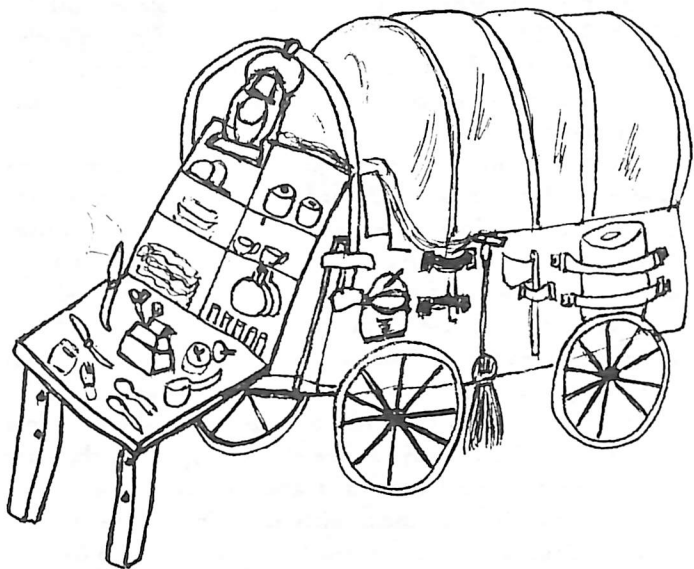
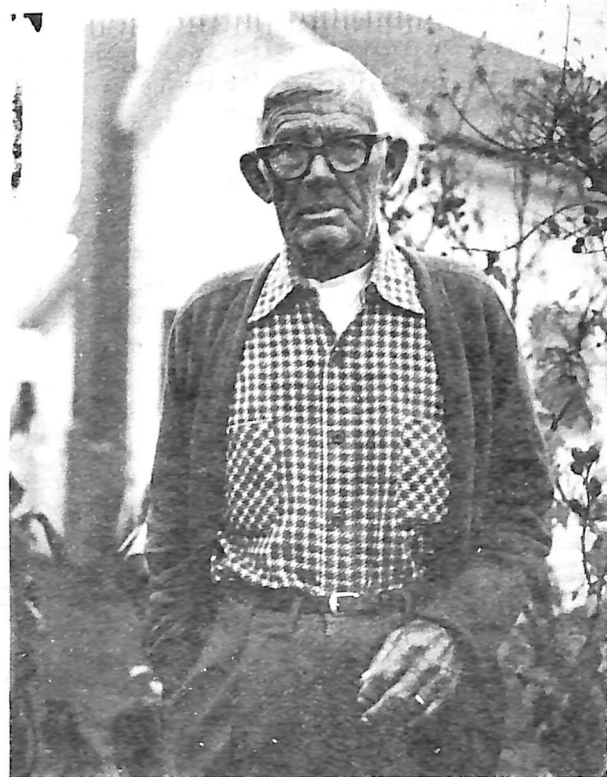


Ida would sweep, sweep, sweep. One day Ida came home from school and Mrs. Kee and I were sittin' on the porch. Well, she was sittin' right in front of the door, and I knowed that Ida was gonna do it, I just knew it. And she went in and got the broom and she swept all in there and come right out with it, right under Mrs. Kee's chair. That embarrassed me to death. "I could just tear you up," I told Ida. She said, "She oughtn'a been setting in the front of that door. She knowed I had to sweep."

People been comin' through here sellin' stuff as long as I can remember. I remember when we was over at my grandmother's how the covered wagons use to come down from the mountains. They'd park there in Grandmama's yard and give Grandma maybe apples, cabbage or just anything they had to let 'em stay there overnight and let 'em water their horses. I just loved to see them wagons comin'. Them wagons was the prettiest things ever I did see. They mostly just had dried apples and cabbage, onions and potatoes, turnips and things like that. Oh, my grandmother had plenty of turnips and all kind 'o vegetables. But they would give her them apples. She had a orchard or two over there at the Hefley house. But we was just glad to see them wagons. I think the ugliest person I ever seen in my life was on one of them wagons. That was the awfulest looking man I have ever seen. He'd be nice, but he was solid ugly!



A lot of good memories, but you begin to wonder about your house when you get about our age. Dot talked to Mr. Harry Heath and he told 'em, "You don't worry 'bout your Mama and Daddy. Long as I'm livin' they'll have a place." You see Pete is here and he works. So I don't know if he would ever take a notion to get married and move out, whether Allen now would say anything about it. But I doubt it. But you do wonder. Somebody could say, "I want that house up there where Walt Hyatt's got." They might come here and say, "Well, y'all move out." Long time ago they'd a sent you packin' outa' here in a wagon right fast like. You do wonder.



WALT HYATT: "People think they have it hard now. Back in them times it was really hard." (Photo by Susan Meiselas)

Walt Hyatt

I was a fixer on the lower end in the card room. I guess I was 18 or 19 years old. When the machines'd break down I had to go there and fix it where it would run. And I kept 'em shuttered, and I'd grind that wire on there with a emory wheel, and then I'd put it back up and start it up. I just taken it up. I worked in there for a fellow Truslow; he's the one that learnt me. If I'd have a breakdown and couldn't do it myself, I'd go ask him to show me and he'd say, "That's what I'm paying you for." So that's the way I learned — just kept worryin' with it 'til I got it to run. I just had a gift to it I reckon. My daddy was thata' way. I've learnt several boys down there myself. I learnt Calvin Black, Cecil Polk and Eddie Williams. My tools that I used to work on the machines are in my tool box on the porch right now.

I needed a hammer, a screwdriver, a pair of pliers, a wire puller and a gauge to set them with. You'd get them little rolls to them big rolls about 24 to a hundred and that's what carded that cotton. You'd take a big chunk of cotton and put it in there and it'd come out just a web. I had to work sometimes in the night until I got that machine runnin'. I'd work on Saturdays and Sundays 'til I got it runnin'. When all the machines was runnin', I didn't have nothing to do.

I was about 74 when I retired. I wouldn't a quit then, but me and the boss man fell out, and I didn't wanna have no trouble with him. He said something I didn't like and one word led to another. He told me, "You make me sick." I says, "If

I make you sick, I'll go home." I was putting a tension roller in a card and you have to get down under the card and that's where I was. And he caught me by the foot and pulled me out he said, "You know, you make me sick working; you so slow." I said, "Well, if I make you sick, then I quit!" He said, "Oh, no! Don't do that!" I said, "I don't work for nobody 'less I please 'em." So I just quit and walked out. And the funny part of it was I had all my tools layin' there in the floor where I was workin' at and gathered 'em up. And he said, "Oh, don't take them tools out a here!" I says, "They're mine! I bought 'em!" He got mad about that. Jones was hard to get along with. I worked for Truslow, Harkey, DeBrewer.

Redmond, Smith and Tom Buchanan. Buchanan was the best man I ever worked for. The others thought they knowed more than I did. Every man that goes down there that's a boss man, he doesn't understand those machines. He just understands how to make you work. Tom Buchanan didn't try to tell me how to do my job. But Mr. Jones, he thought he knew it all, and I couldn't get along with him.

Most all of the bosses come from somewhere else. Tom's father was a "super", but Tom'd come down there and he'd run pickers and tab cotton until he got on to it. And he made a good boss, and he was good to his help. His only trouble was he'd come in there drunk and I'd take him and hide him to keep the "super" from seein' him. The "super'd" come 'long and say, "Where's Tom?". I'd say, "I don't know." He'd say, "Don't tell me a lie!" I'd done hid him in the cotton and he'd get sober and I'd get him out and start again.

People think they have it hard now. Back in them times it was really hard.



MR. BUCHANAN, the "super". (Photo courtesy of Carrie Dawkins)

I'll tell you one thing, if I had them days to do over again, I wouldn't want a girl from around here now. They don't know how to do nothin' but walk and work their mouth all the time. The times have changed. They don't take time now to try to go in the kitchen and cook a meal of vittles.

Ain't none could make out like me and Annie has. She's been a good Mama, too.



ANNIE AND WALT HYATT: "Ain't none could make out like me and Annie has. She's been a good mama, too." (Photo by Susan Meiselas)