

LIM ROCK, ALABAMA

Jackson County
(1930-1945)

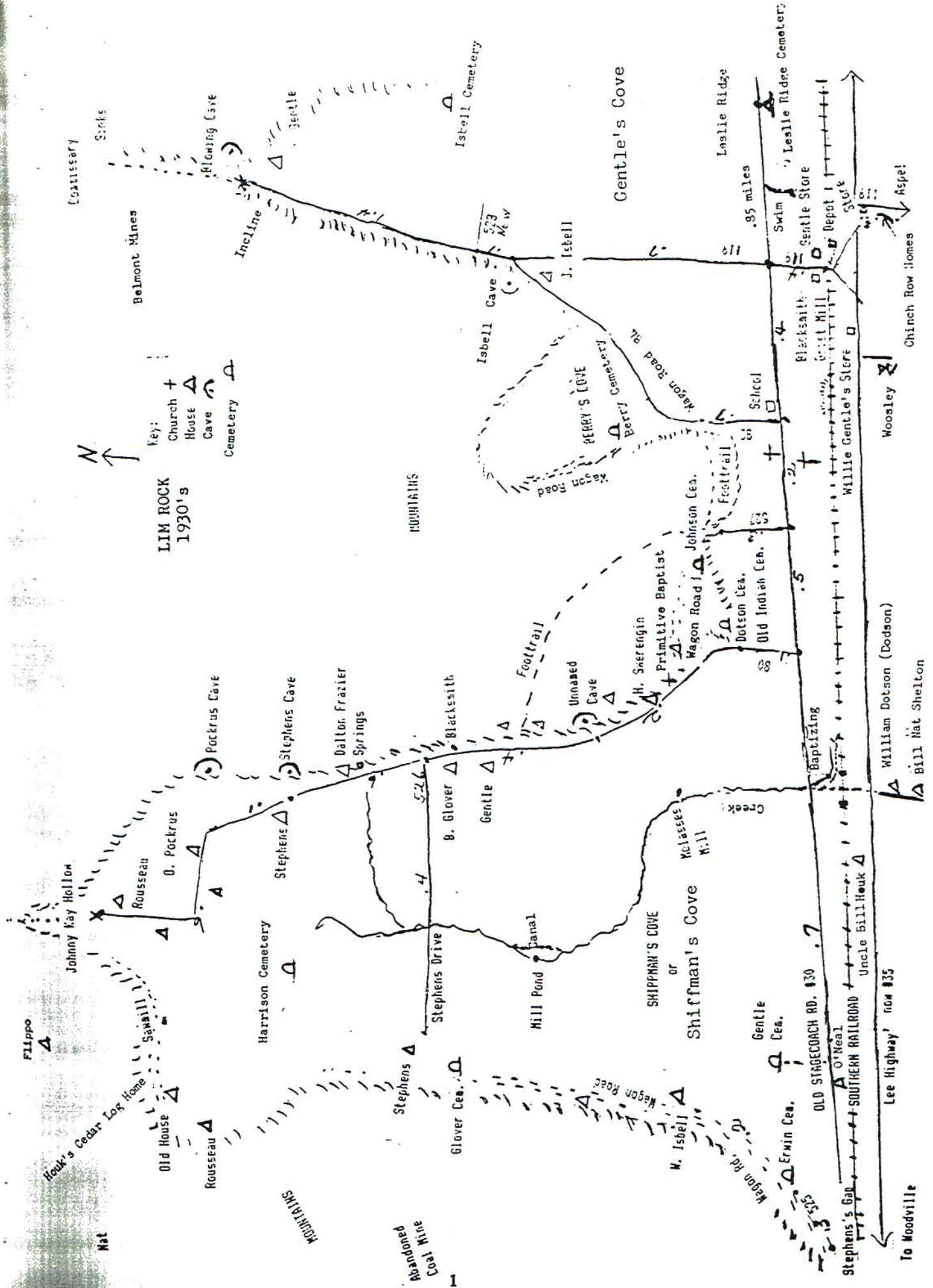
A COMMUNITY AS REMEMBERED 50 YEARS LATER

Part 2 of 3



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Tanner, Alabama 35671
Phone: (205) 232-1454

February 1993



**LIM ROCK
1930's**

Key:
 Church +
 House Δ
 Cave ○
 Cemetery □



Flippo Δ

Johnny Kay Hollow
 Rousseau Δ
 O. Pockrus Δ

Mat
 Old House Δ
 Rousseau Δ

Harrison Cemetery Δ
 Stephens Δ
 Pockrus Cave ○
 Stephens Cave ○

Dallon Frazier Springs Δ
 Blacksmith Δ
 Gentle Δ
 B. Glover Δ

Abandoned Coal Mine
 Stephens Δ
 Glover Cem. Δ

Mill Pond Canal
 SHIPMAN'S COVE or Shiffman's Cove
 Gentle Cem. Δ
 Wagon Rd. Δ

Unnaed Cave ○
 H. Smerengin Primitive Baptist Δ
 Wagon Road Δ
 Johnson Cem. Δ
 Dotson Cem. Δ
 Old Indian Cem. Δ

Gentle's Cove
 Isbell Cemetery Δ
 Isbell Cave ○
 J. Isbell Δ

Leslie Ridge Δ
 Swim Δ
 Gentle Store Δ
 Depot Δ
 Store Δ

School Δ
 Blacksmith Δ
 Grist Mill Δ
 Millie Gentle's Store Δ

Baptizing Δ
 William Dotson (Dodson) Δ
 Bill Nat Shelton Δ

Lee Highway' now #35
 To Woodville
 Stephens's Gap Δ
 O'Neal Δ
 SOUTHERN RAILROAD
 Uncle Bill Hawk Δ

Woodsley Δ
 Chinch Row Homes

Aspet

To Woodville

ROCK MOUNTAINS

ROCK MOUNTAINS

Gentle's Cove
 Isbell Cemetery Δ

SHIPMAN'S COVE or Shiffman's Cove

Wagon Rd. Δ

Gentle Cem. Δ

O'Neal Δ

Stephens's Gap Δ

To Woodville

William Dotson (Dodson) Δ

Bill Nat Shelton Δ

Woodsley Δ

Chinch Row Homes

Aspet

.85 miles

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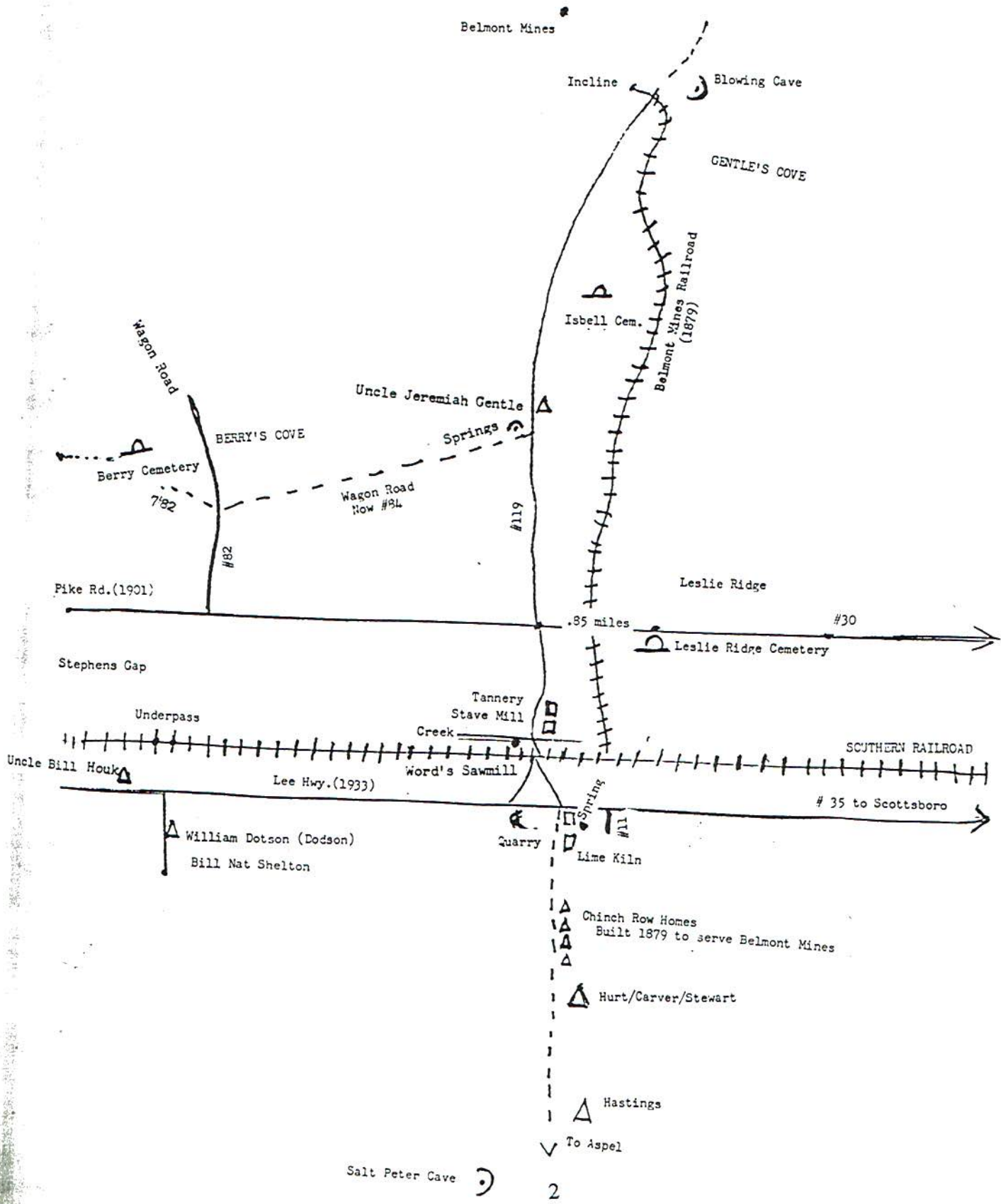
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BOYD'S SWITCH (1870-1882)

POST OFFICE NAMES

LINE ROCK (1882)

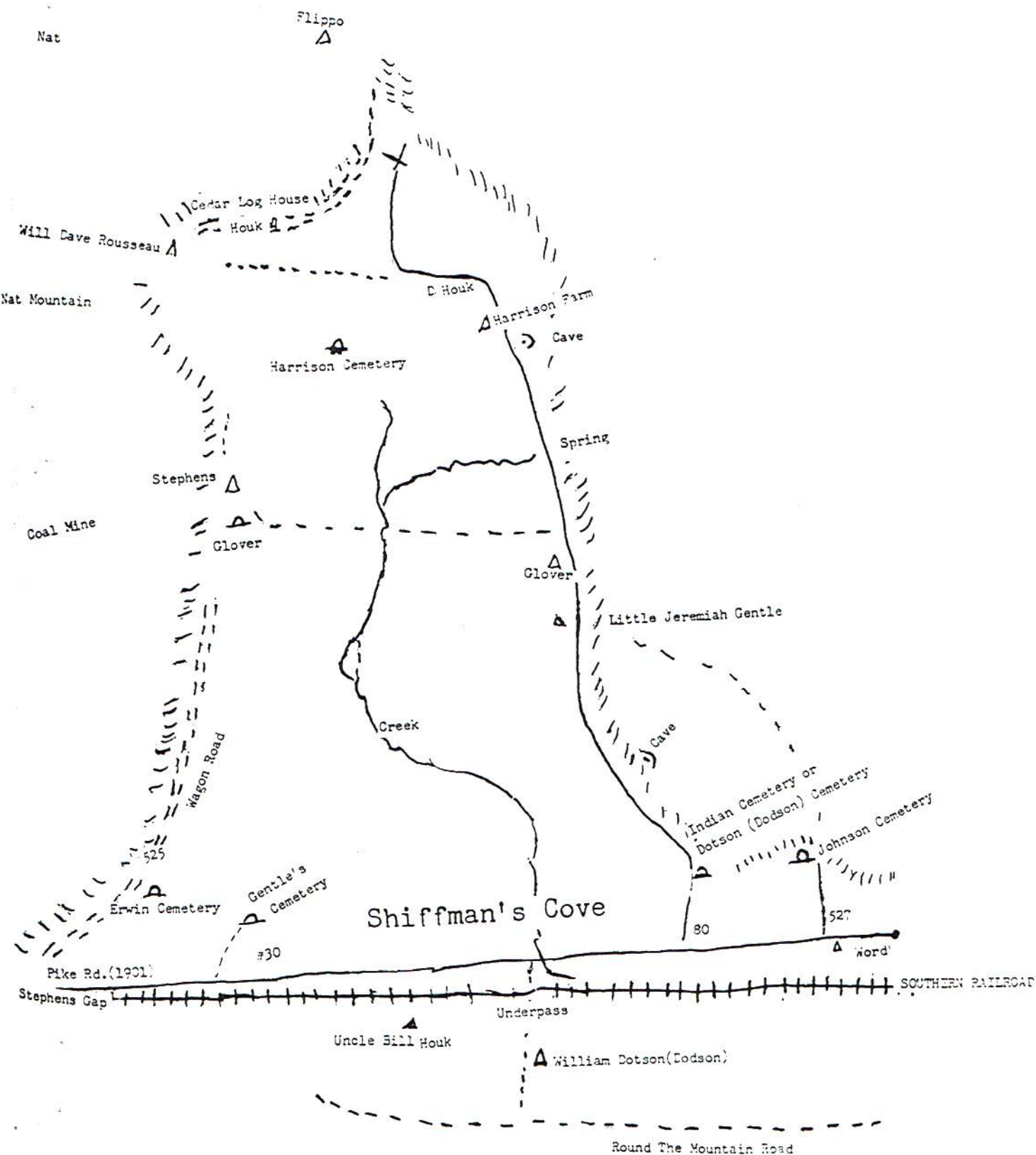
LIM ROCK (Since 1882)



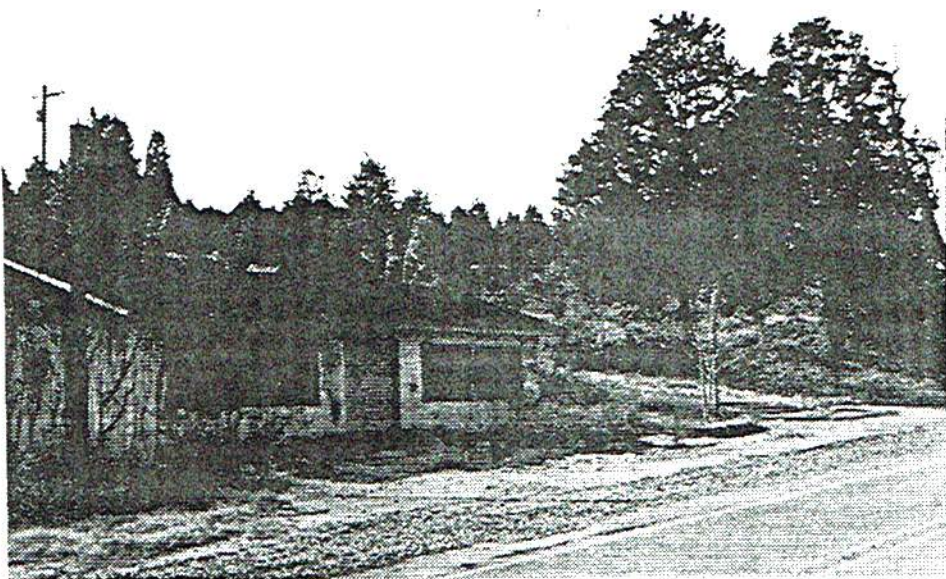


EARLY LIM ROCK

BEFORE 1900



LIME
KILN
Building



Store and Quarry



Lim Rock Springs



UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
475 L'ENFANT PLAZA SW
WASHINGTON DC 20260

December 18, 1992

Mr. Marlin D. Tucker
Route 1, Box 265
Tanner, AL 35671-9670

Dear Mr. Tucker:

Thank you for your recent telephone requests for information on the former Lim Rock, Alabama, Post Office.

I am enclosing a list of postmasters and their appointment dates for the Lim Rock Post Office, which was established as Boyd's Switch on July 1, 1870. The name was changed to Line Rock on June 13, 1882, and to Lim Rock on July 21, 1882.

Site location reports of post offices, which provide exact locations, have been transferred to the National Archives and can be ordered as described in the enclosed handout.

I hope this information is helpful.

Sincerely,

Melody Selvage

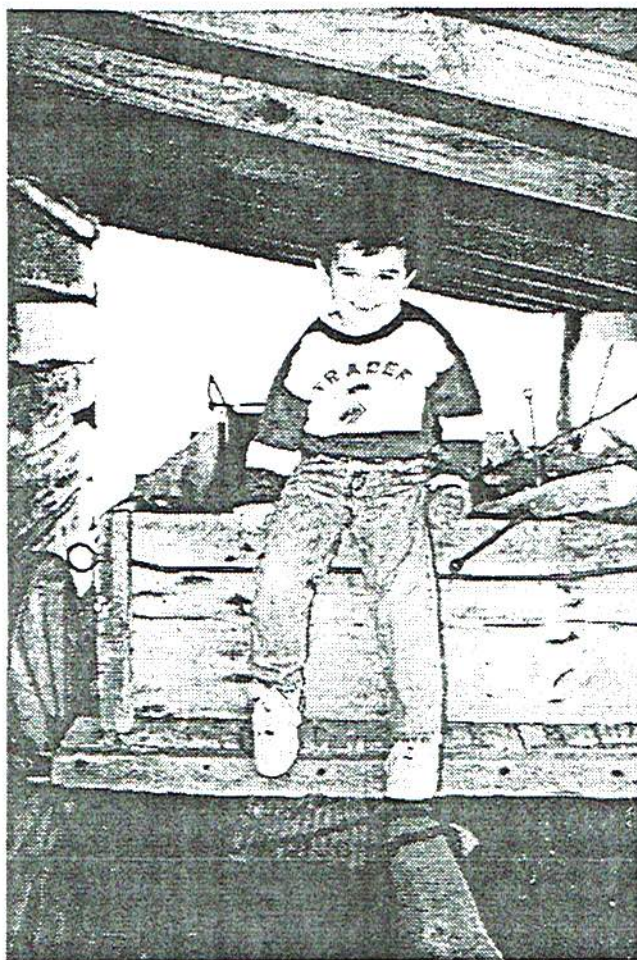
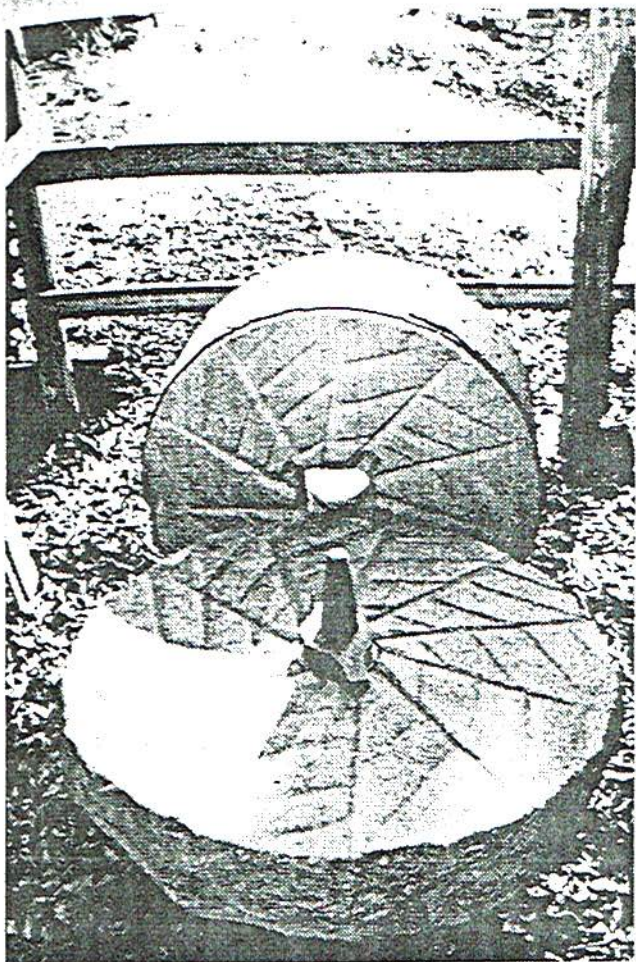
Melody Selvage
Research Associate, Postal History
Corporate Information Services

Enclosures

Telephone: 1-202-268-2507

LIM ROCK POST OFFICE
JACKSON COUNTY, ALABAMA
 (originally established as BOYD'S SWITCH)

NAME	TITLE	DATE APPOINTED
James M. Tipton	Postmaster	07/01/1870
James T. Huggins	Postmaster	04/12/1872 *
Frederick O. Hurt Jr.	Postmaster	05/02/1872
Milton Gentle	Postmaster	09/27/1881
changed to LINE ROCK on June 13, 1882		
Milton Gentle	Postmaster	06/13/1882
changed to LIM ROCK on July 21, 1882		
Milton Gentle	Postmaster	07/21/1882
H. L. Martin	Postmaster	11/27/1882
Milton Gentle	Postmaster	04/23/1883
Pleasant F. Cowart	Postmaster	10/15/1889
Maggie Maloney	Postmaster	04/15/1893
Emma F. Hurt	Postmaster	01/29/1896
Ephraim L. Latham	Postmaster	08/21/1897
Alexander McCormack	Postmaster	10/26/1901
Milton Gentle Sr.	Postmaster	02/05/1919
Miss Beulah Gentle	Acting Postmaster	09/27/1930
Miss Beulah Gentle	Postmaster	11/25/1930
Mrs. Eunice Wallingsford	Acting Postmaster	04/23/1941
Mrs. Eunice Wallingsford	Postmaster	06/24/1941
Willie B. Gentle	Acting Postmaster	08/05/1943
Willie B. Gentle	Postmaster	02/08/1944
Miss Nina Mae Brown	Acting Postmaster	04/30/1947
Mrs. Eunice Maye Wallingsford	Postmaster	10/07/1947
Minnie Higginbotham	Acting Postmaster	02/24/1956



BOYD'S SWITCH

LIM ROCK
1930-1945

LINE ROCK

The first part of the Lim Rock, or Limrock for those who prefer, story dealt with much of the community's history and its landmarks. An effort was made to tell some of the story from the days of Boyd's Switch to the heydays of Lim Rock.

During their storytelling time some of the old-timers said Boyd's Switch was near Stephens Gap. Boyd operated a stagecoach station where horses and stages were switched as travelers passed to and from Woodville and Scottsboro. Thus, the area became known as Boyd's Switch with its own post office. Should a researcher or any person desire the exact location, such information is available from the Post Office's Archives at the enclosed address.

Copied from:

A
Pictorial
Walk Thru
OL'HIGH JACKSON
By Walt Hammer

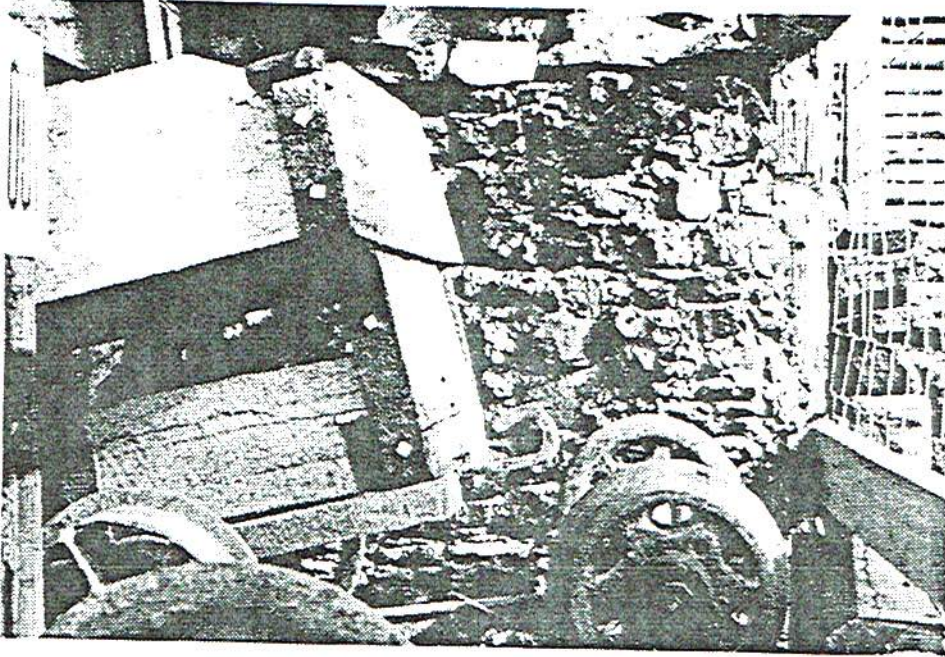
Lim Rock

“The town of Lim Rock was first called Boyd Switch. The name was changed to Lim Rock in 1882.

In April 1879, Major E. C. Gordon, brother of General John B. Gordon brought about 35 men from Huntsville and began building the railroad from Lim Rock to the Belmont Coal Mines near the top of Cumberland Mountains--a distance of nearly 6 miles.

New York capitalists bought the mines in 1881, and made Harrison G. Otis of New York, superintendent. The Gordons went to South Alabama to build railroads. In 1907, Dr. F. D. Pierce and brother, Dr. R. V. Pierce, of Buffalo, N. Y. bought these mines, with 16,000 acres of timber and mineral lands, extending from near Lim Rock to Mud Creek, on Cumberland Mountain.”

Some of the local people still remember the train car that brought the coal from the tipple in Gentle's Cove to the station at Lim Rock. They called it Old Huldy. It was dismantled in the late 1930's, as was the railroad to and up the incline, and sold for scrap iron. The scrap iron was part of the effort for the preparation of war.



This display of a coal car and coal mine was built by Wendell Page for the Scottsboro Heritage House to show visitors. The car is the same size as were the ones used to deliver coal from the Belmont Mines to Old Huldy in Gentle's Cove. They were lowered down the incline and were mechanically turned upside down to dump the coal into a large railroad car. The large car transported the cargo to Lim Rock. This display carload was a good day's digging for one man as he lay on his side digging in the very small opening.

At the time of the building of the six-mile track to the mines, quarters were built for the railroad and mining personnel. The Alabama Herald carried an article stating that in January 1879 the Gordon Brothers were building some shanties for the workmen at the mines. This group of homes later became known locally as Chinch Row. After the mines were closed these were rentals for several years before they were torn down.

BOYD'S SWITCH: The National Archives of the United States Postal Service indicate that the area's post office was established as Boyd's Switch July 1, 1870. James M. Tipton was the first postmaster.

LINE ROCK:

On June 13, 1882 the post office name was changed to Line Rock. The name lasted less than two months with Milton Gentle as the postmaster.

LIM ROCK:

On July 21, 1882 the post office became known as Lim Rock with Milton Gentle continuing as the postmaster. John R. Kennamer did some writing on local history including Woodville and Jackson County. He gave some credit to Walter S. Gordon for influencing the name change to Lim Rock. Reportedly, Gordon gave \$100 to the local Methodist Church for its influence in getting the name change.

**POST OFFICE
CLOSED:**

On March 31, 1956 Lim Rock's Post Office closed. The mail service was transferred to Route 2, Woodville. Minnie Higginbotham was acting postmaster when the mail services were transferred. Today the community's postal needs are serviced by Route 2, Scottsboro and Route 2, Woodville.

Kennamer also suggests that F. O. Hunt owned the lime kiln and lime production at Lim Rock. The main road ran south between the quarry and kiln to Aspel. Railroad lines ran out of the quarry to the lime building. Small 2-3 cubic yard cars were hand pumped to carry the crushed stone to the processing plant across the road. There was a facility to carry the lime overhead over the road to the kiln.

Lime rock was mined and crushed in the quarry. Local people called it "querry." The crushed stone was then sent across the road to the huge, high metal building that was several thousand feet square. There it was heated and processed into lime. The lime was bagged and barreled for shipment.

Working conditions inside the building near the kiln fires were reportedly almost unbearable. The story is still told today where one employee was so "aggravated" with working conditions that he, in good humor, told his fellow workers as he looked upward, "Lord, if it is any hotter in hell, don't send me. I couldn't stand it." In those days people were happy to have jobs wherever they could find them with no exceptions to the quarry and kiln.

The company may have harnessed the great flow of the beautiful Lim Rock spring to help in production and for personal use. The ram pump was very much in use during that time frame in history.

Later when the business closed, new roads were constructed. County Road 11 replaced the old road that ran between the store and quarry to Saltpeter Cave. Chinch Row ran along beside the old road a few thousand feet to the south of Lee Highway.

This second effort at storytelling deals with personal impressions and childhood memories of the Great Depression in the isolated community. All of the stories, tales, and philosophy had

their roots in 1930's-1940's Lim Rock. A concentrated effort has been made to preserve the words and the language of the day.

The families of Lim Rock were strong and self-reliant. They were proud and shared what little they had with others who had less. Anyone could borrow whatever another had, but feelings were bruised when one offered to give or did give to another. It would be rather unhealthy for one to give or hand down something to another if an air of superiority was reflected. From these strong families came individuals of today who are still dependable and resilient.

The hearty breadwinners of the depression era earned what they owned. They bought only what they needed and used everything they had. Cash was nearly always used. There was very little installment buying of farms and homes. Banking and credit were done from each other's hip pockets. Grocery stores did sometimes have limited credit.

The people were indeed proud and could easily have their feelings hurt. This kind of disposition could show up as haughty or arrogant until an understanding could be developed. After that, deep trust and respect could develop. Then, as now, each person had to earn respect.

LANGUAGE

Language was very special. Feelings ran deep. Many of the words were carry-overs from the 19th century from the mountains of other states. Certain words took on new turns and at times seemed a distortion or mispronunciation of a word of bygone times. When those words are looked at today they were, and are, perfectly good concepts that have been lost as some of us pretend new sophistication.

Often words were used to skirt the visceral of their implications. Women were reluctant to do certain things or to use certain words, thus not teaching their children what they meant to teach them. Body language and words sometimes sent conflicting signals to youth. Ridicule might be used to stop an embarrassing inquiry into needed information. Women would tell their children to hush their mouths when a subject became too painful. The children would take this action as shut-outs, personal, and demeaning to them as though they had done something wrong or committed a sin. Many children of these restrictive homes blushed easily, had trouble verbally expressing themselves or otherwise communicating effectively with others.

A man most likely would introduce his wife as his "wormern." The word "wife" was too personal for some men to use with other people. A woman might likewise introduce her husband as her man. Any implied sexual word like "husband" or "wife" was taboo.

"My man" was very appropriate when referring to the family member. Let a landowner say "my man" when referring to his tenant during an introduction and he had better be ready for a

hard fist to the face. No one got away by implying a master/ servant relationship. The proud came out with each one expecting equal treatment and acceptance by all.

Adults of the 1930's at Lim Rock constructed their word usage much as did the mountain people of Tennessee, the Carolinas, and the Virginias. That usage and patterns were of the 19th century vintage. Many of the elder people of the community were probably direct descendants of the first white settlers to the area. Most of the first settlers in the area seemed to have come from Tennessee and states east of Alabama.

Parents and other adults passed this unique word usage on to the children. The children modified the language to suit their needs as does every generation. As the people adjust the language to meet the current needs, there is a loss of certain concepts and additions of others.

Lim Rock parents "nussed" their children and children of others. Mothers "nursed" their children when they breast-fed their babies. Nussed was an inclusive word to include any caregiving. Later the children became more sophisticated and language became more precise. "Nussed" was dropped from the spoken language and "nursing" became the word to include breast-feeding and any caregiving of one to another. Nursing homes replaced the home-caring concept.

Each generation develops new words and drops or modifies other words to better express itself. Also, each pocket of people has its own uniqueness. This idea was especially true before radio and television. Newspaper usage was also limited in the 1930's at Lim Rock.

Sewing and clothing repair were the norm and were developed into a great skill. If something was crudely sewn it was "whanged" together. A person might have a patch whanged on his clothing until a more refined job could be done. Men and boys would do more whanging than did the skilled women.

Boys would often do battle with switches. If one got in a good lick on another person he "swarped" that person and scored a point. A few swarps and an opponent would leave the field of battle. Parents would swarp their children with keen switches to discipline. Children would often carry limbs and swarp a tender plant and cut it off smoothly. Workers would swarp the livestock to make them obey or work.

Parents oftentimes used a limb, called a peach tree switch, even if it was not off a peach tree, to discipline their children. Before the punishment began the parent might say, "I am going to cut the blood out of you." Child psychology was unknown to those who spoke such language and performed such deeds.

A child might not be quite adequate in his spoken language and say, while the family was eating around a large table, "Poke me a biscuit," amid a hoot of all. The whole family might join in a long embarrassing laugh. Instead of later teaching the child the proper way of asking for the

passing of food, ridicule was publicly employed. After such incidents children most likely would be reluctant to show confidence with others.

Some homes had a fireplace and all had a cookstove. In either instance "a far" had to be built. Children were admonished to stay away from "the far". Their clothing might catch "afar". All people were taught how to lay the wood in the "farplace" in order for it to burn effectively. The laying of the wood had to begin with a good backstick or log.

A few homes had two "chimleys" for the two fireplaces. Chimneys were used for several purposes. Children who were outside in the wintertime could run to the "chimley" corner for a few minutes to warm up. It could be used to place a bench or a few sitting rocks for people to gather and keep warm while visiting with each other.

Of course, corn was the most common crop of the day. It was easy to store and was a multipurpose crop being used by both humans and animals. It was ground into corn meal or crushed for animals at the Gentle Grist Mill. The corn was ground into meal from fine to course according to the owner's specifications.

The meal was a major food in the home. Sometimes it was made into "hoecakes" to be enjoyed by all family members. The term hoecake was a word from early America when pioneers cooked their corn mix in thin layers on hoes over open flames. The meal mix was placed in a cooking pan or skillet in a thin pancake and was cooked over an open flame or on the woodburning kitchen stove. The word "hoecake" and the serving of it became lost with time.

Other words were also used that have since changed meaning and directions. Some were too embarrassing to be used in "mixed company" and still bring a twinge of embarrassment to those who were conditioned to shun them.

Hockey was something a person did or something to avoid stepping in. If someone had anything on his shoes that smelled, he had "it" on his shoes. He had to go "outdoors" to wipe his feet on the grass or on a rock.

Later when hockey as a game moved South, it was difficult for the old-timers to convert to the new meaning. To them it was still a body function or something to step around, not something to go into a rink and play.

This kind of thinking was perpetuated somewhat by the "shot lady" from the health department. The shot lady came to school to give those ever-dreaded vaccinations and shots.

The health professionals were concerned over the health conditions of children of the South. Worms were a problem. School children, to their embarrassment, were tested for worms. One of the ways to test was for each child to bring a sample of their stool to school to be delivered to their teacher. Each child was given a metal box about the size of a small snuffbox or a hockey puck. The puck-sized sample was brought to school. As the child's name was called for the morning roll call, they marched to the teacher's desk and left their deposit. To this day, some of

those children have problems referring to hockey as a game or to a puck as something to hit with a stick.

"Karn" was something else to avoid. The word carrion became distorted through isolation of pockets of people. Rotting flesh or anything that smelled awful was called "karn." If someone passed a barn that had a rank odor it smelled like karn. If animal flesh stayed a while in the hot sun it was karn. If someone came into the house with something on his shoes he was ordered to go outside to get the karn off his feet.

No one would dare use the word "bull." They would be much too ugly. Certainly no young person would question why such an animal was let loose in the pasture. If an inquiry was made he was verbally disciplined to hush and not mention the subject again. If the animal was seen he was referred to as a male cow. The female (ugly) or the other sex (ugly) was referred to as the cow.

When a woman was expecting a child no one dared use the word "pregnant." The grossest of the gross would have such a thought. Instead she was going to find a baby. After the baby was born the birth was referred to as having found a baby. Animals also found babies.

Pregnancy was so sensitive that mothers could not explain things to their children. One woman, now in her 70's, discusses her great stress as a young girl. She was denied needed information. She tells the story that once when she fell her clothing went topsy-turvy over her head. Her reasoning was that since some boy saw her "unmentionables" that she would have a baby. She was traumatized for months with her thoughts.

One woman told this story during interviews for this article that when she was about five years old she asked her mother where she came from and was met with stammering and stuttering. She was told to shut her dirty mouth and not bring up the subject again.

But she did bring up the subject again. The next time she asked her grandmother the question. Her grandmother seemed to be more open. She told the little girl more details. She asked the little girl, "Do you see that log out there near the woodpile?" The little girl answered, "Yes." The grandmother continued, "We saw a dog pee behind that log and we went out there to look and we found you." The sister to this lady was told, by the parents, that she was found under a cabbage leaf.

The parents of the 30's were the children of the 1890's. Their parents had been reared to teach the children to have a gay time. It could not have been imagined that such a cheerful word would take on today's meaning. Again, time marches on and words flex, mold and change.

Any unusual behavior of the day was "queer". If a person had a mental health problem and his behavior was different he was queer. The traditional meaning was also attached to the word. Now a person is not politically correct if they use the word in any form.

If a woman wanted to put down a beau of her daughter, or anyone else, she would attach "old" or "ol" before his name such as Ol Jim. Attaching the prefix seemed to show utter contempt for that person. When the name would come up, the woman might say, "Oh, no! Not Ol Jim."

This same implication was used when talking to or referring to a black person or African-American. A white person could not say Mr., Mrs., or Miss. Rather, the person of color was referred to as Old (or Ol) Jack or whatever the first name was. That person could be called Uncle Jack. It was acceptable to call certain ones Professor.

Other words were just as expressive. With some families a baby wore a "hippen." A mother might change the baby's diaper or "hippen." Children might be instructed to go to the clothesline to bring in the "hippens" before the dew "falls."

The Jeremiahs were identified by "Little Jimmar" of Shiffman's Cove because he was younger than "Uncle Jimmar" of Gentle's Cove.

If something was "purtnear" it was close. If a person had a case of "piles" a ride on the coupling pole of a wagon would "purtnear" kill him. A ride on the "disk har" or the "har" (harrow) with the same condition would be just as "aggravatin."

Should a person be stuck severely with a thorn as he walked in the woods he was "stobbed." If a knife fight or any altercation ended in someone being stabbed, people remembered that incident as when someone got "stobbed." Concepts have ways of remaining local so people can understand each other.

WORDS THAT HURT

Not being schooled in child psychology or any psychology except in the school of hard knocks, parents often unwittingly hurt their children. Language was often unsophisticated, direct, and hard. Words scar as deeply as do flesh wounds. The damage may not be as noticeable to the untrained observer. The psychological scars are just as damaging, just as permanent, and just as debilitating as are the physical wounds.

This observer feels that a person can say almost anything to another with love and acceptance. A person can say almost nothing to another if he says it, or is interpreted as, with malice or rejection. A person with malice in his heart does damage to another with even something as simple as "good morning." Malice is detected. Children seem to have the instinct to detect if a parent rejects them while pretending to reject only a behavior.

These examples of words that hurt were expressed by some people who grew up at Lim Rock. The words were common to many people before modern educational psychology came on the scene.

1. I am going to slap the thunder out of you.
2. Shut your dirty mouth and don't ask me that again.
3. You are a smart aleck.
4. I don't like your smart aleck face.
5. You are stupid. You know that?
6. Don't show me your sassy face.
7. Why are you grinning like a Chessy cat?
8. I am going to knock the living daylights out of you.
9. I know you are guilty because you are grinning like a cow eating sawbriers.
10. You are redheaded, snaggle-toothed, freckle-faced.
11. You are "cross-ey'd."
12. Are you "deef" and dumb?
13. I will slap your everlasting face off.
14. I will knock your brains out.
15. I wish you were not born.
16. I wish you were a boy.
17. You are not as nice as your brother.
18. I will slap your ugly face.
19. You have kinky hair.
20. You are feeble-minded.
21. Stop your stuttering.
22. You are not going to do that as long as you eat at my table.
23. Your mother got frightened and caused you to be born with a "harelip."
24. That is the devil in you.
25. I am ashamed of you.
26. Why do you do that? (Referring to a person who has twitches in their face or those who had tics or Tourette Syndrome.)
27. He is not right.
28. He is crazy.
29. He is a cripple or he is clubfooted.
30. You are an idiot--moron-imbicile. (As a footnote these terms were acceptable in educational texts until the 1950's. Special education and other such moves enlightened the public of condition and concept.)

OUTDOOR LIVING

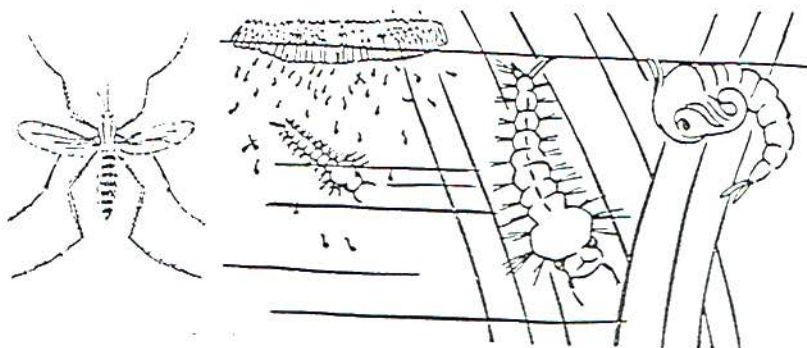


The people stayed outdoors almost as much as they stayed indoors. Without electricity there was no heating and cooling. Much of the time the outdoors were just as comfortable as the indoors. Consequently most people spent much time on the porches visiting with friends and swapping stories. Some homes had rock formations in the yards that served as sitting areas for family and visitors.

Porches and yards were often used for assembly areas for entertainment. Fiddles or guitars were brought out and played for the family's enjoyment in the late afternoon and early evening. The fiddler was the center of attention as old-time fiddle tunes of the mountain music filled the evening air. Tunes like Sally Goodin, Turkey in the Straw, Ol Dan Tucker, Little Brown Jug, Ol Joe Clark, and Red Wings were heard. During these family gatherings there was no feuding. It was pure pleasure and family bonding. It was the time that made dreams. It was the time that all who had the great opportunity to enjoy still remember with fond memories.

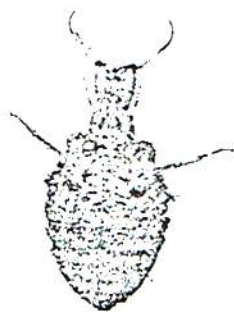
This outdoor living caused many people to be able to learn nature and to live in harmony with it. This kind of living also taught the people how to survive by intelligently harvesting some of nature's bounty. It was learned that wild animals and plants could be harvested, but there must be seed stock left. Rabbits and squirrels were harvested in the winter with great enthusiasm. They were protected during the spring and summer. Their babies were protected and sometimes

fed by the very people who later would use them for food. Other food animals and some plants were also harvested with the future in mind.



As families sat around outside the homes in the late afternoon, mosquitoes were a pest. Rain barrels were kept around the house to catch rain water for household uses. This rain water served as a breeding ground for mosquitoes. They laid eggs in the still water. These eggs soon hatched into the larvae called wiggletails. The wiggletails could be seen scooting about the water as they soon developed into the full-grown bloodsucking mosquitoes.

These mosquitoes in the late afternoon came looking for a warm-blooded meal. When the people were outside, the look was over. In order to protect themselves, the people often built small smoldering fires situated upwind from the sitting places so that the smoke passed over the areas. Rags were often used to generate the most effective smoke. They just lay there smoldering. Smoke seemed to act as a deterrent to the mosquito. The smoke and the smell together sometimes deterred the yard sitters more than they did the mosquito. It might be easier to swat the pest than to overcome the breathing problems caused by the offensive smoke.



People who live like this, like people everywhere, learn to survive and make do with what they have. It was a mystery to some how a human being could talk to a bug and get it to respond. Outdoor living teaches certain things. It was a common thing for a father to teach his children to talk to a doodlebug. The father would get down on his hands and knees with his mouth close to the ant lion's volcano-shaped lair and repeat the call. "Doodlebug, doodlebug, your house is

burning down." After a few calls, the doodlebug would begin tearing on the side of its den looking for its prey. The doodlebug would make its appearance and the caller could gently pick it up to the amazement of the learner. The learner would always ask, "How can that be done?" They most often will go away wondering how can that man get a bug to come up out of the ground by telling it that its house was burning down. They often are too afraid of being made to look like fools by trying the practice themselves.

But, it really works. The ant lion is tricked by the gentle blowing of one's breath on its sand trap. It senses that an ant has wandered into the trap. The doodlebug will come up searching for a meal. This writer still practices the art today as children visit him. He talks to a bug, and it responds. The children leave astonished but feeling too foolish to try the trick themselves. They may tell their friends that they know someone who talks to the bug and they wonder about his sanity.

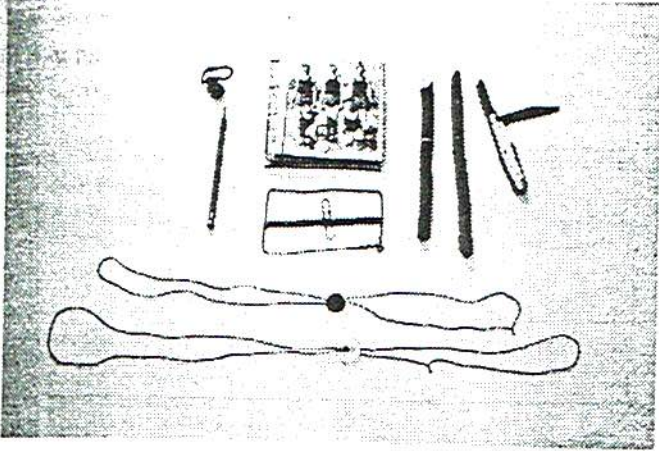
The same people who knew the doodlebug knew how to fish for worms. This special worm--children called it a chicken choker--would make its hole in the edge of fields or pastures where the soil was not disturbed. A yard that had no grass was an excellent place to locate the humpbacked worm. The worm would drill a small hole about half the size of a pencil and several inches deep. The hole was always open and easily found by a person who had knowledge of the habits of the worm.

The hunter would entertain his students by searching for the tiny dens and getting the learners to stay to watch. A long broomstraw or a similar straw would be gently inserted into the hole. When a barrier was felt, the straw was halted. Within three or four seconds the straw would begin to move as though something was trying to force the straw upward.

At a precise time the teacher would jerk the straw up out of the hole in one constant pull. Most of the time, if the timing was correct, the embarrassed humpedback worm came up out of its hole holding firmly to the straw. For a child the experience was something to behold. Adults learned too and were often shocked and amused.

When the two-inch humpbacked worm was jerked up out of its hole it would go crazy topside. The sensitive teacher would place the worm back close to its den, and it sank helter-skelter back into its sanctuary. It would soon be subjected to being caught again. This writer still catches the humpback worm when a curious mind wants to learn about a lesson in nature.

"PLAY PRETTIES"



Left: a pencil sharpener, a button on a string, a hickory whistle, and a flutter in a sack.

Right: a leaf whistle and a sagegrass bugle.

With the Great Depression being what it was, people did what they could to survive and help their children. Cash was very scarce, therefore, parents made toys for the children. "Play pretties" were the thing. Cigar boxes were used to make cigar-box fiddles.

Children were taught how to make a flutter in a sack. A wire 3-inch by 4-inch rectangle was constructed. A rubber band was stretched across it with a trigger in the center. It was wound up tightly and wrapped in a piece of paper or placed in a small sack. It was then given to someone to unwrap. When the paper binding was loosened, a sharp flutter sounded off and startled the receiver to the amusement of the giver.

A button buzzer was another favorite play pretty. About two feet of strong sewing thread was doubled through a large button to allow for about one foot on each side of the button. It was then cranked up for some tension as each thumb pumped the button. The button would purr and sing as it was released and then pumped again. It would make a loud noise as it whirled gently on a piece of paper. It could also cause pain, panic and pandemonium if it was intentionally placed in someone's hair.

Whittling was an art form. Cedar was a favorite wood to use to whittle. Things like a 3-4 inch fiddle could be carved from a favorite piece of wood. This was done at school sometimes. It was done often in the yard-sitting time in the late afternoon or as the family half circled the fireplace in the evening. The shavings were always saved to begin the next fire.

Other play pretties were also made. In the spring when the sap was rising in the hickory tree, a small limb or sapling about the size of one's finger could be cut. The end would be cut at

about a 45-degree slope. About four inches from the end, a cut would be made all the way around the 5-6 inch shoot. From this ring to the sloped end was tapped gently, all the way around the stick. This tapping released the bark so that it would slide easily off the limb. When it slid off it was then put back on and notched on the long side about two inches from the tip. The bark was pulled off again and a small piece was sliced from the notch to the end of the long side of the slope. The bark was put back on after moistening (licking) the whole stem on the underside of the bark. After aligning the notches and the slopes, the person would then have himself a hickory whistle that could be heard for thousands of feet.

The sagegrass bugle was another favorite home toy. A person could take a tin can, usually an opened salmon can, and strike a knife blade into the top to make a one-inch slit. He then could place a 3-4 inch stem of sagegrass into the slit and let it extend above the can about three inches. He would moisten the thumb and trigger finger and jerk on the stem of grass without pulling it from the can. The can served as an amplifier and this jerking on the straw would make a bugling sound that could also be heard for thousands of feet.

A play pretty that took no effort to make, but some know-how and skill to use, was a leaf whistle. A tender leaf, with a young peach leaf being the best, was placed lengthwise between the joints of the two thumbs. The leaf would barely come above the joints. Blowing on the leaf, so placed with the cupped hands serving as an amplifier, a loud, shrill noise would shoot through the atmosphere.



Children throughout history have been creative in ways to entertain themselves. Children of the 1930's were no exceptions. Some people developed great skill in constructing and using the flip. As shown in the diagram, it was made of two rubber bands, with just right elasticity, mounted on a forked stick. The rock holder was made from the tongue of an old shoe. Round, smooth rocks were gathered and carried in a pouch or in the pocket. Sometimes horseshoe corks were secured from the blacksmith shop. These weapons were lethal against squirrels, rabbits, and birds. Snakes might as well give up, because they would be gone when these weapons were aimed.

At times, wet red clay was dug. It was rolled into balls about the size of marbles and then left to dry in the sun. These balls became as hard as rocks. They were stored or carried in the

pockets and were used as ammunition for the flips. They flew straight and true and would "bust" the head of any small game.

During the hot, dry season of July and August, dust devils would dance across the fields and roads. The wind formed a funnel-like formation on the ground. It looked like a small tornado. Boys would run and get inside of one as it swirled around carrying dust and small debris.

Grasshoppers did this same dance about five feet off the ground during these dry months. As boys hunted with their flips these dancing hoppers became the live target as the clay shots were hurled at the excited hopper. Sometimes they were hit during this exercise. If they were not hit in midair they were targets as they lighted back on the dirt roads. These hunters would walk miles flipping the grasshoppers. The hoppers were sacked up to show the kill. Sometimes they were used for fish bait as the boys fished with their simple line and cane pole.



During other hunts with the flip, boys would go looking for the lizard. They were stalked as big game. Lizards had the habit of sunning on the rocks. If they saw a hunter they would slip over the rocks and peep out over the ledge. Even the peeping heads were fair targets.

Sometimes they would run up a tree and go to the opposite side away from the hunter. If two boys were hunting together, one got on one side of the tree and the other one took the other side. The lizard was a goner up to about 15-20 feet up the tree. Sometimes the game was gathered up for bragging purposes.

Hummingbirds were not exempt from the hunt. Some hillsides were covered with the buckeye bush. The buckeye had flaming red bloom clusters that attracted the hummingbird. Hummingbirds would hover over the bloom and subject themselves to a flip shot. If a boy could nail one of them in flight, he was a crack shot. Crack shots came frequently.

Moving targets or still targets were sought after. In the late afternoon, bats were in flight looking for food. Many times a flip shot hurled in their midst would bring one down. A bat would swoop in after the rock thinking it was an insect, only to realize that the missile was its mistake and its death.

A long fishing cane would also bring bats down. The long pole was swung swiftly overhead. Occasionally a bat got confused and would attack the pole, only to be knocked to the ground.

Live targets were not always the thing. Still targets were also in vogue. A small pebble would be placed on 15-20 fence posts along the road. The shooter would walk the road and shoot until the rock was knocked off each post.

One person told the story that his skill with the flip was so that it could have cost him his life. He tells the story that he placed a live 22-rifle shell about 20 feet away. He shot the cartridge with his flip from that distance hitting the firing cap. The explosion sent the bullet one way and the spent cartridge at him. It buried in his wrist requiring medical attention. Fifty years later this incident is remembered with some humor by several old-timers.

Equal skill was shown with a 22 rifle as these pebbles were shot from their places. Throwing rocks to hit each of these fence posts was part of the process of developing skill and entertainment. Times were like that at Lim Rock before radio and TV.

OTHER GAMES THAT WERE MORE INNOCENT AND LESS VIOLENT

After big rains, the mountain streams filled and the run-off was brisk and lively. Children built their flutters and placed them in the stream and watched them run energetically in the swift water.

Also, as the children waded these streams, they were enthralled as they happened upon a whirlpool or whorlpool. The swift water ran over a small sinkhole or fissure in the stream bed. It would whirl the water around as does a flushed commode and suck objects into its vortex and then they were gone. One's imagination could run wild and bring up fears as they played around these natural wonders.

It was a treasure for a youth to find a metal band off a wagon hub. The metal band was about eight inches in diameter. It could be made into a play pretty that would last a lifetime. A four-foot metal rod or a heavy wire could be bent to fit around the band. A child could place the handle to the upright band and it became a balancing act as the band was rolled down the dirt road. The objective was to see how far the band could be rolled with the handle pusher before the band fell. Some people could roll the band for thousands of feet before it fell or before interest failed.

With so much living outdoors, people learned what is friendly and what is not friendly. Nature is unforgiving for the foolish. A mistake costs. If people were lucky they learned from the mistake, and did not let it happen again.

One of the mistakes that could be made and the person could profit from its encounter was to walk through a patch of stingweeds. One trip was enough for the wise. Any exposed part of

the body that brushed against the weed itched and burned for hours. The wise would not brush that problem again.

Boys sometimes would battle each other using the weed as a weapon. One "swarp" across any part of an opponent, and he fled from the battlefield in pain and agony. The real mischievous boys sometimes would catch a friend using the bathroom in the woods and would swipe them with one of the weeds. Later if the victim could, and was big enough, the favor was somehow returned with interest. Victims had to be wisely chosen.

Such victims were sometimes selected while several people picked cotton. Cotton pickers usually picked two rows at a time and several pickers worked side by side. Of course, as in all work, some produced faster and got ahead of others. Packsaddles were a cotton pest and lived on the leaves of the cotton plant. It was a hairy worm about two inches long with a saddle in the center of its back like a saddle of a horse. When it was touched, it reared up at both ends and severely stung. Cotton pickers looked out for this danger but sometimes made a mistake and brushed one with a bare hand or arm. The worker knew when he was hit. Welts formed and the victim hurt for an hour or more.

The jokers who found one of these troublemakers or was hurt by one would often pick a victim. The victim was well behind and could not detect what was happening. The worm would be placed on a cotton leaf on one of the chosen one's row. Its placement was calculated so that the picker would most likely brush it. Activity would resume and all pickers would mind their own business. They would keep an eye on the chosen victim until they got to the trap. If they were hurt, the whole field of workers would "hoot and holler" while the victim nursed his injury.

FIRST AID

When such a sting occurred, standard first aid was available. Wasps, hornets, yellow jackets, and dirt daubers were always around to sting the invaders. When they did, a woman would offer part of her dip of snuff to ease the pain. Snuff or a chew or cud of tobacco were the common treatments for insect bites and stings.

Should a person have a "rison" or "rising" that would not come to a head, the same treatment was available. Fat meat was also attached to the infected area until the infection, causing the boil, turned white so that it could be lanced and drained. After it drained, normally healing took place.

Colds and chest infections were treated with poultices. Mustard and onion were placed in a cloth and wrapped around the face and/or the chest for all day and/or night. These somehow were supposed to aid breathing and chest infections. Vicks Salve was also a common product to

DEATH AT HOME

Community members were attuned to what was happening within each other's homes. "Dinner bells" were often rung to notify the community of problems or to make announcements. When a death occurred several members of the community were probably at the deathbed. Even in sudden death, community members were soon involved as word spread.

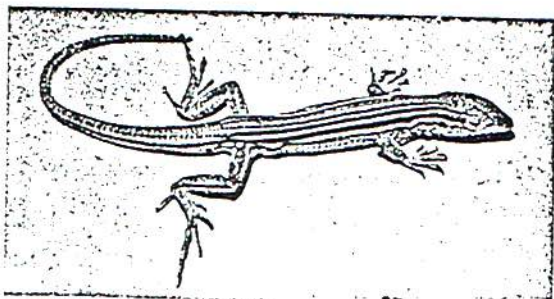
Family members and friends "laid him (her) out." The dead body was washed and dressed to get it ready for the casket. The body was left in its own bed with a sheet up to the head or maybe completely covered. Family members and friends sometimes viewed the dead within their own bed after they were "laid out."

As soon as a casket was built from whatever lumber that was available, preferably cedar, the body was placed in it to await burial. The casket was kept in the front room of the home for all visitors to view until burial. Friends sat up with the dead and with family members until burial took place.

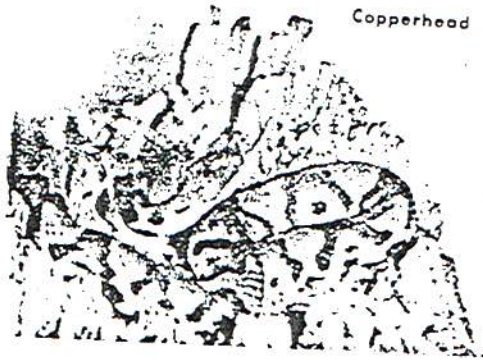
Members of the community hand dug the grave. A burial site could be selected from the cemetery without any formality. The body was either hand carried or carried on the shoulders of 4-6 men to the grave site. A grave ceremony was performed and the body lowered into its resting place. Volunteers closed the grave to complete the ceremony. The whole affair was simple, direct and personal.

EXPERIENCES DURING COTTON-PICKING TIME

Cotton-picking time was killer work. But it did have its light moments. In addition to the packsaddle there were other creatures of the cotton patch. Snakes were always on the cotton picker's mind. The copperhead often inhabited fence rows and cotton patches. Big red velvet ants were also inhabitants of the fields. They could be heard as well as seen.



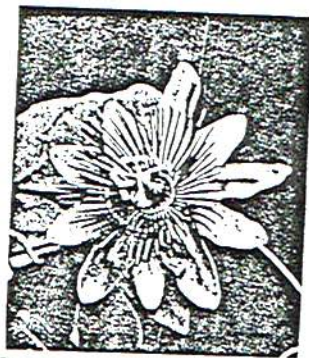
The Six-lined Race Runner of the Southeastern United States can run as fast as 18 miles (29 kilometers) per hour. It escapes its enemies by darting into a hole or under rocks.



The 7-8 inch long striped lizard was the eye-opener when it dashed by a picker, running like a Singer sewing machine, at ninety miles an hour. It would streak down the middle faster than anything on four feet. A few people called it the streak field lizard. Many women workers were deathly afraid of them and called them scorpions. The lizard was often confused with the poisonous scorpion that was found under rocks on the mountains.

In fact, it gained the reputation of being so fast that it was dubbed by the local vernacular as a "stripedass." If a person was a fast runner, perhaps as fast as Jessie Owens, or the fastest runner in town they could run like a "stripedass." They were bestowed with the honored title. That term still resonates in the minds of the old-timer of today who grew up thinking that the lizard and the runners were swift on foot.

CROPS



Farmers would sometimes plant crops like tomatoes or melons in the skips of cotton. Maypops or apricots grew wild. When the workers ran upon these fruits they could enjoy a feast. They would break open a melon or maypop and eat it on the spot. Tomatoes would be rubbed on the sleeve to clean them and eaten without any ceremony. The maypops were attractive. They

Many youth went barefoot much of the year. Later as World War II got underway, shoes were rationed. The rationing did not make much difference to those who could not afford the allotted two pairs of shoes a year.

The bare feet developed a thick layer of calluses on them. They would be tough as nails. Boys who had such feet certainly could climb the trees that had no limbs. They could also walk the roads that had freshly crushed stone with as much comfort as the shoe wearers. Even so, not many of those who remember the barefooted days want to relive the times. They don't mind remembering, but they don't want to exercise the barefooted means of travel.

CLOTHING

As with the barefooted time, all clothing was simple and utilitarian. Picking cotton while walking on one's knees and dragging an 8, 10, or 12 foot sack with 50-60 pounds of cotton in it created havoc on one's clothing and anatomy. Clothing could be patched. Most of the time it was. Holes were often in the knees and the seat. This fashion is quite chic today, but in the 1930's and the 1940's such fashion was necessary but embarrassing.

Patches were used. New patches on old clothing created quite a sight as a wearer walked sideways to keep someone from seeing new cloth on old cloth on the rear end. Faded clothing was equally embarrassing. It represented old and poorness on the part of the wearer. Today girls with shapely fannies, perhaps not so shapely, want ragged, faded, tight jeans. Such is a status symbol to be sought. If clothing is not worn-out or faded with holes, it may not be in style. Acidwashed or stonewashed may put the desired old beat-up look. If that is not enough, perhaps a shotgun blast through the pants might make them look just right. It is understood that this technique of styling clothing is used today by manufacturers. If the clothing is shiny, dyed, bleached, holey, and half way up to the knee, the wearer is in style. At Lim Rock adults and youth alike were stymied and embarrassed if such garbs were necessary. Times change! It is assumed that if one does not have to do something, they are at ease doing it. Good times can cause a person to live comfortably with conditions experienced during hard times.

SUBTLE BEHAVIORS THAT SEPARATED MEN AND WOMEN

Both sexes basically did the same kind of work. They side by side plowed the fields, and harvested the crops. They both fed the animals and milked the cows. Some things did separate the men from the women.

Women dipped snuff. Men did the smoking. It was less than masculine for a man to dip. It was really less than feminine for a woman to smoke. The character of a woman who smoked was questioned. Her behavior placed her in the category of a streetwalker. If a woman smoked, she had to slip down behind the barn to puff on a cigarette. The secret must not be shared.

Men could either twist their own cigars or twist their own tobacco "twists." Tobacco was twisted into a twist shaped like an eyebolt to be carried in the pocket. Tobacco was grown in gardens for home use. Some farmers grew it for sale. The twist would be taken from the chewer's pocket, dirt and all, for a hugh bite. It might be passed around for other men to take their bites.

If a woman took a chew of tobacco or smoked a cigar, she might as well wear combat boots or pants. She had committed something as bad as adultery and ruined the family's name. By yesterday's judging, she might as well be dressed only in a halter and minnie skirt on Governor's Drive in Huntsville.

In most of the little homes, the front room had the fireplace or the woodburning heater. There were two double beds. All chairs half circled the fireplace or encircled the heater. That scene is created to tell another behavior of the sexes. If all the chairs were used up with more seating space needed, the males might sit on the side of the beds. That was frowned on by the parents. It was considered a public announcement to the visiting unmarried males for a female to sit on the beds. A woman just must not do that if she was to keep her respectability in the neighborhood. Sitting on the beds was a no no for all, but especially for the girls.

No judgment was passed upon men if they drank or gambled. Women must not do either. Men could sit around in the woods drinking their home-brew. It was a no no to bring it into the home. A woman could not even think of drinking. She had to instill in the children that drinking was evil. Drinking and smoking together were really kin to the work of the devil by the standards of the women. Even today, the young males of the 1930's think less of a female who drives by in her car "puffing or sucking on a cigarette." The condition will probably never completely go away. In the minds of these people, character was involved.

Men could go to their retreats in the hills to play poker or other gambling games. Some men, with the funny paper's Snuffy Smith mentality, risked their lives by playing with loaded dice. Women somehow felt a need to teach their children that all cardplaying, including Rook, was somehow sinful.

Men could use ugly words or cuss (curse) words at any whim. Women who cursed or used course language were judged unfavorably. Women just must not use bad words in the presence of youth. Their character would be severely questioned.

Youth were unintentionally taught certain behavior through the body language of the adults. Youth were taught to have fears or at least to keep one's distance from certain people especially those with "harelip." But that is getting ahead of the story. That topic will be covered under prejudice.

MORE ON THE BAPTIZING HOLE

That topic reminded the writer how some boys learned how to "cuss" and learned how to fight. Johnny Cash knew the feeling when he sang his song "A Boy Named Sue." He learned how to cuss and he learned how to fight. Hank Williams later emphasized in this song "A Country Boy Will Survive." Cussing for some at Lim Rock developed into an art form; almost like an instinct. This may have been true when one person recently told the story of such an incident at the baptizing hole at the creek.

In case you missed the story in the first part of this writing, some things will be repeated for the sake of understanding.

The baptizing hole was located south of the Old Stagecoach Road on the creek that originated in Shiffman's Cove. The hole had a huge sycamore tree that overhung the hole. This hole was primarily used by boys for skinny-dipping swimming. It was located on the foottrail from Stephens Gap and Shiffman's Cove. The residents of these coves used the trail to go to Lee Highway or to the railroad on their way to uptown Lim Rock. The walkers would walk the railroad tracks to do business at Lim Rock or to catch the train. Sometimes this field road was used to get to Lee Highway to catch a bus. Sometimes when three or four girls happened by during the skinny-dipping time, the boys might find their clothing 100 yards away in the corn patch. The embarrassed boys might stay put in the deep water for a long time until some bold one would venture out to go find the stashed clothing.

Snakes infested the whole creek area. Most of them were innocent water snakes that would do no harm to anyone. Occasionally there would be a cottonmouth. Most people called all snakes around water cottonmouth. Who cares when you are skinny-dipping chest deep in water and some character has run off with your clothing? The swimmer is scared to death of the perceived danger and petrified of going to look for his clothing. The snake fear may not have been as intense as having a bunch of pranksters taunting him over stolen clothing.

This favorite swimming hole doubled for the baptizing hole that produced some interesting tales that have been told for decades, enriched and enhanced with each telling. These ideas bring us back to the suggested instinct and enriched stories.

The preacher was doing his calling. He had his followers around the pool to observe and support the new converts as they were being baptized. He stood in the middle of the creek in the

waist-deep water to wait for each convert to come to him to receive the honors. One young fellow just stood on the bank looking determined. The minister waited. He waited some more. Then he went to the bank to find out what was the matter. He gently took the arm of the young fellow only to find the muscles tightening.

Some members of the observers thought that the young man had lost his religion. Others thought that he had lost his nerve. Most thought that he was being smart.

The preacher asked softly, "What is the matter?" The boy blurted out with that old instinct, "Don't you see that damn snake?"

All those present then understood the hesitation. But a few of them concluded that perhaps the boy should return to some more church services, and for some more indoctrination before he was ready to receive the high honor.

This story might surpass the story of another storyteller. His story plays on the theme of the Biblical reference of how people climbed the sycamore tree to observe what was happening. The same held true when boys climbed the sycamore tree overhanging the baptizing hole.

The preacher was doing his mission from the deep water of the pool. The occasion was solemn and all the observers were sober and quiet. As the ceremony was at its peak, one of the boys fell out of the tree and hit in the midst of the exercise in the middle of the creek. The preacher and the observers were stunned. Fifty years later this young man's family remembers this hilarious incident and tells it with fervor and added flavor.

COMMENTARY ON OTHER WILD "THANGS"

People adjust. If times are hard they share. At other times they may not be so generous. During the early part of the 1930's, farm animals roamed free. No one hurt them and they knew each one belonged to someone. Each person knew that the animal would, on its own, return home. Today if any animal is seen, including a dog or skunk or anything, many people rush to be the first to call the appointed official; animal control, health department or something else.

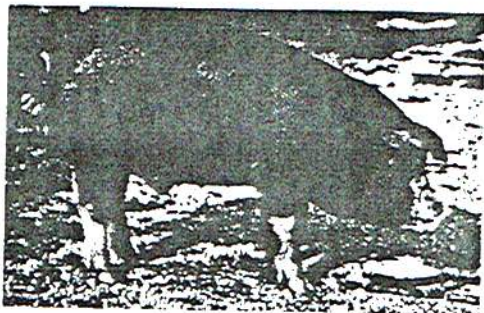
In the 1930's anything that grew wild was considered common property and not solely belonging to anyone. Anyone was free to harvest ginseng or honey or nuts or wild animals. Blackberries grew in pastures and fence rows for anyone to pick. It was understood that those things were necessary for healthy survival.

Ginseng was gathered and sold to companies. Observation indicated that the local men did not need the aphrodisiac. Families were usually large. Companies processed the plant and sold it to the oriental countries where some of their men felt they could use the potion to help them make more war babies.

After a thoroughly saturating rain, explorers along the creek would find many thousands of frogs in masses jumping over the warm bottom soil. The warm rain had brought on the hatching of the eggs. Tadpoles had come out of the water as frogs, seeking shelter on the low banks. It appeared that it had rained frogs. They were there. It has just rained.

The scene also brought on a question of a small butterfly. The same bog that was covered with little bitty frogs was also covered with a little butterfly. The egg hatch was immense and nature was awesome to the curious barefooted boys of the creek.

FIXING HOGS



There were some things around the farm that parents did not want their children to know. Parents did not want their children knowing too much about "maleness" and "femaleness." It was felt that if they did not know certain things they would refrain from doing those things. "Fixing pigs" was one of those things.

When a litter of pigs was born, they were little boys and little girls. It was too suggestive to call them male and female. As the piglets grew they became known as boars and gilts; boars being the males and gilts being the females. The boars were the males with all of their parts. The gilts were the females before they became sows.

After a few weeks, the boars would be ready for surgery. Two or three men in the neighborhood who were known for their surgical skill and knowledge would take the boars down behind the barn, away from the children and women. The surgeon would make sure that neither children nor sows were present. Children might see and learn and get ideas. The sows would, upon hearing the squealing, get excited and attack the men.

The men would select very cold days to do their job. They were afraid if the days were warm that green flies would "blow" the wound. If the flies would "blow" the wound, they would deposit their eggs in the wound. The eggs would hatch into the fly larvae and feed on the pig's wounded part. This problem could indeed kill the pig. Certainly the situation looked ugly to the pig owner. Precautions were taken by selecting cold days. The surgeon needed sharp pocket knives. Coal tar was used to fill the incision.

One man would put the boar between his knees facing the rear of the pig while holding the hind legs. Another man would hold the head to keep the teeth under control. The third man did the operation. This procedure was known as "cutting the pigs." After the cutting was completed, the wound was filled with coal tar. The new creature was turned loose to be known in the future as a "bar." He (it) was set free to roam until its day on another bitter cold day known as "the hog killing."



Sometimes the weather did warm up for a fly hatching. The flies would get to the "bar" to lay their eggs. Within a few days maggots could be seen feeding on the injury. The pig owner would sense real danger of losing his pork. There were very limited medicines to take care of the problem. Turpentine would be used. The pig would be picked up and stood on its head while two or three spoonfuls of the burning medicine would be poured into the infected cavity. The pig would go crazy. When turned loose, it headed to parts unknown. As it ran, it would severely bump its rear end about every other step against the ground. Each bump removed maggots. After many such bumps the pig fled out of sight. Such action saved its life. After it had cooled, it would return much later to the barnyard to rejoin the other animals.

As the pigs grew to young adults they became known as "sholts." A man would admire his neighbor's hogs and compliment them by saying, "I see that you have some nice looking sholts." A young hog is known as a shote or shoat. Some were ready for the smokehouse or pork barrel when the weather got cold enough for a hog killing.

THE HOG KILLING

A nice, trim, lean shote might be selected. Others, especially the castrated ones or as the politically correct speech of the animal control officers, the neutered ones, were fattened for the day. Those who were chosen to be fattened were selected a few weeks in advance and placed in very close quarters to prevent much exercise. The best hog food that the farmer had to offer was fed to these select porkers.

Early on some frosty morning, as cold as the South has to offer, the hog killing began. The men did the killing and the dressing. Women stood by at the house to receive the dressed carcass.

A "singletree" had been secured on a dressing scaffold or in a tree. A singletree was what was used to hitch a horse to a wagon. Hooks were anchored to each end of the singletree. A pulley with a rope was secured above the singletree mount.

One or two people might have scalding vats. Neighbors borrowed these vats. Meat would be shared with the vat owners and with others. The vat was constructed of sheet metal sloping to make for a deep reservoir and for a dry place to work with the carcass.

An ample wood supply had been secured and stocked at the work area. Fires were built early under a wash pot. The fire was kept hot and roaring; the water boiling.

If a 22 rifle was available, one bullet between the eyes did the job. If a gun was unavailable, a single lick with a poleax did the trick.

The carcass was placed in the deep end of the vat for 2-3 minutes until it was scalded. Then it was dragged to the shallow end. Knives were used to scrape off the hair. An occasional dipperful of scalding water would be poured to loosen difficult spots of hair. The job was grueling. The weather and the hands were bitter cold. When cold hands met hot water, it seemed that the fingernails would pop off.

After the hair was removed, a rope was lowered from the pulley to raise the carcass to the singletree. Each back leg had the tendons split and separated and was attached to a hook on the singletree. After this maneuver it was easy to do "the gutting." A sharp knife was inserted into the belly near the back and an incision was made all the way through the ribcage. All of the insides were then lowered into a washtub.

The carcass was then ready for the women crew in the house. They took over for the final carving and preparation for preservation. Some choice parts were placed in certain places. Chunks of fat were rendered into lard with the remains prepared into cracklings for an evening feast on crackling bread.

Very little of the animal was wasted. Lard was used for seasoning of food before the days of the cholesterol alert. Even some of the inside parts like the liver were used. Some people in other places used the intestines to make "chitlins," but not the people of Lim Rock. Others could cook and enjoy their chitterlings but these people gagged and said, "No way!" It was hard times but the times had to get harder for them to consider such a food. As low as the possum was considered as a food supply, it was thought of more highly than food made from pig guts.