

To: Friends of Old Apples

January 30, 2018

From: Tom Brown

Apple Search---2018

Some of the apples found during the past year include: Banana (very large, yellow, sheepnose shaped), Biddick Sweet, Hall Stripe, Kinnaird's Choice, Possum, Sam Apple, and Sharpshin. I am making changes in my nursery operation so I can have more time to "apple search" next year. [I only list apples I personally found and it took me until this year to find the Kinnaird's Choice. I have a good lead for a Cox's Orange Pippin.]

On a personal note we were fortunate enough to be able to visit Scotland: Shetland Islands, Orkney Islands, Edinburgh, & Rosslyn Chapel. Our trip started in very late April so we could attend the Shetland Folk Festival, the United Kingdom's northern most music festival, featuring local and international bands.

Another memorable event was going to Greenville, SC, to observe the total solar eclipse of August 21st; Greenville was in the "Path of Totality" for over two minutes (2:09). It is a beautiful city where we enjoyed visiting the Falls Park on the Reedy and their unique restaurants. We were very fortunate that the sky was totally clear for the entire almost three-hour eclipse cycle. Merrikay and I enjoyed that day with our friends Paul & Betty. The next USA crossing eclipse is April 8th, 2024 with a path from Dallas, TX to Buffalo, NY.

Dillard, GA is an entry point for Rabun County where I went searching for the Fort's Prize apple; it was almost on the center line of the eclipse. It was a special small city because I always looked forward to stopping at the soda fountain of Frank Cathey's Valley Pharmacy (now closed). They had delicious sandwiches: egg, tuna, & chicken salad, plus pimento cheese. My favorite treat was their "Orange Aid" drink. I was able to talk to Anita Chastain who had worked at the Pharmacy for over thirty years and she told me how they made the Orange Aid. First make the "Simple Syrup"; pour 5 pounds of sugar into a gallon container and fill with hot water, making sure that all the sugar gets dissolved. [A very small-scale equivalent would be two teaspoons of sugar in a tablespoon and then fill with hot water.] Next fill a 16 ounce glass with shaved or chipped ice (the ice should be as fine as possible). Then add the juice from 1.5 fresh squeezed oranges and 1.5 to 2.0 teaspoons of the Simple Syrup. Stir. [The quantity of the oranges and Syrup is variable according to the orange size, juiciness, and sweetness.] Then finish filling with water and stir to mix thoroughly, DELICIOUS.

I have one more mini-adventure that I would like to share. For many years I had heard of apple trees "up on the mountain" in the Bluff section of Madison County, NC. Everyone told me that it was an extremely rough road; one group of hunters said, "No way that I would attempt to go there." Billy Joe Naillon agreed to take me to the top of the Bluff Mountain in his pickup truck. Once we left the last pavement, it took us about 1.5 hours to get to the first apple trees and probably 10 minutes to get further up the mountain. I would not call what we traversed a "road"; it was a vehicle-wide opening through the forest which receives no maintenance. Over the years the vehicle track has eroded down to bedrock. Billy had to skillfully negotiate each protruding rock, but even then there was some occasional truck bottom scraping. There were several apple trees of interest and I want to return to see the apples later in their season.

This year I would like to share with you interviews I conducted with four older apple growers (ages 81-90) from the Brushy Mountain area of North Carolina. These are people who provided considerable assistance to my apple search. The "Brushies" is a low mountain area in southern Wilkes and northern Alexander Counties, an area which once had a very large apple production. These counties were also my most productive area for finding lost apple varieties.

Bobby Lowe of the Sugarloaf Apple House allowed me to copy a historic apple grower's map of the Brushies. It was one Lowell Hendren had originally given him. Lowell said that the map was from the era of 1938 to 1940, when Ray Hendren was President of the Brushy Mountain Fruit Growers Association. It shows the orchard locations of 96 fruit growers, 27 who were members of the BMFGA. This compares with the current number of fruit growers—about eight. [The historic growers map is at the end of this document.]

The highest peak in the Brushies is Pores Knob at 2,680 feet. When I was growing up near Statesville, NC, I still remember a wonderful Sunday family picnic on top of Pores Knob.

Lowell Hendren (age 81)

He had a family history of growing apples that goes back to the mid-1800s. His great grandfather, Enzer Hendren, made legal government apple brandy. The stone foundation for the old boiler still exists down the hill from Lowell's home. His grandfather, William Hendren, "who lived over the hill" had an orchard of mostly Limbertwig apples on 4 or 5 acres. Brushy Mountain Limbertwigs provided a good late crop which would keep all winter. They also had Royal Limbertwigs. The late ripening apples were important since in the earlier days there was no refrigerated storage. He also had pigs, wheat, corn, and barley.

Large Family-----Lowell's parents, Clarence and Zella, married in 1922 and had a very large family of fourteen children, twelve of which were home at the same time. Lowell (no. 8) jokingly said, "I had it rough being born among three girls." They lived in a two-story house which had five rooms downstairs and three rooms upstairs. The children were, in birth order: Gladys, Jim, Donald, Max, John, Libby, Betty, Lowell, Jo Ann, Sally, Janey, William, Martha, & Rodger. Lowell has such a large family, that when they have family gatherings, there are frequently one hundred people or more in attendance.

Lowell said that 150 years ago people mainly lived where there was fresh spring water, on Rocky Creek. Then when better wells could be dug, people moved to the mountain top, more favorable for apple growing.

In the earlier days, there was extensive making of moonshine in the area. Someone once asked the popular Roy Lowe ("Mayor of the Brushies") how much moonshine you could get out of a bushel of apples. His reply was, "I do not know, but I got a year and a day"--the Federal prison penalty for selling moonshine.

Lowell grew apples himself from 1961 until 2012, with a total orchard of 35 to 40 acres. He grew Red Delicious, Brushy Mountain Limbertwigs, Golden Delicious, and Stayman, plus a few Magnum Bonum. When growing up, they had a Yellow Potts apple tree which they used for cooking.

Lowell married his wife Sue in 1965 and they had three children: Barry, Kim, and Joel; plus 3 grandkids.

He told me about an apple their family had—a Lady Washington—which was 2 ¾ to 3 inches in diameter, shaped like a Rome, yellow with red stripes, more red than yellow, sweeter than a Golden, ripe in September. Of the apples I find, they fit known descriptions, plus I also get people such as Lowell who remember them to confirm their identity. I need to show him the Lady Washington I found in Yancey Co., NC.

In the Brushies there was an apple Co-Op which was started in the mid-1950s to help the growers market their apples. For several years Lowell was President of this organization.

Zella Henderson---His mother, Zella, was an amazing person. Every morning she would fire up her wood stove and make 36 biscuits plus many other nourishing breakfast items. Once she finished cleaning up from breakfast, she would go out and work in the field until about 11:00 a.m., when it was time to start lunch. Every day she made a pie or two—blackberry, apple, cherry, pumpkin, or raspberry. After lunch she worked three more hours in the field. With such a large family she canned in half gallon jars. With so many kids, his dad bought beans and flour in 100 pound sacks. Zella lived until age 96.

Her specialty was Cinnamon Yeast Coffee Cake which she made for special family gatherings and other special occasions. The recipe is below. I wonder how many people will actually make a cake that requires two intervals of letting the dough rise. But remember, Zella had time to make the cake and she was much busier than one who will read this.

Zella Hendren's Cinnamon Yeast Coffee Cake

1 c. warm milk (100°-110°F)	1 egg
1 pkg. dry yeast	Approx. 3 ½ c. sifted bread flour or all-purpose flour
1/2 c. margarine	1/3 c. margarine (for later melting)
1/4 c. sugar	1/2 c. sugar (for coating dough rounds)
1 tsp. salt	1 ½ tsp. cinnamon

To the warm milk, add yeast; mix well and let stand until softened. Mix margarine, 1/4 cup sugar and salt together until fluffy. Beat in egg. Add yeast mixture. Stir in enough flour to make a soft dough.

Knead until smooth and elastic on a lightly floured board. Place in a greased bowl, cover and let rise until double in size, about 1 hour. Turn out on lightly floured board and knead lightly 1/2 minute.

Roll dough to 1/4 inch thickness. Cut into rounds with 2 inch biscuit cutter. Dip each in melted margarine, then into remaining sugar mixed with cinnamon. Stand up in well buttered 9" coffee cake ring pan, until ring is filled (or use a Bundt pan). Make cinnamon rolls with remaining dough. Cover and let rise in warm place until double in size, about 1/2 hour. Bake the Coffee Cake in a 350 degree oven for 35-40 minutes or until done. Yield: 1 cake plus 6-8 rolls.

They had a grade "A" dairy with 12 to 14 milking cows. They also grew numerous agricultural crops. These extra activities provided a source of income to buffer against variations in yearly apple crops.

Every child helped with the farm chores as soon as they were old enough to carry a bucket. They had Jersey cows and then they acquired a bull in a cooperative arrangement with NC State. At one point, State personnel arrived and wanted to see how well the bull was doing. Lowell said that they were welcome to look but he would advise against it. The men crossed the fence and entered the pasture, then quickly came back with the bull chasing them.

In another incident, Lowell and two sisters were moving a 2 to 3 day-old calf and the mother took offense. She knocked down one sister and chased the other two up an apple tree.

Weather Disasters---In 1946, a severe freeze wiped out much of the apple production on the east coast, but his family still had a good crop of Limbertwigs, about 1,200 bushels. His dad sold them for a high price in Cherryville. With this profitable sale his dad was able to purchase a 1946 Chevy Truck, one of the first to be made after WWII. He also bought a tractor. There was a freeze in 1964 that caused the loss of the apple crop except a few Limbertwigs and Goldens. In 1955 the freeze was more severe, destroying the entire apple crop.

In the spring of 1952, there was a severe hail storm which made a half mile swatch of land look like winter. The hail balls were hen egg in size, and a few were so large that you could not reach around them with your hand. The hail came down the chimney and rolled out onto the floor. His dad had a new '52 Plymouth car. He went out to move it to the garage, but the hail was so bad he had to retreat back to the house. The hail knocked off the small apples and small branches, and also knocked off some tree bark. This ruined that year's apple crop and because of limb damage the next year's crop was also impacted.

The Hendren family was always involved in the military from the Revolutionary War, Civil War, WWI, WWII, Korean, and Vietnam wars. They even had distant relatives who fought on both sides of the Civil War. Two were Confederate soldiers who ended up as Union prisoners of war, one returning from New York after the war and another disappearing after being taken to Illinois. Lowell served in Vietnam but was not involved in any combat.

One time a neighbor talked about a "big dog" getting some of his chickens. After that Lowell carried his single-shot 22 rifle. One day he was in the corn patch and noticed all the cows looking down the hill. Then he saw the big dog with a chicken. He shot, reloaded and shot again. The dog dropped. Later he and his dad took the animal to town. Everyone agreed that it was not a dog. A vet thought that it could be a wolf.

Bark Grafting---Lowell was an excellent tree grafter, predominantly using the bark grafting method. He also did some cleft grafting. He showed Ryan Lowe how to bark graft and he in turn used the technique to convert old large Rome trees into Old Fashion Staymans, having a very good success rate. Lowell also showed me how to bark graft, but I am not proficient at it as yet.

For the bark grafting you need a larger apple stem or trunk, 3/4" or more. It is sawed off, then the bark is slit and slightly pulled back, and a piece of bud wood is inserted which has been cut on one side, with the cut side placed against the wood core. Then the top cut, slit area, and top of the bud wood are sealed with wax or some other compound. Lowell usually did his bark grafting when the trees were blooming. "It was a time when I could do nothing else." For the bark grafting, he collected his scion wood as late as possible, even collecting some after trees had partially budded out.

I had two interesting apple events with Lowell. Once I found a beautiful tapered yellow apple in northern Wilkes County. About one sixth of the apple was gone due to insects or birds. I showed the apple to

Lowell after storing it for about a month in a refrigerator. We both agreed that it had an amazing taste. I later got cuttings for Lowell and he bark grafted one of his trees. Unfortunately, once fully grown, these apples never duplicated the wonderful taste we both remembered. It was a Hogpen apple (Southern Porter).

Another time I was collecting a few apples from Lowell's orchard and I came across an apple I did not recognize. I asked Lowell what it was. He replied, "It is the Pumpkin Sweet apple you gave me." The reason I did not recognize it was that it was a very large apple. I had never seen one larger than medium in size. This just shows how proper growing practices can have a tremendous impact on apple size and quality.

Linney Bryant Lowe (age 84)

"Lowe" is a famous apple growing name in the Brushy Mountains area and it is still represented by the Sugarloaf Orchards (Bobby Lowe), Perry Lowe Orchards, and Brushy Mountain Orchards (Tom Lowe).

Bryant's great grandfather, Isaiah Lowe, brought in Limbertwig trees from Bowling Green, KY. Later he owned many thousands of acres and became sheriff.

Grandfather Robert Lowe set out a Red June apple tree in 1870 and it lived until 1992. There were some big Abram trees on the site when his grandfather Robert Lowe bought the current farm. Grandfather Robert Lowe managed the immense Smoot orchard, the largest in the area at that time. The typical worker there was paid \$1.00 per day. His father Linney Lowe carried water to the apple pickers for 50 cents per day.

His grandfather made legal brandy for three years using Payne and Brandy apples, both making brandy of note. In northwestern Wilkes County I was told that the Yellow Hardin apple made the most brandy per bushel. Bryant said that there were no "deer apples" because there were no deer. All the faulty apples were used to make moonshine. "Granddad also grew tobacco, oats, and cotton, and sold timber."

Uncle June Lowe would take apples to Charlotte in his 1922 Model-T truck, loaded with 40 bushels.

Bryant's dad, Linney, eventually had a 7 or 8 acre orchard of mainly Limbertwigs; plus he leased additional property with an established orchard on it. His family acquired over 100 acres when an elderly lady approached the family about giving the property to them in return for her life-time care.

Bryant and Bobby, his brother, cleared land in 1967 and set out a large apple orchard in 1968. They eventually had 2,700 trees. In one block of the orchard they set out spur-type Goldens; when this orchard became very productive they harvested about 5,000 bushels, that year the apples were unusually large. In their big orchard they had the Red Delicious trees planted down low in the orchard; these bloomed too early and were frequently damaged by frost and had to be replaced by the later blooming Arkansas Black trees.

In 1971 they moved into the Janfue apple house building and started operating it as Sugarloaf; they purchased the building in 1975.

Bobby Lowe told me about some of their early apple storage. They went to a valley where leaves collected, and then they would put them onto a sheet for transport to their apple house. They would lay down a thick layer of leaves to be under the apples. Next leaves would be put into divider partitions and finally used to cover the apples.

Tom Lowe also showed my wife, Merrikay, and I his 1920 apple house. There was a 1 ½ inch gap between each of the flooring boards to let the cooler air come up from the basement to pass through the apples to cool them. The apples were stored in twelve-foot wide bins. The first refrigerated storage was in 1952 at the Janfue apple house, later to become Sugarloaf.

Bryant sold apples to the famous NASCAR driver Junior Johnson, often taking him six boxes. Junior especially loved their Brushy Mountain Limbertwigs.

Root Grafting---One thing unique about Wilkes County is that on the old trees, I would never see a graft line. This was because they never grafted onto young saplings. Instead they would dig up a feeder tree root as Bryant's dad would do. Then when planted, the tree's graft line would be below ground. His dad sold the trees he grafted for 15 cents each.

"One year the hail was so bad that it beat the bark off the trees' top limbs."

Bryant was fascinating to talk to because of his vivid remembrances of very early apple growing in the Brushy Mountain area. His detail for these events was as if they were observed yesterday.

Bryant's favorite food was apple pie. His mother would also make "stack pie", consisting of six to seven layers of apples and dough, baked in a big cast iron pan.

Bryant remembers many of the old apple varieties; one was a Payne apple tree near the home that fell over in rain-softened ground. Lester Lowe had Tenderskin apple trees and Clyde Lowe had the Polk Seedling trees, a variety offered for sale by a Pores Knob nursery. D.C. "Doc" Lowe had Fleming and Winter Bowman apple trees. Their family also had Watts Limbertwigs, thought to be a cross of the Brushy Mountain Limbertwig and Virginia Beauty.

Tree Spraying---Initially no one sprayed their apple trees, but as time went by there were more problems with scab and other apple diseases. There was even a suspicion that some of the early scab problems started when nursery plants were brought into the area from China.

One of the first spraying demonstrations occurred at the Lowe orchard. A Professor Hunt came from Raleigh with his spray equipment in a surrey. Apparently he had traveled by train to Taylorsville and then hired a surrey to take him the 8 miles to the Brushy Mountains. He sprayed part of their Limbertwig trees—"some with trunks as big as saw logs, 15 to 16 inches". He used a Bordeaux mixture: lead arsenate, blue stone, and lime. Later in the year, he returned and compared the sprayed trees with the ones left unsprayed. The sprayed trees had apples which were free from scab, but not those of the unsprayed trees.

For early season scab spraying they also used "liquid sulfur". Once they sprayed with the sulfur and the next day it was unexpectedly very hot, 90 degrees. Many of their Limbertwig apples fell off the tree. In a nearby orchard, Clyde Lowe also sprayed with the sulfur but he did not have the same problem because he added lime to his spray mix.

After that they started spraying their trees. At first they used a large hand pump system. This hard work was done by Lloyd St. Clair who was an extremely stout man who also did saw milling.

They next went to a one-cylinder engine/pump system which connected to a very long hose which would allow them to reach all the way to the top of their orchard. Bryant remembers the problems of using the Bordeaux mixture. It was very easy to burn tree leaves with the blue stone. In one instance an early rain washed off the protective lime and the residual blue stone caused the leaves to burn badly and fall off resulting in a tree with apples but almost no leaves.

This early spraying involved lead arsenate and for this they had no breathing protective devices. Protective attire was a long sleeved shirt and a hat. Three of the four older growers interviewed never used any protective respiratory equipment and the fourth used it only very late in their career "when the Government made him". They all lived long lives—81 to 90 years and counting. It did not affect their memories because they all had astounding memories. For example, if they mentioned a distant relative they would remember their marriage date, death date, etc; also remembering dates of other events, as well.

Folk Medicine---Here are some of the early medical treatments Bryant told me about---Mary Woodring, his grandmother in Watauga County, performed the following treatment for earache. She would go into the woods, and in a rotten log find a "Bess" Beetle. It was then broken in two to give a "drop of oil" which could be put into the ear. An elderly Indian lady gave his grandfather a tonic—"Steel Dust medicine" for anemia. [Some of the folk medicine cures mention iron or steel for anemia.] People would heat turpentine to put on a person's chest for congestion. Appendicitis was called "stomach colic".

Civil War Stories--Uncle Bart Davis said that he killed a man in the Civil War. His commander told him to shoot a sniper out of a tree, and all that could be seen of him was the glint of his shiny buttons. Bart shot and the Union sniper fell. When later telling the story, he would break down and cry, hoping for forgiveness someday.

In that area there were men who did not want to go and fight in the Civil War. One was his granddad's brother who was traveling with Aunt Mann. The Home Guard (Confederate) caught him. That night, when they were not alert, he eased into the woods. A little later he could hear their boots on gravel as they were coming after him. He had a pistol and emptied it in their direction. He went to Uncle John's place. The Home

Guard knew where to look and showed up at the home. Uncle John told them to leave or some of them would be killed. They did leave. Near this home a 57 gpm artesian well was dug in 1956.

On a nearby mountain a very large rock had slid down over some other rocks making a shelter you could walk in, plus there was water at the back. A Hodges man who wanted to avoid the war was hiding out there. The Home Guard found him and he was shot. They call this place "Hodges' House".

Miscellaneous Stories---Bryant also had many other fascinating stories, some of these are below:

Bart Davis' boy who lived near Russell Gap would walk to Taylorsville (11 miles) very frequently carrying a heavy load of "tobacco sacks" for sale. He had a bowed back from carrying such a heavy load.

At one time there was an immense White Pine in the area which was 12.5 feet around. Way up in the forest behind Bryant's home is a famous Hickory tree, notable because of its immense size.

Bryant's dad saying, "It is plenty soon to get married the day before you die."

Dried sweet potatoes could be chewed for half a day like you were chewing tobacco.

Bryant's home has three large chimneys, two of them two stories in height. They are constructed of laid stone, except the very top which is brick. They were constructed about 1898 by Levi Bumgarner who did all the work and supplied the materials for \$60.

One old German who lived in the community was named Robert Shufford. He did not start growing apples until he was 65 and then lived until he was 97. Robert rode a white mule and had a long white beard like Santa Claus. When he came to the house he would use his crooked cane to pull little Bryant near him, then sit him on his lap. This scared the young, shy Bryant.

Ben Lowe, his grandfather's brother who died in 1918, specialized in delivering babies. People would come from all over to get his services. He never lost a case. He lived in a three-room house on the hill just above Bryant's current home. He did a lot of walking to get to his patients. He always wore high leather boots and showed his dad fang marks where snakes tried to bite.

In the early days, not many people had cars so there were many walking trails in the mountains. One went from the Lowes Creek area to behind the Lowe home. His dad used this trail system to carry food and water to the Smoot Orchard.

Jonah Parker (age 90)

Jonah always wanted to be a farmer and saw others doing well at raising apples. He had a more challenging path than the other growers because he did not have relatives already growing apples. Also years earlier (in 1935) his family had a severe setback when his father lost his farm because a \$375 debt could not quickly be repaid. He did have some familiarity with apples because his father had helped in several orchards and when Jonah was 14 he picked apples for the Cherry Hill Orchard for 10 cents an hour. He tried to work 10 hours so he could make a dollar.

He bought his current farm in 1948 and set out his first apple trees in 1949. For this he ordered 100 Double Red Staymans. His bundle turned out to include 9 Blacktwigs and half the remaining ones were regular Staymans. Some of these full-sized Blacktwig trees took about 20 years to have a full crop of apples. Fortunately the farm had a tobacco allotment and so he could grow tobacco until his apple orchard was well established. He also set out peaches to have some production before the apples. Jonah eventually had about 300 very large apple trees in his orchard, Parker's Orchard on the Brushy Mountain Road. Jonah and his wife Helen did all the farm work for the first 15 to 16 years, except for some help during apple picking time. Eventually they had three children who would assist them: Edmond, Carolyn, & Randy.

Jonah also remembered using the Bordeaux mixture for early apple spraying in the area. He said that the mixture they used per 100 gallons of water was 2 lbs. arsenate of lead, 2 lbs. Blue Stone (copper sulphate), and 4 lbs. of lime. The very early apple tree sprayers involved a barrel with one man pumping and another person operating the spray hose.

The apple production of the orchard is currently done by his grandson, Gray Faw. Jonah still sells the apples and peaches at their apple house with the assistance of his sister, age 95.

Grafting Instructor---Jonah taught a grafting class at the Wilkes Community College for 10 years, educating hundreds of people in the art of grafting. For grafting Jonah uses the “whip & tongue technique” where the two pieces to be joined are cut on an angle with a very sharp knife then notched to help hold them precisely in place; this method gives a very strong grafting union. Many of his students brought him apple cuttings and he incorporated these into a 60-tree rare apple orchard. These trees are on more dwarfing rootstock. Customers also brought additional rare apple cuttings. Into one large apple tree, Jonah grafted 120 apple varieties. Jonah also sells apple trees of the old varieties which he proudly grafts, usually on EMLA-111 rootstock.

Special Apple Found---From earlier years, Jonah fondly remembered a long-gone White Buckingham apple tree. One day he went into the Stanley Smithey’s store in Wilkesboro and was surprised to see a bin of apples labeled “Buckingham”, the white ones he had wanted to find. The store manager said that Wilburn Anderson brought in some unknown apples and later Roy Lowe had come in and said that they were Buckinghams. He was able to get Buckingham cuttings from Wilburn’s old tree and now has 10 large White Buckingham trees in his orchard. These trees have produced hundreds of bushels of apples for his customers to enjoy. The White Buckingham is Jonah’s favorite pie apple.

One of his most beautiful apples is his Red Buckingham. It came from the Summit area of far western Wilkes County. The trunk of the old tree was so large that it was difficult for him to reach around it. Two weeks later, after Jonah got his cuttings, the tree blew down.

Ministry---In 1950 Jonah started preaching as a Baptist minister. For about twenty years Jonah was the pastor of Friendship Baptist Church in Elkin, NC. He kept detailed records of his ministry and has preached 1,400 sermons, conducted 240 funerals and 88 weddings. Jonah frequently incorporates his apple knowledge into his sermons. For instance: “Why does a fruit tree grow? To make seed to reproduce itself. Our purpose as Christians is to make more Christians.” He likes the old time hymns, with meaning for every verse as compared to the more modern hymns where the same phrases are often repeated. “The old apple varieties are like the old hymns with much more character. More modern apples are like the newer hymns, shallower in nature being just sweet or sour.” “When an apple tree is grafted, its nature is changed. When a person accepts Christ, his nature is changed.”

Jonah like many other of these apple growers was in the military, joining the Navy in 1944. He was in a Navy LSM group (Landing Ship Medium). These were ships over 200 feet long and 35 feet wide, designed to invade Japan and capable of a beach landing. They had ten double barrel rocket launchers which could fire 20 rockets every three seconds. They also had 5 inch cannons and 4 inch mortars. From his nearby Bethany Church, twenty-eight people went into this war; fortunately they all came back.

Traveler---When you go into Jonah’s apple house on the Brushy Mountain Road, you will see many tools and implements of yesteryear. You will also see many photos of a Border Collie, Traveler. He was very friendly to visitors, and he would frequently put an apple in their cars. People thought that he wanted to go home with them, but he wanted them to toss the apple so he could chase it. Traveler loved Royal Limbertwig apples and would eat an unlimited amount of thin slices; if offered a slice of Golden Delicious apple he would refuse to eat it. If an apple was placed on Traveler’s nose, he would toss it into the air and catch it.

Traveler was afraid of electric fences and would not go near them. Once a ball was tossed and went under the electric fence. Traveler chased it and ended up on the other side of the fence. He then realized where he was, and lay there for a few minutes. He then crawled a long ways on his belly to finally get under the fence.

Waking-up Trees---Jonah shared a lot of his apple growing expertise with me. For instance, sometimes a tree will get up to a fairly good size, perhaps 3.5 to 4” in diameter and still would not bloom. [People have described trees such as this and asked, “What can I do?”.] Jonah said to do the following: about two weeks after when they should have bloomed, make a cut through the bark all the way around below the bottom limbs, cutting down to the wood. The tree should bloom the next year. People have described multiple other ways of “waking up” a non-producing tree, such as hitting it with an axe handle or driving nails into the tree. Jack Masters of Erwin, TN told me about a promising technique: take a worn-out bicycle tire (off the rim, the old big kind), and then hit the tree as hard as you can twenty times about chest high.

Jonah also told me about a person coming to him and describing multiple serious problems with his apple trees. Jonah's recommendation was, "For those trees, they need some sunshine on the roots." I initially wondered if he meant to thin the foliage to let more sunshine through. What he was actually suggesting is for a bulldozer to push out the very faulty trees.

For cider (non-fermented), Jonah's favorite blend would be 2 Staymans to 1 Golden.

At the bottom of Jonah's orchard in a hollow is a Black Heart Cherry tree. These are trees as big as the typical forest tree with full-sized cherries on them. I have occasionally seen this type tree at several Wilkes County locations. Bryant Lowe thought that an ex-Confederate soldier might have had some involvement in setting out these cherry trees.

Grandfather John---Jonah also told some stories about his grandfather, John Parker. John made government inspected brandy and would go to the railroad depot in Statesville to deliver the brandy he had produced. He would hitch up his team of mules, load up the wagon with brandy, and start at 4:00 am down the mountain for the 29 mile trip (one way). On the return trip he would lay down in the wagon and go to sleep. The mules knew the route so well that they would take him right back to his home. John would wake up when he reached a steep part of the road near his home.

Once John was hauling wood one day when the mules ran away with him. He fell and was run over by the heavily laden wagon. When John got back to the house, he took a big dose of castor oil and said, "Tie that mule outside my window and bring me my shotgun and if my bowels don't move, I'm going to shoot that mule before I die." He thought that was some sign of not being busted up inside. He did not shoot the mule.

John decided that they needed a school closer to their community. He went into town and visited the school board offices. He told them if they would send a teacher then he would take care of the rest. He built a school himself on the Trails End Road. It was named the Parker School.

Another time John had a barrel of apple brandy and knew the government tax inspectors were headed his way. He did not want to pay taxes on the whiskey because it was so much he would only make a small profit. He placed a wooden box over the barrel, then placed a little girl on top of the box and gave her a slice of watermelon to eat. The tax people left without seeing the barrel.

Active at 90---I called Monday (January 15th) and asked to speak to Jonah and his wife said that he was butchering hogs with Scott Faw. They each had a hog to butcher and it was 14 degrees early that morning. I asked Jonah if there was any secret to his long life (90) and continued vitality. He said "Hard Work".

Among Jonah's greatest and proudest accomplishments is the completion of 69 wonderful years of marriage to his wife Helen; their anniversary was September 18th.

Jesse Henry Tevepaugh (age 82)

Vashti is a lightly populated rural community in northeastern Alexander County, N.C. Vashti is located northwest of an important geographical feature—Rocky Face Mountain. It is a granite dome which extends about 600 feet above the surrounding countryside. The mountain top is covered with thin soil, trees, and surprising Yucca plants. It is home to several endangered species. From 1922 until 1940 there was a quarry at its southern end. In 2012 the Rocky Face Mountain Recreational Area opened to the public, 318 acres with six miles of hiking trails, rock climbing, picnicking, etc. A hike of note is the Vertical Mile Challenge.

Vashti is one of the first places I started searching for old apples. There I visited Houston Bowles who showed me his old Limbertwig trees and a Yellow Potts tree. These were part of his small commercial orchard. Ex-apple grower, Flake Harrington, helped me find the Liddy apple. The most prominent Vashti apple grower was Henry Tevepaugh (called "Hen" or "Tevie" by his friends). He had apples in his orchard such as Stayman, Red Delicious, Goldens, and Limbertwigs. In an old orchard he had a Polk Seedling apple tree which was laying on the ground, a remnant of a very old orchard. I was able to get cuttings for grafting from this tree. Once I went over to help Henry pick apples. He gave me an apple sack with a shoulder strap and a bottom which could be opened for discharging the apples. I picked two trees of Staymans—good sized apples. And then I got on a tree of smaller medium-sized Staymans, and I thought that I would never get my bag full.

Henry was an excellent apple tree grafter, having almost 100% grafting success.

Henry passed away in 2012 at the age of 82. The stories which follow were told to me by his wife of 53 years, Clara, and his youngest son, Bryan.

Farm Life---Henry bought the farm in 1957 and then added to it in 1973; this was part of his parent's farm. He eventually had twenty acres of apples and peaches. He also raised tobacco and had soybeans, wheat, rye, and corn. Plus he worked as a full-time carpenter. When he came in from the carpentry job, he would then work until dark on the farm. Bryan can remember Henry ploughing all night and then returning to his carpentry job the next morning. Clara and the five children all pitched in and helped—one daughter and four sons: Debbie, Howard, Tony, Joel, & Bryan. Having a variety of crops was very helpful in case they had a problem year with their apples, peaches, or tobacco.

Busy Hands---Bryan said that he could remember spending two hours in the early morning emptying a tobacco barn, then going to school, coming home and working with apples to dark, then doing some more tobacco barn work, and finally some homework. Someone once asked Henry about working the kids so hard. He replied, "If both their hands are busy then they cannot get into trouble."

There was lots of work to be done: two cows to milk, a work horse that was used in tobacco work to care for, hogs, chickens, ducks, and hunting dogs. It was not just hard work, but valuable skills were being learned. "I know how to work" said Bryan. "Dad taught us how to build, farm, garden, hunt, and mom taught us how to cook and sew. I know how to milk a cow, bake biscuits, and light a fire. We learned growing up what it took to survive." Plus they also acquired a valuable work ethic.

"I still say that Dad made us use the horse so we would appreciate the equipment we had and would take care of it." "My parents used to look for me, when I was 3 or 4, but I would be down in the field with the horse. I was just a little thing. The horse lowered his head so I could get the bridle on him. I remember my brothers plowing tobacco with the horse."

Henry, with the family's help and while doing everything else, built their house, barn, pack & meat houses.

Growing up, they always had two plates of biscuits for breakfast plus other great things. For dinner they always had biscuits plus cornbread. Their favorite apple dish was stewed apples.

In their many gardens (5), they grew potatoes, cabbage, broccoli, tomatoes, corn, beets, radishes, beans, peas, cantaloupe, watermelon, squash, peppers, turnips, etc. "Henry always liked to make enough to carry some to others."

Henry did not believe in consuming spirits. He would not sell apples to anyone who planned to use them to make brandy.

Unique Era---They were fortunate to grow up in a trusting era. They did not lock their doors until the late 1980s. After a day of sawing wood they would often leave their chainsaw on an apple crate in plain view of the road and a week later it would still be there.

Henry was a Ford man. He once owned a Chevy truck, "But never again because it was soft in the rear when carrying things."

The daily work regimen was broken up with hunting and fishing trips. One place they would go was to the Granite Falls area for catfishing. Usually this was done at night when the catfish would bite better. They would also go to Webb's pond, the Catawba River and other favorite spots. They would often get up before dawn, eat breakfast and then go rabbit hunting. Henry hunted until five months before his death.

Apple Crate School---Bryan said, "When I was growing up on rainy cold Saturdays when it was too wet to work, Dad's friends—Fred Barnett and Bob Wiles, plus others—who were old men at the time, would come over and talk and whittle under the apple house front shed roof. It would be like nothing for them to set out there for half a day. I would listen to them talk. I will never forget listening to them."

"On one of these rainy Saturdays, my son Jesse, who was 4 or 5, and I were at the home visiting my parents. Bob Wiles showed up. Bob and Dad sat down under the shed on apple crates. I sat down with Jesse on my lap. Jesse just kept wanting to talk." I told him to "Be quiet, be quiet because you are in school now." "School?" "You are in Apple Crate School now," I said. "Listen and learn."

“From these old timers I learned a lot about doing things the old way. I learned about hitching up a team of horses, sitting out there listening to them.”

Folk Medicine---One home remedy that they used for coughs and sore throats was “Onion Juice”. Clara would slice an onion and put it into a bowl, alternating the layers with sugar. This was left to sit overnight. In the morning there would be onion juice in the bowl. They would then take a teaspoon of this as needed. I asked Bryan how it tasted. His reply was, “Good. Good. Mom never had any trouble getting me to take it.” [Tom Brown--“I made my own test batch of onion & sugar. The flavor is not bad; I could easily take it for a cold.”]

Korean War---Like the other apple growers, Henry was in the military, serving in Korea. There he had one of the most dangerous jobs imaginable—a forward observer. These are soldiers who go near or behind the combat lines, observe enemy positions, and then call in artillery fire. It was just him with a radio, rifle, and pistol out there by himself. Henry told them about the intense cold of the winter and about being supplied by food air drops. If they found a damaged food container they would still eat it because they were so hungry.

Henry was wounded twice; both times he patched himself up and kept fighting. Once he was running away from danger when a mortar round blast knocked him down. He could not figure why it had knocked him over. He could not get his rifle up because it kept hanging on his arm. There was a large piece of metal sticking in the butt of the rifle stock. As he was running, this big piece of metal hit his gun stock instead of hitting him. The family still has the piece of metal. Henry got shrapnel in him twice. When he left Korea, there was still shrapnel in him.

He was a forward observer in the critical battle of Taegu. He was in one of the four fox holes of forward observers who called in strikes during a critical part of the battle when there was a surge of North Korean Troops (KPA). A large number of KPA troops were killed or wounded.

While still in Korea he used his building skills to lay out and construct foundations for their large assembly tents, the ones that had floors.

After two years in Korea he returned to Fort Benning, GA, where he spent most of a year training soldiers in the skills he had acquired in battle. Henry did not think that he was owed any military benefits, saying “There are others who deserve it more.”

Two of their relatives were killed in Vietnam, a nephew and Clara’s brother.

Winter Fun---There is a very long hill from “downtown Vashti” toward the Tevepaugh home; it is straight and of uniform downward slope heading South, about 1,000 feet long.

“Used to be when it snowed everybody and his brother would come and sled down the hill. The neighbors would take their tractors and pull us up the hill. We used to get on inner tubes and sleds and slide down the hill and you could not steer the inner tubes. People had bonfires lit all down the hill. When we got it packed down, the snow would be on the road for two weeks. You would be coming down the hill so fast it would make the water come out your eyes and we would often go way up the next hill”

“When it started snowing the feed truck would always get stuck and Henry would have to hook up a chain to his tractor to pull the truck around the curve so it could get feed to the neighbor’s chickens.”

“I know that there was one time it started snowing and it was really snowing. A tractor had gone back and forth, up and down that hill and then that night when we got there it was mashed down in the middle and the sides were up, making a track for us to slide in. You talk about FAST.”

What a rich and rewarding life this family had.

For many years we have been very fortunate to have several owls that live in our community. We frequently hear their calls in early evening and on very rare occasions actually see the owls. I will always remember an owl calling loudly near our home, answering way off in the distance was another owl with a different call. There were at least fifteen rounds of calls between them---Pure Magic.

Tom Brown, 7335 Bullard Road, Clemmons, NC 27012; Phone: 336-766-5842

Email: heritageapples@gmail.com; Web site: www.applesearch.org

© AppleSearch.org

Jonah Parker



Bryant Lowe



Henry Tevepaugh



Lowell & Sue Hendren

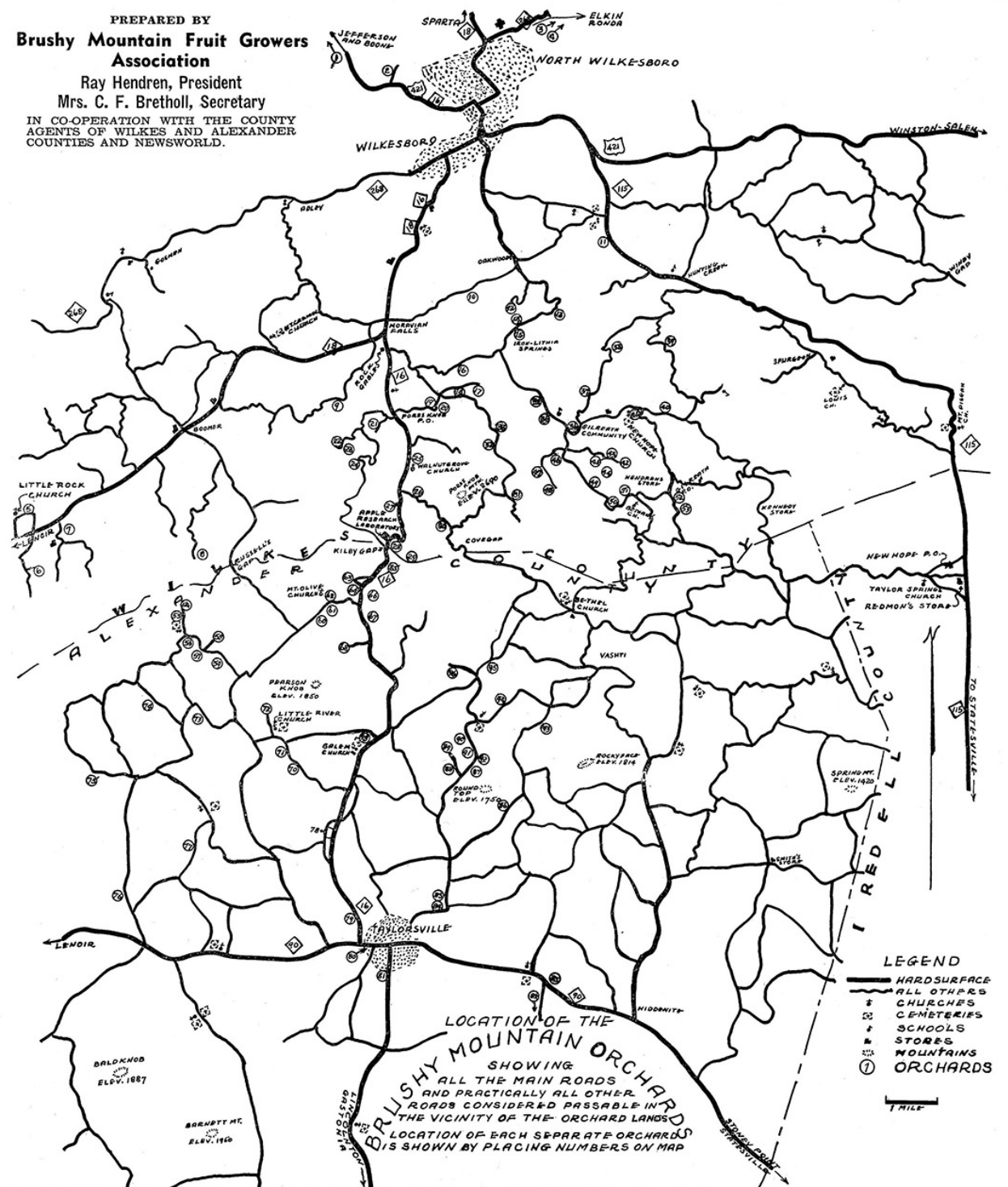


MAP SHOWING LOCATION OF BRUSHY MOUNTAIN ORCHARDS

PREPARED BY
Brushy Mountain Fruit Growers
Association

Ray Hendren, President
Mrs. C. F. Bretholl, Secretary

IN CO-OPERATION WITH THE COUNTY
AGENTS OF WILKES AND ALEXANDER
COUNTIES AND NEWSWORLD.



- | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| 1. V. M. Church, Millers Creek | 24. *Orville Price, Pores Knob | 49. *Floyd Hendren, Pores Knob | 76. *D. Fred Milstead, Hiddenite |
| 2. *Suncrest Orchard, W. B. Anderson, Mgr. Rt. 1, North Wilkesboro | 25. Edna Jennings, Pores Knob | 50. J. M. Costner, Pores Knob | 77. E. Little Bebb, Rt. 2, Taylorsville |
| 3. C. E. Tharpe, Ronda | 26. B. M. Broyhill, Pores Knob | 51. J. P. Tedder, Pores Knob | 78. George W. Jolley, Rt. 2, Taylorsville |
| 4. Dewey Byrd, Roaring River | 27. *E. P. Lowe, Pores Knob | 52. J. C. Tedder, Pores Knob | 79. Fred W. Johnson, Rt. 2, Taylorsville |
| 5. J. A. Lackey, Boomer | 28. *Perry Lowe, Pores Knob | 53. T. C. Tevepaugh, Pores Knob | 80. W. H. Carson, Taylorsville |
| 6. N. C. Andrews, Boomer | 29. Hayes & Church Orchard, Pores Knob | 54. C. Jeff Watts, Rt. 2, Taylorsville | 81. J. A. Sharpe, Rt. 1, Taylorsville |
| 7. *I. J. Broyhill, Boomer | 30. E. C. Phillips, Pores Knob | 55. G. W. Bumgarner, Rt. 2, Taylorsville | 82. T. T. Payne, Rt. 3, Taylorsville |
| 8. J. M. Crawford, North Wilkesboro | 31. Bud Lowe, Pores Knob | 56. Carl Fortner, Rt. 2, Taylorsville | 83. C. A. Deal, Taylorsville |
| 9. W. G. Lowe, Rt. 2, Pores Knob | 32. *Arthur Edsel & Son, Pores Knob | 57. Tom Ferguson, Rt. 2, Taylorsville | 84. *Lennie Scott, Taylorsville |
| 10. C. H. Opitz, Rt. 2, Wilkesboro | 33. *W. F. Lowe & Sons, Pores Knob | 58. Carter Hubbard, Rt. 2, Taylorsville | 85. John C. Deal, Rt. 3, Taylorsville |
| 11. *Clarence Fletcher, Rt. 3, North Wilkesboro | 34. P. A. Jennings, Pores Knob | 59. I. E. Robinette, Rt. 2, Taylorsville | 86. V. Clate Deal, Rt. 2, Taylorsville |
| 12. *Gold Medal Orchard, W. H. H. Vaughn, Oakwoods | 35. R. C. Adams, Pores Knob | 60. *J. J. Lowe & Sons, Pores Knob | 87. Clay Harrington, Rt. 2, Taylorsville |
| 13. Sunny Slope Orchard, W. R. Newton, Wilkesboro | 36. A. A. Baily, Pores Knob | 61. E. J. Deal, Pores Knob | 88. Joe Tevepaugh, Rt. 2, Taylorsville |
| 14. *Mountain Crest Orchard, H. H. Morehouse & Son, Oakwoods | 37. J. M. Crawford, North Wilkesboro | 62. Sherman Davis, Pores Knob | 89. J. Roby Wike, Rt. 2, Taylorsville |
| 15. Austin Triplett, Oakwoods | 38. *S. C. Stewart, Rt. 3, North Wilkesboro | 63. *D. E. Davis & Son, Pores Knob | 90. T. J. Wike, Rt. 2, Taylorsville |
| 16. *C. F. Bretholl, Moravian Falls | 39. J. H. Pearson Orchard, E. I. Ball, Mgr., Gilreath | 64. M. D. Lowe, Pores Knob | 91. Jones Wike, Rt. 2, Taylorsville |
| 17. Mrs. C. P. Brock, Pores Knob | 40. W. H. Tevepaugh, Gilreath | 65. Linney Lowe, Pores Knob | 92. J. B. Harrington, Rt. 2, Taylorsville |
| 18. *Phineas Marlow, Pores Knob | 41. *W. H. H. Vaughn, Gilreath | 66. Spurgeon Lowe, Pores Knob | 93. C. Smith Harrington, Rt. 2, Taylorsville |
| 19. *Phineas Marlow, Pores Knob | 42. Ed Hendren, Pores Knob | 67. Vernon Wike, Pores Knob | 94. *Brushmont Orchard, Sam Wike, Mgr., Rt. 2, Taylorsville |
| 20. *W. A. Jennings & Son, Pores Knob | 43. *M. V. Robinson, Pores Knob | 68. Tobias Bumgarner, Pores Knob | 95. J. Melvin Childers, Rt. 2, Taylorsville |
| 21. *James Ritchie, Pores Knob | 44. *C. J. Hendren, Pores Knob | 69. Dewey Davis, Pores Knob | 96. W. L. Blackwelder, Rt. 2, Taylorsville |
| 22. *Dewey Broyhill, Pores Knob | 45. *J. J. Hendren, Pores Knob | 70. Frank Childers, Pores Knob | |
| 23. H. M. Broyhill, Pores Knob | 46. *Mitch Davis, Pores Knob | 71. Willie Childers, Pores Knob | |
| | 47. Joe Revis, Pores Knob | 72. Gaston Jolley, Rt. 2, Taylorsville | |
| | 48. John Jenkins, Pores Knob | 73. Poole St. Clair, Rt. 2, Taylorsville | |
| | | 74. *Walter Russell, Rt. 2, Taylorsville | |
| | | 75. D. Folk Bowman, Rt. 2, Taylorsville | |

*—Member Brushy Mountain Fruit Growers Association