

Hills of Arkansas

(Andrée Nolen & Tad Tuleja)

July 14, 2010

In the shadow of the Ozark hills	D D7
Where the summer sun beats down	G Em
We were eight kids, two rooms	D
In a one-horse town	A
We learned to work and we learned to share	D D7
And we learned to pray	G Em
In the hills of Arkansas far away	D A D

It was hardscrabble hard times
Across the old Southland
You'd see creeks dry and money fly
To bankers' hands
You'd see old folks chopping cotton
For a dollar and a half a day
In the hills of Arkansas far away

Mama kept the home fires burning	G D
Daddy kept the store	A D
Always short of money	G D
Never feeling poor	Bm A
We were rich in love and laughter	G D
Thankful for each day	Bm G
In the hills of Arkansas far away	D A D

Fishing poles and bare feet
On a country road
Mockingbirds singing
In the trees
The smell of Mama's cornbread
As the crickets start to play
In the hills of Arkansas far away

Now as I count my blessings
In the smiles of those I love
I know there is no luckier man
Then me
Just sometimes in the cool of evening
My thoughts may stray
To the hills of Arkansas far away

My wife Andrée's father, historian and civil rights activist Claude Nolen, grew up on an Ozark farm during the Great Depression. God-fearing, hard-working, and proud of his Southern roots, he gave his family a deep appreciation for country people and their resilience in the face of adversity. Andrée and I wrote this in 2010 for his eighty-ninth birthday.