

Greene County

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My Life and Times by Maudie Powell Haney



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MY LIFE AND TIMES⁶

Maudie Powell Haney

While I was growing up, I lived on the farm that is now a part of Farmcolony.

I am the daughter of the late Paulus Powell, better known as E.P. and Roberta May Powell. I was born on December 25, 1902 above the Geer Post Office (now closed) on what was known as Powell's Mountain at the foot of the Blue Ridge. My mother and father bought the land from my father's parents. The family had lived there for several generations. The house that we lived in is still there.

I was the third child of thirteen children. My father bought the land that is now Farmcolony in 1911 and we moved to the farm during January of 1912. He purchased the land from the heirs of my mother's sister and her husband, Willie Florence Powell and John Warren. Willie, John and several of their children died of typhoid fever.

In the spring of 1913 six of our family were taken with the fever. We were all put in the University Hospital. The day that we came home my mother was brought in with it. It took 30-31 days for it to run its course.

⁶ What was life like in Greene County in the distant past? The magazine will publish accounts of senior citizens from time to time that tell of the "old days" as seen through their eyes.

My parents had a two-seated surrey pulled by two bay horses. They took the back seat off and put feather bed ticks on the floor for us to lie on for the trip to the hospital.

I remember that our food at the hospital was mostly juice and milk with raw whites of egg. There is no doubt in my mind that some of us would have died if we had not been put in the hospital. The hospital charged \$1.00 a day. I remember the kindness and patience that the head nurse, Miss Malian, showed us. The head doctor was Dr. Hamblen.

My father and two children, Carl and Birtie did not get the fever. Dad sent water from the well that we were using to be analyzed. Typhoid germs were found in the water. The cattle and horse barns which were the source of the germs were above the well. My father quickly filled the well up and had a new one dug up on the hill so that the water now flowed to the house by gravity.

We had a good life. I never remember being hungry unless I was away from home. We had many kinds of fruits, apples, pears, cherries and grapes. We had corn, wheat, and oats. We kept bees for honey and we raised vegetables. We dried many of the fruits and vegetables. The green beans when dried were called hay beans or shoe strings.

We went to Sam White's store for our staple groceries, shoes and material to make clothes. We also traded with R.N. Stephens at Quinque.

We sold fowl to two companies in Philadelphia -- Ritter and Russer. We would pick turkeys, chickens and guineas, pack them in large barrels and put them on the railroad. During World War Two we sold many dried apples to Mr. Stephens. We received 18-cents-per-pound. The apples were shipped to England to make apple brandy.

My mother's father, who was a widower, lived with us. My parents worked hard and taught us children to work. I can remember following turkey hens up into Parker's Mountain, where homes are now, in order to find their nests. They were sneaky fowls, darting into the leaves, but when they had young turkeys they were too dumb to get in out of the rain.

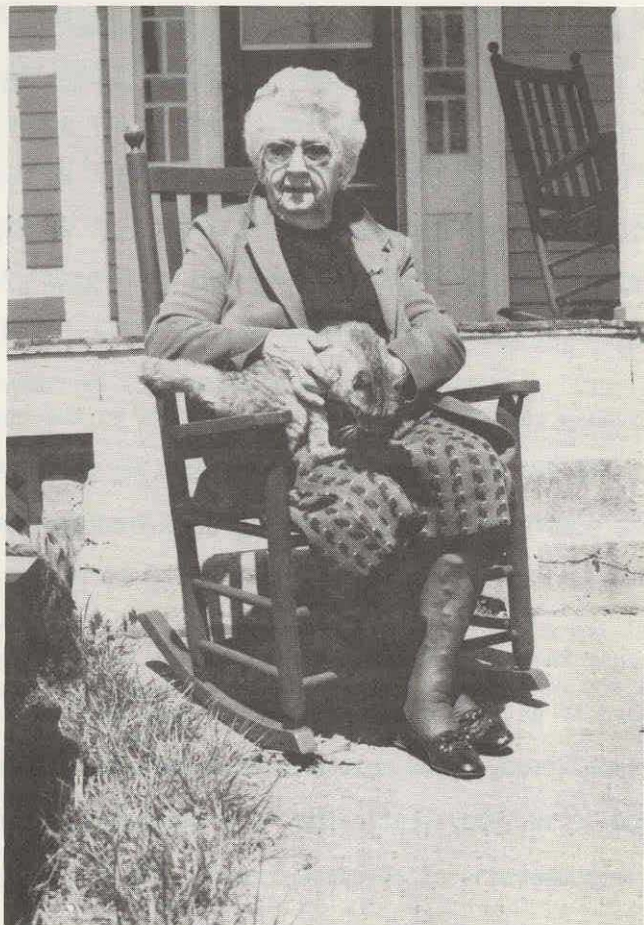
I attended three different schools at Geer, Powell Mountain and Amicus. We walked two and one-half miles to get to the school at Amicus. Sometimes we were lucky and got a buggy ride to school. My last teachers were a Mr. and Mrs. VanDann from Holland. He was sharp as a tack and provided my high school books and taught me well. The school was not accredited so I never could get a diploma. I did teach neighborhood children in the old tenant house on the farm. This was not unusual in those days.

We had time for sports and games. My older brother Paul and I loved to get the family's 22 rifle out and go snake hunting and rabbit hunting. We also loved target practice. Some of our games were soft ball, mumble peg, marbles, jumping rope and croquet. We loved to saddle horses and ride up on the mountains over the trails. We also enjoyed getting our fortunes told. I loved to go dancing. Many private homes would have music and dancing.

When Sunday came we would hitch two horses to the buggy. We'd all pile in and go to the Mt. Vernon Church. Preaching was each fourth Sunday at 2:00 p.m. There would be Sunday School during the summer months.

The house that we lived in then was built in 1905. During 1923 our parents decided to get the family out on the main highway and began to look for a place. They found that the James Beasley farm was for sale. They purchased it in 1924. Later they sold some of the land to the gas company for the pumping station which opened in 1947.

As I was growing up I had two desires. One was to get training to become a singer. The other was to become a missionary in a foreign country. But the Lord had other plans for me. I married George Haney and was the mother of five wonderful children: Davis, Glenice, George Jr., Haral and Daniel. All four boys served in the Army. They are fulfilling my life and I have no regrets.



Maudie Powell Haney and a feline friend basked in the warm spring sunshine recently at Farmcolony. Mrs. Haney enjoys visiting here where she spent much of her youth and girlhood with her parents and siblings. Here she rocks in her Grandmother's chair.
(Story on page 70)