

There were "One-horse" and "Two-horse" farms with acreage which could be planted and cultivated with one horse or two horses (or more often mules). People with larger farms might employ other people to work the land for wages, and in some cases use tractors. Papa always rented when he didn't own the land. Grandpa Ballard (Mama's father) also rented, and like our family, lived in a few different places in Pike County.

I'm thinking now of "white mud", that was used to make whitewash for painting the hearth and around the fireplaces. The places I remember where this white mud was found were small areas maybe a few feet across, often in the bank of a small stream or ditch, I think. Not every farm had a spot of this, but those who had it would give a neighbor permission to get a bucket of mud. It was mixed with water and applied with a rag.

Maybe around 1920 we moved to the "mountains" in the south part of Pike County, I think south of Lifsey Springs and Meansville. The house we lived in was at the "jumping off place" - the end of the country road.

I was in the first grade, and I think Paul was too. (I started a year later because my birthday is in December - Paul's in March). We walked to Cook's School House, partly through the woods by a sawmill, taking our lunch in a bucket. There were two rooms in this elementary school. Miss Olga Reeves taught the earlier grades in one room, and her mother taught the upper grades in the other. We had a well in the yard and two outhouses in the edge of the woods - one for girls, one for boys. At the front of the classroom there was a bench where the group that was reciting would sit. The bench was a log on legs with the top half cut off to make a bench.

One day the teacher told a little boy to count to a hundred by ones. He started off really fast "one-one-one-one-one until the teacher stopped him.

One of the toys we boys enjoyed was our "hoop and staff". In case you don't know, the hoop was an iron band perhaps 6 or 8 inches in diameter, about an inch wide and 1/8 inch thick. (Probably from the hub of a wooden wagon wheel). Using a staff made of a small slat about 3 feet long with a piece of slat about 6 inches long nailed across one end, we could throw the hoop on the ground in a way to start it rolling, then we could keep it rolling and even steer it by pushing it with the cross piece of the staff at ordinary walking speed. Sometimes we would take them to school and play with them at recess.

We walked to school with a couple of neighbor boys. One morning when we got to their house to walk to school, one of them was out behind the chimney with a pan of water, washing his feet. He had not washed them before going to bed the night before. As I recall it, a lot of children went barefooted in those days.

There are some other things I remember from that year in the mountains.

We had used stilts (we called them "tomwalkers") made from a small tree with a side limb cut short for the step, but somehow Papa got some sawed lumber and made a couple or so pairs of stilts for us. A neighbor ran a sawmill, which might have helped. When we moved away from that place we forgot and left them under the house. A few days later we went back but they were gone, so we just supposed somebody thought we had abandoned them and wouldn't be back.