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FOXFIRE

— *Boogers, Witches, and Haints* —

APPALACHIAN GHOST STORIES



Edited by

FOXFIRE STUDENTS

Boogers, Witches, and Haints: Appalachian Ghost Stories

The Foxfire Americana Library
Edited by Foxfire Students



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A NOTE ABOUT THE FOXFIRE AMERICANA LIBRARY SERIES

For almost half a century, high school students in the Foxfire program in Rabun County, Georgia, have collected oral histories of their elders from the southern Appalachian region in an attempt to preserve a part of the rapidly vanishing heritage and dialect. The Foxfire Fund, Inc., has brought that philosophy of simple living to millions of readers, starting with the bestselling success of *The Foxfire Book* in the early 1970s. Their series of fifteen books and counting has taught creative self-sufficiency and has preserved the stories, crafts, and customs of the unique Appalachian culture for future generations.

Traditionally, books in the Foxfire series have included a little something for everyone in each and every volume. For the first time ever, through the creation of The Foxfire Americana Library, this forty-five-year collection of knowledge has been organized by subject. Whether down-home recipes or simple tips for both your household and garden, each book holds a wealth of tried-and-true information, all passed down by unforgettable people with unforgettable voices.

BOOGERS, WITCHES, AND HAINTS

Probably my earliest memories are of the times when the power would go out and we would have to get down the kerosine lamps. My grandmother always used these times to the best advantage by telling ghost stories—or “booger” tales. I don’t remember the tales as such, but I can remember the lamp that lighted only her face as she recalled the choicest horrors of her childhood.

That the people of these mountains should have a rich supply of “haint” tales is not at all surprising. They had conquered the land—but only in a small area around their doors. No matter how friendly the woods seemed in daylight, there were noises and mysterious lights there at night that were hard to ignore if you were out there all alone.

We tape-recorded the following stories in an attempt to let you share a singular mountain experience—a night of ghost tales by a slowly dying fire.

DAVID WILSON

1

To be absolutely truthful, most of the people we talked with did not believe in ghosts or witches or anything of the sort. They had either seen their fears proved false (a white dog, a flapping sheet, natural gas, or the like), or they simply had never had to have them proved false—they just never believed. We met many of them in the course of our wanderings. Here are some of the best of their comments.

MRS. E. H. BROWN: Oh, I’ve heard a number of ghost stories. They come in here and they went out here and I didn’t pay any ’tention. I never have been hainted. I didn’t think I’d ever done anybody any harm that they’d bother me.

I moved t’Highlands and they’uz some people come in tryin’ t’tell me how terrible th’old Methodist Church was haunted there at Scaly there where I lived. Well, I’uz raised there. I let’em tell their tales. They said that you just couldn’t go in that church at night—they’uz th’awfulest thing they ever were in there.

I let’em tell their story, and I laughed at’em. I says, “Well, I’ve been in that church after dark by myself and I didn’t hear a thing.” I said, “I wasn’t a bit afraid.”

There’uz a boy that’d been murdered that’s grew up with me was buried out there, but I never done th’boy no harm, and I didn’t ’spect him t’make any noise and bother me.

And then they thought they would get me. Said, “Just as sure as you pass

th'school house about midnight, you'll see a little girl and a little boy walkin' that rock walk."

"Well," I said, "I've passed there alone many nights about midnight and I never did see anything." That was just a fancy someone had told. Why, I passed that place numbers of nights. I didn't see nothin'. I believe most a'that is imagination. I say imagination, or maybe a guilty conscience. Then you might see somethin'. I wouldn't be surprised. If you'd done some dirty deed or murdered somebody or something, why I wouldn't be surprised if they wouldn't imagine they saw something.

But I never experienced no such thing. Only thing I was ever afraid of was a dog or a snake.

DANIEL MANOUS: No, I don't think there's anything like that. Do you? I don't think so. I think that's th'imagination. You think on a thing till you think it's real.

I used to hear my grandfather tell one about when he'uz a boy. They'uz a cemetery right close to where he lived, and he could hear a baby cryin' every night over at th'cemetery.

He'uz scared and didn't know what t'think about it and told one of th'neighbors. Said, "I heard a baby cry over yonder at th'cemetery every night. I didn't go about it." Said, "I'm afraid to. Are you afraid to go over there?"

He said, "No, I'm not afraid to go over there."

Grandpa says, "You come over t'my house tonight. If that baby cries, if you'll go over there and see what it is, I'll give you ten dollars."

So he came over then that night, y'know, and waited till seven o'clock. Said, "All right. If you're not 'fraid t'go, now's th'time t'go."

That man just took off and went over there, and they'uz a big basket sittin' on top a'th'tombstone, and they'uz a baby in it. Little baby boy. He just went and picked up th'basket, went on back and took it to him and said, "It's a baby."

He'd been a'hearin' th'baby for several nights he claimed. He kept that baby and raised it, and it went by th'name a' Billy Tombs—after th'tombstone. That was actually th'truth. I've heard my grandpa say that he'd seen th'boy a many a time. Billy Tombs.

The Bible preaches that th'dead don't know anything at all. After any person dies, why they don't know anything. They don't have any thoughts, don't know a thing in th'world.

Well, they *couldn't* come back here. They couldn't come back and cause trouble and bother th'livin' because they can't *get* back. They're dead. They don't know anything.

If you don't believe th'Bible, you just as well not believe nothin'. If it didn't teach that, y'might have somethin' t'base it on, y'see. But since they don't know anything, how could they come back? 'Cause they'd have t'be doin' a little thinkin'r'somethin'r'nother before they could get back and trouble

anybody'r anything.

They's mediums that say they could talk t'th'dead and all that. I don't believe that. That's just a evil spirit. Really, I don't believe in'em. They's nothin' t'base it on. They's no foundation. Cain't build a house without no foundation. Th'Bible destroys all th'foundation. If somethin' dies, it's gone—don't know a thing in th'world. You kin find th'stories, but there ain't no foundation for'em. That's what I call a myth. Just not reality.

MARY CARPENTER: There's a place over yonder at Jim Branch—they had been people said they's seen balls of fire big as these old-timey washpots roll th'road there. I forgot who it was told me that they'uz comin' there one night and said they was a big ball of fire. And they said they hit Frank Kelly's field and cut out across through th'field and wouldn't pass it.

HOYT THOMAS: I had friends treed a possum one night, and said they seen a ball a'fire that gave enough light till they seen how t'get that possum out a'that tree.



ILLUSTRATION 1 Annie Perry

And then one night last winter we seen a light, but it was a weather satellite put up in fall that was burnin' up. It just looked like a extry moon. It had kind of a purple-like glow around it. Didn't last but a few minutes till it was gone. Then it trailed off in a cloud of smoke.

And one night it just looked like th'world was afire back in there. Like a big forest fire, y'know. And it come on around, and at twelve o'clock it went right square up in th'middle of th'sky and made a question mark. Just as pretty a question mark as you ever looked at.

ANNIE PERRY: I don't know nothin' about ghosts. In fact, I never was brought up t'hear ghost tales. My daddy said not t'tell children ghost tales. Said it'ud make'em afraid. Well, I'm not afraid, but I tell you I had a sister that wouldn't open a door an' go out on th'porch an' get a drink a'water at th'well. She'uz

just afraid a'th'dark.

They's no such thing as a haint. It's not a thing in th'world but imagination. They just imagine they hear these things and they don't hear'em at all.

Now this is not a haunted tale—this is true. I'uz seven years old when I started school. Had t'go through these woods over here, and ever'body thought they'uz haints in th'woods.

And th'neighbors, they had lots a'big old brood sows. And if you caught a pig'r'made a pig squeal, they'd bite you. And they'd say, "Now, Annie, don't you get out there on th'side a'th'road (them pigs'uz on th'side a'th'road), an' go through there or them old sows'll eat you up."

Well, they had me afraid a'hogs.

I'd have t'go by m'self through those woods over there. I'd look way out here and way out there. There wouldn't be a thing in th'world. Directly I saw a thing that looked like a hog. I had t'go by it and I was skeered. And there wasn't a thing in th'world. Not a thing. They wasn't a hog within a mile a'there—just some old stumps a'lyin' there. But I guess it looked like a hog t'me. Imagination. That's so now. They skeered me with hogs. And I'd look way out an' I'd see somethin' and I'd make a hog out of it.

Now *that's* th'way ghost tales get started. Ain't no ghosts.

LAWTON BROOKS: 'Bout two mile and a half out a'Hayesville, there kind'a in a bend in th'road is where a man was killed and just shoved out ont'a this big old white rock by th'side a'th'road. And he died and left blood a'settin' on th'rock. That blood wouldn't wash off. Stayed there a long time. An' ever'body passed through there got scared, y'know, seein' blood on th'rock where that man just fell out and died.

'Course people got their nerves up and got scared about it and they'd see ghosts. Some of'em said somethin' would be gettin' on behind their mules or horses an' ride with'em an' spook their animals an' make'em jump around scaired and crazy like. People was really scaired t'go by that big white rock 'cause so many people says somethin' would get on their animal an' aggravate th'dickens out'a'em.

I was a'courtin' up there, and I had t'come by there. 'Course I could'a went around, but if I went around it would'a been further out'a my way, and I decided t'go by it. It was a'rainin' that night, and I'd just take th'near cut and go down through there.

When I got pretty close t'where that rock was, m'horse got scaired and wouldn't budge nary an inch. Just bowed right up, front legs stiff like boards. I teched'im wi'm'spur and he jumped over t'other side th'road. Took a step'r'two and bowed up again, and I could feel'im a'shakin' a little even.

'Bout that time I saw somethin' white comin' off th'bank right down t'where that rock was at and stopped. I thought t'myself, "You got me!" I just knowed that'd 'bout done me in.

So m'horse, I think he found out before I did what that thing was, and he just commenced walkin' along and walked right up next t'it. I got me a match

out'a m'coat pocket—they wasn't no things like flashlights in them days—and I struck me a match, and there set a big white dog—big old white shepherd dog a'settin' there in a ditch.

And if I'd a'went on and hadn't a'never discovered what that was, I'd a'always said I seen a ghost. But I found out what it was.

ETHEL CORN: They call them balls'a'fire jack-a'lanterns. It's kind of a round-lookin' thing, an'hit'll come and they'll play up—they'll go down low t'th'ground and high up. And they're see'd always over here on what they call th'Chainey Hill. And some said hit was from mineral. They's a vein a'minerals goes through there. And they'd rise and they'd go up, and they're pretty good-sized lights, and they're playin' all over th'bottoms down below there. And sometimes they'll go away-y-y up and then back down.

I'd been out a'plowin', and I'uz a'wantin' t'get th'bottom plowed out. And I plowed—hit was a dusky dark when I got in. And I went t'put up th'horse and got th'corn and went t'feed her, and right at th'back of th'stable they was jest a big light rose down right at th'back of th'stables in th'swamp.

And hit kept a'goin' higher and higher. I was young—I wadn't plumb grown—and I was awful cowardly, and I throwed th'corn through a crack in th'stable—I didn't put it in th'trough—and I run and I run and I never knowed what it was. I didn't take time t'see how high it went. I run!

And Andy Burrell'uz goin' up th'branch home one night. It'uz in th'winter time an' right cold and th'wind'uz a'blowin' right hard; and it got t'blowin' an'floppin' his tie back over his shoulder. And he never thought of it bein' his tie, and he run about a quarter mile up th'mountain till he just give completely out.

And when he did, he found out hit was his tie that'uz a'doin' th'floppin' and makin' th'rackets. He'uz scared, and he took a hard race from it!

MINYARD CONNER: This boy that lived way back in th'woods had t'go hunt his cows ever' evenin'. There was a big tree beside th'road. He'd drive his cows in there and they'd be somethin' hangin' down from th'limb up there on th'tree. Couldn't tell what it was. He said it would just be hangin' there. Just nearly dusk.

And he had some more boy friends that lived pretty close. He told these other boys about it. They didn't believe him. And he told'em a certain time of th'evenin' it'ud be hangin' there. Said it wouldn't be hangin' there when th'sun was shinin'r'anything. It would be right late of evenin'. He told'em t'come a certain time.

Well, th'night th'boys was t'come, he went up there. He kept watchin' that limb t'see if anything was a'hangin' there. He'd bet some money, and he'd lose his money if they wasn't. Well, they wasn't, so he just decided he'd get out and climb th'tree and hang down *himself*.

'Bout that time, here they come around th'curve, y'know. He'uz a'hangin' down yonder. He'd slipped down on th'limb and he'uz a'hangin' down there.

Th'boys come up and looked around. Said, "Well, he told th'truth. But he said there'uz just one. There's *two* of'em." And that boy kept turnin' his head around, y'know, and kept turnin' his head around. He turned around and seen that'un hangin' right beside him! He just turn loose and here he went! And when he hit th'ground, th'boys broke and run.

Well, he jumped up and took atter'em. He said, "Wait there, boys. I'm one of you!"

One said t'th'other'n—they was a'runnin' right t'gether said, "What did he say?"

"He said, 'Wait there, boys. I'm gonna have one of you!' "

That's th'way them ghost stories gets started.

WILL ZOELLNER: I didn't think much a'ghosts then. We told a lot a'tales—pulled off some stunts on people—done lots a'foolishness around about that.

One time we sent a couple a'girls t'get some water—needed some water. It was Christmas I think it was. They went out t'th'spring, and when they got out there, there was two fellas had a bed sheet wrapped around'em.

Well, th'girls filled their jugs—one of'em had th'jug done full and th'other had it 'bout nearly full. Th'moon was shinin' just as bright, and they'uz about four'r'five inches a'snow on th'ground—had been fer several days. And them fellas just popped out acrost th'spring on th'other side.

Those girls, they just fell down like dead. By God, I thought we'd never get'em back t'th'house. We toted'em and ruffed'em around. Even got a rubbin' doctor from Pine Mountain when they come to.

Gosh, they never played that game n'more. They'uz just scared t'death. Them girls—I heard their hearts a'beatin', and they groaned a liddle bit onct' in a while. They'uz just limber as rags!

MARGARET NORTON: They say th'best way t'keep from gettin' scared when y'hear somethin' is t'find out what it is. Go right on and find out what it is, and then you'll know. It's usually a animal'r'somethin' like that. Maybe a possum in a tree.

2

There were, however, a surprising number of contacts who had seen, or whose relatives or close friends had seen, phenomena that were inexplicable to them except in supernatural terms. Most believe unshakably that haints, boogers, and evil spirits walk the land, and after hearing their stories, one wonders.

AUNT NORA GARLAND: There was about thirteen couples of us, and we took a notion to walk out plumb to the Mountain City Blue Heights Church to a box supper.

Well, we all were coming, and there was about thirteen couples I guess, and

we started back up th'mountain and in th'dead of winter. Awful cold, but y'know we were young and didn't care much, and we were all coupled up together, and me and m'husband; of course—we weren't married then.

But there was a little girl there. And there was a family that lived about a mile and a half from th'church back up th'mountain on that old road, and they was pretty well-to-do people. And I thought strange about them a'lettin' that child go—they leavin' that child at th'church.

So we started from th'church and this little child—it looked t'be about four year old and it was barefooted and it had on a white dress and a little band in it like they use t'make'em, and it had blond colored hair and curls plumb down t'its shoulders—it walked right at my heels every step up that mountain.

And I just thought ever' one of th'rest of'em seen it, and I just thought these well-to-do people had just left this child in church. Just went off and left it t'sleep there.

It kept right at my heels. It didn't walk at th'side a'my husband. It walked right at my heels all th'way up that mountain to a branch. And just before we got t'th'branch, why that child fell down and spread out its arms thataway and was just as gone as gone ever be. I said, "Lord have mercy," I said t'my boyfriend. The instant I said that, there wasn't a thing there a bit more than nothing in this world.

That's th'reason I believe in ghosts.

I wouldn't have found out such a thing as that if I hadn't see'd it with my own eyes. But of course I wasn't a bit afraid, y'know, because they'uz about thirteen couples along in front. But that little'n had walked right at my heels ever' step up that mountain till we got t'th'branch, and my mother always said that a ghost wouldn't cross water.

Her and my father used t'live right on up above there in a house, and she said every morning there was a naked baby sittin' on th'chimney. She's told us that so many times, but I didn't see that. I'm just'a'tellin' y'what I see'd. It might have been th'same thing, but this child was dressed in white. But I wouldn't have thought of a ghost, and hadn't thought of one, if I hadn't see'd it with my own eyes.

JIM EDMONDS: When my gran'daddy was a little boy, he had a aunt that died. She run a old-time loom. Worked herself t'death.

She died, and th'old man tore th'loom house down where she worked. Wanted t'get it out a'th'way. And he was goin' a'courtin' three weeks after she died—courtin' with another woman. Gran'daddy said he heard th'boards a'rattlin' just like th'old loom a'runnin'. Heard th'loom a'rattlin'. Said they had a big fire a'goin'—a big blaze—and she walked up t'th'door.

Th'little baby—her baby—they had t'hold him to keep him from goin' to her. Kept sayin', "There's Mommy! There's Mommy!"

And my mother would tell them witch tales. My mother said that her

grandfather moved from South Carolina to Townes County. He drunk a lot and weren't scared of nothin'.

They were lookin' for a place t'camp, and they asked this feller. He said, "Go t'th'second branch. Don't stop at th'first. Can't stay there. It's hainted."

He said he was goin' t'stay there. Weren't a bit scared. They fixed their camp, got their supper, and went to bed; but he was up. He was a'feelin' good. Heard someone comin'—like a wagon. Looked down and saw it a'comin', and just like a big white sheet over th'wagon. Just a'rattlin'.

The old man just hollered at it, but it didn't go very far before he heard it comin' back, so he hollered at it again. He got t'hollerin' at it and cussin' it—even got out his knife t'cut at it—but you can't hit'em. That thing faded up and down th'road all night.

Somebody been killed. That's th'reason for it.

And old Billy Jesse claimed he was a witch. Ol'Gran'daddy couldn't shoot a thing. Somebody put a spell on his gun. He went over to Billy Jesse t'take th'spell off. He lived in what they call Bitter Mountain Cove. Told him he wanted him t'take th'spell off him. Somebody had witched his gun.

So Billy loaded that gun and went t'every corner of th'house and shot sayin', "Hurrah fer th'Devil!" Run t'every corner and shot—never did load it but once—hollerin', "Hurrah fer th'Devil!"

Billy then said, "Now, th'next thing you will see will be a great covey of quail. Now don't you shoot at nothin'. Then th'next thing you see will be a big buck. You can kill him. Just shoot nothin' else."

Gran'daddy done just like he told him, and here come a big drove a'birds. He just held still. He went on and there was this big ol'buck. Shot and killed him. Th'spell was off his gun.

There used t'be more ghosts then than now.

LAWRENCE MOFFITT: I heard of ghosts but I never did believe. But I lived one time down here, I'll tell you that, talkin' about ghosts. I don't know what that was and never did know.

I moved down t'Maysville, Georgia. The man I rented from said there'uz a house *below* there that was hainted—an old house—and nobody wouldn't go into it.

Well, th'first night I moved into this house (not th'hainted one) there'uz a racket on th'porch just like you was a'draggin' a big chain. Well, that would come right on through that house, and there was a side-box kitchen we called it, on th'far side. Well, that would come through every night. Never missed a night.

I'd get up and sit on th'hearth, and had a flashlight. Never could see anything in th'world, but you could hear it just as plain as you can hear me a'talkin' to you.

Well, I wasn't used t'nothin' like that. I talked t'th'man I rented from there.

I said, "What's th'matter? Is *this* house hainted? You told me th'lower one down there yonder was, but is this one too?"

"Well," he said, "I'll tell you. There was a man killed here. You've probably seen th'stains there on the plank there on th'wall in th'kitchen."

I said that I had, but I didn't know what it was.

"That's where a man was killed, and ever since, this racket has come through th'house."

Well, I stayed there six months. There for a week or two, I couldn't sleep. I was tryin' t'find out what it was. The minute th'light would come on, that stopped. You didn't hear nothin'. You put that light out and you'd hear that. It'd come every night at nine o'clock as long as I stayed there. But I got used t'it. I got t'where it didn't bother me a bit in th'world.

But now t'*start* with, if I'd had a way, I'd a'come back home!

OSHIE HOLT DILLARD: Way over in North Carolina somewheres, they was a Indian cave when Grandpa Harkins was just a young man. And they thought this Indian went t'th'cave every day—or at least once a week. And they was a white man which slipped around after him for three days and nights until he got a chance to shoot him; and he killed him and got his waybill that was printed on a deer skin.

And he went up there, come by this old farmer's house and wanted to borrow his mattock. And th'old farmer said, "If you'll wait till I get my hogs fed, I'll go wi'ya'."

And he said, "I don't want y't'go!"

And th'farmer said, "Well, th'mattock is a'settin' out there under th'smokehouse shed. You can just go and pick it up." And he said, "Take good care of it and bring it back. It's all I got."

Said way over in th'evenin' after they got back from church, th'farmer thought about th'man. Thought he might of found some gold'r'somethin'. He'uz a'lookin' up through th'field th'way that man had left that mornin', and said he seen somebody wanderin' around up there. Said th'farmer went up there and said that man was just as gray-headed as he could be and didn't have a lick of sense—didn't even know how t'go home—couldn't even see. Said he went back and got some help t'carry him home, and th'man lived three days and three nights and died. He never spoke a word.

Th'farmer wanted t'go back and get his mattock—y'know, th'news got out all over North Carolina over in there—and he had t'have his old mattock t'farm with, so he went back up there with a whole bunch a'people. They said, "We'll dig this mountainside down [looking for gold]."

He said, "You can dig it down if you want to, but I'm gittin' my mattock and gittin' out of here."

So they went t'diggin', y'know, and laid their coats off. And it sounded like ten thousand freight trains comin' off th'bluffs. And they was a big old locust tree standin' there, and said ever' limb and th'bark fell off of it. And they run off and left their coats.

Grandpa said nobody had ever been back to it. Now he said that was th'*real truth*.

LAWTON BROOKS: Bob Meeks was his name, and he was a'workin' somewhere in Tennessee over there. He come through by Benton while they didn't have th'road then, and he had t'come across that mountain. Now I don't know whether it was Frog Mountain, whether that was th'name or not. But anyway, there was twenty-two mile there that there wadn't no houses on it— and steep and twisty, my Lord.

And it was late in th'night. His wife had a'called him. Some of his kids got sick, and he had t'come in. And he'uz a comin' along up that mountain, and he said he come around a curve and he seen this thing. Said it'uz th'biggest man he ever saw.

The man stepped out of a water ditch by th'side of th'road, and said he just leaned over a little, and as he come by he just stepped on th'runnin' board, reached down, opened th'door, got in, set down, and looked him over. It was a old Model T, and th'way it was goin' it didn't make much more time than a man walkin'.



ILLUSTRATION 2 Lawton Brooks

And he said he looked at that thing's hands and that's what he couldn't figure out. Says hit's fingers, one of'em was as long as two of his'n if they was put together, and as big again around. He said he had awful big arms, and on top of his hands was just as hairy plumb on down toward his fingers. His fingers was th'longest he'd seen on anybody. Must have been ten inches long.

He said he spoke t'him and he never did speak back. He said he didn't know whether he was gonna do anything t'him or not. He said he knowed he was

big enough. They wadn't nothin' he could'a done about it. They wadn't no need a'gettin' scared because that man could'a reached plumb around him one-handed. Big tall man—all hairy.

Said he had a beard way down, an' face hairy, an' said he was a kind'a'nasty-lookin' old man. Said he looked as old as th'hills.

Said he never got a sound out'a'him. He could hear him a'gettin' his breath.

And he said he rode at least three mile with him, and he wondered if this thing was goin' plumb t'Ducktown with him. An' he was goin' around another curve, an' said that thing—man, what'ere it was—he just stepped out. And said he looked back and it'uz just a'standin' there in th'road.

Said he was th'ungodliest man he ever did see all th'days of his life. He said people might not believe him, but he said it'uz th'truth.

Now I believe it, 'cause I don't believe Bob'd tell a lie. He was a man never got excited about nothin'.

And after that man got out, Bob said he just kept drivin' on.

And me and Walter Coleman and George went a'possum huntin'. Now that's th'only thing ever I did that I never found out what it was. Now I didn't find out *what* that was now, I'll be fair with'y'.

We left, and it sounded like somebody a'takin' a fit. Jest like somebody a'cryin'—hurtin' awful bad. An' it jest commenced when we walked t'where a dog treed a possum out on th'ridge right on't'th'Hia-wassee River.

An' we jest went out there t'get a possum, y'know, and when we went out there, by gosh, we just walked around t'th'end a'this old big log there—jest got a little bit past it—an' somethin' commenced.

Walter said, "Lawton?" Says, "What in th'world is that?"

An' I said, "I don't know, but," I says, "ain't that a pitiful noise? That's somebody or somethin'r'nother hurtin'."

So we took our old lantern then and walked around th'log. Plumb around it. Come back t'th'big old stump there where th'tree had been sawed off. We looked at th'stump. It wasn't holler. Looked in th'end of th'log. It wasn't holler. Well, I went up t'side of th'log with m'lan-tern. Shined th'light along it. Couldn't see no hole in th'log on either side of it. It still sounded like somebody a'cryin' and moanin' under th'log.

And we started a little away from th'log to where it sounded like it was comin' from now, and then it sounded like it'uz right back there at th'log. And then we'd start off out t'th'log again and it'ud be comin' from a little away from th'log. And then it commenced there right there at th'log.

And we never did find out what it was. We left there—I mean, we *left*—old George an' Walter an' me. We started off that mountain away from all that moanin' with nary a possum—into a field (Old Man Smith's field)—and we run right into a wire fence that we didn't know was there. Way we went flyin', when we hit that fence it scared th'daylight out'a us.

That was th'only thing I ever heard I never did find out what it was. Why, I wasn't skeered s'bad, but I wasn't gonna stay and them boys run off and leave

me! They wouldn't stay wi'me, and I sure wasn't gonna' stay up there an' listen t'that thing by m'self.

So we didn't take time t'get any possum!

MRS. MARY CARPENTER: I've heard Mama tell about th'one my daddy saw one time. Said that there was a preacher, and there was a forks of a road somewhere near a church I believe it was.

And he said that hit was about ever' evenin' about sundown that you could go there, and there'uz a woman that—she was so high up in th'air that she looked like she was on a quilting frame—just high up. And she had on a long black dress and she'uz just a'walkin' along, and it rustled like leaves a'rattlin', y'know, as she walked.

My daddy and another man, they worked for Earl Hudson at a sawmill, and they said they'uz comin' in one night and it was a'rainin', and they was a'ridin' them mules on in home.

And that man said to my daddy, said, "I'd like t'see that preacher's ghost tonight, wouldn't you? While it's dark and rainin'?"

Said my daddy said to him, "Well, yonder she comes!"

Said they went on—just kep' a'ridin'—and Papa said to him, "You ride on one side a'th'road and I'll ride on th'other and let her come between us, and we'll see what she looks like."

And so they did. They reined th'mules over and let her come right in between'em. Said he said t'him, "Let's foller and see where she's a'goin'."

Said it was just a'pourin' th'rain down, and said they turned th'mules around and followed about a half a mile back out th'road, and said there was just a curve in th'road—a little ridge. And said she just riz and flew over that ridge and they didn't ever know where she went.

Now is that th'kind of haint tale y'want?

Well, all right. Now there's a place down next t'my brother's that they've seen things down there on that hill. My husband said they'uz a'goin' out through there one night—him and Lawrence Talley I believe it was. They'd been t'church up here t'th'Flats to a Holiness meetin', and they was a'goin' down Mud Creek goin' back home.

And he said they was goin' up along there, and he said he didn't know what it was. It didn't say a thing in th'world. But somethin' just hit them. It was as cold as ice, and he said they just begin t'shiver and shake.

And he said Lawrence said, "Are you cold?"

And he said he was just about t'freeze t'death, and it was in th'summertime.

And he said, "Well, I am too." Says, "Seems like there's ice all over me!"

And John said, "Well, seems th'same thing t'me."

He says, "Let's run."

And John says, "I can't run."

He said, "I don't guess I could either."

And said it just jumped off of'em just like that, whatever it was, and went

away.

He said there's people said they'uz haints out there.

And there at my brother's right across th'creek—you've been over there on Kelly's Creek up there where Jim Taylor lives—there's a Mason woman lives over there. She said she'd seen a little baby out there that was flyin'—had wings. And she said it came up out of her garden more than once, and she'd be out there on th'back porch up in th'evenin' doin' her night work, and she said it would rise up with wings like a little angel—a baby.

And I know she seen somethin' one time, fer because her husband's [Frank's] daddy lived over on Germany and he was sick—bad sick. And so Frank—he'd went t'see his daddy. They were lookin' fer him t'die.

And she had a hog pen out in th'woods there, out toward our house, and she began t'scream. And Mama hollered t'me t'run over there fer somethin's th'matter. She may be snakebit.

Well, I went a'runnin' just as hard as I could, and Dad, he went a'runnin' over there. And you know, she'd fainted 'fore th'time we got over there.

By th'time we brought her to, she said there was a man there at her hog pen with a white shirt on and no head! Blood was all over his white shirt.

Gran'pa said they moved one time—said Mama was a little girl then. And he said they got moved all but their chickens, and he had t'go back and catch them after dark.

So he got him some sacks t'put his chickens in and went back t'th'place he'd moved from and caught his chickens up and tied'em and put'em in a sack. He was ridin' a mule.

He had some slung across his saddle—some on one side and some on th'other—and he was comin' along, and all at once there was somethin' in th'road. Said it looked like somebody in th'moonlight.

Said he said, "Whoa" t'th'mule. Said "Is anything th'matter?" And said it looked like a log. Said it started rollin' toward his mule, and his mule started runnin' back'erds with'im. Said it just rolled so far and stopped, and it rolled back up th'road.

Said he started back up th'road with his mule—back up through there—and said it'd come back toward him when he'd start.

Said he made two or three trips like that and decided it wasn't goin' t'get out of th'road and let him by, and said th'mule was afraid of'im; and so he just laid th'fence down—a rail fence—and let his mule run through th'pasture and come back out, and laid down th'fence again, and passed that place.

And Gran'pa said one time him and Uncle Dave was goin' home from a dance, and as they come around there where a pond was, why they heard something' a'sayin', "Oh Lordy! Oh Lordy!" Takin' on pitiful.

Gran'pa said he was scared—and said he was little—and he grabbed Uncle Dave by th'coat and said, "Dave, don't you run!"

He said "I ain't a'goin' to. I'm goin't'stay here. It's risin', whatever it is."

And said somethin' come up out of the water with th'moon a'shinin'. Said you could see it like a white sheet. Said it had four corners, and it just kept a'goin' on up, and it was just takin' on th'pitifulest. Said it was sayin', "Oh Lordy! Oh Lordy!"

Gran'pa said that his mother said that what caused that—there was a miller there and he'd killed his wife and put her in there, but that's been many many years ago. I don't know. It could have been. Gran'pa, I believe, told th'truth, 'cause I never did know him t'tell a wrong. I believe he heard it. I believe there's things for certain people t'see.

When we lived in that old house right down there, they shore was one down there. Harv Brown owned th'place first, and his wife was afraid t'stay there.

They'uz goin' t'sell it, so we bought it. And we could hear a horse down there. Harv was afraid of it too.

At night he'd come, and you could be just as quiet as you want to, but when you blowed th'lamp out (back then you didn't have electricity in this part of th'country) you could hear that horse—and I mean it'd come right up in th'yard just like a feller. You've heered a feller ride a horse—what a big racket they make—and it'd stand and stomp till you got up and looked, but when you got up t'look and shined th'light, there wasn't nothin' there. You didn't hear any more that night.

But it's th'truth if I ever told it—if I'm a'sittin' in this chair. I've heard it.

And Gran'pa said one time that he went t'make music one time fer somebody, and said he broke th'banjer string.

They said, "Well, we'll have t'quit. We ain't got another banjer string."

One of'em said, "John, you run over t'Ken Muse's." Said, "He's got some banjer strings—some extry ones." Said, "Get one over there." Said, "It ain't late and we'll play some more."

Said he looked out. Said he wadn't afraid, but he didn't like th'idea of goin' fer he had a big dog that'd bite—a great big ol'dog—and said he said, "It's pretty dark out there an' I'm afraid that dog'll get me."

"No!" he said. "I'll make you a board light." There wadn't such a thing as a lantern or a light or a flashlight. Said they got him a pine torch and lit it.

He said, "Now if you'll hurry along," he said—that'uz just a big ol'pine knot, y'know, and they just keep a'burnin' and a'goin'—said, "If you won't stay too long and hurry along, it'll last you till you get there and back."

And so he did. He started out with his pine knot, and said he got nearly there and somethin' just rared up on him and put his hands up on his shoulders and pushed him back'erds and blowed his breath in his face!

Said he reached like that t'push it off and couldn't feel nothin', and said that he plodded on pretty fast till he got over there, and he said to him, he said, "Is your dog loose tonight?"

He said, "No. I've got him tied up."