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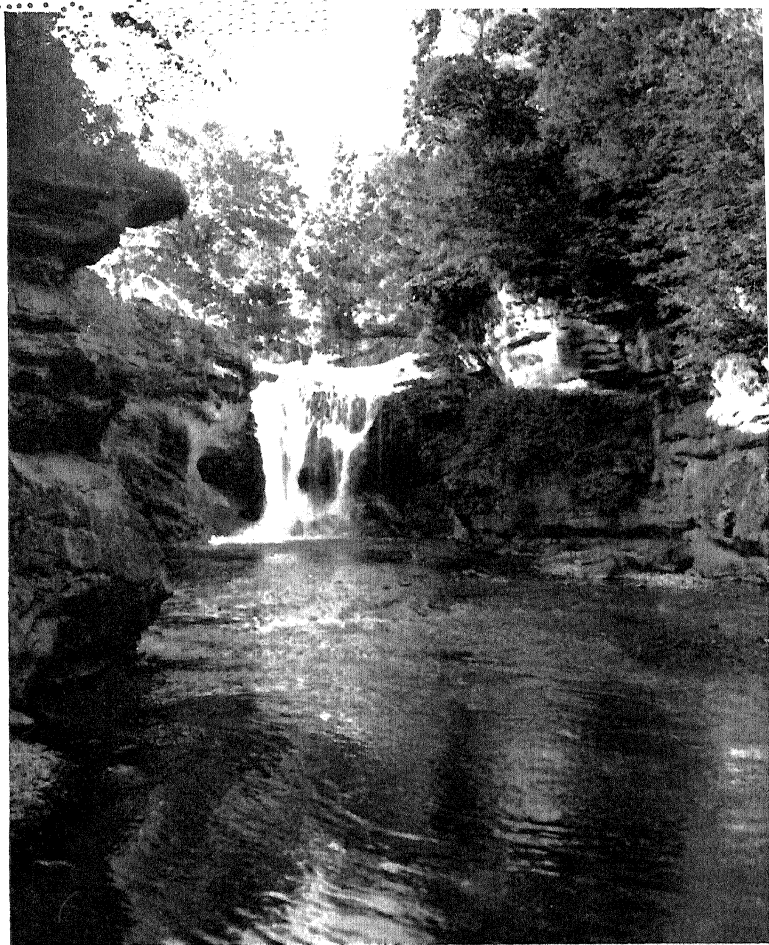
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WATER FALLS



In northern Arkansas many a cascade, like this miniature Niagara, waits for a person who would like to boast that he has a waterfall in his own back yard.

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HURRAH for ARKANSAS!

FROM RAZORBACKS
TO DIAMONDS

By MARGUERITE LYON

ILLUSTRATED

THE BOBBS-MERRILL COMPANY

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First Edition

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Dedicated to

MY FRIENDS,

RUTH WEBB AND VERA BECKER,

WHO KEPT MY HOUSE CLEAN
AND FED MY HUSBAND, CATS
AND DOG, WHILE I WENT
MERRILY ABOUT ARKANSAS
DIGGING UP THE FACTS I
HAVE PUT INTO THIS BOOK.

YHABBU OLUBH YTO ZABHAB ON

I AM INDEBTED to the Arkansas State Publicity Department for all except one of the photographs in this book and especially to Glenn A. (Bud) Green and Dwight Nichols, who took the pictures. I also wish to thank the Cassville & Exeter Railway for their permission to reproduce the picture of "Old 345."

MARGUERITE LYON

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HURRAH FOR ARKANSAS!

Arkansas Travelers

"WHOOOOP! I'm the old original iron-jawed, brass-mounted, copper-bellied corpse-maker from the wilds of Arkansaw! Look at me! I'm the man they call Sudden Death and General Desolation! Sired by a hurricane, dam'd by an earthquake, half-brother to the cholera, nearly related to the small-pox on the mother's side. Look at me! I take nineteen alligators and a bar'l of whiskey for breakfast when I'm in robust health, and a bushel of rattle-snakes and a dead body when I'm ailing. I split the everlasting rocks with my glance, and I squench the thunder when I speak! Whoo-oop! Stand back and give me room according to my strength! Blood's my natural drink, and the wails of the dying are music to my ear! Cast your eye on me, gentlemen! and lay low and hold your breath, for I'm 'bout to turn myself loose!"

These words ran through my mind all one bright warm September morning. I had heard Bud Green say them, with gestures, in a speech not long before, and to the last syllable they had stayed with me. Bud had put a lot of vim and vigor into his speech. He hadn't made up the words. They were lines he had found in one of Mark Twain's popular books, *Life on the Mississippi*, published in Boston in 1883.

In the book the spouter of the words was a drunken bully whom the author called "Arkansaw!"

Bud had felt sad that Mr. Clemens, or Mark Twain, had gone along with so many other writers and artists in making Arkansas the stooge

state of the nation. But when he got to Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, a geologist who came into Arkansas in 1819, Bud got really sore. If Mr. Schoolcraft had seen fit to stick to his minerals, he might have some friends in Arkansas today, said Bud, implying quite clearly that the geologist didn't and hasn't! It was Mr. Schoolcraft who sketched the lazy mountaineer squatter, with hookworm, bare feet, fiddle and jug, sitting before his log shack among his greasy dirty children and his moronic-looking wife, his hound dogs and his filth. He set a standard for Arkansas publicity that has endured far too many years, opined Bud, who was pretty bitter about the whole darned thing. And no one could blame him. Bud was State Publicity Director, and his was no easy job. Every time he tried to get a picture of a bustling Arkansas city or a beautiful, well-tended Arkansas farm into an out-of-state newspaper the editor would just chuckle and ask, "Where's a picture of those mountain boys?"

Mile after mile, on a winding, twisting road, I kept thinking of Bud's speech. What if Bud were just trying to cover up a situation that really did exist! What if Arkansas were as the world believed it to be! It would be just too bad for the Jedge and me. On that sunny September day we were on our way to Arkansas . . . to live!

Eleven months earlier we had driven down into Arkansas on a sight-seeing trip. At sundown, on a blue-and-gold October evening, we had driven over the same road to Eureka Springs. Fold upon fold of hills lay about us, a great tapestry of crimson, copper, gold and emerald, shimmering with damask brilliance in the bright sunlight, veiled with a soft blue chiffonlike haze in the shaded valleys. The beauty of the scene had enthralled us. The next morning we had bought a house overlooking miles of those hills and valleys. We had become Arkansas taxpayers within eighteen hours after we had crossed the state line.

During the months we had needed to find the right people to take over our farm and livestock at Mountain View, Missouri, we had no misgivings. When Jean Krakow and Nell Dill planned to make a dude farm of our former home and call it Ozark Mountain Farm, it seemed that Providence was taking good care of all of us. The girls would

have a beautiful home which could earn a good living for them. They would take care of the beloved cows, horses, dogs, cats, sheep and guinea fowls that went with the place. The Jedge and I, with our three favorite cats and our Boston terrier Judy, would move to our home in Arkansas. It had seemed very fine, until I heard Bud make his speech. I'm one of those who believe that a lot of smoke means inevitably a little fire, and maybe—just maybe—Arkansas was as bad as it had been painted by Mr. Schoolcraft. And here we were, driving toward a life with people like that. I wished I could talk to the Jedge. Perhaps I could urge him to let us turn back before it was too late.

The Jedge, however, was hurtling along the road ahead in his red car, while I followed in my blue one. He refused to listen to my signals, for I have a way of doing back-seat driving for him even when I am in another car. If I see a bad curve beyond, or a car approaching from the side or someone cutting in ahead, I sound my horn just to make sure he is on the alert. For that reason, I can never make him stop unless I drive around him and practically throw my car under his wheels. On this trip my car was too loaded to do any fancy driving. In the back seat I had my Victorian lamp, my camera equipment and my collection of strawberry glass. Beside me was Katie Lichty, a farm neighbor who was going down with me to help straighten up the new home. In the trunk of the car was Toughie, my big striped cat who hadn't got his name for nothing. Toughie wailed protestations from the moment he had been put into a covered basket, and as the hours went on, the wails changed to unmistakable feline cuss words. Perhaps, I worried, Toughie's instinct tells him that we are doing wrong in going into Arkansas! What if he is trying to get me to turn back? I sounded the horn.

Judy looked out the rear window of the Jedge's car, to see what was wrong. But the Jedge looked straight ahead. He seemed to have thrown a fur neckpiece around his shoulders. Maybe he had a stiff neck! But where had he found a fur neckpiece? He had nothing in his car except a flower box, Judy and her bed, and a chicken crate containing two half-grown kittens, Midnight and Prankster.

Putting a slat on the chicken crate had occupied the Jedge's day while the movers were loading our furniture. The Jedge is not what one might call a handy man. If he tries to put up a towel rack in the kitchen he is sure to mash his fingers, lose the screws behind the sink and eventually drop the towel bar and break it. When he started to fix a slat on the chicken crate, I knew what was coming. He had me fetching and carrying nails, hammers, screws, screw drivers, saws and various lengths of boards when I should have carried out the antique cheese cover which was broken in the moving. He had started for Arkansas with the kittens curled up on an old coat in the bottom of the crate, presumably fenced in securely by the newly nailed slat.

I drove closer to investigate the fur piece. Yes, just as I had expected. Prankster was riding along on the Jedge's left shoulder. Midnight was on the right shoulder. I might have guessed that one of them would put an inquisitive paw against the slat and push. It was typical of the Jedge's carpentry efforts that the slat had promptly fallen off and both kittens were free in the car. However, the fact that they had climbed on the Jedge's shoulders and seemed to be looking forward eagerly to their new life in Arkansas was somehow reassuring. The wails in my own car might be caused by Toughie's anxiety to be in Arkansas before suppertime!

I left my worries at the state line.

There before me were the hills, rich with autumn color—and the valleys going to bed under a coverlet of blue chiffon. This was my land, my beloved Arkansas! Let her be the nation's stooge! To me, she would always be the state with everything from razorbacks to diamonds.

If people went barefoot, that was O.K. I, too, would go barefoot. After all, there's nothing quite so cooling on a summer day as getting one's shoes off!

As for all the rest of the publicity of the Schoolcraft brand, I would ignore it! I would just run the wheels off my little blue car getting about the state and finding out about Arkansas for myself.

Now, another autumn has brought the glory of gold and scarlet to

the hills about our home. I hold no resentment against Mr. Clemens' bully, Arkansaw, or even against Mr. Schoolcraft. Shucks! We have to keep a few barefooted people sitting around to make tourists realize they are actually in Arkansas! Otherwise they might credit California with our glorious climate, Colorado with our beautiful scenery, Massachusetts with some of our fine schools, Florida with our delicious fruit and Chicago with our busy main streets. Perhaps the lad with his bare toes hanging out was a lieutenant or captain in the recent war, and before that, a white-collar guy somewhere up north.

Newcomers from other states are flocking in, but somehow, they don't change Arkansas. Instead, Arkansas changes them. They come in with tense frowns on their faces, a hard glitter in their eyes, and they walk so fast they almost run over the dogs taking naps on the sidewalks. We just let them alone for a few days. Then when the Mister has found that he doesn't have to shave every day unless he really wants to, and the Missus has got into something comfortable, we sort of edge up and begin to talk to them. Usually they wind up by buying a "little place out in the hills," just to have for their old age, even when they have come down for a short vacation. Then it's funny to see how quickly they come running back to their place. The lure of our soft caressing sunshine, the blue of Arkansas skies, the clean, pine-scented air from the hills exert a mighty big pull on a fellow's heartstrings when he goes back to the city after an Arkansas vacation.

Then, most of all, one remembers the friendliness of soft-spoken folk who are never in a hurry. The salesgirl in the store, who smilingly says: "Hurry back, now!" to the tourist who has dropped in to buy a post card. The farmer who will stop plowing to give you directions to the next town, and probably take you to his house to see his cured meat. The housewife who will show you her cellar, packed with canned vegetables, which she planted, hoed, harvested and canned with her own two hands, and wild blackberries which she picked dew-wet, braving chiggers, snakes and briers, and who will wind up by loading your car with jars of those same vegetables and berries. The woman

who comes to do your cleaning, bringing an armload of flowers from her garden, or a vine carefully potted in a tin coffee can. These are the Arkansans whom Mr. Schoolcraft never met. Poor Mr. Schoolcraft!

II.....

Our Town, a Bit of Switzerland

.....

EVEN though the Jedge and I had no part in founding or naming the town of Eureka Springs, we can't repress a smug little grin when tourists exclaim: "This unique town! Why, it's just like Switzerland!"

After all, we discovered it for ourselves, about seventy-five years after Colonel C. Bertram Saunders had discovered this valley of springs for Arkansas! Today Eureka Springs is a town of perhaps 5,000 people, who live in houses that perch on mountainsides, peer down from mountaintops or snuggle in narrow valleys with a slab of concrete leading from the front door across a leaping, foaming mountain stream to the highway. It is not at all unusual to have a dinner party cut short because a sudden, sharp rainfall comes up just as dessert is being served. At such times the guests fairly fling themselves out of the house and into their cars in a frantic effort to reach home before the "branch" rises and shuts them off from house, children and baby sitter for twenty-four hours.

A house that looks like a tiny cottage in front will prove to be four stories deep in back, as it fits against the mountain on which it was built. The house that looks tall in front may back up to a cave in the mountain. In fact, many houses and business places have caves in which meat and vegetables are kept at an unvarying cool temperature the year around.

We have 267 streets in our town, but not a crossing. The streets wind about the mountains, sometimes merging, but never making a

direct cross. Some of them are almost vertical, which is terrifying to people from Iowa and Kansas at first, but they soon learn to park their cars with the wheels turned toward the curb. Not more than once a month does a car get loose and run down a mountain under its own power. A few of our tourist courts are located on the ridges and often people from the plains drive in and leave their cars there, preferring to take to the hills on foot. Most tourists, however, like the sense of adventure that comes with sweeping down mountains at a roller-coaster, devil-may-care speed.

One popular resort spot can provide a whole vacation, making it unnecessary for a timid motorist to turn a wheel until it is time to leave. This is Lake Lucerne, operated by Richard R. Thompson. The spring-fed lake, set like a gem in the hills, is fine for swimming and boating, and one has a choice of hotel or cottage accommodations. A golf course and evening bingo game in the dining room provide excitement. If you think golf can't be exciting, you haven't seen this course. Mother Nature built the hazards on this one and as a golf course architect she has no equal!

In the valley and along the mountainsides, within the city limits, sixty-three springs come bubbling out of the earth. Even the town waterworks is supplied by a spring-fed pool high in the hills. The water of the springs is said to have qualities that help people on to health and presumable happiness, but I think it is enough to say it is the best drinking water I have ever tasted anywhere. However, the reputed remedial qualities of Eureka Springs water were actually responsible for the founding of the town.

In 1879 Dr. Jackson, who lived in the hills near Berryville, crossed the ridge to the valley which is Eureka Springs' main street now, and found a great spring of amazing coolness and clarity. All about the spring were signs left by Indians who had undoubtedly enjoyed its water and pleasant surroundings. The good doctor took a jugful of water home with him and tried it on the eyes, injuries and unhealed wounds of his patients. Probably any good sterilized water would have had the same results, but the doctor got the idea that the spring

water had healing qualities. A few weeks later, when he learned that young Bertram Saunders and his father were preparing for a hunting trip, he persuaded them to cross the ridge to the valley with the great spring that came out of a basin in the rocks.

I have heard this story many times from Colonel Saunders, who is now well past eighty. On the hunting trip the doctor rode his horse, with a jug tied to the saddle horn, and the Saunders men rode in a buggy drawn by a team of horses. At the top of the ridge they left the buggy, mounted the horses and rode with the doctor down into the valley. On their first night in the valley, they killed a deer.

The spring in the basin of rock was as clear and cool as the doctor had said, and for weeks after he had ridden away with another jug of spring water tied to the saddle horn, the Saunders men stayed on. Hunting was profitable and they cooked their meals and slept beside the spring. When it was time for them to go home, they were reluctant to leave so pleasant a spot. At last they decided that instead of going home, they would bring young Bertram's mother to the camp. The younger Saunders rode to the top of the ridge, leading the second horse. There he hitched the team to the buggy and drove home to Berryville for his mother. When they returned, Mrs. Saunders rode one of the horses down into the valley. They built a crude log cabin and there the Saunders family stayed for several weeks, enjoying the water and scenery and wild game. In the meantime, the elder Saunders often bathed an unhealed spot on one leg where he had been injured by a pitchfork. Before the camping trip ended, his wound was completely healed. Word of that spread like wildfire through the hills after the Saunders family returned home.

The spring beyond the ridge then became a mecca for everyone. Thousands of people crowded into the valley within the next few years, bringing the sick, the lame and the blind to the healing waters of the spring. At last 10,000 people were living in tents, crude shacks and covered wagons in that valley—and still the settlement had no name.

One evening the question of a name came up, and it was decided

to settle the matter then and there. In honor of Dr. Jackson, the name "Jackson Springs" was suggested. Then someone else said it should be named "Saunders Springs." Young Bert Saunders, who was sitting beside the spring, gave the matter deep thought. He remembered tales of the search for the Fountain of Youth. Here indeed was a veritable fountain of health for all who cared to come to it. We have found it, he whispered to himself. The old poem "Eureka" came to mind. Eureka! We have found it!

"Let's name the town 'Eureka Springs,'" he shouted.

And so it was named!

To this day the spring is said to be beneficial to people suffering from sore eyes or stomach trouble. I wouldn't know. My eyes are quite all right. And as for my stomach, the only trouble I have with it is keeping it filled! For the spring, however, I have the most sincere devotion. It stands in the center of a beautiful little park that is the outdoor living room of Eureka Springs. A band shell provides a place for programs, community sings and outdoor Easter services. Beside the park is an eight-story hotel, The Basin Park, owned by my good friend and fellow hill-tramper, Joe Parkhill. The hotel has frequently been mentioned by Ripley in his Believe-It-or-Not series, for each floor is a ground floor. It is built against the mountainside, and the guests on any floor can step out the back door of the corridor and walk their dogs on the mountain. If you wish to attend a party on the roof garden, you can park your car at the top of the mountain and walk down to the roof.

Another delightful hotel stands near our house. It is the Crescent Hotel, built back in the days when Eureka Springs was so popular a vacation spot that special trains ran into the town to bring the crowds. When the hotel was reopened, the new owners and the manager, Dwight Nichols, restored not only the gracious rooms with their balconies looking out over hills and valleys, but the old-time excellence of the hot biscuits and fried chicken for which the hotel was famous.

From the terrace that runs to the Crescent's swimming pool one

looks down on the steeple of beautiful little St. Elizabeth's Catholic Church. This church, too, has a story.

Back when the Crescent was in its heyday, Richard C. Kerens made his home in one of its luxurious apartments. One day Mr. Kerens started on a trip to Washington. His mother who had been caring for him during a slight illness stepped out on the "Shoo Fly" walk to wave good-by to him. At the bend of the road on the mountainside he turned in his cab to look back at her. That was the last time he saw her alive. His return from Washington was delayed by further illness, and at last he had word that his mother, who had returned to her home in Fort Smith, had suffered a stroke and passed on. He decided to build a church to her memory at the very spot from which he had waved that last good-by. A church on the sharply sloping hillside required real architectural genius. The congregation walks in at the steeple, then follows a winding path down a steep slope to enter the auditorium.

Many homes are built on slopes just as steep, and this architectural jumbling gives rise to many quaint tales. At her club one day, a woman spoke casually of looking up her chimney and seeing her cows come home. It is a matter of legal record that the first lawsuit in the town was filed by a woman who was angry at her neighbors. It seems they had thrown their dishwater down the chimney of her home. The chimney was hot, and it was "plumb ruined" by that dishwater. She sued for damages.

Perhaps the oddness of this little town in the hills of Arkansas has brought about the friendliness and consideration one finds among Eureka Springs citizens. When one is climbing a hill, it is nice to stop and chat awhile with someone who keeps a comfortable chair on a front porch. Hustle and bustle are almost completely eliminated by the steepness of the hills. We have time to talk to strangers and to ask about one another's health. Minor irritations that might cause downright annoyance in the city are taken more lightly where trees and sky meet at the tops of great hills.

Sometimes newcomers need a little time to grasp this fact, but

eventually they do. For instance, when we moved into our new house we found one of the screen doors sagging very badly. A carpenter was called in to straighten the door. With upstairs jobs to be done, I didn't stay to watch the work. Later when I went down, I found the carpenter had gone, but the door to all appearances, listed the same way. As I stood looking at it, one of our cats flattened his graceful body and eased his way into the house under the sagging screen.

That settled things!

The next time I saw the carpenter, I sputtered my protest! "The door still sags so much that my cats can crawl under it," I fumed.

The carpenter said gently and unhurriedly: "I reckon you'll just have to get bigger cats!"

III.....

Ozark Railway, with 2½-Man Crew

You won't find many engineers who will promise to hold a train for you when you phone the night before your trip that you may be a bit late getting to the depot. But then few engineers run the only train on their railroad, as Bert Anderson does. It simplifies matters in many ways. For instance, when Bert had to get out and help his fireman and the student brakeman mend the track, there was no fussy business of racing up and down to flag oncoming trains. They just stopped Old 345 on the track, got down and rummaged through a toolbox, brought out picks and mauls, and walked leisurely to the broken rail. There they mended it with a couple of brackets quicker than one of these high-flying modern engines can whistle at a crossing.

You see, the one-train railway on which Mr. Anderson pilots an engine is the Cassville & Exeter, probably the shortest full-gauge railroad in existence. It runs just four and eight-tenths miles on the Ozark Plateau. Did I say runs? That was a slight exaggeration, since it took exactly one hour and twenty minutes to make the less-than-five-miles trip from Cassville to Exeter, one way!

We didn't have to hold Mr. Anderson to his promise to wait for the Jedge and me. We were up before dawn to get a real railroadman's breakfast under our overall belts before setting out to drive the twenty-five miles to Cassville. The Jedge used to be a brakeman on the Green Bay & Western Railroad and the thought of getting back on a freight train was like the smell of powder to an old war house. He kept talking

about the good old days when he walked the tops of boxcars with a Wisconsin north wind whistling about his ears. He seemed a little regretful when the Arkansas sun came up bright and warm. He'd been hoping for a blizzard, I'm sure.

We found the engine steaming away in the switchyard—or rather I found it there. The Great Railroader had to stop at a convenient restaurant for a final cup of coffee before he went on the job. At close range the engine looked sort of pony-size. Instinctively I wanted to pat its nose. It had had a long life. The thick wooden planks that made up the cab were scarred and splintered, and smoke had turned them a rich, deep black like old Chinese tables. Mr. Anderson, who looked as stout and hearty as an engineer should look, introduced me to the crew: Cecil Hodge, the fireman and brakeman, and Jack Bundy, aged seventeen, the student brakeman. Since the train had neither coach nor caboose, I climbed into the engine and sat on the fireman's seat at the left. It was made for a long-legged fireman but I could clutch the window ledge. Mr. Anderson let me pull the cord that range the bell, and I felt very superior to the motorists who had to stop and let us clang across the highway. I leaned out the window and looked back at the coal car and two empty oil tanks as though their safety depended upon my efforts.

At the little depot beyond the highway we picked up the Jedge, who rode on an outside corner of the coal car, and other preparations for the trip were made. A lever was pulled to fill the water tank and Cece fired up. He would scoop up a shovelful of coal, put his foot on a lever that promptly split the firebox door down the middle, disclosing a true fiery furnace, and then he would swing the coal inside. It made a nice rhythm. Scoop! Stomp! Swing! Scoop! Stomp! Swing! A jigger with numbers indicated the rise of the steam pressure. The crew kept eying it until Old 345 puffed and wheezed, dripping moisture here and there like a fat girl at a square dance. When the pressure climbed above 100, Jack swung aboard, the Jedge clutched a handy corner—and we were off!

We wound through the outskirts of town, so close to little houses

we could see breakfast dishes standing on kitchen tables. A flock of white chickens fluttered across the railroad under the nose of Old 345, squawking at this intrusion of their private runway. I rang the bell vigorously at the final street crossing and then we were out of town, moving slowly up a narrow valley. As we neared a low trestle Bert gave a sigh and stopped the train.

"Here's that broken rail," he said. The entire crew dismounted and went to work. The Jedge gave me the technical name of the repair job, and I listened with interest until I realized that we two were alone in a snorting, puffing engine. "What if this thing begins to back up?" I asked. "Do you know enough about railroading to stop it?" Loftily the Jedge explained that he would just grab the throttle and do this or that, but I got down off my high seat. I was prepared to jump if the engine budged.

At last the rail was properly bracketed, and Old 345 seemed to tiptoe across it. Everybody breathed easier and we settled down for the trip. It was wonderful to move so slowly. When a covey of quail whirred across the track only to settle down and watch us pass, I could see their bright eyes and the beauty of their feathers. I could see, too, the fluffiness of the tail of a rabbit that scurried off the track and crouched beneath a bush a few feet from the rails. When a flock of birds drinking at a small pond arose and flew to a near-by tree, I could see the spread of their wings. The texture of the earth turned over by two men plowing in a field looked like the breaks in freshly dipped chocolate ice cream. At a field of alfalfa I could see where the sower had turned his team and drill at the end of the field; the green rows made wide swirls against the brown earth like a beautifully patterned rug. The leaves in the sheltered valley had not lost their bright color, and the slow tempo of our passing through a panorama of gold and scarlet seemed to have a dignity I had never noticed in a swanky car. I found myself holding my chin high, as though I might be wearing a crown instead of a bandanna on my head. Then suddenly we came to a deep cove where trees were festooned with long sprays of bitter-sweet, bright with scarlet-orange berries. I stopped my mental play-

acting and shrieked with longing. "We'll stop and get you some when we come back," promised Cece.

The way grew more steeply upgrade and Cece began shoveling in dead earnest. Each shovelful of coal made just that much more black smoke billow back into the cab. "Fightin' a head wind," quipped Bert. "Slows us down!" As we inched up the grade, an overalled farmer swung up on the engine, rode a short distance, chatting with the crew and the Jedge, then swung down again. Just taking the train over to a neighbor's! A little later we passed another man walking along the road. Bert leaned out of the cab and called, "Get that lard you was lookin' for?"

The man's answer came clearly: "Yupp! Got some yestiddy. Much obliged!"

Bert turned to me and explained: "Poor fellow. Plumb out of lard the other day. Havin' to use butter. Store's got some in now, and I thought I'd bring him some."

Cece went through his routine of scoop, stomp and swing. More smoke billowed over us. Cece leaned on the shovel and asked: "Did you know this railway is mentioned in the Bible? It is! There where it says 'and all creeping things.'"

We paused at Exeter only long enough to leave our two empties and hitch two freight cars, one filled with corn, the other with coal, to the nose of our engine. "Downgrade all the way, so we back down!" explained Bert. Cece flung his shovel into the coal car, Jack climbed on top of the corn car, the Jedge took a new hold on another corner. Bert released the air brakes a bit; they hissed softly, and Old 345 began to coast backward. We went back down the valley with just about the same speed we had made coming up. At intervals during which I could count to six, Bert would release the hissing brakes. When we came to the cove with the bittersweet, both Bert and Cece remembered the promise to stop. Bert fussed with the air brakes until the engine was brought to a full stop at the exact spot where the berries were brightest and thickest. Jack put an old fence post under the rear wheels. We all climbed out and an armload of bittersweet was cut

for me. When we reached the field where the men were plowing, we saw one of them holding a rabbit that the dog had obviously just caught. The Jedge leaned from his private coal car and shouted, "I'll give you two bits for that rabbit."

"It's yours!" yelled the farmer.

Again Bert obligingly brought the train to a stop. The Jedge climbed down, got his rabbit, paid his quarter and brought the rabbit back to the coal car where he put it on his private corner. Supper had been achieved!

"Now," said the Jedge, "I'm going to get up on top of this boxcar with Jack!" He swung up the ladder on the side of the car and stood on the roof, silhouetted against the bright sky. I clutched the window ledge and the train started up. The Jedge hastily sat down. Perhaps the tracks were smoother on the GB & W. He didn't try to walk, and after a while he began to make bad-order signals indicating that the top of the car was hard and bumpy. But he was still gamely atop when we reached the mended rail and then the siding above the depot. There he dismounted and watched from the side lines when the two boxcars were shunted to the sidetracks by means of a long wire cable and stout hooks. I rode the engine until we reached the depot, wondering if Casey Jones might have been kin to me.

Bert and Old 345 have been working together thirty-seven of the fifty years the Cassville & Exeter Railway has been in existence. At first the railway was owned by two Cassville men. Now their widows run it, with Mrs. Ida Dingler as president and Mrs. B. C. Ault as secretary. Mrs. Dingler's son, Ray, is vice-president. His wife, Lona, is general agent, handling weigh bills, express and all the technicalities common to a railway with hundreds of trains. We had a nice visit with her while the Jedge rested on a cushioned chair in the little depot office. Ray was not around. He was up in Missouri, said Lona, looking for fifty-six-pound steel with which to repair the track, and making a bid on a new engine. Old 345 is about due for the retirement list.

The Jedge, too, is willing to admit that his railroading days are over.

IV.....

Ozark Plateau—Sweet Broilerland

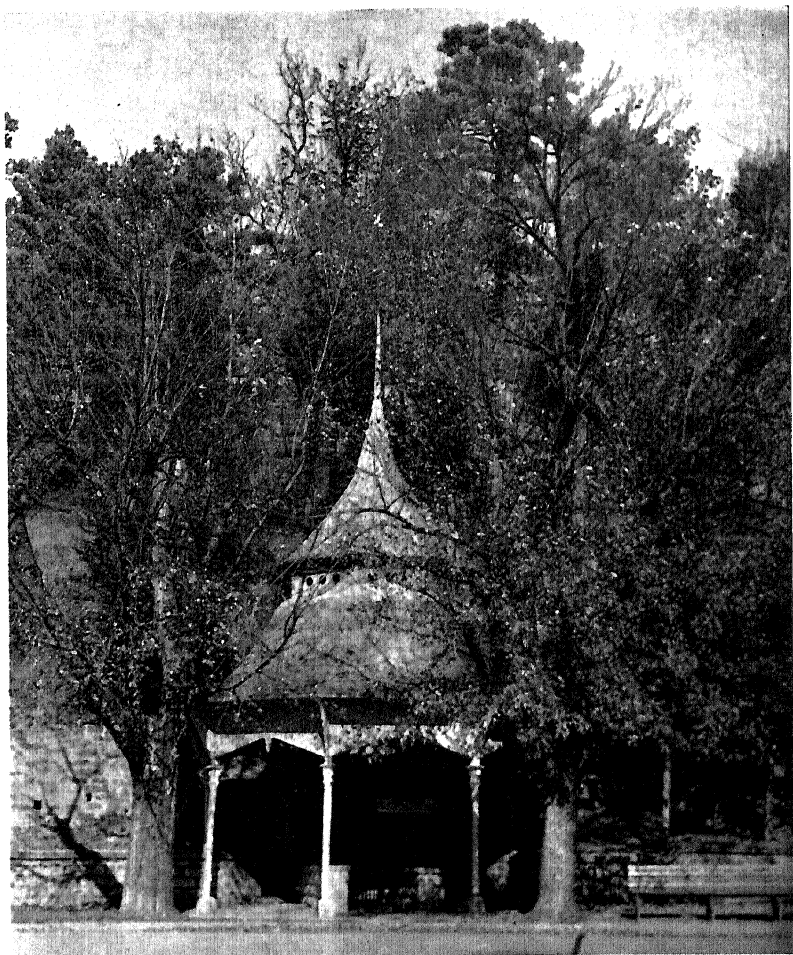
IF ALL the people who have nursed the plan of retiring to a farm and making a fortune raising chickens were placed end to end, it would be a good idea. Chicken raising and prospecting for gold are two gambles which the Jedge and I long cherished. We finally tried to make nice big profitable broilers out of anaemic little chicks with mayhem tendencies, and if we hadn't been blessed with good neighbors, I might have beaten the author of *The Egg and I* to the draw. With that out of our system, we decided the gold prospecting could wait for our reincarnation. I had hoped that people at large had stopped thinking of chicken raising along about the time prosperity turned its famous corner. But such is not the case. Down here in the Ozark Mountains, it remains one of the big ideas. And what is more, it pays—if you do it the Benton County way.

In Benton County, chicken is king, and the entire community is geared to help you make a success of your effort. Chicken feed is brought in by the carload, and practically everyone in the whole community is able and willing to give you advice, whether or not you are willing to take it.

Almost every farm has its poultry house. In fact, raising 3,000 to 5,000 broilers is regarded as part of the farm work. I have often heard women at club meetings relate their duties and, after telling about cooking, washing, ironing, fixing the children's lunches, etc., add, "Oh, yes, we have 10,000 broilers, and of course I help with them." A man and his wife who have modern equipment and good buildings



Eureka Springs' 267 streets wind about the mountains on which the town is perched but never cross! In background: Basin Park Hotel, where a catwalk connects each of the 8 floors with the mountainside.



A steeply roofed shelter built against the mountainside protects Crescent Spring, one of the 63 springs within the city limits of Eureka Springs.

and are not allergic to work can handle 15,000 broilers with excellent success. Travel through Benton County and you see chicken houses on every hand—proof that many couples, native Ozarkians as well as newcomers, are taking this work seriously.

When one speaks of broilers in Benton County, one means chickens at least fifteen weeks old and weighing from four to four and a half pounds. Since Red New Hampshires are the favored breed, it means quite a hunk of chicken. Spindling broilers often seen elsewhere, it was explained to me, are less profitable for the raiser. Actually, the big cost and threat of disease occur before the chicken has reached twelve weeks. The grower who holds onto his chicks just a trifle longer, say three weeks, gets a greater percentage of profit for the extra pounds.

This was one of the tips straight from the chicken's bill that I obtained by visiting the biggest ranch of them all, Willhill, operated by Vick Will. From his ranch of 320 wooded acres, three batches of 56,000 New Hampshire broilers each are shipped every year. He raises also 11,000 turkeys, kept at some distance from the chickens, since chickens and turkeys do not thrive in one another's society. At the time of my visit 2,200 New Hampshire hens and roosters, their blood tested at intervals by state inspectors, were in the laying house. Their care, added to that of the broilers, was too much for the ranch to manage, and this has since been abandoned.

Don Hoyt, then secretary of the Rogers Chamber of Commerce, took me to the ranch. He had prepared me for the sight of thousands of chickens walking around on valuable drumsticks. Anyone who lives in north Arkansas knows about the chickens in Benton County, just as they know about fish in White River. But no one had told me what a queer place Mr. Will had picked out for his famous ranch. It is in the hills—and I'm not foolin'! You go out Route 12 from Rogers, winding among steep, wooded hills and valleys until you come to a gate that leads into what might truthfully be called "the interior." The welcome mat isn't exactly spread out for you. If you are brazen enough to make the trip, look out for the hill after you cross the

gully. Take it in low gear and try not to think what the sharp rocks are doing to your tires.

At the ridge you discover the ranch is a sort of horseshoe affair, with abruptly descending hills veering sharply downward from many well-painted buildings set at wide intervals. There goes the long-cherished idea that chicken houses should be in the valley, with the sun shining in at south windows for winter warmth! Here in the Ozarks the chickens can keep warm under their own steam, so to speak, in the winter. But summer heat is the problem. If the sun beat down on those houses containing the feathered beauties they would be uncomfortably warm. For that reason the houses are built on the ridge, where they get the benefit of mountain breezes.

Furthermore, the trees of this heavily wooded section are allowed to tower above the buildings and shade the runs. Another unexpected reason why this horseshoe ridge was chosen is the air drainage. Both in summer and winter, currents of air sweep up and over the hills, swishing away germs and impure air that might hover for days in a valley. Of course water drainage is also important, and for this the horseshoe-shaped ridge rates high. Each rain pours down the hills from the buildings, washing off impurities that might cause infection.

The land cost \$3.50 an acre two years ago, making the total cost for the 320 acres just \$1,120. But don't let the original cost fool you into becoming a chicken rancher before you have figured out all the angles. It isn't the original cost, but the upkeep, that will get you if you don't watch out.

At Willhill Ranch buildings 250 feet long and 20 feet wide were constructed to hold 6,000 chickens, with crosswise partition to break that number into smaller groups. The buildings had ventilating spaces at the rear, and wide openings covered with feed sacks at the front. Chimneys for brooders, made of three sections of six-inch tile, were set into concrete, non-leaking bases on the roofs and each was tipped with a metal shield. Each building faced into a run about seventy-five feet deep, and there in the shade of tall oak, hickory, gum and maple trees, the chickens spent their days, shifting from sunshine

to shade, eating and drinking at will. They were tame and gentle. They came to the fence to peer at visitors like friendly youngsters. I gathered that it was a crime to sound a horn or make a loud outcry on the ridge. Chickens are temperamental and must not be upset by loud noises. At marketing time trucks come for them at night and load them noiselessly.

Formerly, the layers in houses at the bottom of the hill supplied the eggs which hatched into baby chicks. Now the eggs come from pedigreed hens controlled by the ranch or known to be of high quality. When the baby chicks arrive at the ranch, they are put directly into the house where they will live through all their growing period. Each house, of course, has just sent a batch of broilers out into the world. Before the new babies come in, it is cleaned as thoroughly as disinfectants can clean it. Two inches of peat moss and commercial litter are spread on the floor, and covered with newspapers. When the chicks are a few days old, the newspapers are removed, but the litter remains unchanged during the fifteen-week period. Since it is kept bone-dry, there is no danger of it carrying infection.

In place of a mother hen, the baby chicks have a coal-stove brooder for a period of five to six weeks, depending on the weather. At no time do they sit on perches. That might develop crooked breastbones in the young chickens and reduce their market price. Both chicken houses and runs are equipped with automatic waterers. When a chicken takes a drink, more water runs in, fresh and clean. Willhill is blessed with a great spring, from which water is piped up the hill to a cistern and then to all the buildings, including the eight tenant houses.

A cafeteria feeding plan is provided for the chicks. They have three choices: corn, oats and a mixed feed, which are kept before them all the time. Chickens are not so dumb as a certain author would have you believe. On a hot day they eat a lot of oats. On a cold day they eat corn.

When one of the twenty workmen at Willhill goes into a building he wears rubbers and dunks his feet in a pan of disinfectant, so germs

cannot be carried into one building from another, or from infected ground. Trucks driven into a run to load a batch of broilers must have their tires sprayed. As another precaution, older chicks are never allowed near younger chicks, for the older brother may be holding his own with some disease that might carry off the weaker baby. With this continuous care, the anticipated mortality, which is six to seven percent, is kept away down. In fact, in one set of buildings it was held to the all-time low of two and six-tenths percent.

If you are wondering why chickens are not raised in batteries here, as in the city, let Benton County answer. Because of the lack of processing plants in this region, chickens have been shipped out of Rogers "on foot" for many years. That is, they stand in coops which are loaded on trucks and driven to the cities. Battery chickens would not have enough strength in their legs to permit them to stand all the way to Chicago. Chickens raised under normal outdoor conditions, with plenty of sunshine, fresh air and exercise, can be shipped almost everywhere.

However, this type of shipping is rapidly becoming obsolete, for great processing plants are now being established in Benton County by famous packers. Battery chicks may be the next step. But why skimp on space when land is still relatively inexpensive?

Unfortunately I cannot promise that you will still find land extremely cheap in Benton County. Seems that a lot of people have found out what a delightful country this is, and they are coming down in flocks. Naturally that does things to the price of land. But, let me assure you, many wooded hills are still lying around waiting to be purchased at a price far below what you would pay almost anywhere else. And you have the advantage of neighbors who are raising chickens, too, so you can talk shop morning, noon and night—and maybe from such talk you can get the good advice you need.

The Arkansas Traveler who talks with people in Benton may learn that, although thousands have tried to find it and failed, there is still money in drumsticks and wishbones.

The Willhill people sum up the difference between success and

failure in chicken raising in just one word: carelessness! They mean the sort of carelessness that lets dirt and filth take over the chicken house. Lack of experience can be licked. In fact, when they hire workmen the Willhill people prefer employees who have never raised a chicken. They have no cut-and-dried ideas to be unlearned. But just let a workman forget to dunk his shoes in disinfectant, or obey any of the other rules that would seem silly to the average Arkansas farmer—and *wham*, there's another chap fired . . . even if help is scarce!

With your own flock you must be just as careful.

Oh, yes, it takes a little money, too! Willhill has found that the original investment for building and equipment runs about ninety cents per bird. And the cost of buying, feeding and caring for the chicken from its fluffy babyhood to upstanding, red-combed adulthood runs from eighty-five to ninety cents per bird.

Now get out the old lead pencil and start figuring.

While I was seeing the Willhill chicks in their fumigated, sterilized houses, a butterscotch-colored car came swiftly over the hilltop. I'm still wondering about its speed, for I had reached the limit to which I am willing to push my little blue car. I had ruined one tire, and I was in no mood to de-rubberize another. When we reached the ridge, says I, we'll do the rest of this on foot! That is how Don Hoyt and I happened to be on foot, like the chickens. When the car came over the rise, we could see a handsome, well-dressed man in it—not the chicken thief whom I had already shot three times—mentally, of course! Indeed, chicken thieves might be handsome and well dressed, but theirs would seem a messy job attractive only to the lower stratum.

Don recognized the drives as Mr. Glen Will, brother of Vick Will. Glen has a home in California but spends his summers in the Ozarks. He greeted us cordially, and when Don introduced me, I was surprised no end to learn that he had read a book or two of mine.

"Imagine," he said, "meeting Marge Lyon in a chicken house!"

He might have said "in my chicken house," for he is associated in his brother's ranch. After we had finished a tour, in his butterscotch car, of the broiler houses, wells and ranch homes of the employees,

he insisted that we come home with him for supper. "Jean would never forgive me if you were this close, and I didn't bring you to meet her," he said. I gathered that Jean was his wife, and a nice girl—hadn't she read my books!—but the thought of barging in on her was not too pleasant for me, and what would it do to her?

However, we went. I rode in the butterscotch car with Mr. Will and Don trailed behind in my car. Uphill and downhill, through War Eagle River, skirting deep valleys we drove, and finally we arrived at the Wills' home.

There is a house that could serve as a model for all the country places in Arkansas. It is a long, low building, with the center given over to a living room that has doors on both sides. The entrance doors in front open on a terrace; the back doors open on another that lies above the river. Step off it and you would drop a couple of hundred feet into water. An outdoor fireplace, chairs, tables and a radio make the rear terrace a complete living room. Guests were arriving that evening and supper would be served here. We *must* stay!

That was Jean for you! Of course we stayed. I had never had the opportunity of stepping into a picture-book house before. It was like walking right into the pages of *House and Garden* or *Sunset*.

The guests proved as delightful as the Wills, and our party was very gay. Jean brought out fried chicken, baked lima beans and other hot food in deep earthen dishes that hold heat for outdoor eating. Bowls of salad and sliced cantaloupe furnished a cool touch. We were soon lined up with plates in hand ready to do justice to such a repast.

Probably because I had the hungriest look in my eyes, I was put at the head of the line, and by the time I had my plate filled, those crocks and bowls were considerably less than full! At the end of the table I turned to speak to Don, who was just back of me, and suddenly I realized that the heels of my darned flat shoes had slipped over the edge of the terrace. . . . Which edge?

In terror of falling, I grabbed at thin air with one hand, clutched my plate with the other and tried desperately to get my balance. But nothing helped. I went over backward, describing a wide arc with my

plate. Baked beans, fried chicken and salad scattered all over the beautiful terrace. I was certain that I was about to plunge into the river two hundred feet below. I know now that people's entire lives do not flash through their minds at the instant they face sudden death. I know they do not shout, "Say good-by to Mother!" or do anything dramatic. My one and only thought was to save the golden-brown quarter of a Willhill fried chicken.

The Wills are my good friends now, and I have often returned to their beautiful house on the river's edge. Always I step very carefully over the five-inch drop in the terrace at the end of the buffet table.

Rogers, Bentonville and Springdale are the Big Three of northwestern Arkansas in a business sense. They are in plateau country that differs sharply from the mountains just north of them, and have little time for the tourists who flock to the hills.

Bentonville and Rogers have been rivals ever since the railroad—the St. Louis, Arkansas & Texas—came through. Or perhaps that is hardly the way to express it, since Rogers didn't exist at that time. Bentonville was sitting pretty as the seat of Benton County—both town and county had been named for Thomas Hart Benton—when the railroad line was laid out. A meeting in St. Louis was scheduled for all the towns that wanted the railroad, and Bentonville, as a matter of course, sent representatives. When they went up to St. Louis, they took along \$40,000 that had been raised in the community. It was to be handed to the railroad as a good-will offering, just to make it easier, you understand, for big locomotives to come steaming into the little country town.

It seemed very simple. In fact, it seemed too simple! On the night before the meeting the representatives put their heads together over some of St. Louis' finest brew, so the story goes, and decided that the dang railroad was bound to come through Bentonville anyhow. Next morning, with judgment a bit clouded, and the urge to hang onto Bentonville's money till death firmly established in their minds, they went to the meeting. My informer was not present, so I have no

means of knowing just what was said or done, but the general idea is that the representatives sat tight with a pocketful of community money and let it be known that not a cent would be forthcoming for the railroad. Two of the surveyors who had laid out the line were on hand. Quickly they grasped the notion that the railway need not go through Bentonville. They left the meeting, got on their horses and rode pell-mell into the blue beyond!

When the railroad came along, it missed Bentonville by five miles. And strange as it may seem, two young surveyors owned all the land at the point on the line where a town would logically be built, and in a short time, the new town, Rogers, was born!

In those days a five-mile stretch between town and depot was like living in Chicago and catching a train in Milwaukee. Now, of course, it is nothing at all. It is like a main street, with clusters of stores and pleasant houses at each end. This five-mile distance has, however, made a great difference in the towns of Bentonville and Rogers. Bentonville is the South, a gracious, lovely, traditional Nashville. Rogers is the North, a bustling little Chicago. It is difficult to park in Rogers, a druggist was rude to me there, and the Harris Hotel is the finest in all northern Arkansas. So I always get a feeling of being back in Chicago when I am in Rogers. When I stay overnight in the region, I always go to Bentonville. Now that industries are coming to Bentonville, I hope it will not grow Northern! I'll settle for the New South! The old kindness and hospitality, plus pay rolls!

The hotel at which I stay figured in the Battle of Pea Ridge, which was fought a few miles north of Rogers. Franz Sigel was in command of a Federal artillery unit at Bentonville. Confederate General Earl Van Dorn attacked on March 7, 1862. The Federal officer had just sat down to breakfast in the hotel with members of his staff, when the boys in gray uniforms came up. Sigel retreated toward Pea Ridge, where the main Federal force was posted, and the roadway, so they tell me, was littered with dead and dying. The artillery unit and the Confederate troops fought all the way. At Bentonville old-timers will point out the path by which the Southerners approached, and the

road along which General Sigel so furiously rode his horse. By the highway that leads to Eureka Springs is a little old log house, which has become a sort of Pea Ridge landmark. It stood in the line of fire between the two armies, and now has a more harried existence resisting the onslaught of souvenir hunters. It serves as a museum, and a small admission fee is charged.

When the Arkansas Traveler comes into Rogers from the north, on Route 62, he gets a strong reminder of Grandma's kitchen in apple-butter time, or Grandpa's orchard when he used to make cider. The Gregory-Robinson-Speas vinegar plant produces about 3,000,000 gallons each year, using apples grown on this plateau land.

Apples are not the only fruit of this region. In the strawberry season I was driving along the highway near Rogers one day, when I came upon a shed housing more activity than I had ever seen before in the vicinity. A half-dozen women and girls and a couple of men were busy sorting and crating strawberries, great, luscious, crimson berries that made my mouth water. Out in the field, a dozen pickers were crouched over the rows, filling the boxes in their wooden carriers with the fine berries. A truck was being loaded with the crates.

"Where did you get all this help?" I asked the farmer.

"My neighbors!" he said.

A community where one can grow such berries and live alongside such people makes a pretty good home.

A few miles from Rogers is the site of the "Coin" Harvey Pyramid, which was under construction when Mr. Harvey died. The amphitheatre and speaker's platform built at the mouth of two springs is one of the sights of the region. Mr. Harvey, as your grandmother can tell you, was a prominent figure in the late nineties. He was the trusted counselor of William Jennings Bryan and, like him, believed that free silver was the salvation of the nation. When Mr. Bryan was defeated, Mr. Harvey was convinced that the world was going from bad to worse. He buried himself in the hills of Arkansas. Even today the

spot he chose is a sparsely settled region, although the scenery is among the best.

In the hills Mr. Harvey wrote books and pamphlets. He had great visions of a magnificent summer resort. In the quiet little valley with springs popping out from under the hill to form a brook that still rambles down to a river bed, he could visualize a lively, bustling town. Farther along he saw in his mind's eye great, rambling buildings surrounded by velvety lawns. Beautifully dressed women in high pompadours and long sweeping skirts would spend vacations there playing croquet with high-collared gents or dabbling lily-white fingers in the cool spring water as they boated on the winding streams. I have some of the illustrated pamphlets Mr. Harvey produced to promote his dream. They prove that he was way ahead of his time. If he could have had the bathing beauties and the automobiles of today, he would have gone places with his summer resort.

Instead of the towering hotel popular in that era, he planned long, low buildings that bear a remarkable resemblance to modern tourist courts. Each building would be separated into forty or fifty rooms, all on the ground floor. One building called Missouri Row was actually finished and, according to the prospectus, had forty open fireplaces and 575 feet of porches. None of the rooms was less than sixteen feet square, and all were furnished with the heaviest iron and brass bedsteads and most expensive mattresses that could be obtained. Oklahoma Row was under construction, a separate hotel of smaller dimensions, and an auditorium had been built, bridges had been constructed, waters were stocked with fish, and even a five-mile railroad had actually come into being before the bubble burst.

I have seen Missouri Row, but I rarely waste much time on the lamented summer resort. I am always eager to get to the amphitheater, which fascinates me. I like to walk along the narrow runways, sit in the backless seats and wonder how it would look in moonlight. Like something out of Athens, perhaps. The amphitheater curves in a graceful half-moon about a spring-fed lagoon. It is built of concrete and rock hewed from the mountainside, with seats in clustered groupings. The

runways which connect these groupings would hardly accommodate two persons of average plumpness. In the center of the lagoon stands a concrete platform, furnished with concrete chairs for the speakers. I would hate to sit there waiting to address a women's club while the members who attended the annual convention in Ponca City gave their report! In fact, I would hate to sit there . . . period. Although the concrete structure shows no sign of age or decay, the runway that at one time joined the mainland with the island speaker's stand has long since disappeared. I have waded out to it on a warm summer day when I was wearing shorts, but I would be reluctant to make the same trip in an evening dress before a waiting audience.

The audience would get one break, however. They could look beyond me and see the picturesque length of a tree-bordered stream—the result of those two springs—and even the dulllest speech would become quite bearable.

Year in, year out, Mr. Harvey tried to make the country understand that we were going to hell in a hand basket. At last, discouraged by the public's apathy, he decided to build an everlasting, nondestructible pyramid. He would build it of concrete on the rocky floor of his Arkansas valley. It would be, he said, 130 feet high, ending in a sawed-off top 6 feet square. There he would place a plate of the most enduring metal known, inscribed with these words: "When this can be read, go below and find the cause of the death of a former civilization."

Below, in a room sixteen feet square with concrete walls eight feet thick, the searchers would find a book of 400 pages setting forth the rise and decline of our civilization. A copy of Mr. Harvey's book, *Paul's School of Statesmanship*, also would be there, showing that one man in the United States had had the vision to figure out what was coming. Other things would be in that pyramid—statuettes of people and animals, examples of styles of dress and volumes on each industry and scientific achievement, so those races which followed our own vanished age would know how we had spent, or misspent, our time. For financial reasons, we may presume, the pyramid progressed no farther than a retaining wall.

The little valley of Monte Ne may not be important in the life of an Arkansas Traveler, but as I sit on a seat in the little hidden amphitheater, I can feel the pathos of "Coin" Harvey's dreams.

The third town in this interesting trio is Springdale, which is bursting out at the seams these days. A poultry-processing plant which handles 10,000 chickens a day has been put in operation there. A grape-juice plant, employing one hundred people and furnishing use for thousands of acres of grapes, has been working at top speed for the past few years. Other industries are coming in when homes can be found for workmen, and the banks are stuffed with money.

My friend Don Hoyt left Rogers to become secretary of the Springdale Chamber of Commerce. A short time after he assumed his new work, a letter came to my husband from the Springdale Chamber of Commerce. I had a good mind, as we say in the hills, to open it, but reflected that this might lead to the Jedge's opening my letters, and wisely refrained. A few days later I heard him talking over the phone. "Oh, it's you, Don." "Yeah, Don." "Sure, Don!" "I'll try my darnedest, Don!" "You're right, Don," and "Well, so long, Don." Then he announced that was Don asking him to speak at the annual banquet of the Springdale Chamber of Commerce.

Now there is nothing that pleases the Jedge more than hearing someone say, after much blah, blah, blah, ". . . and now, ladies and gentlemen, it is my great privilege to present Judge Robert W. Lyon." My husband gets up on his feet, opens his mouth and in a deep, resonant voice speaks well on any given subject whether or not he knows anything about it. I am one of those people before whom audiences swim. Everything I am to say must be written, memorized and rehearsed for weeks on end. Therefore I am always in a dither for days before the Jedge makes a speech because he prepares nothing. If I delve into this or that, and hunt up magazine articles or editorials on his proposed subject, which I carelessly leave lying beside his plate at the table, he tosses them aside. "I'll think of something when I get up to talk!" he says blithely.

Over the Springdale speech I practically had a nervous breakdown. No subject had been assigned the Jedge, and for all I knew then, or know now, he hadn't chosen one. I kept hunting up little squibs that make funny stories, in case, God forbid, he went humorous! I felt that I'd scream if he gave his reliable old wheeze about the woman who took her ear trumpet to church and the usher—he was Scotch—said, "One toot and ye're oot!" Only the Jedge always tells it nondialect, and one toot and you're out is even less funny, if possible. Day by day I vowed I couldn't go, but he would only shrug his shoulders and say that was all right.

Finally the day came, and wild horses couldn't have kept me at home. On the drive over to Springdale we would have two uninterrupted hours in which I could make him do some serious thinking about his speech. But a light snow had fallen, and I defy anyone but an Oklahoma truck driver to ride snowy hills in the Ozarks and give a thought to anything except the operation of the car. That goes for the back-seat driver as well as the one behind the wheel.

When we rolled into Springdale, I said, "Now look! You find a nice quiet corner and study up a speech."

"I will," he promised. Somehow I had the feeling he was adding "not."

Mrs. Horace Smith was giving a tea for me, while Mr. Smith and Don and other members of the Chamber of Commerce took the Jedge around town to see what strides were being made. After the tea some of the guests lingered. When Mr. Smith and the Jedge came in, I could only whisper frantically to my husband, "Did you do anything about that speech?" He opened his coat to disclose a large, folded paper which I took to be notes. After that, I was able to wear some lipstick without biting it off. Soon we went to the church in the basement of which the meeting would be held, and met what seemed to be all of Springdale, Rogers, Bentonville and even such faraway points as Springfield, Jonesboro and Fayetteville.

I began to dig my fingernails into my palms, praying that the Jedge had prepared a speech worthy of such an assemblage. We went down

into the basement where long tables had been spread for the dinner. There were corsages for Mrs. Smith and for me, and azaleas were blooming in pots. It was all very festive, but I was getting more and more nervous because the Jedge was obviously having a good time instead of thinking about his address. I picked up the printed program beside my plate, hoping against hope that some great shining orator had come to town and at the last minute usurped the Jedge's place.

For a moment the words swam before my eyes, and I clutched at the tablecloth. Then I looked again. Yes, it was true! I, too, was listed for a speech! I, who always must write out and memorize even such a simple phrase as "I second the motion."

I remember nothing of the dinner, nothing of what the Jedge said, or what I said, though there is a dim memory of getting to my feet. I only recall the Jedge saying, as we drove home through the night, that he hadn't told me I would be expected to make a speech because he didn't want me to worry!

I hear that Springdale has recovered and is making progress as the months go by. I wouldn't know. I haven't been back since.

The Arkansas Traveler who misses Tontitown, just five and a half miles from Springdale, passes up one of the finest examples of Americanism in Arkansas. Before the turn of the century a group of Italians bought land there, sight unseen, from a land agent. When they arrived, they found their new home a swampy, unhealthful district, but being poor peasants, unused to kicking about anything, they settled down on it. They grew poorer and more disease-ridden by the month. Then a priest was sent over from Italy to see how the emigrants were getting along. He must have been sad, indeed, when he saw the plight of his parishioners. He promptly purchased a thousand acres of the beautiful land in Washington County and moved thirty-five families there. On the rolling hillsides they planted grapes like those they had grown in Italy. In autumn when the grapes were harvested, they held a festival, much as they would have done in the homeland. They thrived and prospered. After twenty years or so the Arkansas farmers about them

began to plant grapes. Now the community is noted for its fine grapes, largely responsible for the coming of the Welch Grape Juice Company plant to Springdale.

On your map it is marked Tontitown. It was named for Henry de Tonty or Tonti, Italian lieutenant of La Salle. Tonty also founded Arkansas Post, the first settlement of the state.

The trip to Tontitown is worth while for two reasons: (1) Beside the roadway you find native port and claret made from grapes grown within a stone's throw of the stand where you make your purchase. (2) You may eat one of Mary's dinners. I don't know Mary's last name. It isn't important. Just tell the telephone operator at Springdale that you want to phone Mary at Tontitown. Ask her if she will prepare dinner for you and whomever you may wish to take with you, up to a regiment. If she says yes, turn left at Tontitown and drive along a crooked country road that finally brings you to an unimpressive little house. Go in through the kitchen and tell Mary, who will be working over the cookstove, your name and when you phoned. She will give you a seat at one of the big tables in the two front rooms, and you will have examined and identified not more than half the religious statues before the food comes in. What food! Great platters of fried chicken with the giblets and huge dishes of spaghetti, which you will eat until you are bursting.

The South and Italy! May they never secede from each other!

*Ozark Playground—
Woods, Water, Fish, Food*

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I AM glad I became acquainted with a small part of northern Arkansas several years ago. So many changes are taking place—and so rapidly—that one can refer to the “good old times” and mean a scant three years ago. It is hard to believe that I spent my most fearful forty-five minutes on the banks of Norfork Lake a summer night no longer ago than that. Actually there was nothing to fear, but I certainly worked myself into a lather while waiting for the Norfork Ferry.

I had crossed Norfork Lake on the same ferryboat many times that summer and always I had waited for it with genuine pleasure. Usually I took advantage of the few minutes to put on the wading shoes I always carry in my car, and get my feet cool at the edge of the wide blue lake.

On the night in question I had no qualms as I drove along the winding hill road that led to the crossing. To a stranger it might have seemed a lonely road. Perhaps a half-dozen small log or frame houses stood along the forty-mile stretch, but they were back in the woods, completely hidden from passers-by even in daytime. At night, in the darkness and the shadows of the trees, my dog and I seemed the only living things along the way.

However, I knew the road perfectly, the tires crunched on the gravel in the chummy fashion that seems to say all is well, the engine ran smoothly and the lights were bright. The tick of the speedometer, the little red button that glowed when the “brights” were on, the light on the face of the clock and the instrument panel were cheerful and re-

assuring. Even the gentle snoring of Judy, wrapped in her blanket beside me, seemed companionable. Suddenly I reached the top of a long hill—and there was my gravel road apparently running right into a black, mysterious lake, shimmering faintly in the starlight. I knew, of course, that the loading pier of the ferry intervened before it met the water. Beyond the pier stretched a lake three miles wide and fifty miles long, with a 500-mile shore line. The only bridge stood rusting a hundred feet below the surface of the dark water. About midway of the lake the lights of the ferry were twinkling redly as it made for the opposite shore. I had missed the boat, literally speaking.

Once the car had stopped, the only sound was the gentle lapping of water on the lake shore and night noises of the woods—the chirp of crickets, the shrill zing of the cicada, the crackle of tiny dry branches as little prowlers with bright eyes scurried about. What might lurk in those dark woods, ready to pounce on a lonely gal who couldn't have turned her car around in the steep and narrow road if her life depended on it? This was the question that stayed with me for forty-five of the longest minutes of my life.

I drove close to the loading pier and turned the lights on the murky water, but that only served to intensify the darkness of the woods to each side. I recalled something my little hill friend Doris had said long ago.

"If anything's a-goin' to git you, it can find you a lot easier if you're a-carryin' a light!"

I turned out the lights.

The dog awakened and sat up in the car, with ears forward and nose twitching as if she scented danger. I, too, could smell it, taste it, hear it and feel it in every taut nerve. All at once the car seemed a trap. With my flashlight I stepped out on the graveled road, taking the dog with me, and walked around the car. In the utter stillness my footsteps sounded like gunshots. Suddenly I discovered that I was dogless. Judy had disappeared! My heart stood still. I called her name in a frantic whisper, and threw the feeble gleam of the flashlight in every direction. Then inside the tree line I found her facing into the woods, poised for

a dash after something that might be a chipmunk, a bobcat—or a drunken prowler. If she went into those woods, I knew I would have to go after her. I made a flying tackle, grabbed her up, thrust her into the car and jumped in beside her, breathing hard. Then I began flashing the lights of the car across the lake.

Always the ferry waited fifteen minutes at each side before making the return trip. Although I knew they couldn't see my signal, perhaps they would see a glimmer of reflected light, think somebody was dying and cut the fifteen-minute smoke short! I lost all sense of time and refused to believe the clock on my car. I was sure it had stopped. Perhaps the ferry had quit for the night! I felt my hair stand on end at thought of spending the night there. Then abruptly the blessed heart-cheering lights showed up around the bend and headed toward me over the water. I flashed my lights a few more times just by way of urging them to hurry. The men were chuckling when they brought the ferryboat up to the loading pier and found me there with engine running and car in gear, ready to rush aboard. The lights had told them a silly woman was waiting there, afraid of the dark and the lonely woods.

Now stores, tourist camps and even a night club called, of all things, Villa Moderne, are found along those roads and the lake shore, for Norfork Lake has become a great vacation spot. And deservedly so. White River as a whole was always a fine fishing stream, and the North Fork particularly good. When the North Fork Dam was put in, the name was shortened to the form which the hill people had always given to this branch of the famous river—the Nor'fork. It is already attracting hundreds of fishermen, and all seem to find the sport eminently satisfactory.

As the water backed up, all the little creeks that had run down to the North Fork became bayous and eventually arms of the lake. Now, when one flies over the lake on a sunny summer day—I wouldn't fly on any other—the great body of sparkling water looks like a giant glittering octopus, thrusting its long, curving arms into the woods for miles on every side. Indeed, a 500-mile shore line presents quite a lot of bank on which a patient fisherman may sit and dream. Or probably

that gives a wrong interpretation to fishing as it is done in Norfolk Lake. From what I hear, one doesn't have time for much dreaming. The fish reach up and grab the hook before one can throw it into the water—so I have been told.

I have even seen fish that were allegedly so caught. I kept any private skepticism to myself, for the fisherman was permitting the fish to be served at a hotel supper, and I was one of the guests. That was part of the fun of staying in one of the Mountain Home hotels during the first year or two after the water had backed up to make a lake. Fishermen from Illinois and Missouri would come down to spend two or three weeks. Something had to be done with the fish they caught each day so that they might go out next day and catch more. Obviously the best thing to do was to let the hotel have them. As a result, we feasted on great five-pound bass and other delicious fresh-water fish until we couldn't look a fish bowl in the face.

With the fish we had delicious hot rolls, chocolate cake, apple pies and other dishes that wore such fancy names no one could guess the ingredients. Not that the hotel cook believed superb fish called for such superb accompaniments! It was just that the wives of the fishermen became bored with sitting around and went out to the kitchen to whip up their fanciest dishes.

It was fun to watch those wives. They followed a definite pattern. When the little woman arrived, she would be so tired of housework she wouldn't even fill her own tumbler from the water pitcher on the table. For the first two days she would sit in the little hotel lobby writing letters and working on her nails, disappear into her room in the afternoon for a long, luxurious nap and appear for supper fresh as a daisy. The first two nights she would go to a movie, while her husband cleaned his fish and made plans to get that big one in the cove the next day. The third day she would sit in the lobby working on her needle point and talking with the other women. Invariably the conversation turned to recipes and then to food. On the fourth day she would come to breakfast in a fresh cotton dress and make a beeline for the kitchen right after her coffee.

Until a new batch of fishermen and wives arrived, we would have

food fit for the gods! Each woman would make her own "company special" in competition with all the other company specials. After they left we would refer regretfully to them as Mrs. Apple Pie, Mrs. Chocolate Cake or Mrs. Hot Rolls.

Now I note by the *Baxter County Bulletin* that one can get flake ice at the rear of the DeMers drugstore in Mountain Home for forty cents a bushel. It is, they say, perfect for packing fish or beverages. This is just taking the fish right out of the mouths of the Mountain Home hotel guests! What fisherman wouldn't prefer to pack his prize fish in flake ice and send it home to the partner, neighbor or brother-in-law who doubted the presence of fish in Norfolk Lake!

Mountain Home is changing from sleepy little hill town to busy resort town, with new beauty parlors, new restaurants, new shops and, naturally, new real-estate offices. One of the real-estate men, young Abbott Haskins, has probably reaped more fun out of selling land in and around Mountain Home than any later ones will have in a hundred years. A Newton County lad, he knew the benefit a lake would bring to the mountains and he got into real-estate early becoming the partner of Hugh Melville, Chicagoan and owner of Mountain Lake Ranch. He has had excitement.

One stormy autumn day Abbott had a trio of prospective customers, two men and a woman, out in a boat showing them the shore line. Suddenly one of the inexplicable things that happen to boats happened to this one, and the four found themselves in the water. Abbott was the only one who could swim, and he was wearing the heavy sports clothes that are most practical around the lake. He found the men first and put their hands on the boat and told them to hold on. Then he dived for the woman. He reached her and got her to shore. He went back for the others.

It was hard work to tow the heavily dressed, panic-stricken men to shore, but he managed well enough with the first one. The second was more difficult. One of his arms seemed quite useless. It simply hung heavily in the water, while he clung to the boat with the other.

Perhaps, thought Abbott, he has broken his shoulder. That brought more worry. It was bad enough to handle three sopping, half-drowned people on the farthestmost wooded bank of a lake, without having one of them injured. When Abbott, with his last breath, it seemed, reached shore with the man, he found why the man's arm had hung in the water. He was carrying a suitcase!

As he fell from the boat, the man had grabbed the heavy suitcase he was taking to Abbott's lakeside cabin. In his panic he had clung to it through the agonized moments before Abbott reached him, all the time he had hung onto the boat, and all the while Abbott was towing him, choking and spluttering, to land. He was as much surprised as anyone to find that he still had it in his hand.

On a happier occasion Abbott set out in the boat with a cynical, you've-gotto-show-me-sort of chap, who wanted a "little place where he could fish and hunt." It was a bright autumn day, but Abbott was not enjoying it very much. The man was obviously a tough customer and if he had his mind made up about the superior fishing and hunting merits of another lake somewhere, what could Abbott do? Just take him a boat ride and bring him home, darn it! But Abbott had forgotten it was one of those bright days that come after a heavy rain. All the fish, even the big ones that get away on ordinary days, were out to get the little bugs that hovered over the sunny water and the brand-new feed washed down the hills into the lake by a million little drainage streams. The man gazed popeyed at the big fish leaping out of the water, showing glittering lengths of shining scales.

"Fish!" he murmured. "Damned if you don't have some!"

"Yeah," said Abbott, lazily. "Danged fish so thick in this lake it's hard to get a boat through 'em."

They put-putted on.

Around the cove they came head-on into a flock of wild ducks feeding in the quiet water, far from the sound of a gun. With loud quackings they rose into the air, darkening the autumn sun with their flapping wings.

"Wild ducks" exclaimed the customer: "Millions of 'em!"

"Oh, they're comin' in now, darn it!" said Abbott. "Not so bad, now. Danged nuisance a little later! Wears a fellow out clubbin' 'em out of the way when we go down to the lake to get a bucket of water."

They put-putted on. Abbott looked straight ahead, but the man's eyes darted over the hills surrounding the lake.

Suddenly he called excitedly, "A deer! I'd swear that's a deer up there on that hilltop."

Abbott lazily turned his head in the direction the man was pointing. No deer had ever been seen on the Norfolk banks although there were some in the remote hills. But there unmistakably was a deer. . . .

"Oh, are they back here!" exclaimed Abbott. "Those deer sure play hell with our turnip patch."

"Look," said the man, reaching for his checkbook. "How much did you say you'd take for that piece of land we looked at this morning? I want to pay for it right now!"

Northern Arkansas is already taking its place as one of the nation's famous vacation spots. Hunters have found abundant quail, squirrels, rabbits, coons, possums and all the other hunting of the hills. In the Sylamore Mountains deer hunting has been an important late-autumn sport. Two weeks of hunting are allowed, with a week intervening, in order to give more hunters a chance. A week is also permitted to those who hunt with bows and arrows. They get their turn ahead of the gunners.

Rangers who make the government forests the excellent vacation spots they are must be as canny about deer as a successful livestock raiser is about cattle, horses and hogs. For instance, as one of them told me, they must know how high a deer can jump. This isn't exactly known, but a buck once died of starvation in an experimental plot surrounded by a six-and-a-half-foot fence. He jumped in, but he couldn't get enough running start to jump out!

Deer would go hungry in cured grass knee-high between January 1 and April 1. They are browsers, and the woods must provide enough tender twigs and buds to feed them. If browse material is scarce in

this critical period, the deer with the longest reach will survive, perhaps, but woe to the does and fawns who cannot stretch their slender necks above the deer line! They starve to death.

In the Sylamore district, every effort is being made to increase the deer herds in order to give hunters a good vacation. Eight sets of four plots fifty feet square have been established as a guide in stocking the game refuge. These will show the amount of food available under all conditions during the critical period. One plot will have seven-foot fences to keep out deer and everything else. The second will have gates that can be opened for controlled grazing and browsing. The third will have a fence three and a half feet high to keep out all animals except deer. The fourth will be open to everything. Deer, surprisingly enough, do not range far from the places where they were born. Therefore, in overstocked areas herds must be reduced by some means. Controlled hunting is one method. In 1945, 449 bucks were killed in the Sylamore hills during the two weeks' hunting season. This seems a cruel method, but it saves food for the deer that are left. And it makes a lot of hunters happy.

Trapping is another method of keeping down the deer population in any given area. One of these days a doe, buck or fawn will enter a woodsy enclosure for a special treat of apples or to lick the familiar salt block, and *slam* will go the ends of the enclosure! Then state game-and-fish wardens will aid the rangers in coaxing the trapped animal into a smaller crate. After that it will be loaded with tender care into a truck, and soon the deer will find himself in a new refuge where food is plentiful the year round.

The deer of the Sylamore hills are native sons and daughters. When the region became a refuge in 1926, it was established that twelve to twenty deer roamed over the 170,000 acres. Now there are about four thousand. They are the Virginia white-tailed deer, brownish gray with the underside of the tail white. Fawns are born any time from late April to early June. A day-old fawn is very active, but if his mother puts him into a briar patch to rest while she browses near by, he stays until she comes for him. A young deer, say the forest rangers, has no

scent, which is nature's way of protecting him from wolves and other animals that might seek him out. His coloring is another protection. In fact, so perfectly does his spotted coat blend with vegetation colors that you or I would pass him by without seeing him.

Bucks shed their horns in late January or February but where they shed them is a mystery, even to forest rangers. The most indefatigable rangers have found only two or three. The bucks, it has been decided, usually knock the horns off in tangled underbrush. There they may lie hidden for years, or they may be eaten by mice, wood rats, chipmunks and squirrels.

Work on Bull Shoals Dam has been temporarily halted by government order, but will be resumed later, according to reports. This will put another great lake in north-central Arkansas. Then, within ten years, say state government engineers who are readying the blueprints, another dam will be placed above Batesville in Independence County. This will put Sharp, Stone, Independence, Izard, Baxter, Marion and Fulton into a resort district that can indeed be called a sportsman's paradise.

Incidentally the *Baxter County Bulletin* is campaigning for boat races on Norfork Lake. Progress marches on!

For vacationists, who want just a sight-seeing trip with no destruction of life beyond picking an ant off the picnic table, I can recommend all the northwestern part of Arkansas from the Missouri line to Mena. To be strictly fair, I would begin my vacation suggestions at Branson, which is in Missouri, but which has Arkansas scenery and hospitality. You may play golf on the Don Gardner golf ranch and eat a superb chicken dinner afterward at the Gardner Dining Room. Located right on the bank of Lake Tanneycomo is an excellent resort, the Anchor Travel Village in the town of Branson. Rockaway Beach farther up the lake has Hotel Rockaway, for night, week, month or season vacationists, presided over by Mr. and Mrs. MacMasters. This is a favorite resort hotel, not only for its scenic beauty, which is superb, but for the quality of the meals which Mrs. MacMasters plans and supervises.

Mrs. Mac was an instructor in home economics before her marriage, and what she learned to do with flour, sugar, spices, butter, eggs, meat and vegetables is one of the reasons why a track has been beaten all the way from Chicago to Rockaway Beach.

Another reason is the Jim Owen Float trips which make a new man of the most jaded individual! You float down the river, fishing as you go, and at nightfall trained guides set up a de luxe camp, cook your fish and fill you with good food and tall tales of the hills! After three or four days of this life you understand why hill people do not think much of cities.

VI.....

Peaches—with and without Legs

If you are looking for peaches in Arkansas, you can find them anywhere. Of course, I mean peaches with legs, as Spider Rowland of the *Arkansas Gazette* called them in his column about the Peach Festival. And the sort of peaches you eat with cream and sugar are almost as plentiful. Arkansas has long been a great peach state.

A number of years ago the region around De Queen was famous for its fine orchards. When bugs and blight began to be a menace, the orchardists seemed to adopt the idea that if you just didn't notice them they would go away. But they didn't. They stayed and multiplied, and finally they, instead of the growers, owned the orchards.

Then the region around Nashville began to come into its own as a peach-growing district, and now its fame has spread throughout the whole state until when one thinks of Arkansas peaches the name Nashville comes to mind instantly.

My peach hunting and eating, however, have been done mainly in Clarksville, the seat of Johnson County. Not that its peaches are any better, but I just got started going to Clarksville, and you know how it is! Clarksville contains the College of the Ozarks, where boys and girls may obtain a four-year college education. The Presbyterian Church is the chief sponsor of this excellent school, and much credit should be given to it for the good taste displayed in grounds and building.

Clarksville has interesting slopes and scenic views that set it apart from ordinary towns, and Spadra Creek which flows through it and

forms a setting for its park adds more interest. It adds a bit of excitement, too, during floodtimes, for the busy little creek gets out of bounds and whoops it up.

For more than a hundred years coal mining has been carried on near Clarksville. The miners' homes at Spadra mark the spot where the first mining operations began, and expectations soared that coal would become the chief fuel of the state, thereby making Johnson County rich and important.

Although coal production never reached the heights anticipated, mining is still an important industry in Johnson County. In fact, the Sunshine Mine has been cited as prime example of modern coal mining. Of course it is still far from being a white-collar job, but a great deal of the backbreaking work has been eliminated.

It is not unusual to find in lucky Johnson County country homes heated and lighted with gas, for gas wells also have been found. This seems the height of luxury for country living, at least to this Arkansas Traveler. The hours I've spent stirring gravy on a stove grown stone cold because I forgot to put in wood would have given me time for a dozen hooked rugs.

But mainly Clarksville has been important in my life because it has nice people, and peaches, both with and without legs.

The first time I met a peach-growing family was on an autumn evening. Jessie Mitchell, home demonstration agent of Johnson County, took me to call on the Vern Browns. Mrs. Brown led us down cellar to look at what they had canned during the preceding season. The jars looked like something right out of the county fair. We walked along the shelves examining spiced peaches, peach preserves, peach halves and just plain peaches-without-sugar. Suddenly footsteps clicked rapidly across the floor overhead. The back door slammed twice in quick succession. Then from the back yard came loud calls. "Stay back, Gyp! Head 'er this way, Beal!" "Look out, she's cutting back!" Then a frantic wail: "Run, Betty, run. She's headed for the well."

We dropped the jars of peaches and rushed to the narrow window set high in the wall. That gave us a worm's-eye view of two Arkansas

peaches, with legs, aided by their dog Gyp, chasing a heifer who had suddenly refused to go into the barn.

"Our calves are all registered Black Polls," said Mrs. Brown. "If anything goes wrong with one of them, the girls go after it on high."

As we watched, the heifer suddenly became a demure little lady and strolled into the barn she had previously been passing at a dead run. The girls came into the house for milk pails.

The Brown girls lived in the house where they were born. It was actually a storybook sort of home, perched high on a hillside overlooking miles of Arkansas valley. From the front veranda they could look down on hundreds of little houses scattered singly, or clustering in towns like toy houses in a kindergarten sandbox. Their house was as modern in its equipment as any city home. They had a piano, not off in a lonely parlor, but right in the dining room, backed up to the shoulder-high partition that separated it from the kitchen. Both the girls at home—Betty, sixteen, and Beatrice, twenty-one—were camera fans, and that made it easy for me to meet Verna Ree, twenty-three, who was away from home studying to be a nurse at the time I visited them. They had enough pictures of their sister to fill an album. The camera had also helped their brother Selby keep in touch with doings at home while he was in service with the Navy. One of the many, many pictures they sent him was of his mare and the fine colt he would find on his return.

I hated to think of the sad tales the world hears about Arkansas girls and wished everyone could meet the Browns. They had beauty, brains and ambition—the sort of ambition that made them want to forge ahead, not just each for her own sake, but for the sake of the family. The registered calves were their responsibility, as well as their father's. The canned peaches in the cellar had been a responsibility they had shared with their mother. And as for the growing of peaches—well, either of the Brown girls, at the drop of a peach stone, could give you full information on starting and maintaining an orchard.

Behind their house were 3,000 trees, just coming into bearing. Back in the time of the girls' grandfather, the same land had been

planted to a peach orchard, but the old gentleman had given it up.

When peach growers began to pick the fruit while it was still as hard as rocks, (1) in order to get the sky-high early price, and (2) to ship it long distances before it became overripe, Grandpa Brown gave it up in disgust.

"The market is ruined," he is reported to have said, and forthwith let the woods and worms take over.

Three years ago the orchard was replanted and last season it produced what the Browns called a "half crop." By the time the trees are five years old, they will be in full production, each bearing three to five bushels per year. This will continue until the trees are well past ten years old, perhaps even twenty, if they have good care.

Peach orchards, it seems, are one of those investments which keep you waiting for returns. And while you wait you work. It is work even to find the land. You must look for a hillside with good air drainage and a clay foundation. The air drainage is needed to guard your precious trees from late spring frosts. Where the air can flow freely over the mountainside, or on tableland, the frost is less likely to strike. But plant those trees down in a hollow, where the frost and heavy cold air can settle, and watch Jack Frost do his worst!

You will probably pay fifteen to fifty dollars an acre for such land when, and if, you find it. From the time the trees are first planted, the ground between them must be cultivated to keep down a rank growth of weeds. That means plowing, disking and mowing *ad infinitum*.

Commercial fertilizer must be put around each tree. In Peach Land this isn't something you shovel out of the barnyard, dear children. It is stuff you buy with good hard cash.

Each tree must be wormed. When I heard this, I showed my ignorance by asking how on earth one could get a tree to open its jaws, like Judy, our Boston terrier, and swallow a worm pill. Seems that a tree is wormed by cleaning off a spot under it all the way around, then laying down a circle of some chemical and covering it with dirt. This forms a gas that makes a barrier against the peach borer.

Besides all this, there is spraying, the everlasting fight against peach ills. Each tree must be sprayed at least three to five times a year.

Last, you must choose and plant a winter cover crop. Winter vetch is good, if you inoculate the seed. Austrian peas make another good crop. They are disked down in the spring.

If you are a new peach grower, it will pay you to study up on contour farming. Modern peach trees are planted on terraces, permitting a slightly closer setting, but even so, twenty-four feet is the minimum distance apart. And there is the worry of deciding which variety you should plant. In Johnson County the favored variety has long been commercial Elbertas. Now, however, a few farmers are planting Fair Beauties, which ripen a trifle earlier.

What about frost? Sh! We don't talk about that in Johnson County, said the Browns. Out of the last eleven crops, nine have been good ones, and we don't want to spoil our luck. However, if you insist on talking about f-r-o-s-t, you will be told about the peach grower who looked out his window and realized that his year's work had been rubbed out in one night by Jack Frost. He went right back to bed, so the story goes, and stayed there three full days.

Frost is not generally combated in Arkansas peach orchards, possibly because they cover so much space that the situation looks quite hopeless. Or it may be because Ozarkians are so accustomed to taking the weather as it comes that they carry it over into the peach-growing business. Before the war, when old tires were not being used on automobiles, one farmer was quite successful in smudging out frost by burning those tires his truck had worn out.

But long before we had progressed to the peach harvest in our conversation, the Brown girls carried in brimming pails of foaming, warm milk. (The Browns keep Jerseys for milking. Don't think they got brimming pails from those Black Polls.) Then they settled down to tell the inside story of the harvest of those peaches you see in late July and August. Even Verna Ree had let the nursing profession take care of itself and come home to help.

"We were afraid Verna Ree couldn't stand the hot sun, because

she'd been working inside all summer. But she did fine," said Bea.

Betty picked up the story. "Verna Ree was row boss. It was her job to boss the hands who were picking the peaches. Bea was under the shed, because she was shed boss. She had a crew grading and packing the peaches in bushel baskets. But there I was, out with that trailer swinging bushels of peaches around as though I didn't have good sense."

Sitting on the piano bench, Betty gave a good imitation of the swing it takes to heft a bushel over the side of the trailer. The trailer, of course, was hitched to the rear of the tractor which Betty, as her dad's best hand, had driven all through the year in the care of the orchard. And in case you never bothered to look it up, let me tell you an orchard tractor is different from other tractors. It has wide wings over the wheels so low-hanging peach-tree branches will brush over them without losing a peach, unless it is the peach driving the tractor. The seat and the steering wheel are set low, so the highest part of the tractor, when it is in operation, is the driver's head.

"And you soon learn to dodge," said Betty.

Remembering glamorous pictures of fruit gatherers, I asked about clothes.

"Anything you can find," chorused the girls. "Mainly we wore our brother's old duds—old jeans and faded shirts. And hats like this!"

Mrs. Brown brought in a squashed straw hat. There were gales of laughter as the girls remembered how they had looked at harvesttime. "Peach fuzz gets into clothes and literally burns one up, so the girls had to have a fresh, clean outfit every day. Such washings!" groaned Mrs. Brown. "And me cooking for half the harvest hands, too!"

Just to prove that Brown peaches were as good as they looked, Bea went down cellar and brought up a jar of pickled ones. While we ate the great golden spheres, preserved with just the right mixtures of sweet-sour-spicy flavors, we asked more questions. Who were the harvest hands? Mainly women, who had to be brought each day from Lutherville over on Colony Mountain. For several days, when the peaches were getting close to being too ripe to ship, a sawmill at

Lutherville closed down so the crew could help the Browns get in their fruit. And when a neighbor had finished his harvest, he sent crew and equipment to help the Browns with theirs.

The twilight faded while we talked. At going-home time we went out into a world of enchanted beauty. The storybook house, with the peach trees behind it, seemed suspended between valley and sky. Far below us the lamps twinkling in the little towns seemed to be handfuls of stars tossed down by a prankster angel. Deceptively close above, in the velvety, night-blue sky, was a big Arkansas moon, set in a wide glowing halo rimmed with luminous rainbow colors.

"That moon"—I pointed—"I've never seen one so lovely."

Then I learned that peaches run true to form, in the North or in the South.

"What good is a moon—" sighed Betty.

Bea finished the question: "—when there's no one here to look at it with us?"

When the winds whistled and our heating plant went on strike in the winter months, I thought of the peach trees in Johnson County. Was there ever danger that the trees would be frozen? "Not if peaches live in Michigan," said the Jedge. When the early spiraea began to bloom I wondered about late frosts. And still later, when hot weather—and I do mean hot—came on in mid-March, I watched the thermometer, barometer and the Clarksville news items. "Looks bad," said the pessimists. "We've got to have our blackberry winter." Would a blackberry winter be the ruination of the peach crop? The absence of news from Clarksville was reassuring. No news about late frosts was good news.

I went down to Clarksville, just to see how things were, arriving in time to behold the peach trees in full bloom. All was well. Even the pessimists who shook their heads every time they looked at a peach tree said the signs pointed to an early spring. Gracious me, it *was* spring!

Then, before we could do half the things we had planned for the spring and early summer, it was late in July, and there was the Johnson

County Peach Festival right around the next bend in the calendar. Jessie phoned to remind me of the date, and a couple of days later I motored down. The day grew warmer as the speedometer ticked off the miles, and the thermometer was crowding 100° when I arrived at the Looper Tourist Court, thirty-six hours ahead of the Peach Festival. Too late to do anything about it, I found that my cabin contained the uninsulated tank that supplied hot water for the row.

The warmth of this roommate and its cheerful automatic blaze which flared high whenever one of my neighbors took a shower, roughly about every fifteen minutes, will never be forgotten. Rather than stand continuously under the cold shower to avoid heat prostration, I loafed around town, hampering busy people. Never in my hill years had I found busier Arkansans. Seems that a peach harvest would be enough to use up a fellow's endurance, but Johnson County never does anything by halves. It stopped right in the middle of the busiest two weeks of the year to stage a gala festival, with queen, parade and ball. I was glad I had come down ahead of the big day. Seeing such a hum of activity was more fun than the festival itself.

At my first port of call, the courthouse, I found County Agent Joe Cox and Jessie planning the tour of Elberta orchards for Festival Day. It would be headed by a recruiting automobile, equipped with a broadcasting device. Joe is a big smiling chap with a grand sense of humor, and his personally conducted tour promised to be a high spot of the day. They were writing up a set of notes to be handed to all the occupants of cars participating in the tour, and were too busy to be bothered with me.

At the restaurant where I dropped in for a cup of tea, cooks and waitresses were busy with the turkeys and chickens they would serve the next day. Good heavens, how many did they expect to serve! Oh, a lot of people, they said with true Arkansas reserve. On the streets around the square, crews of workmen were stringing banners overhead. In the office of the *Johnson County Graphic*, a harried editor and his sweating crew were printing and assembling a three-section special edition. Just to be polite, I asked if I could help. Before I could with-

draw the offer, I was inserting the news section inside the part that bore the Peach Queen's photograph, then putting both inside the section with a peach rampant on the cover.

I was saved by the bell, you might say. When the noon whistle blew, I went to lunch and didn't return. But I had earned a press card, decorated with two peaches, which my car still carries.

In the afternoon Jessie and I went out for a preview of orchards and sheds scheduled for the tour.

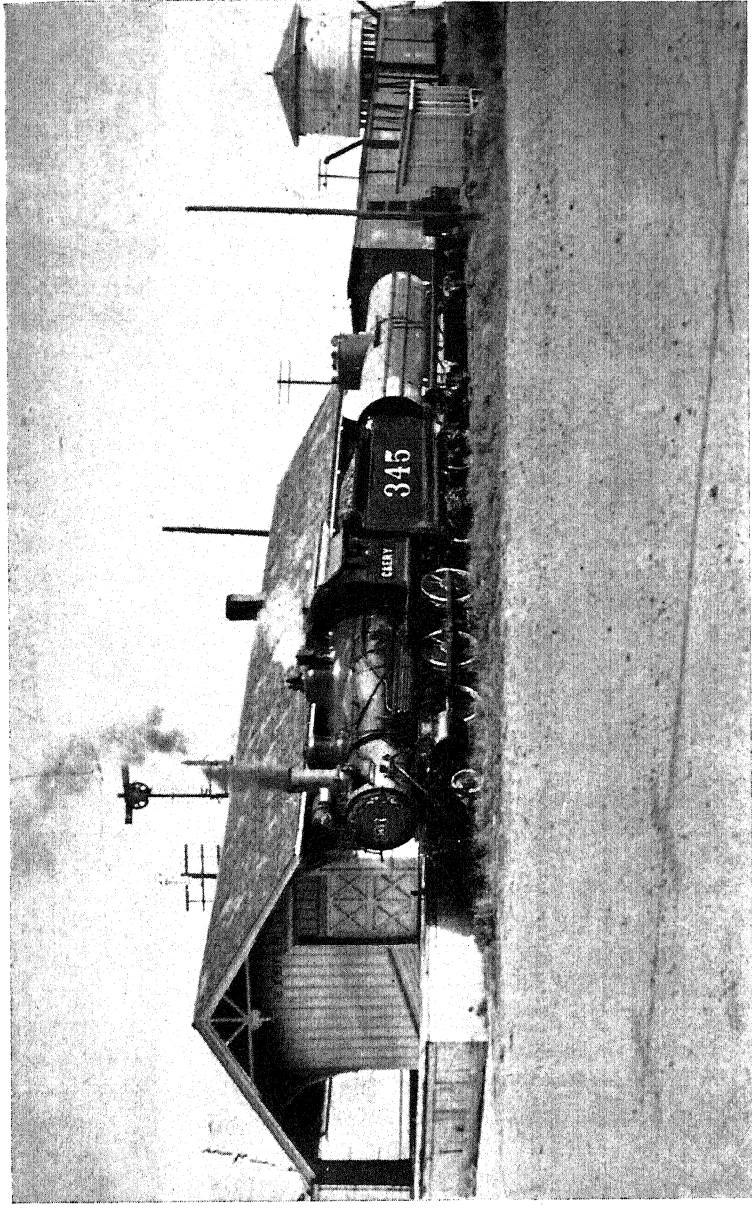
"We'd better see them now," said Jessie practically. "Tomorrow everybody will probably quit work and come to town."

We started out to the Browns', but so many orchards and packing sheds intervened that we never got there.

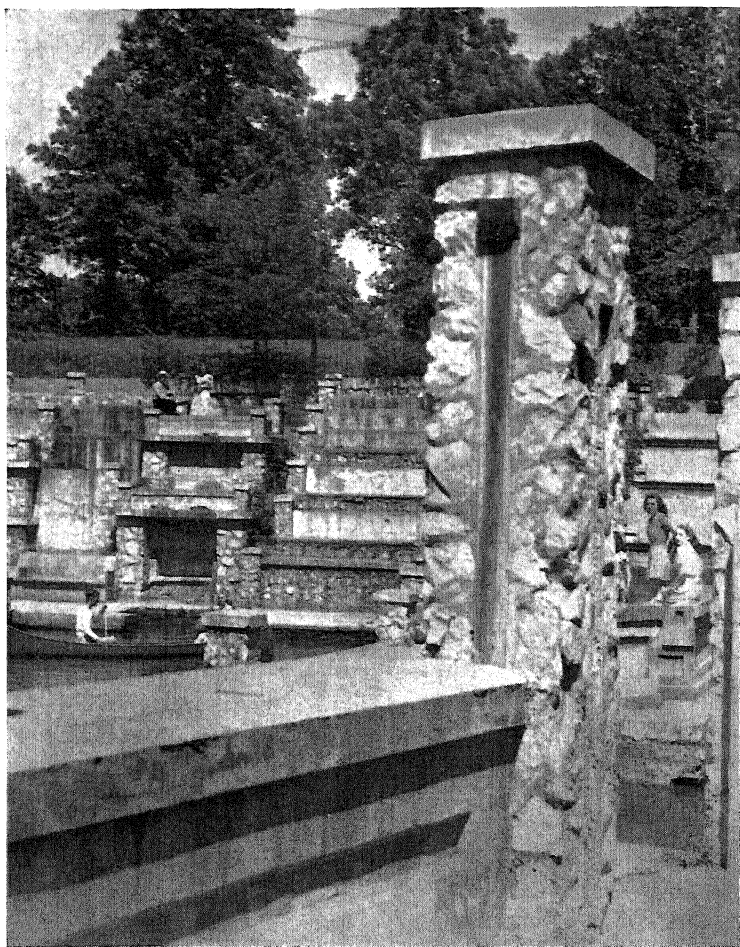
Johnson County peach growers operate independently, each owning his own grading and packing shed. Each deals independently with the truckers who flock in from all parts of the country. I discovered that each shed had a mechanical device with rotating brushes that defuzzed the peaches and a conveyor belt that carried the fruit along to slots of varying sizes. Along the belt rows of women and girls swiftly picked out all the peaches that were less than perfect. The slots thrust them into different avenues of exit, and at each exit a hard-muscled man stood holding bushel baskets into which the fruit rolled.

Then I learned how it happens that one always finds the biggest and best on the top in every basket. As the peaches rolled down to the basket, deft-fingered girls picked out the finest and arranged them neatly in a metal holder that looked like a shallow pan. It was amazing how they could place them so quickly and compactly. Here a peach, there a peach, in this niche another peach, and so on until the pan was filled with fruit that fitted together as perfectly as blocks in a quilt. A basket of peaches was upended on one of these hand-laid layers, then turned over, leaving the layer on top. A lad with a claw hammer adjusted the cover and the peaches were as good as on their way to the city.

Here were all the things at which the Brown girls had hinted, plus a hundred more. The shed! The shed boss—sometimes a woman,



Old 345, of the Cassville & Exeter Railway, manned by engineer, fireman and student-brakeman, creeps upgrade 4.8 miles in 80 minutes. Coasts backward for return trip.



"Coin" Harvey's amphitheater, with lagoon formed by ever-flowing spring water separating seats and speaker's platform. You may visit it at Monte Né, near Rogers.

sometimes a man, sometimes a slip of a kid, male or female! The orchard tractor with the big winglike shields over the wheels, sometimes with a veritable freight train of trailers behind it, each filled to the brim with great greenish-gold peaches! Grandpa Brown was right. They did pick the peaches mighty green. But this year the help was different.

The itinerant fruit pickers had begun to come back. Rows of tents and clusters of trailers of all shapes, sizes and qualities stood near the sheds, with grimy youngsters playing in the shade near them. Outside the sheds, trucks were lined up, waiting for loads to be completed. Some were from faraway places; others were "home folks" waiting for peaches too ripe to be shipped. One truck was being loaded by a man and woman who worked with amazing speed and efficiency. The woman was not dressed in slacks or blue jeans, like most of the feminine copilots on the trucks. She wore a print dress, and around her neck she had a tightly knotted handkerchief. Perhaps the sun had hit that spot on the back of her neck, but among all the bare brown necks, arms, legs and chests, this bit of caution looked strange.

At all the sheds we visited we were cordially told, "He'p yo'se'f." And I'm not kidding when I say we did. We ate great golden, blush-checked beauties (the overripes) until juice was fairly running out of our ears.

We chatted with shed owners, too, for even a continuously running mechanical device cannot stop Arkansas conversation. At the Taylor Landthrip shed we found they had been packing an average of 1,200 bushels a day. Other sheds ran close to that. We heard of one woman—wife of a peach grower—who rushed into a bank, plopped down a tea towel full of bills and cash and hurried away. Over her shoulder she called, "Didn't have time to count it. Think there's about \$6,000 there."

Gene Tolbert's shed had already shut down when we arrived, and would not be open until after the Festival. Workers sat around laughing and joking, perhaps waiting until the owners had finished checking up the day's pay sheets. Some of the workers slid quietly out of

view when I set up my camera. But that was all right. Plenty more were left to laugh and joke about "breaking that-there thing!"

At Lee Ray's shed, formerly the Denton King orchards, we learned how long-lived Elberta trees can be. Some of the trees planted forty-four years before by his father-in-law were still bearing luscious fruit. "The wood is becoming brittle, though," Lee said. "A heavy wind, or a big load, will crack branches right off."

Lee told us, too, of the forty-one baskets of Fair Beauties, the earlier variety, which had been shipped to Minneapolis by plane at the start of the peach season.

"Folks up there got some good peaches for once in their lives," said Lee, never missing a leaf or a bruised peach as they started over the defuzz brushes. "They were tree-ripened." Like Grandpa Brown, the modern peach growers feel that the people who buy Arkansas fruit at some distance never really know what they are missing. "Now that this defuzz business has come in, we have to pick them greener than ever," explained Lee. I watched the peaches tumbling over the stiff brushes and realized they were indeed taking a beating. If a soft, ripe peach got into that crowd, it would be mashed to a pulp in no time! What a mess it would make of the brushes!

On our way back to town, we passed the home of the girl who had been chosen the 1946 Peach Queen, Anna Jane Taylor, daughter and granddaughter of pioneer peach growers. Her Majesty was not seeing visitors, and everyone in town knew why. Immediately after her election Anna Jane and her mother began to worry about the royal gown for the parade and ball. None fitting Anna Jane's new status, not to mention her petite figure, could be found in Clarksville. A dress was ordered from St. Louis but when it arrived it was hopelessly shop-soiled. They rushed it to the cleaners, who refused to be responsible for it. It was too fragile for their apparatus. Anna Jane wired to Tulsa for another queenly white dress. A ghastly pink affair came. With that, Anna Jane and her mother gave up the search and grimly set to work on a frothy white dress, although the Taylor peach orchards, which reached right up to the windows of the sewing room of

the big white house, were bustling with activity. Not for worlds would we have barged in on royalty so beset with difficulties.

We returned to town and went over to call on the Clarks. Clarks-ville was not named for this family, although Mrs. Clark's forebears were among the earliest settlers of Johnson County. Three separate worries at the Clark house were striding along, threatening to become nervous breakdowns at any moment. Nora, mother of the three Clark youngsters, had been appointed a committee of one to insure the financial success of the P.T.A. booth at the Festival, where sandwiches and soda pop would be sold.

"The ice plant has broken down! Imagine pop without ice!" wailed Nora.

I couldn't imagine it. The thermometer had broken a hundred that day and the next day threatened to be worse.

Chari Clark, fifteen, and her sister Betty, nine, each had cause for concern. Clarks-ville has a riding club, like most Arkansas towns, and it would ride in the parade in a body. Both girls were members and naturally wanted to take part, but "hoss trouble" had developed. Chari believed her trouble was worse than Betty's. Her mount shied at fluttering pennants and umbrellas—in Arkansas women still carry sunshades—and that very morning she had been forced to dismount and lead him across the bridge. At best, he was not a very impressive horse, just a long-legged, brown-and-white-spotted fellow she had borrowed to ride until heaven could answer her prayers for a Tennessee walking horse. To have such a horse "act up" and force his rider to the ignominy of dismounting before the Festival crowd would be the last word in humiliation.

"I'll have to get off and lead him past every umbrella," mourned Chari, as she finished giving Spot his third bath of the day and letting him nose an open umbrella in an effort to show him how harmless it was.

Betty galloped into the shed beside the barn, leading a four-months-old colt—or perhaps I should say the colt galloped in, leading Betty. Both were perspiring with equal vehemence, for they had just finished

their tenth lap around the pasture back of the barn. Betty had been teaching the colt how to wear a bridle, hoping with all the fervor of her little heart that he would trot quietly alongside his mother in the parade.

Betty's riding mare, named Precious, had presented the colt to Betty as sort of a bonus. When the mare was purchased, no one dreamed that a colt was expected. Betty prayed for a colt, and when Christmas came, she asked for nothing but a bridle for it. In March someone came to the Clark home and said a colt was in the pasture at the edge of town with Betty's mare. The Clarks sent word to the neighbors that someone's colt must have strayed into their pasture. Then they went to see the youngster—and behold, Betty's prayers had been answered! Precious had a colt, which Betty promptly named Sugar Sweetheart Honey Darling. Betty's family called him Spoiled Brat.

For the first four months of his life, whenever Betty wished to ride, she would shut Sugar in his box stall, adjust the saddle on Precious and indicate that she would like to gallop away. With that, Sugar would put his front hoofs on the top of the Dutch door of the stall and cry like any baby that ever saw his mamma leaving him. Betty's tender heart couldn't take it. She would go back to the stall, put Sugar's hoofs down, kiss his brown forehead and tell him she didn't want to ride anyway.

But that couldn't happen when the parade was scheduled. Betty did so want to ride with the club! For days she had worried over making Sugar unhappy. Then she decided on a plan. She would teach Sugar to wear a bridle and on parade day he would trot quietly beside his mother—she hoped! When I saw them, the baby had advanced to having bracelets of clackers on his front feet, so he would lift them like a thoroughbred.

At the shed where the floats were being constructed, activity was mixed with scornful tolerance of all parades and parade watchers. So much work for just an hour's gawking by a lot of country jakes! Phooey! A weazened chap named Pete and a pretty girl named Sally brought memories of the fairy godmother who transformed a pumpkin into a coach for Cinderella. Pete would hitch his drooping trousers over a hipbone and stretch white cheesecloth over rough lumber at-

tached to a grubby peach trailer. The trailer would straightway become a misty castle or throne. A moment later Sally, in a brief playsuit, would hoist a ladder alongside the superstructure and wallop wallpaper paste across it. Then she would mass filmy tissue paper, white, green, pink or lavender, on the moistened cheesecloth, and miraculously it stayed.

At midnight, when I was still trying to get nerve to go home to my hot-water tank, I drifted by the float shed again. There was Sally, still crumpling and pasting, while Pete drank tall glasses of a certain soft drink spiked with something from a flat bottle.

"Got to keep ourselves goin'," he said.

Then came the dawn. Bright hot sunshine, plus the breath of the booming water tank, got me out early. Already Festival arrivals were on hand. Countrywomen with babes in arms and tagging toddlers. Wide-eyed boys and girls. Farmers in straw hats and spotless overalls. Pretty girls in sleek dresses made from flowered feed sacks. Characters of all kinds, the most amusing lined up in front of the town pool halls. As I passed by I caught the plaintive question, "Is he the only bootlegger in town?" and the sad reply, "Yuppl! We hain't got airy other one!"

A pitchman set up shop under a tree on the courthouse lawn and drew a great crowd. On the courthouse steps a band played merrily, and between numbers political speakers viewed with alarm and pointed with pride as the thermometers climbed through the nineties. On the sidewalk leading to the sheriff's entrance to the courthouse, Nora Clark crouched on her knees and painted P. T. A. SANDWICHES with black shoe polish on a square of white cardboard. Ice was in the pop tub.

Under the noonday sun we toured the peach orchards, with dust pouring over us in clouds from the car ahead, and Joe Cox broadcasting bits of information from the recruiting car at the head of the procession.

"Only fifty-three years ago, the first Elberta Peaches were planted in Johnson County. Now we have a million-dollar peach industry," he boomed in his Gabriel voice.

It was easy to believe. On the slanting hills thousands of acres

seemed to have been given over to peach trees, and every tree was trying to prove what a good producer it was. Great greenish-gold peaches, with faintly flushed cheeks, hung like decorations on Christmas trees—only these decorations were so heavy many of the trees had battalions of props under the branches. It was lucky we had had our preview. Only one of the sheds was in operation, and we could spare time only for a quick look. The workers couldn't even take that much time to see the gawking tourists who had so little to do they could attend a festival in the middle of the season.

At the Arlington Café we gorged on a delicious noonday turkey dinner and answered, "We will," with emphasis, when the waitress smiled and said, "Hurry back!" Then through the early afternoon hours more band music and more political speeches filled the air, but the crowd was too excited to listen. At intervals a gaily decorated float would whisk into the square, the contribution of some neighboring town or village to the parade. Occasionally a strange bus would stop at the corner, and a group of strangers would disembark and attempt to mingle with the crowd. They could mingle all right, but one could spot them a mile away. They were cityfolk from Fort Smith or Russellville. Shucks, we could tell! The men had on their coats. The women wore city darks, with hats and gloves. And stockings!

When the thermometer reached 102 degrees, the murmur "Here it comes" sounded through the massed crowds. Five paradeless war years had made Johnson County hungry for gaily decked floats. But you would never have guessed it. As the floats with fluttering fringes, beautiful girls and amusing groupings passed by, not a sound was heard. Except for the bands and an occasional low whistle at a pretty girl, the procession passed by in spellbound silence. Even when a group of lovelies on a float made to represent a great barrel of peaches threw luscious fruit at the audience, there was only a ripple of amusement. In Arkansas silence denotes complete satisfaction.

Surely the parade was a success from the first tootling band to the eighty-one horseback riders. Not a shred of tissue paper came loose. Spot didn't shy at an umbrella. The Queen, in a gown brought from

Kansas City by a local store owner at the eleventh hour, would have graced any royal gathering. Wearing his shining new bridle which Betty had received from Santa Claus, little Sugar trotted obediently at his mother's side, while the eyes of Betty and Precious were filled with maternal pride and anxiety.

Suddenly it was all over except the Queen's ball. I had intended to stay for it, but the thought of pressing a travel-weary evening dress alongside the hot-water tank got me down. Anyway, I needed to get home and can those peaches to which I had helped myself.

Each season of the year presents a lively new reason for visiting Johnson County. One of my happiest visits was in late autumn, when our blue and gold Arkansas days seemed to be lavishing all the beauty of the hills across the landscape as summer's final curtain call. My chief reason for being there at that time, however, was to see how the folks were going to get through the winter. All summer long Jessie Mitchell had been promoting a project she called "Live at Home"—and like it, I presume—and I was eager to see how she had succeeded.

This phrase, as interpreted by Miss Mitchell, means that farm families should produce all the food they will need through the year, canning and preserving meats, vegetables and fruits, putting down lard, making soap, gathering honey, drying onions and storing potatoes, turnips and carrots. Under this plan, when food is needed for the table, the farmer or his wife just goes to the cellar or out to the smokehouse and brings in whatever is desired.

It seemed an ambitious plan for any family, particularly near-Ozarkians who are constantly "laying off" to do something that is never actually accomplished. When Jessie wrote me that the county extension clubs were prepared to stage an autumn parade of pantry stores, with caravans of housewives going from house to house in their respective communities to examine their neighbors' food supplies, I made prompt reply. "That I must see," I said.

Just as a warm-up for the big parade, Jessie and I visited a few homes

in and near Clarksville, to see what urban homemakers can do when they really set their minds on preserving food.

Mrs. Dovie Moore and her husband, a retired railroad man, had a plot about a hundred feet square just at the edge of town. On this small lot they had a comfortable house and regulation outbuildings, including a poultry house in which they had raised 150 chickens. Of those, fifteen hens were kept for winter eggs and the others had been canned for winter eating. They had also raised a pig, which was lying contentedly on his fat side, apparently happily unaware that butchering day was just around the corner.

They had a tiny barn for a cow, which was pastured at the moment on a vacant lot across the road, so their milk supply was assured. The loads of fruit which had lately bent low the peach, cherry and plum trees had now all gone into shiny glass jars, and the small garden had produced so many vegetables that Mrs. Moore's cellar would more than keep their table supplied all winter.

At the smartly furnished town house of Mrs. R. Y. Fulbright we found the same abundance of canned fruit and vegetables in her basement cellar. Surprisingly her garden was tinier than even the average city garden. But she had the advantage of long beautiful Ozark autumns. A "fall garden" was doing well under the October sunshine. Then, too, Johnson County soil may be extra good! Mrs. Fulbright had raised tomatoes that weighed two and a quarter pounds each, and row upon row of brilliant red cans stood on her cupboard shelves.

Mrs. Fulbright has a way of canning tomatoes which makes them taste like fresh, she says. On canning day she fills a wash boiler with boiling water and puts pint jars in it. She fills the hot jars with tomatoes, adds salt, puts on the jar tops and returns them to the boiler. She adds more boiling water until it stands two inches above the jar tops, then she covers the boiler with a blanket to keep the steam inside, and sets it aside overnight. The next morning she puts the rich, red canned tomatoes down cellar. Never loses a jar, she said. Probably because she cans only pints that way, says Miss Mitchell.

At the Askins house a short distance from Clarksville, we found

canned pork, beef and chicken on the meat shelves of the cellar. And on the vegetable shelves were Kentucky Wonder beans canned lengthwise in quart jars. When we marveled at the length of the beans, Mrs. Askins said, "I had to snip off the ends to get them in the jar."

Along with the beans were corn canned on the cob, carrots, beets and all the other familiar vegetables, as well as honey and sorghum for sweetening. For winter pies she had jar after jar of mincemeat. And for cleaning up, there were about three dozen bars of creamy home-made soap.

We returned to the house to see what Mrs. Askins did in her spare time, and there was another surprise. While her son was in service, she eased the pain of separation by filling a hope chest for the girl he would some day marry. Not that he was going steady with anyone, but she knew he would marry in good time, she said, and in the long winter evenings it was sort of comforting to sit before the fire and embroider or quilt or crochet something that would be his bride's. It kept her thinking of the time when he would return, marry a nice girl and have a comfortable home not so far away but that he could bring his wife and the children home for Sunday dinners. That was much more pleasant than just sitting before the fire with clenched hands wondering . . . wondering . . . wondering! In a big cedar chest she had packed away twenty-two pairs of embroidered pillowcases, nine handmade quilt tops—you should have seen Solomon's Temple done in purple and white—crocheted doilies, chair sets, pillow tops, dresser scarves and tea towels by the dozens.

This did not represent all her handwork. Mrs. Askins had another son who was married, and she didn't want to show any preference. Every time she made a piece for the hope chest, she made a duplicate for the daughter-in-law she already had. When her small grandson expressed admiration for something she was making, she would make three of that item, so she could give one to the little boy for his "hope chest."

The next day we went to Lutherville, on Colony Mountain, where the Denny Extension Club was having dinner with Mrs. Pomrenke

before going out to look at neighborhood cellars. When we turned off the road to drive through the pine forest that fronts on the Pomrenke property, Jessie told me of the community.

Back before the turn of the century, a group of German families had come to this country to settle on land they had bought from an agent. The land was Colony Mountain, with soil very much like that of southern Michigan.

There the good German fathers built sturdy homes and beneath them dug deep, wide cellars, with jutting banks of earth. They had good reason for such wide banks. Soon they were stacking them with huge wine barrels which they filled from their own vineyards.

We came to a low white house far off the main road, and crossed to it over a wide lawn. Inside I found a dwelling as functional as a jeep. Stout, sturdy, wooden rockers without cushions, bare unpainted floors, a big round table covered with oilcloth! Everything was shiningly clean. The heavenly fragrance of chicken and dumplings hovered on the warm air as we said how-do-you-do to the dozen guests present.

German mottoes were on the wall, German books in a bookcase, and the guests bore German names, but the welcome was a true Southern one. Four leaves were put into the table, and when Mr. Pomrenke and the hired men came in, we all sat down and ate a chicken dinner, with chocolate cake and coconut-custard pie as finishing touches. After dinner we washed the dishes and restored the table to its former size before going sight-seeing in the neighborhood wine cellars.

Cellar after cellar of those sturdy German homes were packed with meats, fruits and vegetables, canned, dried and preserved. In many I found big barrels silvery gray with age, but I was told that no one made wine any more because of the sugar shortage. However, when I poked some of the ancient barrels lying on their sides on wooden frames above the cool moist earth, they didn't roll!

At the home of Albert and Annie Pomrenke a great flock of ducks scuttled across the lawn at our approach. "They will be stuffed with celery dressing and baked for the boys," said Annie. The Pomrenkes had four sons in service during the war. Mary Ann, thirteen years old, was her father's only farm hand.

"I didn't know whether to laugh or cry when I saw that little thing driving our great big tractor," said Annie.

We went on to the home of Mrs. Lenhardt, widow of a Spanish War veteran who had six children in school and a seventh at home. Two of them got hot lunches at school. The other four must have dinner buckets packed for them. Mrs. Lenhardt's cellar proved that all summer long she had been thinking of dinner buckets, and the hot suppers hungry school kids must have. Her cellar was a treasure cave of canned greens, wild berries, vegetables, meats and fruits. In it I found also a wine press that looked as though it had come out of some old monastery. I tried to buy it but Mrs. Lenhardt wouldn't let me have it. Some day, she said, sugar might be plentiful again.

Mrs. Lisa Doepel's home was as beautiful as a city suburban home, with wide windows and well-tended lawn. But in the matter of preserving food for the four members of her family, I found her all Colony Mountain.

"I need a lot of canned stuff," she said. "Sometimes for one meal I open as many as six jars. Count them up—meat, two vegetables, fruit, relish and tomato juice. It soon goes," she added.

Mrs. Doepel's cellar was particularly colorful. Bright scarlet jars of tomato juice were so abundant the shelves reminded me of red polka dots on an all-over print. When we commented on them Mrs. Doepel laughed and explained, "Whenever I opened a jar in the summer and had nothing else to put in it right then, I filled it with tomato juice."

At the home of Martha Doepel and her mother I expected a let-down in the Johnson County canning enthusiasm. They were still living alone, for Martha's brother had not returned from service. Along with caring for her deaf mother, and keeping up the spick-and-span house, Martha had to feed out a herd of beef cattle and do the field work. I couldn't expect a girl with her hands so very full to have done much canning. But I hadn't counted on that "Live at Home" urge. Martha's house hadn't suffered in spite of the farm work. I saw snowy counterpanes and scrubbed floors, along with gleaming cherry drop-leaf tables, cupboards with pierced tin panels and other precious possessions.

Then, when we carried a kerosene lamp into the cool, dark cellar, we looked at curtained shelves of fruits and vegetables which would have sustained a family of ten through a year's siege. Down the middle of the cellar was a table ten feet long and at least three feet wide. It was loaded with filled glass jars and bottles of various sizes. "What are these?" we asked.

"Those?" returned Martha. "Why, that's my sour stuff!"

And so it was! A ten-foot table filled with kraut, pickles, relish, catsup and chili sauce, all made by good old German recipes.

Yes, Johnson County proves it. The bounty of the Ozarks and a woman willing to work make a combination practically unbeatable.

VII.....

Riceland—Fields of Golden Grain

WHEN I think of the Arkansas riceland, two pictures come to mind. One is an early spring picture when the rice fields lay bare and sodden under a dull gray sky. Sometimes water stood in narrow channels between wormlike banks, so that a field gave the impression of monotonous stripes, shiny ones where the water caught the reflection of the sky, and dull ones which were nothing but just plain mud. Miles on miles the land lay level as a floor, broken now and then by clumps of trees that reared dull leafless branches above muddy water. It would have been a depressing sight to an Arkansas Traveler, but leave it to good old Mother Nature to dress up the landscape with a cheerful note. Everywhere—in the fields, in the branches of the dead-looking trees, on the fences—were red-winged blackbirds.

Although the rice farmers were lying awake nights wondering how to get their spring planting done, with the rain pouring steadily down long after the seedbeds should have been prepared, spring business was going on as usual among the redwings. The males had their new spring outfits—the glossiest of coal-black feathers, set off by epaulets of bright red edged with yellow. There were so many of the bright-winged birds and so few of the less conspicuous females, I wondered if the females were deliberately staying out of sight, or if I had chanced to arrive in the rice country just at the time when the redwing papas were gathering to start their northern migration, leaving the mammas to follow when the weather would be warmer.

I asked Bob Howe, vice-president of the Walton Rice Mill of Stuttgart, if "those beautiful birds" were around all year.

"Yes, they are," he replied. "But don't say beautiful birds to any of the rice farmers. They are a pest."

So it goes. Even Mother Nature can't please everybody.

The second picture of a rice field which I carry in my mental film file was "captured" in mid-August. It was a picture of such intense brilliance, such clarity of color, I sometimes wonder if I saw the actual scene, or if it was a Gauguin glimpsed on somebody's wall. Under a sky of lustrous blue which only Arkansas can achieve on a broiling hot day, a field of rice lay like a canvas spread with wet green paint—the greenest paint one might squeeze out of a giant tube. Above this green paint, in the foreground, emerged the head and shoulders of a thoughtful Negro man. His black skin was shining with perspiration, his eyes were cast down, and his red mouth was drawn in as though he were thinking the deep, deep thoughts of a burdened race. The straw hat, pale cream against the blue sky, and the faded blue shirt that rose from the green canvas, only accented the black sheen of his skin.

I might have photographed that scene, but it was one of those which even the best photographer often misses, so quickly do they come and go!

"A darky walking the rice levees," I murmured to my traveling companion, and drove swiftly along the highway.

Sometimes I fear the rice-growing section of Arkansas is taken just as lightly as I passed by a picture which might have been a masterpiece. We are not a nation of rice eaters. Here in the United States we eat a paltry five and a half to six pounds of rice per person per year, compared with the 150 to 300 pounds consumed in the Far East. Even in Europe, twenty-five to thirty pounds are contained in the yearly diet. Naturally in this country we would not send up loud hurrahs for the people who devote their farms, their machinery, their lives to the growing of rice. However, there is a chance that the scarcity of rice on the grocer's shelves during the war and the postwar era will create a bigger demand for it.

In our handcraft shop at Eureka Springs throughout the summer we had a ten-pound sack of rice on display, feeling that it deserved a spot along with other Arkansas products! We were obliged to turn down would-be purchasers a dozen times a day. This should be an encouraging note to rice growers and millers. Perhaps when rice is back again in the United States, the dear public will consider it good for something else than a foundation for chop suey or throwing at brides! When that happy time comes, perhaps the public will grow more discriminating in its rice tastes, and Arkansas rice will get the spotlight it deserves. Of course I may be just a bit prejudiced, but I believe the quality of Arkansas rice is something to rave about. Back in the days when the Japanese population of California was something one could mention, the little men who knew rice best would eat only the Arkansas variety.

A lot of Japanese may be eating our rice now, for all we know. At the Walton Rice Mill in Stuttgart I saw hundreds of sacks being sent to government agencies which would forward them overseas. My pride glowed to realize that Arkansas, the state that gets such a walloping in song, story and radio chatter, was contributing so directly to the needs of war victims—and, furthermore, contributing a food that was popular back in the days when the Orientals could make their own selection!

The Arkansas Traveler can learn a lot about rice down at Stuttgart. Now there's the idea that rice is grown in swamps! It may be true in China or Japan, or even in parts of our own country, but it isn't true in Arkansas. The Grand Prairie, in which Stuttgart is located, is a high, dry, comparatively level prairie. It was never a swamp! In fact, it was a country in which corn and other familiar farm grains were grown before rice was cultivated there. The water in which the rice grows does not seep in from any unwholesome source. It is pumped in from deep wells, or from reservoirs built especially to conserve surface water for the rice.

To a hill farmer, rice growing seems a snap. The rice plants stand with their feet in nice cool water, serenely indifferent to a drought that may be drying up the tomato plants on the hills farther north.

Actually the lush greenness of the rice plants seems almost a mirage, like the wet spots on pavement which turn out to be perfectly dry. And imagine growing a crop that requires no hoeing! Rice growing, however, like any other farming venture, requires something more than the will to do. It requires quite a financial investment, hard work—and the patience that enables one to sit quietly on the side lines, taking what comes in the way of hard luck.

For instance, there was one rainy spring. I know many a businessman who would have been tearing his hair if things had been going as badly with a shop or office, but the rice farmers were just repairing tractors, looking after pumps or mending fences. If the rain keeps up, ~~they said~~, we may have to sow the rice with airplanes. Yes, it could be done!

The initial investment of a rice farmer is no small item. The model farm consists of 640 acres which will cost, around Stuttgart, from \$70 to \$100 an acre. The land must be cleared of trees and undergrowth and must be fairly level. And for a farm like this, you must look below the surface of the earth. You must be sure that each acre has hardpan or a clay subsoil. That is what holds the water that grows the rice that builds the house that Jack intends to put up with his rice profits.

You will not plant all your land to rice each year, since crop rotation must be practiced even in Riceland, but only one-third; for good farmers say you should rotate with wheat, oats or cowpeas. This should be proof, if any is needed, that rice is not planted on swampy, unhealthy land.

You must prepare the same sort of seedbed for rice as for corn. Then something else must be added. Throughout the rice field, you must make levees from four to eight inches high, working out a contour system that enables water to be sent to all parts of it by gravitation. The system seems a highly complicated maze of mains and laterals like something thought up by a sadistic psychologist for an IQ test. If you are stumped on this when you buy your rice farm, just ask one of the neighbors—or write to your congressman. They just looked like ditches to me, and why they went this-a-way instead of that-a-way I couldn't understand.

When all this has been done, the seed is sown by drills, with two bushels of rice seed going into each acre. Stuttgart is very proud of its rice-seed laboratory, for the wise farmer knows the importance of selecting and using the best possible seed.

When the plants are about six inches high, the field is flooded. From that day until harvesttime, 100 to 120 days, they stand in five inches of water. The roots secure air through tubes in the outer leaves.

The rice grows rapidly, and soon the plants stand so thick and high that the Arkansas Traveler, if he didn't know about rice, would never dream that they were in water.

Mr. Howe explained the difference between rice culture in this country and in China. There rice growers have no water source, and no motor-driven pumps, so instead of bringing water to the plants, they take the plants to water. After they have grown to the required six inches on dry land, they are transplanted, one by one, into the murky waters of a swamp, or into some land which can be easily inundated. This ancient practice is the source of the old idea that rice must be grown in swamps.

During the 100 days' growing season many a stout, sturdy farmer becomes haggard and worn, and occasionally a sober-minded, church-going man is known to take a glass of beer, just to get his mind off his worries. All of the rice growers' eggs, you might say, are in one basket, and a fragile one at that. Should a hailstorm come when the heads have formed, the crop would be beaten into a watery grave. If an early frost should come, as has been known between the cutting and the drying, the crop is lost. And worst of all is the worry that the pumps will fail. The sound of those pumps is the heartthrob of the rice belt!

Two schools of thought argue the question of water source every year in the rice belt.

Some say the reservoir is preferable. Others cling to the idea that one's own well is. Each has its own points.

In the early days wells were used, and it is a pleasant fact that many of them are still going strong after twenty years' use. However, it costs

at least \$5,000 to sink a well, and if the farmer is just starting with the proverbial nest egg, it may prove to be too much of an initial investment. Add the fact that wells must be sent deeper and deeper to tap the hidden layer of water! With more land being devoted to rice culture, it is not inconceivable that some day the water layer will be exhausted. Then what will the rice farmer do, poor thing?

He will turn to reservoirs, which save the surface water!

Right now many a reservoir is being built in the rice territory.

The Arkansas Traveler can see them from the highway—vast shallow lakes, often with trees still standing in them, surrounded by low mud walls. Naturally the reservoir maker selects a piece of land that is unfertile, probably covered with scrubby timber, since it would be poor policy to take rich black land that could be used for rice culture. He also chooses a piece that is low, for he wants to get into it all the surface drainage that can possibly be obtained. Then he builds dikes about this piece of land to hold the water like a vast pond. If this seems like “going to a lot of bother,” remember he has yet to put in the pumps that will send life-giving water along canals to the rice fields. Of course he puts in electric pumps. But sometimes a storm disrupts the electric service, or a pump will suddenly develop a cough! Those are hazards that may make the farmer suffer the loss of his crop. And they are no picnics for the reservoir man either. He has contracted to furnish water for his neighbors’ crops, and he has to make good in a big way. If he is foresighted he adds Diesel engines to his equipment and may sleep untroubled on nights when the wind blows and the lightning flashes.

Another hazard presents itself when a prolonged rainy season shows up. Then the dikes may give way.

Even if a small boy should come along and spend the night with his thumb pressed tightly into the leak in the dike, it couldn’t save the reservoir man’s store of water. In a rainy season a mudbank crumbles like chocolate cake à la mode in a hot kitchen. Of course the water runs out, and eventually it may find its way to the small creeks from which it can be diverted to aid the rice crop. But that is a faint hope.

The creeks have a way of emptying too fast to be tapped by hastily constructed emergency methods.

Even when the sun is shining brightly and not a cloud crosses the bright blue of the Arkansas sky, the reservoir man may sit on his front porch moaning the rice belt blues. Every hour that is bright, hot and sunny—and many of them can be counted in an Arkansas summer—means just that much less water in his reservoir. Evaporation does it! Thousands of gallons may evaporate in a single day, and if the hot dry weather persists, it can lower the water to a dangerous point.

This is the unhappy side of the picture, however. Actually, seasons come and seasons go and the reservoirs stay filled to the brim (or almost), the pumps never fail . . . or if they falter, the electric and repair companies, which are on the job day and night, get the water flowing in less time than it takes to get a shave and haircut in an Arkansas barbershop—and the rainfall, which averages fifty to sixty inches, is so nicely spaced that the reservoir supply receives constant additions.

The rice fields which have been supplied by the reservoir have grown and flourished, and everybody loves everybody else. Then when the crop is harvested, the reservoir man gets paid for all the worries which did or did not materialize. He gets one-fourth of each rice crop for which he has supplied water.

Then it is only natural for the farmer to wonder if he doesn't do all the work while the reservoir man gets all the gravy! I have heard them voicing such wonder.

When we buy rice at our grocery stores, it has passed through nineteen cleaning, hulling and polishing operations. The rice-milling machines, which look so tough, but are oh, so gentle, are a sight for any Arkansas Traveler to behold. Rice milling is just the reverse, in many respects, of wheat-milling technique. In wheat milling everything is designed to crush the little grain into the finest, softest powder that can be made. In rice milling everything is designed to keep the little grain from being crushed, bruised or even dented. When it emerges from

myriad shaking, straining, pounding and vibrating operations, it must not only be clean and whole. It must also have a beautiful polish, so that each grain looks like sugar candy. That is the only sort of rice American housewives will buy.

Of course most housewives put a cupful of the beautifully polished rice in a kettle of lukewarm water, then set it on to cook, giving it a good vigorous stir every time they pass the kitchen range. A guest of mine was caught stirring the rice on my stove one day, and when she had tied up her broken arm—well, I almost broke it—she explained tearfully that at her house everyone in the family took turns stirring the rice! She also said they didn't like rice very well, for it was always such a soggy, heavy mess. She didn't see how Chinese chop-suey makers could keep the grains separate! Smart people, those Chinese, she said. She was right. The Chinese, who eat up to 300 pounds of rice per person every year, know how to cook rice. You wouldn't catch them stirring beautiful polished rice as it cooks. They know that it must be cooked in a large amount of water, which will be drained off when the grains are soft, just as the excess water is drained off potatoes that are to be mashed. Then rice should be placed over gentle heat, or in a warm oven to steam until each grain achieves its own distinct identity, large, fluffy and delicious.

Unfortunately, polished rice provides considerably less than maximum nutrition. During all that cleaning and polishing, seven layers of bran were removed from the rice grain, and with them went most of the crude protein, fat and carbohydrates that can make rice practically a meal in itself.

Ah, but Riceland has an ace up its sleeve!

During the war, a Persian-American GI cook, Sergeant Milton Yonan-Malek, discovered that rice may be processed in a way to retain all the food elements that have previously gone with the bran hull into stock feed. It is not a terribly complicated process, although it requires precision machinery and a great deal more milling room. In simple terms, the process consists of giving the rough paddy rice a steam bath, then drying it at controlled temperatures. This drives the nutri-

tive qualities of the outer layers into the innermost part of the kernel: There they stay undisturbed by all the cleaning and polishing operations.

After milling of this sort even the most careless housewife will not be able to ruin good rice by poor cooking. It will not stick to the pan, so she will not be tempted to use a stirring spoon. And when it comes out of the boiling water, each grain will be separate and fluffy. It will not be necessary to steam it. The new process will benefit the miller, for rice that has been subjected to such heat will be less subject to spoilage, either before shipping or on the grocer's shelves.

Strangest of all, the new process will benefit the grower also. His rice will not have to dry in the field for two weeks as it does now. He can harvest his crop and haul it to mill in one operation. Often the two weeks' drying period has meant the loss of a crop. If heavy fall rains come while the rice is in the stacks, it may mold and mildew. If frost comes, it is good-by to the crop!

Now with combines which cut and thresh the rice, and the new process which permits it to be hauled to mill the same day, the millennium seems to have dawned for rice farmers. However, there's still the need for water, and water comes from Mother Nature, and she is full of practical jokes.

The new rice-milling process is rated so highly that a new \$350,000 addition at the Walton Rice Mill at Stuttgart will be devoted to it. It is a beautiful building, modern in design, and with an interior color scheme featuring two shades of gray-blue that make a perfect background for the snowy white rice. The structure has 71,000 feet of floor space, with storage capacity for 200,000 bushels of rough rice.

The history of rice culture in Arkansas is a fascinating story. It dates back to 1896, when W. H. Fuller, a bearded old Arkansan who had farmed all his life, drove a team of horses down to Louisiana on a hunting trip. His was no overnight visit; he went down early in the fall, prepared to stay all winter. Along the way, he saw great green fields of some sort of grain that he had never before seen growing. He

asked what it was. They told him *rice*! While Mr. Fuller was hunting wild ducks and other game, he kept thinking about his farm back up on the Grand Prairie. It looked much like the land with the wonderful rice crop. By golly, maybe he could grow rice! There was a creek that could be diverted. And he could grow a crop without hoeing, one that wouldn't be hurt by drought. Hallelujah! He brought back enough rice to plant two acres on his prairie farm.

The farmers on Grand Prairie had not been having an easy time. I have talked with pioneers who raised corn and wheat in those days. Some were Czechoslovakians who came down from Milwaukee in the early nineties. They still speak their native language, and drink beer instead of iced tea, but now they are growing rice instead of wheat. One of them was Grandma Dolney, a beautiful old lady with snow-white hair who, even though bedfast, was the life of the party when Bob Howe took me out for an evening with her!

Memories came thick and fast in her cheerful family as they began to recall the early days on the Grand Prairie. Money was almost unknown, and the only time they had cash was after the wheat crop was sold. Johnny Garrich, son of Grandma Dolney, was a little boy in the days when wheat was their money crop.

One day, when he was about twelve, Johnny and his sister were sent to market in Stuttgart, with a wagonload of wheat and ten cents with which to buy their lunch. The sister was two years older than Johnny, but Arkansas being Arkansas then as now, Johnny was boss of the expedition. That's how boys rate in this country! They started at daylight, for roads were mere trails in those days, and the horses were slow. All went well until they were about two miles from town. Then, as they were driving off a bridge, the wagon wheel dropped into a hole, and some part of the underpinning was broken. Johnny tried manfully to repair it, but it was beyond his boyish efforts. His sister sat and cried bitter tears, which didn't help at all. If they didn't get their wheat to town, the buyers would go on, and they would be out all around. It was a moment that called for feminine tears.

Finally Johnny unhitched one of the horses and rode it into town.

He returned with a kindly neighbor, who had long since driven in his load of wheat, and the wagon was soon fixed. The kids drove on. They found they had lost their dime in all the commotion. They had no lunch. But they sold the wheat.

Late in the afternoon they started home, just two children driving the team of horses and an empty wagon across the wide prairie. Suddenly a fierce rainstorm came up. Lightning flashed. Thunder roared. Rain poured. The children were without shelter on the wagon seat, and they had been taught to stay away from trees in such a storm. To add to their fears they were scared about the horses. One of them had a way of turning tail and running for dear life when a storm developed, and whether or not he could be held back by the other horse and the youthful driver, they didn't know. They headed the team into the storm and doggedly forced them along.

Somehow they managed to get to a house. They drove the horses right into the clearing and up to the house until their noses touched the log siding. There the kids sat in the rain, holding the reins, until the storm cleared.

By that time it was dark, and in their wet clothes they were chilled to the bone. They were country kids, too, with good healthy appetites and they had had no food since daybreak. They started on toward home. Mile after mile the horses plodded along with the two children on a jolting wagon seat growing more weary at every step.

At last they reached home. Johnny drove the horses into the barnyard. He and his sister jumped down and ran into the house. Both threw themselves down in front of the blazing fireplace and burst into loud weeping.

"Why did you cry after you had reached home safely?" This was my question when Johnny, now a prominent rice farmer, told me the story of that terrible day.

"We were afraid we would be scolded for losing our dime."

With money so scarce, it is easy to understand why farmers on the Grand Prairie watched the growth of Mr. Fuller's first rice crop with mingled anxiety and disdain. The Arkansas farmer is not quick to pick

up new ideas. He has seen a lot of "outsiders" come in and try this or that, and usually end up selling their shirts to get back to the city. The rice crop seemed to be another of those get-rich-quick schemes thought up by someone flying in the face of God and Mother Nature. Their scoffing disdain came true. The rice crop was a failure. Mr. Fuller was a disappointed man indeed. He was no longer young, and his idea had met with little encouragement. If he failed to live long enough to make rice grow on the Grand Prairie, then possibly no one would ever try it.

A year passed before he could make the trip to Louisiana again. Then he went down and worked in the rice fields, learning where he had failed, and absorbing all the knowledge he could get from Louisiana growers. Then, just five springs from the time he had made his first try, he brought back more rice and sowed it on a seventy-acre field. Again he was met with laughter and derision. In fact, the citizens of Hazen and Carlisle, now prominent rice centers, offered a reward of \$1,000 if Mr. Fuller could raise an average of thirty-five bushels an acre on that seventy-acre rice field. Reward, my hat!

They can call it a reward if they like, but anyone familiar with Arkansas knows those good citizens were just betting \$1,000 *it couldn't be done!* All summer long, they haunted that rice field, watching the green sprouts grow taller and taller. Then they saw it become truly a field of golden grain, waving gently in the early autumn breeze, until it looked like a golden sea rippling in the sunlight. Then the rice was harvested.

Mr. Fuller collected his "reward" without question. On his seventy-acre rice field he had raised an average of seventy-five bushels to the acre.

So rice came to the Grand Prairie.

Each year a Rice Carnival is held at Stuttgart, with all the towns in the rice belt joining in the fun. Always the parade includes one bearded old gentleman, representing Mr. Fuller, driving a pair of worn and weary horses hitched to a mud-smeared wagon. In the wagon are a couple of sacks containing seed for two acres. The weary

old fellow means more to the rice belt than the bearded gentleman who traditionally drives eight fleet-footed reindeer hitched to a glittering sleigh.

In his two sacks of rice seed Mr. Fuller brought good homes, automobiles, tractors and college educations.

As a by-product of rice farming, Stuttgart and other parts of the rice country offer duck hunting. In fact, this has become such a famous duck-shooting region that it attracts such sports-world celebrities as Bob Becker, of the *Chicago Tribune*, and Spider Rowland, of the *Arkansas Gazette*. Not that it is any easier for a duck to be shot by a celebrity than by some Arkansas farmer with a .22 rifle, but the names look good in the Stuttgart paper. At the Riceland Hotel in Stuttgart one is practically confronted by the sign: BOB BECKER SLEPT HERE!

Just to see how uncomfortable duck shooting can be, I spent a windy, cold, rainy spring day, quite comparable to autumn weather, at a reservoir where Bob had done most of his hunting. It was a new reservoir, which meant that the trees had not yet been killed by standing with their feet in water the year around. This is the sort of place ducks like best. They fly in at dawn and float around on the water, confidently believing the trees will shield them from all enemies. But just as they fly in, *bang, bang, bang* go the guns of Bob and his fellow hunters.

Long before dawn these hunters must be up and out in the murky darkness, securely wrapped in all the high-priced garments one sees advertised in sports magazines or displayed in the windows of the smarter sportswear shops. They drive to the reservoir and then lie in wait for the unsuspecting game behind a screen that, in my opinion, would fool only a subnormal duckling. When the ducks fly in, the hunters bag their limit, if lucky, and then go back to the hotel where they spend the rest of the day thawing out and telling why they didn't get the big one on the left. It must be very interesting—or perhaps they just like to wear the particular brand of sports clothes that go with duck hunting. I once knew a fellow who took up horseback riding in Chi-

cago because his roommate left a pair of jodhpurs behind when he took a job in another city. The fellow tried on the jodhpurs and thought them so becoming that he went out and hired a horse. By the time the jodhpurs were worn out, he had become the sort of horseman people photograph on bridle paths and had married the daughter of a prominent stable owner.

For several years, I was associated with a radio program which starred Bob Becker—I wrote the commercials—and every Sunday his delightful little blond wife sat in the studio throughout the rehearsal and program busily knitting on the thick wool socks Bob wore on his hunting trips. They were not the sort of socks one would wear in a normal life. I often wondered if perhaps Bob took up duck hunting just to get a chance to wear them and in that way keep from hurting his wife's feelings.

Perhaps not! I often see pictures of duck hunters, and occasionally they aren't Bob.

Duck hunting has brought about a peculiar situation in the rice belt. Although the reservoir owners and rice farmers are associated in a business way throughout the rice-growing season, they get along very nicely. Occasionally one hears a farmer voice a well-spoken gripe because the reservoir owner gets one-fourth of the rice crop without lifting his hand, but it isn't often. However, when the shooting season is on, jealousy rears her ugly head.

When one hears about the ducks flying "in" at dawn, scarcely a person gives a thought to where the ducks have been! Were they flying in from "de Nawth?" Nope! Were they flying in from a lodge meeting, or sitting up with a sick friend? Nope! Were they flying in from a night in the ducks' cafeteria, the rice farmers' fields? That is correct, Oswald! From dark to dawn the ducks were gobbling up gallons of the farmers' rice, but the laws protect ducks on the feeding grounds so stringently that the farmers furnishing the feed can't even take a pot shot at them. At dawn, when the laws allow, the ducks rise and fly straight into the muzzles of the city slickers, who are paying the reservoir owners fifteen dollars a day for the privilege of sitting behind a

makeshift blind. There ain't no jestice, say the farmers. Again they do all the work, and the reservoir man gets all the dark meat!

Stuttgart is a thriving little city of 5,628. It is clean and pretty, with a broad main street and at least one crackin' good hotel, the Riceland. Many of the houses are attractive and spacious, with beautiful lawns and the sort of shrubbery that grows in the Southland. On the street one day I saw a pony phateton filled with laughing youngsters and a beaming colored nurse. Somehow I can't help liking a town that has a pony phaeton in it.

VIII

A Slick Chick—and Diamonds

IF I HAD my way, every school child would be required to study a good stiff course in geology. Even if Johnny will never have any closer association with rocks than a temporary term of making little ones out of big ones, it won't do him any harm. And maybe—who can tell?—little Johnny may some day be an Arkansas Traveler. Then as he tramps over the rocks in the Ozarks and the Ouachitas, he will know whether he is tramping on beds of potential necklaces, gold pieces, or just plain Arkansas.

In Eureka Springs lives one of the most interesting of the Arkansas rock hounds, John Jennings. Several years ago John set about learning why one rock is red and another blue, and what the difference can mean to the world at large. Now he is a recognized authority on the sort of stones one sets in rings, and museums all over the country contain specimens which he has gathered up from creek beds, chiseled out of great old dark caves, and dynamited out of beetle-browed cliffs.

John is easy to find. Just stand on the funny little main street that curves around the mountain and soon you will see a big man coming along with a gunny sack over his shoulder. You'll notice his strong handsome features and the tanned blondness that tells of his outdoor life. But you'll find it hard to think of him as a rock hound. John will be inching a crippled leg along the sidewalk, making his way with the aid of a great hickory staff.

Back in 1937 John fell on a Chicago street and dislocated his hip. He returned to Eureka Springs where he had lived as a boy in a big white

house on the mountainside. There he recovered his good health and the use of his crippled leg. He was just about ready to go back to Chicago when he tripped on a faulty sidewalk and dislocated his hip again. Now to all appearances he was hopelessly crippled and every step was slow and painful. But that didn't get John down. He began to study the rocks in the hills about him. He studied books on semiprecious stones. He wrote to other rock hounds and found what they had to say. He subscribed to magazines that devote pages to items about interesting and valuable rocks. As he grew more and more interested he began to go out in the hills to collect semiprecious stones. It was certainly a difficult task he had set for himself.

He was unable to drive a car, so he inched his way along over hills and through valleys, supporting his huge frame with his heavy staff, and resting when the effort tired him to the dropping point. But these painful journeys into the hills enabled him to send out into the world beautiful rich deep-red jasper, blue chalcedony, creamy onyx and picture agates, as well as blue creek flint, red flint, crystal, jaspachate and many other stones of interesting texture, color and figuration. Some are fine and hard enough to be polished for use in jewelry; others become paperweights, book ends and novelties.

In beautiful Diamond Cave, in Newton County, which contains breath-taking displays of onyx, and in the entertaining Marvel Cave in southern Missouri I have become acquainted with this attractive stone. In both cave trips, however, the owners watched me like a hawk, apparently to see that I didn't slip a six-foot stalactite in my pocket, and I realized that any jewel collecting I might do would have to be carried on out in the open. For that reason I hunted up John Jennings and asked if he wouldn't let me go along on a stone-hunting trip. He agreed, and suggested that we go out to Hog Scald Holler.

I remembered seeing Wilbur Bancroft's movies of Hog Scald Holler, and I couldn't see myself driving my little blue car along the stony bed of a creek or descending a mountainside that went straight down. We convinced Joe Parkhill, who owns the Basin Park Hotel, that he should take a day off. Joe was having help difficulties—as who

hasn't?—and he decided that it would be a relief to get away where guests of the hotel couldn't phone him that the elevator had broken down, the hot water had suddenly turned cold and the maid who made up No. 13 hadn't left any towels. His decision was helped along by the fact that I offered to make a panful of gingerbread and fix a picnic lunch for the three of us.

Just before we reached Hog Scald we saw the cliffs with veins of jasper and chalcedony. Even I would have known they were different.

Most of the bluffs of the Ozarks rise sheer from the valleys, with niches in which grow hardy plants or frustrated trees. These bluffs, however, had rounded, projecting surfaces, as though a heavy weight had been put on the mountaintop when the rocks were soft and hot. There was no place where a bit of soil might lodge and a determined fern take root—nothing but the hard, rounded rock surface. Marks made by John's chisel on a previous stone-gathering trip showed bright blue along the narrow fold. I looked my fill—a whole ledge of chalcedony—enough for necklaces that could be placed end to end and reach around Arkansas. Who wanted that many necklaces? I didn't.

We drove on, with John pointing to this valley or that ravine, where jasper and agate could be found if one wanted to get one's jewelry the hard way. At Hog Scald we stopped to ponder on the old story that gave the odd name to this locality.

Back in the days of the War between the States a band of Confederate soldiers camped at the point where a broad, lively, spring-fed creek flows over a bed of sandstone. Food became low and the men had to butcher some hogs. Now a hog must be scalded before the hair can be scraped off the hams and sides of bacon, and in those days armies didn't carry barrels in which a 300-pound hog might be ge-dunked.

The army seemed to be stymied until one of the boys in gray had the bright idea of scalding the hog in the creek's icy waters. At the time it must have seemed like the neatest trick of the week, and it succeeded, believe it or not! One group of soldiers hastily constructed a crude dam and temporarily diverted the flowing water of the creek. A

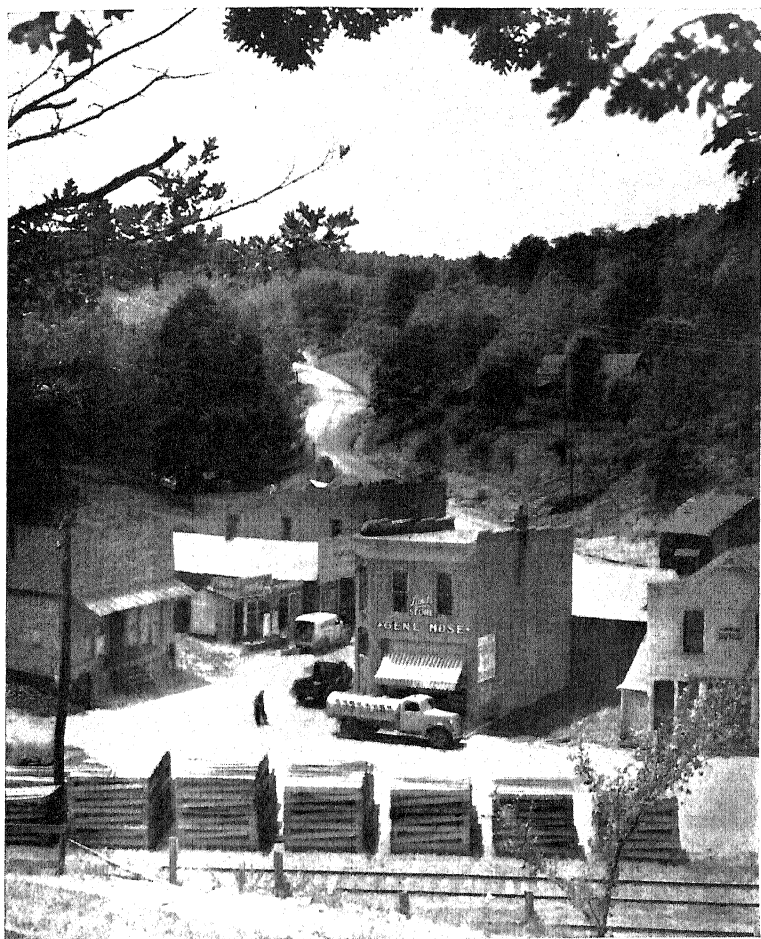
second group built a great fire and began to heat rocks. As the stream was turned aside, the smooth deep hollows in its sandstone bed, worn by years of erosion, were left filled with still, clear water. Into these basins, the soldiers dumped the hot rocks, after they had eased them to the edge of the bank with stout sticks. As the rocks cooled the water was warmed, and by the simple process of rolling in more hot rocks and taking out the cooled ones, the water eventually became scalding hot. Since the basins were wide and deep, even the biggest hogs could be scalded successfully, and to this day the region is known as Hog Scald Holler.

John could point out the direction from which the soldiers had come, and the mountain over which they climbed when they resumed their journey with a wagonload of fresh pork, and I almost forgot why we had come. At last John began to make his painful way up and down the stony road, picking up bits of jasper and fossil specimens, while I walked along beside him, finding nothing except some ordinary bits of stone and funny-looking bugs. Joe discovered the gingerbread and did some research toward seeing if the next piece would taste as good as the one he had just finished.

Suddenly I realized that my urge to collect a bucketful of jewels had collapsed. It was spring in the Ozarks. The sunshine was warm and bright on my bare head. The water was deliciously cool on my feet as I stood in the creek to take pictures of my companions and of a queer little waterfall that had worn a corkscrew path in the hard white sandstone. And it had been a long time since breakfast.

We got back into the car and drove another mile along the creek. There, at a point where the stream became a broad sparkling river, and we could look upstream to a lively, glistening waterfall, we made camp and set the coffee to boiling in the enameled pot.

A black walnut log lay handy for sitting, and a bad case of spring-feveritis soon had us hating to get up, once we had got down! I had brought along a precious pound of bacon, expecting to cut branches on which it might be broiled over the fire. However, the effort of finding green branches among the yet-winter-bare bushes and trees that lined



Arkansas hills are still dotted with quiet little towns reached by winding wooded roads. In foreground: ties cut by Arkansas woodsmen in hill forests.



Now you know why the biggest peaches are always on top. Nimble-fingered packers arrange them that way! Scene in packing shed during Arkansas Peach Harvest.

the river was too much for us. Luckily two little girls came wading across the creek on their way home from the mailbox. They were chums who lived along the river and each was pretty as a picture—Mary Ellen, eleven, with blue eyes and dark hair, and Lula May, thirteen, with blond hair and the peaches-and-cream complexion of an English beauty. We asked if they knew where we might borrow a skillet in which our bacon might be fried! Oh, yes, they would go to Mary Ellen's house and get one. Where was Mary Ellen's house? Right up there! They pointed straight up—and there at the top of the sheer mountainside was an unpainted little frame house that seemed to peer over the edge.

We watched the girls skip nimbly up a cliff that would have baffled a mountain goat. Suddenly we heard a mighty clatter and clanging and a wide tin skillet bounded into our midst. A few minutes later the girls came down the mountain, with Mary Ellen rubbing her elbow and other portions of her anatomy. She had fallen down and dropped the skillet, which came on under its own power.

We fried the bacon, heated the baked beans and settled back to eat. The girls sat on the walnut log, smilingly interested in all our gay chatter and awkward cooking efforts. We urged them to share our lunch, but they turned down everything, including the gingerbread. Later, when we had grown to know one another better, I insisted on knowing why they had turned down our food.

"There was jis' enough for you-uns," they said.

As we ate, we talked of the jewels that may be found in the hills and of the pearls that are found in White River.

John told of a farm near by—he spoke as though it might be within five miles of our campfire—where there is a deposit of the blue clay in which diamonds are found. Once the owner dug down six feet, looking for diamonds. When none had been found at that depth, his burst of enthusiasm was "plumb wore out," so he said to hell with this diamond business and went fishing. John told us, too, of his belief that gold may be found in Arkansas. At one time he leased what he called a "chunk of land" for a year, paid twenty-five dollars for the lease, and

actually prospected for gold. He found some. But just how much, he didn't say! Now he is interested in looking for jade, which he is sure he can find in these rocky hills.

Lunch over and plates scraped, Joe tilted his hat over his eyes and settled himself for a nap where no irate guest or disgruntled employee could disturb his slumbers. John went off along a ravine on his search for the elusive jade. The girls and I wandered down the stream looking for any sort of stones that would interest us. We finally settled on three different kinds (1) Indian Dream Stones, mottled black and white stones that are said to make dreams come true if you slip them under your pillow at night. I wasn't much interested in these rocks, for sometimes I dream I am back working in a city and heaven knows I wouldn't want that dream to come true. (2) Wishing Stones. These have a hole worn through them by the action of running water, and are found only in creek beds! If you wish on one, particularly one found right in the water and not up on the bank, your wish is simply bound to come true, say hill girls. (3) Just any pretty stones. These we expected to keep for ourselves. The others we would pile up and hold for city visitors who need wishing stones and dream stones more than we do.

While we waded in the clear cold water, or trudged along the sliding white stones that had been left exposed, when the river narrowed its channel, to look like the whitening bones of animals on the desert, the girls talked to me. They told me of their yearly twenty-four weeks of school, which let out in February. It seemed like a very small amount for a year—only six months—and many days must be missed because the creek is often too high to wade across. But schooling does not give one all the education needed in the hills. I found the girls could teach me much.

They taught me to stay clear of piles of driftwood because water moccasins lurk there. They showed me clear, deep pools under overhanging rocks and told me of the big fish that could be caught in them. They showed me a natural swimming pool and pointed out the sheltering rock behind which a girl could change her clothes without

being seen from the rocky road that ran along the riverbank. They called me "Mergie" because the name Marge seemed hard and unfriendly alongside their double names, and my years rolled away.

We piled our rocks along the creek bank, then retrieved them in basket and bucket on our way back to the camp site. There John identified those we didn't know. Many were of the type that might be cut and polished, if we had known anyone who could cut and polish. Others, usually the ones we had cherished most, were not worth throwing at a calf, he said. If he had found jade on his solitary rambling, he didn't let us in on the secret.

Perhaps this happy-go-lucky day of jewel hunting explains why semi-precious stones can lie undisturbed in Arkansas for countless years. What do we need with jewels? We have our jade in the new green leaves of the willows. Our turquoise is the sky. Our gold is the bright sunshine. Our diamonds are the sparkling ripples of clear, spring-fed streams. Our rubies are the brilliant cardinal flowers and the birds that bear the same name. And for pearls—well, John, Joe and I would say, "Just look at Lula May's teeth."

The discovery of a diamond mine near Murfreesboro, in Pike County, as told to me by Tom Shiras, Walkin' Editor of the Ozarks and one of the publishers of the *Baxter County* (Mountain Home, Arkansas) *Bulletin*, is one of the classics of the hills.

A part of the farm owned by John M. Huddleston, a little more than three miles beyond Murfreesboro, was, a complete loss as farm land. It was clay of a peculiar bluish color, and probably the most unfertile bit of soil in all the Ouachitas. Mr. Huddleston had owned it for six years, and it grew no better year by year. He had formed the habit of walking over it frequently, and occasionally he picked up bits of stone and carried them home—funny-looking bits of stone, sort of shiny-like.

One day he noticed the baby playing with one. The dirt had been rubbed away, and even Mr. Huddleston, whose knowledge of diamonds was not what you might call professional, recognized the stone

as something out of the ordinary. He got on his mule to ride to town and have it 'looked at' by a jeweler. He dismounted at the gate to close it behind him, and there at his feet was another of the peculiar stones. So he had two to show the jeweler. The jeweler promptly said he believed they were diamonds, but wanted to send them on to Little Rock for a more expert opinion.

Mr. Huddleston mounted his mule and rode home, and we can only guess at the thoughts in his mind. Perhaps he had visions of a life of travel, a playboy life, with boxes at the opera and horses running in the Derby, and obsequious bows from headwaiters at all the smartest places. Perhaps he planned a model farm, with milking machines—or were they invented before 1906?—and underground sprinkling systems. Or maybe it was raining and he had to watch where the mule stepped to keep it from stumbling.

At any rate, he had worked out a financial plan by the following day. Early in the morning he went to the spot where the stone had been found, that strange spot with bluish clay, and there he was soon approached by a panting stranger, who had run a zigzag course through the farm.

"How much do you want for this farm?" asked the stranger.

Mr. Huddleston, according to Mr. Shiras, knew exactly how much he wanted. He had figured out how much it would take to set himself up on a nice little 160-acre farm, one without any of that dad-gummed unfertile blue-clay stuff, and a farm for his son, and a little over to keep him in eatin' tobacco if there came a time when he didn't feel like farming. He answered promptly, "Thirty-eight thousand dollars."

The stranger managed to sputter that it was highway robbery, that it was outrageous to ask so much for such an ornery old farm.

"All right," returned Mr. Huddleston, "eff'n you don't want to pay it, I reckon that feller over yander behind that tree will give it."

The panting stranger had thought himself quite alone when he made the trip to the Huddleston farm, but he had been followed by another eager would-be purchaser who thought cannily that he would hide. When Mr. Huddleston's sharp eyes detected the man, the first stranger

drew out his checkbook and wrote a check for \$38,000 without a moment's hesitation.

This is the story as Mr. Shiras told it to me. If it turns out that the "baby" who was playing with the diamond was eighteen years old, and the man behind the tree was in cahoots with the first man, I'll still take this story in preference to the less spectacular ones that have found their way into public print.

For many years the mine was open to visitors. The Arkansas Travelers of those days could pay five dollars and be privileged to keep all diamonds they picked up, if any! Diamonds were mined steadily, and while they were not spectacular, still they were diamonds. Some, according to tales that have now become legends, were as big as forty carats, and quite usable as sets in rings, necklaces and tiaras. Others were the type that can be used in tools that require hard cutting surfaces.

For the past few years the mine has been closed, and, so the whispers went through the hills, it was owned by foreign diamond interests.

"And do you know why they keep it closed?" the whisperers would murmur in your ear. "Because if they let our diamonds get out into the world the bottom would drop out of the market! That's just how many there are shut up in that old mine!"

Recently American interests are reported to have purchased the mine. We hope the report is true. It gives Arkansans an opportunity for button-snapping boasting: Arkansas—the state of bare feet and appalling ignorance, in the opinion of the world at large—has the only diamond mine on this side of the globe.

If you drive along the highway toward Hog Scald Holler after the road graders have been at work, you will see more of that strange bluish clay.

A recent clipping from the *Arkansas Gazette* gives a hint of the vast mineral resources of the state. "Included in the mineral resources," runs the clipping, "are both bituminous and semianthracite coal, lignite, lead and zinc ores, copper and manganese; also marble, slate,

granite, and a valuable honestone. Bauxite ore is also mined in large quantities."

The modern Arkansas Traveler is just a few years, perhaps a generation, late in visiting the lead and zinc mines of Arkansas. The miners of the hills were a different breed from the farmers. The farmers plodded along, frugal and thrifty, knowing that it took a year to produce a crop—and why should they hurry? They took no chances, not even in prophesying about the weather. To this day you can ask a native Arkansas farmer if he thinks it is going to rain, and nine times out of ten he will say cautiously, "Hit might do it. . . . But I hain't a-sayin' what it will do. I ain't neither a fool n'r a newcomer!"

Miners who were prospecting for the fabulous lead and zinc known to be hidden in the hills had an entirely different philosophy. It is true they were poor on Tuesday, but on Wednesday they might find a mine and be rich! That made frugality and thrift look like unnecessary virtues. Phooey! "Spend what we have today. Tomorrow . . ."

Oh, blissful tomorrow! For many of the miners it never arrived. For some it came, bringing the longed-for riches, and whether or not riches brought happiness was a personal matter. Sometimes, according to stories told in the hills, a group of miners would own a mine collectively and work it together. At the end of the week they would gather all the money coming to them from the men who had bought their ore. Then they would sit down with the stack of silver dollars and change before them. One of them would deal out the dollars as he might deal out cards. *One for you, Shorty, one for Tom, one for Bill, one for me, one for Shorty, one for Tom, one for Bill, one for me—* and so on, until the stack, down to the last penny, had been equally divided. Perhaps that is where we get the term "cash on the barrel-head"!

Few of the zinc mines are in operation now, and again there are whispers about the price being kept up by limiting the supply. In Newton County are seen the decaying remnants of old shafts, and piles of odd stones that have been brought up out of the earth. Undoubtedly the tree-covered hills hide many a fortune in this or other minerals. A

Chicagoan has invested many thousands of dollars in an ore crusher at Jasper, but it stands idle. He has long been convinced it would be a simple matter to ship out the pure mineral, rather than incur the expense of shipping tons of limestone for every ton of pure mineral. He has a good idea, particularly for Newton County, where hauling must be done by trucks because no railroad crosses the county.

If the honestone mentioned in the *Gazette's* news item refers to the familiar whetstone, you can bet your bottom dollar it is found in Arkansas. And the old-timers say the best whetstone rock is always found on the north side of a mountain at an angle of forty-five degrees. That is one of the superstitions May Kennedy McCord, a KWTQ radio star, relates in her *Hillbilly Heartbeats*, but even so, it is probably based on some fact, like most hill superstitions. What a campaign an advertising agency could whip up for a whetstone firm if it could prove that all its whetstones came from a forty-five-degree angle of an Arkansas Mountain! I can fairly see the long-whiskered, barefoot mountaineers, à la *Esquire*, who would be drawn by chuckling city artists to illustrate the campaign. And the last laugh would be a loud heehaw from the mountaineer who had received big money for the whetstones he had once given for free.

The bauxite of Arkansas was one of the great surprises of the war years. Our state had long been known to contain the only worth-while deposits in North America. Small secondary amounts had been found in Alabama and Georgia, but they were peanuts compared to the mine here. In fact, Arkansas had a town called Bauxite because of the rich deposits found near by. Bauxite, as of course you know, is the principal ingredient of aluminum. In spite of the fact that a great deal of aluminum was made in this country in prewar years, very little of our Arkansas bauxite was used, because it could be obtained more cheaply from foreign countries. Ships returning from the far-off places where bauxite was mined could bring back loads of the valuable mineral as ballast, and unload it for practically nothing in America. The Arkansas prod-

uct was used chiefly as a club to keep down the prices of the imported product—or perhaps that was another of those whispers. At any rate, the plan worked very well, until the war came along. Then enemy submarines consistently picked off ships loaded with bauxite.

With the foreign supply of bauxite suddenly shut off, United States engineers began to look toward the bauxite supply down there in Arkansas. With all possible haste they set to work to locate additional deposits in the vicinity of the original one. When evidences were found near Little Rock, A. J. Hoffman, of Louisville, Kentucky, formerly of North Adams, Michigan, was engaged to drill test holes. It was not the first time Mr. Hoffman and his rig had been called on to work in Arkansas, but it was the first time he had met Grandma Gracie Lorey.

Granny Lorey had lived for years back of the small white country church a few miles from Little Rock. Never in all those years had she thought someone would bring a great big chugging machine into her front yard and commence digging holes. And least of all did Granny suspect that she would turn out to be the richest woman in her aid society. In her seventy-five years she had never asked for more than just her chickens, her garden and the little money folks paid her for bringin' babies into the world. To her it probably looked like the work of the Devil himself when those holes began to show up.

Mr. Hoffman never expected to dig holes in Granny Lorey's yard, or in the churchyard. It was just one of those things that happen in the mining business. The chain of events began when the workers who were helping drill the holes established a trailer camp in the grove of pines that stood behind the pretty little white church. Back of the pines was Granny's ramshackle cabin and chicken coop. The trailer people meant no harm to the church, or to her—they just asked to live and let live until the test holes had been established.

The government, however, has a way of looking after the health of its workers, and it was decreed that the trailer camp needed a bigger and better water supply.

The man in charge of the camp came to Mr. Hoffman and said he had been told that a well must be drilled at once, or the camp would

be disbanded. Would Mr. Hoffman, he pleaded, bring his drilling rig over to the pine grove and drill a well? In the emergency the government officials who had hired Mr. Hoffman willingly gave permission. Since the church stood to get a nice deep well free, the trustees likewise gave permission. Mr. Hoffman rolled the rig over and drilling began.

Only a short distance down, the crew ran into signs that pointed to the presence of bauxite. Hastily the engineers were called in. They could hardly believe it, for the point at which they had expected bauxite was quite a distance away. However, when tests were made, it was bauxite all right, and furthermore, the new deposit had all the earmarks of being greater than those uncovered in the other test holes. The engineers began further investigation of the new area. For the next digging spot they chose Granny's front dooryard. What would she say about that?

Mr. Hoffman went to call on Grandma Lorey. He asked if he could buy her cabin.

"No, suh," replied Granny indignantly. "When Paw died, he said to me, 'Maw, the Lord put you here in this cabin and don't you move until the Lord tells you to.' So I ain't a-goin' to move out of this-yere cabin."

It looked bad for bauxite.

Mr. Hoffman began a lecture on patriotism. He told Granny how desperately Uncle Sam needed airplanes, and to make them he needed aluminum. But he couldn't make aluminum unless he had bauxite, because four and a half pounds of bauxite go into every pound of aluminum. There in the Lorey dooryard the Lord had seen fit to put enough bauxite to fill the sky with airplanes. Now was she going to sit back and refuse to let Uncle Sam have that bauxite, or was she going to be patriotic and give it up? Uncle Sam was willing to pay her well. She would get something for every pound of bauxite dug out of her dooryard, and besides that, he would build her a nice new cabin at any spot she saw fit to choose. She would have a lot of money—maybe as much as \$20,000.

"How much real money is that?" asked Granny.

When Mr. Hoffman explained what could be done with \$20,000, Grandma Lorey was almost persuaded.

"Paw said I shouldn't move off'n this farm until the Lord said I orter! But, maybe Uncle Sam's got jis' as much to say about things as the Lord!"

Apparently Granny was weakening. But suddenly she was reminded of one more thing her husband had said. He had told her she must always ask Uncle Mack's advice when problems came up.

"Who is Uncle Mack?" asked Mr. Hoffman.

"Who's Uncle Mack?" repeated Granny indignantly. "Why, he's the smartest man in Little Rock! Every time the Governor sees him on the street he stops to ask him 'bout things."

Uncle Mack proved to be a smart legal adviser. He told Granny to give the farm to Uncle Sam. Mr. Hoffman brought over a government engineer as Uncle Sam's personal representative, and the deal was made.

The contract with the church was made with less effort. Of course it meant giving up the beautiful grove of pines, but when sentiment was weighed against patriotism, with considerable financial reward thrown in, sentiment hadn't a chance. On Tuesday morning the rig was moved over to Granny's farm and the work was about to begin. Granny, who had been permitted to stay on in her house until a new one could be built for her, came tearing out, her faded old blue eyes fairly shooting sparks. "You git that contraption away from here! No diggin' till Friday!" she said, firmly. "My old hen's a-settin' in that coop. All that poundin' and thumpin' is bound to addle them aigs."

Mr. Hoffman laughed and put his hand in his pocket. "I'll just buy that hen and those eggs," he said.

"No, sir," returned Granny. "She's my best dominecker. And besides, ain't Uncle Sam a-sayin' for us to raise all the eats we can? You jis' wait till Friday when that dominecker gits them aigs hatched."

Arguments about the pressing need for airplanes went unheeded. They waited.

Later, when the drilling was under way, another problem arose. The

more adventurous young chickens felt compelled to investigate the sticky, slimy waste product from bauxite drilling. One little fellow ventured too far and became engulfed. Granny fished him out and hunted up Mr. Hoffman.

"See what you done," she said, holding the very dead chicken in the palm of her hand. "The best chicken in th' whole flock. Dead as a doornail! He'd a-growed up a mighty fine rooster. Wouldn't he a-tasted good, all fried brown an' cracklin'?" Mmm! Mmmm!"

Mr. Hoffman fished a dollar out of his pocket and gave it to her. A couple of days later she came up with another thoroughly slimy chicken, apparently breathing his last. She got another dollar. After that it was a daily occurrence for Granny to receive a dollar for a half-dead chicken. At last one of the workmen noticed that though a chicken apparently died each day, the flock remained the same. A little sleuthing went on. It was discovered that Grandma Lorey and the chicken had developed a well-paying racket. The chicken got in the mud and Granny collected her dollar. Then she washed off the distressed chick, dried him out in the oven, fed him well and at bedtime returned him to his mother.

As tests in the state laboratory established Grandma Lorey's royalties on the bauxite, the daily dollar became literally chicken feed. She began to make so much money that Uncle Mack had to give up his job and set up a cot in her kitchen so he could be on hand to offer financial advice at all times. Various nephews and nieces gave up their jobs in factory and field and came "home" to "take care" of Grandma. That was all right with the kindly old hill woman. She loved the bustling activity of her new household and as for folding money—well, she had enough for all!

Eventually the cabin and the chicken coop had to go. Mr. Hoffman made his word good. On a bustling highway where Grandma can watch the cars whizz past, he built a nice home for her. There Granny lives today in peace and affluence, surrounded by her kinfolks and the dominecker and a brand-new brood. Who of us can say that

Paw was mistaken when he told Granny the Lord had put her in that little cabin behind the church house?

As for the church, it has been moved across the road and there it stands with a mountain of bauxite as backdrop for its countrified whiteness. With financial success, other successes have come. In the old days it counted twenty-eight loyal members a big congregation. Now it has sixty who attend regularly. Preaching was held every other week in the old days, now there is preaching every Thursday and Sunday.

With his job near Little Rock finished, Mr. Hoffman went on to further testing. He drilled for and found titanium at Magnet Cove, manganese at Wildcat Mountain, and both lead and zinc near Jasper. The last time I saw him he was drilling for oil on top of Carrolton Dome, eighteen miles from Harrison. The job seemed very dull because he was fairly certain oil wouldn't be found. Besides, he said, he missed Granny Lorey!

Crossett—Child of the Forests

I HAD been in Mississippi on my way to the azalea show at Natchez, and suddenly I was homesick for Arkansas. Possibly I had grown weary of the Mississippi landscape where miles of be-draggled cotton patches, sodden under March rains, were spotted with scabby little brown unpainted shacks. I tried to vision it as it would look later, when the beautiful green cotton plants with their lovely white and rose blossoms would make one think of all the Sunny South songs one has ever heard, but somehow I was an uncompromising realist that day. To relieve the boredom of the long trip, I turned off the highway when I saw a sign reading: LYON 1 MILE. (Or maybe it was two miles.) My name is Lyon, and it suddenly occurred to me that it would be fun to send cards postmarked Lyon to all my friends back in the hills.

I found the post office with little trouble—a drab little building in a funny little town. The woman behind the window handed me a sheaf of cards, on which I wrote messages and then the addresses of friends. I asked the clerk if she would be very, very careful that the postmarks were legible. She started to practice on a piece of blank paper—apparently it had never before been necessary to make postmarks clear. With great care she laid a circular rubber stamp down on an ink pad and then, holding it gingerly, pressed it firmly on the paper. Possibly she was seeing how many impressions she could get from one moistening—I wouldn't know. A couple of stamp customers had drifted in and stood at the window waiting.

Suddenly a small boy rushed in. "Didja know they killed three snakes at the house next door?"

"Three snakes! All at one time!" The clerk was visibly impressed. "Yup! Right under the window. Right in the flower bed."

The two customers dashed out, either to see the snakes or because they feared the neighborhood might be infested with reptiles. The postal clerk waited on another customer or two and then went back to stamping practice marks. Another woman came into the post office and went through the door into the sacred precincts behind the barred windows. The exciting news was relayed to her, and she peered anxiously behind mailbags. She busied herself with some packages that had come in while Clerk No. 1 at last ventured cautiously to put postmarks on my cards.

Suddenly Clerk No. 2 began making little exclamations like "Ugh! What's this?" She shook one hand as a cat shakes a paw after it has dipped into a fish bowl. Then she wiped her hand on a dustcloth, looked at it, sniffed it and exclaimed, "I declare to gracious! The colored woman who just brought in that package has pasted the label on with molasses!"

Often in my childhood, when sorghum molasses was as common as second-grade brown syrup is nowadays, I had wanted to substitute it for paste, which had to be "boughten"! Somehow I never had the nerve of that woman.

I thought of more friends who might like cards postmarked Lyon. I bought another sheaf of them from Clerk No. 1 and wrote my messages while the elderly woman, who seemed to possess the greater authority, washed her hands and repasted the label, sputtering with annoyance.

At intervals, someone would come in and exclaim, "Killed three snakes next door!"

At last I had the cards written and seemed to have no more excuse for hanging around. I took the cards to the window for their postmarks. For some reason Clerk No. 1 had busied herself with something else, and the woman who had had molasses on her hands came to wait on me. I explained to her why I wanted the postmarks to be clear.

She was still in a sniffing mood. The whole idea seemed utterly ridiculous to her. What a morning! she seemed to be thinking. Three snakes next door! A label pasted on with molasses! And now an *idiot*! She seemed overwhelmed with the lousy deal fate was handing out to her. She inked the stamp, spread the cards on the table and thumped on them just as she would have if I had not given her my long personal rigamarole. Bing! Bing! Bing! *Bing!* BING!

I asked if I might see the cards. They were just what I had expected. The first one was quite good, the second less so, and the others were almost entirely illegible, both from lack of ink and from the force of the blow. Oh, well, the first ones were O.K.

I got into my car, peering at the house next door. It was a very attractive little brick house, with a neat lawn in which spring flowering shrubs were foaming with bloom. Not a snake in sight!

Later, when *Mademoiselle* had printed one of my stories, I received a long letter from Mrs. Olive Edwards of Lyon, Mississippi, and discovered she had long been an ardent Ozark fan. I'm sorry I didn't know about her that morning. I would have enjoyed lingering a few hours to see if any more snakes turned up or if another colored woman got another bright idea.

Late in the afternoon I turned off toward Greenville, where a bridge would lead me across the river and into Arkansas. At Greenville I found a good tourist court, with a restaurant where food was both good and moderately priced. I found also an antique shop equal to any in the South. Into my already loaded car I put a big punch bowl that had stood on a table in Jefferson Davis' house! When I brought it home the Judge couldn't see a bit of the Jefferson Davis glamour; it would have been a hell of a lot luckier all round for the Lyon family, said he, if I had found a good coffeepot standing on the table that had stood in Jefferson Davis' home.

Crossing the Greenville Bridge is well worth the dollar it costs for you and your car to make the trip over the Mississippi. It is a high, curving bridge that seems to sweep you right up into the air above the mundane water and earth. It was muddy, swirling water on that

March day, and earth that steamed beneath the hot sunshine. I longed to stop on the bridge and take a picture, but signs told me to keep going and looked as if they meant it. After I'd crossed the bridge it was a different matter. I parked the car at the incline on the Arkansas side, and took pictures from above and below the bridge. As a tip to photogs, I might add that the one below was the better of the two and it was interesting when projected on the screen.

It seemed good to be back in Arkansas, although the flat country bore little resemblance to the hills in which I live. Before I had gone many miles on Highway 82 I met a herd of cattle. Never on an Arkansas highway have I seen so much beefsteak on the hoof. They were white-faced Herefords—the popular Arkansas breed—and made a beautiful picture in the sunshine. I drove to the side of the road and stopped. By chance I was just opposite the gate through which the cattle would be driven. When a man on horseback turned them into the gate, they seemed to flow through it like water in the channel I had just crossed. Another man, who stood at the gate, counted them as they passed him, and promptly rolled off the score: Two hundred seventeen cows. Eleven calves. Three bulls. I had tried to count the shining red animals, but had bogged down hopelessly when I ran out of fingers.

Twice more on the road I stopped for pictures.

Once I found a little building draped with a most enchanting growth of wisteria. Not a sprig of green could be seen. Orchid and pale purple blossoms cascaded across the entire front, the long clusters hanging like great pendants from the edge of the shading tin canopy.

Again I stopped when I reached a little red school for colored children. It was recess time, and the youngsters were whooping it up in the schoolyard, with gleaming white teeth shining from dusky faces. Their teacher smiled from the doorway and gave me permission to take a picture. A youngster about six years old shyly peeked around the door and then darted back like a little quail. I begged her to come out. The teacher joined me in urging. "She's the cutest little thing," she said.

I felt that teacher was cut out for her job. When I held up the light meter to take the necessary reading for the operation of my camera, she came close. She had never seen one and was eager to learn just what it was and what purpose it served. I felt inadequate trying to explain, for to me the light meter is something like the radio and God. But I was delighted with the eagerness of her mind, and the speed with which she grasped the value of such a photographic aid. I know she is a good teacher.

Farther along I came into hills, beautiful hills around which the graveled highway swept with widened curves. Then there were pines, tall, straight, lovely trees that grew close to the edge of the road and gave it the effect of an avenue lined with towering green walls. Occasionally I passed a rutted road that slipped through the forest to the highway. Often these little roads had piles of great logs waiting at their mouths, thick-trunked logs of amazing length. In our hills we have only scattered trees of such size. . . . Trucks piled high with enormous logs rattled past me as I stopped to drink in the beauty of those wooded hills. Here was the forest primeval—bless its darling heart!

Suddenly, as I swept over a hill, I blinked at the scene below!

A big truck, the sort used by farmers rather than by commercial concerns, was lying on its side in the ditch at the left of the road. Coming through the window of the cab was a young fellow in shirt sleeves. His speed was incredible. First his head popped up like a Jack-in-the-box, then his shoulders, and before I could count three he had swung up his legs and leaped nimbly to the ground. He sat down on the bank and rubbed his arm, without taking his eyes off his load of logs listing sidewise.

I hurried down the road, stopped my car, jumped out, ran to the man, asked if he were injured. He said he thought his arm was broken! But he could move it all right, and I had seen him support himself with both arms while he swung up his legs. He explained his haste in getting out. He was afraid the truck would catch fire. Apparently new, the truck was not going to go up in smoke. He said he had no explanation for the wreck. He was just driving along on the smooth

road, the end car of a group of three, when all at once the car just started to turn to the left and nothing he could do would stop it. In another instant it had gone over to the ditch and lain down, like a tired dog. The other two cars were so far ahead we couldn't signal them. In an instant they disappeared beyond the last hilltop. As we talked, a man who lived near the wreck came down the hill and spoke to the young fellow, calling him by name.

Crossett was just ahead. I passed other log trucks with caution, fearful that one might take to the ditch without giving me time to get out of the way.

Crossett is a town of perhaps 5,000 people, situated alongside the great mills that give it life. Somehow the scene reminded me of our Plymouth Rock hen sitting quietly under the hydrangea bush while her busy little white chicks scratched away in the lillies of the valley. Perhaps the comparison wasn't apt, for only a few of the houses were white. The others were pale gray. Without reservation I can say that Crossett is the cleanest town in Arkansas. I couldn't find an alley where rat-infested, sagging buildings threatened to crumple at the next storm. The streets were wide and pleasant. The business district had the air of an unusually neat suburban town. Lawns were tidy. The whole ensemble, one might say, was reminiscent of the idyllic villages one builds under a Christmas tree.

In 1900 men came to the region to buy timber. They decided to build a mill twelve miles west of Hamburg. Families came with the men who worked in the mill and for years they lived in tents. Then the mill owners founded the town of Crossett and planned it wisely with wide streets, straight and regular. The company owns every house on every street. The town governs itself, has aldermen and a mayor, a Junior Chamber of Commerce and a Rotary Club. A country club with a nine-hole golf course flourishes, and the women have a thriving club.

The school buildings are excellent, beautiful and modern—one grade school for the white children and one for colored children, and a consolidated high school.

During the war 1,030 Crossett boys went into service, and the nineteen who were killed in action are perhaps the only ones who failed to come back home after the war.

The retail stores are leased and operated independently, but since practically all the clerks belong to families of mill employees, they are far from being "outside" concerns. Of the four groceries, two are chain stores and two are independently owned. The movie theater is owned and operated by an experienced showman. The pulpits of the two churches, Methodist and Baptist, are occupied by ministers paid by the congregation.

The Crossett Companies cut 65 percent yellow pine and 35 percent mixed hardwoods, including oak, gum, sycamore, willow and other woods. Their Arkansas holdings in Drew, Ashley and Union Counties, and in Moorehouse Parish in Louisiana, are divided into districts. Each district has its own trained graduate forester. Fire towers are located in each, and fire hazards are decreased by an educational program. The old idea that woods should be burned over each year to kill ticks is hard to destroy, but with heart and soul the Crossett Companies are trying to tell their neighbors it is a gross misconception.

They are pioneers in managed forests. Systematic reforestation is being carried out. Only trees above twelve inches are cut; the others are left to grow into big fellows. It is a sort of religion with the Crossett Companies to keep the forests coming on for the benefit of future generations. The old idea of *cut and get out*, which has made naked waste of acres of hill land, is as repugnant to them as it is to the rest of us who love trees. Probably more so! After all, they must have trees in order to have business.

In the Crossett Mills there is no waste! Every splinter of every tree is utilized. Lumber-size logs go to the sawmill, the thinnings to the paper mill, and the scraps to the chemical company. In the research laboratory new processes are constantly being developed to put the bounty of the magnificent Arkansas forests to utmost advantage.

In 1933 the Crossett Companies deeded 1,600 acres to the U. S.

Government Southern Forest Experimental Station. They have been divided into plots. Here the government is learning more about systematic cutting and reforestation. The findings are, of course, available to all other growers. In 1937 the paper mill was established. Throughout the war, cartons for ammunition and other materials were manufactured, and the sawmill division was given an E award with three stars. The employees are unionized with the American Federation of Labor, and through the years a fine record of amicable relations has been maintained.

The mills are awe-inspiring in their vastness. A mile-long loading deck alongside the railroad seems to extend right into the heart of Arkansas. The machines for handling the logs and lumber seem something Rube Goldberg might have thought up. Lumber is piled into great bunks, containing, I presume, a certain amount of footage. When a bunk must be moved from one spot to another, a machine that looks like an oil derrick or the tower of a windmill on wheels straddles the great cube. Hoists are attached to the chains binding the lumber and it is lifted high enough to clear the platform. Then off goes the jitney to another spot where it lays the lumber egg.

On this deck one sees boards that will become fine wood flooring, furniture, woodwork, station-wagon bodies or houses. Sometime I shall go back to Crossett and find out all about those amazing transformations. I shall investigate the rotary limekiln which they say is the longest in the United States. Inch by inch I shall watch the process by which pitch from the logs is salvaged for automobile casings. Years ago it was just dumped for lack of a market. Now billets of wood are sent to tanks where they are mixed with digesters. They turn into pulp, and the black liquor produced is pumped to a recovery room where it is cracked.

I took notes like mad, for I was most impressed. In technical matters, however, I speedily bog down. I found myself veering off to the sprightly observation that lilies are growing in the Crossett log pond. That makes me recall that logs are dunked in the pond before they go into the mill, and the pond is cleaned out periodically. But why logs

should be dunked, and for how long, will remain two of the many questions that puzzle me. Well, after all, I have no thought of starting a mill. I am willing to leave such an ambitious endeavor to the enterprising men who built a town back at the turn of the century. If they have whipped up new methods for hemstitching logs into picot-edged shingles, who am I to try to ferret out the hows and wherefores?

As an Arkansas Traveler, I was far more interested in the fact that the hotel, the Rose Inn, is a honey. Usually I am an unobtrusive guest, taking what is given me in the way of rooms with only the minimum of complaint, and going my quiet way. At Crossett I appeared at my worst. Against my will I had to ask many favors. I had Judy with me. She had caught cold on the trip and developed a bad cough, which sounded like a mule starting a large and obnoxious bray. One time at the English Inn, at Hollister, Missouri, someone had pounded on the wall when the Jedge and Judy were doing a snoring duo in the twin bed next to the wall. That was pianissimo compared to Judy's cough. When the absence of tourist courts in Crossett forced us into the hotel, I had visions of sitting up all night administering cough medicine whenever she began the gentle wheeze that preceded her wracking cough. With that in mind I asked for a room as far removed from other guests as possible. Instead of the fishy eye which implies you'll-take-what-we-give-you-and-like-it, I was given a large corner room at the back of the building, next to the room in which the waitresses changed clothes. Probably my own confident assurance that Judy could cough her head off without disturbing anyone was the reason why the little dog slept peacefully and quietly all night. Or possibly the pure country air had a beneficial effect!

I had had trouble getting food for her! She is a meat eater. Many eating places I had encountered along the way had the number of meals they could serve limited to the portions of meat they could get. When I went into the Rose Inn dining room, I found the food delicious and well served. The waitresses seemed to feel that a lone woman who might leave nothing but a thin dime was not just cluttering up a table that might otherwise be occupied by great big generous males. I was

cheered to the point of asking the pretty girl in the snow-white uniform if I could be assured of meat for my dog when I ate my supper. Point two for the hotel! Judy feasted on roast beef and fried liver, plus one of my chicken croquettes, and perhaps this too had something to do with her quiet sleep.

In addition to these woes my car had developed a unpleasant tendency to "flood," if I left it standing out in the rain. When a cloud hovered over the hotel in the late evening, I went about town seeking an empty garage. None was available. Even the garage where repair work was done was filled to the doors! Again I took my troubles to the hotel desk. I was told that I might put my car in a stall of the garage back of the hotel. I took the car around and put it in No. 5, and if the regular occupant came home in the night and did a nip-up at finding a little blue Ford in the wrong spot, no one told me about it. Although the storm fortunately failed to materialize, another load was lifted from my mind.

The fourth step in acquiring a master's degree as Pain in the Neck to a hotel manager! I went to Monticello to visit the textile mills and returned long, long after the hour of checking out. I offered to pay for the night's lodging, but they wouldn't permit it. In fact, I was allowed to stay for another of those good dinners—and got another man-size portion of meat for Judy—before shoving off. In going through a stack of *Forest Echoes*, the Crossett Companies' house publication that I carried away with me, I learned that Mrs. Lloyd D. Jacks acted as manager of the Rose Inn while her husband saw the world through a porthole. During the war she was favorably recognized at a meeting of the Arkansas Hotel Association for keeping in operation one of the best hotels in the state. This bit of information, which did not surprise me, was gleaned from a prize-winning theme on the "Little City among the Trees," written by Melba Maxwell, a Crossett High School sophomore.

Miss Maxwell had many interesting facts to tell about Crossett, but she neglected to say that strangers can find a given house there more quickly than in any other town in the country, except perhaps Gary,

Indiana. Even that is a debatable question, for in Gary one must know the succession of Presidents to go right to Monroe Street, or Jefferson Street, since the streets are named in presidential order. In Crossett if a high school girl should wish to give her address to a member of the El Dorado football team, she would simply give him a number like 753 and follow it with a letter designating a direction—E, W, N or S. If he should say, as I did when given a number, "753 E *what?*" she would say, "Just 753 E! That's all there is to it!" The letter would tell him to start east from the street or railroad forming the dividing line. The 753 would mean that the girl lived in the third house in the fifth block on the seventh street from the division. The odd number would indicate the left-hand side of the street! It's as simple as that.

Of course, one who doesn't know east or west in a strange town can't go directly to a given address even in Crossett. When I was sent to see Mrs. Erwin, president of the women's club, I drove into a part of town where houses were the same uniform gray. Colored women were going in and out, visiting over the fences, calling little youngsters in for midmorning lunches or bringing in bags of groceries. At last I stopped a pleasant-faced colored woman and asked where I could find the number I had written down. Obliging she pointed it out to me. I asked if that was the home of Mrs. Erwin.

The woman must have had an inkling of the confusion in my mind. "Is she white?" she asked suddenly.

"Oh, yes!" I replied. "She is president of the women's club."

She laughed gaily. "This is the colored section."

When I finally found Mrs. Erwin, she was in an attractive six-room house with a double garage, woodshed, garden spot and wide lawn. The house had a bath, a floor furnace, built-in cabinets, hot and cold water and a beautiful fireplace with an automatic gas heater. The living room was twenty-four by sixteen feet, and the walls were decorated in pastel colors. Rent was paid to the company, and every four years the house was redecorated. Mrs. Erwin was already planning redecoration, for the next year would be *the* year.

Mrs. Erwin came to Crossett to teach school, but before she had

taught long, she was snatched into matrimony by one of the Crossett employees. Now she had been married twenty-one years and for all but three of them she had lived in Crossett. During those three years she had lived in Chicago. They were years that had been "exciting," she said, and then she added that it was pleasant to come home.

She explained the social life of the community. While it has its little groups of similar tastes, no group sets itself apart from the others. When a new family comes to town the women make the newcomers welcome, and introduce the wife to everyone so she will soon feel herself part of Crossett. A bridge luncheon for nine tables is not at all unusual. When a shower is given, it is usually a community affair, with everyone uniting to honor the new bride or the new mother.

Mrs. Erwin seemed to have no regrets that she could not own her home in the pleasant little town. The rent, she felt, was no more than they would pay for maintenance and upkeep of a home of their own. The cost of a house could be saved against old age. Then they would take their savings and go to some happy spot where other couples had retired. There they would buy a house and settle down.

"But away from the friends you've always known!" I exclaimed.

"I wouldn't like to live in a place where everyone was working," said Mrs. Erwin.

The satisfaction of Crossett people was one of the nicest experiences of this Arkansas Traveler's visit. It was no surprise to find the executives enthusiastic. They had good positions with a substantial company. They worked in surroundings that varied from delightful to magnificent—every inch of every office building was shining clean and some were superbly paneled and polished. No one rushed about, getting upset and developing ulcers, and no one seemed to nurse a gripe against anything or anybody. Smiles were ready, voices low and pleasant, and the business of the Companies appeared well in hand.

In the stores I found many of the younger generation working as clerks. They were as quick as the office workers to express complete satisfaction with Crossett. They had grown up there, been educated in the schools; now they had taken jobs in Crossett shops.

"I wouldn't want to live anywhere else" was said over and over to me.

In the mills many second-generation workers are starting careers as employees. And as one might expect, Crossett was experiencing a housing shortage. A large plot of land had been bought by a bank at the north edge of town, and there people might buy land and erect their own houses. Preference in purchase was given to returning veterans. Two residential districts had been opened up: Westwood, a district of small housing units; and the Forest Park addition, made up of frame and brick buildings. These houses are built on solid foundations and are painted white instead of the conventional gray.

The Chase Bag Company of New York will be operated under its own management, strictly separate from the Crossett Companies. This is a step toward the industrialization of the South, and mighty important to the economic development of this region. The bag factory will use approximately 10,000 tons of paper per year, according to Ben Posey, who usually acts as official spokesman for the Crossett Companies. This paper will be purchased from the Crossett Paper Mills, which have been in operation since 1937. Of course the paper mills get their supplies from the Crossett Sawmill, and the sawmill gets its supplies from the forest . . . so there is the Crossett circle! It doesn't take a very bright mind to figure that the life of Crossett depends on the conservation of the forest! And in this it is a shining example to all America! Reforestation is such a devotion that Crossett Companies are known as the greatest tree farmers in the United States. May every seedling grow to magnificent stature!

*The Ouachitas,
with a Suite for a Queen*

SOMETIMES tourists make sad mistakes. They see a little town that looks like many another little town, and they say, "Oh, see the little town! What does this remind you of, Mamma?"

Mamma looks at the house high on the hilltop and says: "Why, it's just like Galena, Illinois. That could be the very house where the nice woman was selling all those wonderful antiques for next to nothing."

"'Next to nothing,' she says," Papa scoffs. "Remember you paid seven dollars for the old coffee grinder!"

By that time the little town is far in the distance, and no one ever thought of stopping to see if it had a heart and soul. Here in Arkansas where towns are strung together along the highway like beads on a chain, you will find that each is completely different from the others. Not physically different, perhaps, but definitely individual in character.

Take Mena for example. I had no intention of stopping at Mena. At De Queen I had heard all about Mena that I cared to know. It was named Mena for the wife of the same Dutchman who gave his name to De Queen. It was a town where a great many retired couples came to live, because of its unique location in the hills. Good scenery, small-town living costs, good climate, neither too hot nor too cold! Not as busy as De Queen, perhaps, for the hills naturally cut down the productivity of the land, but a fair town.

Then suddenly I was passing through Mena headed for the hills of home, my own bed and the glorious bottle filled with Eureka Springs drinking water that always stands in the refrigerator.

The next instant I was driving up Mena's main street.

Something had reached out and snared me. I'm terribly glad, for now that I know Mena, I shudder to think how easily I might have missed that friendship.

I only wish I could have been in Mena the day an Eastern magazine writer (female), intent on writing about a former Arkansan, dropped in at the Chamber of Commerce office, looked over Norma Lee Cranford and said in mock surprise: "Why, you do wear shoes!"

I'm not surprised that the writer went back to her nice cozy East marveling that anyone as bright and intelligent as the young businesswoman whose background she was hunting down could have come from a town so crude and dull. Norma Lee gets annoyed like the rest of us when Arkansas is played up as a stooge, and she probably wasn't much help to an enterprising but tactless writer that day.

The fact that Norma Lee is the paid secretary of the Chamber of Commerce is proof that Mena businessmen recognize ability even when it is camouflaged with blue eyes and honey-blond hair. With or without shoes, Norma Lee is mighty, mighty purty, but she can pick up and lay down a dizzying lot of facts about Mena.

If you count all the babies and half the dogs and cats in Mena the population would still be under the 5,000 mark. Aside from these nonvoters, all citizens are voluble boosters for the town in which they live. And well they may be. Mena is a pretty town, clean as a whistle, with a broad Western-type main street such as one finds in several towns at the western edge of Arkansas. It is the seat of Polk County, almost due west of Hot Springs.

All about Mena are the beautiful mountains of the Ouachita National Forest, the only range in the United States, I am told, that runs east and west. They are separated from our Ozarks by the Arkansas River and have the same wooded contours that feature the hills in which I live. Perhaps the peaks are a bit sharper, but they rise just as abruptly from fertile valleys. Some of the valleys are so narrow a railroad and highway must run closely side by side. Others are broad enough to be dotted with little farms.

The prosperity of those farms is the proudest boast of Mena. Within the summer months some farmers have made as high as \$500 an acre on blackberries. In one day a canning factory paid out \$22,000 for blackberries, and that is big money in this part of the country. Of course, berries zoomed to eighty cents a gallon in 1946, but even in normal years the crop yields big returns, for Mena seems to have what it takes to make a blackberry supergood. Long, hot days and cool, dew-laden nights seem to be the recipe for turning hard green little blackberries into nice big red ones that are still hard—and then a few days more of sunshine and the dew of a few more nights fill them with luscious juice and turn the color a rich deep black. It takes the right amount of moisture, too, at the right time, to effect this transformation, and Mena has the weatherman on her side. Or maybe's it's another of the miracles Norma Lee seems able to accomplish. Mena's annual rainfall is so well distributed that even August and September, the proverbial dry mountain months, have more than four inches each. According to the weather bureau, Mena enjoys a mean minimum temperature of 61.3 degrees, with a mean maximum of 71.8.

When I was in Mena the temperature was a bit meaner than that, if you know what I mean. It was a hot 92, and even though I was told that the nighttime would undoubtedly get down to 68 or 69 degrees, night seemed too far in the offing to take any of the sweat off my brow at the moment. With such a heartening climate truck gardening has naturally become an important industry, with second crops on many vegetables bringing even higher prices than they command in the spring.

Since pastures get the blessings of sufficient rainfall and mild winters, the raising of pure-bred Herefords has come to be another leading industry. Quite naturally in such a wooded county, lumbering is still another. Even the National Forest provides a certain amount of lumber each year, and the forests outside the confines of government ownership seem to have an inexhaustible supply.

The trees are of infinite variety. In one square mile on Rich Mountain, a naturalist and timber expert found forty-seven kinds of trees,

twenty-seven wild fruits, seventeen sorts of medicinal plants, and more than a hundred different flowers, mosses and ferns, some of which are subtropical. A slab of pine-tree trunk, cut down by the CCC camp that built beautiful Skyway Drive through the mountain, showed the tree to have been a flourishing sapling when the little Lord Jesus lay down His sweet head in the manger at Bethlehem. Another tree that had withstood the mountain storms and winds until a few years ago was found to be 1,800 years old.

As I said earlier, a great many retired couples have been attracted by the fine climate and beautiful scenery of Mena. The tourist doesn't have to put up with accommodations that send him out of town vowing he will never darken Main Street again. There are two good courts, good enough to be havens for vacationists who like the quiet of a small town which makes no pretense to being a resort. A third court was to be opened as soon as the proprietor could get sheets and pillowcases. The town had no vacant store buildings when I was there. The annual sales-tax figures were a boast of the pointing-with-pride Norma Lee. Bank deposits were unusually high, due perhaps to those retired citizens!

As in many other parts of Arkansas, electricity was badly needed in localities near Mena. However, the hope of almost complete electrification was just around the corner. A rural electrification line 350 miles long was soon to be brought in by the Southwestern Gas and Electric Company. It would extend to all directions out into the hills and valleys. Then just watch deep wells and electric pumps go into action!

I have reason to hand out delayed compliments to the men who planned towns like Heber Springs, Magnolia and Jonesboro. For those city fathers who laid out Mena, I have orchids and salaams. A ten-acre wooded tract, right in its heart, was set aside and labeled City Park. A fine old log cabin that had been built in 1851 stood in the middle of the tract. I can imagine that some of the founders wanted to tear it down. I can fairly hear the argument.

"Men, we're a-goin' to have a high-class city here, fust thing you know. How's it a-goin' to look to them city people that'll be a-clamorin'

to come in here and set up factories if we've left a danged ol' log cabin a-settin' right squar' in the middle of the city park? I vote to tear the ol' thing down and use the logs for f'ar wood."

Then probably some quiet-voiced chap scratched his chin through his beard and replied, "Sam, I reckon that when all them factories is a-belchin' smoke, and we've got the trees all cut down to make room f'r them brick buildin's, an' the streets is all paved from hell to breakfast, a lot of ol' fellers like us will be kind o' glad to mosey down to the park of an evenin' and take a look at that old log cabin."

So it still stands in the center of the Mena Park, and in all the hills and valleys of Arkansas I have seen no finer example of pioneer craftsmanship. Of course the pioneer had pretty good stuff with which to work. For instance, he had logs that could be squared into timbers eighteen inches across. And as for length—well, he had a couple of squared timbers so long they extend the width of the cabin and jut out at the ends far enough to support wide porches at both the front and back.

The cabin has been used as a meeting place for the city council. Peer in the windows and you see the long council table surrounded by fine old mountain chairs in front of the great fireplace. Probably the cabin has something to do with the public spirit of Mena citizens. In such an assembly room a council could never be mean or conniving.

When I visited the cabin a couple of baby beds with pink blankets stood on the shaded front porch. Only that morning I had been hearing a spirited argument that America doesn't begin training diplomats in their youth. The thought ran through my mind that Mena had taken the matter in hand and provided the city council with a couple of youthful students in diplomacy. Most probably, however, the youngsters were wading in the spring-fed pool, a delightful spot for small fry, or feeding candy to the animals in the zoo.

Mena doesn't have the sort of zoo one finds in big cities—terrifying lions, tigers, wriggling snakes and such-like. Here is the sort of zoo that children of a small town may appreciate. There are squirrels that look one in the eye, a raccoon that washes its food daintily before eat-

ing, and a deer—oh, yes, a very, very important deer! His name is Jim, and everyone loves him. Once Jim got loose and went up on the mountain. There he was found, looking very frightened and lonely because it was the first time he had ever been out alone in the great woods. He stood gazing at the rescue party, and the rescue party stood gazing at Jim, each wondering what to do about the other. Suddenly one of the rescuers held out a candy bar. Jim trotted over, licked the bar and then climbed into the truck that had been brought for him.

Mena has claim to national fame. She is the home of the radio comedians, Lum and Abner. She is proud of two local boys who made good in Hollywood in a big way, but no one is surprised. After all Lum and Abner were doing all right in Mena. When the radio offer came along, Lum walked out of his job as cashier of a bank, and Abner walked out of an equally responsible job in his father's wholesale grocery. The setting of their mythical grocery store in a mythical Arkansas town is based on the Dick Huddleston grocery in a village a few miles from Mena. Originally the town was named Waters as a compliment to the man who owned the farm on which the first post office was located. After the store gained national prominence, and radio fans began writing in to ask if there was such a place as Pine Ridge, citizens of Waters did some quick thinking. Why not rename the town Pine Ridge? According to G. C. Konkler, a Mena groceryman who takes time to write things down, they did what we are so often counseled to do. They wrote to their congressman! Along with their letters they sent a petition signed by all the characters used in the Lum and Abner programs and fifty others around Waters, asking that the name be changed to Pine Ridge. They followed this up with a threatening message to Mr. Farley. They told him that if the request was refused, he would be "e-rested" by Grandpappy Spears for neglect of duty, and Lum, the Pine Ridge justice of the peace, would "sure pour it on him" in court. After such a bombardment, it isn't surprising that permission was granted.

Mountain people, as well as urbanites, like Lum and Abner, because their rural dialogue and expressions are not overdone. Furthermore,

they do not base their comedy on the foibles of imaginary relatives. They'd better not! I bought a belt for the Judge from a pleasant-faced lady who is Lum's sister and Abner's sister-in-law, and she is not the stuff on which radio comedy is based. When she was secretary of the Chamber of Commerce some time ago, she was careful throughout her term of office not to speak of her relationship to the two famous personages. One day someone let the cat out of the bag when a group of tourists, including an eight-year-old boy, were in the office.

The small boy looked her over carefully and then said flatly, "I don't believe it."

As the tourists were going out to their car, he said, "I still don't believe it."

In 1897, when Mena was one year old, the editor of the *Mena Star*, grandfather of the present editor, Ernest St. John, wrote to Mena de Goeijen in Holland, inviting her to visit the town that would "forever bear her honored and charming name." Unfortunately she was forced to decline, but her letter was so tactful and agreeable that it is still preserved. After that the *Star* was sent regularly to the de Goeijens except during the war. The first copy that went over after the invasion of the Netherlands was returned with the curt note: "Service Suspended." Now the *Star* is being sent again, Mr. St. John told me, and it has not been returned, but no word has come from the de Goeijens. No one knew whether they had survived the war and were getting the paper or if someone else just liked to read the goin's-on in Mena.

Once in the Gay Nineties Mena practically touched the hem of Dutch royalty. Upon the crest of Rich Mountain a group of capitalists from Holland built a resort hotel, a hotel that was the show place of the whole region. Nothing like it had ever been seen out in the wilderness—a place where people could be truly rural in the midst of culture, refinement and downright elegance! The hotel was designed along the lines of Dutch architecture, and both stone and wood were used in its construction. It was named in honor of the Dutch Queen Wilhelmina, and a corner suite on the second floor was furnished especially for Her Majesty. It had a fireplace—and here in the hills a fireplace

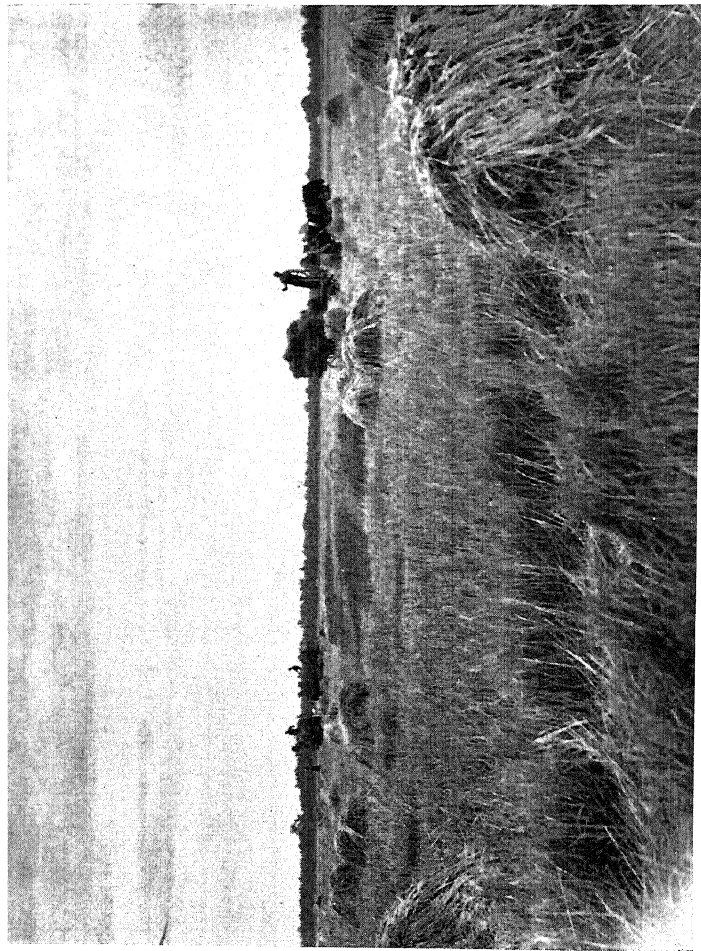
on the second floor is not only rare, but practically unknown. Few women want to carry wood upstairs!

The hotel was the scene of great gaiety. People came from far and near to enjoy its gracious hospitality. The train stopped at a station called Rich Mountain, and there men and women mounted little donkeys and rode to the mountaintop in style. As we swept up to it in her car, Mrs. St. John recalled a picnic she had enjoyed there. She had been one of a party of young people who had risen at 4:00 A.M. on a summer day and taken the train to Rich Mountain. There they missed connections with the donkeys for some reason, and the party had to walk up the mountain.

"It wasn't a road like this," said Mrs. St. John, indicating the comparative smoothness of the gravel way. "It was merely a trail through the woods, and practically straight up, it seemed to us."

The picnic party arrived at the hotel and spent a delightful day. The time came for them to make the evening trip down the mountain to the station where they would catch the train back to Mena. They must have been weary. The boys brought around a wagon which was the forerunner of the station wagon of today, a good old Studebaker, and took the girls down in bone-wracking comfort. They found the train was late. The hours went on! The train was still later! The picnic dragged on interminably. They finally reached home at 4:00 A.M.—making it the longest picnic on record, exactly twenty-four hours.

Today the Wilhelmina Inn is reached by following Skyway Drive, which is a continuation of Mena's Main Street. Those fifteen miles will take kinks out of the most careworn body, the most harassed mind. In places the drive reaches the height of 2,800 feet, but the roadway climbs so gradually that even the prairie driver may scoot right along. "Scoot" is hardly the word, for even the person accustomed to mountain scenery, like this Arkansas Traveler, has to stop and stop and *stop* to drink in the vistas which lie on either side of the road. Here in the Ouachita National Forest are some of the most impressive views that one finds in all Arkansas! Even in mid-July, when the world burned under a copper sun, the soft blue haze swathed cool-looking



When the fields in Riceland have turned to gold, the grain is cut and piled in shocks where it is allowed to dry, before being threshed. Scene on the Grand Prairie.



Rice is the white gold of Arkansas' Grand Prairie. Hard pan holds water pumped into the fields during the growing season. Scene showing threshing of rice.

green hills and valleys under an incredibly blue sky. The whole scene seemed a painting that one might hang over a mantel.

High above the world, with puffy white clouds in an azure sky, and soft green clover underfoot, were the windswept ruins of the majestic old building that once contained a suite fit for a queen. It was a pitiful sight. Stark chimneys loomed above ten-foot fireplaces that had furnished romantic light and practical heat in the ninety-foot dining room where gay crowds danced throughout the mountain nights. The kitchen and butler's pantry could still be traced in the skeleton wreck. In the great cement-floored cellar that had stored hotel supplies lay a small, very dead skunk which must have fallen into the ruins and finally starved to death in his open-air prison, leaving only a faint ghostly odor to remind one of his lonely last hours.

One wing of the inn still stood locked and forbidding, with shutters so tightly closed that I couldn't see what wreckage time had made of the interior. About it were terraces, inviting small woods animals to play in the shadow of the ghostly pillars when the moon rode high. Only the moon, the sun, the trees, the soft summer rains and the wild sweeping winter storms remained faithful to the palace that was built on a mountaintop.

Even in its heyday, Wilhelmina Inn knew little loyalty. In spite of all the money and effort that went into its construction, it was used but a few years—historians say only three years. The reasons given for its sudden decline range from the possible to the ridiculous.

"It was built right at the close of an era, when people would accept outdoor plumbing and other inconveniences without question," said Mrs. St. John. "Then all of a sudden everyone began to be scornful of them!"

Perhaps the burro and the Studebaker wagon lost their rural charm after three years, and no one cared to make a return trip.

A story popularized by groceryman-author Konkler has given a more fantastic reason. The wife of one of the high railroad officials, so it goes, brought her little dog with her to the hotel. At mealtime she insisted on taking the dog to the table and feeding it bits from her

plate. It was a well-behaved dog that conducted itself in a very genteel manner at all times, and possibly its table manners were no worse than many a guest's. But a dog had never been given such attention in Arkansas. The management of the hotel protested that it should be fed from a pan on the floor, or out in the back yard, as mountain dogs were, and still are, fed. The lady refused, but definitely! Someone tried to break the stalemate by wiring her husband. Back came the reply: "WHATEVER MY WIFE SAYS, GOES!" That was that!

The management, to the last man and boy, packed their bags, shook down the fires in the big kitchen range, emptied the water out of pitchers in the bedrooms, and departed. The guests, including the woman with the pet dog, had no recourse but to follow, since this was before the time when guests would pitch in and keep a hotel going after the help moved out. The doors of the fabulous Wilhelmina Inn were closed, and that was the end of its glory.

In other years other owners and other managers took the hotel over, but its glamour was lost. No longer did the rich and famous come to sit on its moonlit terraces or dance on the smooth, firelit floors. But somehow, even in ruins, it retained for me an air of majestic aloofness, wearing its scarf of mountain haze as an impoverished old woman, once the town's richest, might wrap a moth-eaten fur cape about her shoulders and go down to a cafeteria to lunch.

Perhaps the whole history of Mena might have been different if the Queen of the Netherlands had come to visit at Wilhelmina Inn. And—who knows?—the history of Holland might have been different. If she had come in her youth, she might have found a young Arkansas lad who liked to ride a burro, to dance in the firelight and to hold hands on a moonlit terrace, even with a queen! And now, instead of being burdened with the cares of a war-weary empire, she might be helping Norma Lee Crawford run the Mena Chamber of Commerce. Not that Norma Lee needs help—but wouldn't a *queen* impress small boys?

XI

Texarkana—

Where Arkansas Meets Texas

IF YOU, too, still cherish the Schoolcraft idea that all homes in Arkansas are shacks sitting in the midst of straggling scrub oaks, you are definitely in for a surprise when you come to Texarkana!

One Sunday noon at a smart roadside eating place a young couple sat in the booth ahead of me. I could see them from the waists up, and as always when I see well-dressed young couples, I silently admired their good taste. Dressing up for Sunday is a nice custom in my opinion. When the man arose to pay the bill, I noticed his shoes. They were high-heeled cowboy boots of fancy design. Ah! The glorious West!

The broad streets make Texarkana a motorist's joy, but the low buildings of the business district, spread out over a wide area, must put a strain on one who shops on foot. Only a few of the buildings reach the height of six stories; others rarely top the two-story level.

Dominating the entire town of Texarkana is the post office which sits squarely on the line between Arkansas and Texas. It is a beautiful building in itself, and its beauty is accented by the avenue leading to it. Traffic flows toward it, then divides and encircles it, to meet again. It looks like a figure in a square dance.

The monument dedicated to the mothers of Confederate soldiers, which stands in front of the Federal Building, is the most photogenic spot in the city. Photograph it both against the blue sky and with the Federal Building in the background, if you take kodachromes. While

you are there, be sure to memorize the inscription: "*O Great Confederate mothers, we would paint your names on monuments that men may read them as the years go by and tribute pay to you, who bore and nurtured hero sons and gave them solace on that darkest day when they came home with broken swords and guns.*"

It is a forty-nine-word chant of grief for the South that is gone. A new South is rising in its place, and I am proud to be a part of it.

Texarkana has parking meters on the streets, but they are shut off at 6:00 P.M. This is well, for the movie houses are good, and one is likely to forget the meter that gnaws the minutes away. Traffic laws are not fussy; otherwise I would have been arrested at least twice. In finding my way about the city I turned wrong fairly often, but no one flagged me down or even glared at me. Perhaps lawbreakers have always been so common in Texarkana that one more or less makes little difference.

Back in the old days the region was the haven of gamblers, adventurers, cattle rustlers, war-weary soldiers, settlers looking for cheap lands and just plain ordinary tramps of both sexes. They fought like stray dogs and preyed on both legitimate citizens and one another.

As the West was tamed, Texarkana gradually settled down. Of course, occasional flare-ups in lawlessness occur, but where is the city that does not have them?

State Line Avenue in Texarkana follows the border, but many of the streets are laid out along the Missouri Pacific tracks. The town grew from construction camps set up at the western end of the Cairo & Fulton (now the Missouri Pacific) Railroad and at the eastern terminus of the Texas & Pacific. Then in 1882 the Texas & St. Louis Railway, now the St. Louis Southwestern, came through and Texarkana's future as an important commercial center was assured.

Timber and agriculture have contributed to its success in the past, and now the oil fields which creep up to its borders put many a dollar into the cash registers of its merchants.

Although Texarkana is really two towns, with separate school systems, police and fire departments and governments, it makes a single

town of more than average wealth. Four railroads naturally render it an important travel center, and its well-marked highways swing thousands of tourists through its broad streets.

Factories and warehouses provide employment for many of the 3,500 Negroes who make their home in Texarkana, but the larger proportion are in domestic service. Negro sections are in the outskirts of the city where they have their own schools, churches and hospital.

As one who grew up in a town one-fourth of which was in Missouri and the other three-fourths in Iowa, this Arkansas Traveler was naturally interested in finding how two states handled the matter of crime and arrest. Someone could shoot a fellow in a saloon on the Missouri side of our old town, hop across the sidewalk into Iowa and thumb his nose at the officers of the law as they carried out the body. It took collaboration between Des Moines and Jefferson City to arrange matters, and by that time the accused had sold his team and wagon and taken out for the West, where he stayed until he got homesick. Sometimes that was only a couple of weeks, but one man held out for fifty years. When he returned, his identity could not be established, and he lived to the end of his days a stone's throw from the scene of his crime.

Texas and Arkansas police have worked out an efficient arrangement for getting their man simply and quickly. They can make arrests on either side of the border. If the day is warm and the police officer does not feel like a chase, he can phone to his fellow policemen across the line and ask them to pick up the culprit.

Membership in the Texarkana Chamber of Commerce, businessmen's clubs and other civic organizations are made up from both sides. All boosting is done in the name of the city and not on the basis of individual states. In population the Texas side has the edge by perhaps 5,000.

Several good tourist courts are available at Texarkana. The Lane had been suggested to me, and I found it comfortable in spite of the heat of the day. Or perhaps I should say, of the week, since it was one of those times when Brother Williford, weatherman at Station KWTO, was fairly weeping into the mike over the long siege of high tempera-

ture. And he was up in the hills hundreds of miles north of Texarkana!

The Lane Tourist Court had a window fan that whirled busily throughout the night and in time became a familiar noise like the hum of the oil burner or the electric refrigerator which pass unnoticed while the buzz of a mosquito brings us out of a sound sleep. The fan cut down the cloying heat of the room by thrusting it out into the garage occupied by the car of my next-door neighbor. The garage in which my car stood received the heat from my neighbor's room. It gave me a curious feeling of familiarity, although I neither saw nor heard him.

The tourist cottage had an electric refrigerator and a dinette table, but none of the other common kitchen trappings like stove, sink or dishes. Somewhere between Hope and Hot Springs I had acquired a small basket of large, tree-ripened peaches and a sizable box of fresh figs. By the time I reached Texarkana they had become limp and soggy, exhausted, like their owner, by the heat. I took them from the car, put them in the refrigerator overnight, and the next morning every mouthful of the cool fresh fruit gave southern Arkansas another boost in my estimation!

When this Arkansas Traveler approached Texarkana and spotted all the beautiful farmhouses with white-painted fences, the wonder grew that anyone could ever think Arkansas had only cabins for dwellings. There were places that smacked of Ol' Virginny, suh, with a touch of Barrington, Illinois, and Sedalia, Missouri, to boot. When I hinted to a dozen people throughout a stretch of fifty or sixty miles that I would be completely desolated if I didn't get into one of those country places, everyone mentioned a particular home as a Must-See. It was the farmstead of Arthur Helms. Somebody told me I could find Mr. Helms's brother at the Texas liquor store, and from there I would be on my own in getting out to the Helms place. At the Texas liquor store I was told the brother was at the Arkansas liquor store—which is a sample of the way things go in a town split down the middle by a state line.

Both liquor stores were owned by Arthur Helms, who also owned the farm, but he seemed to find the farm more fun. According to word at both stores, he rarely came into town except on business.

Could I phone out to the farm? Sorry, but I must know how the phone business is. They didn't have a phone! It would be all right if I went out to the farm, they said—just a matter of six miles, right on the highway. I couldn't miss it.

Indeed I couldn't! Just after the speedometer showed six miles, I saw a lush pasture on the right, and a big sign bearing the picture of a bull, fullface, told me it was Pasture No. 4 of the Helms Hereford Farm. Then in succession I passed Pastures No. 3 and No. 2. At the gate on the left, which led to great barns, the sign told me it was Pasture No. 1 and gave me the good news that Visitors Are Welcome. Across the road from the barns was a white country house with a screened porch and green shutters. From the gate I reached the house by driving past a solid bank of crepe myrtle, bearing feathery wands of delicate pink blossoms. I hesitated a long time before sending my dusty little blue car along that avenue. Maybe the mistress of that beautiful home was entertaining; maybe I'd find a porchful of guests in cool white linen or pastel sheers sipping long cool drinks of fruit juice laced with something out of the liquor store. I would go in all grubby and soiled from a day's driving, and even if they offered me a drink I couldn't take it, because alcohol gives me hives. Then I realized that I could see just one car ahead in the big garage, and none in the driveway. I looked around for little one-woman planes, but could see none of them either, so maybe there were no guests after all. I drove along the bank of flowers, parked my car and went to the front door. No one was on the porch. After a moment a blond woman in a cotton playsuit came to the door. She was Mrs. Helms, and I liked her at once.

The Helms Hereford Farm is as far removed from the forty acres and house-in-good-repair which one reads about in Arkansas real-estate advertisements as day is from night. Mr. Helms has 1,280 acres on which he raises registered cattle. Most of the cattle he sells to other

breeders. Herefords, in case your bovine education has been neglected, are dark red with white faces. They are built along the lines of a brick schoolhouse, square-cornered and close to the ground, with a massiveness that makes a cow-shy Traveler just a bit wary unless there is a good fence between the animal and herself.

At the times my notes were taken Mr. Helms had 165 registered cows and bred heifers. I am sure the number was increased within the next twenty-four hours, for the small amount of knowledge I have gained in cowology told me that some were scheduled for motherhood mighty soon. Mr. Helms gets an average of \$150 for calves a year old. At a sale of cattle the year before, breeders had come from all over the country and the bidding ran higher than the proverbial cat's back. One old-timer listened to the bidding, then spat a mouthful of tobacco juice on the closely clipped lawn and said, "Good Lord A'mighty, I couldn't git that f'r my ol' woman!"

Of the 400 acres comprising the farm 275 were in corn. The preceding year Mr. Helms had planted hybrid corn, G46, and produced seventy-two bushels to the acre. This year he expected to do better. He had planted 7-11, and like the G46 almost every stalk had two ears. However, the ears were all a little bigger, so he was convinced the yield would be larger.

A great many tourists pass the bountiful cornfields, then stop at the house to ask Mr. Helms if he is from Iowa. Somehow they get the idea that a man from Iowa can produce Iowa-type corn wherever he may choose to plant it. I gathered that Mr. Helms was not exactly insulted by such questions—which speaks well for Iowa. Well, southern Arkansas has an edge on Iowa in the matter of climate if hardly in soil. At the Helms Hereford Farm, corn may be planted up to the middle of July and still produce a crop.

Forty acres of the Helms farm were in cotton. They would produce a bale to the acre. Mr. Helms was not particularly proud of this record. "At Blytheville they get two bales to the acre," he said, with a trace of wistfulness. The difference is that boll weevils must be fought in the Texarkana region. When the summer is dry, they may be fought

with fair success. The plants are sprayed with arsenic by an eight-row duster. But when a rainy spell comes on, the dust is washed off and the boll weevils have their fun without restriction.

Besides the corn and cotton Mr. Helms and his helpers had put out four acres of fall tomatoes, which would bring between 500 and 600 bushels an acre. Fall tomatoes bring better prices than spring ones. They can be picked up to Thanksgiving, and then the vines may be pulled and put in the shed and the Helms family and helpers will enjoy fresh tomatoes up to Christmas. Cantaloupes, watermelons, eggplant, cauliflower, parsnips, Brussels sprouts, collards and all the other familiar garden products grew in the Helms gardens. Many of them have produced two crops each year in this long season—even of potatoes and onions. In fact, the fall garden is one of the most important food supplies, even in northern and central Arkansas.

Don't let me minimize the importance of the spring crop. One of the Helms neighbors, Kelly Budd, thirty-six, of Ogden Switch, had shipped out sixty cars of sweet corn (roas'n' ears, we call them) during the preceding weeks, starting the fifteenth of June and ending on the Fourth of July. This brought him a reported \$30,000, and he still had the cornstalks to make ensilage for his beef cattle. That was the second year young Mr. Budd had tried this project. In the first he shipped out twenty-six cars. •

Sweet corn is not an easily produced crop. Mr. Budd kept eight tractors going night and day during the season, and he was down to skin and bones when the last ear of corn was shipped off to Northern markets.

This young farmer is proof that ideas pay. He is the son of a truck farmer at Ogden Switch, and while still a youngster he went with his father to take produce to market. He got acquainted with produce men, learned about the crying yearly need for good roasting ears, and as soon as he could build up his farm equipment, he started growing them. The variety of sweet corn is the delicious Iowanna.

Mr. Helms preferred raising livestock to farming. His cattle grazed on the luxuriant pastures till Christmas. In late July, under a burning

sun, hay was being cut in the pastures where the fat cattle were grazing! From Christmas to March, a hundred days according to Mr. Helms's calculation, the grazing they picked up in the fields must be supplemented with cottonseed or soybean cake and hay. This is remarkably cheap.

"I figure it doesn't cost over six dollars a head to winter a beef cow," said Mr. Helms.

The water supply at the Helms farm was more than abundant. Two deep wells supplied the house and barns. In the pastures two large lakes supplied the livestock and added picturesqueness to the landscape. One of the lakes covered forty acres, and provided fine bass fishing for the Helms family and guests. A few years ago the lake was stocked with 25,000 young bass. After that, when the Helms gave a fish fry, they caught the fish in their own lake and took them to the house, where they were fried over the outdoor fireplace. Then the fish were eaten outdoors, hot out of the frying kettle, in the open air, exactly the way all fried fish should be eaten.

Only two so-called share croppers or tenant farmers lived on the Helms place, and they made excellent neighbors. The rest of the work was done by day workers. As a rule, share croppers were too much trouble, said the Helmses. Their tenant farmers had a pasture in which they ran their own cattle and seemed to live a complete farm life of their own.

In addition to the Herefords which would be sold to other breeders, and the beef cattle, which were periodically raised, eight Jerseys were maintained on the Helms farm for the milk supply.

Mr. Helms owned Golden Jim, a Palamino stallion which was the pride of his life. Eight Palamino mares and eight golden Palamino colts were feeding on the green pastures.

Across the road from the beautiful country home Mrs. Helms and I found the major-domo of the stables at work prettying up a half-dozen Herefords for the fair at Springfield, Missouri. With Raindrops and Duz he was washing the faces and white forequarters of the square-

at-the-corners animals. If they minded it, it did no good, for Mr. A. Virdon had been dealing with animals long enough to know how to get the upper hand, and keep it. Mr. Virdon was born in Middlesex, England. At the age of fourteen he led his first grand champion into the ring of the International Stock Show at Caledonian Road, Islington. At forty-six he came to America, and from that time on had been associated continuously with agricultural colleges and the finest stock farms in the nation. According to him, he had never taken an animal into the stock-show ring that "'adn't taken ribbons."

Mr. Virdon's personal life had been as surprising as his professional career. He was a cautious chap when it came to matrimony, and not until he was fifty-eight had he found a girl who measured up to his specifications for a wife. Perhaps he kept a score card for women, as judges do for show animals. At any rate he married a young woman with the strength, vigor and good looks that proved he was a good judge of human beings as well as animals. At seventy-six, the wiry little Englishman had a tall, handsome son sixteen years old to help him in his work after school hours, and at home there was a pretty ten-year-old girl who was her daddy's pride and joy. Mr. Virdon told us about them as he showed us through the big red barns with the white yard fences. But at the moment they were second in importance to the animals that he was grooming for the fairs at Springfield and Sedalia. He pointed out the beauty of Teddy Domino, born just a year before, which would undoubtedly carry off blue ribbons at the stock show.

"Look at 'im," said Mr. Virdon, beaming like a proud grandpa. "Beef right down to 'is 'ocks."

Another was H. Bucinta the First, half brother of a \$50,000 bull that belonged to the Lazy D Ranch in Oklahoma. Then there was the seven-months-old "'alf brother" of Teddy, and another which Mr. Virdon caressed with gentle hands, as he said, "I like this little gur-rl here!" She was a beauty—deep red and soft, shining white, with long eyelashes curling over dark eyes.

Mr. Virdon ran his hand down her broad level back. "See what

your rolling pin did!" he said to Mrs. Helms. "It loosens the 'ide!"

He explained how he had massaged the backs of the show animals with the rolling pin to give the hide a loose, rippling effect. Mrs. Helms said it wasn't necessary to return the rolling pin to the kitchen. Fortunately she had a second one, a glass rolling pin, she said.

We strolled to another pen to look at twins, stocky, sturdy animals that made me think I was seeing double. Then we went on to still another to see three more 'eifers and a cow, and I learned that a great many of the Hereford mothers give so little milk they cannot nurse their own babies. At the Helms farm nurses were provided for fancy-priced Hereford babies.

Seven barns made up the animal buildings of the farm, most of them built of lumber from trees cut right on the farm. Then there were a blacksmith shop, an implement barn, a mule house. And down in a far pasture, a hospital barn stood in its own pasture beneath a giant pecan tree.

Trees grew to mammoth size on this beautiful farm. The land was rich in limestone, which made it valuable in the production of rich pastures for raising cattle. On the lawns about the big white house Mrs. Helms helped me identify the trees and shrubbery, for many of them were unknown to one who lived in northern Arkansas. A bush beside the kitchen door had clusters of blossoms that glowed like flame in the sunshine. They were pomegranates. Fig trees, laurels, pecans, peaches, pears and apples were growing in the lawn and garden. At the rear of the house, beside the long, screened back porch, Mrs. Helms had gardenias and cape jessamine bushes for her dooryard shrubbery. Beside the smokehouse, where she kept the trappings that went with the outdoor barbecue pit, she had a garden of tuberoses. Altheas in pink, blue and white, crepe myrtle in rose pink and golden-tipped Nandina bushes formed the background for the rose garden beyond the driveway.

At the rear of the lawns the chicken yard was frosted with the white of a couple of hundred fryers which had been raised under electric brooders for the Helms table. While I watched, Myrtle, a little

colored woman, came out and caught two of the biggest chickens. Then, so quickly it seemed to take only a moment, she had scalded them, ripped off the feathers and had the fowls ready for the refrigerator. As she went out to the incinerator, she was followed by a fluffy yellow cat, intent only on the pan Myrtle was carrying, although a big mockingbird continuously swooped and dived at his back, obviously paying off an old score. When Myrtle had the chickens in the refrigerator, she picked up a milk bucket and went out to milk a couple of the Jerseys for household use. I tried to curb my all-enveloping envy for the feminine Admirable Crichton but with little luck!

Inside the big house evidences of careful planning were everywhere. The spacious living room, the picture window in the dining room, the ample pantry off the large kitchen and the family sitting room next to the kitchen, I recognized from experience as examples of architectural wisdom.

Mrs. Helms said she could take no credit for them, since she hadn't wanted to move to the country in the first place. The house had been built on another location several miles off, but it proved "so far away from everything" that even Mr. Helms couldn't take it, in spite of his devotion to farm life. They tore the house apart, carried the materials to the new location and rebuilt it. It was even more successful than Mr. Helms had dared hope. Except for ten feet of hardwood flooring, all the materials that went into the first house could be re-used.

Although Mrs. Helms was not completely in sympathy with the move to the farm, she has certainly done her part toward putting beauty and livable comfort into the house. Many of the beautiful bedspreads and other interior-decorating treasures came from her sewing machine or were whipped up by her nimble fingers. Her collection of salt and pepper shakers added interest to several rooms.

Fortunately, Mrs. Helms had the hospitable spirit that goes with a country home. In the corner room upstairs her husband could entertain his friends to his heart's content. The big room had a fireplace, a comfortable davenport and man-style chairs, and all the necessary equip-

ment for making and mixing drinks. Although Mr. Helms owned two liquor stores he drank very sparingly and Mrs. Helms, since a fairly recent operation, had been a teetotaler. However, for guests there was everything the heart could desire—even to sparkling ice water.

After the November sale Mr. Helms had had a stag supper for out-of-town buyers who came to Texarkana especially for the fine animals which had gone on the block that day. Mrs. Helms prepared barbecued chicken, baked potatoes, hot apple and mince pies. Then she put bowls of cherries and lemons, buckets of ice and bottles of soda water within easy reach, and after a final look around to see that all was well, she retired to her own room with a good book. After all, she had had a busy day. With the help of the wife of one of the tenant farmers, she had served a free lunch to more than 600 people. Thirty gallons of coffee had been made in great vats. Coleslaw and potato salad had been made by the tubful. The *pièce de résistance* of the lunch was a great barbecued beef cooked over a pit of live coals prepared by one of the men who work on the place. A tent was set up near the barns where the auction was taking place, paper plates were stacked head-high on the counters, and when noontime came, there was a meal that rivaled anything the guests could buy in town, ten miles away—even to cookies for dessert.

"We had a barrel of fun," said Mrs. Helms. "Although it was the nineteenth of November, it was a warm, sunny day and no wraps were needed."

Yes, Texarkana must be a nice place in which to live. And maybe one might find another Myrtle there to help make life completely beautiful.

XII.....

The De Queen Bee Tells All!

THE Arkansas Traveler who motors north from Texarkana comes into De Queen, the town with the newspaper, *De Queen Bee*.

Since 1897 the *De Queen Bee* has been published by a series of owners, but none of them has allowed the paper to miss a single issue. The companion paper of the *Bee*, the *De Queen Citizen*, is a daily newspaper. Both are the property of Wallace Burns, publisher and editor, a hard-working citizen who took time to spend a Sunday afternoon in his office with me across the desk asking questions.

"Nobody ever leaves this country permanently unless he dies," said the De Queen editor, and meant every word of it. "Sometimes they go away—but they always drift back!" Not if they have to stay in that tourist court where I'm installed, I added to myself, but of course I didn't say anything like that to Editor Burns. I sat quietly and listened while he told of the 50,000 pounds of poultry shipped out weekly, of the strawberries, radishes, tomatoes, cucumbers and other garden truck that go out of the country each week headed for cities.

At one time the greatest orchards in Arkansas were located near De Queen. One peach orchard covered 5,000 to 6,000 acres between Horatio and De Queen. This was known as the American Orchard. Then the Highland Orchard was set out on the hillside, covering several thousand acres. That was in the good old days, however, when spraying was unknown. When more and more orchards were planted, and

pests began to make greater headway, near ruin came to the orchards. The fruit growers hadn't been educated to spraying, and as the seasons went on, bugs took over the trees. However, the region about Nashville is still considered one of the prominent peach-growing districts of Arkansas.

Editor Burns told of the good business that De Queen merchants enjoy throughout the year. In ten years, he said, he had never seen an empty building on the square! Even during the depression of the thirties, no business failures occurred. He had a vision of a splendid future for De Queen, for more and more farmers who had been content with just a mule and a cow or two were now taking up livestock raising in a big way. During the preceding five years, it had taken a strong hold on the country, and in the years to come Editor Burns thinks Sevier County will make great strides.

He told me of an oddity. De Queen, he said, was a strictly gentile town. Only one Jewish man lived there, and he was a member of the Baptist Church.

Before I left the *Bee* office—I almost said *hive*—Editor Burns gave me a copy of the Arkansas Centennial Edition he had published ten years before, along with several recent copies of the lively little paper. I didn't try to read them that night. The blinds didn't cover the tourist-cottage windows, so I couldn't read in bed, and I was too tired to sit up, after killing time by seeing two movies. Then I found that the cozy eating place just behind my cabin had what was laughingly called curb service. Actually, the customers blew the waitresses out of the building by the force of their horns! Then, after giving the order, they sounded the horn at intervals to ask them how the hamburger was coming along, or to come back with another coke. The horns and waitresses seemed to speak a language all their own, but long before the wee small hours I could understand it quite well. I could even estimate to the second how long it would be after a particularly vigorous blast until I would hear the customer speak cuss words carefully modulated to the ear of his feminine companion. After another

moment a car door would slam as he went in "after them dam' sandwiches, b'God." At last the cars were all gone and I saw the lights of the eating place go out. I had pulled my bed across one door and had put a chair under the knob of the other, because neither door had a key, and wearily I settled myself for a summer-night nap.

In an instant a dull roll of thunder and a brilliant flash of lightning brought me up with a start. In any rain the front end of my car floods, as maybe I have mentioned, unless the engine runs constantly. The rear deck also leaks. To have it happen now would be a calamity. I had the rear filled with character dolls, extra clothes and all the yard goods I could buy from Sears, Roebuck in Little Rock.

I arose, dressed and went out to the car. By manipulating it as best I could, I was able to get its nose under the shelter, taking the paint off only one fender. The manager had said that great big trucks were able to park under that shelter! Flashlight in hand, I investigated. One of the posts had been knocked galley-west. It must have happened the night a "great big truck" got itself under. Then I carefully unloaded all the boxes and packages from the rear of the car, carried them into the cabin, put the chair under the doorknob again, undressed and went to sleep. When I awoke the next morning, I found that not one drop of rain had fallen.

Weeks later I opened the Centennial Edition and read the headline on Section D: DE QUEEN TYPICAL FRONTIER TOWN IN EARLY DAYS . . . SETTLEMENT KNOWN AS 'CALAMITY' PRIOR TO 1897. What could one expect of a town that began life with a name like that?

That Centennial Edition is a lesson in the history of early Sevier County. Settlements were few in the western part of the state. But a store, a saloon and a few other buildings had sprung up along the East Towson Road. When the Kansas City Southern Railway came through, these buildings were about halfway between the roundhouse and the north part of the yard. The settlement was known as Hurrah City. Another community was established facing the railroad near the present site of the Clements Hotel. It was about on a par with the

first one, a few stores and a saloon doing a thriving business. For some reason the settlement was called Calamity. Each of the two settlements wanted to be the nucleus of the town the railroad was planning to build. For some reason Calamity was chosen.

How this town received the quaint name of De Queen is an Ozark legend. It goes back to the building of the Kansas City Southern. Long before it was completed it was tie over rail in debt. Through some connection which I have not been able to establish, a group of Dutch capitalists came to the aid of the struggling little railroad. They were represented in this country by a J. de Goeijen. When the railroad was finished, Mr. de Goeijen was told that he might have the privilege of naming some of the new towns that had sprung up along the track. Overnight Calamity citizens found they were living in a town called De Goeijen. I wish I had been around to hear them try to pronounce it. For a long time the citizens tried hard to say De Goo-ween. Finally it was shortened to De Queen, and when the settlement was incorporated by an order of the county court on June 3, 1897, it was formally so named.

The town grew rapidly, but disaster struck in earnest just two years later. On the night of Sunday, October 1, 1899, all but three of its fifty business houses were destroyed by fire. In 1909 another fire destroyed the Dierks Sawmill, which was a severe blow. However, the company still maintains general offices and operates a large retail lumber mill in De Queen.

The finger of calamity that touched all towns during the depression was particularly tough on its old namesake, despite the fact no business buildings were empty. In the center of the square stood the framework of a fine new courthouse begun in 1930. The proceeds of the bond issue for it were promptly tied up when a certain bank closed in Little Rock, and for two years it seemed they were lost forever to Sevier County. The framework became a veritable bat roost, and the rickety ruins had the depression practically sitting in the laps of people who might otherwise have been able to ignore it. Then

all the lawyers in De Queen had a conference with County Judge Custer Steel. They decided to make a fight for the funds. Today a handsome building stands in the center of the square as the result of their consistent co-operative scrapping.

Through the years the sting of Calamity grew less sharp. New De Queen is a prosperous little town, with thriving communities all about it. In the *Bee* I noted that correspondents had sent in news from Mineral, King, Central, Stringtown, Frog Level, Horatio, Nettle Hill, Silver Ridge, Lone Oak, Bella Creek, Cane Creek, Avon, Walnut Springs, West Otis, Kingree's Chapel, Ultima Thule, Wright's Chapel, Beacon Hill, Fall's Chapel, Geneva, Lyons, Rock Hill, Woffords Chapel, Gillham, Kellum, Cowlingville, Union, Norwoodville, New Bethel, Provo and Lockesburg. The Silver Ridge correspondent was my favorite. Apparently he had been on the job for a long time, since the literary style of the items from that community dated October 22, 1936, was exactly the same as in the most recent issue. In the ten-year-old paper he wrote, under the heading SILVER RIDGE (COLORED):

Our Sunday school fell off several points last Sunday but the squirrel hunting in the Saline bottoms was in full blast as we could hear the guns shooting just like week days or the war in Spain. These lawbreakers are not friends of society and should be prosecuted.

The writer had a question that he wished some Bible student would answer. He worded it carefully.

One of our citizens got tanked up on liquor in our city and did some tall boasting and the law cooled him off with his club. The other citizen came home in the late afternoon from Church and ate too much peas with pot licker and the result was a bad case of indigestion. Which one cimmitted [the spelling is the correspondent's] the worst crime?

He continues:

The masses of our group of people just can't stand these prosperous times. Just last year our school board asked for bids on 30 ricks of wood and in three days the writer was flooded with bids, but this year we have asked for bids on forty ricks the second time and not one bid has come in yet. But the trend will soon change, because the most of our people are living in Arkansas and boarding somewhere else and their board is cash.

Ten years later, in the *De Queen Bee* dated Thursday, July 25, 1946, the items under the heading SILVER RIDGE (COLORED) read:

A million-dollar rain fell in this section last Friday afternoon, just in time to save the late crops.

Several of our high top folks have just about lost their dignity and gone on the begging list . . . begging for lard, meat and clothing, with money to buy, but out of stock.

The writer marketed canteloupes in De Queen last week and visited the new station and was surprised to see such a nice lunch room and seats to accommodate our group of people. I am wondering, will our home people appreciate this favor to the traveling public. I would like to see a sign in the colored department to read: "No loafers allowed. Buy a ticket or get out."

The Chapel Hill community, from which items come regularly to the *De Queen Bee*, was the site of the first public school in Sevier County. The building was made of hewed logs and had a puncheon floor. One log was taken out the full length of the house. This served as a window for the writing shelf. The students wrote with good goose-quill pens as they pored over their great flourishes. The benches were made of split logs. The fireplace, located in the end of the room, was eight feet wide. The principal schoolbook was the Blue Back Speller. School lasted about three months, and Teacher took "turn about" staying with the families of various students. Now, under the system of consolida-

tion, a four-year accredited high school is available to every boy and girl in the county, and the grade schools have made equal progress.

The Paraclifta Seminary, in 1862, had progressed to the point where it could advertise in the *Southwestern Democrat*. The town got its quaint name from an Indian chief. The advertisement is small but potent. It reads:

Paraclifta Seminary,
Samuel Stevenson, Principal,
Mrs. H. A. Owsley, Assistant,
Miss Fannie Pryor, Teacher of Music.
The Third Session of this Institution will commence
August the 4th and close December the 19th.
The Principal would return his most hearty thanks
for the very liberal patronage received; and, relying
upon Divine aid, will endeavor to merit the highest
degree of human confidence.
For terms, see circular.

From the Centennial issue of the *De Queen Bee*, I have gleaned one of the ghost stories that are told in Arkansas on stormy nights when the wind howls down the chimney. It was told by Laura D. Cole, of Grannis, Arkansas, and is a good illustration of the way the past creeps into the modern life of the state.

In 1849 little Laura came to Arkansas. She lived with an uncle and an aunt who had a daughter about her own age. One night soon after her arrival, her uncle set out trotlines in the Cossatot River. The next morning he awakened his daughter Genevieve and little cousin Laura very early so they might go to the river with him. They found a fine catch on the hooks, and uncle decided to take some fish to the home of a married son, who lived near the Rolling Fork Shoals ford. The trio went up the riverbank, intending to cross Pigpen Bottom, then return home past the Bayou schoolhouse. It was still early in one of the beautiful gold, blue and green Arkansas days, and they were enjoying the trip immensely.

However, when they entered the Bottom, little Laura became very nervous. She shuddered and looked around, saying she had a strange feeling. The others joked about it, and even Laura was able to smile wanly. Suddenly, to the utter consternation of her companions, she went into wild hysterics. Laura's uncle picked her up and hurried to the road, where she soon recovered. She went on with the others, probably very much ashamed of the scene she had made.

A few days later her uncle questioned her closely about the incident. What had frightened her? Had she seen something terrifying? She could say only that when she had turned the corner at the entrance, she had a sensation of being surrounded by evil. This feeling increased to such an extent that she was suddenly overwhelmed by a wave of fear and utter horror and lost all control of herself.

"Did you notice that pile of rocks on your right?" asked her uncle.

The little girl said she had seen no rocks, and asked what the rocks had to do with her fright.

"They once formed the fireplace of a man who was killed at the exact spot where you had hysterics," he replied.

So, because a little girl was frightened, the story of the Pigpen Bottom mystery has been preserved through the years.

Long, long before little Laura was born, a gold mine on what became known as the Campbell tract was worked by Spaniards. During that time, a bearded man from the Eastern settlements arrived with a string of pack animals. The Spanish settlements lay toward the trading point somewhere in the vicinity of Lockesburg. The man settled in the bottom and, with help from the miners, built a fortresslike cabin. He had no companion, but the excellent outfit carried by the pack animals showed him to be a man of means and good taste.

He cleared land, which he farmed in summer, and in winter he ran a trap line. He traded his furs for supplies at the Spanish trading post, but when he was offered work in the mines, he refused. At no time did he seek human companionship. In fact, when wayfarers stopped at the log house to ask for a night's lodging or victuals, the bearded man would slip from the house and hide until they had contin-

ued on their way. Often weeks would pass during which no one caught a glimpse of the strangely unsocial settler.

One day a party of hunters, white men and Indians, were passing the cabin. No smoke came from the chimney and the odor of death was all around. The door was closed, but the latchstring was out. The men went inside and found a strange scene. The white man had been horribly mangled to death. The interior of the cabin had been completely ransacked.

Although the murder was the talk of the countryside for years, no one ever learned the identity of the bearded man, and no one had a clue to the murderer who came and went unseen.

The uncle of Laura D. Cole was Dr. Ferdinand Smith, who had moved into the Fairview community in the early eighteen hundreds. He had come from Frankford, Missouri, where he had been a practicing physician. In Arkansas he resumed his practice and was soon serving Choctaws and white settlers. He liked the study of geology, and by tracing unmistakable signs he became convinced that the valley of the Cossatot had sunk at least two feet in recent geological times. He believed that he had uncovered enough evidence to prove that the New Madrid earthquake, which occurred in 1811, had caused the sinking. Naturally, with a mind like that, the traces of an old log cabin there in Pigpen Bottom would pique his interest. Who had accumulated the pile of rocks that had obviously been a fireplace at one time? What had become of him? To all inquiries he got only complete silence. Then at last an aged Indian told him the story, as the tribe had heard it from Indians then living in Arkansas. Later, from another source, he was able to verify the information. It must have been a surprise to the good doctor when his small niece went into hysterics at the old cabin site because she felt herself surrounded by evil!

XIII.....

Where Wildcats Mean Wealth

It is dollars to doughnuts you never dreamed so many possibilities were wrapped up in Arkansas—the state that gets nothing but ridicule from her sisters. Look at the Riceland, the Cottonland, the Timberland, the Land of Oil and Gas, the Wild West Land with its great ranches and fine livestock, the Deep South, with its antiques and bitter memories, the Fruit-Producing Regions, and last but not most important to visitors, the Land of the Free and Fun-Loving Vacationists.

Mountains, valleys, rivers . . . diamonds, pearls, jasper . . . blue skies, sunshine, fleecy clouds . . . springs and swift-flowing waterfalls . . . minerals and metals—here they are, in Arkansas.

You should wish to heaven this land were indeed filled with barefooted, ignorant galoots, so you could come down here and get some of this rich booty!

For instance, how would you like to have a baby wildcat in your back yard? I mean, of course, a wildcat oil well.

One of the surprises that greet an Arkansas visitor is the presence of gas and oil wells in impressive numbers. During the war, fuel oil was not rationed in this state, and it was one time when Arkansans could be doubly thankful for the bounty of their home state. Not that we need any emergency to prod us into proper gratitude. . . . I just mention that in passing.

Of course, any sort of oil well in one's back yard would be vastly exciting, but it seems to me that a wildcat well would put a lot more

zest into the pride of ownership. You have a farm, let us say, in southern Arkansas. Scenically, it doesn't amount to much, in contrast with the mountains of northern Arkansas. But suddenly you strike oil! Cheers! Recently I ran into a mighty lively baby wildcat down in southern Arkansas—a very young baby, only twenty-four hours old, and my head is still reeling from the figures that were tossed around. Even T. V. Yates, the redheaded driller, was proud of the new arrival! Since it is his business to go around the country making dreams come true, or dashing fond hopes to earth, one might think oil wells would be a dime a dozen to him. This new well will pump 200 barrels a day, and, with oil at \$1.20 a barrel, you can figure out what wealth this represents.

Of course, the income from a well has to be divided several ways. The state takes a hunk of it for taxes. The oil company that made the gamble gets some, and of course, the man from whom the land was leased for drilling purposes gets a share. Actually the landowner gets one barrel out of eight, but that adds up to a right tidy sum, usually, and he still has the surface of the land on which he can plant corn, cotton or whatever was making his living before the redhead and his rig moved onto his farm.

A wildcat, I was told, is an oil well that is suddenly discovered away off by itself. The one I grew to know more or less intimately was about thirty miles from Magnolia, and was all of twenty miles from its nearest neighbor well. It was found on the land of Colonel Hi Moore, U. S. Army (Ret.), and since the colonel has over 11,000 acres of land there in the Red River bottom, plus a possible pension, an oil well more or less in his life will hardly change his manner of living. However, the appearance of that lively wildcat made oil leases in the vicinity leap to five times their original value, and every farmer around was solicited by enterprising real-estate purchasers. The reactions to some of these offers were characteristically Arkansan.

One man, who owned a typical farm there, a scrubby, unbeautiful, scraggly piece of the earth alternately too wet or too dry, was offered \$50,000 for his land. He turned it down. He is holding out for \$100,000.

Another family were offered \$80,000 for their farm. They turned it down; said they didn't need the money. The barefoot children, in tattered overalls, went on gaily swinging in the old tire suspended from a branch of the sweet gum tree. The husband backed his mule into the shafts of the one-hoss plow, picked up his hoe and started out to the cotton patch. His wife picked up her spading fork, went out to the back end of the garden and resumed her digging. Until the cotton is picked, she is supporting the family by selling worms to fishermen who come to the river.

Now if you are mentally packing and moving down to southern Arkansas on a get-rich-quick scheme, better sit back and think it over. Even if you owned a piece of promising oil land, you couldn't expect to go out in the back yard, stick a broomstick down in the earth and then have to leap out of the way before the oil squirted in your eye. Oil isn't found that way. It took thirty days of continuous day-and-night digging to reach Colonel Moore's oil well. Three crews of four men each worked in continuous rotation, while twenty to thirty carloads of interested spectators sat around sweating it out. The crews made their own electricity for lights, and operations never ceased.

Actually it was not such a gamble as one might suppose. Crews of geophysical experts had gone over the land to determine if a dome in the granite cap rock, far under the earth's surface, could be located. When evidence pointed to one, the drilling rig was brought in and young Yates and his men went to work. At 3,800 feet they struck that cap rock, and although they could not be absolutely certain that oil lay beneath it, oil is usually found in such circumstances, and hopes ran high. When the drill reached sand, below the cap rock, they promptly threw in a core to bring up a sample. While the sample of sand was being analyzed, the drillers, according to Mr. Yates, just sat around, waiting for orders.

At last the call came, saying "Go ahead." At 500 feet deeper they were pumping oil.

The cost of drilling the well, in case you are thinking of giving your wife one for Christmas, was \$40,000. (Had it been a dry well, the cost

would have been a mere \$25,000, for it would have been capped when the samples were taken.) This is known as a cheap well, for the cost of drilling often goes to \$150,000, when the drills must be sunk to great distances.

Throughout the digging the driller had been keeping a well log, which describes all the layers through which the drill passed. After oil was found in the Moore well, they ran an electrical well log which took pictures of all the layers. The state of Arkansas requires this reading.

It seemed to me the state was sticking its nose into something that was definitely a private matter, but both Mr. Yates and Willard H. Land, who had come to the field to build tanks to hold the new oil, defended it hotly. The state needs this log not only for tax experts, but to help prevent fraud, in case one might be practiced. Of course I am sure fraud would never be perpetrated in Arkansas, by Arkansans, but some oilmen might come in from other states! In the old days, I was told, an unscrupulous owner would cap a lively young well at the instant oil was found, proclaiming to the world with many a crocodile tear that it was a "dry hole." Then very, very quietly, he would go around, buying up, at bargain prices of course, all the land or leases held by disappointed oil seekers in the vicinity. When he had a corner on the land, he would uncap his hidden well and make a cleaning. The electric well log shows whether or not oil is in a well, and the owner cannot keep it a secret any more than if he told his wife's bridge club.

Although the Moore well had been shut off until the construction of the tanks was completed, Mr. Yates and Mr. Land obligingly turned it on so I could see the black oil gushing out of the two-inch pipe. It was not what one might call an appetizing sight to a gal who had just stopped in because she had never seen an oil well close up. Just a gooey black liquid being burped out into a pondlike pool that combined more of the black stuff with a thinner reddish liquid! However, when I stood there remembering how I begged, borrowed and occasionally stole gas coupons during the late unlamented days of gasoline rationing, the thought of 200 barrels a day being added to the world's oil supply put a new complexion on that oil. And when I switched

on my imagination and pictured myself as Colonel Moore, suh, standing there viewing my brand-new oil well, the pool positively became beautiful.

The reddish color, I was told, comes from the mud which is continuously circulated through the drill pipe during the drilling operations. The red color is not the true color of the mud. A chemical that is put in makes the gooey liquid this reddish-brown, like weak cocoa. The mud is used to prevent wells blowing out, thereby cutting down the exciting news stories that once habitually came out of oil fields. It is used quite scientifically, too, according to Mr. Yates. The mud weighs eleven pounds to the gallon.

When oil is reached, the first flow is pumped into the pool, which Mr. Yates called the slush pit, and the flow continues until the well has "cleaned itself," in the oil-well patter. When the flow of oil is nice, smooth, clean black, instead of a reddish tinge, it is then clean enough to be directed into the tanks.

Mr. Land and his crew were working like mad to get the tanks ready. It was not solely to start that one barrel in eight coming in for Colonel Moore. Fact is, Mr. Land was a newlywed and was hurrying to get back to his bride in Shreveport. The tanks seemed to have been designed for hurry-up construction. They had been manufactured in sections which could be carried about on a workman's back, like a gigantic metal wing. Holes ranged along the edge of the "wing" provided an aid to lifting and transportation. Each workman carried a pair of small iron tools like emaciated stove-lid lifters, which he could insert in the holes along the edge of the section, and away he would go, a sort of mechanized angel!

When the tanks were ready, explained Mr. Land, the oil would be directed into them, and they would act as reservoirs. Then the pipe line would be brought in from the nearest point, which happened, in this case, to be Garland City. Inside of a week oil from the new well would be on its way to the refineries.

It seemed a businesslike, orderly procedure from first to last. Mr. Yates, who had worked up from roughneck to driller and evidently

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It seemed a businesslike, orderly procedure from first to last. Mr. Yates, who had worked up from roughneck to driller and evidently

knew all about oil wells, assured me there was little gambling on whether or not oil would be struck after the drilling operation is started. Oil leaseholders don't start digging until they are pretty certain oil will be found.

Between the Red River Valley and a point roughly thirty miles east of El Dorado, in southern Arkansas, oil and gas wells are thick as proverbial peas. My first acquaintance with this region came about at night. I had spent more time in Crossett than I had intended, and it was late in the afternoon when I headed for El Dorado. Having made a reservation at a tourist court, I was in no particular hurry, so darkness caught me long before I reached El Dorado. Few cars were on the road. I traveled along an exceedingly dark highway rimmed with even darker woods. It had been a rainy week. I could smell dismal swampy spots, and occasionally my headlights caught their reflection in water along the roadside. I shuddered at thought of a flat tire right then. Suddenly, from far back in the woods, I heard a deep cough. Then, a little farther along, another one. Did alligators or crocodiles ever cross the Louisiana line, a few miles away? And if so, did they cough? After the eighth or tenth cough, I was fairly flying. Suddenly I remembered that I was going to El Dorado to find out about oil and gas wells. There in the darkness oil wells were pumping their hearts out to give me gas for my car. Bless the darlings! I drove more slowly, enjoying the rhythmic sound of each new oil well as long as I could.

Of the fifty-five oil and gas pools brought into production in Arkansas since Dr. Bussey's Armstrong No. 1 well blew over its derrick several miles west of El Dorado on a cold January afternoon of 1921, thirty-eight are under state control, says the Eleventh Annual Oil and Industrial Edition of the *El Dorado Daily News*. This means their drilling and production have been continuously regulated according to the best scientific data available, with a view to prolonging the life of the field. A report of the Arkansas Oil and Gas Commission for 1945 reveals that 192 wells were drilled during the year. Of these, 126 were producers and sixty-six were nonproductive of oil or gas in commercial

quantities. They included forty wildcat tests, of which thirty-seven proved dry holes. The other three, however, as in the case of the well near the Red River Bridge, put three new areas into production. Colonel Moore's baby wildcat was quite unusual.

Undoubtedly the discovery of oil and gas has brought improvement to the towns in southern Arkansas, despite the landowners who turned down lease buyers. El Dorado is as bustling a city as one could hope to find. As a matter of fact, I believe it is the hustlingest town I have encountered in Arkansas. Whether that is good or bad depends on the way you feel about it! When a boy with a Detroit license on his car ran through a red light while my brakes shrieked, I could have imagined that I was back in Chicago.

El Dorado has scheduled many improvements of a civic nature. An American Legion Community Center Building is in the blueprint stage. It will be constructed of architectural concrete in the picturesque twenty-acre tract purchased by the Legion several years ago as a memorial to the late O. L. Bedenhamer, of El Dorado, one-time National Commander. Tentative plans have been drawn for a two-story building with main-floor dimensions 50 by 80 feet and an auditorium large enough to seat 1,000 persons or enable 400 to dine at one time. The kitchen will be in the subbasement, and the basement will have meeting rooms for the post and for other groups that wish to use the Community Center.

Since a community center is one of the dreams I cherish for every town, every locality, every village, I was most impressed at finding this progressive spirit in El Dorado.

The schools have been given a shot in the arm by the oil wells. El Dorado has four white grade schools and a high school, as well as a grade school and high school for colored children. Total enrollment stands at 4,122. Three of the schools, two white grade schools and the one Negro high school, serve hot lunches. A registered nurse is on full-time duty. When a youngster is absent on account of a contagious disease, his case is investigated in short order. Art and music have been given an important place in the curriculum, and auditorium activities

have been developed in order that children may learn to express themselves. I like this, too.

Arkansas youngsters may not be any better behaved than children in other parts of the country, but they seem so to me. They have an innate dignity and kindliness that sets them apart from the pushing, shoving, noisy youngsters I have seen elsewhere. Perhaps parents in Arkansas have an old-fashioned prejudice against children being allowed to take over a home, a theater or any adult gathering in which they find themselves. If this repression is bad for the child, as some psychologists seem to think, then perhaps the opportunity to get up in an auditorium and express themselves now and then will keep them even with the brash youngsters who have known no curbing. I would hate to think Arkansas kids must face greater problems in the world because of shyness or an inferiority complex. But I have little fear on that score. Often the quietness which the world might consider shyness is just inaudible laughing up one's sleeve.

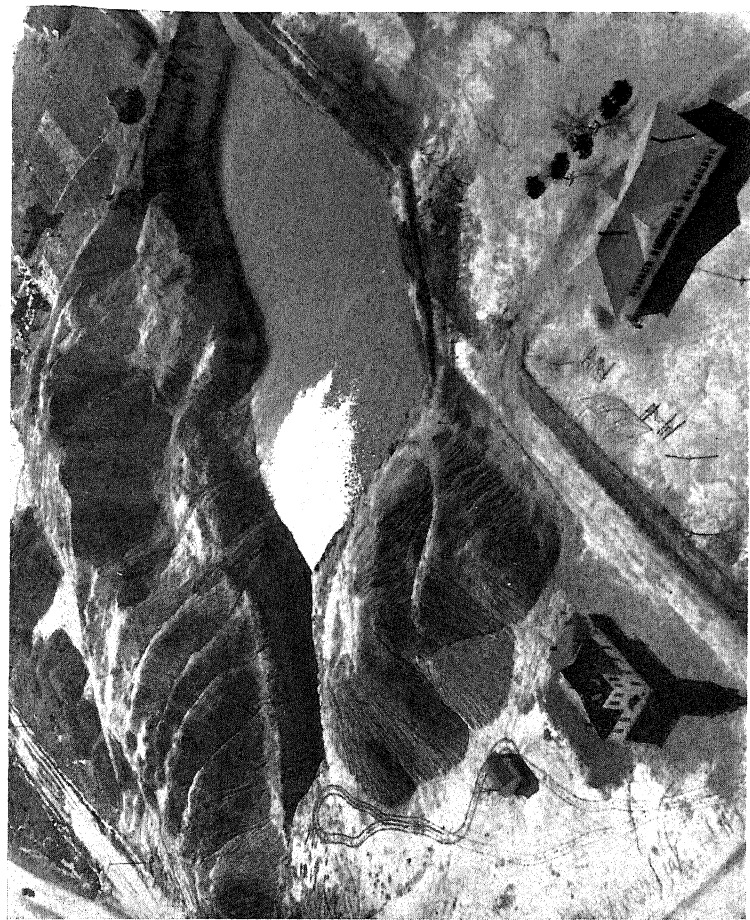
Long before the discovery of gas and oil in southern Arkansas, a good start had been made in constructing the power system. Then when the boom days arrived, a fine record was made in the face of numerous handicaps. Today southern Arkansas has one of the finest systems that can be found in any part of the nation. Hundreds of miles of transmission lines extend throughout the length and breadth of the oil fields, bringing service to pumping plants, and the comforts, conveniences and economies of electricity to mercantile stores, shops, refineries, as well as to city and farm homes. Electricity has been of inestimable value in aiding the growth and development of the territory around El Dorado in the oil-pumping operations. The Arkansas Power and Light company placed in operation in southern Arkansas several years ago a new 30,000-kilowatt steam-electric generating station named in honor of the late Harvey Couch, founder and long-time president of the company. This plant could produce 262,000,000 kilowatt hours a year if operated every one of the 8,760 hours in a year. That is more

than the electric power available in an average year at many important dams.

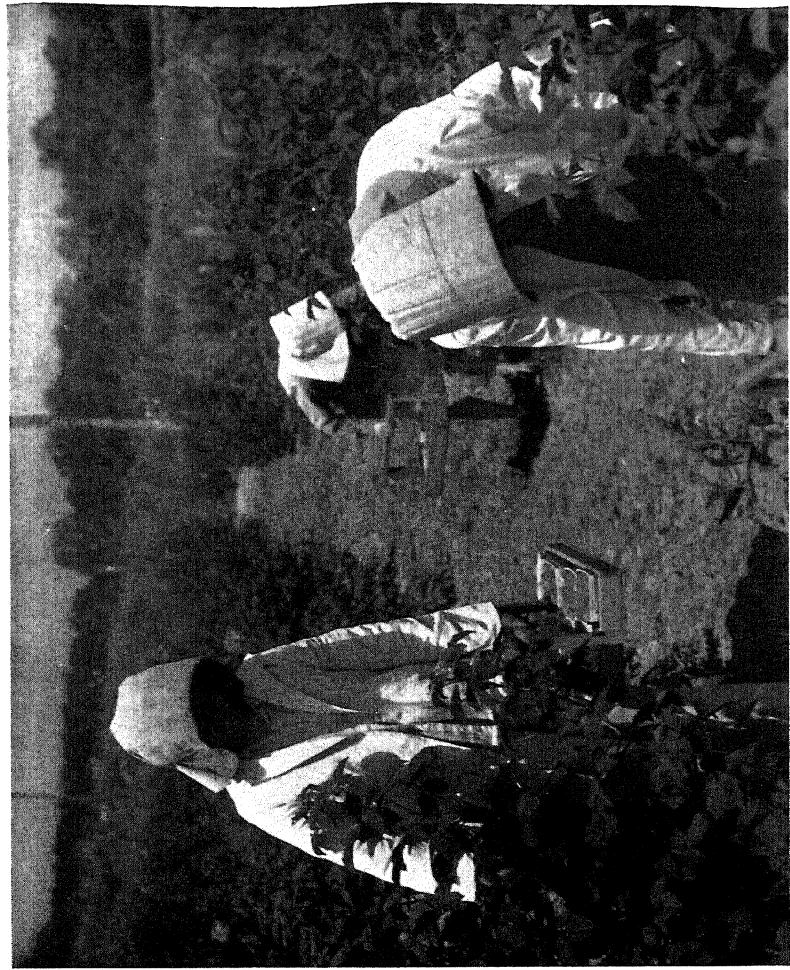
Another plant, with capacity of 300,000 kilowatts per hour, is now being erected near Little Rock, using South Arkansas natural gas. Electricity comes from this plant for my home town, Eureka Springs, and we are constantly pleased at the gratifyingly low figures on our monthly electric bill. Even with an automatic water heater, electric range, eight-foot refrigerator, three radios and the usual household items of iron and toaster, our bill rarely exceeds \$7.50. This takes in even those rare days when I get the urge to run the floor polisher from dawn to dark.

On completion of this program the rural areas of southern Arkansas will be among the best-electrified sections of the entire nation, according to Division Manager A. C. Neel of El Dorado. By the end of 1946 the company will have completed 3,500 miles of new rural electric lines. The number of farms utilizing electric service in that territory will increase, it is hoped, from 25,000 to 50,000.

Rural electrification was born in Arkansas, according to Mr. Neel. The new type of line, costing just about half what the old cumbersome type cost, was developed by Arkansas Power and Light Company engineers and later adopted throughout the nation. The company's program of permitting customers living along new lines to help construct them came also from Arkansas, and was adopted nationwide as the Self-Help Plan. Through this method farmers were enabled to earn money to help pay for wiring their homes and purchase appliances through which they could enjoy the benefits of electricity. Rural co-operatives, financed by tax funds, have been supplied with power at the lowest wholesale rate in the nation. Last year the dozen co-ops served by Arkansas Power and Light purchased power for an average of five and six-tenths mills per kilowatt hour. This is far cheaper than the co-ops could generate their own power. Besides saving the bother and expense of owning their own plants, it enables the co-ops to pass along important savings to the patrons. Perhaps this is one reason why so many tiny unpainted shacks and log cabins wear a shining electric



Bauxite mining leaves unsightly craters on Arkansas fields, but the mineral is essential to aircraft production. Arkansas has great bauxite deposits.



Sunbonnets, with slats of cardboard for stiffening, are still the favorite headgear of women picking raspberries in the fields near Mena in the Ouachitas.

meter—as conspicuous as glittering costume jewelry on a kitchen apron.

In Ouachita County the oil boom reached a new high in 1945, the latest year for which complete figures are available. The Smart field, oldest in the area, now has forty-four producers, with others nearing the final stage. In the past year, however, great interest has centered in the Wesson field, east of Stephens. The entire Stephens area is producing approximately 200,000 barrels of oil monthly under the Oil and Gas Commission field rules, but could produce much more than that if allowed to run wide open. This field is assured a long life, for tests have reported as many as seventeen possible producing levels.

Camden, seat of Ouachita County, has had a spectacular growth since the first oil days, and its improvement came to a peak during the past eighteen months. Now the city has well over 15,000 permanent inhabitants in addition to several thousands that might be called transients.

In the residential district three new housing projects are in progress. More than 300 new houses have been built in Camden and more are under construction. Besides these, a dozen or more apartments and one-room shacks have gone up. The hundreds of trailers are ignored in these population figures.

At least fifty new cafés and eating houses have opened in the Camden neighborhood, and when I was there I couldn't park in front of forty-nine of them or anywhere near. The one that had a parking spot within a block was a little hole-in-the-wall on a side street, but the food was adequate for a hungry tourist, and both proprietor and waitress were pleasant and friendly—despite the fact that three soldiers from a recruiting car gave me strong competition in conversation.

At least \$100,000 has been spent on new buildings in the business district and the town fairly bristles with new brick and brick-and-tile structures. At least a dozen new retail firms have opened up, and the pay roll is the largest in the history of Camden. This is readily understood when one sees the many sawmills that have gone into operation.

However, Camden is not content to cut down its trees and go no farther than the raw boards. Three retail lumber firms have started within the past eighteen months, the Camden furniture company is expanding in large way, and many small woodworking plants are busier than ever before.

Between Camden and El Dorado I visited the first washeteria I had ever seen. Somehow washeterias had completely escaped my attention. When I stopped to look at the strange name I was struck with its originality. It was on a Saturday afternoon and the washeteria had been closed down for the week end. I wandered about, talking with the managers, who certainly needed a day off, and inspecting the four washing machines that were bolted to the floor alongside the big rinsing tubs. Two things impressed me. One was the accumulation of odd socks, baby pants, handkerchiefs and gloves that hung on a line at the back of the washroom. It seems that everybody leaves small objects in the wash water, even as you and I. At the washeteria these were fished out and hung on a line, to be claimed by their owners. The second thing was the long row of chairs along the side wall.

"Heavens above!" I said. "Don't tell me these poor suffering women who are doing their washing must be pestered with an audience?"

"Nobody minds," said the washeteria manager. "Everybody visits and laughs, and the women who are sitting here waiting for their turns join in, so it is just one big jolly party."

While we were talking, a big car whisked up to the front door, and a pleasant-faced woman in a print dress slid from behind the wheel and came in.

"I know you don't like to have customers on Saturday, but I'm having company Monday," she faltered.

"Sure! Come on in," said the manager.

She carried in a big basket of clothes and plopped them down on the bench beside one of the washers. I settled myself in one of the audience chairs!

"When our house was built we made simply no provision for washing," said the woman with the wash. "We had always sent our

washing out and I supposed we always would. The other day I called up our former washwoman and asked if she knew where I could get my washing done. She said: 'Ah's sure Ah don't know, ma'am! Ah's lookin' for a washlady mahse'f!'"

With quick, sure motions, she put all the white things through a tub of cold water, to wash out stains that might be set with hot water. Then she put them in the washing machines while she ran the colored ones through the cold water.

"We're either awfully dirty, or awfully clean." She laughed. "Imagine a washing like this for just four of us!"

Although it was none of my business, I pointed out certain pieces that might have gone until next washday. But then I've always done my own washing!

When I left, the clothes were going through their second rinsing and the Camden homemaker was still unruffled and chatty. My admiration for Arkansas women rose another notch. Despite the hardships brought by a sudden crowding of areas that were once calm and peaceful, despite sudden lack of the help one had known from childhood, no one has let it get her down.

Southern Arkansas may be aware of many fine features of Camden. The country at large is familiar with two of the local products, the Camark Pottery and Grapette. I doubt if a gift shop in the Middle West is without its quota of Camark pottery—those soft-tinted vases, bowls, wall pockets, platters and what-have-you, ranging from roosters to violins. The prices are well within the financial range of the average gift-shop customer, and the colors and shapes are so enchanting that Camark pottery is a godsend to gift-shop owners. One proprietor told me that he kept his sales high by displaying a great stock of it. The more you show the more you sell, he quoted. I looked around the shop and couldn't find a nook or cranny where he could possibly have crammed another piece.

Grapette is the soft drink with the real grape flavor. The concentrate is made at Camden, then shipped to various cities where franchise

owners do the bottling. The company puts out such backhanded advertising as, "Even if you're not thirsty, drink Grapette," which reminds me of the radio comedian who used to knock on a front door and say, "You don't want any vacuum cleaners today, I hope, I hope, I hope!"

In Magnolia the effects of oil discovery are most noticeable in the improvement of the bank and two churches. That's a healthy sign. The First National Bank, a three-story building, is getting a Batesville limestone front up to the second floor, full plate-glass doors, a public clock in front, a night depository slot, an automatic electric elevator, air conditioning, etc.

Within a year, or possibly two, both the First Methodist Church and the Central Baptist Church will begin extensive building programs, including main buildings with greatly enlarged auditoriums to take care of the increased attendance.

Even little Waldo reports improvements of considerable value. A \$75,000 cotton warehouse with a capacity of 7,000 bales has been added during the past year, and the house is now in use. A new bottling plant with franchises for five counties is in operation, and other businesses have been started. Waldo has experienced a severe housing shortage and the biggest building boom in its history is anticipated as soon as labor and materials are available.

I shall always remember Waldo for its pleasant churches. I was driving through the town one hot Sunday morning in mid-March and stopped to walk my dog. Suddenly in a little town that seemed no different from a thousand other villages, the enchanting music of chimes pealed out on the soft spring air. It was so unexpected, so delightful, so Sunday-morning-ish, I waited until the whole repertoire had been played. Then I wanted to see the church. I asked a boy who happened to pass by which church had the chimes. He directed me to the wrong one, but that was a blessing in disguise. It enabled me to realize that a small town could have more than one nice church. The young girl who was practicing the Sunday-school music

directed me to the right church, but I found I was too early even for Sunday school. I went around the church. The minister's young wife came hurrying out their back door to meet me with beads of perspiration on her brow, buttoning the blouse of her pretty Sunday sheer, and when I gave her a dollar for the contribution box, she was completely bewildered. I told her I was accustomed to paying for my concerts, and I didn't know when I had enjoyed one more. She's probably still wondering how I had escaped my keeper, but I felt better as I drove out of town.

At Emerson, which is near the Louisiana line, a new telephone office has been erected in the business section, a new switchboard has been installed, and the exchange reworked. The drugstore is the spectacular spot for an out-of-state visitor. It has the old-time narrow shelves that were familiar before drugstores began to carry electrical appliances and jewelry and pots and pans. Even the carved latticework is there, separating the front part, with its old-fashioned, bent-wire sody-fountain chairs, from the prescription department. If you are inclined to snoop just a little, you can find in the back room apothecary jars and bottles with ground-glass stoppers—that is, if I haven't gone back and bought up those I left on my last trip.

Near Emerson I visited the home of Mrs. A. A. Daniels, one of those Arkansas countrywomen popularly supposed to be so lazy and shiftless. Mrs. Daniels, who was seventy-three, lived alone. You would know the house when you reached it because, if it were between Valentine Day and Thanksgiving, you would find the front yard full of flowers. More flowers lined the porch and climbed the steps that led to the wide, shaded front porch, which extended between a well, complete with windlass, and a front bedroom.

I understood why we had undergone a thread shortage when I saw the interior of the Daniels home. From the towel hanging on a nail handy to the washpan on the porch, to the curtains in the kitchen, everything that could be bordered or bound with crochet had its handmade lace. Even the seven shelves, long as the kitchen walls, were bordered with two-inch lace. One small inner window between the kitchen and

the dogtrot was covered with a crocheted curtain, and all the pillow slips had handmade edges, as well as fanciful embroidered designs and the friendly admonition: GOOD NIGHT, SLEEP TIGHT! One bed had a crocheted bedspread. The crowning achievement of those busy fingers was a lambrequin eighteen inches wide, attached to the mantel over the fireplace. The whole affair had been crocheted, and somehow Mrs. Daniels had managed to work the words, HOME SWEET HOME, into the pattern. The spick-and-span cleanliness of the place and the evidence of loving fingers which have never known idleness made the house truly remarkable, for all the lack of modern conveniences. If I could have my way, I would like to pack up that house with all its crochet, its flower garden, its enlarged photographs of married daughters hung in a row on Mother's bedroom wall, its shining dogtrot, and part at least of the dusty road leading to it, just as I saw it on that hot July day! Then I would take the display around the country, from Maine to California, and from Canada to the Gulf, exhibiting it as an Arkansas home. I would like even to include the lawn mower which stood beside the front gate, although there was scarcely a square yard of grass growing in that flower-filled space. Too bad Mr. Schoolcraft can't return on another geology trip and see Mrs. Daniels' home!

The main part of Magnolia is a square built around a courthouse which stands on a wide lawn. I mean the lawn was wide at one time; now it is fairly filled with great magnolias. I do not know whether the town was named for the magnolias about the courthouse, or the magnolias were planted in honor of the name. It makes no difference. I knew how fitting the name was as I walked between the towering magnolias and looked at the long, glossy leaves and big pods with seeds ready to turn the brilliant crimson that only magnolias achieve.

Magnolia still seems small-town in comparison with bustling El Dorado, but the traveler sees many features surprisingly urban. I stepped into a drugstore and found it air-conditioned. It was a new store, and it had no cokes, for the soda fountain had not been installed,

but it had ice-cream cones! That gave me an excuse to linger until I could forget the heat of the streets outside. The store was not teeming with customers. In fact, on my third cone I was the only one. Perhaps the others had gone out to bring in their friends to witness my indecent slaughter of innocent ice cream. As for me, on a day like that I wouldn't have gone out in the sun to see a queen's coronation!

The Peace Tourist Court at Magnolia had a few insignificant little placards strung along the road, and this traveler who had begun to worry about a place to lay her weary head noted them with lackluster eye. The name Peace brought to her recollections of Father Divine, and since segregation is strictly practiced in southern Arkansas she had cause to wonder whether it would bear the word "Colored" or "White." No hint was given until I drove into the court, and then the unexpected glamour was practically overwhelming. A business office, where one could register, and a smart café were at the front. Then, ranged in a clear, glowing, right-angle formation were perhaps fifty apartments—you couldn't call them cabins—linked together with open-faced garages. Each had its own attic fan, bathroom with shower, polished floor and blue-painted metal furniture. Even on a hot afternoon, one could close the door, open the windows a mere crack, pull down the blinds and enjoy a nap in a relatively cool dwelling.

In years soon to come the Arkansas Traveler may enjoy life in a modern four-story air-conditioned hotel that is planned for Magnolia.

An eating place called the Chatter Box reminded me of the B. and G.'s in Chicago. It had the same counter arrangement—I saw it also in an eating place at El Dorado—and the girls worked behind the counters. The room was air-conditioned. The front door was one of those all-glass affairs, which make you think you are walking through a window. Joseph's shoe store, in Chicago, has one you can look at if you do not understand what I mean.

Undoubtedly many of the pretty houses in Magnolia owe their existence to the oil fields, but I failed to find anyone who could qualify outwardly, at least, as "newly rich." If I had expected to find women lifting lorgnettes as they inspected work shirts and overalls at the gen-

eral store, I was sorely disappointed. I couldn't see anyone putting on the proverbial dog. In the drugstore, I asked the pretty young woman who was handing out ice-cream cones if she could point out anyone who owned land on which oil had been found.

"My daddy does!" she said.

I peered around to see if she had a convertible and a swimming pool parked at the door because those are two things I'd have if my dad owned oil lands, but neither was in sight! I looked at her bright dark eyes, black hair and lovely smile set off by a spankin' clean, freshly ironed, pink cotton dress, and wondered how an attractive oil heiress happened to be selling ice-cream cones. Then I remembered the family who had said they didn't need \$80,000. I asked her if finding oil had made much difference in her life. She smiled.

"Well, we'd always had a car, but we got a better one. We'd had a five-room house, but when the land was leased to an oil company, we built one with seven rooms—and a bathroom!" she added.

Had she gone to college? No. She was twenty-four when the oil was discovered and that was too late. Her sister had been younger, and she had gone to Shreveport and taken a business course. Better take another look at your secretary, sir. She may have an oil well in her hope chest. As for the girl in pink cotton, she had worked three years for a hardware merchant, and when the drugstore needed help she had changed over to the ice-cream freezer. Her father and mother still lived on the farm, about ten miles in the country, but her father didn't work it. Her brothers, returned from overseas, had taken up the farming.

What did she do for amusement? Why, her daddy came for her every Saturday evenin' and she went out home for the week end. Since her mother had trouble getting help to keep the big house clean, Miss Pink Cotton always turned to as soon as she got home on Saturday and did a good cleaning job, finishing the work on Sunday morning before church. Then she always got a good Sunday dinner, because she loved to cook . . . and . . . and . . . they had company most usually. Marriage? Miss P. C. smiled. Some day, perhaps. Her boy friend was

just home from overseas and had bought a half interest in a grocery. They would have to wait to see how that turned out!

I didn't ask her name. She didn't know she was talking to a type-writer-pounder.

Later in the afternoon I met Mrs. Ola Davis, county 4-H Club leader, and mother of six children, three of them just back from service abroad. "I can't seem to find an oil-well owner," I complained. "Do they have a little club where they speak only to the mint-julep boy?"

Mrs. Davis smiled. "Our family has a couple of oil wells."

Ah, at last an oil-well owner!

Mrs. Davis continued: "I don't know how my daddy bought 400 acres of land when he had ten children to support. But he did it. Then they found oil on the land. Of course we're all grown up and married now. Mother still has the farm and the homestead, but she didn't want a widow's share of the money that came in from the wells. She asked to be counted as one of the children, so they divide the oil checks eleven ways, giving mother an equal share with each of us children. We don't get much. I got a check for \$32 today as my month's share. But let me tell you, that helps!"

Perhaps that is why no flagrantly rich oil-well owners clutter up the streets of oil towns. Quite possibly the big Arkansas families spread the profits a bit thin. Then, too, the oil flow is regulated in order to conserve the earth's supply.

When our 4-H Club errand was completed, Mrs. Davis and Bernice Bryson, Home Demonstration Agent of Columbia County, told me of another errand.

"We want you to meet an old gentleman out here in the country!" they said. "He hasn't been very well."

We drove several miles from Magnolia and stopped before a little white cottage on a barren, sandy lawn. One windowpane had been broken, and the window was stuffed with rags. The doorway was unscreened, but a wide porch kept us from seeing the interior. A thin, frail man walked stiffly down the porch steps and came across the lawn to meet us. Miss Ola shook hands with him and asked about his father.

"Paw's mighty restless tonight," the man said softly. "I'm afraid he won't be here much longer." His faded blue eyes filled with tears. "He's been in bed most of the time for the last three months."

"Do you have the sole care of him?" I asked.

"Yes'm," he replied. "Maw died years ago."

"And you haven't married yet? Well, you're still young!" Always the matchmaking me!

"No'm," he answered the first question, and added, "Maybe some day. I'm sixty now!" I looked at the heavy woolen trousers, far too large for that slender waist, at the clean but faded blue shirt, and the ragged woolen hat with a lock of faded hair standing up through its torn crown. The careworn face and the sad eyes tore my heart. Poverty is bearable, but poverty plus sickness . . . that is tragedy!

"You look as if you need care yourself," I said.

He seemed pathetically grateful for my personal concern. "I am awful tired," he admitted.

I asked about the meals for the sick man and his weary nurse in that womanless house.

"Paw don't eat hardly anything. And I'm not hungry hardly ever," he said gently.

Milk? Well, it was too much expense and bother to keep a cow. He didn't get out and do much, with Paw the way he was, and a hired hand cost five dollars a day now. "We find it's cheaper jis' to borry milk from a family that lives down the road a piece."

We heard a faint moan from the sick man in the dark interior.

"He's so old. Couldn't you get him into a hospital?" I asked.

"I've thought about that. Seems like it'd be good f'r Paw if I could jis' git a little place in town and move him into it. But folks say he wouldn't be satisfied. He'd want to git right back out home."

"I don't mean a little place," I said firmly. "I mean a hospital."

"Oh, I know Paw'd never be satisfied there." A sort of nameless terror filled his eyes.

As we drove back into town, my sympathy grew beyond reason.

"Look," I said to my companions. "Can't we chip in together and

beg a little more money somewhere else and get that poor old man in a decent hospital? After all, an old pioneer deserves a little something from the community."

My companions burst into peals of laughter. "Didn't you notice those two oil derricks right there in front of the house? Why, that old man has at least twenty oil wells on his land."

Later as we sat at a long counter in a combination grocery-and-meat market I had a happy thought. At that grubby place, with Harry slicing steaks on the butcher's counter at the back of the store, and Frank, arms covered with tattooing, busily sizzling steaks and frying potatoes at the grease-laden stove, I might be rubbing elbows with Arkansas oil millionaires. But I'd never know it!

Helena—Arkansas' Southern Belle

BEYOND the sea wall that parallels Cherry and Ohio Streets in Helena, Arkansas, Ol' Man River slips so quietly that one almost forgets what a swirling brown torrent he can become. Along the top of the dike separating the river from the main part of town, goats are tethered to graze, and shambling fishermen tread the narrow path, moving silhouettes against the blue sky. Beside the highway leading into town, tufts of cotton blown from high-sided, mule-drawn wagons lie on the greening grass of spring or the dull tan dried grass of midsummer, like strange new white blossoms or unmeltable snow. Helena is a pleasant city in a snug little pocket between Crowley's Ridge and the Mississippi, at a point believed the exact spot where De Soto crossed the river. Some Helena citizens, anxious to be exactly truthful, estimate that he crossed it about thirty miles below the town-site, but there is the De Soto marker which points out their mistake. Anyway, what are thirty miles in a story so hallowed?

Since its founding, Helena has been the Old South of Arkansas. Now it is the New South with smokestacks. Just how yellowed clip-pings, brittle with age, and pay-roll ledgers will mix is something for onlookers to watch. But I'm betting on Helena. After all, a great many things have happened in this town of towering magnolias, eighteen-inch wisteria blossoms and waitresses who say thank-you-kindly-ma'am, yet Helena has kept rolling along, even as Ol' Man River himself.

Helena is the Old South of *Gone with the Wind*, the South of cotton, fried catfish and hushpuppies. It stands in land laced with gumbo roads,

and its homes are peppered with silver coffeepots that Great-grandpa brought back that time he carried the cotton down to New Orleans on a flatboat. Now it is on the way toward becoming industrialized, with booming businesses putting new zip, not to mention new finances, into Cherry Street. Both black and white are more prosperous, and even the agricultural picture seems to be changing, with great plantations giving way to individually owned cotton patches blessed with small loans from Uncle Sam.

Time was when a young woman of Helena speaking of the war meant the fourth war back. Now she is referring to the Philippines or Germany. But don't make a mistake when you hear a woman of middle age or older mention the war. Though it isn't named, she means the one in which Grandpappy fit, bled and died. Helena was the scene of one of the battles of the War between the States, and naturally, up to World War II, the Battle of Helena still dominated all talk of conflict.

In Helena families eat and drink from china and glass such as we drool over in Northern antique shops, yet very often the mother of the family works in a downtown office. A blond schoolgirl sleeps in a great hand-carved bed that rivals those at Mount Vernon, after a date with a young fellow who is one of 700 workmen making station-wagon bodies. A grandmother who cherishes long-ago memories of a velvet-lined carriage now briskly drives her own car about town and is no more upset over lack of parking space than anyone else. The people of Helena have an inner fortitude that enables them to take on new views without losing the old. To some, this quality may seem the reverse of a virtue, but that remains to be proved. It will be interesting to watch Helena.

Already new ideas are permeating its gentle air. With the return of World War II veterans, overnight the old town became something it never had been. Young women whose soft Southern voices remind one of honey and hot biscuits can be found politicking like mad for consolidated schools, a new auditorium and city hall and younger aldermen for the city council. Helena has an airport, a 610-acre, all-way

field and a radio station, a 250-watt transmitter. It has excellent schools—two high schools and two elementary schools besides the schools for colored students. It has two libraries, one daily newspaper and one weekly, and its population of 16,000 has the advantage of first-class waterworks, manufactured gas and a never-ending catfish supply.

Helena harbor and terminal facilities—says the Chamber of Commerce folder—are the best in the lower Mississippi Valley and the only ones on the west bank of the river. The terminal warehouse has a total of 46,000 square feet. The elevation of the terminal is above high water and the building is of the inclined-plane type. End quote.

The average growing season of the region round about is listed as 212 days. After March 28 killing frosts are not expected, and the fall garden can grow up to October 25 without danger of frost, although, of course, there are unusual years. The mean annual temperature is 62.5 degrees, but one doesn't expect to get much good out of a summer topcoat. The altitude of Helena is 250 feet above sea level, and that is hardly conducive to mountain breezes.

The land of Phillips County is a rich alluvial soil, well adapted to all kinds of crops—cotton, corn, small grains, soybeans, alfalfa, other hay crops, vegetables, fruits and pecans. For years, of course, cotton was the main crop, but now a beef and dairy cattle program is rapidly developing. Good market outlets, including a canning factory, a fertilizer-mixing plant, alfalfa-dehydrating plants, a slaughterhouse and a packing plant have materialized within the last few years, in addition to the cotton-marketing aids, such as a cottonseed-oil mill, cotton gins and cotton compresses.

The government now issues loans to farmers who are switching over from share-cropping or working as day laborers to the status of independent farmers. I have sat long hours in the Federal Building where these loans are allowed, and listened to the farmers' plans. They seem pitifully small! "Goin' to git me another mule. I already got one good one." "Goin' to put me in ten acres o' cotton." "Yas, suh, my wife and young'uns will he'p tend and pick mah cotton."

Because the small amount of the loan goes most often to buy seed for

the farm and cotton patch and feed for the farm animals, they are called "seed-and-feed loans" by the men who receive them. Since his return from service Leland Stone is the sympathetic Uncle Sam man in charge of lending. A Helena man, he is intensely interested in the improved conditions in and around the town, and feels that a new agricultural future can be founded on the efforts of the small-loan farmers.

Crowley's Ridge, which Helena touches, is one of America's wonders. I had heard of it long before I ever saw it. One of my farm neighbors was planning a trip to eastern Arkansas. Not long before she was to start, the spring rains set in, and we had rain day and night for almost a week. During that time something came up that made it imperative for me to go on a long trip which might touch the town where she expected to visit relatives and friends.

One night when she had waded over to call, we were discussing the trip and I said, "I might be able to bring you home. Where shall I meet you?"

"If this rain keeps up," she replied gloomily, "you can find me on Crowley's Ridge."

She explained that Crowley's Ridge runs parallel enough to the Mississippi River to act as backstop for many floods. When the river starts to rise, the people in the flood areas grab up the kids and head for the hill. There they find the Red Cross, with tents and baskets of food, waiting to receive them! The neighbor mentioned those baskets with all the nostalgia with which others might recall a dinner at Antoine's or Jacques'!

When I first saw Crowley's Ridge it was in the springtime. The kudzu vine, under the influence of the first warm sunshine, had made it a wall of green. I had severe misgivings about its ability to be a haven of refuge in a rainstorm. Even the vibrant growth of this Foot-a-night Vine, as Negroes call the kudzu, cannot stop Crowley's Ridge from sloughing off, leaving soft, brownish dirt banks that look for all the world like fresh-cut fudge. Only two ridges of the sort are to be found in the entire world—Crowley's and one in the Himalayas. Not a

stone mars the fine, even texture of the earth that makes up Crowley's Ridge, and the result is a continuous washing away. Usually one thinks of erosion as injurious only to the hill or field undergoing the washing-away process. In Helena one's sympathies go out to the family which is unfortunate enough to have a lawn at the ridge base. With every rain part of the mountain pours down on the lawn, burying grass and flowers under a landslide of soft brown earth.

Helena is so rich in history that the Arkansas Traveler who is an incurable romantic should allow plenty of time for his visit.

In 1811, a year before the erection of the big house where "Miss" Johnnie Stephens lives now, the first steamer for Western waters came down the Mississippi. It was the *New Orleans*, built by Nicholas J. Roosevelt, great-great-uncle of Theodore Roosevelt, and the great Nicholas himself made the trip. After that, the boats brought many famous citizens, including the first of the Hanks family, forebears of one of my favorite Helena friends.

In May 1820 Helena was made a town. It was quite a town from the start, for it was laid out one mile square. It is not that large now, for the river has claimed one street and the levee another. The town was first called St. Francis. Later it was renamed Helena in honor of the baby daughter of Sylvannus Phillips. The first mayor was Lycurgus Cage. Plantations were laid out along the river, beautiful pillared homes were built and a graceful social life developed. Although the plantations were mainly farmed by overseers, the owners came once a year to hunt and enjoy a round of festivity. Of course slaves were bought and sold. Cotton was the main crop, with a few cattle and the inevitable pigs for po'k chops. The town continued to prosper, and in 1833 the first newspaper, the *Helena Herald*, was established. In 1854 dirt was broken for the Midland Railway.

The river was both friend and enemy. Early in the existence of the settlement, planters began to build levees to protect cotton. They were crude, inadequate protection, about four feet high. Each planter took care of his own levees. The town buildings were constructed on high foundations, and sidewalks stalked on stilts from store to store.

Then came the war. Of the seven generals given by Phillips County to the South, only one was in the Battle of Helena, but all gave distinguished service. One of them, Charles Adams, came to Helena in 1835, to become a banker and lawyer. After the war he went to Memphis and brought further distinction to his family by becoming the grandfather of Helen Keller. Another, Brigadier General James Tappan, also lawyer, is said to be the only general who ever licked Grant. He is buried in Helena and his home is still in the Tappan family. Major General Patrick Cleburne came to Helena from Ireland, and his illustrious name is found all over Arkansas counties and communities.

Helena men were as staunch rebels as the South produced. The local chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy is named the Seven Generals Chapter in honor of these famous men. Some of the younger Helena citizens, who have participated in more recent wars, are inclined to chuckle because not long ago the record of an eighth general from Phillips County was uncovered. The U. D. C. is just a bit embarrassed about it. It seems a trifle late to change the name of the chapter and readjust the boasted seven to include an eighth name. It would have been better, some hint, just to let some other county have Number Eight. Personal accounts of the War between the States still turn up occasionally in old desks and trunks. I had the pleasure of reading one, written by Captain J. C. Barlow, that had only recently been found in the desk of Mary Elizabeth Miles, whose home is a treasure house of antiques. A canopied bed in one of the bedrooms was part of the dowry of the French bride, Elizabeth Lejier, whom Mary Elizabeth's Great-grandfather Coolidge wooed and won through an interpreter when he carried cotton to New Orleans. Most of the cotton planters brought home from New Orleans beautiful silver fashioned in France, but Grandpa Coolidge brought back a bride who couldn't speak a word of English! In World War II the great-grandson of that French bride, Colonel Joseph Barlow Coolidge, was with Ernie Pyle when the beloved newspaperman was killed.

Helena escaped much of the pillage and destruction that were the

lot of other Southern cities in the War between the States for the reason that the Federals walked right in and took over the important river port at the beginning of the conflict. On July 4, 1863, they were under command of General B. M. Prentiss, who was stationed on a gunboat opposite York Street, where Lycurgus Lucy lived. Lieutenant General Theophilus H. Holmes was commander in chief of the Confederates who tried to relieve the city. General Sterling Price's men took the Federal redoubt on Graveyard Hill back of R. C. Moore's home. In this assault, says an old newspaper account, Arkansas fought not only for the homes of her living loved ones, but for the graves of her departed. The enemy had fortified themselves over Helena's dead. Throughout the long hot Independence Day, the battle raged.

Mrs. Marjorie McKune, of Helena, who was twelve years old at the time, remembered the Battle of Helena well enough to tell newspaper reporters about it several years ago. Her father was Dennis Murphy, veteran of the Mexican War, and their home was directly in the path of shot and shell from three sides. The doughty old veteran was soon out on the street, watching the battle from this point or that one, leaving the mother to look after the safety of the four children. The mother had good judgment. She hurried the youngsters into the big fireplace and rolled the trundle bed against it. Windowpanes were shattered, but the children were not hurt. In midafternoon a flag of truce was flown and comparative quiet settled down on the little town on the bank of the Mississippi. Helena was still in the hands of the Federals. Soldiers of both the North and the South lay dying and dead in the magnolia-shaded streets. As soon as the children were released, little Marjorie went out on the streets to help carry water to the injured.

When the battle results were tallied, it was found that the Confederates had lost 1,636 soldiers killed, wounded and missing, and the Federals, 239.

The Battle of Helena had far greater results than the list of killed and wounded. To this day, amateur army strategists take great pleasure in studying out the battle plan of the Confederate Army. Four Southern

generals were scheduled to attack, each aiming his activities at particular fortifications. Somehow the plans went wrong, and two of the generals with their armies were repulsed. The argument over their failure waged long and vigorously. At last on September 16, 1863, General L. M. Walker and General John S. Marmaduke fought a duel on the Godfrey de Lefevre plantation near Little Rock. General Walker had accused General Marmaduke, a West Point graduate, of cowardice and failure to bring his battery into action at a decisive moment. General Walker was killed in the duel, but General Marmaduke lived on to become Governor of Missouri.

All through Helena the Arkansas Traveler is shown homes that were once occupied by the Feds. The magnolias on the Hanks lawn were barked by the Federals' horses that were tethered to them. The Baptist Church became a hospital, loyal Helena citizens declare. The red brick Moore home, now occupied by the builder's granddaughter, Mrs. Fannie May Hornor, became headquarters for the Federal officers. But in the Battle of Helena it was not spared. The sliding doors that separate the front parlor from the back parlor still bear large perforations left by Minié balls that passed through the house.

According to all accounts the Federal officers enjoyed life in the South. One night they gave a party in the Moore house with its seventeen-foot ceilings and wrought-iron trimming. The local belles were invited and came to the party, just as the boys in gray met the boys in blue for friendly card games when the lines were conveniently close. All went well at the party until someone proposed a toast to the United States. Miss Margaret Moore couldn't take it. Shielding her glass behind her fan, she put it down untouched. Her action was politely disregarded at the party, for she was a guest. The next day one of the Federal officers called at her home and suggested that her father send her out of town. Miss Margaret's trunk was packed and she went to Kentucky to visit relatives and stay for the duration.

The eight magnolias at the fine old Hanks home to which the Federal soldiers tethered their horses have since dwindled to six, but those six are still hardy and beautiful. The Feds cannot be blamed for

the untimely death of the other two lovely trees, but it might be mentioned that their passing caused almost as much furor as the Wah!

Miss Johnnie, of all persons, was the culprit who did away with them. When I met them Mr. Harry and Miss Johnnie Stephens had been man and wife sufficiently long to be the grandparents of a lively youngster. However, in the good old Southern manner, the blue-eyed redhead who could charm the gold out of my teeth, was still called Miss Johnnie.

The home of the Stephenses, the old Hanks house, was started in 1812, long before any sort of town had appeared on the banks of the Mississippi in that locality. Seeing that attractive home now, one finds it hard to believe that its site was determined by the accidental location of a slight rise in the flat landscape. The first Hankses were wary of high water! The house was built of logs in the familiar Spanish style that still appears throughout the South, low, long rooms around an inner court. Slaves, of course, were used to farm the great plantation that surrounded it, and their quarters ran back to the ridge. The logs for the house had been cut on the riverbank where the early settlers had landed, and were carried back to the rise for the building. The big trees in the virgin forest along the river continued to furnish a livelihood for the forebears of Miss Johnnie for many years. They cut logs to provide firewood for the big steamers that were soon plying up and down the Mississippi.

The house had been continuously in the possession of the Hanks family all these years, although, little by little, a great deal of the plantation had been sold. Once a bank failure made it necessary to mortgage the family property, but it was paid off through the years. The memory of those hard years made a laughing matter of one incident other families might have been taken more seriously.

A man in a hospital bed dreamed that the long-dead Judge Hanks told him of great treasure buried under a certain tombstone. The dream was so vivid that it gave him an added incentive to get well. When he came to the Hanks home, he was still weak from his recent illness, but hell-bent on getting to the buried treasure as quickly as possible. He

asked permission of Miss Johnnie to go into the little family cemetery and search for the treasure which Judge Hanks had revealed to him. Miss Johnnie laughed gaily.

"Help yourself," she said in her soft Southern voice. "If any money was ever there, the family has been so poor we would have dug it up long ago."

The man was not at all disturbed. He went off and came back with a great iron stick pointed at one end. He would hold it up in the air and bring the pointed end down *ker-sock*, driving it deeply into the soft yielding ground. Nothing was found.

The dream starring Judge Hanks may have had its origin in tales that are told in the Delta. Rumors that Murrell, the bandit of Crowley's Ridge, buried treasure near Helena still persist. Often on dark nights lights are seen on the mountain, and the next day marks may be found at the base of great old pine trees. According to tradition, Murrell always planted a pine tree to mark the burial place of his loot.

The Hanks family had a passion for keeping records. In the fine flowing handwriting of another era, tax receipts made out to Fleetwood Hanks show the amount of taxes placed on the Hanks possessions. One receipt dated 1850 was for a tax of \$45 for five horses, eighteen cows and ten slaves. The deep basin-shaped depression that was once the swimming pool for the Hanks slaves is still visible back of the house. And always when it is pointed out to strangers, it is recalled that two of the family's finest slaves were drowned in it.

In the Hanks house, the gracious, hospitable days of the South's past seemed so close I could fairly live in them. Beautiful silver and china pieces stood in the dining room, just as they had stood for generations. On top of the china cabinet was the custard set, an item that would be snapped up in thirty seconds in any city antique shop. Even the glassware had proved staunch enough to last through the years—or perhaps I should say, some of it. As Miss Johnnie gaily pointed out, the drinking habits of early plantation owners are revealed by the glassware they left for posterity. Of the Hanks heirloom glassware, all the water

tumblers were left, some of the champagne goblets, a few of the wine-glasses, but *none* of the whisky glasses.

Over the buffet hung a painting of Miss Tabitha, a dark-haired beauty in an old-time full-skirted blue satin gown. Too bad the picture could not speak! At the moment we were admiring the beautiful girl, Miss Johnnie was wondering about the date of Miss Tabitha's wedding. Miss Johnnie's youngest daughter, Miss Helen, had been invited to go to Washington to act as a page at the D. A. R. convention. Of course, in order to be a page, Miss Helen had to be a genuine, authentic Daughter herself. Miss Johnnie had never before been interested in digging up records proving the existence of Revolutionary kinsmen, but Miss Helen wanted to go to Washington, so the family tree had to be grown in a couple of days. Only two dates were lacking when I visited the Stephens home, and one of them, oddly enough, was the date when Miss Tabitha was married. Both must have been found later, for the accounts of the D. A. R. convention listed Miss Helen Stephens, of Helena, Arkansas, as one of the pages.

As little Miss Johnnie was growing into a beautiful young woman, she often visited in Helena. The builder of the Hanks home was her maternal great-great-grandfather, the father of Fleetwood Hanks. Three children were born to Fleetwood and his lovely wife—Anne, John and James Milender Hanks. Anne became the grandmother of Miss Johnnie. James Milender Hanks, afterward Judge Hanks, became the foster father of a stalwart young fellow named Harry Stephens. Miss Johnnie and Mr. Harry were the ideal match, whispered the townspeople of Helena. There were the lovely Hanks home, all the beautiful Hanks antiques, all the traditions of the Hanks family, which they would share equally. Added to that, they were both charming young people who would make an admirable couple. When Helena heard that Mr. Harry and Miss Johnnie were engaged, it was like a fairy tale coming true. Today, a visit in the Hanks home, with pictures of Miss Johnnie's and Mr. Harry's children and grandchild all about, puts truth in that old cliché "and they lived happily ever after."

When Miss Johnnie became mistress of the Hanks home, she proved she hadn't been born redheaded for nothing. She looked out on eight magnolias, towering above the house and dominating the lawn so that no flower dared show its face, and even the stoutest blades of grass withered and died for lack of sunshine. "Two too many," she said firmly. "Six magnolias that size would give us enough shade. Then we could get a little light into the house and coax a few flowers to bloom around the porch."

When the two magnolias were cut, Miss Johnnie's popularity in town suffered quite a setback. But not for long. Callers found that the long living room with its French doors and the décor that made a heavenly background for Miss Johnnie's hair was far more beautiful when the soft sunlight could stream into the room. They liked the flowers that grew about the house and the great wisteria vine that could express its individuality once it was rid of the frustrating shade. Then, too, how could one find fault with a young wife who gave the beautiful family silver, the painting of Cousin Tabitha and the magnificent old mahogany furniture that had come up from New Orleans the same love and respect her grandmother and great-grandmother had lavished upon these treasures. The townspeople nodded approvingly. Miss Johnnie was sure nuff all right, even if she did cut down magnolias.

Among the treasures Miss Johnnie and Mr. Harry cherished were a complete set of diaries kept by Judge Hanks. Apparently someone gave him a diary as a Christmas gift in 1854. On New Year's Day, 1855, he began his entries, and from that time until his death about sixty years later, he never missed a day setting down his own and his family's doings. Each year is in a separate volume, beautifully leather-bound, and the row of diaries in the Stephens bookcase is a complete record of his life and times. Miss Johnnie recognized their value as a historical manuscript and toyed with the idea of being noble and giving them to the Helena Library, where they could be used for reference. However, something happened that caused her to change her mind.

A minister whose father had preached in Helena for a number of years heard of the diaries and came to town expressly to see them. He knew Judge Hanks had been a member of the church where his father had served, and he thought that, at some time or other, the Judge might have mentioned his father's sermons. It would be nice to know what he had said; he could tell his grandchildren. Miss Johnnie said she was quite certain the sermons were mentioned in the diaries but she couldn't recall what was said of them! He was perfectly welcome to find out for himself. She sat the minister down at a table, with all the carefully written, leather-bound volumes before him, and went about her work in another part of the house.

In just a few minutes the front door slammed violently. Miss Johnnie looked out just in time to see the minister get into his car, kick the starter button and whirl out of the driveway in a cloud of dust.

"Why, whatever in the world is making him act like that?" asked the puzzled Miss Johnnie. "Never came in to say good day or anything."

Later in the afternoon she suddenly began to wonder if his haste had been caused by something he had read in the diaries. She picked up a volume that covered one of the years when the minister's father had preached in Helena and soon discovered why the visitor had fled in high dudgeon. Judge Hanks had hurried home from church each Sunday to record in his diary that he had heard the dullest, most uninspired sermon through which a congregation had ever been forced to sit. Sunday after Sunday he had grown more and more disgusted, but, with true Southern chivalry, he had never hinted at his annoyance to the minister. It remained for the minister's son to learn the bitter truth.

After that incident Miss Johnnie decided it would be better for the family to keep the revealing diaries. And after all, she liked to pick up one of the volumes and read, "Anne's first granddaughter was born early this morning. She is redheaded."

Southern charm may not put dollars into pockets like Northern industry. But I feel that Arkansas would lose something very precious if Helena ever went completely commercial. I hope it will stay just as it

is, with enough bustling industry to maintain the morale of the farsighted young veterans, but sufficiently Old South to preserve its charm and its good manners. I want Bessie McRee, assistant secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, to get the new auditorium she wanted, and I hope Betty Woods can swoop that newspaper of hers right up to top-drawer quality. I want Corinne Stone to feel that her small daughter Floy is getting the fine schooling which a bright little girl should have. But always I want little girls of Helena to be brought up like little Floy, who took time during her crowded lunch hour to go back to the kitchen and thank the smiling, dark-skinned woman who had cooked the food.

As for the staunch loyalty of Helena for the South—well, much can be said in favor of that, too. In this day of wishy-washy bootlicking, it is very refreshing to find people with pride of family that outweighs position.

One day as I talked with my Helena friends it suddenly dawned on me that I was hearing names quite familiar in the North. Mrs. Fannie May Horner—was it possible she could be a relative of the late Governor Horner of Illinois? Mary Elizabeth Miles, who was a Coolidge—could she be Calvin's cousin? And as for that name Hanks—now where had I heard it before? It suddenly came to me! The mother of—of all persons—Abraham Lincoln—was a Hanks!

"At the risk of the ceiling falling, I'd like to ask a question," I said to my friends. "Your names! I've heard them up north! Do you . . . by any chance . . . have relatives up there!"

Mrs. Horner said her husband had often met Governor Horner at Hot Springs, and despite the difference in the spelling of their names, they jokingly called each other cousin.

Mary Elizabeth's brother, Captain Coolidge, had met President Calvin Coolidge and established remote kinship. With that, Captain Joe forgave Calvin for becoming President and Commander in Chief of the Feds, and often had lunch with him at the White House.

"The name Hanks," I continued gently. "Seems that there was once a girl named Nancy in the Hanks family."

"That was an entirely different branch of the Hanks family," said loyal little Miss Johnnie. "And besides she was illegitimate! We never speak of her!"

Something tells me that Helena will always be Helena, even when the levee is lined with flourishing manufacturing plants instead of shambling fishermen.

*Land of Cotton,
Contests and Contentment*

HEAD east from Little Rock—and you are going south. It seems strange perhaps, but every roll of the tires is taking you deeper and deeper into the Land of Cotton. More colored people are seen along the highways! Some are walking along, dressed in spick-and-span clothes, headed for church or prayer meeting if it is a Sunday, or to town if it is Saturday. Some are riding in wagons, with chairs in the back for Mom and Aunt Jane. Some are driving rattletrap cars. And some are fishing, sitting so close to the road they can undoubtedly feel the rush of air from each passing car.

Along the highway that leads from North Little Rock to West Memphis, I have always been fascinated by the long, shallow lake. Part of the charm came from seeing people fishing so close to the highway, part from the tall cypress trees growing in the muddy water, with gnarled knees sticking up in the air, and the rest from the fact that water just naturally has an enormous attraction for me! The Arkansas Traveler who is driving south by going east finds this lake lying at the right, so close to the pavement that one may toss a cigarette into it—and, buddy, if you are in the habit of tossing out lighted cigarettes along the road, I hope you wait until you get to that body of water!

On the left of the lake lie broad lawns, studded with magnolias and other trees and shrubbery such as only the South can produce. Back of the lawns stand beautiful homes with deep, shaded porches.

Many times I have wished that a woman would suddenly come out

of one of those houses, run swiftly down to the gate and call, "Oh, Marge, won't you come in a minute?" Nobody ever has, although I have often driven very, very slowly along, in order to give any would-be hostess plenty of time to stop me.

One spring morning I decided to take matters into my own hands. I would stop at one of houses, I said to myself. I chose it carefully, passing up those that smacked of newness or too-too ostentation. I found one simply perfect. It was long and white, with lawns just a bit greener, magnolias just a bit taller, and porches just a bit more spacious and shaded, than those of any other dwelling.

As at most Southern homes, a colored girl answered the doorbell. She said her mistress was "around in back." There I found Gertrude Young overseeing the gardening efforts of a tall muscular man whom she called Harrison. Pansies, violets and spring beauties carpeted the moist, rich, dark earth beneath the tall shrubs. Harrison's touch with the hoe was as gentle as a mother's hands. I watched them as I crossed the lawn, the slender graying woman giving her soft-voiced directions and the smiling gardener easing the dirt about each tiny plant. The spring sunshine lighted up the white-blossoming pearl bush and the feathery boughs of spiraea, and deepened the shadows among the glossy foliage of magnolias and holly bush. Here was the South, and even if I got kicked out, I would always remember this back yard!

Yes, this was the South, but when the mistress of the house greeted me there was no trace of its accent in her voice. Gertrude was a city girl from Kansas when she met a young man from the South at Ludington, Michigan, and became his bride.

Mrs. Young was delightfully hospitable. She changed her shoes at the back door, leaving the muddy ones on the porch, and then took me through her home, with its beautiful breakfast room, wide living room, generous halls and the cove ceilings with bas-relief decorations. Each bedroom had both its own bath and its own sleeping porch—the positive height of comfort for Southern living. The antiques were enough to make one's mouth water—drum tables, mirrors and all the

beautiful furnishings that develop a rich glowing patina through years of faithful, loving care.

This time when the war was mentioned, it was not the War between the States, but World War II. With it sorrow came to that gracious home along the shallow lake. One of the two sons of the Youngs was killed in Air Corps service. Photographs of his smiling face in every room brought home even to the most casual visitor the heartbreak of his death. As we talked, it was difficult for Mrs. Young to speak of Billy in the past tense. She mentioned "the boys" as though Billy were still able to come in after a date, take a noisy, bubbling shower in the "boys' bathroom" and then stretch his long lean frame in one of the snowy beds on the big sleeping porch. Somehow, she seemed to grow smaller and frailer when she remembered to say, "Billy used to . . . !"

At the back of the house, Mr. Young had an office with a separate entrance, for the 3,000-acre Young estate was a "going dairy business" as well as cotton plantation. Two thousand of the acres were devoted to cotton. On the remaining thousand acres, forty milk cows and 250 beef cattle grazed and thrived.

In a little cottage back of the garden, Lucy, the cook, and her husband, the Harrison of the garden, lived a happy life. Mrs. Young proved that she was "of the South," even if not from the South, by her outspoken love and respect for her colored help. "I'm very fortunate indeed to have such good help," she said. She was proud, too, that they approved of her. She told of a time when she was showing Harrison how to plant seeds in a flower bed. She seized the hoe and vigorously prepared the seed bed.

Harrison watched her for a moment, and then said, "Yore pappy shore larnt you how to handle a hoe!"

The lake in front of the house? Why, that was Hill Lake, popularly supposed to be the old bed of the Arkansas River. Time and floods have changed the river to a course miles away, but there was the shallow bed, lined with willows and cypress trees, and filled with water that had a tendency toward mud. Croppies, catfish and bass

lived and multiplied in it. It might have become a popular fishing spot, but the families whose homes face on the lake waterway had it posted, and only their help were allowed to fish in it.

We walked through the gracious rooms, lovely with exquisite furnishings which showed the good taste of the girl from Kansas. The talk turned to housekeeping, as it will when two housewives get together, and Mrs. Young told another story of Billy, the young pilot who never came back.

"One day," she said, "when Billy was just a small boy, I returned from town and found him in my clothes closet, looking over all my clothes. I asked what on earth he was doing. I can still hear his reply. 'Why, Mother,' he said, 'I just happened to think that if you were to die, I wouldn't know where anything was!'"

I went back to my car, lingering under the holly and magnolias and drinking in the beauty of the redbud and spiraea as long as I dared. The beauty and heartbreak that seemed the lot of the South in earlier times still persist.

One day at the Statehouse in Little Rock, I asked if Arkansas had a really big cotton plantation. That was just like asking someone along the Mississippi if he knew where there were fish. I was promptly told a story that seemed fantastic. Just north of West Memphis a man had built up a plantation so huge that he owned a town. It was named for him . . . Wilson! *That* I had to see! Go right on up, I was told. Ask to see Jim Crain, manager of the Wilson estate, and he will tell you all about it. Oh, yeah! My guardian angel was attending to other business that day. After many weary miles of driving I arrived at Wilson, the town owned by the R. E. Lee Wilson heirs. It started out like any other town: nice houses, wide streets, then a jog in the road, and I was cheek by jowl with a beautiful rose garden. Beyond the rose garden and other handsome landscaping was a long, l-o-n-g building, containing drugstore, bank, grocery store and a few other commercial places, all sheltered by a porch. Another row of stores and shops stood at right angles to the

long building, and among them I found a quiet little restaurant where I could eat a belated breakfast.

As I ate, I reached for a Memphis newspaper lying alongside the pepper, the salt and the paper napkins. Lazily I read the news of the day: politicians announcing their candidacy, or denying they would be candidates . . . complaints against the OPA . . . Margaret Truman's desire to be an opera singer. Then I saw a headline that brought me up standing: The heirs of the R. E. Lee Wilson plantation and Mr. Crain were having a serious altercation. And there was I in Wilson to interview Jim Crain!

If Mr. Crain would see a roving reporter on that day I would be much surprised. In fact, I wasn't sorry when the office girl said Mr. Crain was "out of town." As the day wore on, I was less sorry. I met Mrs. Dora Merrell, known as "Aunt Dora" or "Mayor of Wilson."

Aunt Dora, sister of the late Mrs. R. E. Lee Wilson, still occupies the Wilson home. I went to call on her. "She is gone to the cemetery," I was told by the girl who answered the doorbell. "Yas'm. She said she'd be back by noon if it didn't rain. If it did rain, why, she'd be back as soon as she could git here."

I found the cemetery five miles away and parked my car at the entrance. A week's rain in the delta had taught me that a person couldn't bog down in the mud if he spread his toes wide. But a car didn't have toes. I walked through the cemetery to a lot where a woman in shabby black dress, a tired sweater and a funny little hat was directing the activities of a half-dozen workmen. With rakes, spades and lawn mower they were pulling weeds and otherwise straightening the flower rows in the big family lot. I turned to and began pulling weeds, while Mrs. Merrell told of the difficulties of keeping up a cemetery. So many people gone . . . and look what happens to the graves they leave behind them! Such nice people buried there! Fine old families! And now—grass all over the graves. Somebody had to show that the world hadn't forgotten the good they had done, and it looked as if it were up to her. So there, on her seventy-third birthday, Aunt Dora was doing what she could. She left the family lot and moved along the roadway to an-

other plot. Suddenly she threw up her hands in horror and shouted for the boys to come.

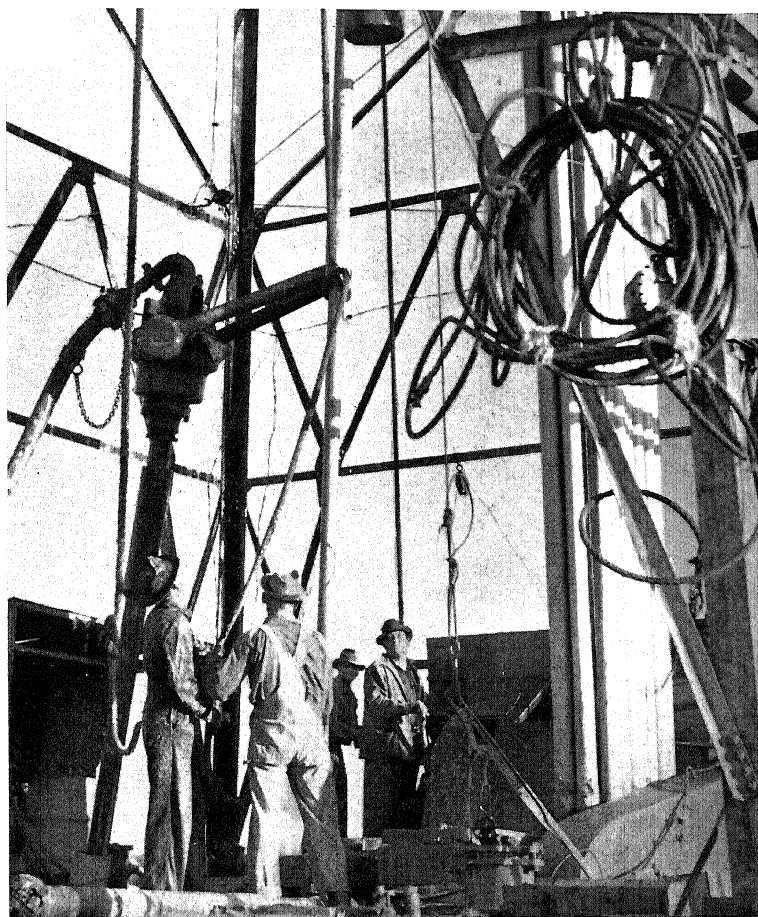
"Oh, land sakes alive, what is this place coming to!" she exclaimed. "Look! Wild onions!" The boys came hastily with hoes and spades and soon the offending critters had been uprooted.

Many of the stones marked graves of Confederate soldiers. Aunt Dora went among them, reverently clipping weeds or fixing rose vines. The lad who was being trained as her handy man was praised and complimented when he trailed along and found bits of work to do. Then a shower came up in dead earnest and we all scurried for town. Later at the Wilson home we sat in a cool room and chatted of the Wilson family.

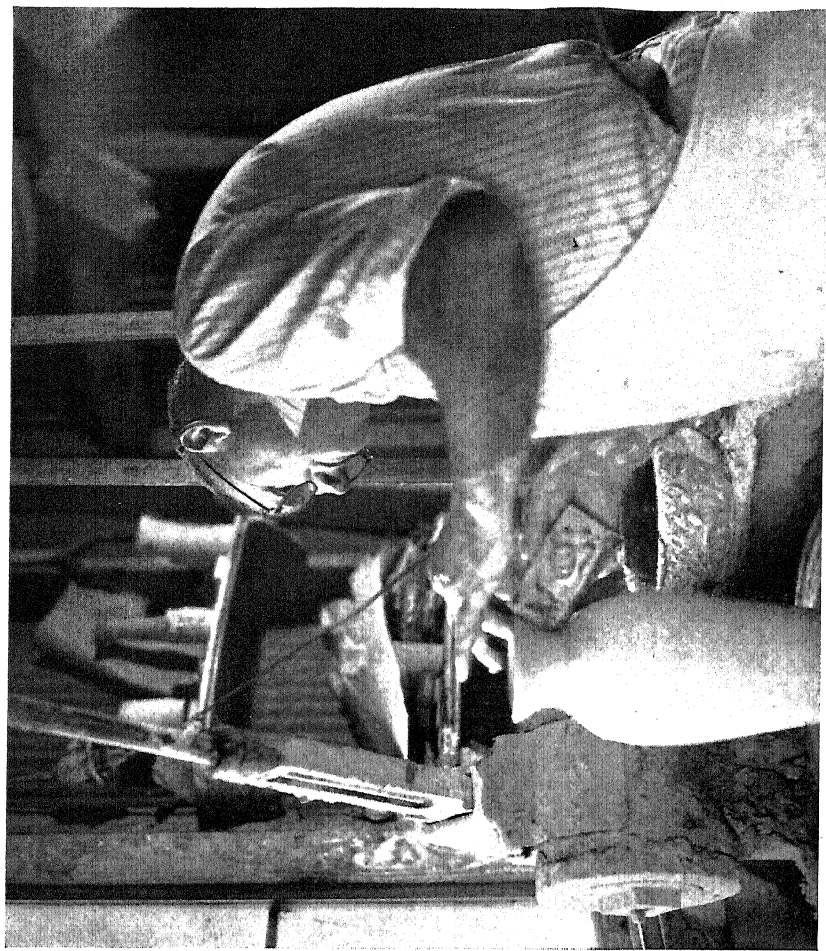
R. E. Lee Wilson, head of the \$8,000,000 enterprise until his death, had been an orphan at fifteen. While still in his teens, he bought a small farm, and the taste of land ownership whetted his appetite for more. He bought a sawmill and cleared a quarter section of timbered land. Part of this was sold, and with the money he bought something over 2,000 acres of swampland. The swamp, however, had fine big trees on it. He cleared the land and drained the swamp water, which gave him thousands of acres of rich black soil—just what was needed for raising cotton.

The Wilson home had the grandeur of elegant dwellings built and furnished at the turn of the century. The heavy carpets and furniture dated the upswing in the finances of the Lee Wilson family. A few modern touches seemed to stand out with startling vividness. One was a magnificent tapestry brought to Aunt Dora by her nephew Joe Wilson Nelson, pilot in the Army. Another was a photograph of the late President Roosevelt, smiling at a handsome little boy and a beautiful young woman. I learned the lad was little Nicholas Craw, great-grandson of the Wilsons, and the picture was taken when the President gave him the medals won by his young father who was killed in Africa.

"I just keep the house going for Joe Wilson and the girls," said Aunt Dora. "It was such a gay place in the old days. The young folks had



Sinking an oil or gas well in southern Arkansas may bring undreamed-of wealth to a farmer and prosperity to a community. To the drillers it is just another job!



On the potter's whirling wheel at the Camark Pottery plant, Camden, an expert craftsman fashions graceful vases from lumps of Arkansas clay.

much company, and there were many people here to see Mr. Wilson. Mrs. Wilson was an invalid for years before her death, and I helped run the household and take care of the children."

We got into Aunt Dora's little sedan and started out to look at some of the Wilson interests. The seventy-year-old spinster drove with the gay abandon of a high-school boy. She laughed as she commented on her driving and added, "People get out of the way." It was a relief to know that. I could settle back in my seat.

The countryside was dotted with the green-painted, red-roofed tenant houses with which the Wilson interests supplied their workers. In the town most of the houses were Wilson-owned, although all of them did not wear the Wilson colors. Aunt Dora pointed them out to me. Some gave her cause for great concern.

"Look at those yards," she said. "I'll have to come over some of these evenings and mow them."

"What about the people who live there?" I asked. "Can't they mow their own lawns?"

"Could, but won't!" returned Aunt Dora. "I'll do it myself."

I could understand why Aunt Dora was called the mayor.

Second only to the Wilson home in the estimation of Aunt Dora is the women's clubhouse, standing in the midst of a beautiful flower garden. It is a big building with high-ceilinged rooms and was once a school. When a new school was built, Aunt Dora begged that the old one might be given to the women's club. For more than twenty years, it had been her pride and joy. Everything in and around the building reflected her loving touch.

Some of the finest antiques of eastern Arkansas can be found in this clubhouse—a pink luster punch bowl worth a fortune, along with other beautiful china and glass. Then there are many items with historical backgrounds. One is a big iron pot that came from the home of President James K. Polk. A slave sold by the Polks brought it with her. "I'd like to have a dollar for every mess of greens cooked in that pot," said Aunt Dora. Another treasure is a magnificent desk which President Wilson used on the ship that carried him to Europe. Still another

is an inlaid bowl, in which George Washington is said to have washed his feet. Older than these, but less ornate, are the Indian pots found under the building when the plumbers' helpers were digging drains.

In the hall stands a little trunk in which a woman carried food when she went to visit her wounded Confederate husband. It is stained with water, the marks of the floods through which the horses and carriage floundered on a perilous journey.

"Such a beautiful place!" I said, and meant it. "Do you allow other parties besides those given by the women's clubs?"

"Yes," she said, "we have been having other parties! But I don't know if we can allow it any longer. The last time the young folks had a party here, I had to carry out a bushel basket full of bottles."

Let the Wilson heirs divide the plantation as they see fit! I don't care a whoop who gets what. But if Aunt Dora is going to be given away, I want to put in my bid for her right now.

Staying in tourist camps—pardon me, tourist *courts*—is one of the ways by which travel becomes broadening. The things one learns—tsk, tsk! Each tourist court has its own personality. Some are staid, quiet, middle-aged affairs, like, perhaps, the court at Gurdon, Arkansas. Others are young, vibrant, full of pulsating life, like, one might say, the Alamo Plaza courts at Little Rock. Some are hopelessly sad and dreary, reminding me of the forlorn old woman who lived at the statue in Lincoln Park one summer during the depression, or the one who used to go around Madison and Halsted, dusting the mail-boxes. Then for a tourist court with a touch of the Latin Quarter and North Clark Street, I'll nominate the tourist courts in West Memphis.

My guardian angel was right on the job when I planned to stop in West Memphis. I had the good sense to ask Bessie McRee, of the Chamber of Commerce of Helena, to phone the West Memphis C. of C. to get a cabin for me. In a moment the phone call came back. I was to register at the 20th Century Court, situated on the highway between West Memphis and Memphis.

It was a pleasing place, with good bath and nice furnishings. How-

ever, the garage which should have gone with the cabin had been fitted into a bedroom for the son of the proprietor, just home from the Navy. All was well, until a rainstorm threatened! Then I remembered the stalling proclivities of my car. I went to the proprietor and told her my tale of woe. I had the choice then of moving into No. 6, which had a garage, or staying in No. 1, into which I had unloaded my typewriter and luggage, and putting my car in the garage that went with No. 6. Naturally I let the car do the moving, and I stayed in No. 1. When a tenant showed up for No. 6, and rain was pouring, the howl that went up about "no garage" could have been heard to high heaven. Since No. 1 was alongside the office, I heard it all, but I just bent my head over my typewriter and pretended to be busily writing.

The next morning I wanted to be off early to make a long trip and return before dark. I went blithely out to get my car! Ah, the occupant of No. 6 had his revenge! He had parked his car so that I could barely get out without nicking my fenders. How to maneuver it, get it turned and headed from the court was the problem of the week for me. I went forward three inches, turned the wheel, backed four inches, went forward again, then turned and backed! Far into the hour when I should have been on my way, I was still backing and turning. Had No. 6's car been drawn forward a foot, it would have helped, but of course I had no way of knowing whether or not its owner was up! Certainly I couldn't awaken a stranger, much less one who was mad at me. I continued to pull and haul on the wheel until I was dripping with perspiration—and before breakfast, too.

At last, I had the car free of the door and was ready to take off. I pulled up at the filling station a hundred feet from fatal No. 6 to get gas. Just by chance I looked back toward its door. The occupant was just coming out, with hat, coat and brief case! He got into his car, and drove briskly away! The son-of-a-gun had been sitting in his cottage, ready to leave, but getting a big bang out of seeing me work so hard at dodging his car. If looks were daggers, he would be wearing one between his shoulder blades. And here, help me pull this one out of my back!

During the course of my five-day stay at this tourist court, my landlady brought in a nice-looking young woman whom she introduced as "another writer." The girl had been one of those WAVES who had interesting writing jobs in England during the war, getting out a beautiful propaganda magazine such as had never been seen over here. On her return to the States, the girl had teamed up with another young woman, also a WAVE, from Kentucky. They had talked the mother of the Kentucky girl into lending them her automobile for three months, and were touring the country, getting material for a book.

The girls and I struck up what amounted to a pleasant companionship. Then suddenly they moved. They came back to tell me why. Four dollars per night at the 20th Century was a dollar more than their budget allowed. They had to go over on another highway and find a modest place that could be rented for three dollars per night.

"My goodness!" said my landlady, when I explained why my new friends had suddenly "left out." "I hope they don't get into one of those courts that rent cottages by the hour."

She was well informed about other tourist courts. She knew of one on the other side of Memphis that had a night watchman named Mortimer who checked couples in and out like a receptionist admitting perspiring would-be broadcasters for an audition.

I was glad chance had brought me to the 20th Century Court.

Along in the small hours of that night, my Boston terrier suddenly jumped to her feet and ran to the door. Any movement of hers in the night always brings me wide-awake, for Judy is not an alarmist. She needed to go outside, but fast! I jumped out of bed and opened the door! No one would be driving up to the office at this hour, I thought, and the little dog could walk safely across the concrete drive in front of my cabin. I was looking down at her when I opened the door, and I saw the hackles rise along her neck. I glanced up. In the bright light from the neon sign I saw a tall, handsome, well-dressed man, of middle age, standing as close to my door as the screen would allow. Probably he heard my gasp of surprise, or possibly he wasn't expecting a lady in a pink nightgown to answer his light knock on what he must

have thought the office door! He backed up a step. Then he whispered across the intervening space, "Where's Mortimer?"

I told him, feeling very much like a handmaid of Aphrodite.

My stay at West Memphis ended in a robbery. On the morning I intended to leave, my landlady and her son answered a frantic call from the maid who was doing up the cabins. The bedspreads from the twin beds of No. 4 had disappeared. Who had been in No. 4? The proprietor and her son put their heads together and recalled that the occupants were a fine-looking young couple with good clothes and a good car.

"Now why will people like that steal?" moaned the landlady. Then she shrieked, "My good spreads! I paid thirty-five dollars apiece for them, and now one can't get any, at any price!"

The young man had given their address as some town in Texas, and Texas is both far away and a big state. The landlady and her son began to wonder if either the young man or his wife had dropped any clue to their travels for the next few days. Suddenly the son remembered hearing a long-distance call. The husband had called his father, and asked him to meet them at a livestock auction in Memphis the next day. It took only a few minutes to check the call and get the old gentleman's name. Then the landlady and her son drove off toward Memphis. I delayed my start until they returned.

When they came up they reported that the robber and his wife had not shown up at Memphis. They had found the father, however, and delivered an ultimatum to him. He must persuade his son to send back the purloined bedspreads or the 20th Century proprietor would get a lawyer who would put him in jail in Texas, Arkansas or any other state in which he preferred to be locked up.

To this date I have not gone back to find out about the bedspreads. It is like missing the last installment of a murder mystery.

When I met Mrs. Mary Kuhn of Marion, Arkansas, she had been a widow three years. So far she had not been obliged to send any of

her four daughters out to sing on the streets for pennies. In fact, "Miss Mary" was doing right well for herself and her girls, because, according to cotton men of Memphis, where Mrs. Kuhn did her marketing, she was an A-1 farmer. Each year 3,500 acres of cotton were tended under her supervision. The remainder of the 10,000-acre plantation was planted to corn, beans, vetch, soybeans, alfalfa, lespediza, oats and barley. Only one of these crops, beans, was grown for sale. The others were for the improvement of the land, and food for the animals.

Not for Miss Mary a one-crop farm! When the plantation became her responsibility she began to practice all the tricks of soil conservation. Sloughs were made plowable, drainage ditches were installed, and erosion was halted. Vetch was planted so it could be turned under for soil betterment, and now alfalfa was coming in in a big way. In fact, Miss Mary had her order in for machinery that would pulverize it for commercial sale.

Each acre of her "little cotton patch" produced about a bale and a quarter. A bale weighs 500 pounds. It seemed like a lot of cotton, but there might have been more!

That was the year when the weather pulled some strange tricks. Too much rain in the spring made planting late. Then there was poor picking weather in the autumn, and much cotton stayed in the fields all winter. It seemed strange to drive through the cotton country the next spring and see cotton pickers dragging sacks and doing work ordinarily done in the autumn. It was not a pleasant sight to Mrs. Kuhn and other cotton growers, either. Cotton that has remained in the field through the winter rains and snows is definitely out of the first-grade class. According to Mrs. Kuhn, it just about pays for the planting and picking.

Anyone who pictured Mrs. Kuhn living a life of idle ease as a big plantation owner was just plain foolish. She was up at six, left the house at seven to go to one of her plantation headquarters, ate her lunch wherever she happened to be—sometimes it was a sandwich made of souse and crackers from the counters of her own store—and returned home whenever she could put off problems she must solve.

Or, most likely, she took them home with her. A 10,000-acre plantation is Big Business.

Mrs. Kuhn had two headquarters, one at Ebony, which was really the main office, and another at Stacy. At each a general store was maintained. This supplied clothing, food, fresh meats, soft drinks, etc., to 200 tenant families that lived on the plantation. The store at Stacy was equipped with a walk-in cooler in which meat could be held for both stores. At each place there was a blacksmith to shoe the 200 mules and make repairs on farm machinery. Plantation carpenters also were employed the year around. They kept the tenant houses in repair and saw that they were neatly painted red or covered with brick siding. Mechanics took care of tractors and tractor-drawn equipment, such as corn pickers, combines, hay balers, plows, discs, cultivators and other attachments, all of which Miss Mary owned. She had also to maintain a fleet of trucks, and four managers were provided with cars, for overseeing purposes. In addition, Miss Mary operated two four-stand gins which separated lint from the seed of about 5,000,000 pounds of seed cotton in an average year. Each gin had its own mechanic, who had been on the place for years. Both were operated by Diesel engines and had boll extractors, Mitchell cleaners and driers to maintain the best sample possible.

Miss Mary also did considerable cattle raising. She had 150 head of Hereford cattle, both registered and grade. Some were sold, some were slaughtered for the plantation stores. She raised also about 300 hogs at a time, and during the meat shortage her porkers furnished fresh meat, salt meat and shortening for both stores.

In addition to all of this, Miss Mary supervised all the building, planning and drawing of blueprints for the houses erected on the plantation. Her own home was built in 1926 before her husband's death; then two duplexes were erected in Marion in 1936-1937; the J. F. Rieves, Jr., house in 1940; the brick store in 1945; the bookkeeper's house at Ebony in 1946. Right then two more modern houses were being constructed. None of the work was contracted. Miss Mary hired the carpenters and supervised the jobs. All homes on the plantation were sprayed twice

during the summer with DDT under the government program. Miss Mary was carrying on a building schedule in which older homes were gradually being replaced with modern houses. These were equipped with bottled gas, hot and cold running water, attic fans and other modern conveniences that seem luxuries indeed in comparison with Uncle Tom's Cabin.

Besides the 200 tenant families, Miss Mary has had to hire a great many cotton pickers in the autumn. Many of them came from Memphis, in big buses, and Miss Mary waited at the store until all were paid for their day's work and sent home. During the war much of the cotton on this great plantation was picked by German prisoners, who were brought over from two near-by POW camps in details of thirty to a hundred.

Miss Mary had two mechanical cotton pickers on order. She believed they should be put in general use if the South was to compete with foreign countries in cheap production.

On alternate Saturdays she went to Ebony or Stacy in order to meet the pay rolls personally. She took special pride in the fact that at least 75 percent of the labor on the place was there when she took over. The years since had been years of migratory temptation for laborers and it spoke well for her that she had been able to keep so many of her employees. She was treated with respectful deference by the help, and she treated them the same way. Some of the share croppers had worked for her husband twenty years, and one old Negro had worked for her father-in-law down in Mississippi. Always, as she went about the plantation or the gins, she carried money in her purse, for sooner or later, one of her helpers would say, "Mis' Mary, can you loan me two dollars?"

Four Negro schools and four Negro churches were located on different parts of the property. All the churches looked to Miss Mary for liberal donations and were not disappointed.

In the South "furnish money" is one of the burdens of the cotton planter. This is the money paid to the share cropper in anticipation of his crop which will be marketed at picking time. "Furnish money"

begins in March, and is usually \$10 per month per person. That is, if a man has a wife and six children, he gets \$80 a month, usually paid in two lumps, half on the first and the other half on the fifteenth. These payments are made regularly up to cotton-picking time. Mrs. Kuhn had a neat way of providing coupons that did away with many of the bad features of the plan.

This Arkansas Traveler could no more generalize about share croppers than about the people who live on Sheridan Road or Truman Avenue. Into my ears have been poured harrowing tales of their laxness and general do-lessness.

"Look at the neat little white houses our plantation owner has fixed up for his share croppers," the blond wife of a foreman said to me one day, waving furiously toward a row with blue shutters. "Do you know what will happen in the first cold spell? The triffin' things will grab those shutters off and burn them. Next they'll take up the floors and burn them! Just to keep from cuttin' wood."

She went on to tell of the trouble she had to get help with the farm work while her husband was laid up with a lame foot.

"We're using day laborers out of Memphis to chop cotton. And do you know what? I have to get up at four o'clock and drive the truck to Memphis to get them. Not a man on this place will get up that early."

The women belonging to those men came in for even deeper contempt from her. They took no pride in the neat little houses. "They sit in filth all day long, and at night patronize the honky-tonks in the worst part of Memphis. They have no modesty and less than no morals."

It had given me a very bad impression of share croppers. Later, that impression was completely reversed.

I happened to be at the Ebony store just after the house occupied by one of Miss Mary's share croppers burned down. The tearful housewife came running into the store with something hidden under her coat. She rushed to Miss Mary, brought out the concealed object and

asked her to keep it in the safe. It was a Mason fruit jar full of money. As for Miss Mary, she was far more concerned about the loss of the family's nice furniture than about the destruction of the cottage. Over the supper table that night she discussed the new cottage she would build for them. It would be one many a city dweller would covet.

The faith of Miss Mary's employees that she can work miracles was also enlightening to me!

One day she picked up a share cropper as he plodded along the muddy road and took him to the store.

"I was wantin' to see you, Mis' Mary," he said.

"What's wrong, Bates?" she asked. "If it's about having your porch repaired, well, you should have told the carpenter when he fixed that wall."

"No'm! It ain't that. I wanted to tell you I sold my car."

"Oh, Bates," exclaimed Miss Mary. "You shouldn't have done that!"

"Well, I got \$200 dollars for it. And it wouldn't run!" he said.

Miss Mary drove faster, her forehead wrinkled with Bates's cares. From the back seat came the sound of a preliminary throat clearing. Then Bates spoke again. "Mis Mary! Now I wants you to tell me where I can git me another car for \$200—one that will run."

All through eastern Arkansas I was able to forget that racial prejudice has been warmed up in some places until it is all too readily reaching the boiling-over point. Nobody seemed to be mad at anybody else in the cotton country. In fact, I seemed to be the only one worrying about the future of the Southland's cotton pickers when mechanical cotton pickers come into general use. I was happily reassured by the words of Oscar Johnson, president of the Cotton Council of America, in a speech made at the Blytheville Cotton Picking Contest.

"Hand-picked cotton, like a hand-tailored suit, will always have a market," said Mr. Johnson to an audience of several thousand cotton growers and pickers.

The annual cotton-picking derby at Blytheville has become one of the greatest contests known to agriculture, probably because of the excellent co-operation of the Blytheville Junior Chamber of Commerce

which stages the whooperdoo contest that culminates in a Cotton Ball at night.

After one of those contests, this chronicler will ever associate a busy young fellow in slacks and blue sports jacket, with an embroidered cotton boll on his back, as part of the cotton scene of Arkansas. Quite wisely, the Blytheville Jaycees wore identical blue jackets, with names like Bill, Tom, Doc and Jim embroidered on the front pockets, in order that they might be spotted readily in the crowd. Each member seemed to have a definite job to perform. From where I stood, sat or leaned, each seemed to be doing it well, maintaining by uplifted arms a sort of signal code with the others, or perhaps arm waving went with each job. At any rate, co-ordination seemed to be perfect!

After all, a cotton-picking contest is not something that can be whipped up at a Tuesday-night pep meeting. Long ago an eighty-acre cotton field was set aside for this annual event. It lay in an ideal spot, just across the fence from the fairground which had a large amphitheater separated from a speaker's stand by a wide open space that might have been a race track at one time. Early in the spring, after the field was well fertilized, the owner planted it with a special sort of cotton, practically free from boll stickers that might hurt a contestant's fingers or slow him down. All summer the field was tended with greatest care.

When the bolls began to burst and spill their snowy contents, contest time was drawing near. A week or so before the day of the contest an airplane swooped up and down the rows, scattering a chemical that defoliated the plants. Only a few dry crumpled leaves were left, and the trash hazard, which can upset a contestant's rating, was reduced materially. In a cotton-picking contest three scores must be tallied: (1) How much cotton is picked? (2) How clean is it, that is, how free from dried leaves, sticks or bolls? and (3) How clean did the contestant leave his rows? Very often one who picks the most cotton loses out on the championship because he does not get all the cotton, or because it is mixed with trash.

The morning of the contest was typical of the Southland in picking time, clear and bright, with a blue sky. The contest was scheduled to

start at ten o'clock, and long before the busy Jaycees arrived with their tally cards and entrance sheets, pickers and spectators had gathered at the field. From eleven states came 262 contestants—boys, girls, men and women, black, white, tall, short, skinny or dumpy, dressed in garments that represented all the work clothes known to the cotton field. Each signed up, paid a \$10 entry fee, and was allowed to draw a number that designated the two rows the contestant would pick in the next two hours. Each was assigned a Blytheville Boy Scout who acted as a sort of cotton caddy, carrying extra bags and helping to tote in the filled bags. With typical easy-going calmness, the contestants took their places. They could find the rows they had drawn easily by looking for the big numbered stake that headed each row. No one grumbled at his lot, not even a forlorn Elmer who had unluckily drawn two end rows where the fertilizer had failed to take hold. Then a gun sounded and the contest was on. The mad scramble and furious opening effort I had anticipated failed to materialize, for cotton is never picked with fuss and fury.

Each contestant reached smoothly and easily for the tufts of snowy cotton, stuffing them into the picksack with a rhythm of motion that might have been set to music. When cotton massed along any part of the long bag that looped over one shoulder and trailed along the row, the contestant would seize it in both hands and shake it deftly, like a photographer arranging a bride's satin train for a wedding picture. Each move of the hands was made to count. Some wary contestants saved motion by picking the cotton from three or four bolls before they stuffed it into the sack. Slowly and steadily they worked their way down the rows, while friends, relatives and folks who just like contests gathered by thousands outside the fence to watch their progress. It was possible, on that level field, to see even the far end of the rows, but the contestants were often hidden as they bent wearying backs to snare the bolls that grew low on the plants. My sympathies were with the luckless Elmer, and I stayed at the end rows to see how he fared. Other eyes, too, were upon him. Long before he reached the last boll of the sparse-growing cotton on his rows, a blue-coated Jaycee was beside

him. Then he was escorted to unclaimed rows where he could resume picking without losing a minute's time.

As the contestants swept into the second rows, Boy Scout caddies began to bring in great gray stuffed bags, the first results of the picking, and in a few minutes the stake row had the appearance of a long line of half-submerged hippopotami. Then at last one of the Jaycees went out into the field, and with the ever-visible raised arm, fired a pistol. The picking was over. Now for the weighing and judging! The spectators promptly packed themselves into the amphitheater, filling it to the roof, and lunch was forgotten as we watched contestants, caddies and hastily commandeered helpers file into the open space, carrying the great gray bags. Large squares of canvas were spread on the ground and there each picker's take was heaped, after the official weighing, ready for the men who would judge its cleanliness. Beside each mound sat a weary, perspiring picker gratefully eating the hot dogs and drinking the soda pop brought by anxious wife, husband or mother. The judges moved unhurriedly from mound to mound, while radio stars entertained the crowd with songs and patter. Among the mounds, in the amphitheater, and even at the microphone were the ever-busy Jaycees, placing and placating the crowd that increased as the minutes went by. Finally Governor Ben Laney and his party came back from lunch and were escorted to the speakers' stand.

Then we had speeches designed to cheer and inspire everyone connected with cotton growing. In the midst of the speeches, someone dropped a lighted pipe into a pile of cotton and flames shot skyward. Nobody became excited. As though it were part of the contest, someone brought an extinguisher and the flames soon subsided into a pillar of smoke. The Jaycee at the mike quipped: "Remember last year Governor Laney said that he used to pick cotton so fast he had to carry an asbestos picksack. When that fire started, I was sure the governor had slipped out to the field and started picking!"

Then the women of the cotton belt had their hour of glory. As great red trucks from the plantation that owned the contest field carried off the mounds of cotton, a style show was held. Lovely models from the

ages of two years upward paraded along the runway before the amphitheater, wearing sleek, home-tailored garments made from cotton sacks that once held flour or chicken feed. One of the models was Becky McCall, the Blytheville girl who was runner-up to Miss America in the 1946 national beauty contest.

After the governor's tactful short-short speech, the winners were announced. At least a dozen men and almost as many women received prizes ranging from \$25 to \$100 before the grand champion cotton pickers were introduced. Then we learned that in two hours Mrs. Helen Poole, thirty-one years old, of Leachville, Arkansas, had picked her weight in cotton, ninety-five pounds. She received \$250. Eugene Shinault, of Memphis, had picked 109 pounds of trash-free cotton. He received \$1,000. At picking wages then being paid—\$2.50 per hundred in eastern Arkansas, and \$3 in the Missouri bootheel, this speed would rate a nice income.

Easy work, did you say? Just try it sometime!

Cotton picking may seem like child's play. Phooey, anybody can pick cotton! I remember saying it myself. You just spread your fingers out—as if you meant to pick up a small hot potato—and pull out the cotton. There's nothing to it!

One autumn before we moved to Arkansas I went to pick cotton in southeast Missouri. I took my big shade hat, plenty of sleeveless dresses, and before going out to the cotton plantation, I bought a pick-sack nine feet long. The shopkeeper suggested that I buy a six-foot sack, but I assured him that was much too small for a cotton picker with the speed I expected to develop.

With me on my cotton-picking venture were Martha Lester and Helen Killion, whom I had met at a girls' camp, and Martha's mother, Mrs. Shelby Lester, of Portageville, Missouri. The field which we honored with our presence was part of the thousand-acre plantation that belonged to Helen's mother and stepfather. It took us a little while to get started. The two girls looked so beautiful in the cotton field, with its chest-high plants, its rose and white blossoms, and the bursting bolls,

that I had them posing this way and that for pictures. The pickers working in the same field also posed politely for pictures, when I asked them, but contrary to the guidebooks, they were not singing, "Swing Low, Sweetest Chariot!" They had buckled down to business and were more intent on picking than on grinning before a camera.

After the pictures I got down to serious picking, too, with the girls putting an occasional handful into my picksack, and Mrs. Lester sitting on the side lines, so to speak, a dignified picture in her summer dress and broad summer hat. I was surprised to find that picking was not so easy as it had looked. The bolls seemed to grow on the wrong places on the plants. I had to bend my back to reach them. When I got down on my knees I could reach the low cotton, but the rest of it was too high.

Added to that, my costume was completely inappropriate. The sun scorched my arms. My big hat got in the way whenever I stooped. A shower the night before had left mud under the plants. It stuck like glue to my white shoes, and finally I seemed to be wearing dark brown galoshes.

During this time my grinning co-workers began to bring up sacks to be weighed at the scales that dangled from the end of the wagon at the field gate. Whenever a sack was opened over the wagon, a great flood of soft white cotton would stream out of it. I didn't have enough in my sack to make a good bump. As the hours went on, the real champion pickers of the plantation would come up with great bags, dingy and mud-stained, flung over their shoulders. White teeth would flash in a wide grin as they caught the smothered exclamations of other hands. The weights were called out for all to hear—seventy-five pounds, a hundred pounds—and even 200 pounds—and the day still young!

The average picking for a day is 275, but Mammy and the kids would often stuff their cotton in Pappy's bag, and it all helped!

Some of the pickers would make notes in grimy little books as they kept track of their work. Others would walk away, mumbling the

weight and grinning. They were the ones who could neither read nor write.

"Poor dears," I said to Mrs. Lester, "they can't add. They have to take a bookkeeper's word for the amount they have picked."

Mrs. Lester laughed. "Not much," she said. "There isn't a man or woman picking cotton who can't keep track of his earnings, even if he can't read or write. Perhaps they make little marks in the dirt some place, or they may make little piles of stones! When it comes time for them to be paid, they know to the penny just how much is coming to them."

Then it was time for the combined pickings of Martha, Helen and me to be weighed. What a chuckle went up from our co-workers! Our cotton, bag and all, tipped the scales at twenty-four pounds! Helen's stepfather didn't bother to write it down in the book. He just gave me the cotton.

I don't believe a present ever gave me more downright satisfaction. The next time I went to my club meeting, I took bag and cotton with me and wore my blue jeans. I went into the house, dragging the bag over the lawn, while the Jedge flourished a large whip over me in the true Simon Legree manner and shouted dire warnings as I pretended to falter. It was probably the most dramatic entry a member of the Colonial Dames Howell County Home Demonstration Club ever made. During the course of the meeting one of the members who had come from Tennessee sat down to seed the cotton. The speed of her slim fingers was almost incredible. To me, getting the seed from cotton by hand was slow, tedious work—even slower and more tedious than picking—although it was a sitting-down job, which helped. At the close of the meeting, I doled out enough of my cotton to stuff a cushion for each member.

After that I used the cotton as "busy work." If I was faced with a long-drawn-out session, perhaps a forenoon when the Jedge was holding court or when I must be present at a political or business discussion and keep my mouth shut, I would provide myself with a kettle of

cotton. Always a kettle, because I learned from a minister who had lived in the remote hills that a "passel" of cotton heated before the seeding began was more readily loosed from its seeds. I would fill my biggest cast-aluminum kettle with cotton, set it on the stove until it was burning hot, then put it on the floor on a tile. The heat of the kettle would keep the cotton warm all evening, which is something the aluminum-kettle manufacturers never thought of using as a testimonial—but I've read worse.

Dear little old Grandma Oliver, who was ninety years old on her last birthday, spent the last months of her life picking the seeds from cotton I took to her. It brought back memories of her early years, when each of the children had to pitch in and pick seeds from a great stack of cotton that their father would dump before the fireplace to warm as soon as the sun had gone down. In those days it was the most exciting event of their lives to have a spark jump out of the fireplace and ignite the cotton. What a hurrying and scurrying to get the blazing tuft thrust into the fireplace before it set the house on fire! And what a joy to go to bed without the labor of picking out those clinging seeds!

For many people in Arkansas cotton is king. Memories of cotton are as much a part of their childhood background as their homes and their school. And nothing can take its place!

Even Mrs. Kuhn, the Miss Mary of Marion, told me in her quiet way, "Cotton is my life!"

Perhaps much of her success as mistress of a 10,000-acre plantation is due to the fact that she was a plantation girl who literally grew up with cotton.

"The first gin I remember was a one-stand affair and the Negroes tramped the cotton into the bale! Often I got in and helped them," she reminisced.

Miss Mary was a firm believer in the finest machinery possible for use in the fields. "I can't bear to see mules straining at the plow, sweating and with tongues hanging out," she said.

Tractors had largely taken over the work of those mules in the fields, and trucks hauled the cotton to the gins, setting the trailers neatly under the sheds, ready for unloading.

I shall go to see her mechanical cotton pickers work, for I hear they are a mighty contrivance of nuts and gears! I want to see if they put out steel hands with fingers outstretched as though they were picking up a hot potato. Maybe they will have record players, and Bing Crosby singing "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," just to keep up tradition.

Our Past Is a Present Delight

WHEN the Arkansas Traveler visits Little Rock, he can put down thirty cents at a certain desk in a certain entrance hall and wander at will through a group of buildings that date from 1820. All the furnishings are authentic of the period and many of the pieces have actually been brought back by generous heirs. The group is known as the Territorial Restoration.

Here are the last territorial capitol; the territorial home of Lieutenant C. F. M. Noland, officially delegated to deliver by horseback the first constitution of the state to Washington, D. C.; the home and office of William E. Woodruff, founder of the *Arkansas Gazette*, oldest newspaper west of the Mississippi River; and the first residence of Elias N. Conway, who was the fifth governor. The grounds have been planted with magnolias, fig trees, crepe myrtles and other trees and shrubs such as the original owners might have enjoyed. In fact, the whole effect is as good as a time machine in lopping a hundred years or more off the calendar.

Anyone who believes Arkansas a low-down state with ignorance, feuds and indolence rampant, would do well to visit this restoration. Even I, devoted to Arkansas as I am, had my eyes opened by its gracious beauty. I had never known that Arkansas homes of a hundred years ago had the charm of Mount Vernon. Here, in wood, brick and fabric, is the irrefutable evidence.

To Mrs. Silas Loughborough, of Little Rock, goes the credit for rescuing the buildings from the ignominy to which they had sunk. A

cheap restaurant, a pool hall, a rooming house of doubtful reputation—these were some of the uses to which they had been degraded. Old shacks had been added, warped wood siding had been put on, and inside, fine old mantels had been obscured by wood and plaster. How Mrs. Loughborough learned they were buildings of historical importance, how she snooped around to discern if they were worthy of restoration, are secrets not revealed. In raising the required sum of \$80,000, the government furnished \$37,000 for WPA labor, the state appropriated \$30,000 for architects' fees and building materials, and popular subscription produced another \$15,000. The property was then conveyed to the state with the stipulation that it be operated as a Historical Museum and Park, with a small entrance fee devoted to maintenance.

Mrs. Sarah B. Campbell was the pleasant superintendent who took my thirty cents at the door and conducted me on a sight-seeing trip about the buildings. Although she has pointed out each item thousands of times to gaping tourists, she still had the enthusiasm of one seeing them for the first time. It took a bored tourist indeed to refrain from Ooohing and Ahhhhing along with her. I saw none such. Her capable helper was Mrs. Dessie Andrews. The two of them kept the buildings in such perfect order, such spotless perfection, such immaculate whiteness and shining brightness that one wondered if Little Rock were free from smoke, dust and grime. All the brass was polished to the see-yourself stage, and the ruffles on the curtains were fluted with an old-time fluter.

The Capitol had been in use for fifteen years, when it was the meeting place of the last territorial legislature, October 5 to November 16, 1835, before Arkansas became a state in 1836. It might be a model for a smart modern country home. It is constructed of large hand-hewed oak logs covered with red-heart hand-beaded cypress siding. All the ceiling beams, upstairs and down, have the same beaded finish. The walls are at least fourteen inches thick and many of the logs are eighteen to twenty inches wide. The window sills are of that width. The hand-made furniture is particularly interesting. I liked the cupboard with tin panels pierced in a design of stars and eagles. The doors are four

eagles high. A tavern bench fully ten feet long stands at one side of the fireplace facing a hickory bench made to fit in a covered wagon. The stout hickory back rail of the bench was obviously soaked in water to give it the right bend, and one can still see the holes through which bolts were thrust in order to fasten the bench to the wagon bed. On the face of the mantel hangs a pair of lazy tongs, with which a man too comfortable to move could reach three feet into the fire for a coal with which to light his pipe.

The House of Representatives met in the ground-floor room of this building. When the going got tough, there was nothing to keep the delegates from adjourning to a room across the hall which had a spindle bar in the corner. If you are contemplating a postwar home you would do well to study the architectural plan of this bar. Its neat latches, its little gate and its letdown front would be the envy of your friends.

On the upper floor is the Senate Chamber, whose main features are the many-paned windows and the section of wall from which the siding has been removed to show the hand-hewed log construction. On a long drop-leaf table, beside a candle in a brass candlestick, lies a book about the size of a modern novel. Note it carefully. It contains all the laws of Arkansas Territory, under date of 1835. The draperies are not the original ones, but were made by the same factory.

Alongside the Capitol is the kitchen, fitted just as it was in territorial days, with a great crane in the fireplace. All the baking utensils, even to the muffin pan, are equipped with legs, for baking was done in the hot ashes and coals of the fireplace. Because this was a Capitol and important personages had to have good warm meals after long, cold, dreary rides, the kitchen boasts the first warming oven of its sort this Arkansas Traveler ever saw. It is a two-shelf affair with front doors and no back, like a Hollywood movie set. It could be filled with meat, potatoes, poke greens, corn bread, beans and pie. It backed up to the fireplace so the food would be kept warm until the personage had warmed his hands and his innards in the barroom.

The home of Lieutenant Noland, which is reached by a narrow brick

walk from the Capitol, is enough to make a modern house-hunting lieutenant burst into loud yowls of envy. It is of brick, with a wide veranda across the back, looking out on a garden of flowers and herbs of the period, which is bordered with box from original plants at Mount Vernon. Extending back on the right side of the house is Mr. Noland's office. Opposite is the kitchen, which was always separate from the house because of the fire hazard. The fire was never allowed to die out, and the sleepy little colored boy set to watch it couldn't be depended on to "stomp out" every flying spark.

The house is furnished beautifully with accessories that make a collector green with envy. A Marseilles spread on one of the beds is a particular treasure. Then there are the more familiar "antiques," such as bed warmer, bootjack, candle snuffer and whale-oil lamps. In the parlor is a fireside desk among delicately graceful tables and chairs, and on the wall an original Audubon print, made in Arkansas. The name of the state is spelled "Arkansaw" on the print. Later such a controversy developed over spelling and pronunciation that an act of the legislature made the spelling "Arkansas," and the pronunciation "Arkansaw."

In the Woodruff group, the house and print shop form a pleasing unit about a little courtyard. It is the oldest of the three homes and brings one face to face with some of the greatest historical events in the state. When the capital was moved from Arkansas Post to Little Rock, William Woodruff, who had been publishing the *Arkansas Gazette*, promptly picked up his little press and followed to the new city. Four years later he built his charming house and office, uniting the two with a brick walk that was gradually overlaid by soil and completely hidden until the restoration began.

Because many of the Woodruff family still live in Arkansas and naturally took great interest in restoring the old home, many beautiful and interesting items have been brought back. A bed with a wooden roller that neatly rolled an extra blanket at its foot, a melodeon and a four-poster crib are good examples. Another memento is a great box of hand-carved walnut building blocks. In the kitchen stands a mammy

bench, a long bench with a railing along half its front. There a Negro mammy could park her own baby or her small white charge while she sat at the open end and did her churning or apple peeling. Several pieces of Westward Ho glass, pink luster and other important breakables are in the house.

In the print shop one finds an old press and a file of early copies of the great paper that still gives the state of Arkansas the daily news. The first copy published at the Arkansas Post has a conspicuous place in the room. It covered July, August and September of 1819, but did not reach the public until November of that year.

The third dwelling is the home of Elias N. Conway, fifth governor of the state of Arkansas. His brother James S. Conway was the first governor; under him Elias had served as state auditor. History tells us Elias was a bachelor. The sight of a trundle bed in the gentleman's rather formal Southern house brought a chuckle from the Minnesota ladies who were seeing the buildings in my party. Mrs. Campbell, the indefatigable guide, explained that it was for Mr. Conway's small nephew, who necessarily went along when his distinguished parents visited their equally distinguished brother. Rosewood, crystal, hand carvings and particular grace and elegance of line are seen in the furnishings.

Quite naturally, I suppose, I preferred a house in which women and girls had dwelt—the Noland home, for instance. In its front hall was a tall mirror, with hatrack and bench. Beneath the bench a second mirror was set close to the floor. This was the petticoat mirror, into which mother and the girls could peek just before leaving the house to make sure that no embarrassing bit of lace or embroidery showed below the hem of their dresses. The ladies from Minnesota and I used it gratefully to see if our stocking seams were straight.

Such is the changing world!

Fort Smith owes its existence mainly to trouble that occasionally flared between the Osage and Cherokee Indians. In 1817 Major Stephen H. Long and a handful of riflemen established the fort at the junction

of the Arkansas and Poteau Rivers. It was named for General Thomas A. Smith, the departmental commander who had ordered it built. In 1838 a new and much more substantial fort was constructed, and by the forties a town of 500 people had been incorporated as Fort Smith. In 1848 news came of the discovery of gold in California. Overnight Fort Smith became the jumping-off place for the Southern route. Thousands of emigrants streamed through the little town. Gambling dens, pawn-brokers' shops, dance houses, fortune-tellers' booths and all the flubdub of a frontier town sprang up. Prosperity literally raged.

Then came the War between the States. Fort Smith was held by first one and then the other of the opposing sides, but no major battles occurred there. After the war the guardians of the fort had their hands full governing the Indian Territory just west. The Indians had their own laws and governed themselves with fair success, but their country became a haven for every train robber, murderer and horse thief who could cross its border.

Judge Isaac C. Parker, a Republican from Missouri, was appointed to the Fort Smith bench in 1875. He was known as the "hanging judge," because in the twenty-one years of his reign in the courtroom he sentenced 151 men to the gallows. Stern measures, it would seem, but the men whom he hanged were the worst of desperadoes. A force of 200 rode through Indian Territory looking for the criminals, and they had to be equally tough. Of the government men, sixty-five were killed in the generation when Judge Parker reigned supreme. The phrase "reigned supreme" is used advisedly. Before 1889 and 1891 a man whom he condemned to death had no opportunity to appeal his case. In those years Congress passed laws that enabled a condemned man to have another day in court.

One of my neighbors, Mrs. Etta Dobbys, who was taken to live at Fort Smith as a little girl in 1881, recalls the old times. The home of Judge Parker was on the streetcar line which the Dobbysnes rode and often he boarded the same car.

"How did he look?" I asked.

"Just the way a judge should look," replied my neighbor. "He was a

big man, not fat, but broad and tall, with magnificent carriage. He was one of the kindest men I have ever known, always friendly and polite, and he seemed to have a special love for children."

Of course he loved children. Every time he sentenced a criminal to the gallows, he was helping to make Fort Smith a place where children could grow up in happiness and security. Who can tell how much of the culture and refinement that make Fort Smith one of the outstanding Arkansas cities is due to the fearless and untiring efforts of Judge Parker?

"I often saw Belle Starr, too," added Mrs. Dobbins, once the train of memory got under way. "She would ride into town with her six-shooters strapped about her, wearing chaps just like a man."

Belle Starr? Oh, yes! I had seen one of her guns in the collection of Colonel Saunders. But just who *was* Belle Starr?

"She ran with those gangs of murderers and thieves who prowled over the Indian Territory." My neighbor shuddered.

"Her reputation wasn't very good, but she made money," offered a Fort Smith visitor. "On First Street you can still see a building with her name on it."

Stirring days, those old years of Fort Smith!

Now it is noted for the excellent and varied furniture produced on Factory Drive, as well as for the glass products, work clothes and other items it turns out. Many of its older, more characterful homes are still well kept, making a drive through its streets decidedly agreeable. The strong, generous, free-handed attitude of the West is apparent everywhere.

The rodeo with mules, called the Mulesta, is one of its most famous events of the year. It calls attention to the fact that Fort Smith is the greatest mule market in the United States.

Fort Smith has good streets, sewers, parks and playgrounds that include a fine swimming pool. It enjoys a clear mountain-water system.

For more than thirty years the city has been well managed by three salaried commissioners, like the District of Columbia. Remembering a high-school debate in which I was on the affirmative side of the ques-

tion, "Should cities have the commission form of government?" I find this extremely interesting. Although no one else seemed at all convinced by my arguments, I sold myself on the idea, and if I knew today where one might find those misguided, bullheaded debate judges, I would love to rub their noses on Fort Smith.

Just to clinch Arkansas' superiority historically, I might add that Little Rock was the birthplace of General Douglas MacArthur. He was born January 26, 1880, in the century-old arsenal in what is now, of course, MacArthur Park. Long ago, when little Douglas was only thirteen years old, the land occupied by a military post was obtained by the city as a park site. The post had a number of large buildings, including the home of the commandant, living quarters for married officers, for unmarried officers and private soldiers and a hospital. Offices, stables, barracks and other buildings were scattered over the thirty-six acres the city obtained in exchange for a thousand acres on Big Rock. The good people of the city felt that the sooner these old buildings were torn down the better. Down they came! By some lucky chance the arsenal seemed to have lines and quality worthy of preservation. The four-foot thickness of the basement walls and the stark dignity of the wings that made quarters for married officers may have aroused a spark of admiration in the breasts of the old-timers who had a say in the wholesale destruction. The fact that it was once the home of General Arthur McArthur, who had seen service with the Federals in the War between the States and then had helped win victory in both the Philippine insurrection and the Boxer Rebellion, did not add the faintest luster to the building. But when the name of General Douglas MacArthur began to make headlines in World War II, the city of Little Rock must have been glad it had kept the axes off the old arsenal where little Doug was born. Now it is operated as a museum, with a great variety of rocks and other flotsam that inevitably find their way into a state museum.

A large portrait of the general, as well as photographs of his mother, wife and little son, are on display. A facsimile of his birth record, a

print of his baby picture and other small items may be seen. When the general returns from overseas, it is hoped he will make good his promise to visit the old arsenal and deposit there some of his personal effects.

Even with the present sparse display, in two years more than 60,000 visitors from forty-eight states and many foreign countries registered at the museum.

Little Rock is a city of three Capitols: the Territorial Capitol in the Restoration group; the first State Capitol; and the present State Capitol. The old State Capitol, constructed in 1833, is a classically beautiful building of magnificent proportions, with tall white pillars. It is one of the finest examples of pre-Civil War architecture in the South. Now it is known as the War Memorial Building.

The new Capitol, modern in every detail and situated in grounds of surpassing loveliness, is on the other side of town.

On my first visit to Little Rock, I asked a boy where the State Capitol could be found. He directed me to the old one. I was sitting before it in admiration when the thought struck me that it was singularly old-timey and surprisingly small for a city as big as Little Rock, not to mention a state as great and important as Arkansas. When another boy came along, I pointed to the building and asked him if that was the State Capitol.

He showed his teeth in a wide grin. "You are a hundred years behind time, ma'am," he said. "The Capitol is on the other side of town."

XVII.....

Newton County—

Land of Unspoiled Beauty

IF ONE single county in Arkansas could be called my favorite, I'm sure it would be Newton. Newton County has not a mile of paved road or railroad. It lies in completely unspoiled loveliness in the northern part of the state, a place of towering green mountains and deep valleys, clear rushing streams, mysterious caves, rocky roads and friendly folk. The only town of any size is Jasper, and I have had to stop my car on its main street to wait for an ambling cow to make her patient way from the grass on one side to the undoubtedly greener grass on the other side.

For fifteen years a large white goose named Joe lived in the gutter in front of the single hotel in the town, and he would probably be there today except for the racing get-to-hell-out-of-my-way driver of a ramshackle truck. Poor old Joe had slowed down considerably, and good living had added so much weight he found it difficult to raise his big wings and fly when danger threatened. In his death the town lost its most spectacular citizen—helpful citizen, too, for everyone knew it was a night to drain the water out of car radiators when Old Joe went down to the Buffalo River to sleep with his toes in the running water. The water would be warmer, he seemed to say, than the frozen earth, and human beings learned to trust his judgment.

I have sat in Newton County homes where the entire furnishings were clearly worth less than ten dollars, yet the cellar was full of canned vegetables, fruits and meats, the Bible rested on a pink crocheted doily, and one could eat off the floor, so clean it was. I have sat

through an afternoon as long as eternity in a mountain home with flies stinging my bare legs, because no one had thought to instill into the owners the need for keeping screen doors closed. The screen doors were there, along with curtains and bedspreads, and even a dressing-table skirt of rose cotton damask, the "project" of an eighth grader in the family, but they swung wide.

In this county, if anywhere in Arkansas, one might expect to find the much-publicized barefoot ignorance, but instead one finds keen reasoning, a delicious sense of independence and some of the most delightful people of all Arkansas. One hot June day, with Miss Addie Barlow, the Newton County home demonstration agent, I set out to attend a meeting deep in the hills. Miss Addie was prepared to demonstrate the art of canning green beans with a pressure cooker, and we had the car practically filled with pressure cooker, pots, pans, jars and all the other equipment needed for a first-class canning job. We were not hurrying, for before Miss Addie's part of the performance the county nurse, Miss Florence Billings, would examine all the children of the district. Miss Addie and the beans were a sort of afterthought, an educational feature for the mothers who brought their youngsters.

We were rolling along the hot, dusty road when we met the nurse. The wheels of her car were dripping from the latest creek crossing, and both the radiator and the nurse were boiling. We stopped at a signal.

"Nobody camel!" stormed the nurse. "Not a single living soul. I've been there since noon, and haven't laid eyes on a baby." We made sympathetic clucking sounds and murmured about mothers being busy canning or helping in the fields, but she didn't seem to hear us. "I give up," she added gloomily. She started her car again and raced toward town with a dust cloud streaming behind her.

Of course she didn't give up. She is still on the job and doing a wonderful work.

Should we give up, too, and go home? We pondered a moment. Then we decided that having driven this far we would go on beyond

the schoolhouse where the meeting was to have been held and visit someone Addie wanted me to meet. We drove on. Suddenly around a bend in the mountain road we met a strange little group. A blond, buxom woman was nursing a plump baby as she walked along the dusty road. To shield them from the burning sun she carried a big black umbrella over her head. On its dusty surface a large, snowy-white diaper had been spread to dry. Behind the woman a girl perhaps three or four years old dawdled along, picking and eating the half-ripe, dust-covered, wild blackberries that lined the roadside.

Miss Addie stopped. "Were you looking for the nurse?" she asked.

"No," smiled the mother. "I seen her car here when we went up the mountain. 'Twasn't there when we come back down. Reckon she's gone now."

"You mean to say you went right past the schoolhouse while she was there and didn't take those darling children in to let her look at them?" sputtered Addie.

The woman smiled just a bit sheepishly.

"Yeah, I'm afraid I did. She looked at the young'uns four months ago and said they was all right. They're jis' the same now, so I figured there wasn't nothin' wrong with them."

Quite obviously nothing was wrong with those two youngsters! However, just for the safety of youngsters whose mothers might diagnose wrongly, Miss Addie delivered an impromptu lecture on the importance of having children examined regularly.

Miss Addie and Newton County are almost inseparably linked in my mind. The slim, energetic young woman knew every turn in the road, every hollow, and every man, woman and child, it seemed, and loved them all. With her I have gone to cull chickens in a back yard so steep I couldn't hold back an on-the-spot variation of the old wheeze: "Do you cull out those with one leg longer than the other?"

With Miss Addie I have clambered down the three-mile mountain-side to the Wilderness Library, where Ted Richmond gathered some 5,000 books in a log house by dint of asking for them in the right places. He earned the books, for every one of them, even to the yearly

reports of this or that club which found their devious ways into the gift chests, had to be carried in tow sacks down the mountainside on Ted's own drooping shoulders. On the return trip up that slippery slope I fell down and slid ten feet before I had sense enough to dig my toes into the mud, and cracked a rib either in the fall or on the slide.

With Miss Addie I have peered over the hill to Hemmed-in Holler, which can be reached only by two ways, each one bad. One is by riding a horse up a river bed, and risking a flash flood that will maroon you and your mount in the hollow until the waters recede. The second is by climbing down a mountain on a rickety ladder.

In that retreat dwelt the father of Rose O'Neill, long after the family had moved to more accessible spots. Once a year the dainty little mother whom Rose loved to draw would make the long trip back to see that he was well and comfortable.

Because of Miss Addie's interest in the Newton County Fair, I was one of the visitors to that never-to-be forgotten event.

When I arrived in Jasper on the first day of the fair, the parade was just ending in a good old-fashioned mountain downpour. All the way between the square and the schoolhouse grounds, where the fair was held, I met dripping trucks bearing bedraggled queens and tattered crepe paper. In the school grounds which slope to a grassy valley and beautiful winding stream, all was as quiet as a rainy day on the farm. Not a soul was in sight. Sheer instinct led me to the gymnasium building, where I found groups of women sauntering about to view a roomful of exhibits neatly arranged in booths.

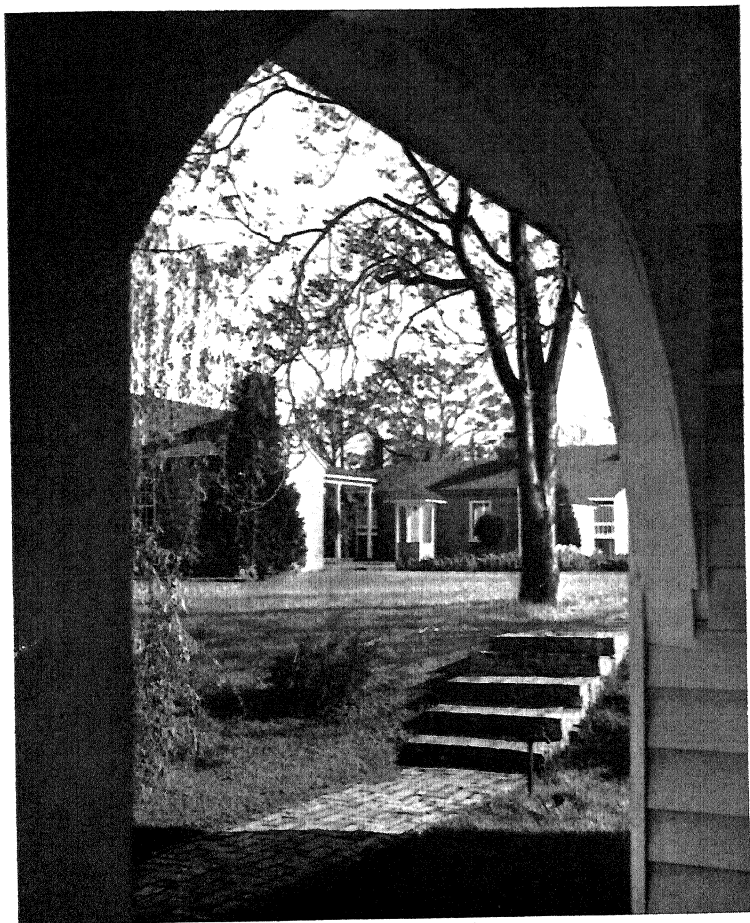
Their gentle buzz of conversation stopped instantly when I entered. In silence that could have been cut with a knife, I tried to look at the exhibit but it swam before my eyes. I was reminded of a time at Sunrise Mountain Farm when a strange yellow cat appeared in our back yard. We had thirteen cats of various stripings and spottings, who went among the chickens, pigeons and dogs without attracting the slightest attention. But when the newcomer sidled in, every chicken lifted her head and changed her cheerful little singing cluck to a

startled questioning gurgle. Every cat arched her back and hissed. Every dog growled menacingly deep in his throat. The pigeons with one startled whirl whizzed past the kitchen windows on their way to the barn roof. When I stepped outside to investigate, I found the mild-mannered yellow cat so embarrassed by all the attention that she was trying desperately to hide under a manure pile beside the barn. At the Newton County Fair I knew exactly how the cat had felt, and wished for a handy pile of something to conceal me.

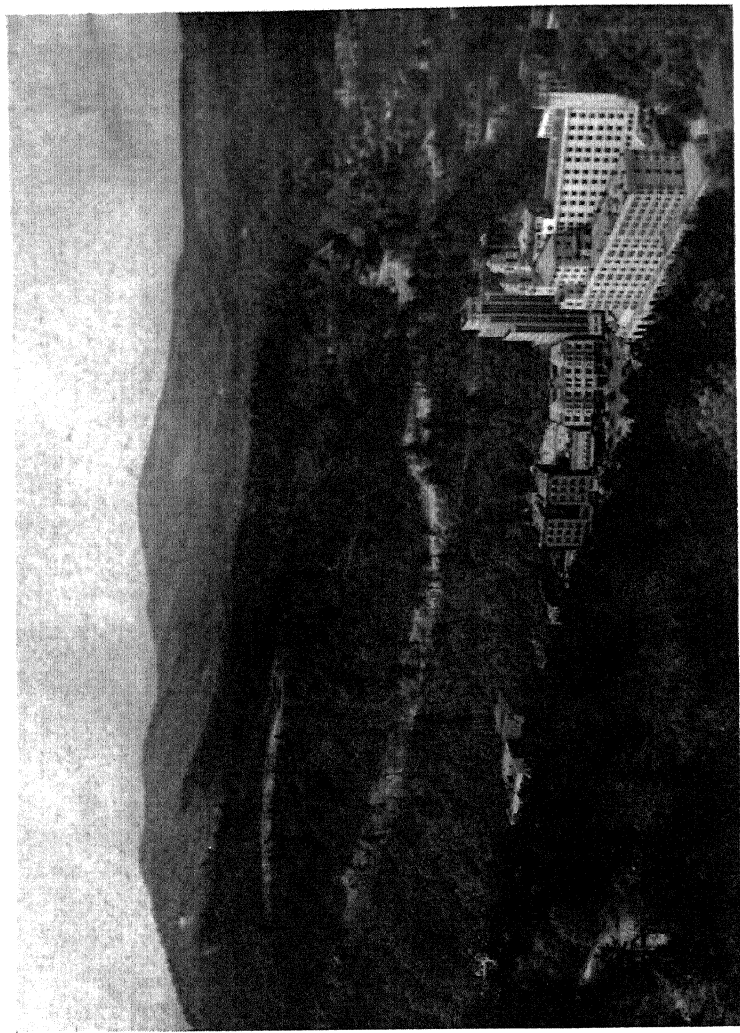
Then Miss Addie saw me and came to the rescue. After I had been introduced to every woman in the room, I was taken about to see the exhibits. Each of the home demonstration clubs and 4-H clubs under Miss Addie's guidance, and the farmers' groups led by County Agent Freyaldenhoven, had arranged exhibits of fruits, vegetables, grains and handwork. No attempt had been made to produce freak pumpkins or giant ears of corn. Instead, it was a county-wide effort to prove that a Newton County family can produce all the food it needs, and if the housewife has any gumption at all, she will still have time to sew, quilt and crochet. Practically every vegetable and fruit known to the Midwest was present in its canned, dried or fresh state, and such delicacies as beefsteak, pork tenderloin and fried chicken gleamed through glittering glass jars.

Even Mother Nature seemed to be one of the exhibitors. Jars of wild blackberries and dewberries had their place along with orchard fruits and berries, while piles of walnuts, hickory nuts and chinquapins lay among the neat little stacks of grains, vegetables and peanuts. In the Christmas-gift booth, designed by Gussie Ball, Nature's fanciful burs and seed pods had been silvered and gilded as tree trimmings, and there they lay among fine quilting, crocheting and expert sewing.

Any girl would have coveted the blue suit, jacket and skirt, with cylinder purse to match—made over an oatmeal box—which Mary Lois Palmer had made from three pairs of bell-bottomed trousers sent home by her sailor brother. Then my covetous eye fell on a crocheted tablecloth so fine in texture it might have been whipped up by an ambitious spider who wished to dazzle her girl friends. Its maker, Inez



Just as in 1820, you may step through this arch and visit these trim homes. The Territorial Restoration at Little Rock has preserved their beauty inside and out.



Hot Springs is a beautiful fun-spot with two sparkling lakes, well-planned mountain drives and foot paths and water heated by Mother Nature to help wash your troubles away!

Borin, postmistress, buyer and bookkeeper at the Bass community store, housewife and poultry raiser, only smiled and shook her head when I asked its price.

"I don't have much time to crochet during the day," she explained. "When I made that piece I used to get up at four o'clock in the morning and sit on the porch and crochet until the sun was up over the mountain. The valley was beautiful when it was filled with mist."

Then I knew why she would never sell that tablecloth. She had only to look at it to see the mist in the valley and the sun coming gold and rose above the mountain.

Along about suppertime, when the rain had slowed to a drizzle, trucks began to come down the mountains about the little town, carrying loads of children and grownups. I commented on the surprising attendance the fair brought out at night.

"Oh, naturally," said Miss Addie. "Tonight all the schools of the county will compete in singing and speaking."

We watched the young performers and their adult escorts file into the assembly hall until it seemed that the walls would bulge. Men, women, small babies and school children came from Jasper, Log Hall, Red Rock, Western Grove. Every community, every hollow, every ridge seemed to be represented. Then the program began.

Some of the children were so shy and frightened by the crowd my heart ached for them. Others were beautifully poised, so confident in their singing or speechmaking they reminded me that dignity and good manners were the traditional heritage of these pure Anglo-Saxon youngsters. Almost every group included a child or two who could play a fiddle or guitar in true country style. One lad, Ray Ted Jones, plinked on a git-tar taller than his own small body as he soloed with "Smoke on the Water."

To me the mere presence of so many young folks on a stormy night was more awe-inspiring than any performance they might have given. Many of them had walked miles through dripping woods to meet the truck which brought them to the fair. They would return along the same path in pitch-blackness. Many had ridden in uncovered trucks,

with rain pelting their heads. Many others had walked all the way, taking the slippery short cuts known only to the mountain people. Surely the return journey must have loomed in their minds, but no one was impatient. The singing went on and on and on. Then there was a special number or two, and afterward the decision of the judges, which met with appropriate yells and whoops.

Friday was babies' day. Nurse Billings examined the infants in a small room off the gym, where a broken window made the place so drafty she couldn't risk undressing them. But she didn't need to do much examining, for every baby deserved a blue ribbon. "No use hurting feelings," murmured the nurse, as she prepared her blue ribbons before the rush began. However, she chose this chance to give a little counsel. I shall always remember her patient reiteration: "But cod-liver oil is *not* a medicine. It is a food, and your baby needs it." Sometimes the mother smiled and promised to give the baby cod-liver oil, come wintertime. But mainly she just smiled.

Shortly after noon on Friday the exhibit hall emptied like a paper sack, leaving only the exhibit judge and me rattling around in it. "It's time for the funeral," called Miss Addie, as she whisked her car out of the grounds. I wondered if a funeral were always part of the fair entertainment, before I learned that Judge Spears's long, useful life had ended, and all Newton County mourned the loss of a great man. Everybody abandoned the fair, and everybody accompanied the body to the cemetery for the last sad rites.

Then they all came back, and the foot races began.

A two-block stretch of the road from the square to the schoolhouse was roped off, and on that reddish-brown, gravelly strip of Arkansas soil, pounded firm by tires and horses' hoofs and made moist by recent rains, the boys and girls of Newton County ran races. The boys of the high-school track team had shiny satin pants and running shoes. The country boys and girls wore blue jeans or the clothes in which they had come to the fair. To prepare for the races they just sat down on the sidewalk and took off shoes and stockings, if any. But brother, those

kids could run! Even now my ears ring with the smack of bare feet flying over moist, gravelly earth.

After supper the men and women from each community of the county competed in singing, in a quiz program and in a spirited old fiddlers' contest. Although the quartet that had sung at the afternoon's funeral was rated very high-class, the star of the performance, in my opinion, was the Western Grove orchestra. It was led by a sharp-featured young man who slapped, twanged and snapped the strings of a bull fiddle. He wore a plaid shirt, velveteen breeches and a wide-brimmed hat. One of his three companions topped his outfit with a hat that veered straight up from his nose. They were not in costume. The night before I had seen these two coming into the hotel, sans bag and baggage, in those very clothes and with hats at the same angle. When they departed the next morning, to join their companions who had slept in the car surrounded by fiddles and git-tars, they were just so arrayed, as though the passage of time meant nothing in their lives.

The winner of the old fiddlers' contest was an unsmiling lad of eleven, whose father and mother plucked guitars as accompaniment. The boy played as untrained musicians of the hills always play, with the end of the fiddle held tightly against his chest.

At dawn on Saturday I could see from my window at the hotel visitors crossing the Buffalo River bridge. One was an old man carrying a straw suitcase on the end of a cane over his shoulder. He must have headed straight for the fairgrounds, for there he was when I arrived at seven-thirty.

When I asked how far he had walked, he said, "Not fur. Only two miles. Come part way yestiddy." Then he smiled toothlessly and asked, in polite hill fashion, "Do you keep well?"

Although the mists were still shrouding the top of Mount Sherman, the 4-H boys were grooming their pigs. This was the day for which they had lived, breathed and kept records all summer. When I saw the soap with which Joe Kenneth Jones was scrubbing his big red hog Tom, I wished I could get a picture of the pair and send it to the

president of the advertising agency handling that soap account. It was the soap featured in prewar campaigns with the slogan "The skin you love to touch!" After Tom's bath, he was given a rubdown with olive oil. He went into the ring with every red hair shining. Unfortunately his hams were just a little rangier than those of Victory, the hog raised by blond Carl Grant Ham, and Carl Grant swaggered out of the ring with the grand championship ribbon. Blue ribbons went to Tom and all the other 4-H entries.

In the afternoon the fine horses which had been ridden to the fair and tied to the trees on the slanting hillside had their inning. A pathway was cleared through the schoolyard, and they cantered, walked and trotted, while small boys and dogs darted across under their noses. I paid little attention to the horses, for I, too, was having my hour of competition.

The judge who was examining chickens and rabbits was steadily approaching my entry, three beautiful speckled Ancona hens. My heart was in my mouth, for never had I won a blue ribbon. She came still nearer. I leaned against the schoolhouse wall, faint with anxiety. When she had passed on to the next entry, I had a blue ribbon to tack on my chicken-house wall. Since that day not one of the three hens has condescended to lay an egg.

But I don't care. The wind in the pines always recalls the twang of a bull-fiddle string, and the slap of bare feet on a moist gravel road.

In Newton County I have met some of my most unforgettable moments and unforgettable persons. Eleanor Moss was one of the persons. She and her husband Frank, a former golf professional, were white-collar workers in Chicago before they took a trip to the Ozarks. They decided that country life was their dish, and they went all the way rural. They bought forty-three wooded acres lying in a triangular peninsula with only a narrow neck connecting them with the mainland. Except for this neck, along which runs a rutted, rocky trail that could not be called a road by any stretch of imagination, the farm is surrounded by three creeks. Even in good weather only the hardest

motorists attempt the road. In bad weather not even the trucks that haul feed to the farm will make a stab at it. Then Frank went to war.

For four years Eleanor lived alone on this farm. When she came out for groceries and mail, as she did three times a week, she walked down past the barn, took off her shoes and stockings and waded through the creek. Then she clambered up the steep bank, wound her way amid the dense underbrush which always grows along Southern streams, climbed a six-rail fence, walked through a watermelon patch and a cornfield, then a patch of weeds, and at last reached the road. There she would flag a truck and ride seven miles to Jasper, the nearest town. She bought groceries until she had all she could carry. She rode back over the stony roads to the stock gate, and retraced her way over melon patch, fence, mountainside and creek. Her nearest neighbors, the Riggsses, were a half mile away through the woods, and in the Ozarks that is equivalent to a mile walk over the rocks of the breakwater along Lake Michigan. Only the breakwater doesn't have trees, poison ivy and snakes to slow one down. For companionship Eleanor had her big dog Jerry, a cat, fifty beautiful white Giant hens, sixteen speckled bantams and fifteen goats.

"We have eight kids that Frank has never seen," I heard her say wistfully one day as she patted the heads of the soft-eyed Toggenberg nannies and their babies.

Throughout the four years of his absence Eleanor kept the three-room house with its golden pine paneling ready for a shining welcome. Also, she kept books like a certified public accountant. At any minute she could sit down with her ledgers and show exactly what was taking place, how expenses were being met, how livestock was multiplying and had multiplied over the days, months and years. Even her canned goods were recorded in a perpetual inventory. When she canned huckleberries and blackberries gathered from the woods, carrots and peas from her small garden, poke and lambs'-quarters from the scanty clearing and an occasional baby goat, she made a record of each can in a card-index file. When a can was opened, she put a slanting line through its number to show it was out of stock.

Her woodpiles were neatly ricked, so she could tell at a glance how much wood she had on hand. Even her groceries were cleverly gauged; she would have flour on hand until she ordered goat and chicken feed. By this means one truck could bring them all at once, and that meant a saving in haulage.

We went out to see Eleanor one July night. When we were ready to go home, she accompanied us as far as the road, wading with us across the creek which was almost knee-deep and icy cold, despite the warm weather.

"How do you stand this creek in the winter?" I asked, shivering as I plunged in.

"It really isn't any colder then than it is now," she replied, splashing through it as if she could make her way blindfolded. "Remember, this stream is spring-fed, and springs do not vary in temperature."

"But the air is cooler," put in Miss Addie.

"Yes, it is," admitted Eleanor. "In winter I always bring a towel to dry my feet before I put on my shoes and stockings."

Frank came home and all the improvements they planned by correspondence were made. The threatening tree at the corner of the house was cut down, the little rock patio was enlarged, and a fence was built around the chicken house. Then, greatest improvement of all, a bridge was built across the troublesome creek that Eleanor had waded through in lonely years. The first flood of the springtime washed it out. Eleanor still wades.

Another city-bred couple found refuge and hard work along with the happiness they sought in Newton County. They are Tom Harvey, a former Kansas City hotel man, and his pint-sized wife Jimmie, a former linen-shop proprietor. Although they are snowy-haired sixty, they are actually newlyweds. They were married in 1941 when Tom went to Little Rock to become manager of the Officers' Club. They began saving for a farm in the Ozarks. On St. Patrick's Day after the war ended, they came to Newton County, prepared to use part of their

savings to buy their farm, and the remainder to tide them over until it could produce. They learned of a farmer who would not return from war work. His property consisted of forty-eight acres, partially cleared, a tumble-down barn and a three-room house. One of the rooms was of native stone, with inside walls of whitewashed planks. The other two were mere shells, typical example of a remodeling project interrupted by war. In two days the Harveys bought the farm for \$850, ambitiously renaming it Rim Rock Ranch. On March 20 a hired truck carried them, their trunks, three metal chairs, a camp stove, two homemade beds and secondhand mattresses, an X-legged table and a bushel of seed potatoes out to the farmhouse. Miraculously the farmer hired to come over and plow the garden had done as requested. After the half-dozen possessions were stowed in the house, they went out and planted the seed potatoes.

It was months later when I stood in the garden and looked down upon the world below, a world of woods, with not a house visible. In every direction I could see deep shadowy valleys and mountains, wooded so thickly they looked like tufted cushions, while above them soft billowy clouds floated across an azure sky. Their garden is a narrow level ridge, like the backbone of an extra-large, skinny, Arkansas razorback hog. I liked to think of these two city people, long past the years of youthful adventure, planting potatoes in their new garden on the late afternoon of a March day. Surely the hearts of the gray-haired refugees from city pavements must have burst with the beauty about them and the thrill of belated enterprise. The trees were showing the delicate jade of fresh new leaves, the springtime haze was like a runaway cloud spreading her thin veil over the distant hills, and the valleys lay below them like pictures painted on a lacquered tray. The fragrance of the newly turned ground, the warmth of the spring sunshine, the songs of nesting birds and the excitement of the venture—it must have seemed that life begins at sixty!

By the end of their first week on the farm, beans, corn and peas had been planted in the garden. The kitchen and bedroom, joists gleaming barely in the unlined walls, had been cleaned and aired.

The camp stove went into one, and the beds into the other. In the living room the whitewash had been scrubbed from the plank walls, revealing a surprisingly nice graining. The X-legged table, three chairs and the trunks shared the room with a modernistic guardian angel set high on a lacy metal shelf.

When the angel fell off the shelf and had to be mended with chewing gum, the Harveys were not at all disturbed. They said she, too, must get accustomed to a more rugged life. They went ahead fixing up the house, putting a scalloped length of crepe paper across the top of each window to suggest a curtain, and hanging glowing pewter plates and gay Mexican canes against the scrubbed walls.

By Memorial Day the Harveys were eating beans, potatoes and spinach from their garden. They had acquired three Toggenberg goats. In a short time after that the goat named Nina became the mother of a small brown-and-white bundle from goat heaven—and weren't the Harveys happy to find it was a girl! That meant another member for their milk-goat herd. They bought a Jersey heifer named Rosa, paying seventy-five dollars for her, hoping for a girl calf some day. Then they would have two cows, which makes an ideal milk setup. Five pigs set them back twenty-five dollars, but they were offered seven-fifty for each. Eight hens were purchased, at a dollar apiece. At the time of my visit, besides having enough eggs for their own use, the Harveys had sold three dozen, realizing the sole farm income of ninety cents. Little chickens purchased from a hatchery fared badly. The Harveys had no place prepared for them, and the little fellows couldn't take the chill of the mountain nights. Only 40 percent survived.

The big project of the farm was just getting under way. Two cleared fields would be planted to grapes and bramble fruits. This means blackberries, raspberries, youngberries and boysenberries. Strawberries, too, would be planted in the new land. These, with the wild berries on the farm, would provide fruits for fine homemade jams and jellies that could be sold at the Farm Women's Market at Harrison, or at our own Craft Cabin. Such plans were strictly in the dream stage, of

course, for sugar would have to come back again before their ambitions could be accomplished.

The Harveys had to carry drinking water from a neighbor's spring a quarter of a mile away. A shallow dug well, about fifteen yards from the house, provided water for washing and for the animals, but it had to be cleaned out and possibly dug deeper before it could be trusted for all-around continuous use. Water is a problem to people who live on Ozark mountaintops. Often good caves troughs and a deep cemented cistern form the only solution. It is best not to postpone this improvement if it seems at all advisable. Water so stored is often far more healthful for drinking and general use than the product of a doubtful dug well.

By autumn the Harveys hoped to operate both a heating stove and cooking range with bottled gas. Then the plans for remodeling the house called for a wood-burning fireplace in the living room.

Families in the hills about Rim Rock Ranch had been kind and helpful to the two gray-haired Babes in the Woods. They had supplied vegetables when the Harveys had none. They had given advice, cheerfully and earnestly, and felt no rancor when the Harveys failed to heed it, because they knew that city people are that way! When the first snake penetrated the Harvey Eden, a neighbor boy came over and killed it. After that the newcomers learned to kill their own snakes. When a big fat blacksnake invaded a setting hen's nest and swallowed a dozen precious ready-to-hatch bantam eggs, Jimmie had to be restrained from killing the reptile with her own two bare hands!

When I asked her if she would like to go back to the city, she hitched up her blue shorts, pulled down her white T-shirt, tucked a flyaway strand of white hair under a red hair ribbon and told me that wild horses couldn't drag her.

It is true the Harveys were dreamers. But not idle ones! Blessed with good health and a will to get things done, they were busy from dawn until dark with a dozen projects. One project called for a pair of gigantic posts at the lawn gate. They were cut and peeled far down the mountain. The Harveys rolled them up the long, rough, steep slope.

When Tom had to shift the crowbar from one end of the log to the other, little Jimmie had to put her entire weight against the log to keep it from rolling down the mountainside.

At last she whimpered, "We shouldn't do this. Remember we're old people!"

"Sh! Don't say that!" admonished Tom. "We're never old until we admit it."

Newton County has been on my travel list so long the Commerical Hotel seems a second home. With a faintly nostalgic feeling I note it is changing now. Bottled-gas stoves are taking the place of the individual stoves in which guests maintained their own fires, and the excitement of a winter night in Jasper has been taken away. Now, if a guest asphyxiates himself, it is just a dull, regrettable accident. In the old days the Jedge and I would lay bets on which guest would set the hotel on fire—in that way adding excitement to an otherwise quiet night. We usually occupied No. 8, which was at the end of a wing, with windows on three sides. Its stove was a small sheet-iron affair painted silvery-grey with aluminum paint. Behind it stood a bucket of tall pine slivers, standing on end with their feet in kerosene. On the porch outside the room a big pile of stove wood lay handy to the door. Getting the fire started and keeping it going were strictly up to the occupants of No. 8.

In the evenings we lighted a fire so our dog would be comfortable and then joined the other guests who sat out in the lobby until near midnight. Then all the sitter-uppers would go back to the kitchen. Someone would make a pot of coffee and we would have a cheerful cup and some toast or leftover cake before retiring.

In the mornings I could achieve a reasonable facsimile of sound slumber until after the Jedge had a rousing fire going and a washpanful of water heating on the little silvery stove. With a new tank-gas stove I shall miss all the shaking down of ashes, the vigorous punching of stubborn oak stubs, the banging of the stove door, the metallic clanking of the poker against a stove leg as it is tossed on the metal floor mat

beneath the stove, the threatening roar of flames going up the chimney while the damper is open, the cheerful crackle of new sticks igniting and the pungent fragrance of burning pine and coal oil! In fact, the lazy act of opening a valve and striking a match to light a soundless fire will be a distinct letdown.

I hope the passion for self-improvement which is sweeping Arkansas will not sweep away the outdoor movies which I have always enjoyed at Jasper. Although I live quite happily for months at a time without seeing a show, a Wednesday night in Jasper always finds me movie-minded. Probably the youngsters there gave me my first urge.

One afternoon I saw the big truck marked Carmar and bearing a cutout of Mickey Mouse round the corner of the square, with a half-dozen tousled little boys waving from the back end. Miss Addie explained that it was the traveling movie truck. The kids had walked five miles to meet it at the bridge and ride in with it. They would help unload it and then they would get in free—the Newton County version of carrying water to the elephants. I was quite scornful of the whole proceedings.

"I never go to movies," I said loftily.

Miss Addie seemed just a little embarrassed at being forced to admit that she never missed a performance. "If it rains," she said, "we just put our coats up over our heads and sit right there until the picture is finished." From an intelligent girl like Addie, that was almost more than I could bear.

At the hotel supper was served in a perfect dither of excitement. Movie night, it seemed, meant as much to everyone else as to Miss Addie. The two young women who cooked, served and washed dishes flitted about the table as though on roller skates. Someone scurried into the dining room as we ate and pressed a pink dress on the ironing board. Redhaired Junior ate his vegetables without giving the string beans the Bronx cheer. All at the long table chatted excitedly. What would happen next to the hero who had been left clinging to the wing of an enemy plane with spies shooting at him? I hadn't the heart to repeat my disdain! I promised to be ready right after supper so we

could all get seats. After all, I said to myself, it would be nice to see the crowd's reaction.

Although it was still broad daylight when we started to the show, everybody on the square was headed toward the canvas wall. Town matrons in smoothly ironed summer dresses swept along with men in clean blue jeans and sun-bleached shirts, and youngsters with hair slicked down in wet paths. Countrymen and their wives and children were descending from trucks in which whole communities had stood as the vehicles careened over hair-raising mountain curves. At the gate was the only line-up I have ever seen in the hills.

We paid our twenty cents each, with the movie manager making change from a rusty muffin tin, and went inside the canvas ring. Although Ozarkians are proverbial latecomers, almost every seat was filled. Every eye was on the big, cracked, grimy screen—just a length of canvas painted too long ago and now sodden and gray from rain and dust—as though something might be missed if one flicked an eyelash. Across the aisle from me a big mountain lad was hunched forward in obvious anticipation of excitement. In big brown hands a new ten-gallon hat was cradled tenderly.

Youngsters tense with interest ran toward the front rows, and anxious parents with smaller ones in arms tried to sit close to them. The chairs soon filled, and families sat on splintery boards placed across rickety sawhorses. Suddenly the sound of a worn, wheezing record came from the truck, and one could distinguish the tune, if not the words, of the doleful "I Just Hang My Head and Cry." As darkness fell, the screen loomed white and mysterious, its cracks and grime mercifully hidden in the gloom. Then there was a jumble of sound, a flickering of lights, and a picture leaped on the screen.

Roy Rogers, handsome, debonair in his tailored Western getup, was riding across the plain. Or was it a plain? Keeping pace with his horse were two trees with soft lights glowing along their gracefully arched branches. Overhead pin-point lights of bright stars showed in the blue-black night, and just above the screen the tops of Mount Judea and a sister mountain reared to touch a rolling cloud. Movies are

wonderful, I decided, when they can be seen out under the stars with trees standing beside the screen.

When Roy sang, none cared about the worn mechanism that garbled the high notes. The hills about the little town seemed to catch the melody and toss it from one to another until they rang with music. A soft evening breeze sprang up, rustling the leaves of the friendly trees until they danced with delightful rhythm and overhead a crescent moon slid into view as if coming to see the fun.

When the picture moved on to an outdoor fiesta, full-skirted señoritas and their Mexican escorts might have been merrymakers in our own village square. Even Captain America, of the serial, with bulging muscles and square jaw, seemed quite reasonable. When he stripped off the disguise of a suave businessman, revealing himself in the slim tights of a daredevil circus performer, we caught our breath in one great gasp. When he flung himself onto a motorcycle and roared right off the screen to save our country singlehanded from enemy forces, unconsciously we lifted our eyes to Mount Judea, confidently expecting to see his headlight come gleaming around the road on its star-crowned top.

Miss Addie called my attention to the young fellow across the aisle. I, who had come merely to observe the reactions of the audience, wrested my eyes from the screen to look in his direction. In his excitement he had crushed the new hat in his hands and sat wringing it like a wet towel. I looked down at my own hat. It was twisted into a tight roll!

Perhaps the progress of Newton County will come through the activities of the new generation—or perhaps I should say, the up-and-coming generation. For two years I have attended the 4-H Club camp, just because the kids are so interesting. I have heard only one severe grumble. That was the night we had fried chicken for supper and there were only three pieces each. Ozark youngsters can't understand a shortage of chicken. Several of them, both boys and girls, have chickens as their 4-H Club project each year, for many an Ozark girl

would rather tend chickens than sit in the house and sew. Most of the boys, however, would rather tend a pig as their club chore, and a few of them, who have ample financial backing, have baby beeves as projects. Whatever it is, the folks at home are left holding the feed sack while Junior and his sister attend the camp.

Work in 4-H clubs is excellent for hill youngsters. A couple of years ago, Mildred Phillips and Betty Keeling, both seventeen, as a 4-H project staged a white-rat demonstration to prove the value of milk in a child's diet. Arkansas university lent the girls two white rats, equal in age and size, which they named Wiggles and Sniffles. Wiggles was fed a diet of milk, cereal and water. He grew fat and sleek. Poor little Sniffles was fed coffee, cereals and water. He stayed small and undeveloped, with no pinkness in his ears, nose and eyes. When he began to lose his hair, the test came to an abrupt close. The girls felt so sorry for him they began feeding him cream to make up for lost meals.

The test paid big returns. Many a family was nagged into getting a cow, or a milk goat, because the kids were afraid of losing their hair.

Of course, the object of each 4-H Club youngster is to make the top-prize trip to Chicago for the annual meeting. Even if they get no farther than Fayetteville, the work does them a world of good. Many a girl learns how to sew beautifully, many others learn to cook and can, and the boys are potentially better farmers and livestock raisers for their effort to make a pig or a beef a prize winner. The fun they have at summer camp spurs them on to another try next year, though in many cases that fun is dearly bought.

In the summer of 1946 little Doris Seys, eleven years old, and her sister Susie, nine, walked four miles down Roundtop Mountain to reach the truck that brought them to camp, and many of the children had to climb two miles to a road where they and their blankets would be picked up. No wonder that when they got to camp, this overage 4-H-er was promptly outwalked, outtalked and outswum by the hill-country kids. As always, I was impressed by their innate dignity and good manners. Bickering and squabbling are never heard in a 4-H Club camp. Excess physical energy is used up in furious diving and

swimming in the icy spring-fed river, and vocal energy goes into telling equally violent tales. When Robert Phillips, aged ten, fell asleep after the afternoon swimming period and slept right through the supper bell, he was told that we had had ice cream and cake for supper and that none had been left for him. Fortunately darkness hid the unmanly tears on Robert's face when he came to ask humbly for whatever supper was left, but the tremor in his voice was unmistakable. He was assured that nothing more luxurious than lemonade and home-made cookies had been the evening dessert, and plenty of both were left for him.

Because the children who were fortunate enough to come to camp must go back and impart knowledge to others, they had lesson periods each day. Chicken, geese and a gobbling turkey were brought in as specimens, so they could learn to cull fowls. On nature-study walks they learned the difference between legumes and grasses, conifers and deciduous trees, and why our Arkansas soil is red. On one walk they learned how to scale lumber. They could, but I couldn't, grasp it.

While the boys were given special lessons on soil erosion, the girls got a hat project under way. Many of them had never owned a hat, except, as one of them said, a straw hat to wear in the garden. Miss Addie brought out a collected stack of outmoded headgear in straw and felt and several millinery pages torn from the latest mail-order catalogue. The hats evolved from this meager equipment would make Lily Daché eat her best number. As the afternoon assembly feature, the hat-makers concocted a little skit that permitted each one to parade in her new headgear. The boys sat through the fashion parade like little gentlemen, but no one stood around afterward to congratulate the winners. Having been forehanded enough to wear bathing trunks to the fashion show, the boys made a beeline for the river as if to wash the taste of such girl-stuff out of their mouths.

The Buffalo River that winds through Jasper, flowing the proverbial stone's throw from the front porch of the Commercial Hotel, was the center of attraction at all times. On the final evening of the camp this river, so clear, sparkling and swift-flowing, became the chief

actor in a ceremony of utmost beauty and solemnity. At dusk the youngsters seated themselves in a ring around the great pile of brush on the white sand beside the water. For a long time they sang in chorus and two of them sang solos. Then the fire was lighted and a member from each club represented in camp placed a fagot in the flames. When the fire burned high, all stood and joined hands to recite the impressive 4-H creed which has to do with Head, Heart, Hands and Health.

When darkness had fallen and the trees on the mountains were silhouetted against a starry sky, two leaders, a boy and a girl, lighted tall candles and started a procession down to the water's edge. The others followed, each holding a small candle inserted into a block of dry wood. The candles were lighted, and one by one the blocks were set afloat at the bend of the river. Dipping, bobbing, swirling, the tiny lights floated downstream with the current between high, tree-clad mountains and limestone bluffs, each tiny, sparkling glow casting long, golden reflections that shimmered in the dark water. As the candles floated past our camp site, the youngsters sang the Arkansas State Song in soft young voices that mingled with the voice of the river. Thus the torch of Newton County's 4-H Club work went out on one of our mountain streams to all of Arkansas. May that light burn brightly, for not only Arkansas, but all America, needs men and women who have been 4-H boys and girls!

Hot Water and Watermelons

DOGGONE it, that town of Hot Springs was a complete disappointment to me! From what I had read, I supposed that somewhere along the road to town, a tall dark handsome gambler in a frock coat would leap out of the bushes and twist my arm until I gave up the money I'd been saving for Aunt Tilda's gravestone. Nothing like that happened. I just spent my tombstone money at auctions and have some near-linen, almost-china and crystal diamonds to show for it. But golly, did I have fun! I was almost sorry I didn't have a few aches or pains or feel run-down or tired. All these things, according to everyone there, can be wiped right off your personal map by a series of baths in the water which comes streaming out of the base of Hot Springs Mountain.

The enthusiasm of all Hot Springs citizens for what they lovingly call "our water" is one of the most touching things I have found in this state. Elsewhere in Arkansas I have known churches to fall apart over trivia such as which way the benches should face, clubs to disband because of a dicker for a meeting place, and neighbors to feud over apples falling over a line fence. In Hot Springs you meet a completely united front. Every citizen, young or old, will grab you by the lapel and hold on like the Old Man of the Sea while he tells you not only of his own ills washed away by the beneficial waters but of hundreds of other cases. Even a United States bulletin unbends sufficiently to say in the literary style of the fine print on income-tax blanks, "Increase in bodily resistance in bathers availing themselves of the Hot Springs

water has long been noted in the improved general health, strength and vitality in persons in a run-down or debilitated condition."

Since the government supervises the bathhouses, regulating them so prices are low and service high, this might be construed as biased approval, except for the fact that one never meets a dissatisfied customer. I was interested in a literal interpretation of "run-down." If ever a person takes chances on being run down, it is in Hot Springs. I mean, run down by trucks, buses, motorcars and even two-horse carriages. One lone stop light casts its feeble authority on all the downtown district. In crossing streets and dodging traffic, it is definitely every man for himself and the ice truck gets the hindmost. For the able-bodied vacationist, this is all right, but for the crippled people who have come to Hot Springs for the highly advertised baths, it seems a bit on the dirty-deal side. But who am I to gripe where thousands have let it slide?

The easygoing ways of the Southern hills, the pleasant sunshine, the high wooded mountains, the sparkle of clear blue lakes all seem at their best in this Arkansas town. Add the mystery of water heated somewhere in the bowels of the earth, the snobbish delight of bathing in surroundings that would have floored the ancient Romans, and the pampered-darling feel of having someone scrub your back, and it is easy to understand why Hot Springs attracts visitors from all over the world. Indeed Mother Nature was in a generous mood when she formed its setting.

The climate is far enough south to escape the cold winters of the North, yet it does not have the humidity of the South at any time. It is that rare bird, the year-round resort! About it are the mountains, wisely taken over by the Federal government back in 1832 and operated as a reservation, through which smoothly graveled roads wind with such gradual ascent that even the timid motorist from the plains can take them without a tremor. For trampers and horseback riders well-marked trails are dotted with drinking fountains, lookout spots and comfort stations.

Two lakes, Catherine and Hamilton, provide swimming, boating

and fishing in addition to scenic joy, although man had to help Nature along by putting a couple of dams at strategic points. Then, as if in one grand final fling of generosity, old Mother Nature threw in forty-seven springs which pour a million gallons of steaming water out of the ground each day while the rest of us here in Arkansas have to wait for our bath water to warm after chopping the wood with which to heat it. Of forty-seven, forty-six are tapped to run into a reservoir which in turn supplies bathhouses and sanitariums. The forty-seventh spring is allowed to discharge through a narrow channel into a small pool in which Doubting Thomasinas like me can stick fingers to see if the water is really hot. It is! According to a friend who knows, it hits the tank at one of the hospital baths at 180 degrees, though even the Chamber of Commerce lists it at 147.

Along with the 25,000 visitors which Hot Springs can accommodate at one time, 35,000 inhabitants live normal and presumably happy lives in these pleasant surroundings. On Sundays they attend their choice of fifty-three churches, which range from the twin-spired magnificence of St. John's to the watch-charm daintiness of the Lutheran church. Through the week they shop for groceries, make new curtains, hold down jobs mainly connected with the tourist trade and invite guests for luncheon. I know, because I was a luncheon guest at the enchanting home of Mrs. Marie Lonsdale. Harmony Hills, the beautiful home of Marjorie Lawrence, the Metropolitan Opera star, was another point of interest to me. Along one of the lakes Chicagoan John T. Liedtke is establishing a scenically handsome retreat for pensioned railway workers that should get a lively toot-toot from every railroad in the country.

At the edges of Hot Springs lie estates that show generations of loving care. One is the W. C. Brown home, where a sunken garden and great bushes of crepe myrtle take one deep into the heart of Dixie. The Fordyce estate, now owned by Colonel Earl Ricks, is another. It might be wise to view this place with its private lake and landscaped grounds from your car, as we did. A boxer dog, about the size of a Shetland pony, lay on the terrace wall between us and the doorbell. He

didn't lift his head, but just looked out of the corner of his nearest eye and emitted mumbles which we guessed were warnings not to go too far.

We didn't have to feel like park-bench warmers as we viewed these striking homes. After all, Hot Springs abounds with places where tourists may find lodging and some of them had the lovely word **VACANCY** on them! The accommodations seemed to include every type and price known to the traveling public. They ranged from small home hotels, rooming houses, tourist homes and apartment buildings to such swank places as The Park, Majestic and Arlington Hotels. Even if you can't afford the Arlington, you can slip in for the Sunday-night concerts by Paolo Grosso's orchestra, and perhaps you will have the good fortune to hear Franklin Neil sing "The Holy City." The hotel-court list is topped by the out-of-this-world Jack Tar Court, where the MacArthur suite rents for \$35 a day and even the comparatively inexpensive cabins have air-conditioning units and red leather chairs. But there are simple affairs on the outskirts that cost less than living at home. If you want to go still farther down the scale of expense, you can bring your own tent or trailer and park it beside a stream marked **NO SWIMMING**, plugging your stove and lamps into an electric-light system, and still be close enough to Bathhouse Row for your daily ablution.

The behavior of the dog that mumbled, "Don't go too far," seems to strike the keynote of local tolerance. At this place where even warring Indians called a truce that all might enjoy the Healing Breath of the Great Spirit, as the waters were called, every effort is made to preserve peace without trampling too forcibly on individual rights. Rival Chicago gangsters who shot at one another around corners at home used to meet on Hot Springs streets without drawing their gats. But local authorities take no chances. A perpetual game of cops and robbers is in progress. During the racing season policemen from New York, Chicago and New Orleans are on hand to nab pickpockets before they nab purses, and trains are met by cops who can spot bad boys quicker than they can spot their luggage in the porters' carts. Even a poor, mis-

guided guesser about which horse will come in first gets picked up, dusted off and a ticket home, with possibly a note to Mother!

For people who love to eat, Hot Springs can put terrific strain on the belt or two-way stretch. Some of the best Pullman cooks and waiters have homes in Hot Springs, and their influence is reflected in the fine food and service everywhere. For dining, the choice of surroundings is practically unlimited. You can take it from one who ate her way through and around Hot Springs, the pleasure is the same whether you order pompano in the luxurious Jack Tar or hot fried catfish and hushpuppies at Bud Smith's place on Lake Hamilton.

Hot Springs is genuinely interested in showing visitors a good time, it would seem. Three eighteen-hole golf courses provide year-round playing, and a fourth, in the middle of the race track, may be used between racing seasons. In fact, you may enjoy all the diversions of land, water and air! And if you want to while away the hours between baths by engaging in a slight game of chance, it is O.K. with Hot Springs. On the list are Bingo games, auctions where shabby gents write big showy checks for near diamonds, and some plain and fancy spots that I didn't see because I didn't stay up that late. For daytime entertainment there is the second floor of the Southern Club, where you may lounge in an easy chair in air-conditioned comfort and watch a handsome lad, in undervest and brown slacks, scuttle along a narrow ledge and post changing odds. He is a far cry from my frock-coated gambler ideal. However, I'd hate to know what he thinks of a woman who walks up to a bookie and says, "Nothing today, thank you. I'm just looking around." That's what I did.

To most travelers the mid-Arkansas area south of Hot Springs is just a vast unexplored region, the sort that was colored black in old-time maps. Of course those who are swooping through the state, hurrying into Texas on Highway 67, realize that it has towns, stores, houses and people like other parts of Arkansas, but they rarely stop to investigate them. Occasionally they stop for the night in a tourist court—for instance, the quiet little grandmotherly court at Gurdon and the very nice Davis Court at Hope, where the proprietor will bring in a rocking

chair if you have one thread of gray in your bonny brown hair. Always, however, such travelers stop at dark and are off with the dawn, so you can't say they give the town much of a break.

At Gurdon they would never learn about Vicky by such a touch-and-go system. Vicky is a fox terrier who looks like the familiar one in *His Master's Voice*, except that the colors are reversed. Vicky is black where the dog in the advertisement is white. Furthermore, I am convinced that Vicky would never sit calmly before an instrument quizzically wondering how his master got into the damn thing. He would probably view the whole performance in great disdain, wishing his master had chosen to sing another number. Vicky seems to have a mind of his own.

He belongs to the Griffon family, and the Griffons have a couple of greenhouses in their back yard. They have also a tree that produces the sort of figs Adam and Eve enjoyed in the Garden of Eden. Vicky pays no attention to the figs, but he gives the greenhouse his best wags. When he is hungry, he goes into the greenhouse and hunts around until he finds a chrysanthemum, aster or gladiola stalk. If the floors have just been swept, and he can find no flower, he stands up and begs until someone gives him a geranium, an azalea or just a plain old zinnia. With the flower in his mouth he takes out for the "uptown" district of Gurdon, and goes to one of the two restaurants. Patiently he waits at the door until he can dart in behind a patron. Inside, he looks about until he sees a waitress. He goes to her and drops the flower at her feet. Then he looks up with eyes shining. He has undoubtedly read about "saying it with flowers"! The waitresses just don't have the sort of heart that can resist that doggy appeal, backed up by a gift of flowers. Vicky gets his handout, and all is well in his world.

You will be almost through Gurdon, if you are traveling south on 67, when you come to a filling station with a pile of clay in the driveway. It will probably have some small pottery figures on a bench, too, and probably you won't be much surprised to see still another filling station that sells pottery. But it will pay you to stop and investigate. You will meet Florence and Reba Rogers, and their aunt, who is also

their stepmother, Miss Edna. All three have given up other jobs to turn to the work that has been done by three generations of their family—pottery making. They call it mud daubing, and refer to themselves as mud daubers, but, for my money, it is creative art of an extremely high order.

Florence studied art, and then became a stenographer in Chicago. She gave up all thoughts of a career in the city when an employer said he would hire her if she took voice lessons to speed up her slow, easy Arkansas drawl. He was the head of a brokerage house. If any of his clients phoned in to ask if he were a pauper or a millionaire, her employer feared the poor fellow would drop dead with suspense before Florence could get him told. She went back to her home town with a hundred dollars to start making pottery. Reba had been a teacher of English, but preferred to write for publication. She quit teaching to become Gurdon correspondent for the *Arkansas Gazette*, but so far hasn't reached a taxable income in any one year. She runs the gas station and keeps books for the pottery business, besides scraping off fringes and smoothing out bumps in the clay products. Miss Edna has a real sculptor's touch. She can push and poke a wad of clay until it looks like the face of someone in a picture. You should see her Mrs. Roosevelt!

The hundred dollars capital had to be spread pretty thin over glazes, clay and other equipment for the new pottery business. Fortunately they could borrow a homemade kiln left by a cousin who was one of the unlucky on the Death March of Bataan. They took it home with them, ran natural gas to it and used it to fire buttons which they made from clay.

At the University of Arkansas, where Florence had had a year of art, she always wanted a red slicker with a razorback hog, the college insignie, on the back. Money was too scarce for such a luxury, but the thought must have persisted. When Florence began to design buttons, almost instinctively she made razorback hogs and glazed them brilliant red. Her knowledge of clays, glazes and kiln operation were all learned in one way—the hard way! She had never seen a ceramics plant, like

the magnificent one at Camden, which turns out beautiful pottery. She couldn't even understand the technical phrases in the ceramics trade magazines. Bitter experience soon taught her. In the course of a year she knew that clay works better if the kiln is slowly heated, and that even the choicest work will craze if one gets anxious and opens the kiln for a peek before the glaze has cooled.

As another part of their education the Rogers girls learned that the little kiln was far too small for much commercial pottery work. Florence's uncle, who also operates a pottery business at Hope, came over to help her, and together they built a brick kiln in the little shed that houses a milk goat and a flock of Buff Cochin bantams.

It was no small job to make the kiln. It had to be lined with special heat-resistant bricks, and then coated with a layer of metal. Metal is hard to get, but they salvaged enough old signs along the highway and in dumps to go around the kiln, and Florence and her uncle riveted them together. Without this metal coat, the bricks would crumble under the intense heat of the kiln, and probably the shed would be set on fire.

The kiln is the downdraft type, which, according to Florence, utilizes all the heat units produced by the fuel—but don't ask me how it is accomplished. The burners that heat the kiln are simply natural-gas pipes with holes punched in them. When the pipes were installed the holes were too small. The kiln wouldn't heat. The girls uncoupled the pipes, took them to the blacksmith and had more and bigger holes punched in them. Reba, who has a mathematical mind, estimated that the heat would be five times greater than they had had before. Florence was inclined to doubt it. She said the only way to find out was to turn the kiln on to its full heat and see what would happen. That was the night the shed almost burned down, and items that would have sold for a hundred dollars melted in the fierce heat. Now they know how much heat can be coaxed out of those homemade burners. Usually they prefer a temperature of 2,100 degrees as the best firing heat.

For two years the girls and Miss Edna have been trying to settle on something that can be produced in large, overwhelming, you-see-it-

everywhere masses. They have tried, but somehow they can't resist putting a little extra time on every item they make. The Mammy Lou salt and pepper shakers must have character in the whites of the eyes and on the red lips in the brown face. They tried making a tomato-juice tumbler, but instead of one red tomato on the dull green surface, they had to put on four tomatoes, two on each side. They have made tiles, using real dogwood blossoms as the model for their design, but glaze on tile is tricky, and if the result lacks perfection, they throw it away.

Someone gave the girls a tiny demitasse to copy, and after making the wee cups the original customer had requested, they put more in stock. But no one else wants them. Someone brought them a pair of baby shoes to be used as a model for a pottery pair. Now they make baby shoes for the Griffon Greenhouses, and every Gurdon mother is sure to get one of them filled with flowers for her new baby. However, all this hasn't meant enough business at the prices they timorously ask to put "shoes on baby" in their own household.

After they modeled Vicky, the Griffons' dog, and reproduced him in clay, Florence decided that her pet bantam hen, Honey Child, should likewise be immortalized. She made a pottery bantam, life-size, and with infinite patience drew in every tiny feather before the little figure was put into the kiln. Also the nest could not be one of common "straw" such as one finds under antique glass hens. Honey Child must be sitting on a pine-needle nest, because the Rogers girls believe that such nests keep off mites and other unpleasant insects. They finally made a mold for the little hen, but even with that, much painstaking handwork is required to make the prim little feathers.

One of the little red-combed hens with her pine-needle nest was standing on a table in my living room recently when an antique collector came in. "Majolica!" she gasped reverently.

"No! Rogers!" I replied, with equal reverence.

Then at last these three women, who couldn't understand what technical magazines were talking about, tried something else. They began molding the faces of real people in doll size, using photographs for

models. For one doll they made the face of a Gurdon woman's long-gone mother, and they modeled her dainty hands, and her feet in the old-style, high-topped, pointed-toed shoes. Now the owner of this doll is making a body to fit the head and extremities, and when the little figure is completed and dressed in garments after those in the photographs, it will be a three-dimensional miniature of the loved one. Surely a treasure like this would be an heirloom for generations to come.

A traveling man who stopped for gas and learned of the portrait dolls brought three photographs of his lovely wife, showing soft, waving hair about a face of classic beauty, and asked them to "make her up." "She isn't well," he said with a catch in his voice. The effort the girls put into the modeling and firing of that delicate little face and the tiny hands and feet could never be given a financial rating. But, after all, they are artists!

Following their success with portrait dolls, the Rogers women began to make a series of character dolls. For gift shops in Morrillton and the vicinity they have made a Petit Jean doll, giving her a beautiful face with the elaborate hair-do affected by women of the French court. Morrillton women dress the dolls in bouffant costumes that match the hair-do, and sell them to tourists as figurines of the venturesome girl who died on the mountain that still bears the name she assumed.

Another character doll from the homemade kiln is Arkansas Belle, an aristocratic young woman with a lovely face, long, slender hands and narrow, high-arched feet. This doll is dressed in lace and taffeta, sprinkled with ribbon bows, and bears the label: "No relation to Bob Burns."

Really there is nothing much to tell about the Rogers women at Gurdon. Just three women by the side of an Arkansas highway, peddling gas to motorists who pause reluctantly when the gas-tank indicator is far to the left, and dabbing in the muddy clay which they mix by hand in an old barrel.

If you plan to visit Hope, Arkansas, make your trip during the watermelon season, for Hope is the Watermelon Capital of the state. Long

before you get there, you will meet trucks loaded with great green melons, looking like plump porkers with their ridiculously small curly stems exactly like pigtails. Sometimes the trucks will pass you, racing ahead to cities far in the distance, and occasionally you will see a smashed watermelon alongside the road, its pink meat and black seeds looking deliciously fresh and cool in spite of the hot sun. When you drive into the edge of Hope during that blissful season, you will see a small colored boy at a roadside eating place, walking solemnly up and down bearing a huge picketing sign hand-printed with the word WATERMELON.

Too bad you couldn't have been with me during the watermelon season that is just tapering off as this is written. The whole town had risen in righteous indignation because a famous monthly magazine of diminutive size had given Texas credit for raising the country's biggest watermelons. This was going too far, even for Texas. Shucks, that little old 185-pound watermelon over which Texas was crowing was only a marble! Why, in the Patmos community just twelve miles out from Hope, Mr. Oscar D. Middlebrooks a few years ago grew the acknowledged world-champion watermelon that weighed 195 pounds. It was presented to the Arkansas motion-picture star, Dick Powell, and was duly photographed and weighed in by Warner Brothers, putting melon and weight on record for all doubting Texans.

Incidentally, on the same half acre on which Mr. Middlebrooks grew the champ, he grew also a runner-up that weighed 140 pounds, six others weighing in excess of 130 pounds each, and thirty-two more, each of which weighed over 100 pounds. Even my nonmathematical mind can calculate that seventeen melons from that patch would weigh a ton. Then, just to humble Texas still further, Alexander H. Washburn, editor of the *Hope Star*, dug up the fact that the melon over which Texas had been crowing was actually grown from Hope watermelon seed.

Now of course not all melons grown in the Hope region are so large. This is fortunate. Imagine a housewife trying to put ninety-seven and a half pounds of watermelon in an apartment refrigerator!

And anyway, melons that large are not good to eat. They are just spectacular things, with meat coarse and unflavorful. Hope growers are mighty particular about the quality of their melons. Perhaps that is why one sees trucks lined up from all over the country during the watermelon season. It is a sight for an Arkansas Traveler. Apparently the trucks come in during the night, some as big as boxcars, others just as bright and shiny, but smaller, with the names of grocery dealers in Frankfort or Sedalia or Des Moines on them. Then there are privately owned trucks, a bit on the grubby side usually, and as they wait in line for their loads of melons, couples snooze cozily under homemade comforters in the back. Many of the trucks are so large they can't be weighed on the Hope scales, but must go fourteen miles down the highway to get weight tickets on both the empty truck and the load.

This Arkansas Traveler saw, heard and felt most of those trucks, for I was in a tourist cottage beside the highway, trying to catch up with some writing. Every few minutes my typewriter was shaken to its question mark by a truck hurrying to get its weight recorded before it speeded on to Northern cities. Always I wished them luck, for I wanted my city friends to taste Hope melons while they were at their best.

In a long life of watermelon consumption, this consumer had never known that watermelons could be so good. The prize of my continuous one-woman-watermelon-eating-contest was a comparatively small affair, weighing a mere sixty pounds, and it was eaten as watermelon connoisseurs would approve—without benefit of plate, salt or fork.

The melon had been pulled from the vine in the cool of the morning and placed in the deep shade of two giant pine trees. There it had retained the natural chill of the night in every luscious drop. C. A. Coffee, who had grown it, selected it from a pile of 1,040 that had been picked at the same time for a truck arriving at noon from Indianapolis. He borrowed a stubby jackknife used by his tenant Jim Poole to cut chunks off a plug of tobacco, and cut the melon rind and its deep pink flesh as deep as the knife would penetrate. Then the melon was lifted a foot from the ground and dropped. It split open along the incision,

leaving a great red heart standing high on one side. Mr. Poole, who helped plant and tend the melons, does not like watermelon. That left only Mr. and Mrs. Coffee, their daughter, Colleen, and me to eat the sixty pounds.

We used the knife by turns to cut out great chunks of the heart, which we ate from our fingers. At first we bit directly from the chunk, letting the juice run down our chins. Then as thirst and hunger were partially satisfied, we held the big pieces in our left hands and broke off small bite-size portions of the cool, crisp melon with our rights. When we got to the portion containing the seeds, we were slowed down a bit, but time isn't important in Arkansas.

Each of the remaining 1,039 melons weighed from thirty to seventy pounds and represented a total of 38,000 pounds. Similar melons had ripened in the patch and gone on their way, and more were ripening on the vines. The forty-acre patch, all told, brought in something like \$5,000. At first thought, this might seem a big return for a crop requiring just ninety days for planting and maturing, but it is definitely earned.

Like all other farm crops watermelons must be planted in prepared ground, and plowing isn't fun, even in the dry sandy soil of the Hope area. The seeds must be planted exactly as cucumbers were planted in your Victory garden, in hills and by hand. Five seeds are planted to each hill, and the hills must be sixteen feet apart each way. When the plants come up, they must be thinned to one to a hill. From the moment the seeds are in the ground, the worry is on. If the ground is too wet, the seeds may rot. If it is too dry, they fail to sprout. Luckily, in most years the rainfall is adequate, and the vines grow like Jack's beanstalk. Tiny watermelons, each tipped with a blossom, begin to appear. Then the farmer and his helper must go through the field and straighten the vines into a neat row, leaving sixteen-foot roadways for the wagon and team which will collect the melons at harvesttime. When they are about as big as one's fist, the worry about the weather becomes acute. Does that cloud look as if it were bringing hail? The melons will be beaten from the vines. Of course more will grow, but the sec-

ond crop would be late for the early high prices. Does that cloud seem to be bringing wind? Then those long slender vines will be twisted over like tumbleweeds, and again the farmer must go through the rows and unwind them, once more laying them out neatly.

Don't forget the bugs! In Watermelonland, growers must fight the same little striped bugs that attack your cucumbers, squashes and gourds. In the Hope region they grow so strong and hardy that DDT is simply baby powder in their lives. Each watermelon farmer has his own dusting concoction for combating bugs, and he must work early and late to protect the vines.

As time goes on, the melons get larger, but the sun gets warmer, and another problem is created. When one part of the melon is exposed to the sun and another part is consistently shaded by the vine foliage, it grows out of shape. No one likes to buy it, and such melons, delicious and juicy as they are, become feed for the farmer's hogs.

A few years ago when war maneuvers were being carried on in the region of Hope, a group of boys, mainly from Brooklyn, came into a farmer's barnyard and saw a wagonload of melons waiting to be dumped to the hogs.

"What's wrong with them?" asked one of the boys.

"Just a little out of shape," replied the farmer. "Help yourself."

The way those boys helped themselves was the neighborhood wonder until the week when I demonstrated how watermelons should be eaten. Now they're probably still talking about me.

As the melons grow larger, thrusting great rounded sides above the foliage, they are in danger of becoming sunburned, which also creates loss. To offset this, the farmer goes through the field with a bucket of lime and water and whitewashes the top side of each big green melon. This gives a field of ripening melons a curious frosty look under the burning summer sun. Don't be deceived by that cool, frosty appearance.

When I stepped into the Coffee watermelon patch, I was reminded of the horseback rider who wondered that a horse stuffed with hay could be so hard. As I walked over it, dodging an occasional bull

nettle and looking for the snakes that love watermelon patches, I marveled that melons coming from such hot dry ground could be so lusciously juicy. I found that barefoot sandals are not the footgear for this exploration. The hot sand blistered the skin.

I learned other watermelon facts. I noted that each of the 1,040 melons piled up for the Indianapolis truck had a little stem. In Chicago, where I bought melons in and out of season, I never saw a stem on one. The Coffees enjoyed that bit of enlightening news. It proved that I had never eaten a really fresh melon in the city. If the stem is on the melon, it is proof that it has been picked from the vine within the previous twenty-four to thirty-six hours. Many truckers will accept melons only with stems. They have proof that the melon is getting a good early start toward market, even though the stem will probably have dried and fallen off by the time homemakers begin making selections. But please don't let the absence of a stem spoil your watermelon purchase. A melon is good long after the stem has disappeared.

When you buy a melon that has a hard, white core down the center, you have a right to complain. It indicates that the grower purchased seeds from melons grown in another climate. Mr. Coffee overcame this difficulty by planting new seed in a special patch. He saved all the seeds from the melons produced the first year for the second year's planting. They would become acclimated by that time, and fine melons would be produced.

Planting the right variety of melon is another problem of the Arkansas grower. The favorite at Hope is the Tom Watson, a long, dark green melon with gray seeds. It is preferred by hotels and restaurants, for it may be cut crosswise to make many round slices, or lengthwise to make impressively large portions. This was the variety mainly grown by Mr. Coffee, for many trucks bought nothing else. Other trucks, buying for retail stores, chose the Black Diamond, a round melon. This is the popular grocery-store variety, for customers can get half of one into a refrigerator. The Georgia Rattlesnake, a striped melon, is less popular, but I saw many in Hope stores, which speaks well for them, since local purchasers are usually pretty choosy

about local products. The Dixie Queen, another round melon, is also popular locally, and the Kleetex, despite its Texas origin, gets a good play. Kleetex is not a good shipper because of its thin rind, but the flavor is delicious.

Down in Arkansas they laugh about this business of thumping a melon to see if it is ripe. It isn't necessary. Growers can spot a green melon by its "bloom" or the moisture on its green coat. In certain circumstances, having to do with freshness and coolness, the thump test may be positively unreliable. In the patch, however, it works. A thump on a green melon produces a lively echoing sound. A thump on a ripe melon produces a dull, dead "plop."

If I had stayed in Hope to the end of the watermelon harvest, a well-placed thump on me undoubtedly would have produced the same sound.

What! No Pink Coats?

OVERHEAD a great silvery moon beamed down on us with what I'd swear was a cynical smirk. Myriads of stars twinkled as if enjoying a quiet little chuckle. Among great curves of wooded hills and velvety-black valleys we must have seemed like toy figures walking from car to car, crunching highway gravel under our feet. "Have you heard anything?" we whispered to one another.

Invariably the answer came back: "Only that one time!"

After a while we abandoned our parked cars and huddled together in the middle of the road, apparently believing that mass listening was more effective. Someone murmured a story about a man who went into a restaurant. He was interrupted at intervals by a sharply hissed *sh!* Someone else climbed into a car, took something from the glove compartment, and a long gurgle ended with a prolonged *Ah-h-h-h-h!* Another put a white handkerchief on a bush, then stood twenty feet away and shied rocks at it until it dropped into the dusty weeds. Somebody stopped in the middle of a yawn when a rustle sounded in the near-by bushes. All of us tensed, then relaxed. Someone whispered hoarsely, "I think we're at the wrong spot. Let's drive to the top of that next hill."

"I was expecting that," said the woman they called Minnie Lee. "I've been coming to these fox hunts for fifteen years and there's never anything to them. We stand around at one place for a while. Then someone says we're at the wrong point. So we drive on three or four miles and wait there. That turns out to be another wrong point. Then we go home. Who wants to go home now?"

"Aw, wait a minute, honey," said her husband, O. B. Robins, who had to be patient because he was President of the Fox Hunters Association which was holding its state meet. "It's too dry now for the dogs to pick up the scent. Wait till the dew begins to rise. Lord, what a night it would have been if we'd just had a little drizzle this afternoon!"

I listed that alibi along with those familiar ones of "sun in the eyes," "the cough of a caddy" and "the big one breaking the line." But this was different.

I knew very well why the eager fox hunters on Sugar Loaf Mountain had heard only one deep throated burr-uoop—and that a false alarm—although 178 hounds were ranging in the woods about us. Standing there in the moonlight on the gravel road, I was praying that all the little red and gray foxes would have sense enough to stay in their dens while the great, slobbering hounds were sniffing for their tracks. Of course, I knew that foxes eat chickens, and even ducks, turkeys and quail. I knew that among farm people they are considered on a par, socially, with a sheep-killing dog. In fact, I had even seen a fox trot along the ridge just beyond Mary Jones's chicken house with a big fat White Rock hen in his jaws. But I had also seen foxes trot jauntily across our own grassy pastures, pausing to give me a Hy-ya-Kid look over their shoulders before they melted into the shadows of the woods, and it hurt to think of them running for their lives.

At midnight heaven and I were still winning out, for not a scent had been picked up. And after I left in the predawn hours, the dogs brought only one small gray fox to an untimely end, and were led a merry chase by a wily red one.

Next year, when the annual fox hunt is again held at Heber Springs, they will probably post guards along the highways to keep me out of the county. I shall be sorry, for much as I hate fox hunting, I like fox hunters.

Now don't get the idea that hunters here in the hills wear bright red coats and leap their horses over tall hedges, yelling "Yoicks!" or whatever fox hunters yell in English novels. In Arkansas it is the

sport, not the trappings, that counts. A pink hunting coat, I imagine, would get only a loud snort of derision. When I first met one of Arkansas' greatest fox hunters, Mr. Yandell Moon, he was tastefully attired in an afternoon hunting costume consisting of blue hickory shirt and overalls to match, and had a wide-brimmed black felt hat pulled down at the right to keep the sun out of his eyes. On my second interview he had changed to evening togs by turning the hat down at the left to keep the moon out of his eyes. Others dressed for the hunt by adding a bulge to the right hip, although a few proved their rugged individualism and a slight tendency toward southpawism by putting the bulge on the left.

Mr. Moon is practically the only Arkansas hunter who goes fox hunting on horseback. He was telling of this when I edged into the group surrounding him in the beautiful little park of Heber Springs.

"... never missed starting a fox on that point. I liked to go up there along about midnight. I'd ride old Doc, and old Dolly would foiler, with a coffeepot tied onto a pack load of blankets. The hounds would trail along. Up at the point I'd spread down the blankets, start a fire under the coffeepot, and before it boiled, them hounds would start up a fox. I'd jis' lay there and drink coffee and listen to them hounds chasin' that fox—the sweetest music in the world."

Several reverently repeated, "Sweetest music in the world!"

It takes only a couple of hours in Heber Springs to convince the Arkansas Traveler that no sport has more ardent devotees than fox hunting. Baseball fans who quote scores and averages, golfers who plod on with rain beating in their faces, fishermen who risk drowning to beat unknown streams, ski eagles who make pretzels of their legs—all merely toy with chosen sports compared with the zeal of the lads who have taken up fox hunting.

Take J. D. Frazer, of Rosebud, Route 1, for example. Mr. Frazer had brought four of his registered hounds, Pat, Paul, Dan and Levi, to the hound show held that day in Heber Springs. All the hounds at the show were registered—the same quality of canine aristocracy you see at the smartest dog shows in Chicago and New York—and no

hound owner worthy of the name would be caught dead with just one dog. He had to have five, ten, twenty or thirty to be really in the running, and registered hounds were worth anywhere from fifty dollars to a hundred and fifty.

When I met Mr. Frazer, he was rushing his four hounds home to get supper before they joined the chase on Sugar Loaf Mountain. Now don't imagine that he and his fine dogs were riding in regal isolation. With them in the back end of the straw-padded truck were a half-dozen or more fox hunters and perhaps thirty dogs, all getting along with the chummy friendliness of a Sunday-school picnic. The men were laughing and joking, and the dogs were amiably nosing out good places to lie down as if they knew a hard night was ahead of them. Some of the best hunters of the region were in that truck—such men as Porter Parrish, who had brought Crip and Peggy Ann; R. R. Parrish, with Dinah, Joe and Jack; Dewey West, of Drasco, with Hunch, Chuck, Belle and Big Mamma.

I asked Mr. Frazer if he had rehearsed his hounds for the night's chase. He just grinned. "I reckon you might say that," he said. "I go hunting twice a week the year around. Tuesdays and Saturdays."

The year around! I protested over the large number of baby foxes that might be left motherless with such unrestricted pursuit.

"Nature takes care of that," said Mr. West. "Mother foxes stay close to their dens. You just catch old dog foxes in the bearing season."

The truck started up and the men apologized for their hurry. Men and dogs had to have supper.

Supper! I thought of the trouble we have had getting meat for our Boston terrier Judy. What did one feed such big dogs? I hunted up Mr. Moon to ask. He had the answer.

"Mainly corn bread and cracklin's. That so?" He turned to the group about him for corroboration.

All heads nodded gravely. They should know! The proud owner of Merry and Loud, Henry Heffington, had been a fox hunter for forty years, L. R. Plummer had a thirty-five-year hunting record, and Doc Prescott was another old-timer who felt that eighteen hounds were no

more than a fellow needed if he were going into fox hunting in a serious way.

All these, and every other man whose hounds would join in the chase that night, carried a hunting horn slung to his belt or galluses or projecting from a rear pocket. Most of them were steer horns, beautifully polished, and with a great variety of mouthpieces. I put one of them to my lips and tried to blow it as one blows a New Year's horn. Not even a squeak came out. It is a real trick to blow a hunter's horn. Perhaps the variety of sounds which the owners produce accounts for the fact that each hound recognizes his master's call. The horns are not blown to urge the dogs on, or to cause them to swing right or left, as I had imagined, but to bring them in after the chase.

Mr. Moon deplored the fact that he was unable to blow his horn. Only a few days before a big old veal calf had kicked out the tooth that had given him a peculiar whistling sound.

Mr. Robbins was in a similar predicament. "I can't blow my horn without my teeth, but my teeth hurt me, so I left 'em at home!"

"Too bad you missed the hound show," someone said to me, as we sat out the twilight in the park, waiting for the signal that would send us up to Sugar Loaf Mountain where the chase would start. "Prettiest sight you ever laid eyes on," he continued. "One hundred and ten hounds bein' walked around in a big ring. Most of 'em have been taken home now, to get ready for the chase."

Enough of the long-eared, sad-eyed dogs remained to give me a good idea of the show. Apparently each owner had chosen a tree in the park and simply arranged his "bench" by tying the dogs to the trunk. Some of the dogs lay sleeping, as they waited for the chase. One pair rubbed noses with a tiny gray kitten. A cluster told off a Boston terrier with what was meant to be paralyzing effect, but the terrier simply backed off beyond the length of the hounds' ropes and returned threat for threat.

I walked about among Jesse Carter's fine dogs, Rose and Hattie, and the unconcerned prize winners, Tebo Carter's Ginger and Little Fetch, Buffon Darner's Snowball, and Screamer, the top-honor dog belonging

to Dr. S. F. Button. Dr. Button's fox-hunting career began when he was ten years old, and at seventy he was one of the most enthusiastic hunters at the meet.

"Beautiful dogs," I said to my friend, Mr. Moon, when I returned to the park bench.

He spat at a lonely brown-eyed Susan fifteen feet away, catching her neatly in the eye. Then he spoke. "Yeah! But it takes more'n points to run a fox!" He settled back on the bench. "Take one of these bench-show prize winners out in the woods and sometimes a little ol' potlicker can outrun him."

The doggy conversation, once begun, ran on until darkness fell. Mr. Moon's companions argued that a registered pup has more chances of being a "good dog" than one that is just dawg. They seemed to win the argument. For a time the conversation veered to dogs that will track deer. I gathered that the consensus settled on a dog described as "half ol' long-eared potlicker with a little Walker to put pep into him." Such a dog would, they said, bring a deer up slow, so the hunter who was sitting on a log under a tree would have a chance to bring his sights to bear on the deer and then shoot him.

When they spoke of a little Walker, I inquired if they meant a snort of Johnny. Patiently they explained that hounds are of two varieties, Walker and Trigg. Walkers are sturdy fellows with dark coloring, black and brown in a variety of intermingled spottings. Triggs are white, with brown spots, like Dr. Button's Screamer.

I showed my ignorance by piping up with my opinion, which, as usual, was wrong. "I should think you would all raise white hounds. They are so much easier to see in the darkness." I was basing my conclusion on the fact that I always look for my Judy's white face when we take our bedtime walk.

The fox hunters looked at me with the same pitying expression my father wore when as a child I announced that I could see no reason for putting kerosene into the lantern. Why not just keep turning up the wick?

"Walkers and Triggs are both good dogs," said one of the hunters. "But a white hound, now, he has disadvantages."

Another member of the group explained. "Sometimes a hound runs a fox five, ten or even twenty miles. Then he has to make his way back home. Well, that's a long way for a hound to come alone. Folks along the way don't know he's somebody's good dog. A farmer sees him moseyin' along home, all t'ared and footsore. He don't think that he's jis' a hound goin' home. He thinks he's goin' to suck eggs, maybe. So he says, 'Look at that wuthless ol' hound,' and grabs his gun. Many a good hound has been killed that way! Take a dark-colored hound, a farmer can't see him so easy."

The group sat in silence for a long moment, mute with sad memories. I had a feeling they were mentally facing east, in tribute to the good dogs who had lost their lives while making their lonely way home.

Then the stories started again.

"Once when my dogs was chasin' a gray fox . . ." began a member of the group.

I listened to the end of the story. Then I asked my question: "How in the name of goodness could a man sitting on a log in total darkness know that his dogs were running a gray fox? Mightn't it be a red one?"

Again Mr. Moon aided my education. A gray fox, I learned, runs in short circles, rabbit-dodging over logs and around bushes to elude the hounds. A red fox runs in a wide circle. Then after a while he suddenly takes out in a straight line and is off like an arrow, leaving a trail of diminishing music wafting back over the hills to the listening hunter.

"Does the fox ever get away?" I asked. Then I added: "I hope!"

"Lots of times," said Mr. Moon, and I fancied there was a sheepish note in his voice. "The dogs never catch up with him. If he sees them closing in, he makes one last desperate effort to escape. He opens his mouth wide, gives a sort of cry and runs right back toward the dogs. Maybe it's just a bluff. Most of the times it's just suicide. We can hear it. Then we'll say, 'It's all over. I heard him squallin'.' Once, though,"

he added, "I saw a fox run right through a bunch of hounds and get away."

I sighed with relief. Perhaps heaven can be trusted to take care of little foxes when I am not around.

Heber Springs, seat of Cleburne County, is one of the busiest little towns in middle Arkansas. It is not a large town—something under 2,000—but its two banks have combined assets of nearly \$5,000,000. In the northeast part of the county diversified farming has been developed to a high degree. A couple of years ago the businessmen looked up to Rogers and Springdale where farmers were making a killing with broilers and said, "Why can't our farmers do that?"

While they were still talking about it, O. B. Robbins went to Rogers and learned that little chicks need only food and shelter to make them grow into big healthy broilers for which city people gladly pay hard cash. He came back with a bright idea. He would furnish the feed if the farmers would supply the little chicks and the shelter. They could pay him at broiler time. He would see that buyers came right into Heber Springs and picked up the long-legged chickens.

Of course, Mr. Robbins was the one who could do this! The old saying, "If you want anything done, get a busy person to do it," holds good in Arkansas as nowhere else. At that time he was president of one of the two Heber Springs banks, as well as Ford dealer, lumberyard owner and manager and real-estate man. He was also president of the Arkansas Fox Hunters' Association, was engaged in building a laundry which he planned to operate, and had recently become owner of a church, which he didn't expect to operate.

It was quite easy for him to add a feed store to his other enterprises. This brought \$100,000 worth of business into the county, for the vicinity of Heber Springs was found to be a naturally advantageous location for raising healthy chickens. Farmers found they could raise 1,000 to 3,000 broilers with modest equipment. In a couple of years buyers were taking 600,000 broilers out of the country annually. That meant better

cookstoves and new oilcloth for the dining-room tables in farm homes. It meant new cars and new blue jeans for the farmer, and ice-cream cones all around when the family came to town on Saturdays.

(Note: *Just a few days after I wrote this chapter local papers brought the sad news that O. B. Robbins had suddenly passed away. I'm sure a brightly starred crown was waiting for him!*)

The biggest pay rolls are furnished by the fifty sawmills in Cleburne County.

"We thought the timber was all gone years ago," said one of Heber Springs citizens. "But now the industry is getting more for little slim poles than they used to get for virgin pines!"

All the timber is sold on the out-of-town market. It is not even dried in Cleburne County.

The Arkansas Traveler who is headed for Heber Springs really has to fight his way there. Just make mention of Heber Springs along the highway and everyone will tell you, "Awful rough road over there. Don't know if you can git through."

This is a gross libel on the gravel road that leads from Clinton to Heber Springs. True, the road has a bit of washboard action to it now and then, and it swings along the sides of steep hills, but I've seen far worse. The suspension bridges one crosses would be worth the trip. They are long and springy, and even though they are the one-way variety, which terrorizes me—I'm always afraid of a drunken fool barging onto the bridge from the opposite end—they are an interesting diversion on a long ride. The county would like to trade them in for the stout, staid variety. Seems that suspension bridges have such play in them the flooring is soon worn out. It costs money to replace it.

The springs which give Heber Springs part of its name are said to be among the best health waters in the state. I met a woman at the hotel across the street from the park, who said she had been at death's door when she came to Heber Springs. After drinking the water three weeks she felt like a new woman. She had acquired a boy friend aged seventy-one, a farmer from a near-by valley, and on his next trip to town they were going to climb to the top of Sugar Loaf Mountain.

It may be assumed that the boy friend had been drinking the water all his life.

I am always a bit reluctant to emphasize the healthful qualities of spring water, for I would hate to arouse false hopes in the hearts of sufferers. But at any springs with a reputation you will find people who swear on the Bible that they have been cured or relieved. When I hear them, I always think of Tom Shiras' observation that the illness of many folks is just due to the fact that they are dehydrated. Getting such people to drink an abundance of *any kind* of water might bring relief.

At Heber Springs seven springs are in the city park. These include red, white and black sulphurs, iron, arsenic and alum. Enthusiastic drinkers will tell you they are good for everything from sore eyes to stomach trouble and rheumatism. One spring is even supposed to help headaches. Not having any of the ailments, I went around to several and drank long and earnestly. They all tasted terrible.

The fact that the local people go for this spring water in a big way leads me to believe that my lack of enthusiasm is probably all wrong. Every man, woman and child who came into the Heber Springs park carried a jug, quart jar, tumbler or dipper. The jugs were used, of course, to carry a supply home. One man had a gourd dipper hitched to the galluses of his overalls. Such local patronage is the best advertising that could be given to the springs.

Whether or not such faith is justified, a visit to Heber Springs would be good for whatever ails you. Just to sit in the beautiful park, with its big trees and comfortable benches, warmed by Arkansas sunshine or cooled by Arkansas shade, should be soothing to mind and body. If you want to talk, you will find the town full of friendly people who will converse with you on any subject. If you want to be quiet, you can pull your hat down over your eyes or bury your nose in a book, and no one will disturb you. Two hotels stand face to face on the street that leads to the park. I chose the one that was obviously older and less commercial, and had no regrets. I soon learned that good cold drinking

water was kept in the refrigerator in the dining room which was next door to my bedroom.

When I was thirsty, I simply helped myself, like everybody else. Late in the evening a big watermelon was put into the refrigerator. The next morning, about ten, the melon was cut for whatever guests happened to be hanging around, and for those who were lucky enough to drop in. For meals we went to a restaurant on the main street where we ate fried chicken and country gravy, with hot biscuits.

Shucks! Why would anyone need to drink "health water" with all that?

Smart People, These Arkansans!

THROUGHOUT Arkansas the love of music rates equally with the love of fishing and hunting. It is not at all uncommon to see a tall, broad-shouldered young fellow walking along a busy highway strumming a guitar slung around his neck. He is on his way, more than likely, to a party, or a "sing" at a church, and is doing a little practicing as he walks along. It is typical of Arkansas independence that he pays no attention to the cars whizzing by. After all, the busy highway is just another "newcomer" in his estimation. Long before gaping tourists began cluttering up the hills and valleys of Arkansas, his people were there, working a little, eating well, drinking a bit of homemade likker, and enjoying the music of Grandpappy's fiddle. Even the younger generation of fiddlers still reflect the playing of some old-timer of their family or neighborhood.

When young William C. Hacker, brilliant New York pianist who studied under Iturbi, came to the University of Arkansas a few years ago to teach piano and to form a symphony orchestra, he found the Arkansas attitude toward music expressed quite clearly in two ways. The youngsters were eager to study the music of the masters, and many of them had amazing talent, but the financial appropriation for the new venture was exactly \$30. How Bill formed a symphony orchestra and gave concerts with borrowed instruments would make a book in itself! Somehow it was accomplished, and the concerts were good not only in an auditory sense but visually as well. Slim girls in evening dress sat beside plump boys in tweed suits and the familiar college sweater. The

boys ranged from blue serge to loud plaid sports jackets. Two of them chewed gum as they whammed the timpani. I commented on that gum chewing the next time I saw Bill.

"But did you notice that they chewed in rhythm?" asked Mr. Hacker proudly.

Perhaps that tolerant attitude toward his musicians was one reason why Bill could achieve such splendid success with his newborn orchestra. When a young fiddler who formerly clutched his violin to his chest showed the first symptoms of developing a more conventional hold on the instrument, Bill was the first to congratulate him. If the lad failed to develop that first symptom, Bill had a way of tactfully easing him to another instrument, such as the French horn or the 'cello, and giving him the right start from the first note.

The young leader found it possible also to develop symphony societies throughout Arkansas. Through the efforts of these societies tickets to his concerts were sold well in advance, and the "ticket money" enabled the budding orchestra to travel to many towns. It was good practice for the kids, and it enabled music lovers to ease the pangs of music starvation with something other than folk songs. Of course, each concert was sweetened by the presence of professional musicians from near-by cities, who generously devoted time and talent to the cause.

Behind the scenes each concert became a saga of improvisation and making-do! For instance, one engagement found the orchestra without a 'cellist. That was an impossible situation. Bill looked at his blond wife, Norma, and the young man who helped carry the borrowed instruments into the concert hall.

"You two will play 'cellos for tomorrow's concert!" he said.

Neither had ever touched a 'cello, except to move it from place to place, but at the concert they played. And well! Throughout the night the three young people sat with the concert orchestrations that would be played next day, painstakingly changing 'cello notes to combinations of figures such as 1-3, 2-4 and such. The first figure of each combination gave the fret, the second the string, enabling the player to sound the right note without knowing a thing about music.

Now the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra has become an established part of the state's musical life. An annual Music Workshop is held at Eureka Springs each summer, with talented young people coming from all over the state to engage in an almost continuous round of rehearsals for two weeks. During that time the works of Beethoven, Tschai-kovsky and Mozart take an awful beating, but at the end of the session two concerts of extremely high quality are given to the public.

When the concerts are over, the kids linger on the stage, gathering about the bull fiddle for a jam session. Because these young people are Arkansans, the music drifts gently from concert stuff to popular airs, then to a bit of boogie-woogie, and at last simmers gently to a good old tune that has floated on the Arkansas air through generations: "Turkey in the Straw."

I do not deny that many travelers find Arkansas folk "jist a-settin'" but I wonder if they notice how those complacent people are often engaged in a bit of handwork that would baffle a person with a roomful of tools. For instance, there is a man who carves canes for our craft cabin, the old barn which Vera Becker, Ruth Webb, former school-teachers, and I have rigged up as a market place for handcraft. He takes small, out-dated Christmas trees, whittles off the branches and carves the heavy end of the trunk into a quaint figure or a head with characterful eyes and mouth. One day a tourist stood in the cabin spouting some poetry he had written, and Vera silently handed me one of the canes our whittler had just brought in. I glanced down at it, then stared in fascination. By coincidence the cane had been carved into a face exactly like that of the men who recited before me!

Sometimes our whittler finds branches that have a sharp curve at the heavy end. These make fine dog heads, an excellent handle for a good walking cane. The shape of the curve, of course, determines the type of dog, and the whittler brings them out to perfection, with brass tacks for eyes. Once I saw him seize on a fallen branch as though he had found his personal pot of gold.

"That will make a fine cane with a bulldog head," he said.

To me it was just a branch torn from a tree by a recent storm.

Carved doll heads, dogs, candlesticks and other interesting gadgets come from fingers that have had nothing with which to work except a jackknife and imagination. Given a few more tools, primitive as those known to the earliest pioneers, they contrive baskets of delightful sturdiness, chairs that last a lifetime, tables, benches or chests. Not with speed, of course, but in a fairly steady flow. Usually the surroundings in which these excellent pieces are made bring a gasp from the woodworker who has what is modestly known as a home workshop. Dirt floors, sagging doors, if any, and piles of shavings around a stove that is red-hot in winter or tobacco-spotted in summer, feature most of the workshops of Arkansas. But the products of one of those little shops may be treasures for generations to come.

Anyone who has ever seen the quilts hanging on washday clotheslines in Arkansas could never doubt that women, too, know their handiwork. It must be remembered that what you see on the lines are the "usin'" quilts. If you could persuade a housewife to let you come in and go through some big old chest or old-fashioned wooden cupboard in her home, you would find the choice ones which she considers too good for common use. They are being saved for the day when someone has a new baby or is so ill a doctor must be called in and neighbors volunteer to sit up with the sick one. Sometimes they are just saved—period! Occasionally a choice quilt may be purchased, but mainly the maker clings to each one with the same fervor with which she would cling to a child being wrested from her grasp. Each quilt is indeed a brain child, produced with labor and suffering. If you doubt it, just try sewing by the light of a kerosene lamp when you have hoed all day in a garden on a slanting hillside, and cooked three meals over an old wood-burning cookstove, after you have chopped the wood needed for cooking.

Other nimble fingers produce dolls so quaint and amusing in character that they become treasured souvenirs long after a tourist has returned to her city home. One peculiarity of the makers is outstanding. Each woman manages to turn out dolls that resemble herself. One woman deep in the hills below our home makes long, lean, slightly stooped

figures just like her own. She likes to dress them in the same sort of clothes she wears, and often she makes them carrying a sack of flour, a sack of quilt pieces or a good-sized baby in a long white dress. Her best production, however, is an old grandma, with her knitting or a pipe, wearing the black bonnet, apron and calico dresses commonly seen on old grannies of the hills. The doll maker also makes the chairs on which the grandmas sit, and these are as truly folk art as the dolls. Each is made from cornstalks, matches and bits of string.

At Christmastime last year she surprised me with three Santa Clauses in the traditional red and white. There tradition ended. Each Santa was long, lean and lanky.

This woman lives on a farm and tends their garden, always "the woman's job." Each year she raises several hundred baby chicks to become meat for the family, or layers. She has five children of her own, the youngest three years old, and she cares also for three grandchildren. Her dolls, like many quilts, are made at night by lamplight. Sometimes I have to call her attention to seams that are not quite straight, and she anxiously promises to do better. With her doll money she is making payments on a bright-blue velours davenport and chair, the first "new boughten" furniture she has ever owned.

Another type of doll is made by a tiny, black-eyed woman, whose fingers can contrive something out of nothing with more speed than one should ever expect of an Ozarkian. Characteristically her dolls are tiny and neat and have tip-tilted noses, although they are made entirely of cloth.

For several years many women of the hills have been making dolls with hickory-nut heads. About eighty or ninety years ago some pioneer mother made a toy for her small daughter by sewing a hickory nut firmly in a little white bonnet and attaching it to a small rag body dressed in old-fashioned, voluminous petticoats and dress. Unknowingly she started a popular tourist item. Somehow the doll survived the years and at last came to rest in Maude Henderson's exquisite Albert Pike Museum, in the Boston Mountains of Arkansas. One day a neighbor asked Mrs. Henderson to suggest a kind of doll to attract the

tourists that came in after a new highway was built. The little doll with the hickory-nut head was brought out. From that tiny hint the neighbors developed a doll with a rigid body and hickory nut head wearing the sunbonnet, apron and print dress of a hill woman. More and more women have taken up making these dolls, and I doubt if many tourists go home without one.

For our craft cabin, we specialize in hickory-nut dolls made by a woman who actually tailors clothes to fit the small bodies. Garments are cut by pattern, even though she makes thousands of little coats, sunbonnets or aprons in the course of a year. The difference of an eighth of an inch might cause an unwieldy bunching in a tiny sleeve! The buttons are French knots.

All this sewing is done after nuts have been gathered for the heads, and attached to bodies jigsawed from the ends of orange crates. Not just any hickory nut will do for a doll head. It must be a symmetrical nut with a long, pointed stem end that will suffice as a nose. Eyes and mouth are painted on the nut.

The Harry Webb factory in Eureka Springs now employs thirty men who slice black walnuts with sharp cutting saws, then dry and varnish the slices. Girls and women then weave them on leather thongs, making belts and costume jewelry. Ten-cent stores all over the country now sell this popular item which started as a simple hand-craft idea.

A picture made of seeds may sound unbelievable, but we have them. Each year hundreds of tourists carry away "seed pictures" as mementos. You should see the wispy little grandmother who makes them! She sits down before a small desk where little glass jars of seeds occupy each cubbyhole. She spreads glue over a square of black sandpaper. Then with a pointed stick the little picturemaker spears one tiny seed after another, and places them on the sandpaper in the exact position they should occupy. When she has finished, she has a picture of a bouquet of flowers, with each petal a seed in its natural color. Striped sunflower seed, shining weed seeds, Indian corn, scarlet magnolia seeds, golden split peas, wheat and a hundred other kinds are used to make her pic-

tures. A list of the seeds used for pictures is pasted on the back. Then she puts a check mark after each actually used in that particular picture.

I have yet to see anyone who could identify all the seeds checked. But then few of us have given to seeds of garden, highway and woods the study this little gray-haired woman has given. Each year she raises a big garden, just to get the seeds she will need for her pictures. And each year she collects pounds and pounds from woods and roadside. Sometimes this brings heartbreak. Once she walked two miles in the hot sunshine of a broiling summer day to gather a particularly fascinating weed seed. When she reached home, she noticed that a border of the weeds had grown up along her garden and there were all the seeds she could use ready for picking.

Seeds for pictures must be gathered when they are in full color. They must not be allowed to stay on the plant until they are hard and black, in the pale ivory or delicate milky stage they are far more artistic as petals for picture flowers.

Hand weaving is another craft that comes naturally to Arkansas girls. In many homes one can still find the looms on which rugs and beautiful coverlets were once woven. At the School of the Ozarks, located nine miles from the Arkansas line, with the post-office address of Point Lookout, Missouri, I have seen the finest weaving known to the hills. It had been done by students at this school where tuition, board, dormitory and even clothes are paid for with work. In the summer students can stay at the school, picking beans or tomatoes in the school fields or working in the canning factory to pay for their tuition. During the school year they must work sixteen hours each week in factory, weaving room or dining room, or at clean-up jobs or construction work, in addition to carrying a full-time schedule of high-school studies. Girls learn to cook in the school kitchen and boys learn to become good dairymen by working with the herd of registered Jerseys provided for the school by its good friend, Wilk Hyer.

Only boys and girls who live so far back in the hills or in other circumstances that might prevent them from acquiring a high-school edu-

cation are permitted to attend this school. Money is no consideration. Often the students arrive without a change of clothes. That is no disgrace. A room filled with garments donated by former students and friends of the school is opened to them, and each garment is plainly marked with its price, not in terms of money, but in hours of work. A tweed coat may be four hours of work, a new pair of shoes may be two hours, so that the student who chooses the coat and the shoes will not feel that he is wearing charity garments. He has bought and paid for them!

The school is financed by donations—and prayer! Robert M. Good, the president, is a firm believer in good coming to those who deserve it, and somehow donations miraculously appear just when his need is greatest. As proof that the boys and girls deserve the good that comes to them, not one of the students who have gone out of the school in its thirty years of existence has ever been in serious trouble. One of them is now our county judge.

Boys and girls eat together at tables for eight in the big dining room. Along with their high-school studies and their farming, cooking and sewing, they are learning social manners. Boys are taught to hold chairs for the girls, to pass the bread and hold the gravy bowl while the girls help themselves.

"That little courtesy may not mean much to this generation," said a fifteen-year-old girl who was working out her third-year tuition, "but the next generation will be a lot better."

Hurrah for Arkansas!

ARKANSAS is "plumb sick and t'ared" of being the nation's Cinderella. No longer is she willing to sit back in the chimney corner while her sister states cavort in mink and pearls. Somehow, she has found that a lot of the mink-and-pearl glamour came out of Arkansas in the first place. Now she has decided she won't stop with trapping the mink or digging the pearls out of mussel shells! She has learned that if she does some of the polishing and curing, she stands a better chance of getting invited to big parties, like the other girls.

Seriously, Arkansas is experiencing a great revival in all the economic factors affecting her welfare. Since 1944, she has been fortunate in having a businessman for governor, and with Ben Laney at the head of state affairs for two years more even greater progress is anticipated. At the latest General Assembly, the Resources and Development Commission was created, with Colonel Hendrix Lackey as director. Through this commission all the state agencies interested either in the conservation or development of our resources are consolidated. Heretofore, all the state agencies—Agriculture and Industry, Forestry and Parks, Geology, Flood Control, Water and Soil Conservation, Planning and Publicity—had carried on independently of one another. Under the new commission a saving in appropriations will undoubtedly result and very likely time and effort will be saved by co-ordinated development of projects. It is the commission's sworn objective to pro-

mote conservation of our resources and to lead an organized effort on the part of our citizens to improve our economic position as a state.

Arkansas is humming with activity. In 1946, 700 new industries came into the state, increasing the employment of our workers by 20,000 to 25,000 people. Fortunately they are about as depression-proof as industries can be! Most of them are small and diversified, and are therefore less liable to suffer in hard times than big business. A state with a wealth of small businesses can weather a financial storm better than one whose eggs are all in one basket. Many of these new businesses utilize raw products from the farms. Comes a depression, the farms will still be there producing raw materials, the industrial plants will still be there waiting to process them, and people will still be eating. In addition, most of the businesses utilize the state's minerals, oil and timber, and do not have to rely on outside resources.

It must be remembered that the 25,000 workers who will have jobs in these enterprises represent only a small portion of the population who will benefit financially from them. For every new worker who enters a paid position, two service jobs are created. Another factor to consider is that fresh markets are provided for products already being grown or manufactured. Add these together, and you can see that, from the standpoint of labor and income, Arkansas is indeed going places.

With all this emphasis on industry, the Resources and Development Commission has not lost sight of the fact that fifty-seven percent of Arkansas' population is engaged in agriculture. Conservation of soil, high production, better farming practices, labor-saving machinery, all get their share of the limelight in every meeting. Not an angle of improvement is overlooked.

As an example, consider the sweet potato. The time has come, says the commission, when Arkansas sweet potatoes must occupy a more prominent position than merely costarring with baked ham. Someone discovered recently that sweet potatoes are an excellent stock feed. I could have told them that long ago! Back in the days when I could

write chapters of books only on successive week ends, because I had a full-time advertising copy-writing job, the problem of food was no small item. It was too much bother to go out to eat, or even to stop writing and cook. Sweet potatoes saved the day. On Friday night I would boil a kettle of sweet potatoes. Then on Saturday and Sunday whenever I felt hungry I would simply go to the kettle, fish out a cold sweet potato and eat it out of hand. No fuss, no bother, no dishes to wash! However, I always wondered why I gained instead of lost weight during one of those trying authoring periods. *Now* they tell me three bushels of sweet-potato meal are equivalent to one bushel of corn in food value!

Here in Arkansas a farmer can raise 600 bushels of sweet potatoes on an acre of land where he would be hard put to raise fifteen bushels of corn. Therefore, instead of trying to farm large acreage in order to produce sufficient corn to feed his livestock, he can farm a few acres of sweet potatoes. The sweet potatoes can be ground into meal to feed his stock, and the land not needed for cultivation can be put into pasture. Many sweet-potato dehydrating plants are being established and many more are scheduled for early opening.

Although sweet potatoes require considerable effort in cultivation, the commission believes farmers will be glad to switch to them when they realize what can be accomplished with sweet-potato meal.

Many farmers are already producing specialized crops such as cucumbers of particular varieties and certain kinds of tomatoes which are sold to near-by processing factories.

In some regions farmers have turned to strawberries for their money crop, and the building of lockers in every town of any importance will undoubtedly lead to bigger and better fields. Arkansas strawberries are rich, juicy, tempting morsels of deliciousness. I have seen some of the finest grown on a rocky old sidehill that looked as though it couldn't produce a first-class weed.

For many years strawberries of high quality have been grown in the vicinity of Bald Knob and Searcy. At the time the Jedge's jam and

jelly factory was in operation, before it became a war casualty, we had our entire supply of strawberries trucked 200 miles from Bald Knob. In Maine, New York, California, Florida and all states else people ate jam made from Arkansas strawberries and are still writing for more.

The blackberry business near Mena and De Queen is another instance of agricultural switch-over with profitable results. The commission is already "pointing with pride" to the business done there both in tame and wild blackberries and raspberries.

As for the good old Popeye pepper-upper, spinach, Arkansas is making California look to its laurels and its crops. We can raise two crops of spinach a year. In fact, so much business has developed in canning beans and spinach in Arkansas that the American Can Company found it necessary to put in a new factory at Fort Smith. In earlier years the center of the canning industry for this region was at Springfield, Missouri. Now it has moved so far into Arkansas that a new factory had to be provided to supply tin cans to processors.

Besides working out new ways of using raw products, the Resources and Development Commission is seeking new methods for salvaging waste. For instance, the straw and hulls left over after Arkansas rice has been milled will no longer go to waste. Now it is known that rice straw makes a particularly good boxboard, while the hulls, believe it or not, make an excellent abrasive for grinding out airplane cylinders.

In the timber country it is definitely out of style to take a hunk of the trunk and leave the rest of the tree to rot on the ground. Now even the twigs are boiled, ground, dried, pulverized and what not to make wood smoke for curing meats and other important, if less amazing products. The sawdust which formerly went to waste in lumber and stave mills is being made into a wood flour that eventually finds its way into plastics. One plant in Arkansas formerly used a great quantity of wheat flour in the manufacture of veneer. When wood flour was suggested and tried, it was found to be more satisfactory. In this in-

stance, as in many others, an Arkansas by-product was put to use, and a product was released for a more important original purpose.

The utility of cotton seeds, once discarded, is a sample of the way in which by-products are given new rating. All through Arkansas one passes cotton-oil mills spreading their fragrance for a mile down the highway. They recall the appetizing aroma of peanuts being roasted in the park on Sunday afternoon.

Cotton is suffering no pangs of jealousy because of any threatened rivalry from rayon, nylon and other synthetic fabrics. As industry develops new needs, new uses are found for cotton, and Arkansas' great crop becomes more important to the world at large than ever before. In 1945 the state produced \$145,000,000 worth of cotton, ranked third in production and second in yield per acre. In 1946 crop estimates rate Arkansas second in production, with Texas as a not-so-far-ahead first.

With the advent of the cotton picker, flame cultivator and cotton chopper, all operated mechanically, the greatest handicap in the South's production, expensive hand labor, will be cut considerably. It will be picked faster, but will probably bring a lower price. However, much of this loss of price may be offset by the fact that cotton can be picked before winter rains come. The damage done by bad weather when the picking is dragged out over a long period is enough to discourage the most optimistic growers. I have seen women in the cotton districts of Arkansas tramping in dust almost ankle-deep, and praying that it *wouldn't* rain. In the hills a flick of dust sends us out to the mountain-top anxiously scanning the clouds for one that looks ready to give with the raindrops!

Labor thrown out of employment by the mechanical cotton devices will mean headache for the Resources and Development Commission. But they do not seem to be losing sleep over it. Members of the commission have told me that the change from hand labor to mechanized will come about so gradually that the problem may be solved as it arises. I have come to believe that nobody ever really liked to pick

cotton. More than likely all the songs about cotton picking and all the stage scenes in which colored pickers suddenly drop their bags and break into a buck-and-wing dance were written by Northerners who never knew what it meant to drag a sack all day. The fact that Southern Negroes arose as one man to buy paper suitcases and bus tickets and light out for war jobs makes the lure of cotton picking rather dim. In the future industrialists who dangle well-paid and less tiring factory jobs before pickers' eyes will see those sad sacks speedily dropped in the Land of Cotton. On the other hand, even with mechanized cotton there will always be a certain number of jobs for those who prefer the fields, and those who wish to stay on the land may save up money and buy a little patch of their own. It has been done, heaven knows, even on cotton-picking wages and share cropping!

It is hoped that more and more of our Arkansas cotton will be put into cloth right here at home. In all the state I know of only one cloth mill. It is a good one, at Monticello. At the time I visited it, it was busy on plain dull cloth ordered by the Federal government, but back in a corner I found ends of cloth of delightful texture and weave, the product of earlier days. To go on to printing patterns on that cloth is a simple step. Then cloth for our dresses and sunbonnets would be made in Arkansas.

A few industries devoted to making cloth into work clothes and other items of wearing apparel are in the South now, and many more could be accommodated. A company planning to establish a factory in the pretty little town of Mena made a survey of the workers it might expect. Three hundred women promptly signed up—an example of the speed with which industries may be put into districts previously rural.

Some communities have organized their own new industries, basing them on products already produced in the region. For instance, the neighborhood of Malvern produced a great amount of milk, livestock and poultry. The local businessmen decided to start their bigger and better developments with these products, rather than try to bring in outside interests. The plan worked beyond all expectations.

Malvern has a pasteurization plant second to none. Its locker building is one of the finest in the state, with facilities for dressing chickens and cutting up the meat. Now it is planning a slaughterhouse which will dress the farmers' beef cattle and hogs. This will undoubtedly have the same success as the other two ventures, for Malvern seems to get things done. In financing the locker plant no one was allowed to put in more than \$5,000. As a result, over 200 local people are interested, and if you think that doesn't make things hum, just look at any business in which local capital is invested—particularly Arkansas capital.

At Lonoke a dairy has been established, and from that little community a total of \$2,500 worth of milk is shipped daily to Little Rock. The local businessmen offered prizes for the development of pastures, and a well-paying business has resulted. Thoroughbred cattle are seen everywhere in Arkansas now. And even the pigs are plump and round! Only on back-country roads does one see the once-common razorback hog with his gaunt sides, bony ridge, long snout and belligerent expression.

In the old days who would have thought of associating technology with Arkansas? Now, new ways of using old products and old ways of using new products are contributing largely to the awakening of this Sleeping Beauty state. Some day our minerals and ores may be as important as the surface of the ground is now. The eyes of the nation are frequently turning toward our billion tons of coal. Although the cost of coal production is considerably higher than in some of the other states, we are still far ahead of the British Isles in yield per man per day. The coking qualities of Arkansas coal are being studied—and you could have knocked me over with a feather when I heard what else was given serious consideration in connection with it. Butter! Butter made from coal is said to be superior to other substitutes.

"Quick, Johnnie, run out to the North Forty and dig up a pound of butter. The kinfolks will be here any minute!"

What is the world coming to?

Arkansas' rivers are receiving a great deal of attention. Dams to

control flood conditions are being constructed, and while two schools of thought seem to exist, the long view points to consistent usefulness and practicability. Deeper channels are being dug in some rivers, to allow bigger boats to make trips far along the valleys. This will ease the burden on railroads, which are not, I regret to admit, what they might be in Arkansas. Perhaps river traffic can help keep our products moving until we can achieve the roads we need.

Of course, the state has not reached the ideal. But you can see we are working toward it. We're in debt but, thanks to wise leadership, we are getting out of the hole. Our highways are admittedly insufficient, but give us time! Remember many parts are so rugged that the advent of the automobile made little stir here, while other states were putting hard surfaces on remote country roads. Our face is pretty red when we find that we have to go over into Mississippi to get down to Crossett from Memphis, but the road machinery is working twelve months in the year, and it is bound to make a showing soon.

We need more hospitals, libraries and playgrounds. We are getting them gradually. I have had the pleasure of setting several libraries in motion because city friends were willing to donate books that make good reading—not those bound yearbooks of little-known clubs!

Our schools need more teachers as good as the ones we have, and we need more schools here and there.

We could use a little less emphasis on the way Grandpappy did things and thought things out, if ever, but we are getting that, too. A lot of Arkansas boys have gone places and done things these last few years and they have discovered that Grandpappy was often an old mossback who couldn't have made a living if his wife's father hadn't given her a farm to keep her and the young'uns from starving to death.

But any time anyone begins to crowd me about Arkansas, I have positive proof that this is an up-and-coming state. Believe it or not, Hollywood brassières are made here.

In fact, Arkansas has so many good qualities we can afford to overlook shortcomings. We couldn't ask for a better climate. It may be a bit

on the warm side in summer, but the housewife can plant two gardens, an early one in spring for summer eating and canning, and another one in the late summer for winter storing. The winters are so short we can sell the furs we trap instead of having them made into coats which only weight a girl down anyway! On February 28, 1946, at my home in the hills I had five bushes of shrubbery in full bloom, one fragrant and alive with honeybees! In southern Arkansas roses were blooming and wisteria was clambering over porches.

In this one state we have a variety of scenery to satisfy all tastes. We have rivers for those who like to feel a big one snatch the hook, lakes for those who like to see the moon make a shimmering path of light on silver water, hills for those who like to sit on a mountaintop and watch a golden sun silhouette a fringe of pine trees on the next ridge, plains for those who like far horizons, and valleys for those who like to rest in cool shadows and watch a little brook tumble down a rocky ledge after it has bubbled out of the ground. Our woods hide deer, fox, squirrel, rabbit and even the sinuous bobcat, and we have meadows for quail and bayous for wild ducks.

We have dawns in which the sun comes up like a golden ball, sending even a staid, slightly blasé reporter to reciting poems about rosy-fingered Eos, particularly when a whole skyful of soft fleecy clouds are high-lighted with rose. We have sunsets that are a blaze of glory with purple and scarlet clouds forming battlements and turrets in the sky. We have springs that bring healing balm to those who believe in them—and some come ready-heated for the bath! What more could Nature do?

¹ In fact, the more one looks about Arkansas the more one realizes that God was certainly accommodatin' when He made this part of the country. From now on, so help us, we are going to make the most of the opportunities that a beneficent God has put into our hands. What was it Mark Twain's boy, Arkansas, went around shouting? From now on we shall borrow his words and make them ours.

Look at us! We're splitting the everlasting rocks with our glances

and squenching the thunder when we speak. Yooooooooooooo! Stand back and give us room according to our strength.

We're not fooling!

Just cast your eye on us, gentlemen! And lay low and hold your breath, for we're about to turn ourselves loose.

HURRAHHHHHHHHHHH FOR ARKANSAS!

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