

ISL S4 E9: Community Gatherings

Transcript

Kami Ahrens (KA): Hello and welcome everybody, you're listening to "It Still Lives," the Foxfire podcast, where we take you on a journey through Southern Appalachian history one story at a time. I'm your host, Kami Ahrens, curator and director of education at the Foxfire Museum, bringing you some stories of community this fall. We are rapidly approaching our annual fall festival, so we're gearing up to have all kinds of exciting games and music and food here in Rabun County on Saturday, October 8th. And as I was getting ready for the festival, I started thinking more and more about what community gatherings used to look like in Appalachia and where some of our current traditions like shucking the corn or chasing the pig come from.

So I took a look back into our archive and pulled out some stories of community activities to share with you this month. So we are going to be looking at what community life was like and how chores and tedious things like pea thrashings or corn shuckings were turned into exciting and fun community events that really set the stage for social activities here in the mountains. Many of these activities took place in the fall, whether it was early fall surrounding the harvest or later into the fall as people would prepare for winter. Many of these activities come from the Scots-Irish settlers who practiced ceilidhs in Scotland and then later in Ulster. These were gatherings that took place around a hearth, and these often happened in wintertime when the days were much, much shorter up in the islands. And people would come together to play music, dance, tell stories. And this tradition certainly traveled with settlers over to Appalachia. But certainly the Scots-Irish weren't the only ones practicing traditions like this. There were community gatherings in every culture, we can just trace direct ties back to some of these activities.

The majority of the interviews that we're going to listen to today were featured in the spring/summer 1971 issue of the *Foxfire* magazine. This was an article that students wrote on some of these traditions, community activities, that they'd first heard about from Aunt Arie Carpenter in a 1970 interview where she started talking about corn shuckings. As with a lot of topics, the students started asking more and more questions on that same interview and succeeding interviews as well.

So today, we're going to hear from Aunt Arie who started, again, this initial topic by talking about corn shuckings, but she also talks about house raisings, barn raisings, and the latter was actually more of a gendered activity, and we'll hear this repeated in other interviews as well. But most of the activities were not gendered. So corn shuckings, pea thrashings, candy pullings - all of those activities would have seen participation from both genders and all ages. There are other gendered activities though, such as quiltings - that would have been primarily women coming together. And interestingly, the candy pullings were an important part of courtship practices. At a candy pulling, you'd be paired up with a boy or a girl and usually it was your sweetheart. So it was a big deal if you could get to pull candy with a person you were courting.

We're also, at the end, going to hear from Lena Dorsey, who was interviewed in 2013, so a much, much later interview. She's going to highlight the importance of baseball in her community. Lena Dorsey has a really interesting story and you can read more about it in the *Foxfire* magazine issue that she was featured in or she will be featured in our upcoming book, *The Foxfire Book of Appalachian Women*. But Lena grew up in Bean Creek, which is a historically black community in White County, Georgia. This community is descended from a group of enslaved peoples who remained in the area after the Civil War. And so they grew up in this really tight-knit community where everybody was close to family and definitely really tight relationships in such a small area. And they had a very well-known baseball team called the Bean Creek Valley Vets. And so she is going to talk a little bit about what those games looked like and the role, again, of that in the community.

The one thing that really pulls all of these activities together, though, is food. You'll hear in most of the interviews that they'll talk about the actual activity, but then they always follow it up with, "And then there was dinner." Or there was feasting, sometimes they'll mention music and singing and hooping and hollering and dancing, but sometimes they don't. But they definitely always mention food. Sometimes the activity was centered around producing or preserving food, so definitely with corn shucking, where you're getting the corn ready to be ground or to be put up over the winter. A candy pulling or an ice cream party, you're definitely making the food. But all of these activities also had a dinner. So even the activities that may have been gendered, specifically the house and barn raisings, where it's primarily the men performing the activity, the women would still be there because they would be cooking. As, I'm sure, some of us can imagine today from going our own experiences of maybe attending a potluck at a church or helping at a family gathering, a lot of times it's the women who congregate in the kitchen but that's also where a lot of the socialization happens. So this would have been an important sphere for women of all ages to come together and, you know, catch up on the latest news or share experiences that they're going through, get some advice. It would have been an intergenerational activity for the women and certainly would have provided men with the same opportunity as well.

So as you can see already, these were very important parts of community and community development in the mountains. So without further ado, we'll turn it over to the interviewees that I have for you today. First up, we have Aunt Arie Carpenter. She's going to talk about corn shuckings and, I'm not joking, she talks about a lice stomping, but she'll also talk a little bit about a house raising as well.

Foxfire (FF): You know all the old gatherings they used to have, house raisings?

Arie Carpenter (AC): We all called 'em corn shuckin's.

FF: Corn shuckings?

AC: Uh-huh. Yeah, we always called 'em corn shuckin's. A family'd raise a big crop of corn, gather it, and put it in the crib shed. Then certain day, have a corn shuckin'. Get all the laborers

from everywhere. Come in there and then the cook had somethin' to do to cook to give the workers somethin' to eat. I can tell you, I tried it several times. And then they come in and shuck the corn, sing and have the best time. You never seen such good times as they had at corn shuckin's, you know. I wished you could go to a corn shuckin' one time.

FF: I wish I could.

AC: I do too, I wish we - if we had 'em like we used to, we'd have every one of you'uns come down here. We'd have the best time. Then they'd shuck the corn, and when they'd have the corn shucked, if they got done, and then you're always finished before you left. They'd put the man of the house that had the corn shuckin' on a rail and carry him to the house, bring him in the house and set him down and comb his head, comb the lice off of his head down to the floor. And stomp 'em with the feet. They had all kinds of fun. You know, they just done that for devilment and fun. Yes sir. We made 200 bushel of corn on this place.

FF: That's a lot. How long would it take to shuck that much?

AC: Well, they'd always come - we hardly ever had an all-day shuckin. Hardly ever. We had that much, but they'd come at dinner time. Tell the truth, a lot of them would come for dinner. They'd sit down to eat then go on to shuckin'. Well sometimes, they shuck 'til twelve o'clock at night before they ever get up. And singing and hollerin' and hoopin' an' all. Carry shucks and hide people in shucks and do everything. They had all kind of fun in the world. That made people love to go.

FF: Aunt Arie, somebody told us that they used to do some dancing. Dancing after each corn shucking?

AC: Yeah, we never did any of that.

FF: Never did any dancing?

AC: I've never been to a dance in my life.

FF: Really?

AC: Never. Never seed but one person dance a little in my life. I don't to dances. Don't go to frolics. Never went to a frolic in my life, never went to a dance in my life.

FF: Laurie would also like to learn things about house raisings and barn raisings - do you remember when people used to do that? The neighbors would come and help build.

AC: We had a raising to help build this house.

FF: Can you tell us about it?

AC: We had a raising to raise the barn. Well, we's going to have the logs - you have to go to the mountain to get the logs first, you know, and stake 'em in. And then get your nails and whatever you're going to have ready and then ask in a whole lot of men. You know, a whole lot of men to come in and raise your house. And there's four men, four good men with good axes. And they have to know what to do. They have to cut - now I can't name the notches but you had them notches in one of them, you know. Now I know them, but still I can't name them. Well, each man took, four men, each took a corner of the house. And another man stood on the ground and worked and got them logs ready and rolled them up there. And they notched them and put them down. Well next thing you know, they got up the square of the house. If you had your rafters here, lots of times you didn't have them over here, why somebody would lay them rafters off - somebody that knows how, carpenter knows how - lay them rafters off a certain way and cut the notches in the rafters and nail 'em together top and put them together. I helped do all that. Helped do every bit of it. And same - that was the house - now this house isn't hard to raise like a barn. See the house is made out of little logs. And the barn has to be made out of big logs. Then the barn's got four big stalls in it. Well it took eight men for four stalls, maybe more. I don't know. And done the same way with it. Every man take his - you never hardly got the barn raised in one day though. No sir, it's too big, too much.

FF: Well, when you had these, did just the men come or did the whole family come over to help?

AC: Well, some of the women would come to help cook. But now they never did come to help with the barn hardly ever, just the men come. Women come when they had the cardings.

KA: So after Aunt Arie, we're going to hear from a later interview with Carrie Stewart that was done in 1977. Carrie Stewart was a Black woman who was born and raised in Franklin, North Carolina. And she was, I think, 98 at the time of this interview. But you can definitely tell how sharp she still is. So she shares her memories of corn shuckings, but also cake walks, so little bit of a different perspective here and how these were handled in Macon County, North Carolina.

Carrie Stewart (CS): I like to go and I liked it when they had what they called cake walks, where they'd have two and two and play music and walk, march. I didn't mind that, but a crowd get out and dance and the man called it - what they called "calls it" - unh-uh, I wasn't into that at'all. But whew, some of the girls could dance, my my. They had good times then, they wasn't so particularly cheesy about it.

FF: Well did they have much problem with people drinking or anything?

CS: Well no, not like they do now. I don't know, it seemed like people didn't drink and what I call act the fool at gatherings like that then. They just went to enjoy theirselves, I reckon. But I didn't remember seeing them drinking and cut up like they do now. No, everybody seemed to be so sociable and nice.

FF: Did you all have things like thrashing parties and big party after you finished shucking corn?

CS: Well no, I remember they'd have corn shuckings in the fall of the year. Men would gather corn and put it in a great big pile you know? And then they'd send out word, "Corn shucking tonight." And then they'd have supper and lot of them would have a dance afterward.

FF: Now, did white and colored go?

CS: Yes, white and colored would go together.

FF: You didn't have the segregation?

CS: No, no, there wasn't no segregation to it, I don't know, they enjoyed being together to have a big time I reckon. No, they didn't do like they do now. It isn't as bad since they integrated the schools and things, it isn't as bad. No, they'd go white and colored. And I remember they'd have a red ear of corn in the pile somewhere. And I forgot how they done that, the one that got the red ear of corn, the one that shucked until they found the red ear of corn. There's some kind of prize to that. They used to have a corn shuckings and cleaning up - like a man had new ground he wanted to clean up to put in corn.

KA: Now we're going to hear from Florence and Lawton Brooks. This interview was done in 1971. Florence and Lawton like to talk over each other at times, so if you need a little bit of help understanding what they're saying, head on over to our website, we'll have a transcript there for you to follow along with. They talk about corn shuckings and house raisings, but they also bring in the topic of candy pullings. As I mentioned earlier, this was an important part of courtship activities and they'll elaborate on that just a little bit.

FF: Well see we're trying to gather up all this information about the old corn huskings and taffy pulls and wool carding parties and stuff like that.

Lawton Brooks (LB): Oh yeah, old corn shuckings. Used to have old corn shuckings and they'd always bury a drink in the big pile, you know? And then when we'd get done, we'd have to shuck all the corn to find it.

FF: What would they do?

LB: We'd shuck all night to get to that half gallon of liquor. *laughter* Stuck in the middle of that corn pile, you know, we'd shuck all night. And we'd get to it and we'd all take a drink and they'd probably have dancin' the rest of the night. If we got done in time, we'd dance. Sometimes we wouldn't get done in time to have a dance. They'd just pile up the corn in their barnyard, you know. Instead of putting it in the crib, we'd put it in the barnyard. And then they asked everybody, all their neighbors to come around and they'd always bury a drink right in the middle of that thing. And then they'd pile their corn on top of it. You couldn't get a drink until you got

there. And everybody wanted one you know. And god, you never seen such shucking of corn. Sometimes they'd have whoever found the first red ear to kiss the prettiest girl.

Florence Brooks (FB): The one you thought was prettiest.

LB: The one he thought was prettiest, if he found the red ear of corn, he got to kiss her. It took a while for someone to find one. Somebody find one every time.

FF: Or else bring one.

LB: But it was fun.

FB: Back then, it was the worst thing a boy and girl could do, was be caught kissing. And now, it's just, you don't pay any attention to it.

FF: So they invited just all the old people and young people?

LB: Oh yes sir, everything. Everything and body. There wasn't nobody stiffed. They invited the young and old. They all come together. And you never seen such throwing shucks in all your life. Then if we got done near midnight, something like that, we'd have a big dance and all, you know. Towards daylight; we never counted on sleepin' that night, no way, when we had them big corn shuckin's, we knew it was going to take the big part of the night. We just counted on the time, you see, big time. 'Bout only way we had of havin' any fun was them corn huskin's. I wish they'd have 'em back like they used to. They was lots of fun than now.

FF: Well, what about the taffy pulls? Did you used to go to much of those?

LB: Huh?

FF: The taffy pulls? You know, they pull all the candy?

LB: Candy pullin? Lord have mercy. I've been to hundreds of them, hundreds of them. We used have them here at home all the time. The girls back home, my sisters, they'd always have a candy pull. I was the only boy. But I got as much fun out of it as any of them did.

FF: Who would do that, the young and old? Or just?

LB: The young and old would all do it, they'd all pull candy, you know.

FB: The old folks always enjoyed it.

LB: Oh yeah. It got me, you'd get syrup all over you.

FB: They had to get it all cleaned up.

LB: But still it was lots of fun, candy pullin'.

FF: Could you just explain, maybe briefly, how you made the candy? What you used?

LB: You just use ol' syrup like I buy.

FF: Could you use like sorghum or something?

LB: Yeah, yeah that's it. Regular ol' cane syrup. That's what you make your candy out of.

FF: Would you do it inside or outside?

LB: Inside the house, you pull it.

FF: Would you cook it up or what do you have to do with the syrup?

LB: We'd have to boil it and make a candy out of it. You'd cook it until you got a candy. And then they'd all go to pullin' candy.

FF: So when it got really thick, it was ready to pull?

LB: Yeah, it'd have to get awful thick though. You'd have to cook it - you could tell when it got to candy. We used to make syrup candy like that.

FB: You can grease your hands and just pull it and work it and work it and work it, twist it up then like a -

LB: Sometimes you got time, you come down and I'll show you. I'll you'uns how to -

FF: How about if we came over some night and did that? Make a nice mess. I mean it.

LB: I've got some extra cane syrup here.

FF: I could buy some.

LB: Well I got some, I got some here.

FF: What other kinds of things did you get together to do, Lawton?

LB: We'd have pea thrashings.

FF: Ah, a new one.

LB: Yeah, pea thrashings. And people'd go in - everybody planted peas. These old, well they call 'em old clay peas. I ain't seen none of 'em in twenty years. There's seed to them about to run out; you can buy these old black and white peas, you know. But them others was kind of a red little ol' pea. Round and red. And people always planted 'em in the cornfield. Well, they'd go and pick and carry a great big ol' pot and then we'd all get us a pole to beat.

FF: A pole?

LB: Yeah, had to cut you a pole, a stick to beat with. And then we had to go - they put them on big sheets, you know, great big ol' sheets. You just beat. And you stir up one and beat again.

FF: You beat the pods off?

LB: The hull'd dry up on top and then you'd stir up to get some more that hadn't been hit, you know. Then you'd beat them again. Have them ol' peas beaten like that, thrashin'.

FF: Everybody just get together and do that?

LB: Oh yeah, yeah they'd get together and just beat, thrash peas. Had the biggest time of it you ever seen.

FF: Would people all put their peas together? Would they do like one person's peas at a time?

LB: One at a time. But they growed lots of them. Back them, they'd grow 'em and sell the things. You could buy them for nothing, nearly a bushel. But still that was a way of gettin' a little money. Back in them days, there wasn't no way of gettin' money. You had to do the best you could to get your money. And they saved everything and they growed everything. And growed them peas and what they didn't eat, they sold. We'd have house buildings and build a house.

FF: Yeah, tell us about those.

LB: Anybody went to build a house, well we'd all pitch in and most of them that was built was log houses and we'd pitch in and a couple of days, three days, we'd have a man a house built. Everybody just go in and help the man. Wasn't countin' on gettin' a dime out of it. Of course, maybe they'd have a big supper or something when we got it done, you know. We always had somethin' at the end when we got done. Some kind of a party. Generally had a big dance in the house, first thing, before they ever moved in, when there wasn't nothin' in the way. You got the house done, they'd always give us a big dance. All of us for helpin' build the house. We'd pitch in and you take, gosh, fifty or sixty men, and didn't take but a little bit to build the dang thing. It went up fast.

FF: Right. Would just the men come?

LB: Yeah, just the men come 'til we got ready for the dance, then all the ladies.

FF: Some lady told me that they'd have somebody standin' on each corner doin' notches, is that how they did it?

LB: That's right, they'd notch the logs. Some notched the log, some was carryin' the logs, some was peelin' the logs. There's always a job for everybody.

KA: The same year, an interview was conducted with Harriet Echols. She also talks about candy pullings and corn shuckings, but she makes mention of ice cream parties - which would have been a particular favorite of mine - and nut cracking, interestingly enough.

FF: Do you know anything about corn shuckin's or candy pullings or?

HE: Oh yes, I've been to many candy pullings. You know, people that had farms; in all of these areas in here was big farms. And since I've lived up here, Mr. Cabe was hauling wagon-loads of pumpkin, watermelons 'til frost in the fields and corn. Now they haven't had a corn shuckin' since I've been up here, but I went to several while I lived down near Franklin. And it's where people have the big farms and they just store the barns full, big cribs of corn, you know. And I notice all through here, years ago, they had especially log cribs made where the air could go through and finish drying the corn after they gathered it from the field. Well then all the neighbors would get all their corn gathered in and then they'd start. And they'd go from place to place every week, maybe twice a week, they'd have a corn shucking at different places. And the men would get to the barn and shuck the corn. If there was too many women, they'd help shuck too. And then the others would cook supper and have a big supper just like we have goin' to church suppers or somethin' like that. All kinds of everything that was prepared. And they'd store the pumpkins in a barn and cover them with the shucks and the hay from the corn to keep them through the winter. And, well, it's just fascinating. And then, after, if there's enough young people they would have a party and they would dance. And if they had made syrup - and usually, they was finishin' up the syrup makin' before the corn gatherin', you know. They'd have a pot of syrup boilin' on the stove and they'd make molasses candy. And you'd pull it, you know. You grease your hands. It takes two to pull it. And you get one end and your boyfriend gets the other and you just hand it back and forth. Both hands, you're just workin' it and havin' fun. It's fascinating. I wish people would do more of that nowadays.

FF: We tried last night to have a taffy pull but every time we handed it back and forth, it'd go *makes noise*

HE: You didn't cook it long enough.

FF: We didn't boil it long enough.

HE: It takes a good little while. You usually stay over the table 'til you get it kind of worked up, you know, and started to pull it. And we'd get out on the porch and out in the yard to pull candy and bring it in the house. Have the big ol' turkey platters, you know, ham platters, spread it around and take the knife and it just breaks. Just take a knife and hit it and it just breaks off in pieces.

We had the ice cream parties too. We froze the homegrown ice cream. And we'd have about five freezin' and we'd have about thirty youngsters and then the old folks would come in with the children and we'd stay up until twelve and two o'clock. Go home and lay down a little while and get up and do the chores. Usually our ice cream suppers was on Saturday night.

FF: Could you explain those a little better?

HE: Well you see, most everybody had four or five cows. Well, there was just a lot of people that lived like we do around here, you know. And they'd all fix a meal, 'cause they make the boiled custard. You know how that's fixed, with eggs and what have you, sugar and flavorin'. And cook it and freeze it. It's delicious but you put a lot of eggs in it. It's so rich you can't eat as much of it as you can the raw cream. And we'd get about five ice cream freezers and invite the youngsters in, and maybe we'd get in the parlor as we had those days. And get around the organ or piano or whatever - most every family had an organ or a piano. And we youngsters would sing and play games and well, it's just fun. See, we didn't have anywhere to go. The pictures shows - and that was back in the horse and buggy days, and the big towns was the only place there was a theatre, you know, to go to. And that's what we did for recreation was our parties that we had and singin's. And we'd meet during the week, we'd go to prayer meeting on Wednesday night and a crowd of the youngsters, and they'd sing and practice the songs for the choir and for church on Sunday. And then on Saturday nights, we'd have our ice cream supper and in the winter time, a candy pulling. And well, we'd gather nuts and have a nut cracking to make our candy, you know, if we wanted to make fudge or something like that. And we did all kinds of things like that.

KA: Again, in the same year, 1971, we've got an interview from Richard and Margaret Norton who lived in Betty's Creek, Georgia, which is where present-day Dillard, Georgia, is here in Rabun County. They talk about corn shuckin's and house raisings and candy pullings, but Margaret does talk a little bit about quiltings and, as mentioned in the beginning of this podcast, quiltings were an important part of women's activities and an important time for them to come together. It was an activity they could perform while still watching children, so there are memories from children who grew up going to quiltings, hiding beneath the quilts or hanging out in the other room trying to listen to what the women were saying. So she gives us a nice introduction to some of that practice.

FF: Okay, I'm getting information on times when people used to get together, like when they have corn shuckin's and house raisings and barn raisings and candy pullings, and you know, all that kind of stuff. Can you tell me anything about that? Like the corn shuckings?

MN: Quiltings.

FF: Quiltings? Right.

RN: Yeah, they used to have corn shuckings. Every fall they'd get their corn together and they'd have corn shuckings. They'd gather it all in and all the women folks, a lot of them would go in and cook dinner and the -

MN: And the men folk would shuck corn and had a jug of liquor in the middle of the big pile of corn. Whoever got to it first, got to drink first. They just hurried as fast as they could shuck.

RN: Last one I was at was when we were on Wolffork. Do you know Bruce Keener?

FF: I don't, no.

RN: Well he lived on Wolffork over there.

MN: Well, Suzie lived on Wolffork a while but she probably didn't acquaint with Bruce Keener because he's a, well, he's not old but he's not young.

RN: He's at the head of Wolffork there.

FF: Is it a brick house?

FF: Split-level, I believe, too.

RN: Yeah I believe he built a new house right here.

FF: Yeah, I think I've met his wife.

FF: I know his boys too.

MN: Well yeah back in those days everybody helped everybody else. Somebody went to build a house, everybody flew in to help them, you know. Went and helped 'em.

FF: Yeah, well how long would it take? Say if you're just going to build a log cabin with a couple rooms in it, how long would it take for them to get it together?

RN: Well that, they just need their logs out and have 'em ready and they'd throw - many of 'em would do the notching, you know. Some roll 'em up. And they'd put up the walls in a day.

FF: Did they use pulleys to get the logs up?

RN: Huh?

FF: Did they use any kind of pulleys with ropes to get the logs up?

RN: They just, most of the time just use what we call skid poles. Lay up poles and roll 'em up. Four or five get a hold of 'em, you know, and they'd just roll 'em up on the house.

FF: And how could you make sure that everybody's notches were going to fit together, you know?

RN: Well, they generally had one, they had 'em measured pretty close, you see, and they was tapin; they didn't care whether they were exactly square.

MN: They had somebody that knew how to cut 'em.

RN: And they had somebody that really knew how to cut 'em, you know. And they could make 'em fit alright. And then sometimes, they'd put 'em up there and notch 'em after they got 'em up pretty high. They generally used smaller logs and they could notch 'em after they got 'em up there, you see. They'd turn 'em up and notch 'em and turn 'em back over and made 'em fit on the logs.

MN: And then people would work all day, I mean all fall on quilts, piecin' quilt tops, you know. And then when they got 'em all pieced, they'd invite all the neighbors and they'd have a quiltin'. And that person, whoever had the quiltin' for it, at that particular time, furnished all the dinner. People didn't bring nothin' to eat unless they's a'havin' a community quiltin' or a quilt to sell, like that home instruction club that I told you about. They quilt quilts. And then when they - at whoever's house, anybody takes a dish. But if it's at your house and it's for you, you furnish the whole dinner, even if there's twenty women there.

FF: Well how long would it take, say five women, to quilt a quilt do you think?

MN: Oh well they could quilt it out in a day. We've done it lots of times. We've had lots of quiltin's up here at Dorothy's for the home demonstration club and quilt two. Yes. 'Cause they can usually, two, four, five, six - about six get around one quilt.

FF: What other things did people, you know, get together to work to do? Like, seems like people got together to help each other, you know, work.

MN: Well, we used to help each other kill hogs when they had hogs to kill. The neighbors would come in and help. Everybody got a mess of meat and went back home. Course you had four or five hogs to kill.

FF: Right.

MN: And half a dozen or more come to help you. And they'd do it for accommodation or a mess of meat.

RN: Or you just give them a mess a' meat a lot of times. Up here, me and ma (?) would join in together and we'd kill eight or ten big hogs, but we'd always, we'd just dress one and then we'd kill two or three more for the other feller and two more for the other feller, so we got 'em all killed and dressed out and we could do it all in one day.

MN: See they didn't have --- to dress 'em like they do now, see. Had to do that yourself.

FF: What about, did y'all use have many candy pullings? Perhaps when you were younger?

MN: Yeah, they used to have candy pullings all the time. They made syrup, didn't you?

RN: Yeah, we had, well we had what we called candy breakings and then candy pullings too. When they made syrup, we'd - we had Billy Long where they generally made up syrup. His father had the syrup mill over there. We'd go there and have a candy pulling and make syrup. Take your girlfriend and you'uns pull together. Get a big stretch and double it like that, just keep pulling it 'til you make candy out of it.

FF: That sounds like fun.

FF: What's a candy breaking?

RN: Well we just buy this peppermint candy, all kinds of candy.

MN: Stick candy, you know.

RN: Somebody take a dishpan and cover it up and you had to reach in there and if you and your partner didn't get the same kind of piece, you had to put it back. But if you did, you kept it. And they'd --- through the house all the time, go around and 'round. There'd be twenty-five, you know, maybe. So they'd go around and around through the house and every time you didn't get the, your candy didn't match - they'd have different colors, you see. And if you didn't match, why, you had to put it back. Then you see who got the most candy and who was lucky.

FF: Were a boy and a girl usually partners?

RN: Mhm.

FF: Yeah.

KA: And then finally, we're going hear from Lena Dorsey. Again, this is a much later interview conducted in 2013. Lena talks a much different activity and that is the Bean Creek Valley Vets, who were a local baseball team that was pretty well known for playing in this area. And as mentioned earlier, she grew up in a very close-knit community. And so the Bean Creek Valley Vets were kind of like local celebrities in this region of Georgia. So she's going to talk about the role they played in their community.

FF: Tell us about the baseball games that used to go on up here.

LD: Oh, the Valley Vets. That was, you know where the church sittin' at?

FF: Uh-huh.

LD: Well, it's the little road that goes right by the church on up to the ball park. That was the Bean Creek Valley Vets. There was a team before them, but I don't know about them. Now that was, that's when Bean Creek was really popular. Everybody would come from far and near to the ball games. That was the only fun place we had.

FF: So, you went to a few of the games?

LD: Oh yes.

FF: Who did they play?

LD: Everybody. That mayor, oh what's the name? He was the, somethin' of Georgia. Lived over here in Blairsville or somewhere over there. What was his name?

FF: Zell Miller?

LD: I don't know, my memory's done got up and gone y'all. I'm just glad that they took history, you know, white people back in there, 'cause I done forget what I did know. Some of them didn't try to remember.

FF: How often did they have games, was it every Saturday? Or once a month, do you know?

LD: Well sometimes, well I know it was more than once a month. I just don't know whether they had it - well somewhere, if they wasn't playin' here, they was goin' somewhere to play.

FF: Do you remember where they went to play and different places? Just all over?

LD: Different places. They was over in Murphy (North Carolina) playin'.

FF: There been big crowd when they'd play here?

LD: Oh Lord, yes.

FF: Oh really? How many people would be there watching?

LD: Cobbs Park, here, it was all over. People from everywhere would come here. Yeah, 'cause, yeah that was the time. And Fourth of July and Labor Day and stuff like that. They, people like to come here 'cause they could let their hair down. Yeah, every Fourth of July, Labor Day, we would be down in (?) wood park, down near Atlanta. That was Valley Vets.

FF: Do you remember when they stopped doing that? I assume it's been a long time.

LD: Yeah, it's been a good while. Zell Miller, I think, he was one of the presenters. I had one of 'em books, but after I lost my eyesight, I lost my mind and everything else, you know.

FF: Has Bobby passed away?

LD: Yes, he's dead. He used to play.

FF: Is Bobby a relative of yours?

LD: No, he was, I don't think he was my kin, but anyway, he used to play ball. He was of the younger, you know, players. My brother used to play, all of them. Well the Vets used to play when my daddy was comin' up, you know. That was the only fun game, really, that you had around here. Everybody would look forward to the ball games on the weekend. That's when the people just enjoyed things. Nowadays, you can't get a crowd a'tall.

KA: Well thank you so much for joining us today, we hope to see you all in person this Saturday, October 8th, at our Foxfire Fall Festival. It will take place at the Rabun County Civic Center here in Clayton, Georgia. We'll meet at 10 am and festivities will continue until 5 pm. The museum will also be open that day, so definitely encourage you to come by and get your fill of Foxfire and Appalachia. You can learn more about these events on our website at www.foxfire.org/events. We thank you so much for listening to this podcast. Please share with a friend or family member. Leave us a review, a rating, send us a note, subscribe - all of those things help us gather in new listeners and spread the work that we do here at Foxfire. If you're interested in furthering your support, please consider purchasing a Foxfire membership or subscribing to the Foxfire magazine. Both of those things go directly back to supporting our mission of preserving and

promoting Southern Appalachian history and culture. But it also helps us continue our Foxfire magazine program, which again, is the foundation of all that we do here at Foxfire, working with local teens to get out into their community. And exciting news, we have a new Foxfire book coming out this March. Pre-orders will be available later this fall, but we are so excited to announce that *The Foxfire Book of Appalachian Women: Stories of Community and Landscape in the Mountain South* will be hitting shelves, again, March 2023. This book will feature 21 women's stories from 1967 up until 2020. This is a compilation of interviews, some that have been published in books, magazines, on the podcast, some that have never been published before. They're interwoven to tell diverse stories of place and people here in Appalachia. So definitely encourage you to check that out and follow us on social media @foxfireorg for the most recent updates about pre-orders and news about the book and things happening here at Foxfire. We thank you so much for listening and we will talk to you next time. Y'all take care.