THE DARK CORNER OF GREENVILLE COUNTY

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The designation "Dark Corner" has for many years described a small area of northeastern Greenville County. It is that description that has connotations of mystery, danger and darkness. Who? Where? Why? When? are questions that people have asked for years, but few answers are clear and decisive. They primarily exist in the memories of early residents' descendants.

Dean Campbell, who was given the title, "The Squire of the Dark Corner," by late Greenville *News* columnist Jim McAlister, defines the perimeters of the Dark Corner. In his photographic odyssey, *Eyes to the Hills*, he states: "The Dark Corner of S.C. is located in the Glassy Mountain Township and portions of surrounding townships in the northeastern corner of Greenville County."

More specific directions place the northern boundary on the North Carolina line, with the Tryon area of North Carolina included. The Spartanburg County line forms the eastern boundary; Hwy. 414, just south of the Glassy Mountain Township line, marks the southern border and includes part of the Highland Township. This line then proceeds west, past the North Saluda Reservoir, to the North Carolina line.

Mann Batson comments in his *History of The Upper Part of Greenville County*, 1993: "Glassy Mountain Township is the geographic area in which Dark Corner is located. It is in the environs of Glassy and Hogback Mountains." For generations the exact location has been "just down the road." The story is told of two World War I army officers, unfamiliar with the area, making their way on horseback to the firing range in the mountains. Not knowing the way, when they saw a local resident they asked how far it was to "Dark Corner?" The reply, "about 5 miles," came back quickly. The officers rode what they considered five miles and seeing another citizen, raised the same question. The immediate answer was "about 5 miles." Continuing on their way, they rode what they thought to be

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5 miles, asked the same question, got the same answer, "about 5 miles." One of the officers turned to the other and said, "Thank God we are holding our own."

Nancy Vance Ashmore, in her history, *Greenville Woven From the Past*, commented on the location of the Dark Corner:

> Sheriff Gilreath may have known the boundaries of the so-called Dark Corner, but, if so, he was the only one, for it is an amorphous region somewhere in the general vicinity of Glassy Mountain Township. Outsiders can never quite locate it. Nevertheless, it does exist and inhabitants once had a rough and tumble reputation for drinking whiskey, toting guns, and fighting hard amidst their sylvan mountain setting..

Definitely in the backcountry of South Carolina and isolated for many years, the Dark Corner developed a mystique of its own.

Reese Fant wrote in the Greenville *News* in November 1994. "It is ironic that one of the most picturesque areas of South Carolina, the Appalachian hills of northeastern Greenville County, is referred to as the 'Dark Corner.' It is one of the most beautiful areas of the state."

James Alexander Howard in the book, *Dark Corner Heritage*, comments: "To those of us born and reared in this area, there is no more beautiful spot in the world. The beautiful mountains and scenery serve as a comfort and inspiration." As we look at the geographical details of the Dark Corner, we see that these assessments are correct.

Contributing to the magnificent scenery of the area are a number of major peaks and mountains. These mountains are a part of the southernmost chain of the Blue Ridge, worn down to a height of just over 3000 feet above sea level. South of this chain are a series of monadnocks. Two prominent monadnocks in the upstate are located in the Dark Corner: 1) Glassy Mountain, whose rocky slopes are wet with water which freezes in winter and "reflects the rays of the sun with a dazzling luster," and 2) Hogback Mountain which is distinctive for its fertile plateaus. Hogback from the east looks like a mama hog with her snout at the ground rooting for acorns.

Surrounding these two dominant mountains are a number of smaller ones: Squirrel Mountain, west of Gowensville, is called "Squirrel" as best as it can be determined because when it was covered with woods, it seems that a lot of squirrels were killed by hunters. Between Squirrel and the Hogback/Glassy Mountain range is a long, flat-topped ridge called Chestnut Ridge. West from Hogback is Hoghead Mountain. Further west are Big Round Rock Mountain and Little Round Rock Mountain. Going from Glassy Mountain to the other side of the range off old Hwy. 11, you pass Callahan Mountain and Old Indian Mountain.

Flowing through and from these major peaks are beautiful rivers which sparkle in the sun - which does somehow manage to shine in this area labeled "dark".

Vaughn's Creek which flows through the northeastern corner of the area is vastly important because it is the major source of water to fill Lake Lanier. Lake Lanier is the water supply for Landrum, which is in Spartanburg County. In an interesting little book, *Shadows of Hogback*, by James Walton Lawrence, which is primarily about the Landrum area, the author commented: "In later years, outsiders have tauntingly claimed Landrum was a part of the Dark Corner. Some say Landrum wants to be, but it is not."

Coming from Hogback Mountain, flowing in a southeasterly direction, is Jamison Mill Creek., The old Jamison Mill was actually just inside the Spartanburg County line. Beyond the mill, on top of the hill, is the site of old Gowen's Fort.

South of Jamison Mill Creek, also coming from Hogback, is Belue Creek. Belue Mill was located in the Glassy Mountain Township. Two major rivers on the south side of the Dark Corner are the South Pacolet and Middle Tyger Rivers. On the other side of the mountains - on the north side -is the North Saluda River, which forms the North Saluda Reservoir which supplies water for the city of Greenville.

In a conversation about the Saluda Reservoir with Arnold Emory in *Tales from the Dark Corner*, Dean Campbell comments that one of the most beautiful portions of the Dark Corner was inundated to provide the county with water. "The entire section of families that had been there for hundreds of years had to be moved

out to make that reservoir. Some of the most fertile bottom land in the Dark Corner is all under water up there." He continued, "The Saluda Reservoir hides one of the most gorgeous waterfalls in this part of the county." These falls, Big Saluda Falls, are located in the upper reaches of the lake - in a saddle between Plumley Mountain and Little Piney Mountain. The waters of the reservoir come about halfway up the falls.

Since it is not a large geographic area and since it was considered a part of the "backcountry" until more recent years, the Dark Corner does not contain any large towns. Small settlements, or communities, which primarily grew up around churches, comprise the populated areas of the Dark Corner.

Perhaps the oldest, with the first settlers, is the Oak Grove Section, in the extreme northeastern part of the Glassy Mountain Township. While Oak Grove Baptist Church is not the oldest in the Dark Corner, having been established after Gowensville Baptist, the first permanent settlers did come from the Spartanburg County area into the coves and valleys between Hogback Mountain and Chestnut Ridge.

Gowensville is the seat of government in the Glassy Mountain Township. It has the oldest church, Gowensville Baptist, which was established in 1820, although it was a mission arm of Tiger Baptist Church as early as 1809. Gowensville itself is named for old Gowen's Fort, one of twelve Indian-line forts built by the colonists in the mid-1700's. Located on Old Blackstock Road., near the conflux of the Pacolet River and Jamison Mill Creek, the fort was commanded by Major "Buck" Gowen.

A small settlement developed in what is now the Lake Lanier area of the Dark Corner, on the state line between North and South Carolina. Rock Creek Baptist Church was the center of this community.

From Gowensville, west on Hwy. 11, at the foot of Glassy Mountain, the next community is called Glassy. This settlement grew up around Glassy Mountain Baptist Church, established in 1833. Adjacent is the Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church.

Actually on top of Glassy Mountain, Mountain Hill Baptist Church was the center of the Mountain Hill community. Mountain

Hill Baptist records its existence back to 1869, but it might have existed for 50 years before records were kept. At the turn of the century there were 60 or so families living on the mountain. None of these are there now.

On the southern fringes of Glassy Mountain Township is the Ebenezer-Welcome Community, near the site of Campbell's Covered Bridge. Fairly close to Campbell's Covered Bridge and to the Ebenezer-Welcome Church is the Pleasant Hill Community. Dean Campbell in defining the Dark Corner cautioned: "Those people contend they have never been in the Dark Corner and don't want to be. Pleasant Hill will not admit they are anywhere near the Dark Corner."

On the southwestern fringe of the Dark Corner is the Highland Community. Originally it was called Highland Grove, and was the site of the first post office in the area, in 1828. These communities were small, consisting only of a few scattered homes and farms - maybe a small store or a grist mill.

In addition to these small peaceful communities, there are a number of interesting and familiar landmarks in the Dark Corner. Each one tells or displays for us something of the history of the area. Visited by everyone, I am sure, is the Poinsett Bridge. Designed by Joel Poinsett, the bridge was a part of the Old Stage Road, built in 1820, which ran from Charleston to Columbia and then through the Dark Comor to Asheville. The Poinsett Bridge, over Gap Creek, is the only one remaining of three designed by Poinsett, who supervised construction until he was elected to Congress. The bridge, stretching 130 feet across the stream, contains a Gothic arch 15 feet high and 7 feet wide. Construction of the stone bridge, perfectly fitted without mortar, was completed by Abram Blanding. An engineering marvel at the time it was built, it is still a major tourist attraction.

The second major architectural landmark in the Dark Corner is Campbell's Bridge, spanning Beaver Dam Creek near Gowensville. A woodworking masterpiece, it is the last remaining covered bridge in northwestern South Carolina. In earlier days, covered bridges were common sights in upper Greenville County. Others in the neighborhood were Morrow's Covered Bridge and McClain's Covered Bridge on the Middle Tyger River and a small one near Blue Ridge

Middle School. All are gone, leaving Campbell's Bridge as a lone, silent sentinel to a vanished, but picturesque, lifestyle. Built in 1909 the 38-foot bridge was named for Alexander Lafayette Campbell, who owned a grist mill nearby. Although it has been extensively restored over the years, it is now closed to all but foot traffic and is indeed a county treasure.

Interesting sites and magnificent panoramic vistas of the natural beauty of the Dark Corner can now be accessed by a number of curved, meandering highways. It was not until more recent times, though, that highways were constructed to connect settlements. Early settlers relied primarily on Indian paths, a number of which crisscrossed the Greenville region. Indian paths were perhaps originally created by the buffalo, the elk and the deer as they traveled to springs, salt licks and fords across the rivers.

Today the Cherokee Foothills Scenic Trailway (S.C. Hwy. 11) crosses the Dark Corner at the foot of the Glassy/Hogback Mountain range. Originally this route was known as the Cherokee Indian Upper Warriors' Trail.

The upper portion of Hwy. 14 cuts through the southeastern part of the Dark Corner, passing through Gowensville on its way to the North Carolina line. Originally an old Indian road, later known as Rutherford Road, it connected Greenville to Rutherfordton, North Carolina. It was named in honor of Col. Griffith Rutherford, a renowned Indian fighter.

Portions of the Great Indian War Path remain in the Dark Corner. Known as the Old Tugaloo Road, this was the Indian path which ran from the Tugaloo River on the border of Georgia to Virginia. Early Scotch-Irish settlers who migrated from Virginia used this path.

Driving through this section of the county, enjoying the beauty of the terrain, one wonders, "Why is this area called the Dark Corner?" When? How? was this name applied to such a beautiful section of the county? There are a number of theories, but how and when the name became synonymous with the region is not precisely known.

The most colorful rendition I came across was in a fascinating book, *Tales from the Dark Corner: Documenting the Oral Tradition.*

Located in three or four libraries across the state, this volume presents research completed in the summer of 1983. Sponsored by the South Carolina Committee for the Humanities and Limestone College, under the direction of Dr. Bernard Zaidman, it consists of transcripts of interviews with 39 long-time residents of the area. The project was an effort to preserve the rich folklore of the Dark Corner.

T.B. (Buddy) Williams was interviewed in June, 1983. He commented: "This is the legend of the Dark Corner as I understand it from my grandfather and father. My grandfather was born in 1865 and he lived to be 83 years old. My father was born in 1891. He lived to be 70. I'm just 55, but I grew up with this story."

> That it apparently happened during the Civil War, maybe 1862, a politician from Charleston come up here to the mountains to solicit volunteers to fight in the Civil War. There were no slaves in this area and this politician come up here to select, to ask for volunteers. Well, they met at what we call the mustering ground .... And the politician made the speech and several of the mountaineers were present and something was said that apparently they didn't like .... So it's my understanding that they put him on his old oxcart or donkey cart and carried him around this road here to my grandfather's old mill pond and threw him in - and he made the remark then that these people up here were in the dark. When he made the report to his superiors in Charleston, they said, 'How did you do up there?' He replied, 'Well, you can forget that area because that's the dark corner of the state. That's the childhood story that I've heard and lived with all my life.

There are several variations of this tale. Some place the story of the politician, who was dumped so unceremoniously from his cart, around 1872, after the Civil War. While the Greenville District had supported Secession, and had cast its lot with the Confederacy in 1860, bitter feelings continued between two factions: Unionist stalwarts in the Glassy Mountain Township and those of Confederate leaning. Residents of the Dark Corner throughout its early history - under British rule, through both the American Revolution and the

Civil War - were strongly Loyalist and Unionist in their political philosophy.

Another theory dates the "Dark Corner" label to an earlier controversy, the nullification conflict. A disagreement over high tariffs, passed by Congress in 1824, led to protests by South Carolinians who believed that American cotton growers would suffer as a result of the higher tariffs. After several years of controversy, and violence, the state convention met in 1832 and nullified the tariff. Unionist Benjamin Perry, from the Greenville area, stated that the nullifiers had dubbed this area the "Dark Corner" when local voters gave 169 votes to American Union and only 1 vote to Nullification. It was, they said, a corner where the light of nullification could never shine. Needless to say, the Congress did not accept this action by South Carolinians. President Andrew Jackson stated that nullification was treason and that he would use the army to enforce the constitution. Crisis was averted when a compromise was worked out by John C. Calhoun and Henry Clay. In this incident, and others, residents of the Dark Corner stated their Unionist views and supported the federal government.

Anne McCuen, a Greenville historian, in pursuing some genealogical research, also documents an early date for the title "Dark Corner" from an old deed, recorded in April 1840, which described 100 acres situated in Greenville County, "in the northeastern part usually called the Dark Corner." Others theorize the region was called the Dark Corner because it was dark - dark in atmosphere, dark in deeds. There are many interpretations of the word "dark."

Writing of his upbringing in the Dark Corner, J. Dean Crain, a noted minister and educator, ruminated that the geographical area is not dark by nature, because "nowhere is the sun brighter, the hills bluer, the sky clearer, the hills more picturesque, or the creeks more sparkling." "It is Dark Corner," he said, "because of what men have done, men ruled by sin and ungovernable passions born of ignorance. Men blind to the common blessings of the beauties of life have made it the Dark Corner."

Mrs. Evelyn Gosnell, a resident of the Dark Corner, who was 83 when she was interviewed as a part of the Humanities project,

stated in answer to the question, "Why do you think people call it the Dark Corner?":

> I have no idea unless it was - oh, you could hear lots that they had been fussing and raising whiskey, I guess. I just think they thought it was the dark corner. It's a beautiful country, yes, yes, it is. Although I think, I've been up north, you know, and all around the country nearly and down South America and everything, and then I said when I come back home, 'There's no land - no where - that's prettier than ours.'- I think it's misnamed, Don't you?

Part of the "dark" mystique is based upon the early history of the county. A.V. Huff writes in his new history of Greenville County: "Greenville County came into existence by an act of the South Carolina legislature in 1786. But long before there was a Greenville County, the verdant mountains and rolling landscape had already nurtured prehistoric animals and successive groups of American Indians and shaped both the British colonial frontier culture and the society of the new American nation."

At the time the Europeans began to settle in the "New World," the land that became Greenville County was part of the domain of the Cherokee Indians, who, at an earlier time had driven out the Creeks. The Cherokees occupied an area stretching from the Seneca River in South Carolina, north into Tennessee and west into Georgia.

Lewis Jones in his description of the Cherokees commented: "They were not wild men - they practiced some degree of diversified agriculture; they built semi-permanent homes in villages; they had a reasonably definite and, in some cases, sophisticated political organization."

Approximately 64 Cherokee towns have been identified, divided into the Lower Towns of northwestern South Carolina and northeastern Georgia, the Middle Towns of western North Carolina, and the Overhill Towns of East Tennessee. Keowee Town was the capital of the Lower Towns. Located on the Keowee River in present-day Pickens County, it was flooded in 1968 for hydroelectric development and a major nuclear power facility. Smaller towns in the area included Eastatoe and Tugaloo. Northeast of these settled

areas in South Carolina lay the hunting grounds, portions of which they shared with the Catawba Indians.

The land that eventually became Greenville County was part of the Cherokee's hunting preserve. James Richardson in his history of Greenville County states: "Recorded history tells us of no one who resided in the Piedmont, even temporarily, before the establishment of the first permanent settlement in Charles Town in 1670. However, there is little doubt that it was only a few years after the settlement in Charles Town when white men began to push back from the coast into the upountry and on into the mountainous sections, where they established themselves as traders among the Cherokee Indians."

When South Carolina became a royal province after the revolution against the Lords Proprietors in 1719, the colonial government in Charleston actively cultivated the friendship of the Cherokees and established a treaty in 1730 cementing Cherokee relations and the British government. The relationship between Indians, early colonists and traders was peaceful.

Unfortunately, the peaceful relationship did not last long. In the early 1700's, the Indian trade was a very lucrative business, yielding enormous profits. But almost from the very beginning there existed great abuses in the trade, promoted by, as Richardson called them, "irresponsible men of the most despicable character." Unscrupulous traders took advantage of the Indians by exchanging liquor and meaningless trifles for valuable skins. Not operating within the law, they also cheated the Indians with false weights and measures.

By the mid-1700's the Piedmont section of South Carolina began to receive its first permanent settlers. They did not come from the coast; they came principally from Virginia and Pennsylvania, traveling down the old Indian Trail, bringing their families with them. They were of the crude pioneer type, fiercely independent, having little wealth or education, living in close touch with nature. For the most part, the first settlers who migrated to upstate South Carolina were Scotch-Irish. Described by one scholar as "emotional, courageous, aggressive, pugnacious, fiercely intolerant, and hard drinking with a tendency for indolence," they were uniquely suited for taming a new land.

Richardson observes:

> In contrast to these simple, hard-working frontiersmen were the dwellers of the low-country, who, by this time, had a well-formed social system, an established religion (Episcopal) , and a great deal of accumulated wealth, with many families of culture and refinement. And in order to understand the sectional differences which have played such a prominent part in the social, political and economic life in South Carolina, one must bear in mind the different types of people making up the citizenship of the upstate and the coastal section.

At first the Cherokees seemed willing to part with some of their land, but as settlers increasingly moved into the backcountry, the Indians began to complain that their presence in the hunting lands had forced the wildlife further back into the mountains and there were no longer enough deer to feed and clothe them. This encroachment was one of the factors leading the Cherokee War of 1760.

Early settlers, particularly those in the Dark Corner section of Greenville County, since that area was within the Cherokee Indian boundary, faced the constant threat of Indian attack.

For protection they relied on a series of forts built by the British in 1755 as a protection not only from hostile Indians but also from attacks by the French. The French and Indian War began in 1754 and did not end until 1763. In the Dark Corner, Gowen's Fort served as a fortress for early settlers. Other forts, bordering the Dark Corner, were Earle's Fort, just over the North Carolina line on the North Pacolet River, the Block House, near present-day Tryon, and Wood's Fort, sometimes called Thompson's Fort, near the site of Greer. When the alarm came, the settlers dashed to these forts - only to return home when the danger was past.

These fortifications, while offering temporary protection, failed to fully protect early settlers. A number of tragedies in and near the area later designated as the Dark Corner occurred.

In June 1776, Preston Hampton, son of Anthony Hampton who had settled his family on the South Tyger River in 1774, one

mile east of the Indian boundary, and brother to Edward and Wade Hampton, led a party of twenty-three men into Indian territory. In a subsequent fight he and four of his companions were killed. Also killed by midsummer was James Hite, son of Greenville settler Jacob Hite. He met a war party near Eastatoe that scalped and killed him.

That same summer, a party of Cherokees rode into the Hampton settlement on the edge of the Indian boundary. This war party killed Anthony and Elizabeth Hampton and the infant son of their daughter Elizabeth. A.V. Huff comments: "According to one account, the baby had been left with them while his mother went to visit a neighbor, Mrs. Sadler." Elizabeth and her friend watched from the nearby canebreak where they had hidden, and then quickly rode to Wood's Fort for help. By the time help came, the raiders had vanished, but not before they stopped at Preston Hampton's house and killed his two children. His wife was found several days later, wandering through the woods. Her mind never recovered from the event.

Jacob Hite and his family died in the raids of that same summer, 1776. Hite believed that his long-standing friendship with the Indians would save him from attack. Tradition has it that one of the daughters of Richard Pearis, who had been engaged to the recently killed James Hite, went to warn the Hite family when she heard of the impending raid. But Jacob Hite was killed, his two daughters, Susan and Eleanor, disappeared, and his wife Frances was kidnapped. Her body was later discovered by the militia in a deserted Indian town. A similar fate befell the Hannon family on the North Pacolet River just over the North Carolina line.

Terrified by these massacres, settlers in this isolated area of the state gathered in the primitive forts to make plans to resist the Indians.

At the Block House, a group of brave men gathered under the leadership of Capt. Thomas Howard one of the early pioneers of the Dark Corner. Not waiting for authority, or help, from Charleston, he and his men planned to attack the Indian war parties. Howard led the attack against the Indians under the command of Big Warrior who were in the gap of the mountains, since known as Big Warrior Gap, near Tryon.

During his march, Howard was guided by a friendly Indian, Skyuka, who led him through another gap in the mountains, since known as Howard's Gap. Howard's force surprised the Indians and won what is now known as the Battle of Round Mountain (July, 1776).

During later and more peaceful times, Howard resided in the Dark Corner, at the foot of Glassy Mountain, near the intersection of Hwy. 11 and State 101. When Hwy. 11 was rerouted, it passed over the old homesite where Howard and his wife Mary lived until his death in 1838. He is buried in the Howard family cemetery, a few yards from his home. In 1964 a marker was placed at his grave.

In 1909 a monument was placed in his memory near the site of the Battle of Round Mountain. Since it was on the right-of-way for I-26, it was moved and now stands near Howard's Gap Road on the east side of I-26 above Tryon and is visible to travelers. A stone obelisk, it is a tribute to brave men like Capt. Howard who pushed back the frontier and also to those early pioneers who lost their lives in the struggle to settle the backcountry.

By the end of that year, 1776, the Cherokees were ready to negotiate. In the treaty signed in 1777, the Cherokees deeded all lands previously reserved for them in South Carolina to the state, except for a small strip in what is now Oconee and Pickens counties. Peace, of a fashion, came to the frontier at last.

Problems, though, existed between the settlers of the Backcountry and those of the Lowcountry. It was basically a taxation without representation issue. People in the Upcountry paid taxes at the same rate as the wealthy planters along the coast, but they received no military protection against Indians or the thieves and robbers who terrorized the region. They had no representation in the Common's House in Charleston. There were no parish churches, no courts, no jails. In 1767 Backcountry settlers banded together to stop lawlessness on the frontier. They called themselves the Regulators. In time, the government in Charles Town addressed some of their concerns. The province was split into six districts, with the Greenville area being in the Ninety-Six District. Sheriffs were appointed and representation in the Common's House was granted.

Upcountry resentment at bearing the burdens of the colony

and receiving few of the rewards created difficulties when the American Revolution began in 1775. Both British Loyalists and American Patriots were well aware that they needed allies in the Backcountry - not only to support their causes - but also to help control the Cherokees, so that they would not have to fight two wars simultaneously. While no more than one-fifth of the free population of South Carolina were Loyalists during the Revolution, perhaps the greatest concentration of them lived in the Ninety-Six District, which included the Dark Corner. The Battle of the Great Canebreak in 1775, the only major battle to take place in Greenville County, was fought near present-day Simpsonville and ended in victory for the Patriots. This battle ended the Loyalist threat in the upstate, but did not change the anti-Lowcountry feeling of many upstate residents.

While no major Revolutionary War battles took place in the Greenville area, and even though the Cherokee had been defeated, residents of the Dark Corner continued to live under a reign of terror. Richardson calls these years the "Years of Banditry." In the Dark Corner: "There was no law there, but the law of might. Roving thieves and cutthroats made it their favorite haunt, from which they sallied forth at pleasure to rob and plunder." Sneak thieves and highwaymen, roving at will about the countryside, preying on honest citizens, reduced life on the frontier to continual terrorism.

Two of the most infamous local bandits terrorizing the Dark Corner shared the same epithet, "Bloody Bill." "Bloody Bill" Cunningham was at first a Patriot, then a Loyalist. He served in the Loyalist militia until the British withdrew from the Ninety-Six District in 1781. Thereafter, with a band of sixty recruits, he captured a number of frontier forts. He systematically pillaged and looted the area within the old Indian boundary.

"Bloody Bill" Bates also led a force of Loyalists and Indians. He attacked Gowen's Fort in the Dark Corner in 1781. Being poorly armed, the occupants of the fort surrendered. As they marched out, some were tortured, and the majority killed on the spot. Major "Buck" Gowen, who escaped, later gathered a force and chased Bates back into his mountain stronghold. After the war, Bates was captured for horse-stealing and brought to Greenville for trial. Hearing that he was in jail, a young man Motley, whose entire family had been

murdered by Bates, gathered some neighbors and rode into Greenville where they forced themselves into the jail, seized Bates, and promptly shot him to death. Motley was never prosecuted for the murder of "Bloody Bill" Bates.

As you can see, during the 1760's, the 1770's, and early 1780's, the relatively small number of settlers in the Backcountry were absorbed with fighting the Indians, fighting the British, and fighting the bandits. It is no wonder that violence is considered a part of the heritage of the Dark Corner.

Although the Indian hunting lands were ceded to the state in 1778, South Carolina was too busy with the war with Britain to pursue settlement of the former Indian territory. After the war ended in 1782, the state, in an effort to erase its indebtedness created by the war, decided to open a land office, offering tracts of land for sale within the former Indian boundary. Settlement of the Upcountry began in earnest.

It was during the Reconstruction Era, following the Civil War, that in 1869 Greenville County was divided into townships, sixteen of fairly equal size. In the upper part of the county, eight townships were established: Chick Springs, O'Neal, Highland, Saluda, Glassy Mountain, Cleveland, Bates and Paris Mountain.

The geography of an area and the history of an area do not tell the entire story of a specific locale, though. Remaining is the story of the people.

Early settlers were attracted to this remote, almost inaccessible, area by the rich quality of the soil along the small streams and in mountainous coves. The environment made it easy for them to grow corn and vegetables for food. There was an abundance of wildlife - deer, elk, bears, rabbits, squirrels, coons and wild turkeys. From the forest they gathered chestnuts, chinquapin nuts, muscadines, scuppernongs, huckleberries, blackberries, blueberries, and honey from the bees.

They built homes, generally of log construction, wherever water could be secured from springs. There were no supermarkets. Fields and forests provided a livelihood for the family. In small clearings, and on land which the Indians had burned over as a part of their hunting grounds, they grew a variety of crops - corn, peas,

beans, sweet potatoes, peanuts, sugarcane for sorghum molasses. A few small gardens grew onions, turnips, squash. One or two cows provided milk and butter.

Mrs. Evelyn Gosnell remembers: "Most everything - we raised ourselves. We didn't have too much either." Dean Campbell questioned, "But you were happy?" She answered, "Yes."

Corn was the major crop. At harvest time, neighbors gathered for "old-timey" corn shuckings - then stored the corn in cribs to feed the livestock - and carried the remainder to grist mills situated on local rivers and streams to grind for meal and grits. Corn supplied the family with cornbread, grits, hominy and mush - the staples of their diet.

There were those, however, who preferred turning some of the corn into "liquid corn" whiskey. For over 150 years, moonshine has been synonymous with the Dark Corner.

Bennie Lee Sinclair's roots lie in the Dark Corner. Her father's mother, Effie Barton, was born and raised there. When Bennie Lee was interviewed for the Dark Corner project, she was asked, "When someone asks you about the Dark Corner, what thoughts come to your mind?" She answered: "I think of it totally... well, first off, I love the specific area of the Dark Corner, but I think about the wildness and I think of it in relation to bootleg, because when I was little, that's what I saw of the Dark Corner. My father, Grady Sinclair, was a connoisseur of bootleg whiskey... and any time that I spent with him, we always headed for the hills - we headed back to see his friends who made bootleg. There were stills everywhere, just everywhere."

The production of moonshine, bootleg, white lightning - whatever it was called - was, and still is, illegal. It violates both state and federal laws because the producer does not pay taxes on it. There was a strong economic incentive, though, to produce whiskey. Prior to the coming of upstate textile mills, there were no industries to hire Dark Corner residents. Mrs. Alex Campbell remembered: "Back then there wasn't jobs." A farmer could sell his corn for 50 to 60 cents a bushel, but if he distilled it into moonshine, which he could sell for $1.50 a gallon, he could gross $2.50 for his bushel of corn. A man with a fifty gallon copper still could make ten or eleven

gallons of whiskey in a day, realizing a $25.00 profit.

But the production of whiskey was not a peaceful business. It led to numerous acts of violence. Alex Campbell, Dean Campbell's father, commented when he was interviewed in 1983: "'Well it was pretty rough sometimes back when I was a kid growing up. You'd hear tell of somebody getting killed once in a while over the whiskey. Most of the people I knowed of up there that got killed, they got killed over whiskey. Fighting 'cause they was pointing one another's still or something like that, you know. Didn't over women, nothing like that. Just pulled somebody's still or stole his whiskey. That, or called the law and the law got his whiskey and he says, 'I'm gonna kill you for it.' All I hear when I was a young boy growing up."

Another element of life in the Dark Corner was the family feud. Children learned a rigid code of loyalty, and the slightest insult sometimes led to violence. A.V. Huff quotes Dean Crain who remembered that: "I went with a friend one night to shoot some boys who had gotten me out one night and "run" me as far as I could see. There was scarcely a boy in the neighborhood above twelve years old who did not carry a pistol . . ." Buford Crain later said that "in my early life several people buried here in Glassy Mountain, Highland, Oak Grove, Gowensville, Ebenezer-Welcome, and Mountain Hill cemeteries died with their shoes on." When the killers were apprehended, they sometimes went free. Buford Crain commented: "Sometimes when some of the mean men in the country were killed, the people were glad, and the man who did the killing would 'come clear' on a plea of self-defense." For many years the Dark Corner was noted for illegal whiskey making, mountain feuds, numerous killings and lawless acts.

Making whiskey and fighting over it is only one theme, though, in Dark Corner folklore. Bernard Zaidman commented: "One of the common themes that seems to be running through just about all of the interviews is people here in Dark Corner have a real love for the land. It's perhaps, if not the most important thing in their lives, surely one of the most important." Albert Emory, whose great-great grandfather settled near Gowen's Gap, responded: "If you want to get somebody stirred up you just start takin' some of their land. You got problems."

When Mr. Zaidman interviewed Bennie Lee Sinclair, he said, "There seems to be in the Dark Corner this intense traditional love - first for God, then for family and then for one's land." She responded, "I would almost put land first. I have seen that God is. The family Bartons I've known have been old-style Christians. God is very important, but the theory of the land - when my great aunts took me back and showed me where they used to live - the bitterness they have for the day when that land was sold. Would you think that land came before God and family?" Dean Campbell: "Yes, I would have to agree that in many instances, I think so." Bennie Lee: "Does that shock you?" Bernard Zaidman: "I wouldn't say 'shock'. I'm beginning to get a feeling for it, the more people we talk with, people who have gone away and come back or people who have never left and never will until they are carted to their grave. That's what Lou Emma Plumley, on top of the mountain said, that she didn't intend to leave until she was taken to her grave. There is an intense love for the land."

Love for the land and love for people, whether they be family or neighbors, is intermingled. Life was difficult in this isolated and harsh area. People were dependent upon the land for sustenance and upon family and friends for survival.

Arnold Emory responded to questions about the love of land:

> I would think basically people because you know your neighbor in a country like this, where if you get into a larger town you may not know your next door neighbor. But most everyone in this area all know one another. They're accommodating, they're good people - if you need any accommodations you don't mind going to just about any of them, whether it's a close friend or not, and expect to get it. And it's a area where you expect no theft from any part of this county. We do love the land and the mountains but it's the people that we've known. It's the close knit of people we've known all our lives. We have new people that come in occasionally, but a majority of people are still people that grew up in this area and they don' t want to leave it.

Alex Campbell amplified on this theme:

> Yeah, if a neighbor got sick, if it was crop time, plowing time, you know, crop about to go up, the neighbors got up maybe when they'd go to church, somebody get up and announce, 'Brother so-and-so's sick, his crop needs plowing out, ain't been plowed in two weeks. He ain't gonna be able, he's gonna be sick, no telling how long. How many come Monday morning go along with me and help plow that man's crop out?' Well they'd be a gang of them you know. They'd plow that man's crop out. And maybe a week or two after that there'd be another man talking, 'You know, Brother so-and-so is over here sick and his cow's dry and they got so many kids over there they need some milk. Any of you fellas got an extra cow around here you'd loan this fella awhile? Yeah, Bill so-and-so over there's got one.' They'd go out and loan that man a cow.

One has only to drive through the Dark Corner to observe the importance of religion in the lives of its residents. Dean Campbell in his lovely photographic tribute to the area states: "The strong sense of personal relationship with the Creator of the Hills is evidenced by more than 20 churches in the region. Over the years the small Dark Corner has produced 30 ministers and 2 missionaries to foreign lands."

A.V. Huff describes the religious climate of the Upcountry in the early 1800's as "the second Great Awakening," a wide spread religious revival which decisively shaped the evangelical Protestantism of their region. "Southern Evangelical Protestantism emphasized personal morality more than social reform. It provided a moral discipline for the community without questioning the social system and brought to the people who lived in relative isolation in a rural society a sense of community."

The Dark Corner has a rich past. Indians, pioneers, Loyalists, Patriots, bandits - all lived and fought here - at times against a common enemy, at other times against each other. They loved the land and lived off its wealth.

Those who carved their way into this area are gone now - but as you drive through the Dark Corner you witness monuments,

landmarks, and memories of their times. The old wooden church down the road, with its pot-bellied stove and funeral-home fans, the hay wagon resting now in the shadow of a barn that is more a landmark than a workplace, the old homeplace left to the ravages of wind and weather but still bearing witness to what it was.

The centuries-old remoteness is no longer. Changing times have brought hang gliders who soar off the heights of Glassy Mountain - golf courses, the premier of which is Cliffs of Glassy, with its beautiful views of the mountains - and lovely horse farms. The rolling terrain, nurtured by early Indian hunters and later by pioneer-farmers, has become the "hunt country" of the county. Beautiful homes, stables, and pastures dot the landscape - giving evidence to a more affluent economy than the early residents ever knew.

As I drive through the Dark Corner and witness its incredible beauty, I have come to the conclusion that Mrs. Gosnell was right when she said, "There's no land - no where that's prettier than ours. I think it's misnamed, don,'t you?"

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