, a new car was out of reach for most farmers as the cost exceeded a year's income. When Thomas said they didn't need much money, he meant for the essentials.



Marie and Thomas Reason Trivette

Margaret Scott's parents were buying a new home about this time. Their five-room house was built in 1926 for \$1200. When the Depression came in 1929, her father lost his job and they were in danger of losing their home. Her father cut wood and made \$.25 a cord, and her mother took in ironing. There was plenty of food because they had a garden, canned and dried fruit and vegetables, and they had a cow. "Neighbors shared with each other," Margaret explained.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal brought them hope. Margaret's mother was able to persuade her husband's employer to give him as much work as he could and to withhold \$1.00 a week from his paycheck. The house payment had been reduced to \$4.00 a month. In 24 years their mortgage had been paid. Their lives could have been very different had it not been for their mother's courage. Black women seldom were heard from in

that day, and her actions earned her the admiration and respect of everyone in the white community as well as from the black community.

Mrs. Page Beatty remembered the Depression, but she said, "It never worried me because we didn't see any difference in it. My parents probably did. We raised our own stuff to eat, you know." For families with farms and gardens, food was not a real problem, particularly as those who had more of it shared with their neighbors. It is easy to see why children had an easier time than did their parents. Amelia Kennedy confirms this.

Well, we never heard anything about a Depression. I mean, we always had a lot of company. People would come and stay it seemed to me like a month at a time, and everybody was always welcome, and my mother would always manage to have food for everybody. We always had potatoes. Go to the mountains and get bushels of apples and put 'em in the cellar. Then she had her onions which she put up in what they called a shop building. I didn't know anything about a Depression until later years. I'm like Dr. Nicholson said at a meeting in Harmony. He said he didn't know he lived in poverty.

Those who were old enough to be working for a salary certainly felt the thrust of the Depression. Sarah Turlington was teaching at Lee's McRae.

I certainly knew it was hard times. We were paid \$50 a month...and we got room and board. What we had for board was what the students brought in to pay their way which was cabbage, apples, and cornbread, and beans. On Sunday, we had salmon.

Sadie Martin was a young school teacher in the Central School community. This is some of what she remembered of the Depression years:

To people in this area, including our family, it meant working a little harder and tightening our belts a little tighter. Most people in the area had only small bank accounts. Only one bank in Statesville and one in Stony Point closed. This meant that very few people lost their savings.

Some people in the community received flour and other supplies and seeds from the government. A few people worked for the WPA topping trees around the local schools and churches. Also, on the school ground at Central, a cannery was built. This made it possible to can meats and vegetables which could be canned under pressure.

Many families found it difficult to buy books and school supplies for their children. Library facilities were very limited. I ordered a traveling library from Raleigh. We used it at school, then I brought it home for family and neighborhood children to use.

I enjoyed teaching, but sometimes I became very discouraged. One year I received a cut in salary. One year, the county didn't have adequate funds to pay our last month's salary. I got my pay at threshing time during the summer.

Rose McCollum reminds us that those with jobs often had trouble getting to work. "I remember parkin' the car because they couldn' get tires and couldn' get tags. And if they got up to the sawmill, they would walk and be gone for a week at a time. And if it went to snowin' or anything, well they done the cookin'. They took enough with 'em to cook." Lawrence Patterson described a "Hoover Car". "You'd take the front end off a Model-T Ford and make a cart out of it (the body) and hitch a horse to it."

There were some items that everybody missed. Most frequently mentioned was sugar. Annie Messick said, "We had to be so saving with sugar." Carl and Sue Cook recall having to do without coffee. They drank Postum instead. "I never did like it," declares Carl. Gaynell Cooke Freeland tells of "having to economize on gas...and flour if you didn't have your wheat." John Henry Redmond's family had their flour ground at a mill. "I rode the horse many a time with a sack of wheat and a bushel of corn. I'd take it to the mill and have it ground, and the mill man would put my sack on top of that, and the flour on that, and I would come back home on the horse. I was small and it would slide off, but I would try to hold it."

Mrs. Page Beatty bartered with flour for school lunches. "I got my lunch at school by takin' flour to pay for it. Really! My flour was \$.10 and each item was \$.05. They'd come around every evening and write the next day's menu on the blackboard. I've took flour, meal, blackberries. They would allow you two things for a quart of blackberries, soup and hot chocolate (for instance)."

Those in the cities naturally fared worse, in part because they did not have their own food supply. In addition, they made their living working for someone else, and jobs disappeared. Rural families were "used to hard times anyway," in the words of Jessie Lee Troutman. Millard Knight puts this into perspective for us in the following account:

I'd be aworkin' up here on this road that runs from Statesville back up here to the Brushy Mountains and, of course, Mocksville and other points. You would see people coming from town to the country. They run out of anything in town, I reckon. They'd be acarryin' a suitcase, headin' for higher ground."

Maggie Phifer painted the grimmest picture of the job market.

People couldn't get no work to do. The only people that would get some work to do was the women folks. And they didn't get but \$2.50 a week. Yes, Mam! If you got \$2.50, you were getting big money. See the men couldn't get no work nowhere. I had a little job and I was only getting \$2.50. Sometimes I had to come back to work on

Sunday. That's right! Times are changing I'll tell you. I have worked for \$.50 a day cutting the tops off corn, and them old worms with stingers all over their backs, sometimes they would sting you, and oh, Lord! Pull corn, shuck corn, cut corn stalks and get the and help them sprout. Pick up a many sprouts and pull forward and tie it. Bet I couldn't do it now. Yeah, you need to tie it good and tight and stick it up on the stalk. That's the reason I wanted to get away from that. You go to the cotton field and pick cotton and then go milk the cows, and then come back and pick more cotton. I said to myself when I get grown I ain't going to be doin' this stuff. There wadn' but one of me and I had to do chores and get in the field. I could tell you some awful tales, I'm telling you!

"I remember it well," said Page Beatty. "I was just a kid. Cotton was \$.05 a pound. Sweet potatoes was \$.50 a bushel. Get all the labor you wanted for \$.50 a day, but you didn't have \$.50 to pay." Gladys King's mother cooked and made \$3.00 a week, but her grandmother walked to work and carried the clothes on her head. "She got their clothes, bring 'em down here 'n washed 'em, and she carried 'em back on her head. They just give her clothes 'n stuff. I don't think she made nothin'."

When Theodore Wallace was laboring for a WPA Project, he laid rock in Holly Springs. He was compensated with "a bag of flour or something like that." He added, "I was never too stuck on handouts, you know. When I was going to school, I worked for \$.50 a day digging Bermuda grass."

Henry Miller repaired track for Southern Railroad, staying on the road for a week at a time, living in tents and shanties. Because of abysmally low Depression wages, he would pack with him a week's worth of meals in order to save what money he could to send home to his wife and children.

Small businessmen in particular, and that was the most prevalent kind in rural areas, found themselves in a precarious situation. Many were unable to survive. Dan Woody, in interviewing O. C. Stonestreet, III, said that his father lost "a couple of grocery stores during the Depression. He just didn't have the heart to be vicious like the businessman today." O. C. said that his grandfather's uncle, "had a dry goods store and a grocery and he actually went bankrupt during the Depression because of letting people have food on credit, and he never saw the money. When he died, they went in some of his stores and went upstairs, and he had boxes full of I.O.U.'s."

Vera Saddler said that "having a little store" helped her. She would go from town to town to get lard. When a merchant said no, she would go to the wholesale place where they allowed her to purchase a certain amount.

Ida Tharpe was luckier than most, even though she was married right before the Depression. "We didn't know it (the Depression) because John was with Roses, and he made a right good salary. And, of course, we got along."



Ida Tharpe

Lillie Christopher "was just a kid growing up (and) didn't realize it was any different than any other time, but I do know all the work Papa would do. He had trucks, tractors, and all that kind of stuff, but we never did have money just to really do as we pleased."

Sam Price, born in 1929, was quite young during the Depression, but he still has vivid memories of that time. His father purchased Miller Drug Store in Mooresville in 1930, just as the Depression was beginning. "I remember hearing my mother and father talk about how they would have to live on a little bit of money because there wasn't enough money to buy a lot of food. There were many times we would go to the table, and we would not have much on the table, but there was always something there. I remember

distinctly one time we had some soda crackers on the table, and my mother poured soup over it, and that was our supper."

"I'll tell you what," said Clyde Tulbert, "it trained us to value a dollar, going to a ball game and I'll tell you, you just took \$.10 or \$.15 cents back then. Some big to do...I can't remember what it was, but anyway, I asked Dad for \$.25 and he gave it to me and told me to give half to my sister....so she felt sorry for me and told me to keep \$.15 and she would take a dime. A lot of people at that time had just a little bit of money. I know my dad lost what he had in Elkin Pen Company. You used to put (pens) on your telephone over the glass knobs where the telephone was, and that thing went broke and he lost everything he had."

John Henry Redmond was born in 1915, and he well remembers the Depression. "It was rough, I'm telling you! I don't think that will ever get out of my mind." Even though he was 14 years younger, Sam Price echoes this thought. He observed that "even when the economy improved, we still had that remnant attitude."

There is no doubt that the long shadow of the Depression changed lives forever. The "remnant attitude" Sam spoke of came from looking disaster in the face. Some called it fear. What it did was make frugality a permanent lifestyle. No scrap of anything was ever thrown away, and few people ever again risked borrowing money for any reason. If the money wasn't there, they did without. Many, like Lon Mills, never borrowed a nickle in his life, and the largest checks he ever wrote were for fertilizer. He did not build his home until he could pay cash for it. Harry Brawley, his son-in-law, and Harry's wife and two daughters lived with his family during the mid-1930's. Harry cut firewood and delivered it for \$.50 a day in 1934, the year his first child was born. He learned all he ever wanted to know about hard times, and he never forgot that lesson. He never went into debt. This meant that he did not move into his first home until he had been married 27 years and both his daughters had finished their master's degrees.

Sadie Martin says that "by hard work, imagination, and the cooperation of the family and neighbors we lived through the hard times." Sam Price also gave credit to his family's religion. "We realized that we really had to depend on something besides our own powers, our own thoughts, our own actions to help us get through...this. We did have a lot of prayer involved in our lives. I think my early days working in the pharmacy and the Depression had a lot of influence on the fact that I believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. I learned to respect Him; I learned that he was the Lord God Omnipotent, and I

had to let him be in control and call on him and talk to him all the time through prayer."

Perhaps it took the Depression to give others a taste of the life farmers experience every day of every year. On a daily basis, the farmer turns over the welfare of his entire family to the forces of nature, the whims of bankers, the merchants who sell them supplies, and politicians. He must have ultimate faith to go on tilling the soil to eak out a living. It is poetic justice, if not divine intervention, that farmers as a whole were the one group who suffered the least during this crisis. In addition to having their own food supply, their natural frugality and their faith enabled them to deal with hard times better than many others.



Betty and Harvey Cook: 1945

Betty and Harvey are the parents of interviewee, Ralph Cook, who still works on the family farm and is teaching his grandson David to do the same.

World War II

"Man, it was down to a gnat's heel!"

Harry Brawley

Some families gave more than their share in defense of their country. The John Sipes family is a good example. John Lee, Sr. was wounded when he served in France in World War I, injuries which cost him a kidney and a leg. Still his four sons followed him in service through our country's military forces. Ray and John, Jr. served in the Navy in World War II, Alan saw action in the Navy during the Korean War, and Ernest completed his military service in the Army base in Texas (1950's).



Martha Mills and John Lee Sipes, Jr. :1943 (wedding photo)

Many in Iredell who were called into service by the draftboard were exempt from direct participation because of the critical nature of their jobs. Russell Cowan was one of them.

Well, I had to register, but I was doin' a job that created a lot of butterfat and that kept me out. I was workin' for Mr. Edmiston then, and he got me a deferment to keep me workin' on them cows. But I was the right age to go.

The Page Beattys were also part of this group. Mrs. Beatty tells their story this way.

He got his invitation from Uncle Sam to be inducted into the Army when Bobby was nine months old. And we was milkin' cows; he was operatin' a dairy. Some people would quit public work and go home to farm. You could stay out of the Army (that way); they called them draft dodgers.

I cried and didn't know what I was gonna do. I called Mr. R. D. Grier. He said, "Don't worry, just forget about it. It's all took care of."

Harry Brawley told us about another vital industry, transportation:

I went to public works in 1937, and then I was able to buy a car, so then I moved to within three miles of Amity Hill with my in-laws. I lived there until World War II came on. I got a job workin' fer a truckin' company (G & M Motor Lines) in Statesville. (We were) haulin' defense materials, 97 per cent ammunition. They was a little bus runnin' from Troutman to Statesville so if I couldn't get gas or tires, then I could still get to work. I had a chance to rent one side of a small house in Troutman, so we moved there in 1941, and we made out, but it wasn't plentiful. Gas stamps and sugar (stamps). If you found anything, it was shoddy.

I worked at G & M and drove defense materials from Warner Robbins, Georgia, right out of Macon to Rome, New York, by myself. One trip a week. Thirty-five miles an hour, for cars and trucks, and you hardly ever, even on a four-lane road from Alexandria, Virginia, and this side of Washington, you hardly ever seen a car. Man, it was down to a gnat's heel!

Clyde Tulbert must have had a charmed life. He told this unusual story.

I went three times to be examined. Every time before I was called, the age limit changed two or three days before that. I know I went three times I was called up, but I didn't have to go because the age limit changed, you know. Then, I got older and I didn't have to go.

Clyde also talked about the scarcity of goods at home. He remembered rationing too well. He commented on the problem of getting cars as well as gasoline and sugar, "but we survived through it," he added. Russell Cowan responded this way. "Yes, they was a lot of things rationed, but they weren't necessarily things we really needed. As far as food and clothing, we had plenty."

For Mrs. Page Beatty, the war meant both feast and famine.

The war was a scary time. You were allowed so many pairs of shoes a year. 'Course with my stamps, I got more shoes than I'd ever had 'cause I never had no shoes no way. But I can remember those ration stamps and people that lived on our farm, they didn't cook, and they would trade us sugar stamps.

Sugar was the worst thing that bothered us because I done a lot of cookin', you know. There was lots of stuff you couldn't get. You couldn't even buy needles and thread and such to send to the boys.

Jessie Lee Troutman agreed that sugar was the commodity most missed. On the subject of nylon hose, she said, "Oh well, I didn't go very much," and about gasoline rationing, she said, "We didn't travel." She explained that her husband was working in Statesville at the time. When he was called in the draft, his employer went to Charlotte with him and got him off because they were making army shirts.

John Henry Redmond was asked if he remembered difficult times during the war; he answered emphatically, "Yes, M'am!" But rationing of tires and gas, he explained, was only a problem "if you had a car." He had a brother in the war, but his brother never talked much about it.

For those back home, perhaps the greatest problem was fear, which was pervasive, both for those at the front and for themselves. Millard Knight "missed the war by being married and having family," but he knew about fear.

Yeah, I can remember those days. We had a pretty hard time. I used to be so afraid when a plane came over because I had heard them talk about how they were bombing. It seemed like they had hit right over here, and this wuz a cotton patch at that time right here in the field where the house is at. The old house wuz right here down under the hill. Them airplanes would come over and that would scare us. They would make the sky dark-looking when they would pass over and make an awful noise.

Rose McCollum emphasized the same fears.

I was scared to death when a airplane come over. I was sure that I was going to be bombed. They was telling on the radio about bombing. We had a battery radio that we had one time, but, ya know, back in World War II, you couldn't get batteries for it, so we didn't have one until that got over with. We didn't have electric lights (either).

If there was anxiety because of lack of news from loved ones who were serving in active duty, it was heightened by the news that came by way of

reports of casualties and scenes of battles on land and at sea. It is small wonder that, if adults were afraid, children were in a state of constant anxiety. Schools were conducting daily drives for the purchase of war bonds through the sale of stamps in classrooms, and every war song was taught to every child of school age. "When there's one motor gone, we will still carry on. We're 'Coming in on a Wing and a Prayer'," were song lyrics that created a strong impression on a six-year-old.



First grade at Troutman Elementary: 1941

There were some things that could be done by adults at home that contributed much to the effort to win the war. Sarah Turlington was in Washington working for the United States Navy as a civilian.

I was in personnel work. I traveled a great deal. I flew and I traveled by train. I didn't drive when I could go by train. I was in San Francisco when the war ended. I remember trying to stay off the streets. We weren't working that day.

Among those who saw active duty was Bill Williams, who gave this account.

The armies were segregated. I was in the Philippines and served in an integrated environment. After the war with Germany, the American Army began to integrate. I was in a port battalion. We were over there unloading ships that had been scheduled for the invasion of Japan. It is unbelievable the hundreds of things that were loaded...bombs, grain, anything that might be needed. These ships were either in the waters around the Philippines or they were on their way. If they were on their way, they didn't turn 'em back. We emptied thousands of 2000 pound bombs out there in the bay. Take 'em up out of the hole, take 'em over to the side, cut 'em loose, and let 'em fall in the water. Of course, they were defused.

The following narrative comes from Flake Messick, who saw a lot of the world during the three and a half years that he served in World War II.



Ralph Flake Messick

Through graphic details, Flake put the conflict into human terms.

I spent over two years in Iran. That's right across the river from Iraq. When I was over there, the country was mostly in poverty. What we did over there was haul supplies from the Persian Gulf to the Russian border. We turned it over to the Russians to fight the Germans; the Germans was in Russia and just about had 'em whipped when we got over there. We had six months that they worked us awful hard on them trucks running convoys to the Russian border. That was up in the northern part of Russia where the ships went in. It froze up in the wintertime, and they couldn't get the ships in there then. For six months, our supply line furnished them.

After the Germans surrendered, they divided my company up. Half of 'em went to southern France, and I went to China. I got back on an old boat in the Persian Gulf. They come down there and picked up a convoy of trucks...about 150...and drove them through Burma, and I think we was in Thailand. I ain't sure. It might have been a part of Vietnam. Anyway, we went over the Burma Road and took 'em to China. Them mountains was kinda dangerous. When we left northern India to go on the Burma Road, we drove a day or two. About eleven o'clock, the convoy stopped, and they sent word back down the line to look to the north and you'll see Mt. Everest. It was in Pakistan, I believe is where it's at. When we was seventy airmiles away from it, they said you could see the top of it. It glared so you couldn't hardly tell; you could just see the outline of it. It was so white, and the sun was shining against it. You could just see the outline of the top of it, way up there about seventy miles away. There was another one beside of it, a sister mountain, about the same height. They told us we'd better look at it because we might not see it again.

We stayed up there in China about three months. They had run the Japs out. They had bunkers all along that Burma Road after we hit China. The guns was pointing toward India. That's the way the American Army was coming in on them, out of India. You may have read in history about old General Stillwell. He was a general of the American forces. They are the ones that run the Japs out of there. They were coming over the Burma Road, and they had their bunkers so that we went in the back side of them. The Japs left live ammunition. You could pick up live ammunition all around...I seen one all the way from China...one Jap Zero.

On the Christmas before, the Japs had slipped through. One Jap Zero got through the anti-aircraft guns, and he come in behind the transport planes at a low level. They missed him on radar, and he got in there, bombed the mess hall, and killed some soldiers. The fool, he crashlanded down there on the B29 base that was right below us in China. They got him and put him in prison; they didn't kill him. They fixed the old Zero up and kept it for a souvenir over there.

Zeros were their best fighter planes. When we got there, the B29 bombers were there, and they was going from there to bomb Japan. That was just before the atomic bomb was dropped. We stayed there about three months, and they come in there and said we was going home. We left the infantry division there that looked a lot worse beat up than we was. They had been out there in them jungles; them boys had malaria. They come out of them jungles and took over our camp. There was more camps

there in China, too, on up farther. We delivered 'em up there. Those boys, some of them looked bad, but they just hadn't been there as long as we had. Time was what counted, you see. We'd been there nearly three years.

I never seen a bit of combat. While I was over there, I carried a rifle. We had a little trouble over there in Iran with them Arabs...robbing you. They wouldn't send a truck out on that road unless it was in a convoy 'cause the Arabs would shoot you and then take your truck. We never lost nobody, but some of them got shot at. Some of them stole ever' vehicle they could get their hands on. Them Arabs would come across the river from Iraq into Iran. If they could get a vehicle, they'd drive it back into Iraq and sell it. You could sell a vehicle over there if they didn't catch you. You could sell a Jeep to 'em for a whole lot of money. It was a little bit dangerous to try it. They would send you back to the states and put you in the Federal Pen. They had guys that kinda watched that. They were Federal men that hung around. They were (impersonating) soldiers, and you didn't know who they was.

Back home, Annie Messick quit work and moved in with her parents. Their daughter Patsy was born while Flake was in service, and he didn't see her for two years. Annie describes their first meeting:

I would show her Flake's picture. She said she was going to hug him when he come home. He come home about midnight one night, and she wouldn't even have anything to do with him. I had to wake her up, but in a little while, she got so she would. I tried to teach her that her daddy was coming and for her to give him sugar and hug him, but she wouldn't.

It was common for families to live together when their relatives were in service. This could create problems. Flake commented that Annie's sisters "had that Patsy spoiled! I'm tellin' you the truth; they really had her spoiled." Mary Kimbrough's entire family of five sisters and ten children lived with her father during the war while her husband and brothers-in-law were all in the armed services. They enjoyed it, said Mary, but it was a difficult time for her father.

Several other children who were born while their fathers were overseas were a few years old at their first meeting. Lillie Christopher's daughter was born while her father was in the Navy. Lillie also had a brother in the Navy and two brothers-in-law in the Army.

As we have said, some families gave more than their share to the war effort. From Sam Price, we have a glimpse of the suffering that the war brought to the German people, as well.

After they surrendered, they had their people to go over there and to be sure they were policed well. I remember distinctly that the people were very hungry; they did

not have food to eat themselves. The people who were left in the country had hardly anything to eat, and they were at the mercy of anyone else that could help them with this problem. I remember one dear lady came to me and asked me if I had access to coffee, that she would love to have some coffee and hadn't had any in a long time. At that time, we were rationed one pound of coffee for the month. I told her I didn't have to worry about that because I was able to get some at the mess hall. I got one pound of coffee and gave it to her, and she was very appreciative of this.

Sam's observations also help us to put into perspective the mood and the attitudes of those Iredell Countians who experienced the tragic events of the early 1940's, an unforgettable period in our history.

World War II was very vivid in my life. I knew what was going on every day by the newspapers and by the radio. This, at first, (was) a little bit scary, but as time went on, we accepted the situation, that it was dangerous, and we knew it was something we had to go through. We did not know what the outcome actually would be, but I think we had greater faith in those days that things would come out all right. That was great to live that way!

It is clear that no one in Iredell County was untouched by the two World Wars. The impact was felt in our homes, schools, and industries. Shortages of essential items like sugar, shoes, batteries, gasoline and tires created hardships for most families. There was also the constant battle with fear which was accentuated by the news that came from the warfront by way of newspapers and radio and by the failure to receive any word at times from the battlefields.

Iredell County made a valuable contribution to the war effort. Our families provided food and supplies from their farms and textile companies and transported these products as well as military equipment and ammunition for export to military bases. Women took on the burden of childrearing with much-needed support from their families. They also took on jobs and collected items to be sent to those fighting overseas. Employers intervened to keep those with special needs and critical jobs at home with their families. And schools encouraged patriotism and support by promoting the sale of stamps and bonds.

Several factors helped Iredell citizens to cope with these crises. First, as was the case with the Depression, they could not miss what they had never had. Many were used to getting no more than one pair of shoes a year, nylons were a nonessential item, especially if "you didn't go very much," and not everyone missed tires and gasoline as they had no car. Many, in fact, did not need a car to get to work. As Russell Cowan said, "They was a lot of

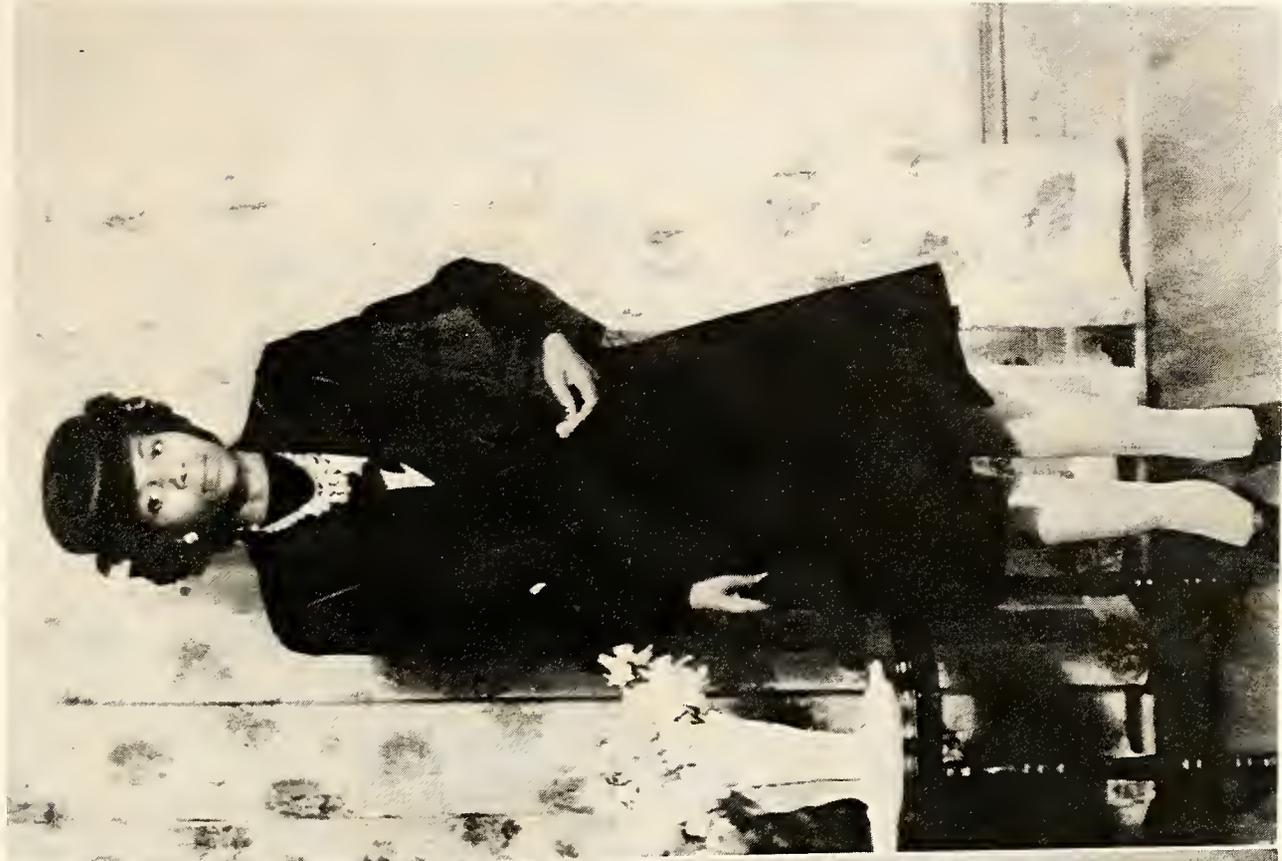
things rationed, but they weren't necessarily things we really needed." Somehow, our parents and grandparents found the strength they needed to survive the hardships created by a world at war; some of them even prospered as a result of their determination and perseverance. Most importantly, they did it once again by working together.



Harry Brawley: late 1940
On a trip to New England for Johnson Motor Lines, Inc., in Charlotte



Bill Allison
Lived on Patterson Avenue in Mooresville.



Edna Allison
Courtied Bill during the war;



Julius Aronson

Drafted into Army at age 36. Served in infantry
1942-44, discharged because of an ulcer on
his way to the Battle of the Bulge.



Constance Aronson

Married less than a year before
Julius was drafted.

Transportation

"The ol' roads was washboarded, an' they didn' keep 'em up 'er nothin'. You just made ya own road about. They just had old roads and gullies, and the horse would jump over that."

Vivian and Dick Cook

We heard as much about walking, the oldest form of transportation, as we did about automobiles. All of our subjects walked to school most of the time. And everyone walked to various churches, often more than one on the same Sunday. They even walked long distances to visit relatives if they were that far apart, which was rare. Millard Knight told us that to visit them Granny Knight walked "about five miles, I reckon. That's all the way she had of going. People can't walk far today. They have to git there quicker than walkin'." And Mary Kimbrough reminded us that some jobs depended on walking. W. G. Kimbrough for a time delivered the mail to Winston-Salem on foot, and he hung the mail bag in a tree each night for safe-keeping.

For those on foot, in particular, weather was a force to be reckoned with. Everyone insisted that winters were much more severe when he or she was growing up. We heard from Harry Brawley about the Catawba River freezing over so hard that a wagon could be driven over it, and Vivian and Dick Cook told us about the ice storm on their wedding day. Thomas Trivette talked about the snowstorm the night he was born. He also told this story:

One of the biggest winters that I ever seen was in Pine Bluff, a little village that had tourists in the wintertime because the climate was mild. They said it never snowed down there. When we lived there, I was around five years old. It come a snow that drifted up around the winders on the house. It come up around my father's waist. The next day he shoveled out a path to the chicken house. The snow come up to my shoulders. I believe that was the deepest snow I ever seen and in a country where it wadn' supposed to snow. Peach trees were bloomin' at the time, in March. Two people froze to death about a mile from where we lived. Their car stalled. None of 'em had heaters on 'em until about 1926 or so.

Before the car, came the buggy. Rose McCollum described theirs:

We had a two-seated buggy and went to Union Grove. It had fringe all the way around it. You had curtains, and it had lamps on each side of it, though we never got to go out at night. Oh, we wanted to go so bad at night to get to see those lights on! Never did. I remember when my daddy passed away, we had to sell the mules and the buggy.



Lillie Christopher: born 1922

And Clyde Tulbert's father used mules, like many others, because they said they would work harder. But they did present a few problems.

My dad had four mules and there was four of us boys home at that one time. We plowed corn until you could pull what I called "roas'n ears" off and bring it home to dinner. My dad (went) all the way to the other side of Windsor's Crossroads to the other side of Hunter Creek down here. There used to be a bridge, the Campbell Bridge. I know a few people must remember it. We would cross the bridge and there would be crack in the plank, and you couldn't hardly get those mules to go through there because they would see the water down underneath them.

Sarah Turlington grew up in Mooresville. When they went places, at Christmas for instance, her father would call the livery stable and get "a hack" to take them. It wasn't as big as a stagecoach. It could be closed or open, and it would hold four to six people. They also had a barn and a horse.

So popular was the horse as a means of transportation that when the automobile first arrived on the scene, it was referred to as a "horseless carriage." The Page Beattys together described Statesville as follows:

It looked like a Western town, did it not? There wasn't much to it then! People drove their horses and parked around what they called a "back lot". (It was also called "a jockey lot.") It was right there where you get your car tag, license tag.

But it was the advent of the T-Model Ford which "put the old buggy in the shed," said Clay Tolbert. But it was not a perfect machine.

A cranker would cost \$385, no tax, and a self-starter was \$415. There's no door on the driver's side. If you didn't watch it, you'd give it too much spark, and it would kick back and break your arm.

The Landmark reported that by the beginning of World War I, the garage had replaced the livery stable in Statesville. The first auto went to the country in 1913, and by 1916 it had become an accepted part of rural life. At one funeral in Troutman, 16 cars were counted at the church. With his amazing memory, Clay Tolbert was able to recall which families had the first cars at Bethesda and which model each owned.

Harry Brawley said that he drove "the last surry ever to be parked in front of St. Paul's (Lutheran Church)." Because they were the very last to have a car, he said that his father bought a "streamlined Ford from the showroom." This was extreme for a man of his frugality.

Jessie Lee Troutman's father started with a surry that had "a two-seated carriage" with two horses to pull it.

Our surry had fringe on the top. We had a lap robe...a black lap robe with big designs on it. One time I remember after we were in the new church, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Troutman, we were leaving church and coming out on (Highway) 21, and my aunt and uncle was in front of us in an old Essex car, and we saw a big rat running under it.

Jessie Lee said that it was 1928 when they got a Model-T Ford, an old one. Next, they got an Model-A Touring Car that she learned to drive. "I skipped Sunday School one morning and my cousin took me out to drive, and we went all the way to Bell's Crossroads, and I thought that was a *long* way (about five miles). Probably had never been there before." Jessie Lee was fourteen when she started driving. No license was required. "You could get behind the wheel and drive!" And she volunteered, "The roads were all dirt, all of 'em. And when it rained, the road was muddy." Sarah Turlington remembered the first automobile she rode in.

Mr. Clarence McNeely had it, and he took us for a ride. It was a Maxwell, and it was red. Horses and things got frightened. It started to get dark, and Uncle Clarence got out, lit a match and lighted the lalmps in the front of the automobile. I have no idea how old I was.

John Henry Redmond didn't get to do much driving. His father got a 1924 Model-T before John Henry was old enough to drive. Although he learned quickly, his father drove it or let his mother do so.

A.L. Patterson was taken to school by his older brother in a Model-T Ford when he was about 11 or 12 "or something like that. I drove when I was 12 years old."

Annie Messick said that the trip to town required planning and preparation. The day or two before they went to town, they would work on "those old side curtains" patching and sewing to get them ready for the trip. They had to plan at least two or three days ahead so that the car would be ready to go. It was a major event to get ready. "It would take you an hour or more in that old Model-T bumping along at about 10 miles an hour. Sometimes we would pack our dinner, take it, and eat dinner in town."

Flake said that the road to Statesville was paved in the "early teens." "Dad took me over there to see them working when they come along, about Mayberry's down here. After they got that, and I got more high-powered

cars...more speedier ones...I'd drive it in 30 or 45 minutes from here."

Lex Sloan drove a school bus for 2 or 3 years while he was in school at Union Grove. "In the wintertime, they'd get muddy, and you'd get stuck up in that mud, and have to get out and push and shovel." Said Dick Cook, "They just had old roads and gullies, and the horse would jump over that." Vivian added the following:

I couldn't hold his car in the road long enough. Them T-Models were harder to guide (than her family's Dodge). They was up an' down, an' you were jumpin' all around in the road. I don't know how they made it. In them ol' cars...they didn' have no glass on 'em, no heaters, no nothin'. Didn' have no winders. You had to put up a little ol' curtain like an' fasten 'em on there an' air would jist come in on you anyway. You just didn' have no business out there days like that, not in that car.

Thomas Trivette also elaborates on this theme:

I remember my father buyin' a new Model-T Ford. I remember it. It was a shiny, pretty car. I was little, but I remember that new car. You done the best you could to stay warm. You put curtains on 'em to shut the wind out some. If you started out on a cold day, you'd take a flat arn 'r a brick, 'r a big rock 'n put it on the farplace ta get it hot. Wrap it up in a blanket and put it on the floor of the car to put your feet on. That would help some to keep your feet from freezin'. You put on heavy clothes. If it was very cold, you put on nearly everything you had to put on.

Lex Sloan's family bought a 1915 Model-T for \$130 used, "a two-seater that you had to crank." Lex's first car was "a 1931 with a rumble seat and a runnin' board."

There were other cars, of course. Gaynell Cooke said their first car was a 1916 or 1917 Chevy. She still likes the Chevy and thinks it's better than a Ford, but the bottom line for her is that "They both will take you there and bring you back, and that's what I like about them."

What almost everyone alluded to was that "taking you there and bringing you back" was not an easy thing, even if you had an automobile. There were still those roads to contend with. Flake Messick's daddy's first car was "an old '19 Model-T Ford. Best I can remember, it was a touring car. That's what they took their fruit and stuff in. They'd pile the whole back seat full. You had to crank the ol' thing by hand. There wasn't no hard surface. You were on a dirt road from here to Statesville with an old covered bridge over yonder on the river."

Even with the discomforts of the early automobiles and the rough roads, the first family car was a very big deal! We heard much more about that

than we did another landmark in transportation, the railroad, which received a fair amount of attention from our subjects as well. O.C. Stonestreet, III, gives this account of its arrival in Iredell County:

John Franklin Moore was a very prosperous, large landowner. He owned several thousand acres, basically the north half of Mooresville. I guess the city limits was mostly his farmland. About the middle of the 1800's, they had completed a railroad from Charlotte to Statesville, and it was supposed to go west from Statesville, I think, to Asheville and even to Tennessee. And the railroad had a name that was longer than the railroad; it was the Atlantic, Tennessee, and Ohio Railroad, and it went nowhere near the Atlantic, Tennessee, or Ohio. It went from Charlotte to Statesville.

Anyway, this area was heavy into cotton, and (they) needed a place where the farmers could get their cotton to a train. Mt. Mourne (was) equidistant from Charlotte and Statesville...no one in the Mt. Mourne area was interested in selling them any land for a siding or a spur or whatever they called it. They had a big meeting up at Shepherds Crossroads about 1854 or 1855, and no one at Shepherds was interested either, but John Moore was at the meeting, and he said he would deed land to the railroad for a depot, or siding. Before the Civil War, Mooresville was called Moore's Siding or Moore's Depot. It wasn't called Mooresville until it was incorporated in March, 1873. When the place was incorporated, I think there were about 25 families within a mile of the depot, and by the Mooresville charter, the depot was the center of the town. Originally, the town limits were one mile in any direction.

Bill Williams talked about the railroad in Statesville:

What a lot of people don't realize is that Statesville's growth, a lot of it, was over in that area up until the railroad came through. Then the town began to settle along the railroad. Now Shiloh Church sits on Old Salisbury Road, and the new Salisbury Road, it changes direction, and it would be rather interesting if people knew the path of that road. (When I was) a boy, both of those roads were in use. Every fall I remember seeing the covered wagons coming down from Wilkesboro going to Salisbury to load their products, apples and cabbages, on the train.

Amelia Kennedy's father also felt the call of the railroad. He had spent two years out west, and "when he'd hear a train whistle, he just could not stand it! All he could think about was going west again."

Henry Miller took a job with the railroad after his return from World War I. Even though he worked long hours and lived in tents and shanties, packing his lunch so that he could send money home to his wife and children, he was proud of the work that he did. After he retired from the railroad, he spoke often of missing the trains and the whistles going by on the track.

In addition to transportation, the railroad meant jobs. John Brawley lived near the old depot when his son Harry was born on Shelton Avenue in 1911.

John was a "track man" when Harry was growing up. Harry said that one day they were having a meal when his father heard a sound from the track that signalled trouble for the train. John snatched up the tablecloth and used it to flag the train.

Lawrence Patterson remembers the railroad for another reason.

Some of my earliest memories was when they were building the Statesville Airline Railroad. They built it with convict labor. Convicts escaped, and they came and jumped over the fence of our front yard. My brother and myself were playing in the yard, and they were shooting at them, and we were out in the yard playing. He says he can remember the bullets whizzing above his head.

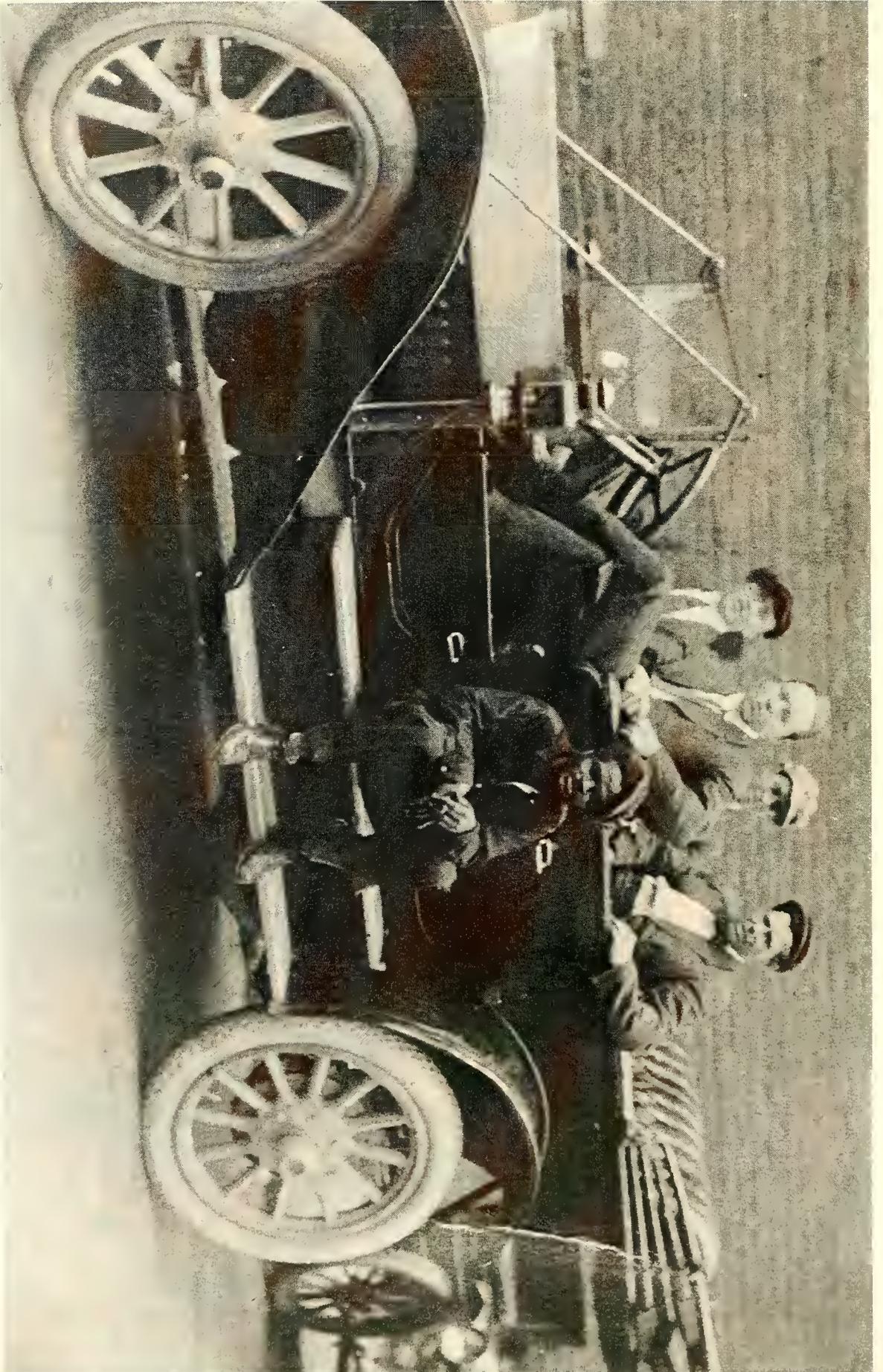
Harry Brawley was fascinated by the railroad. And when he failed to get a job with the railroad as his father had done, he turned to trucking, a job he retired from in 1976. Flake Messick also drove a truck for many years, and he named this industry the biggest change that he had witnessed.

Well, transportation is about the biggest change. Back before I went in the service, I worked for the Mayberry's. They had that cotton gin down there. A whole lot of stuff was hauled by freight. A few transfer trucks were on the road, but not like it is now. Transportation is the biggest change I've seen in Iredell County. Really, I guess I'm talking about the whole country...transportation by truck.

Ida Tharpe answered that question this way:

Well, I guess automobiles and people going more. Everybody going like working in Statesville and going to different towns to work. It used to mostly everybody had to work close around home. They had horse and buggies, you know, and it would take too long to drive to Statesville to get to work. We sit here in the window from six until seven o'clock and the cars, you wouldn't believe it! Much more traffic now!

The development of land transportation changed Iredell County forever. The arrival of the automobile had indeed, in the words of Clay Tolbert, "put the old buggy in the shed." The paving of the red clay roads of Iredell followed. This enabled people to travel a distance to their work and for their goods, and rural communities like Amity Hill in South Iredell and Eagle Mills in North Iredell faded into history. And with their disappearance, we lost a lifestyle which now lives only in the minds of our subjects and others like them. We are grateful to our narrators for the glimpses they have shared with us.



Sunday Sports in Statesville

Electricity and Other Conveniences

"It was a gradual thing. You take the 1930's, there was hardly a house in this country that had plumbing in it....We had little 'johnny houses'. That's the difference."

Willie Mae and Clyde Tulbert

The magnitude of the change in even a decade or two of our history is difficult to comprehend, and it interfered with communication between interviewer and interviewee more than you would imagine. For example, Sarah Turlington (Mooresville, born 1907) was describing to Liz Price, also from Mooresville, the ice wagon and the ice man who went by their house. Sarah recalled that as a child she went out and got shavings from the ice, but the ice was delivered and brought it into the house for them. Liz added that she also remembered you could always hear that ice truck coming down the street. "There was no truck! It was a horse. Don't confuse your childhood with mine!" insisted Sarah. On another occasion, a very young would-be interviewer asked, "Grandpa, did they have color TV when you were growing up?" Such exchanges made us even more keenly aware of the importance and the necessity of our task.

Again, we heard from Sarah Turlington, who sets the scene for this segment of our book:

We didn't have any money; we didn't have any luxuries. We had a happy time. There were all these things that had never been invented and never heard of.

Mary Kimbrough was born in Statesville in 1916. She was more specific:

There were no electric lights, no running water, no bathroom, no radio, no television. There was, in later years, a movie. The one I saw at the Playhouse was silent. Later, they opened one on the hill. (It) cost 10 cents to get in. Only telephone for us was one in the store and one at Calvin Nickolson's. If you got a call, she would come and take you to her house. Mrs. Annie Harshaw, our neighbor, was a mother to us and we all loved her. She could carry three buckets of water on her head. Mrs. Nannie Pearson was everybody's midwife. Mrs. Doll Allison, she churned our milk. She also sang in the choir and gave me good advice.

Our ancestors' dependence on hand labor made them also more dependent on each other. The coming of electricity did much to change this. After

transportation, Flake Messick named electricity as the second major influence for change. He and Annie elaborated:

Another thing, we got power in Iredell County. Telephones come in next. We had power down here at the old house before I went into service, but we didn't have no water pump or well or telephone. I come home (from World War II) and I put in water, and (the Yadkin Valley) put in a telephone. Then television come along.

Annie: I think electricity and stuff like that is about the biggest thing; it made things a lot easier. Just mashing a button on the washing machine is better than rubbing your clothes, and you can dry them. (And the) Air conditioner.

Flake: Refrigerators.

Annie: Yes, that was good.

Thomas Trivette agreed wholeheartedly about refrigeration. His father dug a milkwell, "bored it with an augur by hand, put a windlass on in and let the milk down deep in the ground where it would keep the milk cool." Constance Aronson remembers that ice was brought to her parents' home in Statesville by horse and wagon. "The amount needed was written down and left at the door so that he would know how much to bring. Mother had one of the first Frigidaires, and their house had central heat, which was not common in that day." First, they used coal and then oil for heating.

Lawrence Patterson talked about obtaining ice:

We had a pond when I was real little. I can faintly remember standing in the cold weather on the side of the hill and watching them cut ice on that pond. They would take it and put it in a large hole in the ground and cover it with straw. I had a shed over it so the rain couldn't get in. In July, you could go down there and get ice out of that straw. When people got able to travel to Statesville, they'd buy their ice there. ...go to Statesville and bring a 300 pound block of ice home on the running board of a Model-T Ford and put it in our icebox (the part that didn't melt). Later, Louis Hager and Thea Whitmore started delivering ice out in the country.

And from Clyde Tulbert we heard this:

Oh yeah! I remember it very well. We had a power unit at Windsor's Crossroads in 1932. Then we got power down here about 1938. Crescent. We did a lot of things. We had springs. We had a well up there. We didn't use it for water. We dug it about 20 feet deep and left our milk and butter down there in buckets to keep it cool, from souring. If you didn't have a spring, you would use a spring across the road.

Lawrence Patterson adds the following:

We got electric lights and power. Before that, we had a Delco Plant which was a 32-volt system. You had a bank of batteries and a gasoline engine with a generator connected to it. You'd start the gasoline engine, and it started automatic. It would run and charge your batteries; then you could have lights. But that wasn't satisfactory because your batteries would eventually go bad in two or three years. Every time we wanted lights at night, we'd put a gallon of gas in this generator and start it, and it would run till about 11 o'clock. When it stopped, you had no more lights. It was drop cords in each room and maybe one or two outlets for various things. You could have a motor that could run the separator so you wouldn't have to crank it to separate the cream from the milk.

Then there was a motor on a pump for a well. In those days, you didn't have running water unless you had a pump, and the pumps were run mostly by gasoline engines which was the old hit-or-miss type. I can remember when we bought one. It was a two or three horsepower, and it would hit just like a four-cylinder engine. Before that, they had a hydraulic ram for your water if you had a place for it. What you would do is at a spring or branch near a spring, you would dam it up. Then down below that you would put your hydraulic ram in the ground in a built-in cavity and put a cover on it so it wouldn't freeze. You would have falling water from that pond to run the hydraulic ram, and you could pump it up to your house and into a tower to give you water pressure. You had water coming into it 24 hours a day.

But the hydraulic pump was destroyed by the railroad. Statesville Air Line, approximately 75 or 80 years ago, built a railroad through the property. They were going to run a railroad from Statesville to Elkin. But when they came by, they destroyed our pond which was getting water from the spring. That's the reason it's not in operation today. Then with all this red dirt around it, the water when it would rain would get muddy. Then we had to go to wells and gasoline engines.

About that time, '32 or '33, Duke Power came out from Statesville through Harmony and ended here, and it turned and went up to Kennedy's and up to Tharpe's in Williamsburg and that way.

On the subject of water, we heard from Mary Douglas Warren in West Iredell. The Douglas Homeplace had the first dug well (1878) in that community, marking a new era in farm water supply as compared with the natural springs down in the meadow. "The well, still here, is dated and sealed with a huge concrete slab. It furnished water for the home, farm, tenants, as well as the nearby church and school. In the early 1940's, the community's first drilled well and combine thresher were here," added Mary.

Running water in the home was an addition of phenomenal importance. Indoor plumbing was "a gradual thing," said Clyde Tulbert. "You take the 1930's, there was hardly a house in this country that had plumbing in it." Willie Mae offered, "My mother died in 1947, and she just had been putting in new bathrooms then. We had it over at the hospitals; Duke Power was

there. But if the power went off, they'd have these big sleets and snows, and we carried in snow and put it in a tub to melt. We had wood stoves in the basement and in the kitchen to heat the water to give people baths. That's the difference." Clyde added, "We had little 'johnny houses' in the path."



Outhouse: A. G. Mills farm, 1984

Photo by Michael Brent Cheek

Sarah Turlington remembers the arrival of sewer, paved streets, and sidewalks in Mooresville:

There was a great hill, and Mr. Lowrance lived at the top of the hill, and we lived at the bottom of the hill. At first, they laid the sewer, and they brought earth down for the sewer. Then, when they paved the street, they brought more earth down.

For sheer impact on daily lives, it would be hard to surpass the telephone. Comments had much to do with the age and location of the respon-

der. Sarah Turlington did not have sewage in her earliest days, but she offered, "We had a phone, electricity, and running water. We always had a telephone." Sam Price (Mooresville, born 1929) even remembers phone booths. "I do remember when I decided I would like to date some girls that there was an old pay booth in the back of Miller Drug Company...It had double windows in it and nobody could hear what I was saying. You couldn't just dial a number; you had to pick up the telephone and the operator would say, 'Number, please.' Miller Drug's number was 9."

Maggie Phifer, who was born in 1905 in a rural area near Mooresville, says, "There wasn't many telephones. Nobody had telephones but one neighbor." Mary Kimbrough in Statesville also depended on a neighbor, as we have heard. But in Harmony, things were better, according to A.L. Patterson.

See, we're talking about almost modern times. The last 75 years (from about 1918) was almost modern times. You got power, and that changed some things. We had telephones about 1911 from the Harmony Telephone Company. My ring was short, long, and short. Mayberry's Store was two shorts. Everybody could listen in. The switchboard was down at Harmony. The first switchboard I remember was at Mrs. Tharpe's place; she was a telephone operator. Then it moved across from Dr. Robertson into a house that Graham York used to live in. (Why was the switchboard in someone's home?) Because she was a telephone operator; you had to put it somewhere. It wasn't like anything today. It was all manually operated and you plugged it in...You still had telephones, but not like today.

We were the last one on the line. We lived close to Hunting Creek. One line was out (Highway) 21, then came in here and went up by Tharpes, and...if you wanted to call somebody going out towards Davie County, you would call the operator, and she would plug you in to that line and ring the person.... That wasn't long distance; that was local. Also, you could call the...switchboard operator, and she could get Statesville for you.

It is easy to see why Lou Ray Cartwright, Rose McCollum, and others referred to the telephone as "the grapevine phone". If the telephone was the "grapevine" to the community, the radio was certainly that to the world at large. Yet, like the telephone, not everyone had a radio in the home. Sarah Turlington (born in Mooresville, 1907) does not remember hearing a radio until she was a senior in high school (about 1924). Gaynell Cooke (born in Amity Hill, 1904) does not remember what a radio was in that day, and she does not remember the first or any radio programs that she heard. She did not speak of missing the radio or wishing for one. This is surprising given the family's demonstrated fondness for music and singing. The answer, of course, is that they made their own music together and with their neighbors.

For her, the arrival of electricity meant a change in sewing machines, a major event for their large family. The old machines, "called treadle sewing machines... had a pedal with a band and a wheel that turned it."

Many looked at radio as an enormous influence for change. It was important as entertainment, but it was essential to communication, even before the World Wars. Thomas Trivette shared the following stories of the Hindenburg tragedy and Pearl Harbor.

I remember it (the Hindenburg) very well. They had a radio program on that we listened to most ever night when the static wadn' too bad, WJJD in Chicago, a program called "The Suppertime Frolic", country music. During one of those programs, they broke in with a news flash that the Hindenburg had crashed in Lakehurst, New Jersey. I remember even the song that they were playin' when they broke in. It was "Listen to the Mockingbird". News back then, you paid more attention to it than you do now. A tragedy like that really got the attention.

I remember Pearl Harbor was on a Sunday mornin'. I had a radio that picked up short wave. I was quite a ham radio operator. I got up early on Sunday mornin' ta try ta hear 'em as far away as I could...some DX, they called it. Everything was quiet when the ham was on the air. Later, when I turned it over on the broadcast bands, I found out Pearl Harbor had been bombed. That silenced all the ham radio operators.

It is small wonder that Rose McCollum did not take lightly the scarcity of batteries for their radio during World War II. They did not yet have electricity, and they depended on their battery radio for news from the front.

Others mentioned favorite programs from radio, including comedies like "Fibber McGee and Molly" and "Amos and Andy" and soap operas. Westinghouse had a contest for writing the next episode of a popular soap opera; Lawrence Patterson's mother entered the contest and won an assortment of light bulbs. Of course, it was all AM, and static was a problem. Lightning in the summertime was another. Clyde Tulbert listened to Nashville, Tennessee. "I guess we had one of the first radios that came into the country. One that was round at the top and about that high. That was really a pastime at night, you know (about 1923 or 24)."

The Page Beattys said that when they were first married, "We had an' ol' battery radio" and they listened to "The Grand Ol' Opry." It came on weekends.

We ate in the bed and listened till 11:30 or 12:00 at night. We had a fireplace in our bedroom, and we had a fire in there and used it for a light. We didn't have no electricity till right 'fore Elaine was born. And he give me an electric radio before we got

married. He worked two weeks to get enough money together to buy that little \$12 radio, and we didn't have electricity. We had to use an old battery one till (electricity). That's all the music that we had.

During this period, newspapers played a vital role. In Statesville, Bill Williams had three paper routes, the *Greensboro Daily News* in the morning, the *Record and Landmark* in the afternoon, and the *Pittsburgh Courier* on the weekends. Thomas Trivette's family could not afford a daily paper, but every Thursday they got out of Winston-Salem *The Union Republican* by the same company that published *Bloom's Almanac*. Clyde Tulbert's home also got the *Winston-Salem Journal* and the *Yadkin Ripple* and shared them with others. A.L. Patterson enjoyed first and most the little magazine insert in the *Grit*. Colin Shaver used to deliver those (the *Grit*); they came on Saturday and cost a nickel. The *Liberty* also cost a nickel and it came every week. "The articles were timed so you could check how good a reader you were." He also liked *Popular Mechanics*. There were also *Popular Science*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, and the popular *Progressive Farmer*. The *Chicago Tribune* also sent out a weekly magazine. It is obvious that some families informed themselves by reading as much as was available. The bookmobile, which brought books into rural homes in the 1930's introduced books to many children.

It is interesting that Lawrence Patterson referred to the last 75 or 80 years as "almost modern times." He recognized the magnitude of the change brought by the arrival of the automobile, paved roads, electricity, and modern conveniences. In the aftermath, life in Iredell County was decidedly different! The "good ol' days" were indeed gone forever.

Changing Times

"Nothing that's there now was there then; nothing that was there then is there now."

Sarah Turlington

Another exchange between Sarah Turlington and her interviewer puts into perspective for us the magnitude of the changes over the past 80 years. Sarah was describing to Liz Price, who grew up in Mooresville in a different decade, that part of downtown Mooresville that she remembered best. Sarah explained, "Nothing that's there now was there then. Nothing that was there then is there now."

"It's hard for me to visualize that."

"I don't see how you can," Sarah replied.

The change in Mooresville has been dramatic. O. C. Stonestreet, III, historian and teacher, in his interview with Dan Woody, talked about Mooresville's earliest days. He began with John Franklin Moore, on whose land half of Mooresville was founded.

His house stood right across the street from the Mooresville Municipal Building, right in the curve in the road, and the story goes that he could sit on his front porch and look all the way up Main Street to the depot, and if anybody went into his store, he would get in his buggy and go down there and...help them with their purchases. He did not donate Willow Valley Cemetery, that land where Mr. Moore is buried. That was purchased from his widow. But he was the first person buried there. As other people died, they were buried near him....It was his farm, and there was even some talk in the early record that he objected to where they put some of the streets because it interfered with his cotton and corn. Mooresville's extended its limits several times since then, but I think, originally they had a saloon, which was owned by Mr. Moore, a general store, a blacksmith shop, and that's about it.

Mooresville was pretty slow in the early days, but they soon had a sawmill and other drygoods stores and things, and then the main industry that got Mooresville on the map in 1893 was when James Elbert Sherrill and about 10 others started...old Mill No. 1 on Church Street not too far from the First Presbyterian Church. It was a cotton spinning mill; I think they just made thread, originally. They did pretty well and they expanded and built Mills No. 2, 3, 4, and 5, all together down on South Street where my granddaddy had the cafe. They later went into weaving and denim and all sorts of things. I think it was in 1954 or '55 that Mooresville Cotton Mill was bought out by Burlington and Burlington began selling off the mill houses. The mill worker...rented his home from the mill at a very cheap price. But the bad side of that was if you got in trouble with the mill or went on strike, besides losing your job you also lost your home. (This happened to some people in 1935 in the middle of the Great Depression.)

Interviewer Dan Woody, who taught social studies at Mooresville Junior High School for 30 years, was struck with the impact of Lake Norman on population demographics. "During my stay here at least since World War II, Lake Norman's had more influence than any other particular thing. I know where I played baseball as a boy at East Monbo, it's now under water, including the big factory." He began, "So what we're saying (is) from 1900 until World War II, (like) most small milltowns, the population was relatively stable, between 2000 and 4000."

O.C. responded:

Right. Probably between 3000 and 4000 in the city limits, and the same families that had been here since the 1870's. And it's only in the 1950's and '60s that Mooresville really started to change. Mooresville is facing right now kind of an identity crisis of new people coming in. How are they gonna be accepted by the older families? You know Mooresville had kind of its own version of the "Fortune 500." The McNeelys and the Rankins, the Davidsons and the Templetons and that group, most of whom go to the First Presbyterian Church, very old German and Scotch-Irish families.

Duke Power started buying out the bottom lands early in the century. I guess they had the thing planned pretty well. They didn't announce what they were doing until 1957. But I remember sitting in ninth grade biology class, Dick Lowder's class, and him talking about the lake that was gonna be there and wondering about how that would affect the weather or the climate and the economy of Mooresville. Of course, we had no idea how big the lake was going to be. You hear so many acres, but it's real hard to conceive what it would look like.

Duke Power would hire these workers from all over the country to come down here and run bulldozers, tractors, heavy machinery to clear the lake bottom. Their people would work on one side of the lake basin for a year or two and then they would work on the Catawba or Mecklenburg County part, and then they might come back over here a year later, so you've got these names...for 3 or 9 months or 2 years, and then they're gone again....In the middle '60's some interesting things happened. You expect Hagers and Davidsons and Templetons and Whites, and Mc _____ names, Scotch-Irish names, and in the early '60's there's a lot of Bronkowskis and Polish names....

We've got a lot of diversity of names, not those names that were here in the '60's. What's happened is that the people in the '60's had lake cabins and trailers and shacks. They'd come up here and fish on the weekends. And then some of 'em...moved up here. This was accelerated when the interstate was completed in May of 1968. The Davidson Township has become a bedroom community for people working for IBM and hi-tech jobs in Charlotte. They come in here from New York or wherever, and a lot of 'em are Republicans it turns out, so the Davidson Township is a hotbed of Republicanism and also people from other parts of the country. It's sort of an interesting mixture....

It seems that these people at the County School Board up here in Statesville didn't have a real strong grasp on what was going on because Brawley School was scheduled to be closed in 1956. Mr. Jerry Fox was hired to be principal for one year in 1966. He

taught there with four other teachers (besides being principal). Pretty common back then for rural schools. The school had a population of 120 that year...by the end of the year 150. The next year it was 160, and by the end of that year it had gone up to 175. Brawley School is still open today, about 30 years later.

Statesville has also had its share of growth. Alice Fowler has watched that development. She remembers when Davie Avenue was "a country road".

It wasn't even a street; it was a road, a country road. I remember very well there was a hitching post out in front of this house. I'm thinking it was one of those black boy hitching posts. And a big barn in the backyard, falling down, by the way, and full of nails. My first child was a little girl, and she'd try to run out there and get into that barn....We had to watch her every minute. Finally, we got it taken out.

The Messicks were among those who commented on the increase in traffic:

Annie: A few years ago, we'd try to go to Statesville at the first of the week in place of waiting till Friday or Saturday. Now, at the first of the week, it's as bad as it used to be on Fridays and Saturdays.

Flake: On Friday evenings is when there's most of the traffic....Everybody, I reckon, is trying to get their groceries and everything like that then.

Crime is a topic that concerned the Messicks and others, including Leona Dalton and Elsie Turner. They named this as the biggest change they had witnessed, and they discussed their theories about the reason for this.

Leona: Young people killing one another!...Now they have taken prayer out of the school. They have taken the hickory away from the children. Now the children can tell the parent, if the parents start trying to correct (them), 'I'll have you up for child abuse.' Now, to my way of seeing it, we need God. Put that prayer back in school, put it in the home, and let these mothers stay at home and raise their children like the older mothers used to do. Leave these jobs off and raise these children at home. Let the teachers correct the children...the poor teachers...their hands are tied now.

Elsie: (Reports say) a teacher has raped a 4, 6, or 10 year old child...parents in the homes is raping their own child. Now what kind of parents is that? What church did he or she belong to...?

Gaynell Freeland is also concerned for young people. In answer to the question about the biggest change she had seen, she said, "One of the worst things I see is these young people out all hours of the night, and they're not out for no good."

That children need to be taught to work is a strong message sent by several responders. The Tulberts put it this way:

Clyde: They need to be trained to work. To know what a dollar's worth. I think the greatest trouble with the younger generation right now is, their parents are working themselves to death to support them, and they don't know how to work....I think that's why the foreigners are really...taking us over. You can't get nobody hardly to get out here and bail hay. They just ain't going to do it. I don't care what you offer them! I think the best thing to do is not hand out everything that you have to them, and they would realize. I think they need a chore, or things to do so they would realize that they had to work for a living.

Mae: Back in this field we had tobacco, and (our daughter) would have a play pen or a box (to stay in). We had to work. Children are not taught this day and time. Entertainment? Entertaining was work!

Clyde: I fear athletics has ruined our school system. There's just so much to do all the time. The young people don't have time to do anything (else).

Mae: People when I grew up used to visit one another, but they don't have time anymore. About any time you see anybody now is when you go to church. Of course, the younger generation now doesn't have time to go nowhere. They've got to work all the time to pay their bills, raise their children, send them to school. We couldn't do it now. We sent all of ours to school, and Willie Mae's sister had six children, and we spent a lot of money sending them to school. Lord me, we couldn't send one of them now! Today, you could go out and do in 30 minutes, more with a tractor, than you could do in 2 or 3 days with a mule. That's the way it goes. But it's expensive. The cost of living is so much in this day. I think everybody just tries to keep up with the Joneses. They don't take time to live like they used to.

Theodore Wallace also misses visiting and working with neighbors. "Neighbors getting together...we always looked forward to the cornshuckin's. That's what really hurts us; we don't work together like we used to. I think most everyone keeps to his own self. Of course, I have some good neighbors; they help me and I help them some. But not like then, you know. Everyone looks after his ownself."

Vera Saddler had several pieces of advice for us:

Try to look as nice as you can...It speaks for you. Regardless of how other people talk, try to use knowledge when meeting people. You don't lose anything by saying, "Yes, Ma'm" or "No, Ma'm". Use the old timey ways, forget yourself, put God number one.

I didn't get an education. I didn't go but two or three years, but I continued to read. I still read about everyday. I guess that's the reason I read as good as I do because I never stopped reading!

They don't have in the home what they used to have... You had to say a verse before you ate. You had to read the scriptures. I know you can have prayer otherwise, but we had to get on our knees when we were little, morning and night. We didn't know the value, but now I do.

I'm a witness he has taken care of me. I could have been burnt up! The Lord knows I wouldn't tell no story, but before I went to bed, I said, "Lord, am I going to get burnt out?" Just something came over me and I read my Bible. I went to bed, and by eight o'clock that morning, my house was on fire. It (the warning) was God taking care of me."



Vera Fleming Saddler

Maggie Phifer offered this advice. "Live a clean life and put the Lord in front. Have faith in the Lord and (in) yourself, and you'll be successful." Maggie believed the Lord had already taken care of her and she was grateful for what she had. She showed interviewer Gail Hooper her closet full of clothes. "Believe it or not, if the eye isn't too small, I can still thread a needle. I got more now than I ever had in my life with food and everything. I haven't been grocery shopping for two years and a half. I think I've been pretty successful!" Maggie Phifer was 92 at the time of her interview.

Gaynell Cooke Freeland had one very simple piece of advice. "Be honest, love people, because people are God's people. We're all His. 'Course some of us go astray, but we're still His...Love everybody. There may be things that you don't like; you don't have to like that (the deed). But you can love them (the people).

Because of the importance of religion in the lives of our subjects, it is to be expected that they commented frequently on changes they had witnessed within the church. A common complaint was that ministers today are often more "readers" than "preachers." It was Clay Tolbert who gave us a vivid depiction of the manner and role of the "country preacher." After the reading of the scripture, the preacher "rolled up his sleeves and went to work," he said (chapter on "Religion"). Serious objections were also voiced concerning the type of music we hear today. "They don't sing the old songs like they used to," was the refrain. This sentiment probably accounts for the popularity of the 5th Sunday hymn sings that have become a tradition in Amity Hill.

While the interviewers had difficulty grasping the scope of the physical changes our subjects had witnessed in Iredell County, the subjects themselves had similar problems in coming to terms with the changes in lifestyle that these changes have brought. Common themes emerged in their comments to us: be clean, respect yourself and your elders, look after your children and teach them the value of manual labor, get an education and continue to read, love your neighbors and make time for them in your lives, and put God first. At least one of these themes is prominent in each chapter of our text. In fact, our subjects summarized our book for us far better in their comments than any of us could have. And their remarks were no surprise. This is the code our ancestors lived by, and it has served our subjects well.

Other Recollections

"My granddaddy was our storyteller. He could tell all kinds, way back there...I used to love to sit an' listen at 'im."

Gladys King

Some of those we visited loved to talk, and they entertained us for hours. Others were more efficient in their use of words, and they said a great deal in a few minutes. Speakers of both kinds wrote subtitles for our chapters which spoke volumes. Much of what we heard defied the categories used for our chapter titles. Some of that is included here to give you a taste. The excerpts are varied; some episodes are humorous, others tragic, mysterious, or merely curious. Some pieces provide a glimpse of the personality of the speakers. Each is a slice of local history.

There are two stories on how Mt. Mourne got its name. There was a slave market there. A fellow named Alexander Work raised slaves and sold them farther south. He was located somewhere in the Mt. Mourne area. His plantation might be under Lake Norman now, but they did auction slaves. I heard the auction block was about where the fire station is in Mt. Mourne. I don't know for sure. The mourning and the crying of the slaves gave the place its name.

Rufus Reid had a plantation there that he called Mt. Mourne. Some say that's for the Mourne Mountains in Ireland. There are Mourne Mountains on the eastern coast of Northern Ireland, and it's spelled the same way. Maybe Mr. Reid or some of his ancestors were from there and he named the place after the place back home. Of course, there's no mountain there, but there's no mountain at Mt. Ulla or Mt. Pleasant or some other places. That's never bothered North Carolinians in naming a place!

O.C. Stonestreet, III

At the end of the Civil War, the Yankee soldiers were coming up from the south from Georgia, and they came by my great-grandparents' farm. The commander of the Yankee soldiers of that particular outfit knocked on the door, and my great grandmother came to the door. The officers said they were very hungry...and they wondered if there was any way she could prepare them something to eat or let them eat something off the farm....She said, 'Yes, I will. My husband has not come back yet from the war, but I'm sure he would want me to take care of you, and I'm going to take care of you by feeding you.' The officer did tell my great-grandmother that he would see to it that his men did not harm any of his daughters.

So after my grandmother cooked a real beautiful meal for the troops, and they sat

around and were so happy about it, she told them, 'I need to tell you something. I put poison in your food, and you're all going to die very soon.' They all started crying and rolling on the ground and hollering...so afraid they were going to die. She said, 'Wait a minute, Men, I must tell you that I would never do anything like that. Your food was prepared perfectly correctly, and I know you enjoyed, it, but I want you to know that we do have a bad feeling...the fact that we have been injured so much by your troops when we had this war in the South. Of course, my husband has not returned now.'

The troops left very happy about everything. Little did she or the troops know at that time that her husband was not going to return. He never did return from that war; he was dead at the end of it. That's for sure. Somebody told us that they knew he was dead.

Sam Price, Jr.

Uncle Millard's father was Uncle Anderson Dalton, my great grandmother's carriage man. That is what Uncle Millard told us. He'd tell us all about these things when he'd come to visit. We'd sit by that open fireplace and just beg him to tell us stories, you know.

Uncle Millard would tell us about cutting ice out at the farm. Uncle Anderson...cut the ice too. And that way then got a little toddy. It was so cold cutting ice out of the pond, and then they'd put it in a pit there at the barn, and people came from all around to get the ice. They would store it in sawdust down in this hole.

Uncle Millard would tell us about that when he would come at Christmas. He said Miss Cecilia would give 'em a little toddy then, and Daddy would give 'em a little too much. And Mama would always make eggnog for Uncle on Christmas morning. She'd save cream and she made this beautiful eggnog, and she put a bit of the white lightnin' in there for Uncle Millard, and he'd smack his lips. 'Oh, Miss, he'd say! That's good!' Oh, we loved him just like he was family! (Daddy and Mama, they insisted we call them Uncle and Aunt, these aged black people. Even before they were real old, we called 'em Aunt and Uncle out of respect.)

Amelia Kennedy

I lived close to Campbell School, but when I went to Union Grove, you had to walk or get a buggy; sometimes they had a car now and then. The teacher drove a buggy. Well, Swanee, our Aunt Journey, she was goin' to take us, and she did. She come and got us one time. We had to go down by Huie's Mill. It's a steep hill, and the holdin' strop broke, and we wuz all a'drawin' lines an' sayin' "Whoa, whoa, whoa!" an' a'tryin' ta get outta there. I said, "If we don't get outta here, we're gonna all get killed!" I got out, but Cleo had to pick a way. Swanee stayed on. And Mr. Ansel Pardue was attendin' to the mill, and he seen what had happened. And the poor ol' horse didn't know what to do, you know, the buggy was up agin her. She kicked the dashboard out, she kicked it back, and he come out there and stopped her. And she was scared to death!

Well, he hooked her all up and got us started on yonder way, and we went on over there. I don't know how we got on to Union Grove. Anyhow, we didn't drive that buggy nor horse no more. I know my older sister said, "I begin to think about my religion." She

never did get out; neither did Swanee. But I got out. I was a'pickin' my way every time there was a cut. Them four wheels and that dashboard a' comin' back in your face. She was goin' to take me and Cleo to school, and we was goin' to ride in the buggy, but that stopped that!

Rose Huie Brown McCollum

The following series of sketches come to us from Lou Ray Cartwright, interviewer and interviewee.

Now Eagle Mills was started back in the mid-1800's by a man named Andrew Baggarly, who lived somewhere in this vicinity....He felt like everybody needed a clock in their home. So, he went around from house to house selling these clocks at a very small amount. I think this is an Andrew Baggarly clock (on the mantle). It's been in my family ever since I was born. I can go 67 years with that clock. It was made and sold by George Marsh in Winchester, Connecticut. My daddy bought it at the sale of Reuben Tharpe's property in the late '20's or '30's after he and his wife died.

I guess you'd call Andrew Baggarly a visionary because he decided that he was going to start a city,...Eagle City, about a mile from my house. He decided that he would put a tobacco factory there...a cotton mill...a big general store, (and) he would build houses around there. Then, they would expand. He went down to Salisbury and petitioned them to bring the railroad through here. But we were in the pre-Civil War days and there wasn't much money....He went into the middle of Eagle City down there and measured off...10 acres of land, and he deeded this to the President and the Congress of the United States. The deed is in the courthouse in Statesville now.

I can remember going down there and seeing some of those houses... It eventually was changed to Eagle Mills. There was Eagle Mills Methodist Church. There was a cemetery out there with so many graves. Andrew fell into hard times. One of the Civil War generals, it wasn't Sherman, came through and burned the cotton factory. They rebuilt the cotton factory and the tobacco factory. The general store lasted for a good while. There is one piece of old Eagle Mills, or Eagle City, left. It's a little building down the road, and Dash Gaither told me that was the last of the original (community).

Thomas Trivette's Grandpa Trivette bought a clock from a man named Andy Baggarly for \$1.50. The clock kept time for him all his life. Thomas will pass it on to his son Dale, whose daughter Wendy Trivette, interviewer, will become the 5th generation to use the clock.

My grandmother baked bread every day, cornbread most of the time. One day she baked wheat bread, and they were just thrilled that they had biscuits to eat. They ate this big plate of biscuits until there was just one left, and they were all eyeing this biscuit. My Uncle Ernest reached over, got the biscuit, and said, 'I got it, I got it!' About that time an old hound dog raised up from the floor and grabbed the biscuit. He thought he had it, but he didn't have it!

My mother told a story about a black snake that chased her all the way through the woods. Black racers, those snakes crawled real fast. My mother went to get buttermilk at a neighbor's house, which was at least a mile or more from the house. She started back through the woods, and she saw the snake. In the woods there were leaves, and she was sure they rattled and rustled and that the snake was right on her heels. There was no buttermilk left in the bucket when she got home!

My earliest memory, I guess I was three years old, I went into the store (Daddy's new store) building, I remember playing on the platform scales in there. I grew up in that store until I was about 15 years old. I sat under the counter of that store, and I evidently loved to read. We took the *Winston-Salem Journal*, and I remember sitting under that counter from early in the morning till late. When it got dark, we came home, except on Saturday night. He never sold more than a five cent Co-Cola on Saturday. People would (just) come in and sit around the stove and talk. We probably never got in on Saturday nights until 9 or 10 o'clock. Why he did this, I have no earthly idea, except for people to come and talk.

The Williams family, a black family, had a son who was the same age as me; Harvey was his name. Harvey was my playmate. I remember we had a tobacco barn. I'm sure Daddy was at the store. But I was home with my mother. Harvey and I--- we would see people smoking cigarettes. One day we were at the tobacco barn. They used wood to cure it with, and there were fire coals down there that were still alive. So we got us a brown paper bag, and we took some of that tobacco leaves that had fallen down and crumbled them up and rolled them up in that paper bag that we'd torn off, and we made us two cigarettes. Then we took them over there and lit them off of the coals that were in the fire, and we smoked those two cigarettes. Well, I've never been as sick! He went to his house and I went to my house. I know my mother surely knew, but she thought I was punished enough.

I really loved Harvey! He may have retired now. The last I knew of Harvey he was an artist in New York. I've told his family I would love to see him if he ever comes down.

Dr. Trivette carried a black bag. He would come by the store, and I would see that he had the black bag...then he would go to somebody's house. It wouldn't be long till somebody would come to the store and say, 'Oh, did you know they had a new baby?' I guess I began to say to my mother, 'How did they get that new baby?' She would say Dr. Trivette carries those babies in that black bag when he goes to their house. That's the facts of life that I learned early. I wanted very much for Dr. Trivette to come to our house to bring us a baby in that black bag. But he never did!

Dr. Trivette was my mother's cousin, and we visited in the home some, but when I'd get sick, my mother would take me to see Dr. Trivette. I didn't like all that probing and the medicine he gave me. One day, my Uncle Chester gave me a penny. Back in those days, a penny was a whole lot, and two pennies was a fortune. And a *nickel!* My grandpa would give me a nickel sometimes and that was very valuable; I could buy a lot of

candy with that. I loved to eat, and I was always a fat child.

I was very bored. My parents were sitting in the car talking out the window, and I was in the back seat. I began to play with that penny. I decided it looked like it might be good if you put it in your mouth and held it there for a while, so I put the penny in my mouth, and I swallowed it. When we started home, my mother said, 'Where's the penny that Chester gave you?' I said, 'I don't know. I guess I lost it.' She could tell I wasn't telling the truth. She said, 'Lou Ray, what happened to the penny?' I said, 'I swallowed it.' That night, I began to get sorta sick, and they decided that maybe it was the penny...so they called Dr. Trivette. When he walked in the door, I went under the bed. I could scoot! Everytime they'd get to where they could grab me, I'd scoot in another direction. Dr. Trivette might have had a lot of patients that he treated, but he didn't have a lot of patience. So he said, 'Forget about the damn penny and just watch and see if the penny doesn't pass!'. And that penny did pass. We were running the store at that time, and I would go out behind the store. One day I came running in the store, shouting to the top of my voice, 'Mama, I done the penny! Mama, Mama!'

The Youngs, the Daltons, the Kennedys, and the Houstons were all related to Amelia Kennedy. Kit Carson's mother and father stopped at the Houston's house and danced the night Kit Carson was born. This is the origin of his middle name, Christopher Houston Carson.



Lou Ray Cartwright

By the time his older brother Thomas advised him that he shouldn't pay his brother Mott \$5.00 for Mott's half of the bicycle, it was too late. Harry Brawley already knew he'd been had! The same bicycle had been used by his father when he was a section foreman for the railroad and by Harry's three older brothers. And he said he got just as much use of it before he paid him as he did afterwards.



John Brawley: about 1911, the year Harry was born

Back then, they didn' have the streamlined bicycles; it was like I have seen from England, the tall bicycles, and you had to be a man to ride 'em, and I wasn't a man when I started. The log house that we lived in was on a hill that was pretty steep, and I'd set down in the sprocket with my feet out like this so if it'd start ta fall I'd catch myself. And I had ma hands up through here to the handlebars to guide it. I learned ta balance it like that. Then I learned ta ride it upright...right, and I couldn't reach the pedals with the seat on it, so I just took the seat off and wrapped a tow sack around where the seat was so I could sit on that and reach the pedals. Not real comfortable, but I didn't know no pain when I got into a race. It had streamlines (?), and it had wooden rims that went together

like that (locking his fingers). I won most of the time until one time where the wooden rim went together came apart. They said when it did, it naturally stopped the front wheel just as I had passed the last one, and I cut a clear flip over the handlebars. But I do remember landin' on ma hands an' feet an' still goin'...on gravel. I could take you to the road that it was on. It doesn't look like that now. I don't remember about the clothes, but I had to get a new rim, and it took me all day and all night to put the spokes in. I ordered it from Sears and Roebuck or Montgomery Ward one, I forget which.

Harry Brawley

I was going to tell you about Mr. Totsy Cribbe. He's dead and gone now, but he came by to talk to Paul and Jesse (my brothers). We were on new ground of pine, and Dad notioned me to keep on plowin'. We had a stump from there to about that chair, and you had to pick it up with a plow. It was getting dusk, and he said, 'Where's Paul?'

I said, 'He's gone up to Hiddenite to see his girlfriend.'

Totsy said, 'Where's Jesse?'

I said, 'He's gone down to John York's to see his girlfriend.'

He looked up at Dad and said, 'Ed, let Clyde go to the ball game.'

My Dad said, 'He ain't got no business over there' (at Union Grove).

He said, 'I'll bring him back.'

Finally, it lasted a while, and Dad took out his pocketbook, one of them that folds up you know, and gave me a quarter and said, 'You bring him back, hear?'

Well, we got on down the road, and it was about time we got to a covered up bridge down here and Totsy said, 'You keep your money and get yourself something to eat and drink with it.' He said, 'When we get there I want you to listen to what I tell you. You get on the left hand side, and I'm going on the right hand side....'

So we got all the way to Union Grove and he pulled back his coat, and he had a U.S. Marshall's badge that came out of a Cracker Jack box. So we got there and Mr. Stamey White was at the door collecting money, which was a quarter, you know, for an individual and a dime for a student. He said, 'I'll deputize this young man. I got to catch this guy, and I don't really know him that good, and he knows him good.'

Mr. White said, 'Yes, Sir! Yes, Sir! You go right on in.'

So I went in and watched all the ball game and when we came back out, Totsy came around where I was at and we got together, and Mr. White was standing as far as that door over there, and he pulled that badge off and handed it to Stamey and he said, 'Mr. White, I'm going to give you this badge. You might need it sometime, you might not have enough money to get in and see a ball game.'

He said, 'I know'd there was something the matter with this,' and so he gave me 35 cents. Ten cents for being a.....and out the door we went! I imagine I was 12 years old (about 65 years ago). I remember that better than I can what happened yesterday.

Clyde Tulbert

My granddaddy was our storyteller. He could tell all kinds, you know, way back

there. How they'd go out in the woods an' they'd see haints...all that stuff. I used to love to sit an' listen at 'im! And then I'd see sumpin' risin' over the water. Oh, Lord, I can't even think about all that! And then we all went to bed. And then we heard a noise, and was somebody out there? But wadn' nobody out there. It was a haint! A ghost!

Gladys King

I know sometimes when we would get done picking cotton, we'd be sitting around telling stories. I'd be scared to death to move. I'd be scared to death to move!

I remember one time we were gathering herbs. Mama was way in front of me... Guess what she was looking for? A lady's slipper, I think it was. It only grows about that high, and it has like a slipper with three little strings hanging down on in. Mama was in front of me, and I looked up, and I still don't know. I wonder if it was real or what. I saw two men dressed like twins, and they were stooping over. I hurried up to Mama and I said, 'Did you see those two men?' She said, 'What men?' I said, 'I saw two men back there.' I showed her where they were standing, but we didn't see them...just disappeared. That house was supposed to be haunted not too far from me. But there were two twins dressed up just alike, and they were stooped over picking up something. I bet you I got up by Mama in a hurry! (Black or white?) I don't remember what color they were. I was busy trying to get away. I was getting gone right quick!

Maggie Phifer

Daddy kept cotton in a great big old shed. At the back of that shed, it had a window, and he had bees out there. One of my oldest sisters and my brothers, they were gonna get them some honey, and they set that cotton on fire, trying to smoke the bees out so they could get some honey like they saw my daddy do. The boys had a time getting that cotton on top of the fire carried out. Best I remember, somebody got a mighty good whippin'!

Lillie May Christopher

Houston Overcash shot Ann Winecoff, his wife. We saw him going up the lane, (Mr. John Templeton's lane) over there where the cattle went. We saw him go up the lane, but we never thought about nothing lke that. He come back, and he put the shotgun under the right hand side of the church, the Lutheran Church. Go over there and look at that. There's a little hole sorta there, and he had that shotgun up under there. He was around that church, and I was the first one that seen it. I said, 'That looks like a gun under there!' Hampton Winecoff said, 'Let me down there.' He reached down there, and he pulled the gun out. It had his initials on it, so they knew. He was sent to prison for a while.

That was the worst tragedy. She had not finished school, and after she left him, she came back home and started going to Amity School with us. She was a little older than we were, and we just thought she was just wonderful, you know. He wanted her to come back to him.

She wouldn't do it. He wasn't so big, but he was mean!

The tragic death of Lue Cree Overcash, 21-year-old bride of two months whose body was found in a well, is a mystery that was never solved.

I saw her that evening; she worked at Belk's in Statesville. She said they wanted her to move up to the boys' department. She said, 'Linnie Sue, I don't want to. I don't think I'd like it up there.' That's the last thing I remember her saying. Then, she went home, and whatever happened to her, we don't know...never did find what happened to her.

I know my daddy and uncle were there to help hold the plank when they drew her up. Isadore Heaggans pulled her out, I believe.

It was burying her that I remember. The roads were so bad (in January, 1937) trying to get to Bethesda.

Sue and Carl Cook

There was a terrible sound that night that I heard miles away, a wailing sound that went on for hours, and it was not the wind. I could not sleep.

Another Witness

Walter Morton, by everyone's definition, was a memorable character, a "rugged individualist." He was generous with those in need if he knew that they were willing to work, and he was generous with his church, New Perth ARP. He offered to give the congregation materials to build a new church if they would leave it where it was on Perth Road out of Troutman. They did not accept his offer. Walter was later "sessioned" for conduct that church officers decided was unacceptable. To his credit, Walter was honest about his faults. Harry Brawley gave us the following account. He could do the voices of Walter and Lon Mills and imitate their facial expressions and body language to a "T", something that he did often upon demand.

Uncle Walter's cu-rosity was great, and he couldn't set too good. 'Who's that comin' down the road?' he'd say. 'Is that Lon? Well, who's that with 'im? Well, tell 'em ta come in!'

He was always wantin' ta go up on the river. Aunt Annas Freeland give him 400 acres up there fer keepin' 'em. After the War Between the States, they lost all slaves. His mother didn' know how ta comb her own hair. Walter never talked about his father. It is likely that he died during the war. Uncle Walter would say, 'If I hadn' took care of

myself..I ditched barefoot when the ditch was covered with ice. I stood between the plow handles and ate cold cornbread and water.

'I went out West to the Rockies with two friends. We worked for our board. I was manager of that farm in three weeks. I said, "Gee an' Haw! What's them damn lines doin' in your hand?" When I came back, I came back with four carloads of horses, and I rode in the cars with 'em. I turned 'em a'loose in the pasture.'

I don't know if his friends came back with him, but they never paid him back for their fare. And the man he sold those horses to after they'd had a nip or two said he never got took so bad on a deal in his life!

Uncle Walter loved to talk politics, and so did my daddy-in-law. And they'd talk to anybody that was there. They'd stand in the middle of the road in the rain, and neither one of 'em would know it was a'rainin'. Lon would take a step or two back, and then he'd run up on his toes and point his finger in the air. You'd think they'd wear their toes out!

Lon was the first Republican in a long line of Democrats. Walter was a strong Democrat, or he was until they raised the taxes on him, and then he was just as strong a Republican. One day I was drivin' him to town when he asked where Lon was. 'He's standin' over there in the field talkin' to Henry Sowers.'

'Let me get out and you go on to town. I raised that boy!' (Lon was about 65 years old at the time.)

I went to town and came back by there, and all three were still a'standin' in the field talkin' an' pointin' at one another.

Harry Brawley

I had just returned from service overseas (after World War II), and I went to work as a pharmacist in my father's drug store, the Miller Drug Company. An old man came in the store, an old black man, and he said he wanted to get a dose of Castor Oil. The way you fixed the Castor Oil in those days was to take some root beer syrup and put it into a glass and pour some Castor Oil on top of that. A dose of Castor Oil was two ounces. Then you'd take it to the soda fountain to the carbonated water. If you pushed (one spout) a certain way it came out in a very forceful way which would mix the ingredients with carbonated water and whatever was in there. So we poured the carbonated water in with force and it mixed up very fine. I handed it to the man and said, 'Drink this down real quick without stopping.'

He said, 'What?'

I said, 'Drink it down real quick because the carbonation will lose its affect, and it will not be as pleasant as it is now.'

So he drank it down, and his eyes got very large. He looked at me and said, 'What was that?'

I said, 'That was your dose of Castor Oil.'

He said, 'It wasn't for me. It was for my wife!'

Sam Price, Jr.



A. G. (Lonnie) Mills: 1875-1952

Interracial Relationships

"They got along good when I was growin' up!"

Olena Winford

One of the goals for this project was to discover where we are now and how we got here in terms of interracial relationships. Belinda Hurmence's book My Folks Don't Want Me To Talk About Slavery helped to inspire this project. Her book includes excerpts from oral interviews taken in the 1930's with survivors of slavery in North Carolina. In a sense, we were attempting phase two of those interviews. We are convinced that an appropriate title for this edition would be My Folks Still Don't Want Me To Talk About Slavery. A common reaction from both black and white subjects to the question "Do you remember hearing anything about slavery?" was "No, I don't think so."

There is no doubt that these people are connected to slavery. Among the subjects from the black community who were included in this project, is a cluster from North Iredell who are descended from slaves who lived on the plantation Daltonia, which was owned by Cecelia and John Dalton. Another cluster is found in South Iredell in the Shinnsville area. The grandfather of one individual in that area was a slave on the plantation home in Elmwood, a home which is now called Darshana. Sue Cook and others referred to it as the Chambers place. Others whom we spoke with in Statesville and Mooresville did not know of or did not reveal a connection with slavery. Gladys King was an exception as was Bill Williams, who has an ancestor out of slavery in Snow Creek and another in Mecklenburg County. Amelia Kennedy, Mary Warren, Lawrence Patterson, Ruth Crosby, Sam Price, Jr., and most certainly others are descended from slave owners.

We did hear a few references to slavery. There was the young slave who ran away as she went to the creek to bring in the water (Olena Winford). There was also the mother who was sent back to the field immediately after childbirth even as she continued to bleed (Gladys King). Olena Winford also told us about the curfews and paddyrollers who whipped any who disobeyed. But mostly, we heard about the hard work that was demanded by the slave masters.

From Bill Williams in Statesville, we heard about the threatened lynching of a black man who refused to be arrested and shot the sherriff in the hand and the stand that was taken by black families, women included, that prevented a riot or worse. And Maggie Phifer and Millard Knight told us that justice was not to be found by a black person. Even though they "seemed to

get along pretty good with the white families nextdoor on the farm," she said, "there wasn't no need to go and tell the sheriff or somebody like that if something happened in the neighborhood. They wouldn't pay you any attention because you were black. They could do anything they wanted to you and there would be no need to say nothing because you were black. They could tell you where to go! They would do that in a minute. That was wrong!"

Vera Saddler was interviewed by Gail Hooper, who asked, "Cousin Vera, do you remember your mother telling you anything about slavery?"

I can't remember anything....She always only told me good things; never did tell me anything bad....I guess they didn't talk about it. I don't think people should be hard on white people because slavery was back then....If you're nice to them, they'll be nice to you. I just love people that's why. The white people have always been nice to me, and the people down here in Shinnsville. The Houstons were nice people and still Mrs. Amy Brawley will stop in and see me or call me. And Mr. Craven was nice. I went to him and asked him to give some money to the church, and he gave me \$500. And he gave me \$100 for the school. The ladies in the store (Shinn's) were very nice. The children were always nice to me, the Shinnsville children.

Edna Allison, interviewed by Gail Hooper, talked about changes she had witnessed:

At the cafe, the black boys worked in there and cooked, but you went to the back in town where the depot is now, there used to be a restaurant. I've gone there at the back door and got food. Harry Phifer and all of the Phifer boys used to do lots of cooking for the cafes.

Now you go where the white folks go, sit down and eat with them. Honey. I'm nobody, nobody. It's just a blessing. But see, ya'll don't know about all this. We used to ride the buses. God knows, I've got on the buses and in front there'd be seats, but don't you know the black people would have to go to the back and sit down....Now you sit down where you want to. Old blackie sit down where they want to. I've gone to all the churches here in Mooresville; I still visit them yet. They used to have a good little preacher at Bethesda; I used to love to hear him preach. The black people ought to be happy, you hear me, and love each other. But you know how they are. But God knows I love everybody.

Olena Winford's interviewer was also Gail Hooper, her granddaughter. Gail asked her if she saw any differences between then and now in race relations.

No. The white people goes ta their churches, and black people goes ta theirs. They got along good when I wuz growin' up. With the Overcashes, you're da same as white with dem. Wade Overcash an' his famley, all them boys an' girls, they reconized us. We borrowed from each other, flour 'r whatever. All dem dat's livin' now, dey reconize us....Calvin, he used ta drive a red wagon. He would ride up an' call for us. We were same as white then, and we still is.

Olena Winford, whose grandmother was "out of slavery," told of working for the Shinn's on their farm along with her father. "He worked and slaved. He planted cotton, he raised cotton, he hoed cotton, and he picked cotton on the Shinn farm....I dreams about pickin' cotton...(Shinn) had a wife an' she was a worker. She worked like a dog. Then she passed away an' he married again. She didn't work. All the boys worked."

Bertha Westmoreland's grandmother was also "out of slavery," and her Grandma Susan worked in the Mills home where she said the work was divided "fifty-fifty" with the white family. Bertha herself spoke of the fact that her family worked side by side in the fields with Harry Brawley. She also told of her mother Gertrude who worked in homes where she felt like family. As a child, Bertha's playmates were three white girls each from a different family. She said Nellie Hoover was "a sister to her," and Beatrice Westmoreland, mother of Margaret, was "like a mother," sewing clothes with lace-trimmed slips and such for her. Bertha had 10 children whom she said she was able to clothe only with the help of two "friends" who anonymously and on a regular basis left bags of clothes and shoes at her door.

Edna Allison was employed by more than one family, but Dr. and Mrs. Martin were special.

White people, you know, you had to go to the back door. You'd cook for them and tend their children and all, and they were nice, but you didn't eat at the table with them. Dr. and Mrs. Martin was the only white people I worked for that I ate at the table with them...I didn't care if the President had come to Dr. and Mrs. Martin's house, this old blackie would have been setting in there eating with them...I started to work for her when Jim and Mary was a little boy and a little girl. I was there to see Mary get married, and I was there to see Jimmy get married. I worked for her 20 years...They stood for me to get this house. If it hadn't been for them, I couldn't have gotten one. That's why I'm here. They've been helping me since I had my stroke. Mary's got two children now, and Jimmy's got two children. They're in school now. Seems I can see Jimmy starting down the street with his little books and his little overalls on. I've got the children's pictures here somewhere....(In 20 years) I wasn't out narry a day for being sick.

Edna also talked about the 30th of May, a holiday she remembered celebrating with a parade in Salisbury. She also indicated that not all racism came from the white community.

You know where the cemetery is. We used to walk from town, me and Aunt Merle and Mattie Allison. Some people was there in a wagon. We was walking behind these black people with the wagon and the horses. White folks was sitting on the porch where we was passing by. This black girl said, "Hey, White Folks, this is nigger day!" But you know what, there ain't no more days like that. Soldiers marching through town and all. Them days is gone.

Mr. Ed McArthurs and Miss Julie, they had an old T-Model car, and Miss Julie, she was a fat woman. They'd pass me and Mattie and Aunt Merle. They wouldn't stop and let us ride.

Interviewer: Were they black or white?

He looked like a white man, but he was black. On down the road there, Mr. Ed had a blowout, and we just walked right on by and didn't open our mouths. Miss Julie was sitting (in) a big fine seat!

In addition, Edna also lets us know by the following comment that it was customary for people who were black to speak differently to people who were white, a carry-over from days of slavery.

One day Miss Stewart was over at Belk's, she spoke to me so nicely, and I thought she was a white woman. I just said, 'How are you?' I got back home and I thinks, 'I don't know what she thought about me.' I just spoke to her like I did. I thought Miss Stewart was a white woman.

Sam Price, Jr., made the following observation in discussing the topic of segregated schools, which he attended all of his school years:

There was a school for the black people, colored people we called them then, up near the Cascade Mills in the northern part of town...an old wooden school building. It was real strange because I lived on the path where they would walk from the west part of town to the north. Later, they did build a school in the west part of town, and destroyed the (other one). Then you'd see all the children going in the western direction.

There was not a bad feeling between any of the black and white in those days. We accepted each other quite well; I played with a lot of black children because my house was not too far from their neighborhood. We all got along very well. My father and mother taught me to respect black people as well as all people, and to treat them all as human beings...the same.

So similar were the language, the living conditions, and the customs that from the reading of the transcriptions of interviews it was impossible to know the race of the interviewed unless matters of race were being discussed. We expect that the readers of this composite will have similar uncertainty. There were a few exceptions. There were no homecomings recalled by black families in rural areas, but food, clothing, marriage, and other religious customs, music, and games were identical. Also, we noted no economic disparity in the black and white homes we visited. And in those homes, the objects displayed reflected similar values: family portraits, photos of the homeplace, personal art by family, a clock that had been passed on for generations, and, above all, the family Bible. Those families, black or white on large farms or small, fared then and now much the same. The soil, it seems, is a great equalizer.

It was through unsolicited comments that we learned much about racial attitudes. Not all of these comments occurred during the interview setting. Some were inspired by the photographs of the interviewed and those that they shared through our exhibit of photographs at the Statesville Arts and Science Center during the month of April, 1996. For one thing, it is apparent that black families who have a history with white families are held in high regard by them. Leona Dalton and Barney Dalton and his family were praised by white subjects and other visitors. Often we heard what good neighbors the Westmorelands were, and Bertha herself had the respect of everyone who knew her. Many in both the black and the white community expressed their admiration for Russell Cowan, "the finest black man you could ever find." Both black and white participants loved and respected Clay Tolbert. Harry Brawley was remembered fondly by the family of Bertha Westmoreland.

We can only speculate about the reasons for these genuine feelings of warmth and respect between these families. We know that they did not develop overnight. Some of these individuals have worked side by side in the fields and watched each other struggle. In north Iredell and in south Iredell, there were tenant farmers of both races as well as people of both races who had tenants working for them and alongside them. During the Depression, people of both races worked for \$.50 a day at hard labor, and they suffered the same shortages and griefs during the World Wars. Everyone traveled the same roads and improvised when necessities were lacking. Sharing was common.

This is not to say that there was equality. There was not. The wages of black women who worked in the homes of white families were too low or non-existent. Black women had to care for their own homes and families

after their day's work. There were few jobs for black men except as drivers for doctors or white families. Of course, there was some open resentment and hostility. Many of those who were interviewed from the black community were the third generation out of slavery. They can never forget that and neither should we, but they do not dwell on that fact.

We must remember also that the people who shared these recollections with us are very religious, and their faith strongly influences their words and deeds. But there is still work to be done. For instance, we hope for a society that will one day be able to say of Russell Cowan, "He was as fine a man as you'll ever find," instead of "the finest black man." We can hope that the admiration many expressed for members of the opposite race will continue to be transferred to the races at large. But children have moved to others areas, and contact with childhood playmates has been lost, in most cases. Many of the bridges that our ancestors built have disappeared. Thankfully, some are still strong.

We are indebted to each of our interviewers and to those whom we interviewed. We are grateful for what we have learned from them. Our hosts displayed an openness, warmth, and honesty that charmed us all. They have faced adversity and good fortune with equal grace, and they have made good lives for themselves in the process. Their interest in the community is a model for each of us. They have given us their vision and their wisdom, and they have left us a "how-to" manual. Only one question remains: What kind of Iredell County will we build with it? Our answer will determine how our children will remember us?



Winnie Lou Dalton and Rebecca Tulbert White Poplin: 1950

Becky (age 12) and Winnie Lou were constant companions when they were growing up in North Iredell. They are the daughters of interviewees Louise Holmes Dalton and Willie Mae and Clyde Tulbert. The tag on the Southern Bread truck dated our picture.

THE INTERVIEWS

Interviewees	Interviewers
Edna Allison	Gail Hooper
Constance Aronson	Sarah Cheek
Effie Marie Bailey	Gail Hooper
Mr. and Mrs. W. Page Beatty	Mary Bryant
Harry Robert Brawley	Sarah Cheek
Jessie Lee Troutman Parker Brawley	Sarah Cheek
Oliver Campbell	John Kent Robertson and Victor Crosby
Lou Ray Cartwright	Sarah Cheek
Carl and Linnie Sue Morrow Cook	Alice Brown
Dick and Vivian Christy Cook	Sarah Cheek
Ralph Cook	Neil Wilfong
Russell Cowan	Sarah Cheek
Ruth Alexander Crosby	Sarah Cheek
Barney Dalton	Margherita Somers
Louise Holmes Dalton	Sarah Cheek and Victor Crosby
Leona Patterson Dalton and Elsie Patterson Turner	Margherita Somers
Elsie Patterson Turner	Lena Grady
Alice White Fowler	Martha Fowler and Jackie Conkey
Julia Fowler	Martha Fowler and Jackie Conkey
Gaynell Cooke Freeland	Alice Brown
Beulah Myers Glass	John Kent Robertson and Victor Crosby
Fleecy Griffin	Beulah Brown
Amelia Kennedy	Lou Ray Cartwright
Mary Kimbrough	Viola Parker
Gladys King	Crystal Jackson
Millard Knight	Lou Ray Cartwright
Rose Huie Brown McCollum	Lou Ray Cartwright
Sadie Martin	Stephen Clanton
Annie and Ralph Flake Messick	Margherita Somers
Henry Miller	Dan Woody
Amy Lou Mitchell	John K. Robertson and Victor Crosby
Arnold Lawrence Patterson	Margherita Somers
Maggie Phifer	Gail Hooper
John Henry Redmond	Sarah Cheek and Victor Crosby
Sarah and Ruth Reeves	Sarah Cheek and Viola Parker
Vera Fleming Saddler	Gail Hooper

Margaret Scott
Katie Sigmon
Lex Sloan
Mildred Smith
O. C. Stonestreet, III
Ida Tharpe
Clay Tolbert
Thomas Reason Trivette
Willie Mae and Clyde Tulbert
Sarah Turlington
Theodore Wallace
Mary Douglas Warren
Bertha Heaggans Westmoreland
Willie Williams
Olena Winford
Edna York

Crystal Jackson
Dorothy Sigmon
Sarah Cheek
Gail Hooper
Dan Woody
Margherita Somers
Neil Wilfong
Wendy Trivette
Margherita Somers
Elizabeth Price
Sarah Cheek and Victor Crosby
Sarah Cheek
Sarah Cheek
Bernard Robertson
Gail Hooper
Lou Ray Cartwright

