

LABOR AND SOCIAL BARTER
IN AN APPALACHIAN COMMUNITY:
CARROLL COUNTY, VIRGINIA, 1880s-1930s

by

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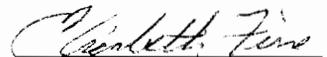
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Keith Robert Webb

Peter Wallenstein, Chairman
History

(ABSTRACT)

From the 1880s to the 1930s Carroll County, Virginia, experienced economic changes which were sweeping many areas of the Appalachian mountains. Industrialization brought sawmills and iron ore mining activity. Throughout this fifty-year period, Carroll County residents continued to labor at agricultural activity. Laborers began to work in the new industries while continuing to farm.

Throughout this period, laborers moved from place to place seeking economic opportunities on farms and in industry. Carroll County residents practiced a diversity of labor to support their families. Carroll County residents also helped each other through the practice of mutual aid. When crops needed harvesting, neighboring farmers pitched in to help. Younger residents took care of and housed their elderly kin. These practices of mutual aid did not cease to exist with the arrival of industrialization. Sometimes, new labor opportunities provided people with new ways to interact with and help family and community.

Preston Webb exemplifies the fact of Appalachian migration, mobility, work diversity, and mutual aid. He

moved about the Carroll County region for work opportunities. He worked at a variety of agricultural and non-agricultural jobs to support his family. He also housed family members during times of crisis. Other Carroll County residents were at different levels socially and economically, but they too operated from a world of mutual help, work diversity, and mobility. This thesis explores these phenomenon through the stories of these residents of Carroll County.

Acknowledgments

This project would have never achieved completion without the help of many people. Thanks go to my interviewees and survey respondents for providing clear descriptions of another age. Special thanks go to Crandall Shifflett and Ricky Cox, who read the paper in its early stages, and to my committee, especially my advisor, Peter Wallenstein. Many thanks go to my mother, Janet Webb, for patiently assisting with typing, and my wife, Lisa Webb, for inspiration to see this work to completion. This project is lovingly dedicated to my grandfather, Clarence Webb.

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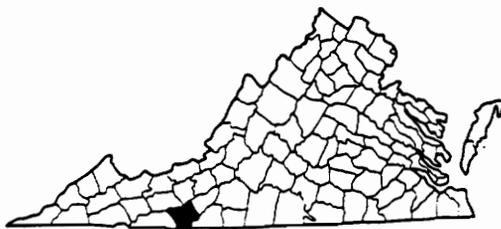
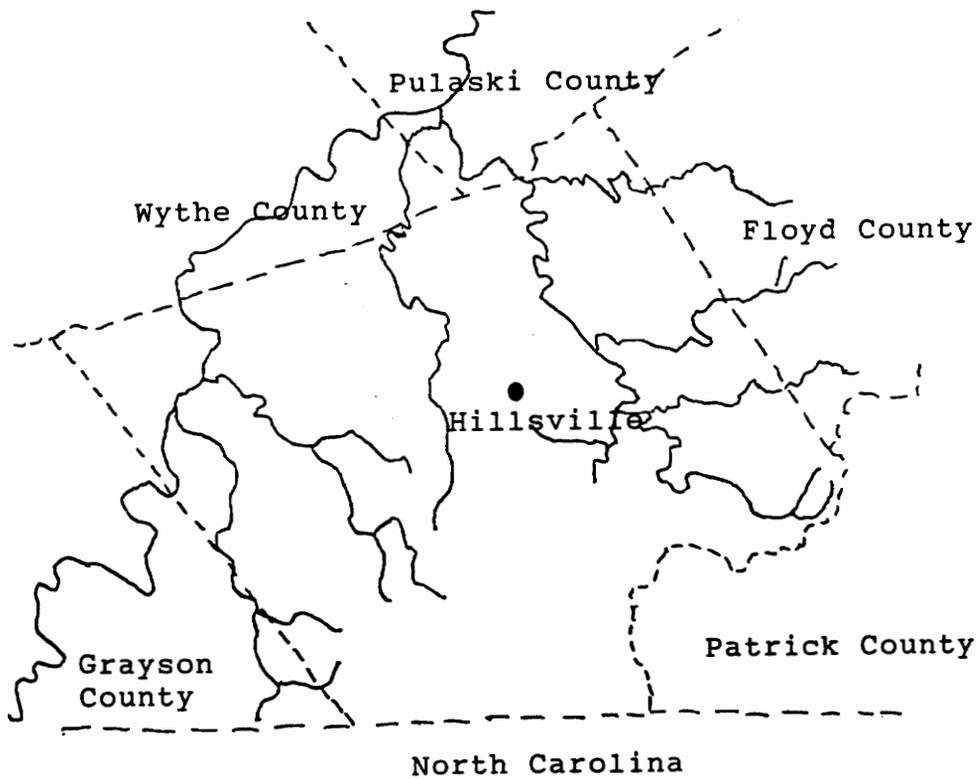


Figure One - Carroll County, Virginia

CHAPTER ONE:
INTRODUCTION

Appalachian mountain people have been stereotyped as lazy, ignorant, and backward. The modern media mistreats Appalachian people in cartoon strips, magazines, and movies. Scholars of Appalachia have begun to see how the misunderstanding of mountain culture and folkways has led to a misreading of mountain life. Ignorance of Appalachia's true history has also played a part in the development of false ideas about present-day Appalachia. From the 1800s until the present, Appalachia has been described by local color writers and historians as a backward, primitive area. To these writers, Appalachians seemed to be "locked in time." Appalachians did not progress with the rest of America.

Modern students of Appalachia term this attitude toward Appalachia as the "static image." Appalachians, according to this view, were static in several ways. They did not move about very much. After early families settled in isolated hollows, they remained there for many years. Secondly, under the static image, mountaineers had little contact with the outside world. Mountaineers were frightened by the outside world and violent toward outsiders. Thirdly, according to the static image, mountaineers were independent of each other and did not possess social or economic contact at the

local level. Instead, mountaineers found it hard to get along with each other and settled their differences by feuding.

If these static images were true, mountaineers would not have carried on trade with larger market centers. They would not have moved around from one geographic location to another, and they would not have interacted with one another in social and economic ways. In this paper, I will show that mountain people have not been static, or locked in time, but have interacted with the outside world through market activity, have moved about from place to place to improve their economic condition, and have helped one another in reciprocal relationships which I refer to as social barter. Neighbors were not fiercely independent of each other, but vitally dependent upon each other.

This study of Carroll County, Virginia, came out of my broader interest in the Appalachian region. I have Appalachian roots which run deep and, like Appalachian historian Ronald Eller, I have an interest in providing an accurate account of Appalachia's history. As Durwood Dunn mentions in his book about an Appalachian community, Cades Cove, the people he knew or heard about from oral histories were people who "embodied widely held ideals of selflessness and unstinting service to their neighbors." These were the qualities upheld and admired in an Appalachian community;

not lawlessness, drunkenness, and selfish isolation.¹

Also like Eller, over the years I have been interested in presenting the operation of an Appalachian community in its daily work world. How did Appalachians make a living? Did Appalachians remain locked in a system of subsistence agriculture, blindly ignoring the advance of industrialization? How did Appalachian people react to the world of industrialization? Did non-agricultural work strip Appalachians of their dignity and culture, or did mountain people preserve the patterns of reciprocity and neighborliness which had sustained them for so long? This study will show that Appalachian people, specifically those residing in Carroll County, Virginia, sought the economic opportunities offered by industrialization. From 1880 to 1930 (the scope of this study), Appalachian people preserved certain aspects of the older agricultural world. As they moved into industrial activity they kept alive the patterns of mutual aid and neighborly reciprocity which were once necessary parts of a the agricultural world.

¹While attending a northern college, Ronald Eller became interested in Appalachian "people, in their distinctiveness, and in their experience as Americans." Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers: Industrialization of the Appalachian South, 1880-1930 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1986), vii. Durwood Dunn devotes a whole chapter to the family life and social customs of Cades Cove people, who showed sympathy for their neighbors. Cades Cove; the Life and Death of a Southern Appalachian Community, 1818-1937 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1988), 194.

I have been influenced by several important works dealing with the Appalachian community. The most important ones focus on the period of industrialization in the mountains. In Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers, Ronald Eller speaks of industrialization as an active force, one that swept away a passive, idyllic pre-industrial Appalachia. In Eller's view, Jeffersonian-type family economies operated in relative isolation from the outside world but remained productive and prosperous in a social system that stressed local, neighborly hospitality and mutual help. The most important economic unit was the family farm, though the family received support from the social and economic system of the surrounding community.²

Eller's idyllic economic community suffered its death blow with the arrival of industrialization. Thomas Jefferson's economic model of family economies was then replaced with corporate Hamiltonianism, followed by an accompanying destruction of environment, culture, and social structures. Accordingly, mountain people were not willing participants in this new industrial order but were pressed into the new order by forces beyond their control; forces which in turn destroyed their old economic lifestyle and

²Eller's Chapter One, "On the eve of a Remarkable Development," covers the basic Appalachian economic unit, the family, and its function within the context of community. Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers, 3-38.

culture. Mountaineers were not happy with the new arrangements, Eller contends, but "by the eve of the Great Depression, all were bound together by their common loss of autonomy and by their common relationship to the new order."³ While Eller's interpretation of a stable pre-industrial Appalachia may seem too ideal, his economic and social descriptions of barter and trade on the local level provide a useful framework for developing my study on Carroll County. Farmers in all areas of Appalachia transferred barter practices to every facet of the social system, from the role and duty of boarders to the role of children and the duties of one farmer to another.

Another important study on the reaction of an Appalachian community or region to industrialization is Crandall Shifflett's Coal Towns. Shifflett takes issue with two of Eller's central arguments: 1) that pre-industrial Appalachia was functioning soundly and fulfilling the economic needs of most of its people; and 2) that mountaineers and their culture were obliterated by industrialization. Instead, Shifflett argues that mountaineers were struggling under a pre-industrial economy high in poverty and low on the possibility of social improvement. Mountaineers did not resist the industrial

³Eller, Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers, xxv.

changes which followed, for changes brought with them opportunities for work and a better life.⁴

Another work that examines the changes in the economy, culture, and life of an Appalachian community over a one-hundred-year period is Durwood Dunn's Cades Cove. Dunn traces the history of Cades Cove from the first white settlements until its takeover in the 1930s by the National Parks Service. One is amazed at Dunn's historical juggling act as he adeptly keeps alive a cogent description of a community's culture, social practices, and changing economy. Dunn describes how community members interacted with one another in daily cultural and economic roles, as well as how the community related economically to market centers, such as Knoxville. Cades Cove retained strong ties with the outside world at a time when local color writers falsely described Appalachian communities as backward and isolated. Cades Cove managed to function smoothly on a local level because of strong social ties which stressed individual hard work and a moral life that emphasized helping kin and

⁴Shifflett argues that if rural life had been "so idyllic, farm families would not have left...Rural life held out limited opportunity; rural industry seemed more promising." Coal Towns, Life, Work, and Culture in Company Towns of Southern Appalachia, 1880-1960 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 7.

neighbors in reciprocal work relationships.⁵

While Dunn's work provides the model for my own study of Carroll County farmers, people who labored in work relationships which stressed hard work by individuals, another work set in nearly the same area as Dunn's Cades Cove, is Florence Cope Bush's Dorie. The author traces the life of her mother, Dorie, in East Tennessee and North and South Carolina from 1898 to 1942. Bush explores how Dorie's family retained traditional Appalachian customs, including mutual aid, while also participating in the industrial changes which were sweeping Appalachia. In Dorie we see examples of migration to other states for work, local migration when industry-based jobs moved around, and movement back to the countryside when industry slackened. There are also descriptions of the phenomenon of mutual aid, such as when Dorie's mother nurses the sick, when grandparents kept grandchildren who were going to school, or when Dorie's husband, Fred, housed his brothers when they were looking for jobs. Dorie's story matches my own story of Carroll County families, who also exemplified patterns of

⁵Dunn covers various aspects of the community with chapters on culture, social customs, the market economy, religion, and politics, and nicely organizes these topics into one integrated community study.

reciprocity and help during an industrial age.⁶

METHODS AND PRIMARY SOURCES

While Carroll County provides the framework for a community case study, the work life of Thomas Lee Preston Webb provides the framework for interpreting the social relationships which were so important to the social and economic functions of a community. Preston Webb was born in 1875 in Carroll County to Daniel Martin and Victoria Webb. After his marriage in 1894 to Dora Ellen Stillwell, he spent twenty years working in Carroll County. Preston moved his family from one farm to another. He would rent one place, move and buy a small patch of land in another place, and move yet again to another rented farm. Finally, in 1914, Preston moved his family to the Dry Branch community of Pulaski County, near Allisonia. Here in the southern section of the county, south of the New River, near Macks Mountain, Preston farmed, mined, traded, and hauled. On several occasions he boarded in West Virginia to mine coal; for two years he moved the whole family there.

Preston represents a group of Appalachians commonly overlooked by historians. Constantly on the move and looking

⁶Florence Cope Bush, Dorie: Woman of the Mountains (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992).

for work opportunities, these mobile workers present historical challenges. But the history of these laborers gives insight into the geographic mobility of nineteenth and twentieth century farm laborers. These laborers also provide information on farm and industry work developments and the survival of social and economic practices from the agricultural world into the new industrial world. Many of these farmers were either illiterate or simply did not keep personal records. The farm owners they worked for did not keep records as well. Since some of the farmers studied for this project did not own the land they worked, deeds and land records prove of little use in tracing their history. Even agricultural census schedules provide only limited information. The schedules report only the renters who worked a whole farm unit.⁷

Population census records also present an incomplete picture of farm life. Census records taken every ten years

⁷There are two ways to derive agricultural information from the census. The U.S. Bureau of the Census published general statistical figures, recording overall tenancy rates and the types of crops farmers grew state-by-state, and county-by-county. For this study I also used the agricultural censuses from 1870 and 1880. These census figures give specific farm by farm information on what kind of crops were grown and how much land was devoted to various agricultural activities. The figures also show farm ownership and list the renters and tenants who farmed a complete farm unit. Not included are the farmers, including sharecroppers, renters, and wage workers, who farmed the land of other farmers and did not farm an autonomous farm unit. Their activity does not show up in the agricultural census records.

do not show when temporary moves occurred, such as when a family was present at one census, moved within or outside the county, and moved back before the next census count. Ultimately, the available records provide incomplete information for tracing the geographic mobility of Appalachian farmers. Local personal property tax records are an excellent source for tracing either social mobility or acquisition of wealth and property, but they still do not give the information needed to trace geographic mobility. It is difficult to determine whether the individual under consideration moved to another area for temporary employment, or whether he engaged in supplemental employment activities.*

*For this study I traced the persistence of farmers from the Pine Creek section of Carroll County, a district encompassing the northeastern portion of the county. (Carroll County is composed of four districts including Pine Creek, Laurel Fork, Blue Ridge, and Sulphur Springs.) I used the population census records of 1880 and 1900. The records from 1890 were destroyed by fire, so I was only able to study the persistence of farmers over a twenty-year span, rather than a ten-year span. It is uncertain how many moves were made by farmers in this long interim. No history of their extra work activities is given by these figures, or incidences of residents boarding in faraway places for temporary work. Personal property tax records are arranged by district also, and they are good indicators of social standing and social movement or acquisition of wealth. But they still do not give a full picture of temporary moves to find work. For this study I traced the social mobility of select farmers from the Pine Creek region for the years 1880, 1890, and 1900. These records give good information on farmers' possession of farm animals, agricultural implements, and various household items, as well as the general trends of wealth acquisition.

Tracing temporary employment patterns is a challenging prospect, but not the only challenge. Census records and personal property tax records present a wonderful mosaic of the diversity of agricultural activity in an Appalachian county, but they do not recreate the social interaction that made this diversified economy function. Also, supplemental work activities which allowed this economy to operate with social networks of labor do not appear in these records. Furthermore, patterns of mutual help and family and neighborly reciprocity are absent from census records and tax records.

To trace Carroll County work activity, both on and off the farm, I made extensive use of oral and written interviews and surveys. These sources provide a wealth of information on the social work interaction of the family - husband, wife, and children - on the farm. The interviews and surveys provide information on the diverse work activities that farmers and their families practiced to survive and thrive economically. These sources also indicate how the community interacted through the social network of mutual aid. Additionally, the surveys and interviews give a clearer picture of the movement of farm laborers from one part of the county to another, as well as to other regions within Appalachia. Motives behind moving or in retaining aspects of the agricultural world are much clearer because

of these sources.

The surveys and interviews provide historians with different types of information. I sent written surveys to one representative of each of Preston Webb's eleven children. Besides helping to reconstruct the moves Webb made, the surveys explore the settlement and work patterns of his children. The surveys ask questions about the work history of each of Preston's children, including work both on and off the farm. The surveys provide the best information on the survival of social practices from the agricultural world into the new industrial world in the Carroll County region. They also present geographic mobility patterns practiced by Preston Webb and continued through later generations (See Chapter Four).⁹

Along with statistical records and the surveys which present the case study of the Preston Webb family, I used the stories of several former Carroll County residents to enhance the understanding of labor in Carroll County. Oral interviews are a tremendous source of information, for they give life to a history which is hard to piece together from statistical records. The interviews reveal settlement

⁹The main purpose of the "Survey of the Work of Carroll County Families" was to explore the trends in farmers' work patterns as they moved from an agricultural to an industrial economy. These surveys also served as a guide for the oral interviews conducted with various former Carroll County residents.

patterns, work patterns, and mobility patterns of Carroll residents as they moved within the county or to other counties or regions. The interviews give life and texture to other data collected in the census and personal property tax records.

Interviewing participants of the transformation from an agricultural to an industrial age was the only way to understand the survival of barter and mutual help practices in the new economic order. The oral interviews are extremely valuable, as they demonstrate that both before and after industrialization the agricultural world of Appalachia contained a number of social practices which fostered community interdependence and neighborly mutual help. In Chapter Four, data from the interviews and surveys are combined to prove that the practices of the agricultural age continued to exist well into the twentieth century.

Preston Webb is just one representative of the many laborers who participated in the transformation of labor in Carroll County. He experienced every variety of turn-of-the-century rural labor, working many combinations of farm and non-farm occupations. He worked his own farm as well as on neighboring farms. He labored in activities outside the realm of farm work, such as trading, hauling, and saw milling, participated in local industrial activities such as iron ore mining, and worked in industrial activities away

from home, such as coal mining in West Virginia. Along with helping to illustrate the transformation of labor in Appalachia, Preston Webb's case provides the historian with an understanding of geographic mobility during the industrial age. Studying the agricultural background of mobile workers, such as Preston Webb, as well as the agricultural practices of the regions from which men like Preston Webb came, helps to explain why certain work patterns remained in place when families moved into non-agricultural spheres of work.¹⁰

In addition to Preston Webb, there are other farmers who show up as statistical numbers for supporting data gleaned from the population and agricultural census records, as well as from personal property tax records and deeds. These records present data on farm products and offer a general picture of population mobility from one census to the next. Also, these records show the trends of social mobility and acquisition of wealth. For example, Preston Webb was a farmer who rented most of the lands he farmed. He

¹⁰To better understand Preston Webb's working life, I interviewed two of his children: Clarence Webb, of Pulaski, Virginia, on June 17, 1993, and Gracie Webb Gunter, of Shiloh, Virginia, on June 24, 1993. Clarence Webb was born in 1913 in Carroll County near Long Shoal, which is near the Pulaski County line. Soon after Clarence's birth, Preston moved his family to Pulaski County near the New River. Until he was disabled, Clarence spent much of his working life in the paint mines near Hiwassee and lived in the Dry Branch area. Gracie was born in 1914 in Carroll County.

moved many times during his twenty years in Carroll County, in addition to years out of the county. In contrast, John Goad operated a two-hundred-acre farm in the Snake Creek section of the county and remained there his entire life. The work patterns, agricultural practices, and settlement patterns of John Goad's children provide interesting comparisons to Preston Webb's family. John Goad, like Preston Webb, took advantage of work opportunities off the farm.¹¹ In addition, John Quesenberry owned his farm of about fifty acres in the upper Snake Creek section of the county, near Hillsville. Like Preston Webb and John Goad, he too worked at supplemental work activities.¹² Lee Spencer lived in the northern section of the county, in mountainous land near the Wythe County line. Here he subsisted on a few acres of land on hillsides and in hollows. Lee Spencer

¹¹Interview with Berta Goad Webb, Dublin, Virginia, on June 22, 1993. Berta is the daughter of John Goad and Octavia Jane Webb Goad. Berta's mother was a daughter of Isaac Webb, a local leader, minister, and farmer who divided his seven-hundred-acre farm among all his children. Berta grew up helping her brothers do many chores on the large farm. Berta married and lived in Carroll County for several years, working for sixteen years at a local hosiery factory, before moving to the Dublin area.

¹²Interview with Merl and Claudia McGrady Quesenberry, Dublin, Virginia, June 18, 1993. The the son of John Hanibal Quesenberry, Merl, a veteran of World War II, spent most of his working life at the Radford Arsenal. Merl's wife, Claudia, is the daughter of Monroe McGrady, who owned a small farm near Hillsville and helped farm surrounding land with his brothers.

nearly mirrors the stereotype of an isolated, independent Appalachian farmer, but even he was affected by the work transformation of the larger world. While being a part of the reciprocal work relationships which were so important for agricultural areas, he participated in the industrial transformation that reached even his community.¹³ William Gardner's experience was similar to Preston Webb's in some ways. He too moved his family often from farm to farm. He was a sharecropper or renter on these farms, moving from a cousin's place in Hillsville to a one-thousand-acre farm in Wythe County, then to a large farm in Pulaski County. After moving to Pulaski County he made several more moves.¹⁴

All of the farmers mentioned above were touched by the changing work world through the period of fifty years beginning in 1880. They held in common the transformation of labor, whether by owning a large farm, renting a farm, or sharecropping on a one-thousand-acre farm. The stories of the children of these representative farmers provide useful information regarding the labor experiences of people across

¹³Interview with Mary Spencer Surratt, Wythe County, Virginia, June 22, 1993. Mary is the daughter of Lee Spencer, who owned a small patch of mountain land in Carroll County before moving his family across the line into Wythe County. Mary married and stayed in the same general area of Wythe County.

¹⁴Interview with Ola Gardner Webb, Pulaski, Virginia, June 16, 1993. Ola Webb, the wife of Clarence Webb, was born in 1915 in Carroll County. Her father was William Gardner.

various social strata. Aside from utilizing census records (which track geographic mobility) and personal property tax records (which track social mobility or acquisition of wealth), this study uses the testimony of the interviewees to trace the work history of Carroll County laborers. Studying the labor experiences of farm owners and non land owning farmers alike is helpful in understanding turn-of-the-century work patterns.

HISTORY OF EARLY APPALACHIA

Building cabins and other temporary housing was part of the range of activities Appalachian frontier families undertook. Families farmed and otherwise subsisted by hunting and gathering in much the same way as the Indians had on these same lands. Men cleared trees, built houses, planted corn in mounds when a plow would not cut through stumps and stubbled ground, and assembled fences around the garden. Women worked gardens, tended to children, did other household chores, and even helped the men clear land and assemble buildings. Children helped their parents with a wide variety of tasks and were responsible for their own chores as well. The whole family operated as an economic unit.

Very little in the experience of a frontier family was

permanent. Rough log houses were not romantic retreats but practical and easy-to-build shelters. Settlers cleared fields for planting by girdling trees, allowing corn to receive sunlight through dead branches. Many settlement sites were temporary stops for families on their way to Kentucky, Tennessee, or other parts of the Appalachian mountains. Housing, economy, and settlement patterns all speak of the transience of early Appalachian settlement.¹⁵

Early Appalachian settlers were not isolated from each other. They did not live as "islands" but were willing to give and receive aid. Along with neighbor ties, settlers worked closely within larger community and regional economic networks. Farmers bartered goods at the nearest store for things they could not raise on their own. Early farmers herded thousands of hogs through the mountains to market centers far from their homes. Some farmers distilled their corn into a more mobile product -- whiskey. Appalachian people managed to maintain economic ties with the outside world.¹⁶

¹⁵For a discussion of migration into Appalachia, see Raitz and Ulack, Appalachia, A regional Geography, 94-146. The end of Chapter Three, "Coming to the land," treats routeways and land distribution. Chapter Four, "Settlement and Cultural Patterns," discusses settlement patterns by various cultural groups.

¹⁶For local economic patterns, see Eller, Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers, 3-38. For regional economic patterns, see Dunn, Cades Cove, 63-89, and Raitz and Ulack,

The limitations imposed by terrain influenced the settlement patterns of Appalachia and the development of market agriculture. Appalachia possesses several different mountain chains, with variations in mountain steepness and the size of valleys. Some areas have large river valleys with rich soils, while others have tight hollows with steep, rocky slopes. The particular geographic nature of each area influenced the settlement patterns and work relationships of that region.¹⁷

CARROLL COUNTY GEOGRAPHY

Even geographic areas as small as Carroll County possess vast differences in terrain. A sizeable portion of Carroll County is located on a mountain plateau; the town of Hillsville is centrally located within the county and rests on this plateau. The farmland in this area is generally good, with gently rolling hills. Steeper mountain slopes compose the terrain of the northern border of the county near the Wythe County line. The same holds true for the

Appalachia, A Regional Geography, 100-101. For information on economic transformation in Appalachia, see Mary Beth Pudup, "The Limits of Subsistence: Agriculture and Industry in Central Appalachia," Agricultural History (Winter, 1990), 61-89.

¹⁷Raitz and Ulack, Appalachia, A Regional Geography, 39-84.

northeastern corner of the county near the border of Pulaski County. The southern portion of the county also possesses an interesting range of topography. The Blue Ridge Mountains define the southeastern border of Carroll County. The elevation drops quickly from north to south over this mountain range. On the western side below the mountain, a small portion of the county lies within this lower elevation. Here the climate more closely resembles that in nearby North Carolina than the climate in the mountains.^{1*}

The steep Blue Ridge, tight hollows and ridges near the Wythe County line, hollows and river hills in the Pine Creek section near Pulaski County, and gently rolling hills on the plateau around Hillsville all define Carroll County geographically. These also represent areas which are important to farming in Carroll County. Though terrain accounts for a number of differences in the agricultural practices between these regions, there are similarities in the work patterns and mobility patterns which farmers practiced.

CARROLL COUNTY FARMING AND BARTER PRACTICES

Farming in Carroll County mirrored that of larger

^{1*}Alderman, Carroll 1765-1815, 1-2.

Appalachia in several respects. Throughout the period from 1880 to 1930, corn was one of the staple crops of the county. Corn served to sustain; farmers fed it to their horses and cows, and they ground meal for human consumption. Whenever possible, corn served as a market crop. Farmers sold their surpluses after they determined what they would need until the next harvest. Cows, hogs, and chickens were prominent in the agricultural life of Carroll County farmers, just as similar livestock were for other farmers in Appalachia. Chickens, eggs, butter, and hogs were not only consumed but bartered or sold for things farmers could not produce on their farms, such as clothing, shoes, coffee, and sugar. Farmers in Carroll County also produced significant amounts of wheat, rye, oats, and buckwheat. Local millers ground wheat and corn, taking part of the flour or meal in return for their services.¹⁹

The system of barter was an important characteristic of Carroll County farming. Not only did millers receive part of a food product for their services, but also landlords received part of a crop as rental payment for use of a farm or house. Farmers produced corn through the system of barter by helping each other hoe, harvest, and shuck corn. Barter,

¹⁹Good general information about the types of items raised on Carroll County farms is found in census records and personal property tax records.

mutual help, and neighborly reciprocity were common ways Carroll County farmers interacted socially and economically.²⁰

From 1880 to 1930, the system of agriculture in Carroll County facilitated the formation of mutual help work patterns. The family operated as a miniature economic unit. Men, women, and children operated in separate spheres of work, but the spheres allowed for mutual aid. In addition to engaging in their own daily chores, family members helped each other and neighbors with various tasks. All family members were vitally and equally important in sustaining economic prosperity. Family-oriented economic practices influenced the social practices of the community. The system of barter and trading incorporated family economic practices of mutual help and reciprocity and dovetailed with the economic order of the larger community. Family work practices mirrored community social and economic practices. Each aided in the growth of the other.

²⁰For examples of Appalachians' barter system of neighborly help, see Verna Mae Slone, What My Heart Wants To Tell (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1979). Mrs. Slone describes the social networks of mutual aid that sustained Eastern Kentuckians and brought families and communities together. See also Florence Cope Bush, Dorie: Woman of the Mountains (Knoxville: University of Kentucky Press, 1992).

CARROLL COUNTY WORK PATTERNS

Like many other Appalachian people, Carroll County residents practiced diversified agriculture to sustain themselves in a system of agricultural self-sufficiency. Orchards were an important part of agricultural diversity; farmers harvested apples, cherries, and chestnuts. Many farmers kept bee gums and harvested honey. Children picked blackberries and dewberries for extra income, or to trade for clothing. Along with agricultural diversity, Carroll County contained many different jobs on and off the farm. Men and women labored at various tasks within the family unit, as well as for neighbors and the community. There were also jobs outside the realm of agricultural production. Millers, blacksmiths, preachers, stonemasons, and other workers led busy lives, working at their specialized tasks while also farming.

In the 1880s, Appalachia underwent a transformation of labor that forever altered the region's work environment. Companies from various eastern cities began to tap the tremendous natural resources of the region. Coal, timber, iron ore and other resources were hauled out on newly-laid railroad lines and spurs. Large mining towns came into being where there had been no towns before. Thousands migrated to areas where only recently there had been few people.

Industrialization brought mighty changes to the mountains.²¹

In Carroll County, the coming of industry added to an existing list of non-agricultural jobs. Now labor was less related to agricultural production than ever before. From 1880 to 1930, one-time farmers mined iron ore, logged, worked in sawmills, hauled tanbark, labored seasonally in the West Virginia coal fields, and worked in factories in North Carolina. The combination of industrial work with agricultural work quickly became the natural order for farmers of Carroll County. Farm owners with over one hundred acres, or those with fifty-acre farms, as well as renters and tenants, engaged in non-agricultural labor activities to supplement their family's income. Farm owners on established farms worked in the more traditional non-agricultural activities, such as milling, carpentry work, and blacksmithing. Poorer farmers, renters, and tenants quickly took on the new industrial jobs, becoming iron ore and coal miners, haulers, and general laborers.

²¹For descriptions of industrialization in Appalachia, see Eller, Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers, and Shifflett, Coal towns. For a description of industrialization in and around Carroll County see two works by Helen Lewis and Suzanna O'Donnell, Remembering Our Past, Building Our Future and Telling Our Stories, Sharing Our Lives, (Ivanhoe, Virginia: Ivanhoe Civic League, 1990); Conway Smith, The Land That Is Pulaski County (Pulaski: Pulaski County Library Board, 1980), 314-341; C.R. Boyd, Resources of Southwest Virginia (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1881).

At just the time when farm sizes were declining, other job opportunities became available. Carroll County residents quickly took advantage of the employment opportunities at hand. Industrialization provided labor supplements to the old agricultural world which incorporated community social customs of mutual aid. Workers still carried on reciprocal family and community social work ties, but now through a new combination of agricultural and industrial labor activities. Laborers did not always look at new work opportunities as a way out of the life they lived, but as a way to retain that lifestyle, whether plowing the fields of Carroll County, grubbing up roots in a new ground near Big Reed Island Creek, mining iron ore near Allisonia, or laying stones for a house chimney near Hillsville. Carroll County residents were opportunistic workers, and the social patterns that laborers developed before the Revolutionary War lived on in the world laborers created after Appalachia's industrial revolution. Agricultural and non-agricultural practices of old meshed with new labor practices.

CHAPTER TWO:
WORK ON THE FARM

SUBSISTENCE AGRICULTURE AND AGRICULTURAL DIVERSITY

On Carroll County farms laborers raised a diversity of crops. There was little in the way of one-crop specialization. Farmers grew almost everything that was needed by the family on the farm. Owners of larger farms were able to produce not only a greater variety of agricultural products, but also greater quantities of these items. Farmers of small holdings also made the effort to diversify, but they had to do so on a much smaller scale.¹

Items common to almost all Carroll County farmers were cows, corn, and chickens. John Goad kept about ten milch cows on his two-hundred-acre farm in the Snake Creek area of Carroll County, converting this dairying activity into saleable items such as butter and cheese. Even smaller-scale farmers kept at least one cow. After working for twenty years on other farms in Carroll County, Preston Webb moved to Pulaski County, where, as Clarence Webb recalled, Preston "kept three cows the biggest part of the time." The family

¹There are a variety of sources on agriculture. For general information on agriculture and agriculture in the South, see L.C. Gray, History of Agriculture in the Southern United States To 1860, 2 vols. (New York: Carnegie Institute, 1941); Wayne Rasmussen, ed., Agriculture in the United States: A Documentary History, 4 vols. (New York: Random House, 1975).

made butter and fed the "hogs the clabbered milk." The family also drank "milk all the time. That took a whole lot [of milk]." Mary Surratt stated that, although her father, Lee Spencer, lived in the mountainous section of northern Carroll County, where large-scale farming was impossible, he "kept two cows most of the time. Sometimes around the country the old cow would go dry, and [the neighbors would] come and pay ten cents a gallon for buttermilk."²

Hogs were common on farms of all sizes. As Clarence Webb recalled, his father, Preston, "most of the time had four or five hogs, sometimes two." John Quesenberry owned his farm and kept hogs and sold hams or parts of the hams. William Gardner remained a sharecropper but also kept hogs and sold the hams. According to Mary Surratt, Lee Spencer

²Interviews with Berta Webb, Clarence Webb, and Mary Surratt.

In the personal property tax records of 1900, a sample of eleven farm owners from the Pine Creek district of Carroll County owned an average of 6 cows each. One farmer owned 14 and two farmers had only 1 cow each. Seven of the eleven farmers had from 4-to-8 cows each. A sample of twenty-three farmers who did not own farms in 1880 shows that in 1900 all but three had at least 1 cow each. Nine of the twenty-three had from 4-to-8 cows each. Pine Creek farmers without personal holdings owned an average of 4 cows each. Of a sample of nine Laurel Fork tenants (area including Hillsville and Snake Creek), tenants averaged 1.7 milk cows each. A sample of nine Pine Creek tenants averaged nearly 1.5 milk cows each. Of all eighteen tenants, only two from the Pine Creek district had no cows listed. Personal Property Tax Records, Carroll County, Virginia: 1900; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Agricultural Census, Carroll County, Virginia: 1880.

"killed the hogs and salted the meat down."³

Most farmers kept some kind of poultry. John Goad's daughter Berta Webb, remembered that her father "had chickens ... guineas, [and] a few turkeys once in a while." Preston Webb kept as many as one-hundred chickens at any time. Clarence Webb joked that the family moved so much that the chickens learned to lie down and cross their legs when Preston started loading up the wagon. Ola Webb said that her father, William Gardner, "raised turkeys and sold 'em. Course we raised 'em on the shares." (The landlord received part of the product as rental payment.) Poultry were present on every farm, from the smallest to the largest.⁴

Farmers also raised beef. Preston Webb would buy a beef and kill it. "Back in the thirties," Clarence Webb recalled, "we killed a beef every week, [and] sometimes two a week." Preston would start out for Allisonia and sell a whole beef "before [he] got there." With no refrigeration, people

³Interviews with Clarence Webb, Merl Quesenberry, Ola Webb, and Mary Surratt. Nine Laurel Creek tenants averaged 8.6 hogs each. Pine Creek tenants averaged 3.5 each. Eleven Pine Creek farm owners averaged 4.5 hogs each. Twelve farmers without farm land in 1880 averaged 3.3 hogs each. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Agricultural Census, Carroll County, Virginia: 1880; Personal Property Tax Records, Carroll County, Virginia: 1900.

⁴Interviews with Berta Webb, Clarence Webb, and Ola Webb. Nine Laurel Creek tenants averaged 14.0 chickens each. Seven Pine Creek tenants averaged 6.3 chickens each. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Agricultural Census, Carroll County, Virginia: 1880.

bought what they could consume quickly. Preston took advantage of that fact and easily sold parts of a beef in his community.⁵

Farmers preserved food to enjoy their varied diet through the winter months. Mary Surratt and her family dried apples. They also dried tomatoes and green beans (or "leather britches.") The tomatoes were dried on a flat board and then rolled up and put in something clean until needed. Lee Spencer's family also had shell beans, snap beans, and pumpkin. As Mary Surratt recollected: "Grandma Beasley use to dry that pumpkin and cook it with a piece of meat in the wintertime. [She would] chop it up." In the summertime "we'd dry summer apples, but the winter apples we picked them and put down straw and cover 'em with dirt, so to eat. They kept good, they tasted a little bit earthy but they was good." The Webb family also preserved food. Preston Webb's daughter, Gracie Gunter, remembered that "we'd always make molasses in the fall. We canned everything; blackberries, apples, anything to eat."⁶

Many farmers in Carroll County kept bees. John Goad kept three bee gums, or hives. John Quesenberry also kept bees. To harvest the honey he would do what was called

⁵Interview with Clarence Webb.

⁶Interviews with Mary Surratt and Gracie Gunter.

"robbin' the bee gum," by smoking the bees to the bottom of the gum. Bees produced honey from the plentiful buckwheat flower, which was a common crop in Carroll County. Bees were attracted to the flower of the buckwheat stalk. Fields of buckwheat and gums of honey bees could be observed on many Carroll County farms. Buckwheat had an additional advantage as a crop. Hogs ate the hulls or chaff from buckwheat. When Clarence Webb was at home with his father, he helped thrash out the buckwheat. "We'd frail that out" and thrash it over a hickory pole. We "stuck rails [in the ground] and put a canvas over it. [Then we] laid some rails on top of that [and beat the buckwheat] on top of that. Then [we raked] out all the big stuff [and] took it to the thing that you turned and cleaned it."⁷

Along with buckwheat, farmers raised wheat and corn. Berta Goad Webb's family raised a great variety of crops, including corn, wheat, buckwheat, rye, potatoes, and cabbage. Usually her father raised anywhere from twenty to thirty acres of corn. "We sold a lot of corn. He just kept what he knowed he'd need to feed the horses and cattle and

⁷Interviews with Merl Quesenberry and Clarence Webb. Laurel Creek tenants harvested an average of 39 pounds of honey each. Pine Creek tenants harvested none. In 1900, Carroll County farmers produced 68,520 bushels of buckwheat, 28 percent of the state total for that year. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Agricultural Census, Carroll County, Virginia: 1880; Twelfth Census of the United States: 1900 (Washington, D.C., 1901-1902).

for meal, and he sold all the rest," Berta recalled.⁹ Even farmers who rented land raised a diversity of field crops. After he moved to Pulaski County, Preston Webb raised corn, wheat, and buckwheat. According to Clarence Webb "most of the time we made about a hundred bushel of wheat. Wasn't every year. Sometimes we'd miss a year." Buckwheat was a common crop in the tri-counties of Carroll, Pulaski, and Floyd, and it was sometimes used as rental payment. Clarence said his father "raised the buckwheat when we lived across the river. We didn't get all of it you see. We's sharing it. [The landlord] only got a third of it. We made forty-five bushels one year."⁹

Farmers near Hillsville were close to the marketing center of Mount Airy, North Carolina, over the Blue Ridge Mountains. John Quesenberry carted cabbage, onions, and beans and sold them in Mount Airy. Dave Webb, a son of Isaac Webb, "put out cabbage and they'd haul to Mount Airy," remembered Dave Webb's daughter, Melissia Akers. John Goad sold agricultural products to a local merchant, who then carted these items to Mount Airy and sold them.¹⁰

Corn was one of the most important cash crops in the

⁹Interview with Berta Webb.

⁹Interview with Clarence Webb.

¹⁰Interviews with Merl Quesenberry, Melissia Akers, and Berta Webb.

mountainous areas of Virginia. Even renter farmers, such as Preston Webb, raised a surplus of corn to sell. When he lived north of the New River, across from Allisonia, Preston sold corn. Monroe McGrady operated a forty-acre farm near Hillsville and sold corn.¹¹ Inadequate transportation and rough terrain curtailed surplus corn growing in some areas of the county. In the extreme northern section of Carroll County, steep mountainsides and deep hollows made extensive corn growing difficult. Mary Surratt's father, Lee Spencer, owned a small patch of mountain land near the Wythe County border. He raised "enough corn to feed the cow and a horse through the winter. You couldn't hardly call it farming," Mary said. In the same area Mary Surratt's uncle grew enough corn to feed his family and winter their cattle. He "never thought about selling" corn.¹²

Nearly all farmers sold eggs and butter, which were traded at local stores for things that could not be raised on the farm, such as salt, sugar, and coffee. "Mommy mostly made our living. She would sell butter, milk, and eggs - chickens - raise young chickens and sell 'em. That's how we

¹¹Interviews with Clarence Webb and Claudia Quesenberry. Pine Creek tenants produced an average of 168 bushels of corn on 11 acres. Laurel Creek tenants produced an average of 176 bushels of corn on 14 acres. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Agricultural Census, Carroll County, Virginia: 1880.

¹²Interview with Mary Surratt.

made our living," recalled Mary Surratt. Mary's mother sold chickens to buy clothes or material for making clothes. Eggs, butter, and chickens were especially important in places where it was difficult to raise surplus corn. William Gardner kept turkeys on shares. "That's the way we got our clothes," remembered William's daughter, Ola Webb.¹³ Preston Webb's wife, Dora Ellen, took chicken and turkey eggs to the store to "buy clothes for the boys, and stuff to make quilts out of to keep us warm," according to Preston Webb's daughter, Gracie Gunter. Eggs also bought the material Mary's mother used to make overalls for her husband and four sons. Even in areas more advantageous to market crops, farmers traded farm items. Berta Webb's family sold eggs, butter, and cheese. The family churned every day and "made plenty butter too." The family produced items not as common on smaller farms, such as cheese.¹⁴

In Carroll County's subsistence economy, barter became the most important method of exchange. On large and small

¹³Interviews with Mary Surratt and Ola Webb.

¹⁴Interviews with Clarence Webb, Mary Surratt, and Berta Webb. Laurel Creek tenants produced an average of 169 pounds of butter a year. Pine Creek tenants produced an average of 58 pounds a butter a year. In 1900, Carroll County farmers produced a significant amount of the state total of cheese, producing 3,564 pounds of cheese out of the state total of 31,697. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Agricultural Census, Carroll County, Virginia: 1880. Twelfth Census of the United States: 1900 (Washington D.C., 1901-1902).

farms necessary items were paid for with butter and eggs or other goods raised on the farm. "Sugar and coffee, that's the biggest thing the eggs went for," remembered Clarence Webb. Stores took eggs through a system of credit known as "due bills," round sheets of paper signed by a merchant. If a transaction came out uneven, the customer could make up the difference on the next transaction by holding his due bill.¹⁵

Aside from being important economic assets, orchards provided aesthetic beauty. Berta Goad Webb recalled a time when her father, John Goad, planted his apple trees "set[ting] 'em in rows just like corn rows, [the] prettiest thing you ever seen. In every fence corner he had a big cherry tree. Talk about them apple trees and cherry trees gettin' in bloom. It was something to see." The family worked together to harvest and dry the apples, selling enough to buy Berta and her brothers clothes and books to go to school. Tenants could even take advantage of the orchards on their landlord's property. Wade Allison had close to one thousand acres where William Gardner and his family stayed, with many orchards. William's family would cover the pears with straw and "try to keep 'em from freezing," explained Ola Webb. The family would eat all the apples they wanted

¹⁵Interviews with Clarence Webb and Claudia Quesenberry.

from the place.¹⁶

John Goad kept chestnut trees. As Berta Webb recalled, "We'd pick chestnuts too, we had a big chestnut orchard. We'd have bushels and bushels of chestnuts." Many people sold walnuts, chestnuts, and chinquapins. After the 1920s, many individuals suffered from the loss of income when the American chestnut died. Economically, orchards were like the field corn; after farmers and children collected fruit for home consumption, the surplus was sold or bartered.¹⁷

Farmers on mountain farms found orchards beneficial. As pointed out by Mary Surratt, her father, Lee Spencer, "had an orchard [with] apples and cherries. There was cherries all over that place." The kids even had the luxury of taking apples to school. William Gardner moved his family from Carroll County to a large farm in Wythe County, replete with apple and pear orchards. The owner told the family they could "have all they wanted."¹⁸ In addition to selling apples and chestnuts, families harvested berries of all kinds for sale and for consumption. Mary Surratt picked huckleberries and blackberries. "I remember Mommy sending us

¹⁶Interviews with Berta Webb and Ola Webb. Laurel Creek tenants harvested over twenty times more bushels of apples than their Pine Creek counterparts. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Agricultural Census, Carroll County, Virginia: 1880.

¹⁷Interview with Berta Webb.

¹⁸Interviews with Mary Surratt and Ola Webb.

down in the holler to get some fox grapes that was running around that wasn't too high." Picking berries was a common job for children and a way for them to help the family economy. Gracie Gunter, Preston's youngest child, "picked [berries] 'til Mom would let me sell some, and go down to Zed Cox's [store] and buy material; and Mom made my clothes to go to school. I wasn't but about six or seven years old when I started picking." Gracie's brother, Clarence, picked berries to buy summer shoes. Gracie also picked dewberries for a Mrs. Lindsey. "She gave me ten cents for the blackberries for a gallon, and fifteen cents for the dewberries. She was really good to me." Picking berries was a way Gracie and other children could "make a nickel."¹⁹

CHILDREN'S WORK

Children often worked for or with neighbors. In addition to picking berries and cherries to buy clothes for school, Claudia and Merl Quesenberry "picked green beans for ten cents a bushel," Claudia reminisced. Whether picking green beans or berries, children learned to help the family economy.²⁰ Another way children helped out was by doing

¹⁹Interviews with Mary Surratt and Gracie Gunter.

²⁰Interview with Merl and Claudia Quesenberry.

the chores in the household and in the field. In Preston Webb's family, Clarence and the boys "didn't do much in the house. Oh, they might help peel apples when [Mother was] gonna make apple butter." The boys' primary realm of labor was the field. On John Goad's farm all of the children, boys and girls, helped in the household. They had to, since John Goad spent much of his time doing carpentry work. Part of the year Goad and his wife helped assess taxes for Carroll County. When her parents worked on taxes, Berta and her brothers "had all the inside and outside work to do."²¹

Since Preston had nine boys to do field work, the two girls spent most of their time around the household. Gracie and her sister, Notie, did the cooking and washing. "In the spring and fall of the year you clean the house up good. Always take the quilts and things off." Gracie and her sister worked together on some projects. "You had to clean in the spring by May back then. Me and Notie did most of the cleaning," Gracie recalled. Gracie was also responsible for washing her many brothers' clothes. "At one time I had fourteen white dress shirts to iron for that bunch of boys. I oughtta killed 'em all!"²² Girls helped with the cooking at an early age. Gracie "stood on a box and made gravy.

²¹Interviews with Clarence Webb and Berta Webb.

²²Interview with Gracie Gunter.

Between nine and ten years old, I was making gravy" for the boys early in the morning before they went off to the fields. When some cousins dropped in late one night at the home of William Gardner, Ola got up to help fix supper. "After I got big enough," Ola said, "I did a lot of the cooking." Along with cooking, the girls helped prepare food to preserve. After Berta's grandfather died, her grandmother stayed with John Goad's family, and Berta helped her "do up" or fix apples. "I'd peel 'em and she'd slice 'em, and Dad he'd fix scaffolds to put 'em on to dry."²³

Girls did their share of outside work too. Gracie carried water to the boys in the field and fed the chickens and hogs. She even chided her sister, who was more accustomed to inside work, for not knowing where the hog pen was when she went to feed the hogs one day. "She kept hollerin' 'here piggy'. I got so tickled at her." Ola gathered duck eggs beside the branch and "took care of them old turkeys."²⁴ Field work was not for all girls, but some labored in the fields. John Goad had "bean patches on top of bean patches." He planted beans in the corn. "That was my job when we started to plant corn was to drop the beans," Berta recalled. When the Gardners moved from the Hillsville

²³Interviews with Gracie Gunter, Ola Webb, and Berta Webb.

²⁴Interviews with Gracie Gunter and Ola Webb.

area to Wythe County, Ola remembers that the farm owners let green beans "run up in the corn in the corn field. We had that to ourself, the beans. We just planted in the corn, that was all. They said it wouldn't hurt." Ola helped harvest these beans. Boys and girls helped plant as well as harvest crops. "Anything the boys did, I did," remarked Berta Webb. "I went to the field as soon as I was big enough to carry a hoe across my shoulder. Have to hoe corn. Back then every weed had to be cut out of the corn field. [John Goad] always had about three ten acre fields of corn."²⁵

Boys spent most of their work time in the fields, even at a very young age. Gracie reminisced that Clarence "was always out feeding the horses or working, doing work of boys sixteen or seventeen years old," even when much younger. "Clarence would get up and start the fires every morning, and I got up next and put whatever kind of meat we was gonna have. He'd be up every morning. If he wasn't up, something was wrong."²⁶ Some young children had to perform labor-intensive chores. When Berta was thirteen, her father died, leaving her, a mother, and her young brother at home (The older brothers were grown and away from home). "We didn't

²⁵Interviews with Berta Webb and Ola Webb.

²⁶Interview with Gracie Gunter. In the population census records, boys sixteen years old and younger were commonly listed as "laborer" or "farmhand" under the column for occupation, even when they still lived at home.

have no wood or nothing, and I took an old crosscut saw, and went to the woods, [and] sawed me a log of wood, come to the house and hitched up" the horse. "Dad had a great big sled; I hooked [up the horse to that] and went down to the woods to get my wood."²⁷ Aside from working on their own farm, Berta and her brothers worked for neighbors. While John Goad stayed busy doing carpentry work and taxes for Carroll County, he sent his children to help neighbors. Mary Surratt recalled a time when she "went over there and Mommy did and helped old man Eli Goad hoe out his corn. I remember hoe'n'. They'd pay us a little for it. It wasn't much."²⁸

WOMEN'S WORK

The work of women was as diverse and varied as that of children. Women worked in the fields and the fields of neighbors. Women kept the family garden by hoeing it out and harvesting the foods that were needed daily for the dinner table. Women also preserved food, sewed, and made pillows, among many other varied activities.

Sewing and quilting were almost totally within the women's realm of work activity. Dora Ellen made quilts and

²⁷Interview with Berta Webb.

²⁸Interview with Mary Surratt.

clothes for the family. "She sewed for us. It was nice little ole dresses Mamma made for me. I was proud of 'em," beamed Gracie Gunter. William Gardner's wife, Partha, "knitted [and] quilted. She liked to sew," according to Ola Webb. Mary Surratt said her mother would sew and "buy material and make might near all the clothes we wore. Make them boys overalls and things when they was growin' up, and make some for Pap. She done a lot of sewing."²⁹ Women also made pillows. "Mother kept some ducks [and] she'd pick them and make pillows" Ola recalled. Mary Surratt's mother "use to weave. She knew how to weave. She had a blanket that she kept. She wove a wool blanket on a loom." Weaving was part of the recent past for these Carroll County residents. Mary Surratt's "Grandma Alexander had a loom upstairs, right at the chimney. It kept them warm during the wintertime, kept their feet warm. They'd weave carpet. Grandma had several rooms covered by carpet." Raising flax or spinning wool was not as common after 1900 as it had been earlier, especially since women could trade eggs for material at local

²⁹Interviews with Gracie Gunter, Ola Webb, and Mary Surratt. Of farm families with land, 6 of 11 had obtained sewing machines by 1900. Of the sample of tenants, 7 of 12 had sewing machines in 1900. The machines ranged from \$5 to \$10 in value. Many women who did not own sewing machines still sewed by hand. Personal Property Tax Records, Carroll County, Virginia: 1900.

stores.³⁰

Not all women wove, but all cooked. Women cooked for large families and encountered this major task every day. According to Clarence Webb, women "had to build a fire big enough to bake a pan of biscuits" for Preston Webb and his hard-working children. A special event, such as a corn shucking, would further tax the cooking skills and stamina of women. When Berta Webb's father was sick, neighbors came and helped harvest and shuck his corn. "Mother cooked dinner for everybody, indicated Berta, and "some of the women helped her."³¹

In addition to cooking and sewing, women spent many hours outdoors. Women milked cows, made soap, and occasionally helped with the field labor during peak work periods of the agricultural season. Berta and her mother would have to "wash that old dirty wool" after her father sheared the sheep. "That was a mess," she exclaimed. Outside jobs entailed trips to the store, where women bartered for such goods as coffee, sugar, and material for making clothes. Berta's "Daddy would hook up the wagon, and mommy would take us up to George Morris's store" in the Laurel

³⁰Interviews with Ola Webb and Mary Surratt.

³¹Interviews with Clarence Webb and Berta Webb.

Fork section of Carroll County.²²

During times of crisis or special need, women also worked jobs outside their traditional sphere of activities. When Mary Surratt's grandparents moved to their new place in the mountains, they came "in there in the woods and cleaned it up," Mary said. "She'd pile brush and he'd clear, you know, and worked with him to help clean up that land, and they lived in a log house there 'til all the kids was born." Berta's grandfather, Isaac Webb, served in the Confederate Army during the Civil War. His wife, Melissia, had to keep up the farm while he was gone. Berta sat at her grandmother's feet while her grandmother would "sit and tell for hours at time how they had to live whenever he was in service you know. She was just a little person, but she done the plowin' and raised their corn."²³

MEN'S WORK

When Melissia Webb did the plowing in husband Isaac's absence, she engaged in a realm of work normally reserved for a man. During certain times of the season, men and boys spent many hours behind the plow. During the plowing season

²²Interview with Berta Webb.

²³Interviews with Mary Surratt and Berta Webb.

"you had to keep a plow going all the time," according to Clarence Webb. His father, Preston Webb, planted and hoed the corn and "run two plows most of the time. [He] had a whole lot" of corn. During this peak time of agricultural labor, plowing was the major drain on men's time. Both small and large farms normally operated with one or two work horses. Oxen were also used at times. Berta said that when her father, John Goad, "was able to work on the farm, he kept a couple of steers [to] pull the wagon 'round the farm." He also kept a couple or work horses, as did Preston Webb, who kept "two horses, sometimes more in the spring when we went to plowin'. [He] turned 'em loose after that," recalled Clarence Webb. Farmers commonly used the same horses for working and riding.³⁴

Some farmers preferred hoeing and clearing new ground to plowing with horses. As Clarence Webb pointed out, the farming areas were so "steep you couldn't [use a horse] over in them river hills." Martin Webb, father of Preston Webb, never did like to plow with a horse. According to Clarence, Martin "was afraid of a horse," but he did occasionally

³⁴Interviews with Clarence Webb and Berta Webb. Nine of 12 farmers who had no land in 1880 had horses by 1900. The sample of 12 averaged 1.6 horses each. Seven of the sample owned at least two horses. The average value of the horses was \$22. Eight of 11 farm owners owned horses in 1900, averaging 1.6 each. Six of the 11 owned two or more horses. The average value was \$25 each. Personal Property Tax Records, Carroll County, Virginia: 1900.

"work a steer." What Martin liked the best was to "clean up a new ground, an acre or two, and put it out [in corn]." Martin would take "an old heavy mattock, and hoes [and] cut the sprouts off and everything else [and] go in there and plant" the corn. He made "the hills and planted it" and then went back later to "hoe it out."³⁵

Clearing a new ground was a common activity for Carroll County farmers. Mary Surratt said Lee Spencer "loved to clean up a new ground." Even with roots and stumps to work around, he "scratched it up the best he could." After planting, he and the rest of the family had to "fight it with a hoe; sprouts coming out on them stumps." After getting one area in decent and rootless order, Mary Surratt said Spencer would "get it in his head to clear up another new ground somewhere, and let that one grow up. We all time workin' in a new ground. I hate a new ground."³⁶

Lee Spencer preferred to work behind a hoe rather than a plow. He was a Primitive Baptist minister, and the hoe gave him the opportunity to ponder the deep passages of Scripture. "That was his thing," Mary stated, "hoeing or chopping. He didn't want to plow no horses. His mind was on other things besides keepin' a horse agoin'." When rainy

³⁵Interview with Clarence Webb.

³⁶Interview with Mary Surratt.

days made outside work impossible, Lee Spencer spread his Bible and dictionary out on the floor and studied. Once, when he was plowing, he "got in such a shape, till when he come to he was out in the woods knelt down a tryin' to pray, and the horse still standin' there where he left him."³⁷

Men worked on the farms of others as a way to supplement their income. Martin Webb helped neighbors put up hay. According to Clarence, Martin would "get a pitchfork and head across the hill. He use to help that fellow Gray, I know, a lot, to put up hay." Lee Spencer took along his wife and children to help neighbors hoe out corn. "He'd help people some on the farm." Preston Webb's family was accustomed to hard work. According to Gracie Gunter, they were "just a working' bunch of people. They couldn't stand to not do nothing, knowing they didn't have no income. They'd do something if it wasn't but plow a field for somebody." The Webbs also hoed corn and cut hay for other folks.³⁸ During peak times of the season, especially when the family farmed on Rich Hill, a large farm he rented on the banks of the New River, Preston Webb hired laborers to help with plowing, harrowing, and planting corn. Later in the season he hired corn cutters, as many as three laborers

³⁷Interview with Mary Surratt.

³⁸Interviews with Clarence Webb, Mary Surratt, and Gracie Gunter.

at a time for a dollar a day. "Dollar a day was good work then," Clarence Webb exclaimed. The Webb family, unlike other farm families, rarely traded work with neighbors but would, as Clarence put it, "just hire somebody to do something or 'nother."³⁹

SOCIAL BONDS

Preston Webb hired the laborers who worked for him. He also worked for wages on other farms. Often neighbors swapped work. According to Merl Quesenberry, neighbors "cut wood for each other, [farmed] together, [and] helped each other." Farmers worked for each other during hoeing season or during corn shuckings. Swapping work was common in established, well-settled farming areas where social ties of community and kinship bound the community into reciprocal social and work relationships. Farmers were motivated to swap work for economic reasons as well. As Berta Webb stated, "a lot of times one farmer would help another [because it] saved each one from having to pay

³⁹Interview with Clarence Webb. In the Laurel Fork region, for 1880, 194 out of 430 (or 45 percent) of the farm operators reported paying wages for agricultural production. In the Pine Creek region 43 of 272 (or 16 percent) reported paying out wages for farm labor. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Agricultural Census, Carroll County, Virginia: 1880.

somebody."⁴⁰

Neighbors helped each other in times of crisis. When Berta Webb's father was on his deathbed, the community offered assistance. Berta was a young teenager at the time. She recalled a time when her father's corn was "sittin' in the shock. [It] hadn't been shucked, carried to the crib or nothing." Most of the help came from neighbors' children, who organized a huge corn shucking. By "four o'clock that evening all the fields were done."⁴¹

Farmers like John Goad, with large farms, and those like Lee Spencer, with small, mountain farms, supplemented their income with other work activities. Even though he operated a large farm, John Goad spent much of his time doing carpentry work. He built his own house, as well as other houses in the area of Snake Creek. During part of the year, his work on Carroll County taxes demanded his total attention; so much so that it put constraints on his children's level of boisterous activity. During tax season Berta and her brothers felt like they were "walkin' on eggshells."⁴²

Preston Webb supplemented agricultural activity with

⁴⁰Interviews with Merl Quesenberry and Berta Webb.

⁴¹Interview with Berta Webb.

⁴²Interview with Berta Webb.

other work. He enjoyed trading, especially horses. The mail carrier who came through the Allisonia area traded horses or mules with Preston at least once a year. On one occasion he "bought and sold [the same] horse three times in one day. It just happened to turn out that way," mused Gracie Gunter. As a banjo player in demand, Preston often played "music someplace, and they'd always give him something on that," Gracie reminisced. Clarence described his father, Preston, as much like his grandfather, Martin Webb, who did "a little bit of everything."⁴³ Merl Quesenberry's father, John, also did "about everything" on his fifty-acre farm near Hillsville. He earned extra income from his blacksmithing, taking "an old log house and us[ing] the logs to make him a blacksmith's shop," Merl said. John and his brother also owned a cane mill, which they rented to neighbors. Usually they received part of the molasses as rent for use of the mill, and then they would sell the molasses.⁴⁴ As young children gathered apples, chestnuts, and berries to pay for school clothes, men and young boys would earn money hunting, trapping, and selling animal hides or furs. During the winter, men sold foxes and rabbits.

Lee Spencer owned his land in the mountains of Carroll

⁴³Interviews with Gracie Gunter and Clarence Webb.

⁴⁴Interview with Merl Quesenberry.

County. Mary Surratt stated that "Pap done a lot of work. He's worked hard, but he didn't accomplish much in worldly things." Lee Spencer's interests were not on "worldly" things though, for he spent many of his weekends traveling to meetings or to the churches where he preached. Mary Surratt remembered that he traveled a lot. "He's pastor of that church down there, Big Reed Island, for several years, and walked from over in there across through that mountain some way." Church meetings were held on Saturdays and Sundays, so he would be "gone maybe a weekend." Men's extra work activities were either money oriented or duty oriented.⁴⁵

Special skills, such as John Quesenberry's blacksmithing, or special talents, such as Preston Webb's banjo picking, were profitable as well as enjoyable. Ola Webb said her grandfather, James K. Polk Sawyers, "use to make chimneys for people. He liked that." Whether blacksmithing or chimney building, farmers from 1880 to 1930 worked at supplemental jobs along with agricultural pursuits to earn income.⁴⁶

Farmers made the effort to achieve as much self-sufficiency as possible. This self-sufficiency was

⁴⁵Interview with Mary Surratt.

⁴⁶Interview with Ola Webb.

accomplished by different means. For example, John Goad's children sold dried apples for their clothes for school, while Preston Webb's children picked berries. John Goad kept ten cows and sold butter and cheese. Lee Spencer and Preston Webb kept two or three cows and each sold butter or buttermilk to neighbors. Farmers traded for the things they needed with the things they had. They kept chickens and traded eggs for sugar, coffee, and salt. Most families did not make their own wool and flax material, but instead exchanged eggs, apples, and berries for clothing material. Barter also existed on a social level. Farmers benefited from reciprocal community events, such as corn shuckings and "hayings," and inculcated the worth and value of this system in their children by requiring them to trade work with neighbors. The whole economy was based on barter, reciprocity, and mutual help.

Reciprocity transcended the community ties established by kinship and proximity. The household economy was also strengthened and sustained by mutual help. Children traded work with neighbors and helped do important tasks at home. Women preserved food and traded eggs and berries at the store for things the family needed. Men made provisions for enough corn to sustain the family and its animals through the winter. Men, women, and children all worked as economic cogs in a mutual, self-sustaining economic machine.

For Carroll County laborers, agricultural work was never far from memory. For this reason, Carroll County's industrial economy did not destroy the culture of the agricultural age. Most laborers either remained on farms or kept ties to the rural landscape. Carroll County farmers were similar to the characters in Shifflett's Coal Towns and Bush's Dorie, in that the exchange of labor, time, and resources continued. While men split their labor time between the fields and the mines or sawmills, women and children continued practices of diversified labor to help sustain the family.

CHAPTER THREE:
HOUSING, RENTING, BOARDING

Farm families lived in all types of housing. Some enjoyed solidly-built frame houses with many rooms. Others endured hastily-built tenant dwellings with few rooms and inconvenient door placements. Some lived in cabins or dwellings with a cabin core and frame add-ons. Others even reassembled company housing from the iron ore mines. A farmer's agricultural interests and economic situation influenced the type of housing he and his family possessed.

"SETTING UP HOUSEKEEPING"

Many farmers began their married life on sections of their parents' estate, or the "old homeplace." A farm owner divided land among his children. After his father died, Monroe McGrady received his portion of forty acres. He built a house about a mile from where his mother grew up, and there he farmed his land along with helping his brothers with their portions of farm land. John Goad built his house in the Snake Creek section of Carroll County. "Their first house was a log house. Then they built on to it. [They] sealed that in and everything, [but] the main part was log," recalled John's daughter, Berta. John and his wife, Octavia, built the house on land she had bought by selling her

portion of her father's estate. (Isaac Webb had given each of his children an equal portion.) John Goad then added to this parcel of land. Berta said that John "bought some other farms around then adjoining it, and just kept making it bigger and bigger. He finally wound up with about two hundred acres." Before he moved to his house in the mountains, Lee Spencer lived for a time in a one-room log cabin. Rough housing was a normal experience for Lee; his mother lived in a log house with oak floors which had dried, leaving huge cracks in the floor. Lee's daughter Mary remembered it as the "coldest house you ever seen [and] in a cold place." Evidently, Lee's wife had a bedroom suite, but would not bring it from her mother's house. Lee Spencer's mother gave the couple a "bed, the pillers, [and] everything [that] went with it. They took that bed up there." To help complete the newlyweds' housewarming, Lee Spencer's stepfather "made 'em a table, and they ordered a flat-topped, four-eyed cook stove. They didn't live there too long. They went up there and lived a summer," after which the couple moved to a more permanent house.¹

Some newly-married couples stayed with parents before setting out on their own. William Gardner remained on his

¹Interviews with Berta Webb and Mary Surratt. Evidently, each of Isaac's children received about one hundred acres of land.

father's place near Hillsville, before moving to his cousin's farm nearby. His first move out of the county was to Wythe County, where he worked for about two years on the farm of Burt Dyer. The house was inconvenient, having no door between the two rooms. One had to step out on the porch and then into the next room through an outside door.²

HOUSING STRUCTURES

Almost everything was convenient for the Webb family on the farm they rented on Rich Hill in Allisonia. Clarence Webb talked very little about the house on the 190-acre farm. More important to him were the two springs, nearby Little Reed Island Creek and Big Reed Island Creek, and the New River. According to Clarence and Gracie, the pleasures derived from life around the farm were more important than the housing structure itself. For hard-working farmers, housing was to be more practical than "pretty." While at Rich Hill, the Webb family rented land on both sides of the New River. Preston Webb often stayed in a vacant house "on the Walker place" on the opposite side of the river from the house on Rich Hill. "Poppy stayed over there sometimes,"

²Interview with Ola Webb. Like many houses of this time, this tenant dwelling had a room added on at some point. Rather than cut a new door between the rooms, the builders simply built the new room with an outside door.

Clarence recollected. The boys got up early and crossed the river to help farm that side of the river. "We'd fix our breakfast, bring our lunch, [and] fix our supper out of something or 'nother." The family kept work horses on that side of the river, and Clarence enjoyed crossing over every day to take care of them.³

People used the resources which were available to provide housing for their families. Preston Webb once reassembled a mine house after the Tasker ore mines closed down in Pulaski County. As Clarence stated, those who bought the houses "pulled everything down and tied it up in bunches. Some of 'em six rooms, some of 'em four rooms, some just three rooms." Preston Webb took a Tasker house that was part of company housing and set it up in a "bottom," where he farmed. Several of the homes were dismantled and moved, while some of them were sufficient for rebuilding both a house and a chicken house at another site. Some people bought both house and land from the company and continued to live at the old company town site.⁴

Martin Webb, the father of Preston, worked in the ore mines at the Tasker mines, but he preferred not to stay in company housing. Instead, he walked over the mountain to a

³Interview with Clarence Webb.

⁴Interview with Clarence Webb.

home in nearby Snow Holler, where his daughter lived. Commuting to work by foot was the experience of many other ore miners and washers, especially those originally from nearby areas.

KEEPING FOLKS

Farming families in Carroll County kept guests, boarded travelers, and took care of elderly kinfolks. Children often stayed with grandparents. A widowed grandparent appreciated the company and safety a grandchild provided. Preston's son, Toney, often stayed with Martin. When Preston was working at the sawmill at Max Creek, eight-year-old Toney decided to strike out on his own through the mountains. The family found him walking the road to Carroll County, heading for his grandfather Martin's place. When she was in school, Mary Surratt lived with her grandmother, whose house was closer and more convenient to school than the long walk out of the mountains.⁵

It was also common for the elderly to stay with their children or grandchildren. After her husband, Isaac, died, Melissia Webb lived for thirteen years with her son-in-law, John Goad, and his family. These relationships were

⁵Interviews with Clarence Webb and Mary Surratt.

reciprocal, for even though families did not charge rent or board, the patriarch or matriarch usually helped the family in some way with chores. The practice of helping with the work was the unwritten but understood way for kin to "earn their keep." Even though Melissia mostly stayed at the same farm for thirteen years until her death, other people moved from place to place. Martin Webb lived with his granddaughter, Gracie, for a short time, "then he went off to stay with Mom and Poppy on Rich Hill," remembered Clarence Webb. Soon growing homesick for Carroll County, he ended up with his daughter, Tavie, back at Snow Hollow, near the Pulaski County line. Keeping parents was part of the responsibilities of the son/daughter who received the largest portion of his/her parents' estate. According to Berta Webb, even though Isaac Webb gave each of his children equal portions of land, he gave his son Price the old homeplace "to take care of him. He gave that to Price to take care of him and grandmother." Keeping the elderly was another of the social relationships so important to the functioning of an agricultural community.*

Farm families housed kinfolk during times of duress. Whenever her family ran low on food, Preston Webb's sister

*Interviews with Berta Webb and Clarence Webb. Kinfolk who did not earn their keep were many times still cared for but resented.

Tavie stayed with her brother on Rich Hill. Preston gave the family flour and corn to take to the mill. Tavie's husband, Garland, "was a sick old man," as was one of their sons who died at a young age.⁷ Farm families kept kinfolk who visited or stopped by on a temporary basis. Ola Webb relived a time when her father, William Gardner, moved his family to the river in Wythe County and "a bunch come to go fishing." The family hurried about to cook supper for their guests and scrambled up some duck eggs. "I don't think they knew that we used duck eggs, 'cause [my mother] fried ham and cooked [the eggs] in the ham grease you know." Farmers did not have to be wealthy to take in guests. William was a sharecropper when his family came "to go fishing."⁸

William Gardner learned his ways of hospitality naturally. His father owned a farm home on a well-travelled road near Hillsville, and he frequently kept travellers. "We use to keep so many people," remembered Ola Webb. They would "come in and stay overnight. Grandma never would turn 'em down. She'd put a quilt on the floor or something." When he lived on Rich Hill in Allisonia, Preston Webb lived near the railroad. Clarence Webb recalled that "a lot of people would come maybe just overnight. Old fellers from out of Floyd

⁷Interview with Gracie Gunter.

⁸Interview with Ola Webb.

County [and] Carroll County [would] stay overnight and go down to Allisonia and catch a train." The Webb family did not keep many guests over extended periods of time though. The family "didn't have room for 'em, [unless we found a nail on the wall to] hang 'em up by the galluses."⁹

Homes closer to roads and railroads obviously received more travelers, but even remote mountain homes near roads received their share of guests. Lee Spencer's mother kept people who "come through." Mary Surratt recollected one in particular. "Old Doctor Will Tipton used to hit 'em up every trip he come through there." The principle of hospitality made most home owners gracious hosts. At her grandmother's house "anybody had a home there [and could] just come and stay as long as they wanted to," Mary recalled. Industry brought a new group of travellers. Some migrant workers, such as the men who repaired the train bridges near Allisonia one summer, brought their own temporary housing. Other workers found housing in company houses or around the countryside. Lee Spencer once kept minerals prospectors at his home for a week. "They worked up here all summer like that, prospectin', huntin' for 'paint'," a material processed from iron ore. The family even entertained their guests. One day Lee Spencer pulled out his banjo, while a

⁹Interviews with Ola Webb and Clarence Webb.

prospector played the harmonica and the other danced. For Lee Spencer entertainment was part of the duties of hospitality.¹⁰

RENTERS

As Berta Webb remembered, in Carroll County there were many "people that didn't have farms [and] didn't have no work. [They would] live around on people's places." John Goad had "a couple little houses on his place, people rent 'em." These people were not sharecroppers. They simply rented housing from Goad. "He let 'em garden, and he'd let 'em go to the fields and get beans or whatever they needed to eat." Other farmers worked as sharecroppers on large farms. William Gardner commonly worked on large farms and gave "shares" of his turkeys and other items as rent payment.¹¹

In the Laurel Fork region of Carroll County, tenant farms listed in the 1880 agricultural census made up only two percent of all farms. Yet, the number of heads of household who farmed and did not own their farms was twelve percent of all agricultural laborers in that district. In

¹⁰Interview with Mary Surratt.

¹¹Interview with Berta Webb.

the Pine Creek district, where Preston Webb spent his early working life, heads of household who farmed but did not own their farms comprised twenty-three percent of all agricultural workers. Those listed as tenant farmers in the agricultural census comprised almost eighteen percent of the farm population. Preston Webb worked as a farm laborer on various farms, but on one occasion he rented a complete farm unit. When he farmed on Rich Hill, he rented from a "fellow Hall from Pulaski." This farm had two springs, woods, and some rich land near the New River. Along with the Walker place across the river, Preston had enough land to raise a good amount of corn, along with many garden items.¹²

Farm owners rented out houses or small parcels of their farm, as well as whole farm units. Although John Quesenberry spent most of his working life on a fifty-acre farm near Hillsville, he once rented the farm to a family when he and his family were working in Mount Airy, North Carolina. Shortly after the Great Depression came, he lost his job at the furniture factory and returned to the farm. Here the family was at least assured of enough to eat.¹³

¹²Interview with Clarence Webb. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Agricultural Census, Carroll County, Virginia: 1880; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population Census, Carroll County, Virginia: 1880.

¹³Interview with Merl Quesenberry.

Because of strong social ties in the Appalachian region, farmers kept boarders of all kinds. Elders kept grandchildren who helped their elderly kin with chores. Predating the modern welfare system, farmers kept their aged parents in this age of mutual help. Carroll County society was closely tied to the barter system; trading relationships transcended all areas of social and work life. Farmers housed relatives suffering from need, including grandparents and other kin. But farmers never lost sight of the bonds of mutual labor that served as society's glue in an economic and social system based on barter and trade. Everyone labored in some manner to earn their keep, even if they were in a destitute situation. In the biography of her mother, Florence Bush provides one of the best looks at the mutual help aspect of keeping kin as boarders. She describes how sickness, school, and work made keeping folks a necessary part of Appalachian communities even during industrialization. In a system of mutual aid, boarders had responsibilities. In the novel River of Earth, James Still describes a family coping with hard times. At one point in the novel, the father's uncle and two cousins move into the house. All three eat the family's food but contribute nothing to the family economy. The mother eventually burns down the house and moves her family to a shed, which was just large enough for her family but too small for her

husband's kin.¹⁴

Just as in pioneer days, between 1880 and 1930 Appalachia was a mobile society. As people moved, they boarded, made temporary stops, rented houses and land to farm, or rented houses and worked in local industry. Eller, Shifflett, Bush, and Dunn all describe how demographic changes pushed laborers into other areas when farming became less profitable because of land constraints. Bush describes a long series of moves by her family into timber camps and textile communities, moves that were broken by an occasional move back to one of a number of farms. The family in James Still's River of Earth survived an industrial downturn by going back to the farm. Similarly, Carroll County laborers moved from one farm to another, across the county, and out of the county and into other regions. Movement has been an aspect of Appalachian and Carroll County society before and after industrialization.

¹⁴Bush, Dorie; James Still, River of Earth (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1978).

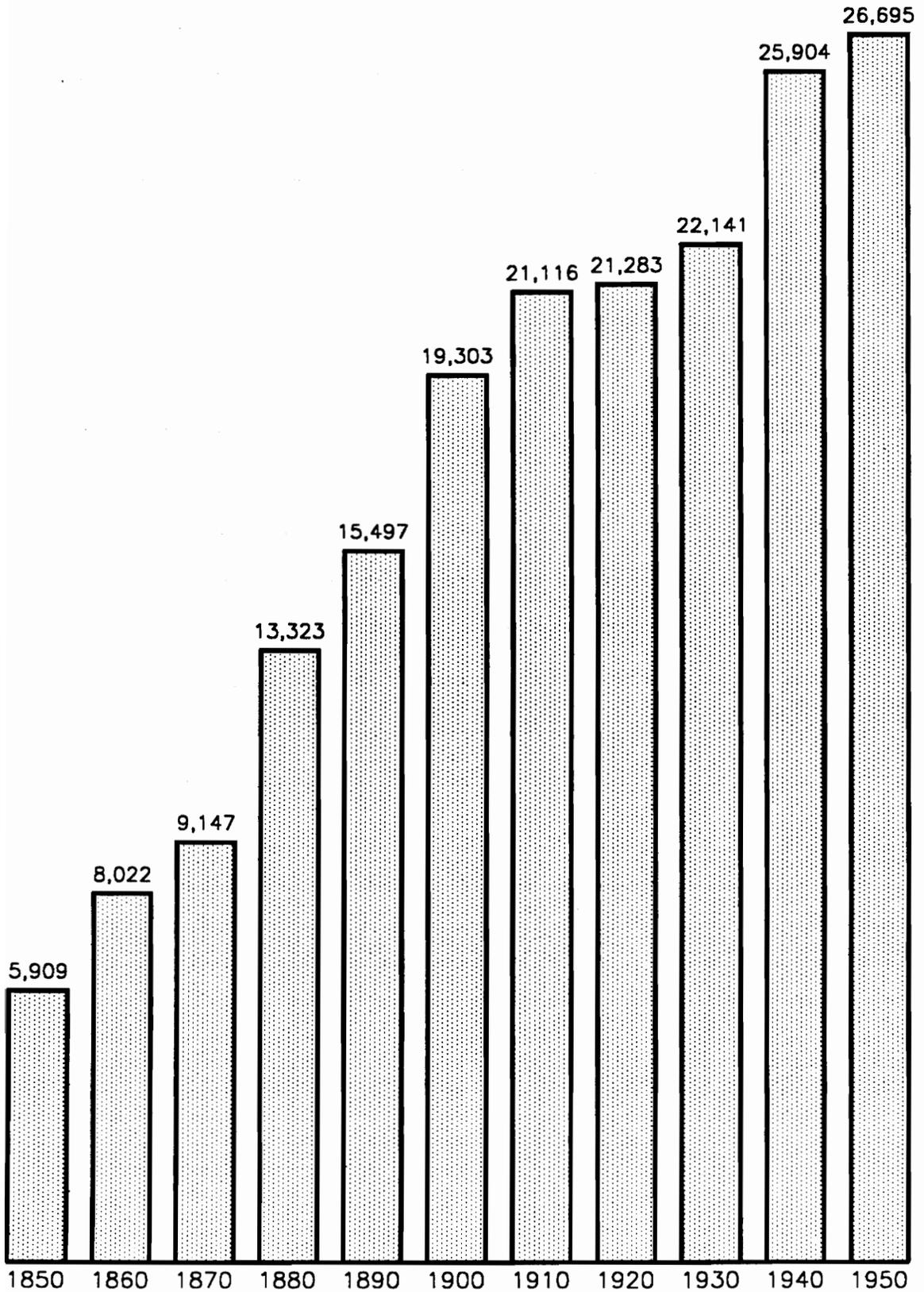


Figure Two - Carroll County Population

CHAPTER FOUR:
WORK-LIFE AND MOBILITY OF CARROLL COUNTY LABORERS

SUPPLEMENTAL WORK ACTIVITIES

Preston Webb loaded up his wagon once again. It was an appropriate vehicle for the hauling jobs he did occasionally and it came in handy for moving his family and belongings. Many times Preston had gone about the same chore: moving from one farm to another or from one part of Carroll County to another. Now he was moving to another county. Preston had married at nineteen years of age in 1894. Now it was 1908 and he had seven children, with another one on the way. In neighboring Pulaski County he had an offer to work at a sawmill near Max Creek for two dollars a day. This pay was twice normal daily wages, and the offer was too good to reject.¹

Preston worked at the sawmill for two years. Sawmill work took him away from farming completely, which was rare in his years of working life. Whether plowing corn, hoeing it out, putting up hay, or the many other activities revolving around farm work, Preston never strayed too far from agricultural labor. Farming remained his foremost occupation through many other labor activities. But he often supplemented agricultural work with other labor.

¹Interview with Clarence Webb.

Appalachian farmers, especially Carroll County ones, had always found work outside of agriculture to supplement their income. Even well before the wave of industrial jobs after 1880, Appalachians on farms of all shapes and sizes made extra income through milling, blacksmithing, chimney building, carpentry work, or whatever skilled and unskilled jobs they could find. Farming families took advantage of every activity possible to help meet the income needs of the family, whether selling apples, berries, animal hides, or hogs.

Finding extra work was an early event for farmers' children. Young children picked berries to pay for their own clothing for school. Teenage boys and girls worked on neighboring farms. When industry moved into the mountains, younger folks chose from a new array of work opportunities. Before young men married and moved out on their own, they worked on other farms and in the expanding industries. Before he was married, Preston did his share of work in the new industries. As Clarence Webb put it, "Poppy used to work for Bryce Montgomery, sawmilling, logging, or something, back when he was young, real young." Although he went on to work as a farmer, at a very young age he took advantage of the opportunities afforded by industry.²

²Interview with Clarence Webb.

Young men worked at the supplemental activities required by the new industries. The iron furnaces used coke fuel, which was made from slowly burning wood. Lee Spencer tended these sites as a young man. Spencer's daughter, Mary, remembered that at "these coal hearths around they [would] pile chestnut wood and stack it someway and put dirt over it and burn it, and made coal" or coke. If the fire broke through the dirt and the wood got too hot, the fuel was useless. "They'd have to stay there and tend them night and day." The work was just right for teenage boys. Mary Surratt "heard him talk about layin' around there and big times they'd have, talkin' and carryin' on."³

Sometimes young men faced the world of labor out of necessity. For example, Monroe McGrady, who was born in 1889, was very young when his father died. Monroe had to work to help support a large family, especially since his mother also died when he was young. Before he was married, Monroe worked in the timber business. He eventually got part of the old homeplace, farming about forty acres of his own land, in addition to helping his brothers with their portions of land.⁴ The young men who worked in these new non-agricultural jobs commonly worked in the timber and

³Interview with Mary Surratt.

⁴Interview with Claudia Quesenberry.

logging business. Whether at home helping with peak season agricultural activities or helping neighbors with the same seasonal tasks, the work was convenient for laborers still tied to agricultural activities. Supplementing agricultural labor with the income of new labor opportunities was natural for farmers. Farmers in and around Carroll County hired themselves out to haul materials in wagons. Preston Webb hauled cross-ties and lumber from Rock Creek to Allisonia. For several years tanbark was a major extractive resource of the region. Farmers loaded up the bark and hauled it to places such as Allisonia, where a shed held the bark until it was loaded on trains. Carroll County laborers also hauled the bark to Mount Airy, North Carolina. In the 1920s, John Hanibal Quesenberry moved from his farm to Mount Airy and worked as a laborer loading the bark onto railroad cars.⁹

Working in the sawmills helped many residents stay in the region when they would have otherwise had little to support themselves. Lee Spencer's brother, Burt, received only one acre of land, on which he kept a garden, a few hogs, and a cow. To care for his children after his wife died from the Spanish flu, he worked for other people in corn fields and at sawmilling. Like his brother Lee, Burt found that labor opportunities were an avenue of

⁹Interviews with Clarence Webb and Merl Quesenberry.

subsistence and survival.⁶ Aside from cleaning up his own new grounds and working for neighbors hoeing corn, Mary Surratt said Lee Spencer worked for his "Uncle Warren," who, according to Mary Surratt, was "kind of overseer of the roads. They'd work on 'em a little every summer, and he'd hire. I think they got about two hours a day." Combining corn field work with a little "public" work was Lee's way of holding to a simple lifestyle centered more on spiritual things than on worldly goods. "He didn't work what you call public works much."⁷ Martin Webb worked at a combination of agricultural labor, wage work on other farms, and industrial work. He worked at the washer with his son, Preston, at the Tasker iron ore mines near Allisonia. Washers cleaned dirt clods and other debris from the iron ore as it came down a conveyor.⁸

Whether they were from families which owned farms, many young men found the coal fields attractive places to make extra income. After he was married, William Gardner moved his family from farm to farm. But William worked in the coal fields as a young man. Preston Webb also worked in the coal fields as a young man and returned to the coal fields with

⁶Interview with Mary Surratt.

⁷Interview with Mary Surratt.

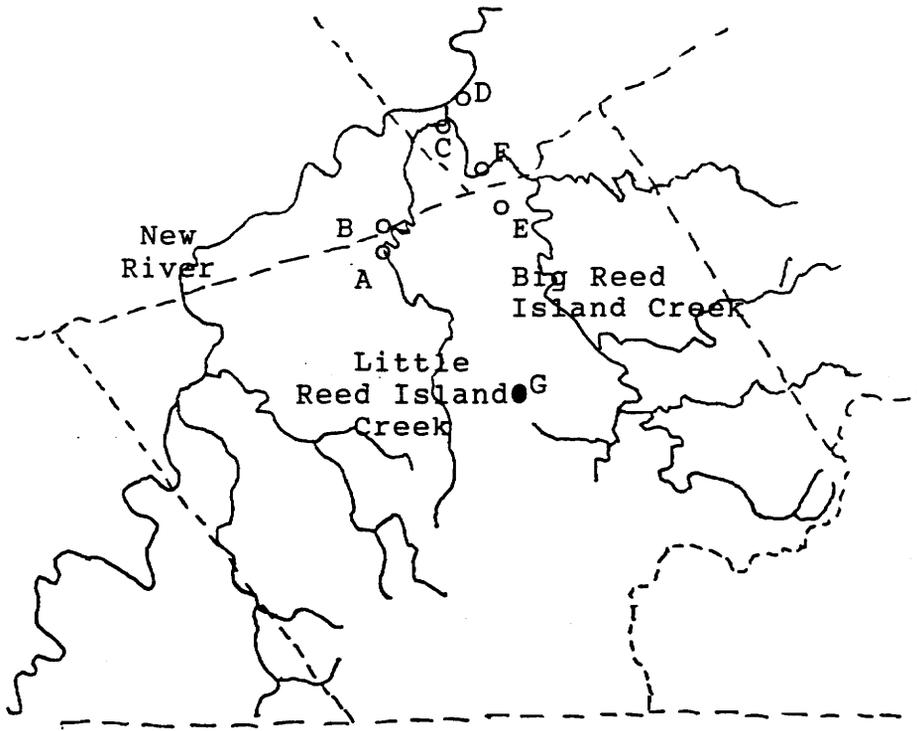
⁸Interview with Clarence Webb.

his family later in his life. Before he was married, John Quesenberry was hired by a local man named George Carter to work in the West Virginia coal fields. Carter owned much land in West Virginia and hired any local boy who wanted to work in the mines.⁹

Farmers' sons naturally looked for other job opportunities when the labor demands of the farm would allow. "I think if you didn't" look for work in other areas "you would get so far behind," Gracie recalled. "If you had a family you wasn't much thought of if you didn't try to get money some way or another to support your children and your family." Supporting themselves before they were married was one more way boys could "earn their keep."¹⁰

⁹Interviews with Ola Webb, Clarence Webb, and Merl Quesenberry.

¹⁰Interview with Gracie Gunter.



- A -- Lee Spencer's Carroll County residence.
- B -- Lee Spencer's Wythe County residence.
- C -- Rich Hill, residence of Preston Webb.
- D -- Allisonia Community.
- E -- Long Shoal, Snow Hollow, residences of Preston Webb.
- F -- Dry Branch, residence of Preston Webb.
- G -- Hillsville, Virginia.

Figure Three - Identification of Communities and Residences

MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

Appalachian and Carroll County society operated within the context of mobility. People moved from place to place to find work or more convenient living conditions. Few people strongly resisted the changes of industrialization, but most reacted favorably to the new world of work. Whenever labor opportunities afforded a step up the social ladder, or an improvement in social or economic conditions, farmers were quick to seize these opportunities. Local moves are difficult to trace in the census records, but they were a significant part of movement patterns.²¹

Lee Spencer built a home in the mountains. Here he and his wife and family subsisted on corn fields and the chickens and eggs Lee's wife bartered at the store. They supplemented this economy with the garden, the orchard, and the berries which grew around the place. When their oldest

²¹Tracking farmers' movements out of a county or a particular district of a county is laborious but not impossible. For this study, I traced the out-migration of farmers from the Pine Creek district of Carroll County. Those who moved could have moved either to another county or to another district of Carroll County. From 1880 to 1900, 42 percent of farm owners remained in the Pine Creek district; 31 percent of agricultural laborers without farm ownership remained over the twenty year period; 33 percent of farm owners' sons remained in the district and 24 percent of laborers' sons remained. These figures are based on a sample of 164 farm owners, 167 farm laborers, 264 farm owners' sons, and 203 laborers' sons. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population Census, Carroll County, Virginia: 1880, 1900.

child, Mary, was fourteen, the family moved across the line into Wythe County. "You see," Mary Surratt explained, "it was unhandy to school was how come us to move out of the mountain. Pap always thought you ought to get all the education you could and he's right." Her father bought some land and "built that house, and we moved out of the mountain so we could go to Patterson to school." This move for educational reasons took the Spencer family out of Carroll County, for Patterson was just north of the Carroll County line in neighboring Wythe. Evidently, education was an important enough reason to move, even for isolated mountain farmers.¹²

Some moves were temporary. Preston Webb moved his family from Allisonia to a place across the New River. "We moved to one place and stayed about three weeks or one month," remembered Clarence Webb. As Lee Spencer and his wife needed a temporary place while he built their house, Preston Webb's family also needed housing until they could settle in a more permanent dwelling. After the three-week stay, the Webb family moved "up there to the Windell home [and] stayed there about two year." The Windell home was also across the river from Allisonia.¹³ William Gardner

¹²Interview with Mary Surratt.

¹³Interview with Clarence Webb.

and his family made short moves as well as longer ones. After he married, Gardner and his new bride lived with his parents at the "old homeplace." He then moved nearby to a cousin's place. The Gardners combined stay at these first two homes was over ten years. They then moved to a large farm in Wythe County. The family remained here for about two years before moving to another large farm in Pulaski County. Ola Webb recalled that the "next place, then, was Wade Allison's farm," where the family stayed for nearly four years.¹⁴

From 1880 to 1930 there were two types of mobile workers. One group settled as families, if only temporarily, in growing towns, such as Crawford Mines or Allisonia, where iron ore mining and the tanbark industry employed hundreds of workers. Another group was even more itinerant, but had an effect on the work patterns of the region. When Preston Webb lived on Rich Hill, near the New River and the railroad, laborers came through to "overhaul them bridges." Clarence Webb said that nearly thirty men worked in that area for a summer. During that summer, Preston and his family "sold 'em milk and butter, potatoes, tomatoes, everything you could raise." The workers needed something to eat, so the Webb family sold them "just anything we had to

¹⁴Interview with Ola Webb.

sell." The presence of these workers created a market for agricultural goods that was quickly seized upon by a family use to making a living every way they could.¹⁵

A CASE STUDY OF LABOR AND MOBILITY - PRESTON WEBB

Geographic mobility was common from 1880 to 1930, when work opportunities were constantly changing. In Carroll County and neighboring Pulaski, the interplay of sawmill work, iron ore mining, and agricultural labor presented farmers with work options. When sawmilling and iron ore work was available, many people worked in these industries as opposed to agricultural labor.

Preston Webb spent most of his working life on farms. He worked farms in Carroll, Pulaski, and Rockbridge counties. In Carroll and Pulaski counties he worked more than one farm, moving from farm to farm after one or more

¹⁵Interview with Clarence Webb. The theme of migration has received considerable attention by historians. On early southern migration, see John Solomon Otto, "The Migration of the Southern Plain Folk: An Interdisciplinary Synthesis," The Journal of Southern History (May, 1985), 183-200; Jack Temple Kirby, Rural Worlds Lost: The American South, 1920-1960 (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1987). For a look at turn-of-the-century migration and industrialization's role, see Jack Temple Kirby, "The Southern Exodus, 1910-1960: A Primer for Historians," The Journal of Southern History (November, 1983), 585-600; and Ronald Lewis, "From Peasant to Proletarian: The Migration of Southern Blacks to the Central Appalachian Coalfields," The Journal of Southern History (February, 1989), 77-102.

years. Throughout this period he worked in non-agricultural fields of labor, too. The same horses which pulled a plow during planting season pulled a wagon for hauling jobs.

Preston's father, Martin Webb, did not own any land but worked on the farms of other Carroll County farmers. Martin did his share of work off the farm. Clarence Webb heard that his grandfather once pulled logs out of the mountains faster than his partner could work with a horse. Martin worked the "old time" way, preferring human-power to horse-power. Martin supplemented his labor activities by working for hire on neighboring farms.¹⁶

Preston grew up learning that this kind of diversified labor was natural. He saw his father get work where he could and valued the work ethic that pushed rural folks to get by the best way they could. Preston grew up in a social position that required hard work to survive and prosper. There was no large farm inheritance for Preston. Just as Martin had started from scratch after being abandoned during the Civil War by his father, a Confederate soldier, Preston had to begin adult life on his own. Not having a farm was certainly a factor in either pushing laborers without farms from the region or forcing them into other fields of labor. Martin's legacy of working hard at everything and anything

¹⁶Interview with Clarence Webb.

to make a living extended to his two children. Preston's sister, Octavie, suffered hard times and relied on the mutual help social networks of this Appalachian family.¹⁷

Preston Webb's initial work experience was helping his father farm. As a young man Preston experienced labor diversity when he worked for hire at a sawmill. For the first few years after he was married, Preston spent most of his time on farms in Carroll County. Here, 1894, his first son, Edgar, was born, followed by Keonard, Canie, and William. After six years of Carroll County farm life, Preston made the first of his major moves while remaining in the field of agricultural labor. Preston worked on a farm in Rockbridge County, where his fifth son, Toney, was born.¹⁸

After a short tenure in Rockbridge County, Preston returned to Carroll County. After Hobie was born in 1907, the family moved to Snow Hollow, an area of Carroll County near the Pulaski County border. Here, Preston's first daughter, Notie Belma, was born. After a few years, the family returned to Snow Hollow, living at various places in that region of Carroll County. Shortly after the birth of Notie, the family made its first move into neighboring Pulaski County. Preston began working for his uncle at a

¹⁷Interviews with Clarence Webb and Gracie Gunter.

¹⁸Clarence pieced together this history of Preston's moves. Interview with Clarence Webb.

sawmill on Max Creek. He remained there for about two years, long enough for the birth of another son, Sterling. With two children born outside of Carroll County, Preston had already made more than two moves. Preston's next son, Bruce, was born in Pulaski County in 1910, the year after Sterling was born at Max Creek. By then the Webbs had moved again, this time to Turman's Hill near the Tasker iron ore mines. Here Preston worked at the washer alongside his father, who at this time was living near Snow Hollow. Preston's next move took him to Long Shoal, near Snow Hollow. Here, Clarence was born in 1913. A little over a year later, in 1914, the last child, Gracie, was born. As Clarence Webb remembered, "right on top of the hill there used to be a house there. That's where I got that burn on the side of my head." It seems that Clarence's four-year-old brother, Bruce, was trying to carry his little brother and dropped him in the fireplace. Less than a year after the birth of Gracie, when Clarence was nineteen months old, the Webb family moved away from Carroll County for good to a place with ties to Carroll County, Big Reed Island Creek.¹⁹

After a short stay in Pulaski County, around 1916, the family moved to the coal regions of West Virginia. When Clarence was around two to three years old, the family lived

¹⁹Interview with Clarence Webb.

at a place called Devil's Fork (later called Stevenson), located in Wyoming County, on the Guyandotte River. During slack times in the farming season, Preston had worked in the coal mines. This move was different, for he took along his whole family, or at least the ones who were not yet married. During this more extended trip to West Virginia, Preston used familiar skills. For much of his stay he hauled mining props from the mountains, where they were cut, to the mines, where they were needed. Clarence said that the mining company gave him "so much to haul them out." Like many other haulers, whether hauling mining props, cross-ties, or tanbark, Preston worked as an independent operator rather than for a company, and he was paid by the load.²⁰

After their short stay in West Virginia, the family moved back to Pulaski County and bought the "Jim Buckner Place," where they remained for four years. The place was in Dry Branch Hollow, a feeder creek of Big Creek or Big Reed Island Creek. Preston owned the house in the hollow and farmed a piece of bottom land near Big Creek at the head of the hollow. Next, Preston bought some land near Big Creek, "in the bottom." Here the family lived for four more years. This stint began around 1922, after the iron ore mines in

²⁰Interview with Clarence Webb.

southern Pulaski County closed.²¹ Afterward, the family moved to the community of Allisonia. Preston rented from Cebert Lindsey for about two years, then he moved again across the New River, where he remained for two years. Finally, the Webbs moved to Rich Hill.²²

By now Clarence was sixteen years old. When Clarence married and left home at age twenty-four, Preston was still at Rich Hill. Rich Hill was located on the south or Allisonia side of the New River. The farm Preston rented was located at the confluence of the New River, Big Reed Island Creek, and Little Reed Island Creek. Also located next to and alongside the river was the railroad. After Clarence was married, Preston lived another five years at Rich Hill, for a total of thirteen years. It was by far Preston's longest place of residence at any one time.

While at Rich Hill, Preston rented from a Mr. Hall from Pulaski. Including cliffs and cuts, the farm totaled about 190 acres. Several good springs were located on the place, which made it easy to keep horses and other farm animals. The land along the river yielded good potatoes. The family also grew a lot of corn, selling the surplus each year. The farm at Rich Hill provided the family with a relatively good

²¹Interview with Clarence Webb.

²²Interview with Clarence Webb.

standard of life, especially with its waters and location near the town of Allisonia. Clarence Webb looked back with fondness on the years he spent at Rich Hill.

William Gardner, like Preston, was an agricultural laborer who did not own land. Gardner worked at his parents' homeplace, until moving to his cousin's home. When the homeplace was divided up, William sold his portion. "He'd been better off to [have] kept it," remarked Ola Webb. He then moved to a large farm in Wythe County. "He worked as a sharecropper you know," Ola added. The next move took him to a large farm in Pulaski County. After four years here, he made yet another move to another farm in Pulaski County.²³

All of the members of a farm family were affected by work mobility. One of William Gardner's moves took him to the banks of the New River. Ola Webb explained that near their new home there was "a big mill dam fixed." The family arrived at their new home late, after dark, and the mill "made such a noise you know, the water going over that thing." William's wife had never "seen nothing bigger than a spring branch." She did not seem to cherish her new home, commenting that the place was "just as near the devil's den as I ever saw!"²⁴ Even farm families which owned land

²³Interview with Ola Webb.

²⁴Interview with Ola Webb.

experienced mobility. John Quesenberry moved his family from his fifty-acre farm in Carroll County to Mount Airy, North Carolina. Here he loaded tanbark onto railroad cars and for a time worked in the furniture factories. While in North Carolina the family rented the farm, returning to it after the Great Depression eliminated many furniture factory jobs.²⁵

The children of Preston Webb worked at a variety of agricultural and non-agricultural labor in an effort to make life easier for their parents and to accumulate their own material possessions. Several of the boys worked both in local iron ore mines and in West Virginia coal mines. As a teenager Clarence Webb worked on the roads near Pulaski, directing the teams of horses which hauled and dumped wagon loads of rock. Before she was married, Lee Spencer's daughter, Mary, worked for a short time in a knitting mill in Pulaski.²⁶ From 1880 to 1930 Carroll County farmers faced a new realm of work opportunities. Farmers and their children responded to these changes by using the tools of work diversity and geographic mobility which had always been so familiar to them. The social structure of mutual help so important in the agricultural world encouraged farmers and

²⁵Interview with Merl Quesenberry.

²⁶Interviews with Clarence Webb and Mary Surratt.

their children to take advantage of new opportunities in the industrial world.

MOBILITY AND DIVERSIFIED LABOR ACROSS GENERATIONS

PRESTON'S CHILDREN

Preston's eleven children grew up in an atmosphere of work diversity. They all learned from Preston's example that work was the natural order of things, regardless of whether that work entailed agricultural or industrial labor. Aside from Preston's example, the children all learned from "experience" to make a living by whatever means possible. The children picked berries at an early age, built fires, prepared meals, helped neighbors, worked on the farm, and boarded while working away from home. All of Preston Webb's children experienced labor diversity to some degree.

Preston's oldest child, Edgar, was born in Carroll County in 1894. After Edgar married at age nineteen, he worked in the ore mines for about a year while also farming. In 1916 he moved to Allisonia and farmed while working in the mines at Hiwassee, a short distance from Allisonia. He leased about forty acres in Allisonia and raised several items for sale, just as his father had done. Edgar's family

sold butter, eggs, chickens, and hogs.²⁷ In 1921 Edgar moved to Devils Fork, West Virginia. Here he worked for the Devils Fork Coal and Coke Company, "hauling groceries from the company store in a wagon pulled by a team of mules." While in West Virginia he had just enough land to keep a cow and a hog. Edgar moved his family to Allisonia in 1928. He intended to work a couple more years in West Virginia and then join his family and work in the paint mines near Allisonia. Around 1930 he could not get the job at the paint mines. According to Edgar's daughter, Alma Hall, Edgar "felt let down. His dream was to come back to Virginia to his farm and home he had built." In 1930 the family moved back to West Virginia, where Edgar leased thirty acres of land and kept cows, hogs, and chickens. The mining company replaced Edgar's mules with a truck, and he continued to haul for the company store. He eventually bought a truck of his own and conducted a business on the side. After retiring, Edgar moved to Princeton, West Virginia.²⁸

Preston's next oldest child, Keonard, also followed the pattern of work mobility so common in his day. His case was different than Edgar's in that he did return to the

²⁷"Survey of the Work of Carroll County Families." Responded to by Alma Webb Hall. Surveys were sent to a representative of each of Preston's eleven children. Alma is a daughter of Edgar Webb.

²⁸Survey, Alma Hall.

SURVEY OF THE WORK OF CARROLL COUNTY FAMILIES

Please answer the following questions and return this survey to:
Keith Webb
Rt. 1, Box 53
Pulaski, Va. 24301

Name _____

What was your father's name? _____

Year of birth/ County of birth _____

What was your mother's name? _____

Describe the various places your parents lived from the time they were married and the time period they lived there. Also, how were your parents employed at these places?

PLACE	TIME PERIOD	EMPLOYMENT
1.		

2.

3.

4.

(use back if necessary)

If your family farmed, did they own the land, rent the land, or work for wages? _____

How many acres was the farm? _____

Figure Four
Survey of the Work of Carroll County Families

Circle the following items that your family sold or traded.

eggs butter cream cheese honey molasses

apples wood chickens hogs sheep wool

corn wheat buckwheat berries tobacco milk

other, describe _____

What food items did your family buy from the stores as opposed to raising on the farm? _____

What animals did your family keep on the farm?

What meats did your family raise on the farm?

What items did the family raise in the garden or orchard? How were these items preserved?

What jobs did your mother do in the household and on the farm. List daily activities as well as seasonal ones.

What jobs did your father do on the farm. Again, list daily and seasonal ones.

Did your mother ever help with what were considered your father's work duties? Explain.

Figure Four Continued

Did your father ever help with what were considered your mother's work duties? Explain.

Did your father ever move to other locations for temporary work? Did he board in other areas and work? Explain.

Did your mother or father ever trade work with neighbors, or engage in work outside their own household and farm?

Did your family ever keep boarders? Did your family keep relatives outside the husband/wife/children family unit?

Did your family ever keep renters or hire laborers? Explain.

When you moved away from home, where did you go and what was your employment. List in chronological order your places of residence and employment.

PLACE	TIME PERIOD	EMPLOYMENT
--------------	--------------------	-------------------

1.

2.

3.

4.

Figure Four Continued

Allisonia area for good. Around 1920 Keonard worked in the West Virginia Coal mines in Wyoming County. After three years of mining he moved back to Pulaski County, setting up and operating a specialized poultry farm. Keonard and his family raised chickens and eggs for sale on their forty-five-acre farm. Here he farmed for the remainder of his life.²⁹

In some ways, Canie Webb followed in the steps of his brother, Edgar. From 1914 to 1925 he worked as a coal miner in West Virginia. But unlike Edgar, he spent most of his time underground mining the coal. In 1925 he came back to the Allisonia area and worked in the paint mines. During this same year he worked a short time in Ohio. Canie then returned to West Virginia and worked for four more years mining coal at Thorpe, West Virginia. Canie's next move brought him to Virginia, this time in the Dublin-Newbern area of Pulaski County. Here he worked a five-acre farm on weekends, while also mining during the week in West Virginia, where he would board. On his farm he raised corn and kept cows, sheep, and chickens. In 1938 he returned to Thorpe, West Virginia, and worked in the coal mines until 1960. For the next two years he worked outside the mines cutting weeds and taking care of the town cemetery. In 1962

²⁹Survey, responded to by Rondey Webb, son of Keonard Webb.

he retired and moved to Princeton, West Virginia.³⁰

Preston's fourth son, William, worked at Stevenson, West Virginia, in the coal mines for about two years, before returning to the Dry Branch community near Allisonia. He then spent the rest of his working life mining paint pigment near Allisonia, while taking care of fourteen acres of land. On the land the family raised most of their food items, keeping hogs, chickens, and cows, as well as a garden.³¹

From 1921 to 1923 Toney Webb mined coal at Gary, West Virginia. He then returned to the Dry Branch community, where he raised a variety of agricultural products on about ten acres of land while working at the pigment mines. Toney's family raised much of the food they needed, buying sugar, flour, meal, and coffee at the store. Toney supplemented his income by trading horses, mules, dogs, and guns. He, more than any other son, carried on the tradition of his father, who was a well-known horse trader.³²

Hobie Webb was born in 1907 and first worked across the river from Allisonia at a rock quarry. He then worked for another year near Rich Hill, where his parents lived. Next

³⁰Survey, responded to by Wilma Webb Trentadue, daughter of Canie Webb.

³¹Survey, responded to by Violet Webb, daughter of William Webb.

³²Survey, responded to by Hugh Webb, son of Toney Webb.

he moved to Allisonia, where he resided for fifty-three years, working in various capacities at the American Pigment Company, at Coleman Furniture Plant in Pulaski, at Hercules in Radford, and in the coal mines in West Virginia. Hobie and his family kept some farm animals and raised a garden, producing much of the food the family needed.³³

Sterling was born near Max Creek in 1909, when his father was working at a sawmill. Sterling worked at a wide variety of jobs, moving to Huntington, West Virginia, to work for a year in a nickel plant. He then moved to Leesburg, Virginia, where he worked for another year as a tenant farmer on a cattle farm. He returned to Huntington for seven years and worked at the nickel plant. Afterward he moved to Allisonia for thirteen years and worked at a variety of places, including timbering, the furniture factory, and the paint mines. Sterling then moved to Nokesville, in northern Virginia, where for eleven years he operated a dairy farm. While farming, Sterling and his family raised much of their food and kept cows and hogs.³⁴

Bruce Webb was born in 1910 in Pulaski County, near the mines at Turman's Hill. Bruce spent most of his life working for the paint mines. He and his family raised a garden and

³³Survey, responded to by Ernest Webb, son of Hobie Webb.

³⁴Survey, responded to by Charles Webb, son of Sterling Webb.

kept chickens, hogs, and cows.³⁵

Clarence Webb, the last of the boys, was born in 1913 in Carroll County. Clarence worked in the paint mines near Allisonia and kept a cow and hogs on his two-and-two-thirds acre farm. Clarence kept a garden and raised much of the food the family consumed. Clarence's working life was cut short in 1948, when he became disabled because of a spinal condition. His wife, Ola, then worked for several years in the furniture factory in Pulaski, while Clarence did what he could around the place, gardening and helping with the cooking.³⁶

Gracie, the last of Preston Webb's children, was born in 1914 in Carroll County, near the Pulaski County line, at Long Shoal. After she married she lived in the house that Edgar owned near Dry Branch. After living in Dublin for a time, she moved back to the Allisonia area and resided with her parents, helping to take care of them. After her father died in 1950, Gracie moved to a place in Shiloh, across the New River, where her mother stayed with her for thirteen years.³⁷

³⁵Survey, responded to by Glenna Webb Watson, daughter of Bruce Webb.

³⁶Survey, responded to by Robert Webb, son of Clarence Webb.

³⁷Interview with Gracie Gunter.

Preston's children followed the pattern of geographic mobility established by their father. All of Preston's children moved at least one time in their lives. All but two of the boys, Bruce and Clarence, worked in the West Virginia coal mines. Of the nine boys, three permanently settled out of the Allisonia region. Edgar and Canie spent most of their lives in the coal regions and retired in Princeton, West Virginia. Sterling retired to northern Virginia. The other six boys eventually settled in or near Allisonia. All six raised gardens and kept farm animals, and all but one worked in the paint mines near Allisonia.

The three children who permanently moved out of the region came back to the Allisonia area or nearby, before leaving for distant places again. Intending to return to the region, Edgar moved his family back to Dry Branch for two years. Canie moved to the Newbern area for seven years, before returning to the coal mines for good. Sterling worked and lived in Allisonia for thirteen years after World War II, before heading to northern Virginia and the dairy farm he and his family tended. Of the two girls, one stayed in the general area of Allisonia. Gracie took care of her parents, while her older sister, Notie, moved to West Virginia.³⁸

³⁸Surveys.

In addition to their industrial-oriented jobs, all of the nine boys engaged in some form of agriculture. Their land holdings ranged from just over two acres to one hundred acres and included rented, leased, and owned land. Clarence owned less than three acres in the Dry Branch community, but he was able to produce a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, and meats for family consumption. When Canie lived in Newbern and boarded in West Virginia, he owned five acres of land on which the family raised much of their food. Sterling once operated a one-hundred-acre farm. The remainder of the boys operated farms ranging from fourteen to fifty acres.³⁹

Preston's offspring endeavored to produce a variety of agricultural products, just as their forbears had done. Sterling's family raised and sold eggs, chickens, hogs, milk, and cows. Keonard made his living from his farm, and raised thousands of chickens for sale. He also sold eggs and honey. William's family sold butter, as did Clarence's, whose own family also sold eggs, cream, and milk. For Clarence and Ola, "cream money" was an important part of the family income. Bruce and Hobie lived in or near Allisonia and sold butter, chickens, corn, and milk. Hobie also sold eggs and cream. Bruce sold hogs and wood. Edgar and Canie

³⁹Surveys.

sold chickens, hogs, and milk, and Edgar also sold eggs and butter. Toney sold butter, eggs, hogs, chickens, and corn, in addition to trading mules, horses, and other items.⁴⁰

Preston's children, just like their Carroll County forebears, tried to produce as much food as possible on the farm. Most earlier Carroll County farmers bought only sugar, salt, and coffee at the stores. Farmers had flour and meal ground at local mills. The latter wave of agricultural-industrial laborers, such as Preston's children, still produced most of their own food, but they began to buy more from the stores. In addition to sugar, salt, and coffee, farmers began to buy flour, bread, corn meal, and dried beans.⁴¹

Women continued to engage in many of the activities earlier farm women practiced in the region. They did housework, milked, churned, preserved foods, gardened, prepared chickens to eat, made clothing, and fed the farm animals. Women also helped with duties which were normally reserved for their husbands. When her husband, Canie, was away mining during the week, Mary Lou gardened and took care of the animals. When he delivered goods to the miners around Stevenson, West Virginia, Edgar's wife, Minnie, helped him

⁴⁰Surveys.

⁴¹Surveys.

with his coal orders. Keonard's wife, Bessie, took care of the administrative tasks surrounding their poultry business. She helped grade and ship the products which were for sale. Sterling worked on a dairy farm for a time, aided in milking the cows by his wife, Mabel. Clarence's wife, Ola, did chores, such as milking and gardening.⁴²

Most of the men worked industrial-based jobs, but still managed to carry out many agricultural activities around the farm. The men planted, harvested, milked, fed livestock, killed hogs, cleaned barns and outbuildings, repaired broken equipment, cut wood, and raised gardens. During periods of crisis or special need, the men helped the women by cooking, helping with the children, helping with preservation of food, and housekeeping. Following Bruce's wife's death at a young age, he was involved in many tasks which were normally part of a woman's realm of work. After Clarence became disabled, his wife, Ola, worked in the furniture factory and he took care of home-based tasks, such as cooking.⁴³

Preston moved from job to job, working on a temporary basis at various tasks and even boarded in West Virginia to mine coal. Several of his sons did the same thing after they began their families. Hobie worked in coal mines in Gary,

⁴²Surveys.

⁴³Surveys.

West Virginia, boarded there, and came home on weekends. While his family was in Virginia for two years, Edgar continued to work in West Virginia. From time to time, William worked in the coal mines and boarded there. When he lived in Newbern, Canie boarded during the work days and came home on weekends.⁴⁴

The old work patterns of neighborliness and mutual aid were still in place for these farm families. Preston's children traded work with neighbors, helping with tasks such as hog killing, harvesting wheat, vegetables, and fruits, making apple butter, and quilting. Sometimes Canie worked for other farmers and was paid in crops. He also milled corn for his neighbors.⁴⁵ Preston's children kept kin for extended visits. Gracie kept her grandfather Martin for a time and also housed her parents. After Preston died, Gracie took care of her mother. Because of their location in the coal fields, the two families of Edgar and Canie kept relatives for periods of time. "When relatives came to West Virginia," Alma Hall recalled, "until they found a job, they lived with us." Canie also kept boarders. "Some were relatives in the coal fields." Because of the patterns of worker mobility, people in industrial areas saw more

⁴⁴Surveys; Interviews with Clarence Webb and Ola Webb.

⁴⁵Surveys.

boarders than their counterparts in totally agricultural areas.⁴⁶

The Webb family hired laborers to do specific tasks around the farm. Some of Preston's sons hired men to do plowing. After he became disabled, Clarence hired men to do odd jobs around the house. Canie hired people to cut wood. Keonard hired laborers most all the time. Since his type of farming required intense work at particular periods, he did not keep renters but instead hired laborers as he needed them. Alma Hall recalled that when Edgar's family was in Virginia for two years, they hired a black man, Rob Garner, "who stayed and helped [my brother] with the farm. They built a small house for him."⁴⁷

From 1880 to 1930 farm families ranged from John Goad's family of six children, living on two hundred acres of land, to Preston Webb's family of eleven children, who resided on various lands in Carroll County and Pulaski County. Despite the differences in land ownership, means of agricultural production, wealth, and existence of opportunities, all the families experienced a similar movement to industrial labor.

⁴⁶Interview with Gracie Gunter; Surveys.

⁴⁷Surveys.

CHAPTER FIVE:

CONCLUSION

This project began as a study of social mobility. Just as Stephan Thernstrom studied social mobility in a New England town, I intended for this study to demonstrate the patterns of wealth acquisition in a rural Appalachian area. Originally, I had hoped that a study of population and agricultural census schedules would reveal how means of agricultural production and land ownership influenced the move from wage to sharecropper to landownership status in the Appalachian mountains. I found, however, that the lines of social division were not always clear. Farm owners and landless farmers worked by the same methods. Landowning and landless farmers interacted on a much more egalitarian level than people in areas such as the Deep South or the Midwest, where lines of social division were more clearly drawn. Then, my interest in social mobility led to an interest in geographic mobility. Thernstrom traced the movement patterns of city dwellers aside from tracking their acquisition of wealth. As Crandall Shifflett and Florence Cope Bush discovered, the people of Appalachia experienced a great deal of mobility, moving often from one rural area to another, in much the same fashion as the laborers of New England had moved from one town to another.

In the process of tracing geographic mobility another important question arose. Why did Appalachians move? At this point in the study, interviews with various former Carroll County residents helped fill in some holes. Before industrialization Appalachians possessed a strong work ethic that emphasized aiding the family in mutual help relationships in which all family members had important tasks. Communities also functioned cooperatively: individuals and families helped each other through the system of social barter. Families and individuals did not cease patterns of mutual aid when industrialization and new work opportunities arrived in the mountains. Whether adults or children, Appalachians moved and engaged in new labor activities to help their families. Mutual aid and reciprocity therefore became the focal point of this study. Industrialization never did destroy the bonds of hospitality that allowed the practice of social barter to survive in the Appalachian mountains. Many Appalachians entered the world of industrialization in an effort to more ably contribute to the most basic community building block -- the family.

Appalachian and Carroll County history proceeded through three distinct stages. Appalachia's first phase lasted until 1880, when most but not all communities operated from local economic structures of mutual aid at the family and community level. The economies of these families

and communities were mostly subsistence economies with a semblance of market activity, as demonstrated in the works by Dunn, Eller, and Shifflett. More important than outside economic relations were local patterns of mutual aid and social barter. From 1880 to 1930, in Appalachia's second historical stage, communities faced a transition in the practice of mutual aid, owing to the introduction of new labor opportunities. As men, women, and children ventured into new jobs, they more often than not remembered the social patterns of mutual help that had sustained their forebears for so long. When people accepted new work opportunities, they were not rejecting their cultural upbringing, but many times were seeking to sustain the world they knew. One can see the social patterns of pre-industrial Appalachia still existing in a world that was quickly changing from 1880 to 1930. For this reason, the families of Crandall Shifflett's Coal Towns kept patterns of reciprocity alive in the coal communities they created: The farmers of Cades Cove continued the practice of mutual aid and mobility in a post-Civil War shrinking economy: And Eller's mountaineers became millhands and miners. Similar to the laborers of Carroll County, Dorie and her family in East Tennessee moved about to find work but kept alive patterns of neighborliness, whether helping bury the dead, keeping a family during economic crisis, or helping the sick get well

again. Carroll County residents also kept kin and continued the patterns of community and family mutual help. The scale of industrialization from 1880 to 1930 invited rather than repelled patterns of reciprocity, mutual aid, and social barter in Appalachia and in Carroll County. More importantly, these same patterns of mobility and mutual aid survived after 1930.

EPILOGUE

Although it is possible to speak of historical stages in the development of industry in Carroll County, it is also helpful to look at how aspects of one historical stage survives in another historical era. Part of the argument of this thesis is that the practices of social barter, mutual aid, and neighborliness continued after the 1880s and were an important part of the industrial age up to the 1930s. Florence Bush's study of her mother's history also shows how some practices, such as mutual aid, transcend historical boundaries. Shifflett's work on coal communities shows how mountain people retained aspects of their culture in a completely new environment.

People from Carroll County reacted to change by borrowing from their past. Dorie relied on her mother's help and the help of other family members, even while she and her husband entered a new era of labor. Carroll County residents kept helpful social patterns alive as they ventured into the industrial age. Though the Carroll County of 1930 to the present is a different Carroll County than the one of 1880 to 1930, I refrain from judging either era against the other, as Eller does with industrial and pre-industrial Appalachia. It is difficult to determine all the various influences which have changed Appalachian and

Carroll County society since 1930. Rather this study has sought to show how the patterns from the 1880s to the 1930s, which had their foundation in pre-1880s developments, remained in place to some extent from the 1930s to the present.

Clearly, the legacy of geographic movement and labor diversity continued after 1930 in Carroll County. Preston Webb's forty grandchildren took advantage of an even greater array of employment opportunities. They pursued college, the military, industrial labor, agricultural labor, and specific careers, such as law enforcement, engineering, and government jobs. For example, in the early 1940s, when war production began, Mary Surratt's husband, Clarence, worked at the Radford Arsenal, as well as continuing to operate his farm. Later, he drove a school bus to supplement his farming activity. William Gardner's brothers and sisters offer similar examples. Three remained in the Carroll County area and farmed while supplementing their income by driving trucks and making barrel staves. Two brothers migrated to other areas, one to Oregon and another to Detroit. John Quesenberry's brothers and sisters worked at the arsenal and in factories in Mount Airy. One of Berta Webb's brothers stayed nearby and farmed. Two brothers moved to Washington, D.C., to work for a time, and another brother, along with Berta, worked in local hosiery mills. Carroll County

residents, like many other Appalachians, kept alive patterns of mobility and work diversity.

The history of Carroll County dispels many stereotypes about Appalachia. Carroll County residents were not "locked in time," but carried on a wide variety of labor while remaining geographically mobile. Carroll County residents did react to larger changes which affected the Appalachian mountains and the rest of America. The case study of Carroll County also dispels the stereotype of independent, isolated people. Carroll County residents did seek to achieve as much economic stability and independence as possible, but they never did lose the patterns of help and mutual aid that sustained their communities and families. Practices of economic barter were only one part of a larger world of social barter where people traded skills, talents, and resources.

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