

## **GLEANINGS**

The book of Ruth in the Old Testament gives us a look at the definition of 'gleaning'. When the wheat crops were harvested, that which blew out of the winnowing fork was not to be picked up, but left for the poor to come through and collect. In any book, there are stories, ideas, and facts that did not get included. I find myself perusing Margie's notes and my memory looking for those gleanings that will add to the Lanning Story.

I am also soliciting any stories or information from other family members who would like to contribute to the continuation of the Lanning story.

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### **Mountain Superstitions**

#### **Witches**

To ward off witches, one would run around the house three times at sunset waving a white cloth, or fire a shotgun blast into the dark night.

Witches were always women and their powers came from her "dealing with the devil." She used these powers by "casting a spell" on her enemies or anyone she disliked. If a cow suddenly stopped giving milk for no apparent reason, or if a corn crop failed, natural causes were seldom blamed - these things had been "bewitched" or "witched".

As you travel the mountain towns today, you can still see evidence of the beliefs that have been handed down from generation to generation. There are the lightning rods on the roof or a horseshoe tacked over the front door. Lightning rods were for protection against the powers of the Almighty; the horseshoe, a protection against evil spirits, better known as witches.

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#### **Death**

Many superstitions and signs linger in the area of death and are taken seriously by hill people. To hear a whippoorwill cry near the house is regarded by some to be a certain sign of death. And, if you've ever heard its lonesome, mournful sound at dusk, it's easily understood why it can give folks the "willies".

A flower blooming out of season, a rocking chair that rocks by itself, a ringing in the ears (deathbells), are only a few of the many signs of oncoming death. For a hen to crow like a rooster is a sure sign of death, and many a hen that was silly enough to do so has found herself in a cook-pot.

This prompts the old saying my mother Inez used to quote:

"A whistling gal and a crowing hen  
Always come to some bad end".

A bird in the house is a bad omen that means death.

Not many elderly men today will plant a cedar tree because of an old belief that whenever the tree grows to a height tall enough to shade his grave, he will die.

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### **Bad Luck**

To return home for something once you've started somewhere is also bad luck unless "you make a cross mark on the ground and spit in it, then no harm's done".

Do not open an umbrella in the house.

Do not bring a hoe or axe inside the house.

Do not follow someone and step in their tracks.

Do not count the cars in a funeral procession.

Do not give a centipede a chance to count your teeth.

Do not sing in bed.

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### **Good Luck**

It is good luck to find your initials in a spider web.

Finding a penny or button in your path is good luck sign.

For your right eye to itch means something pleasant is going to happen to you but if your left eye itches you're in for a disappointment.

A woman's dress turned up at the hem signifies a new dress.

To find a horseshoe and hang it up on a limb, or fence, is to "hang up your troubles". However, you must be careful not to take one down that's already hanging: the penalty being, you inherit the bad luck.

For a horseshoe to bring you good luck, pick it up and throw it over your left shoulder. Don't look back.

Certain coins are carried as good luck charms today, and the Hillman carries his rabbit-foot with just as much faith as the city bride who marches down the aisle with a penny in her left shoe.

Black eyed peas and hog jowl, eaten on New Year's Day, are supposed to bring good luck all year long. Local grocers in many areas of Georgia stock these items heavily in order to meet the demands of their customers. [Since I can remember, we never had anything else for the New Year's meal in the 18 years I lived with Inez. We did add turnip greens (Collards work too) to the mix because it was supposed to bring money in the following year. We must have eaten the wrong brand because we saw very little money. We were so poor that if it had taken a dime to go around the world, we couldn't get out of sight.]

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### **Power Doctors**

People with special powers are becoming extinct in the Georgia hills. Many of the customs are not being handed down and carried on. Some of these are:

- Talk out fire
- Conjure off warts
- Stop the blood
- Heal sores, wounds, and many other diseases.

The seventh son or the seventh daughter, whichever the case may be, is automatically born with the gift of healing trash, or thresh, a white cotton-like eruption common among children. This method of healing is done by blowing directly into the patient's mouth, since the breath of the gifted person is supposed to be the healing factor.

A woman who has the reputation to "stop blood" says her method is no secret. It comes from "God's own word!" She simply repeats a verse from the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of Ezekiel: "And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live."

My grandmother, Maude Griffin, was one of those who could 'talk out fire' and 'stop the bleeding'. When we would get burned, or cut, we would run to her house to get her to perform this ritual. She never spoke out loud and would never reveal what she was saying. Somehow, as children, we always thought it worked. Maybe it did, I can't remember, and I have no scars from burnings and I did not bleed to death from the many times I cut myself or knocked the bark off somewhere on my body.

This story was one that Margie listed in one of her publications:

This man had gone to doctor after doctor with apparently no results at all ... it seemed the sore on his hand would not get well no matter what. Hearing about an old woman who was said to "possess certain powers" to heal such miseries as his, the man hoisted himself up the mountain side to the old woman's shack. A few days after his visit with the so-called power doctor, his sore was completely healed.

"Call it witchcraft, or anything you want to!" He declared, and thrust out his hand. "I call it *pure gospel!*"

Sure enough, the man's hand was clean as a whistle.

Superstitions are not limited to the old and ignorant, nor are they limited to mountain people. Many old-time remedies can be seen in the cities of today if you know what you are looking for.

But, like the old mountain dialect, mountain music and songs, and the one room school house, superstitions are almost gone from the Georgia Mountains. It seems that the city has crept to the edge of the woods and no one wants to believe in those things that were near and dear to our ancestors. As one woman put it, "Some folks just don't believe in NOTHING, no matter what it is!"

Source: Margie Dunn's Notes

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## More Stories And Tales From The Mountains

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Mary Maud

It's going to be harder on my family now I've had to stop going out to work. We needed the money but, the doctor said I had to.

I'm not strong as I once was, and heavy housework is wearing my body out...doctor said I'd be old and broke down before I was twenty-five.

I enjoyed working in other peoples homes. Most ladies were good to me, and they had so many pretties! Things I'd never seen in all my life. Lots of times while I was working I'd pretend their things were mine and that I lived in one of their nice homes.

One thing I never quite made a few of the women understand was...I wanted to be paid regularly. Not with old clothes and odd dishes, but ...cash. You'd think with an education (like some of them had) they'd know stores won't swap a sack of meal for a worn out pair of dancing shoes.

Told one woman that...

She said I ought to appreciate a fifteen dollar dress in exchange for a days work. I would have...if the dress hadn't been size twenty-four...

I wear size eight...

There was one woman I worked for I couldn't like. She was too proud. I felt sorry for her. She had everything; fur coat, jewelry, car and fine clothes. But she was sickly, never getting over one misery till another one had hold of her. She had headaches, backaches, toothaches, ... never saw another person loaded with so many aches. She ust to lie in bed and ask God to kill her.

God wouldn't...

But several times I thought her husband would.

He seemed like a fine man, quiet, easygoing. But he aggravated her illnesses. She was always worse when he was around ...crying and taking on, rubbing her body with strong smelling ointments till it took your breath away. I guess that's the reason her husband stayed gone a big portion of the time.

I wish the doctors could find out what's wrong with her...she's been to them all...they can't find a thing wrong. She won't believe them. She's pitiful, and I ust to listen to her troubles while I worked. Don't guess she's got anyone to listen now I'm gone.

Her husband won't.

And I wouldn't have,

Except I got paid...

Source: Found in Margie's notes - I believe Margie wrote it.

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### Mitch Pinkerson

There was some little something about that man that suspicioned me right from the start. Maybe it was his name. I donno. Hooker it was...Nathanial Hooker, and he was running for representative in these parts a few months back. One day he came strutting across my yard like a big game rooster and handed me one of them little white cards he was toting around giving everybody. Printed on the card in big black letters was HOOK ONTO HOOKER!

Well, that fancy little card didn't cut no ice with me. I told the gentleman so, too. Told him be damned if I was gonna hook onto somebody I didn't know nothing bout.

He was about to tell me what it'd mean to me to Hook onto him, when Ruthie Mae (that's my daughter), she came sidling out of the house sorta catlike and started eying him.

Well, he eyed Ruthie Mae right back and never did get around to telling me nothing.

Ruthie Mae's a pretty thing...but she's crazy as a Bessie bug. And I could see what was going on...I ain't blind. So, I told Hooker right quick like Ruthie Mae didn't have much mind. Told him, too, that what mind she had was all hers and she could use it as she pleases. Hooker didn't seem to mind Ruthie Mae being off some, for he commenced coming around courting her.

Well, I tried my best to like Hooker but by the time Election Day rolled around I still hadn't seen enough to make me want to Hook onto him.

So, I voted for the other man.

Hooker lost...

Then he stopped coming to see Ruthie Mae. He's been gone almost two months now, and Ruthie Mae's been dwindling away ever since. Thought she'd get over him but don't reckon she is going to. I hear he's over in Plainville...I'm going to see. If he is, guess I'll be hooking onto him this time.

I don't think he's fit for Ruthie Mae a man...but, he's put his mark on her. And, she wants him.

Her being like she is, I ain't got me much choice...

But to fetch him to her

Source: Found in Margie's notes

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## Peg Moreland

Manse sure is tickled we got rid of all that old house plunder in the barn ... Said it was a miracle.

I didn't much want to let it go ... specially Granny's spinning wheel and loom, and Ma's corner cupboard made an awful good place to hold canned goods. But Manse said he'd build me some shelves.

Don't guess we'd sold the stuff but the man that bought it showed us where worms was eating it up. Hated to charge him for stuff like that, but he gave us \$20 for it all ... broke chairs, old wore out tools, even old muddy bottles.

Folks don't use stuff like that no more...I felt like telling the man so, but he acted real happy to get it.

There was a nice sized load when we gathered it all up. He even took an old trunk full of grandma's clothes. The clothes weren't no account...they all out of style.

Manse said I could use the \$20 and go buy me some new house things. I want me one of them chrome table and chair sets to replace our eating table grandpa made. If that man comes back I'm gonna show the table to him. Grandpa made it outta black cherry, and there ain't a nail in it. Manse said me not tell the man that it didn't have a nail in it...said he might not want it.

Manse said apts as not the man would be sick over his trade...not come back.

But if he does, there's a lot more plunder here in the house I aim to let him have...and it's better than the stuff in the barn. But it's out of style too.

I want me some new...So I'll be in style...

Source: Found in Margie's notes

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## Jacob

Don't look like it's gonna be long till the guvment's gonna own everything we got, lock, stock, and barrel. And there ain't a blasted thing we can do about it either.

Look how they buying up all the land around here. Seems all they have to do is want it, then its theirs. Didn't think so much about it til they set into eying mine.

My land's poor as dishwater...ain't nothing but hills and hollows. But, that don't matter a whet to the guvment...they just move hills and hollows.

Pa's Pa squatted on these 160 acres way back when it was warm with Indians. He tamed it, and protected it, and made it grow corn, and beans, and tobacco. When he died he left it to pa. When pa passed on I fell heir. It's been home to me for sixty odd years.

No, the guvment didn't want this land when grandpa was tearing a living outta these rocky slopes...but they want it now.

Say they gonna build a watershed up that little cove yonder, they've asked me what I consider a fair price for my place. I've studied on it some and somehow it don't seem right for me to sell. Be sorta like selling pa and grandpa. They buried over on that little knob. So's the rest of my blood kin.

Now, if the guvment builds a watershed there the graves are right in line of rising waters. Told the guvment man that...he said me not to worry, they'd move the graves and it wouldn't cost me a cent either.

But, I dunno...

Most of them buried there ain't nothing but dust. Seems wrong to disturb that dust. Goes against the Bible. But I don't reckon even the dust of the dead stops them guvment men once they start wanting.

They'll get my place...

I know.

I'd protect it if I was dealing with one man. But you can't stop guvment men...they's just too many. They're springing up around here like wild onions in a cow pasture.

Soon it ain't gonna be nothing around here but roads leading to lakes...and the guvment's gonna own them all. Won't be nothing left for the likes of me.

The time's coming...

And it's coming fast.

I strongly hope I won't be around to see it when it gets here.

Source: Found in Margie's notes

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### **The Biggest Capture On Turniptown Road**

The biggest capture was made by a nine (9) year old girl and an eleven (11) year old boy from the city. Their father brought them to Turniptown and they started to school the first part of the term. While walking to school one morning they captured a large turtle. They ran in to the bushes and built a rock wall around the turtle and put a large rock over the top so it could not get away. They hurried on to school. As soon as school was over they ran as fast as they could to get the turtle. On their way home from school one would carry it a little way then the other one would take it a while.

Two big boys came and took it from them. They started kicking and beating the turtle trying to kill it. The girl and boy got it back from the bigger boys and took it home feeling sorry for it. The little girl and boy was Rosa Lee and Clarence Lanning.

We went back to the city in time for Christmas that year and never got to go back to visit. I sure wish we could have because it was fun.

Source: Rosa Lee Lanning Castleberry

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### **Cousin Tom's Day In Court**

My father had a cousin that lived up in the Ellijay Mountains. We lived at Canton, Ga.

His cousin had a still running him some corn whiskey. He had gone out getting some wood to run the boiler and when he came out into the opening he saw two men at the still. He laid his wood down and walked up and one man said "That's my still, I saw it first." They were the law so they took Tom down to town and locked him up. He wrote my daddy, Will Lanning, a letter to come and get him out so my daddy asked him what was said.

He told him when he walked up that one officer said to the other "that's my still" so my dad said go on to the trial and tell them that he came up on those two men talking and which man it was said it was his.

Cousin Tom followed his advice. When he appeared in court and told what happened, and pointed out the law officer, he was cleared of the charges against him.

Source: Rosa Lee Lanning Castleberry

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### **Moving To Town**

A mountain family was moving to the city to go to work in a cotton mill. They knew there would be no place in the mill village for their chickens, goats and other barnyard animals. So, they were saying their heart-rending goodbyes.

A little boy cried to the family cow, "Goodbye, Bessie! We're moving to town, and I'll never see you again!"

Next, a little girl cried, "Goodbye little chickens! We're moving to town and I'll never see you again!"

Finally, the old mother, who had been standing and watching the tearful scenes, could stand it no longer. She threw both arms heavenward, and wailed, "Goodbye, God! We're moving to the city and I'll never see you again!"

Source: Unknown - Found in Margie L. Dunn's notes

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### **Little George Lanning**

To lose one to death is a tragic thing at any age but where a mother had died, especially if there are small children, is even more so. Such was the case when Aunt Minnie Lanning died. She left 6 children with Inez the oldest of 17 and George the youngest at 6.

When Aunt Minnie's coffin was opened, Aunt Becky gathered the small flock around it and asked each child if there was anything they wanted changed, or done, and if she looked all right.

Little George, with the seriousness of his 6 years, said, "It would look more like mama if she had a dip of snuff in her mouth."

Source: Margie Dunn's notes

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**A Tale of the North Country  
From Eben Holden**

I ain't afraid  
'Shamed o' nothing I ever done  
Always kep my hugs tight  
Never swore less twas necessary  
I never ketched a fish biggern it was  
Er lied in a hoss trade  
Er shed a tear I didn't hav to  
Never cheated anybody but Eben Holden  
Going off somewheres, Bill dunno the way neither  
Dunno if its east er west er north er south  
Er road er trail  
But I ain't afraid.

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**Razorbacks**

Razorbacks are about the meanest animal there is - next to wildcats I reckon. In Gilmer county several years ago a farmer bent on herding such a wild hog through the streets of town became so enraged at the hogs refusal to walk a straight line that he began beating it with a stick.

An old woman happened to pass. "Don't beat that hog so - don't ye know hit ain't got no sense."

"Then I'll larn it some" the mountaineer replied.

Source: Margie Dunn's Notes

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**Pat and Mike**

Pat and Mike were Irishmen. One of the, Pat, had a wooden leg - a peg leg.

Now, Mike he got mad at Pat one night - they was both a drinking some - and he, Mike did, got him a hand saw and he sawed Pat's wooden leg off while Pat was asleep.

When Pat woke up, he got up and started to walk across the yard. He took a few steps and then cried out, "faith and be Christ Mike, some fool's dug holes all in this yard!"

Source: Found in Margie's notes - author unknown

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## **Illegitimate**

There was a newborn baby on the Road one time and children heard a new, whispered, word: Illegitimate. I remember going with Mary Lanning to see it and was sorely disappointed. I expected to see a freak or something but it was just a normal baby. The old folks were whispering about it and the kids were giggling.

Source: Margie Lanning Dunn

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Pa Lanning would lay apples on the mantle and daddy said they would lay there till they rotted before one of the children would touch them if he said leave them alone.

Source: Margie Lanning Dunn

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## **The Peacock Spread**

Spreads stamped with a design, were brought by a woman from Dalton to be finished and picked up the following week. It was just one of the special county wide programs created by the government to help the housewife earn needed money.

Gonna get me a fancier design this week, one using the double fluff. They pay you fifty cents to do that kind provided there were no clipped holes. Miz had been doing them but she ain't gonna make much money this week.

Last week, she got one of them double fluffs with a big strutting peacock stamped on it. She couldn't see too good for it was cloudy half the time and she needs glasses for she goes squinting her eyes something awful.

She had some trouble with her colors and worked some of the pink dots red and some of the blue dots purple. And it was on that peacock's tail, too. I'll tell you, I hope I never see a peacock that looks like that. Takes the strut right out of it and to cap the stack, she didn't have enough thread left to do it over and then she let Louise, that big old lazy girl of hers help clip, and she clipped two holes right next to the eyes. You can't hardly see the holes with your naked eye but they'll find em when they run that light under it.

She knows they'll dock her five cents each hole and she don't know what they'll say about that tail.

Source: Found in Margie's notes - author unknown

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## The Hanging Of Negro Ross

In 1901, in Canton, Georgia, a Negro named Raymond Ross was hung at a public execution.

On July 29th, Ross outraged [raped] and otherwise morally mistreated Mrs. Harriet Miller of the Sixth district. He was arrested immediately and brought to Canton. Judge Gober called a special term of court and tried Ross on August 6<sup>th</sup>. Ross was found guilty and had to be transported to the Fulton County jail for safe keeping.

On August 30<sup>th</sup>, Sheriff Bedelle brought Ross from Fulton County and was met at the train by guards, special deputies, and a large crowd. They stopped at the jail for Ross to change clothes. Afterwards, he was placed on the wagon with his coffin and driven to the gallows followed by a large crowd.

There was a law that demanded a fence be built around a gallows and it had been but a storm had caused it to fall. No attempt was made to replace it. A rope enclosed the gallows and the crowd pressed to it to watch the execution. 2,000 people, men, women, and children stood about the gallows and on a nearby hillside. They clung to limbs in tops of saplings and trees overlooking the gallows to witness the hanging of Negro rapist Raymond Ross. In all, there was good order with no demonstration.

Before the noose was tied, Rev. Drew Cal, of Marietta talked to Ross and the crowd and offered a prayer for Ross, the jury, and the judge.

He was asked to speak and Ross replied by saying he was not guilty. He said he was prepared to go and believed his soul would go to heaven. He died with no words of farewell.

Most people said he died with a lie on his lips - they believed the girl.

Ross was then led to the trap door and the noose arranged. Sheriff Bedelle, Dr. Turk, and Dr. Coker witnessed the hanging. None of the Ross family claimed the body so the sheriff had it shipped to the College of Physicians and Surgeons in Atlanta as the law directed.

Source: Found in Margie Dunn's Notes

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## December 7

It was Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup> and they heard the news from Matt Gazaway. Its war folks! War!

They turned on the radio and listened to WSB in Atlanta. Some man was telling that the Japs had bombed Pearl Harbor.

It's a long way off from here she told herself. No use getting excited.

Source: Margie Dunn's Notes

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Mary Lanning Goble tells this story of her remembrance of Paw Lanning.

Paw was sick and in the bed. He chewed tobacco and when he threw his cud away, I slipped and got it and was chewing it. Mama and Papa caught me and I told them Paw gave it to me. Paw heard me tell them he had give it to me. He waited until we were all setting by the fire that night and he ask me about it. I knowed I was caught in my lie. It sure was embarrassing. But it sure taught me a lesson.

Source: Mary L. Goble

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I can remember Laura, Caroline and Fronnie. They came to our house quite often. I was so afraid of Fronnie. She would sit and sharpen a knife all the time they were there.

Source: Mary L. Goble

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## Mountain Remedies

Other ways of doctoring certain ailments didn't call for salves or teas. Some families didn't put much faith in all of them but every family had at least one or two of these treatments they used on occasion.

Barks were gathered in the spring or late winter and leaves and herbs while the plants were blooming. These were dried and stored to be used as needed.

This list is short but again there are more than those listed here. I am using only those I know were practiced by different family members.

Stop blood	Let a few drops of blood from the wound fall on the blade of a sharp knife - plant the knife to the hilt in the ground under a door step. Do not remove until bleeding stops.
Stop blood	Someone in the community had the gift "to stop blood". They would be called in an emergency.
Stop pain from a burn	Could also be treated by someone with a gift "to talk out fire".
Cramps in the leg or foot	Put your feet flat on the floor -or- stick the toe of one shoe inside the other when you go to bed
Ache in the side	Spit on a rock and turn it wet side down on the ground. It will smother the pain.
Childbirth pains	Place a pair of scissors under the patients head to cut the pain.
Hiccoughs	Drink 10 swallows of water while holding your breath. [This one works for me every time - BG]
Nausea	Put your head lower than your knees.
Snake bite	Bathe the affected area with lamp oil and turpentine. Kill and cut open a chicken, press the warm meat against the bite. NOTE: Uncle Will Nabell was bitten one time by a rattlesnake and used this method which may have saved his life. It was told the chicken meat absorbed the poison and turned green.
Colds	Fried onion poultice laid on the chest
Sores	Polk root salve
Asthma	Cut a sourwood limb the length of the afflicted child's height, put the limb under a doorstep and let it stay until the child outgrows its measure Take a lock of hair from the crown, put it in a hole in a tree and peg it up.
Cuts	Turpentine would burn out soreness. It would also draw out rust and splinters.
Warts	These were usually "conjured off" by someone gifted with a mysterious power Castor oil Let a black calf lick them 3 times on 3 days

## Folklore - Miscellaneous

### Mountaineers Defined

Only a true Mountaineer knows the difference between a hissie fit and a conniption fit and that you don't "have" them, but "pitch" them.

Nobody but a true Mountaineer knows how many fish, collard greens, turnip greens, peas, beans, etc. make up a "mess".

A true Mountaineer can show or point out to you the general direction of "yonder."

A true Mountaineer knows exactly how long "directly" is - as in "Going to town, be back directly."

All true Mountaineers know exactly when "by and by" is. They might not use the term, but they know the concept well.

True Mountaineers know instinctively that the best gesture of solace for a neighbor who's got trouble is a plate of hot fried chicken and a big bowl of cold potato salad. (If the trouble is a real crisis, they also know to add a large banana puddin'.) In the South, we can't say we are sorry about anything without a covered dish. "Sorry to hear your Daddy passed on, here's some baked beans".

True Mountaineers grow up knowing the difference between "right near" and "a right far piece."

They know that "just down the road" can be 1 mile or 20.

True Mountaineers know that "fixin" can be used both as a noun, verb and adverb.

True Mountaineers never refer to one person as "y'all."

Every true Mountaineer knows tomatoes with eggs, bacon, grits and coffee are perfectly wonderful; that red eye gravy is also a breakfast food; and that fried green tomatoes are not breakfast food.

When you hear someone say, "Well, I caught myself lookin'", you know you're in the presence of a genuine Mountaineer.

Mountaineers say "sweet tea" and "sweet milk." Sweet tea indicates the need for sugar and lots of it - we do not like our tea unsweetened; "sweet milk" means you don't want buttermilk.

Many native Mountaineers have begun to act almost embarrassed about their speech. We've already lost too much. I was raised to swanee, not swear, but you hardly ever hear anyone say that anymore, I swanee you don't. And I've caught myself thinking twice before saying something

is right much"; "right close" or "right good" because non-natives think this is right funny indeed. My new educated friends who think it's hilarious when I say I've got to "carry" someone to the doctor or "cut off" the light. They also get a giggle every time I am "fixing" to do something. And, bless their heart, they don't know where "over yonder" is, or what, "I reckon" means.

My personal favorite was my aunt saying, "Bless her heart, she can't help being ugly, but she could've stayed home." To those of you who're still a little embarrassed by your mountain raising: take two tent revivals and a dose of sausage gravy n grits and call me in the morning. Bless your heart!

Source: F.W. Griffin

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Who can say how many angels can stand on the point of a needle

Weather:

Is governed by the bark on the trees  
Whether the sun sets red  
Thickness of corn shucks  
Behavior of birds  
Fur on animals  
Whether the sun shines on Ground Hog Day

Did you ever notice how the old mule stands with his hind end to the wind? Well, weather is what the old mule turns his tail to.

If you are bitten by a turtle, it will hold until it thunders.

How far is a "piece?"

A hog will build a bed of sticks before a bad storm.

How much is a "dab?"

People weren't simply ugly; they were ugly as ho made sin.

To squirrel away - to save

As faithful as a dog

Wean babies when the signs are not in the feet and the baby will not suffer from ailments

Just sitting here drawing interest on my money

Sage - means to heal - said to help digest fat, that's why we cook it with pork

Mountain Laurel - It is said the Indians used it for suicidal purposes  
- the leaves are said to possess poisonous qualities

The worse the medicine tasted, the more effective it was considered to be

Fox Glove - the drug digitalis is processed from dried leaves and is a well known cardiac stimulant. It causes contractions of the heart and arteries. Given in small doses, it stimulates the kidneys. This plant is believed to be a cure for dropsy.

"You can't go broke if you ain't got nothing".

"Gimme some pepper sauce to go on these sardines".

Cedar buckets used for water was healthier and tasted of cedar. Tin buckets poisoned the water if it stayed too long.

I want fatback - lots of lean in it

A cow gets up hind end first while a horse gets up front end first.

All cows graze heads pointed in the same direction.

To tell which direction the wind is blowing, watch a mule, he turns his hind end against the wind.

"Nobody cares cept Roosevelt"

After canning all summer and storing the jars in the cellar, it was common for some to spoil and some to taste like the cellar.

Because houses were small and space at a premium, if a death occurred and the body moved into the house, sometimes a bed had to be taken down to have a place for the coffin.

June bug on a string

Burma shave signs

Feb. 1942 - "A" stamp on automobile - 3 gallons of gas per week, ration books, no rubber.

"Save your grease"

Bread 5¢ a loaf

Sample Ipana toothpaste - some children used a black gum stick

Two pairs of shoes a year -- Brogans - the name for the ankle height shoes worn in the winter

Work Shoes - the leather slashed with a razor blade over the toes -  
for comfort and ventilation

Dogs draw lightning

Caps - everyone had a cap which advertised either flour or paint

Overalls - pronounced "Overhauls"

Grinning big enough to show teeth he didn't have

Source: Gleaned from Margie's notes

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## Mountain Life

Every family owned a cow. It provided milk and butter to compliment a pan of biscuits or a pone of cornbread. During the summer months milk was kept in a spring to keep it cool.

The spring was also the site of the family wash place (today known as a launderette). The first day of the week was washday and the mountain women gathered up the clothes and her homemade lye soap and trudged the trail to the spring. Clothes took a beating. They were scrubbed, boiled, and pounded with a battling stick. When they were declared clean they were hung on lines, bushes, fences or anything handy, to dry. (MLD)

If the clothes did not go to the spring, then the spring had to come to the clothes. I remember carrying water in a tub from the spring. We filled a black iron wash pot and built a fire around it to wash the clothes. We also had to carry enough water to fill the rinsing tubs. Sometimes, if we were lucky, we caught enough rain water in the tubs placed under the eaves of the tin roof to avoid having to carry it all. (FWG)

Source: Margie Dunn and Bill Griffin

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Corn was used by the men in the mountains for purposes other than eating and feeding to livestock. It also put sure income in his pockets, and often was the sole means of his survival.

Hauled up some dark cove the corn was converted into mash that distilled into a liquid form. A good "run" put needed money in the pockets of many mountain men and Turniptown Road had its "stillers". They weren't averse to drinking their own product either. However there were those who made it purely out of necessity and tasted it only for medicinal purposes.

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Young people were not forced to go to church, they looked forward to it. It was the only social life they had and they took advantage of it.

Boys went barefoot during the week saving their shoes. On Sunday, they carried them until they got near the church, then they put them on.

Girls wore their only Sunday dress and a ribbon or flowers in their hair.

Source: Margie Lanning Dunn

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Decoration Day held different memories for all the families. Sometimes children would get to participate in this memorial service. They could hold the flowers until the proper time came. Sometimes they were allowed to place them on the graves. (I don't remember getting to!) Most often though, children were being warned not to step on a grave. Neither were you supposed to step over one either. To do so was a terrible thing and dishonorable to the dead below. Many children stayed out of the cemetery whenever they could out of mortal fear.

Source: Margie Lanning Dunn

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Some of the more progressive homes on Turniptown Road had porches. To sit on them during summer evenings, a smoke pot had to be used to keep gnats from devouring naked limbs. A smoke pot was simply a bucket filled with wool rags burned down to a smoking stage. They make an excellent insect repellent but kept you busy dodging the thick smoke.

Source: Margie Lanning Dunn

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### **Margie's Memories**

When I remember Turniptown Road and my people, I think of these things:

- o Sleeping warm in the loft at Uncle Andrew's, and looking through the cracks to see the moon shining on the creek and hearing it roar during the night.
- o The small table or a wide shelf near the door to hold the water bucket. In the bucket was the 'dipper', a dried and hollowed gourd, used to drink from.
- o And always the lonesome "hoot" of an owl, frightening to a city child.
- o The kewpie dolls that hung on the walls. They belonged to Aunt Minnie who got them at a fair and they were not to be played with.
- o Swinging on elder bushes along the banks of the creek and picking fox grapes.
- o Swimming in the baptizing hole, now the entrance to a resort, Walnut Mountain.
- o Picking up chestnuts, the ground literally black and covered with fallen nuts. Blight had hit these trees long years before, but this was a die hard that would eventually go as the others.
- o Carrying laundry to the spring winter and summer and then hanging the clothes on limbs and fence rails for drying.
- o Daddy's story about the potatoes grown on the steep mountainsides. He said they were easily gathered by uncovering them and rolling them down the mountain. He said all you had to do was pick them up at the bottom.

- o One of my notes has only three words written on it, "Gurgling Cove Spring". I remember it to be along the Road where you could hear water running under the ground and where it surfaced it was so cold it hurt your teeth. It brings to mind also another place that makes a hollow sound beneath your footsteps when you walk across it. The whereabouts of both places have long been forgotten.
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- o Many authors describe the typical mountain home with inside walls papered with newspapers and pages from magazines. In all the homes I was ever in on Turniptown, I never saw one with these so-called papered walls.

Source: Margie Lanning Dunn

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## Wild Foods Of Turniptown

### Plants:

Dandelion, wild lettuce, plantain, cress (creases), poke salad, lambs quarters, sorrel, pepper grass, ramps

### Berries:

Huckleberry, blackberry, elderberry, foxgrape, muscadines, wild cherries, plums.

### Nuts:

Walnut (black and white), chestnut, chinquapin, hickory nut.

### Birds:

Wild turkey, robin, partridge, pheasant.

### Animals:

All kinds such as, squirrel, rabbits, groundhog, coon, opossum, razorbacks

### Honey:

Bees made honey in holes in a tree. These trees were robbed certain times of the year. If a bee tree could not be robbed the same day it was found, the finder would put a mark (initial) on the tree. These marks were respected and if anyone else found the tree it was left alone.

### Fish:

From Turniptown Creek and nearby rivers and streams.

Source: Margie Dunn Notes

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## Aunt Becky Lanning Nabell

She worked willingly with her hands her entire life. She cut the face masks for the dead. She kept on hand, flowers fashioned out of colored crepe paper, to decorate a grave in wintertime. In the summer she gathered spruce and pine boughs and seasonal flowers to preserve for later times when they would be needed.

She learned to midwife and future generations lived because of her knowledge. She gave shoes, high top with buttons, to a child, now grown old, who has never forgotten. Company was served and strangers made welcome from her collection of beautiful cut glass and china housed in a tall glassed mahogany cabinet. Company was anyone who dropped in near mealtime - be it a child or adult, rich or poor. To these differences she was blind. The door to her home was always open.

She married a man from a wealthy family who was not of her faith and a new word was introduced to the children, infidel. She prayed for them both - strength and wisdom for herself - salvation for him. She lost a child that brought about rebirth in him. She called it a blessing.

She tended the sick and closed the eyes of the dying. She offered advice, "kill em with kindness" and took it herself. These are some of the things we know about her and there are many more things that we don't know.

In her twilight years, she moved away from Turniptown. She was gone only a few years until they brought her back to the mountains she loved.

She has two monuments in Turniptown, one at the church cemetery, a stone with the carved words, bought by the family. The other she planted herself, just up the road a ways; a yellow forsythia bush at the edge of what once was a yard. Today on Turniptown Road, this living monument, the yellow forsythia which blooms early each spring, reminds us where she lived.

Source: Margie Lanning Dunn

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## Uncle Andrew Lanning

### Uncle Andrew Went A.W.O.L.

During World War I, Uncle Andrew Lanning was drafted along with Tom and Rob Henson. He had never been away from home and he was sent to Camp McPherson near Atlanta. After a few days, away from the familiar surrounding of Turniptown and eating strange food, Uncle Andrew packed up and left - along with Rob and Tom.

Back in Turniptown, they hid out in the mountains while soldiers in uniform searched for them. There were three different caves they lived in at different times while evading the military police. The caves were large enough to house cots to sleep on and a small table for food. They depended on their families. Ma Lanning would cook and stuff her clothing full of food to take. This took some doing for the MP's came around quite often looking for the three. She would leave the house as natural as she could in case she was being watched. When she reached a certain place in the woods, she would whistle like a bird, a signal to Uncle Andrew.

Sometimes Aunt Nora Lee would be sent to carry supplies to the men. She would get in the creek and wade so no one could track her.

Sometimes at night, Uncle Andrew would slip down to the house. One night the MPs came looking for him and he was under the house.

The Henson's provided for Rob and Tom during this time and had to be just as watchful.

The army came searching but never found him. Eventually the search was called off and Uncle Andrew married and raised a family on the old Lanning homeplace.

Long after the war was over and Tom and Rob had been caught, Uncle Andrew was living in Cherokee County with his family. Someone reported him and he served six months in the stockade for his actions.

His excuse always was, "I didn't like what they fed us". But, it's hard to believe that this was all the reason. Uncle Andrew was a gentle man who loved the mountains. He lived off them, hunting, farming, and fishing. The mountains were home - they were safe. To be anywhere else was a slow death for him.

He could kill an animal for food, but to raise a gun to kill a human being, even in self defense, was something he could have never done. To admit this, would have revealed that portion of him he wanted kept hidden.

Source: Margie L. Dunn and Mary Lanning Goble

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### **Andrew and the Poplar Tree**

The story is told of Andrew and another person cutting down a tall poplar tree. They spent a half day cutting the tree and then found it was so straight it wouldn't fall.

Source: Margie's Notes

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### **Andrew And His Coon Dogs**

As a young lad, I can remember going with my grandfather, Andrew, when he would gather up his pack of dogs for a coon hunt. Until later in life when he moved into town in East Ellijay with Harvey, he always had dogs. It was the one pleasure he had in life I suppose. Andrew never owned a car as far as I could tell. Financed a few for the kids and grandkids but never his own.

We would get the dogs into the woods and turn them loose. While they were sniffing and hunting a trail, we would build a fire for light and for warmth if it was cold weather. We always hoped for a coon but the dogs never quite cooperated fully. If they cut the trail of a possum, they just could not resist so off they went.

We would listen and there would be a distinctive bark when they treed an animal. When we heard this bark, we would venture out into the dark night to see what our fortunes were to be.

I don't remember ever taking anything home. I guess it was just the thrill of the hunt and the dogs that kept 'Papa' young. Maybe he had enough coon and possum when he was a young lad on Turniptown and was trying to keep a family fed.

If nothing was happening, it would soon be time to round up the dogs and call it a night. One expression my grandfather used to close the hunt that has stuck with me all my life was:

"Boy! It's time to pee on the fire and call the dogs."

Source: Francis W. Griffin

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### **Andrew's Saturday Trip To Town**

I do not remember Papa ever owning a car. As far back as I can remember he walked everywhere he went if Harvey or George was not around.

Every Saturday if it was not raining, Papa would get up and walk to Ellijay from his home in East Ellijay. If he was lucky, maybe someone would come along and give him a ride, if not, he hoofed it.

When he got to the square in Ellijay, all the other 'seniors' were waiting; lined up down the sidewalk and leaning against the brick wall of the store that occupied the corner space. As a 'newbie' came up, he would fall in line and swap words with those on each side for a bit. After catching up on their gossip, the men would begin to swap around so no tidbit of news would be missed. Only in this fashion could he get to speak to everyone there without shouting loudly and having everyone else in town looking at him.

Papa always went to Whitaker's Grocery Store and bought his groceries because they delivered. Papa would try to determine when the truck would be going toward East Ellijay. If he could, he timed a return to the store to catch a ride. If he was not in the store, the driver knew to come by the square and check.

Today, our generation will not walk even a half block to a 7-11, we have to ride everywhere. Lord help if we stop along the way to chit chat with someone.

Source: Francis W. Griffin

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## Dub Garrett

April 29, 1950, the Carnegie hero medal was awarded posthumously to J.W. (Dub) Garrett, who lost his life June 16, 1948 while attempting to rescue his brother-in-law, George Lanning from a gas filled well.

The following is extracted from the book:  
The Annals of Upper Georgia Centered in Gilmer County  
By: George Gordon Ward, 1965  
Page 478 reference to the year 1948  
June 15. Dub Garrett dies a hero's death in a well in order to rescue George Lanning from the well.

Another medal was awarded to A.C. Griffin who assisted in the same rescue efforts.

Dub was the husband of Mary Lanning.

Source: Margie Dunn Notes

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## More Mountain Songs and Poems

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### Our Brave Men

By: R. G. Chastain

We have three men in Canton  
Whom we all call the brave  
They'd fight a deadly demon  
They'd fight him to the grave  
They went out in the country  
And met a Guernsey brute  
They had no guns or weapons  
This Guernsey bull to shoot

And when they saw him raging  
They offered up a song  
Our glory it is coming  
It won't be very long  
Then when the song was finished  
In that good service there  
Columbus he was burdened  
And offered up a prayer

He said O Lord of Heaven  
And Jacob's God of old  
I've caught some fish on Sunday  
And chickens I have stole  
But thou O Lord can help me  
If it can be thy will

I pray thee God of Heaven  
To save me from the bull

I'll go to church on Sunday  
And pay the preacher too  
I'll visit all the widows  
If Thou will help me through  
I'll steal no more fat chickens  
Nor watermelons take  
I'll be a faithful soldier  
And I'll be wide awake

Then when he finished praying  
The bull was gone away  
When Jesse looked around then  
They heard him softly say  
Now boys it is a wonder  
That we could win this fight  
We never could have done it  
If we had not been right  
Lee said "when life is over  
And we lay down to die  
We'll have him for hamburger  
At the home beyond the sky"

The notes indicate the three men are: Jesse Johnson, Ren Columbus, and Lee Evans: to the best of my ability to decipher them.

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### Home Came The Old Man

Last night when I came home, plain as I could see  
I found a horse in the barn where my horse ought to be!  
"Come mere my, little wifey, explain this thing to me!  
How come this horse is in the barn where my horse ought to be?"  
"You blind fool! You crazy fool! Can't you plainly see?  
Ain't nothin but a milk cow, your granny sent to me!"  
Well, I've traveled this wide world over, a thousand times or more,  
But a saddle on a milk cow, I never saw before!

Last night when I came home, plain as I could see  
I found a coat hanging on the rack where my coat ought to be!  
"Come mere, my little wifey, explain this thing to me!  
How come this coat is hanging on the rack where my coat ought to be?"  
"You blind fool, you crazy fool! Can't you plainly see?  
Ain't nothin but a bed quilt, your granny sent to me!"  
Well, I've traveled this wide world over, a thousand times or more  
But pockets on a bed quilt, I never saw before!"

Last night when I came home, plain as I could see  
I found a head laying on the bed where my head ought to be!  
"Come mere, my little wifey! Explain this thing to me  
How come this head is laying on the bed where my head ought to be?"  
"You blind fool, you crazy fool! Can't you plainly see?  
Ain't nothin but a cabbage head your granny sent to me!"  
Well, I've traveled this wide world over, a thousand times or more  
But a moustache on a cabbage head I never saw before!

Source: Unknown - Found in Margie Dunn's Notes

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### When It's Twilight On The Trail

When its twilight on the trail  
And my voice is still  
Please plant this heart of mine  
Underneath the lonesome pine  
On the hill  
When its twilight on the trail  
And I jog along  
My world is like a dream  
And the ripple of the stream  
Is my song

Never ever had a nickel in my jeans  
Never ever had a debt to pay  
I guess I'll never know  
What real contentment means  
Guess I was born that way

When its twilight on the trail  
And I rest once more  
My ceiling is the sky  
And the ground on which I lie  
Is my floor

By: Margie Lanning Dunn

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