

Long Leaf, Louisiana 1941

Photographs from the
collection of
Evon Ballard Sonnier

Compiled and annotated by
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Southern Forest Heritage Museum
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In late 1998, as the Southern Forest Heritage Museum was getting its start, A woman named Evon Ballard Sonnier presented the Museum with a set of eight 2" X 3" black and white prints which had belonged to her family.

From time to time, one or more of these prints graced the pages of the Museum's quarterly newsletter "Edges and Trimmings" during the early years of the Museum.

Evon's parents worked and lived at Long Leaf during the 1930's and 1940's. Her father, Clarence was a machinist in the shop, and her mother Irene, ran the Long Leaf Hotel. At that time, the Hotel was almost brand new, having opened on September 1, 1936, replacing the old hotel built about 1913.

The hotel was more of a glorified boarding house / restaurant, than it was a 4 star Hotel by today's standards, but in 1941, it was probably the best that there was for miles around. The primary function of the hotel was to provide housing for single men working at the mill, rooms for travelers (mostly salesmen) and anyone else that might need lodging or food. The hotel dining room was open to all and served 3 square meals a day. Room and board was \$1.00 per day, while a single meal cost just 25 cents.

As construction began at Camp Claiborne, the hotel also overflowed with construction workers both staying at the hotel, or simply showing up for meals as Irene Ballard had such a reputation for good cooking that the hotel was known locally as the "Ballard Beanery".

The eight photographs presented here are the first time that all 8 have appeared in a 'single Museum presentation or publication. There are notations on the prints as to the identity of the people in the photographs, but the museum has no information regarding the relationship of these people to the Ballard Family or Long Leaf.

All told, there are 7 people in the photos. Joe and Roxie McCollum, Mac and Irene (McCollum?), a man named Maxie, another named Goldberg and a young girl identified as Sue Gilliam.

Were they war workers building Camp Claiborne? Were they staying at the Hotel? It appears that there are two couples, so who are the other two men, and who is Sue?

Did Roxie or Irene work at the hotel which is why they all came to Long Leaf?

By their appearance, it looks as if this may have been a Sunday Outing. If so, where did they come from, and why go to Long Leaf?

One thing is certain, they did not go outside of the "public" areas at Long Leaf, so most likely they did not have an affiliation with Crowell Long Leaf.

We will probably never know any of the answers to these questions, but their photographs have given us a priceless snapshot in the time just before the beginning of World War 2 and the nation was heaving itself out of the Great Depression and getting ready to fight a World War.

In front of The Barber Shop.



The men are sitting on a bench in front of the barber shop. Behind them is the post office, and then the hotel. The post office is now preserved across the railroad tracks on the museum Grounds, but the barber shop and the hotel were removed sometime after 1954. This photo was taken by either Roxie or Irene.



Walking uphill towards the hotel, here we have Goldberg, Joe, Roxie and Maxie posing in front of the Long Leaf Post office. This photo was apparently taken by Mac, or possibly Irene.

Store Office at Longleaf.



Taken from the road in front of the hotel, this is the Long Leaf Commissary on the left, and the Crowell Long Leaf Lumber office building on the right. The railroad track in the foreground is the Missouri Pacific main line, and the track leading to the left leads to the finished lumber sheds and the planer mill. There is another railroad track buried in the dirt where the boys are riding their bicycles, which is used for unloading supplies at the commissary.



Immediately north of the Commissary, was the Long Leaf Tennis Court. This court was built in 1918
And was very popular with the staff employees as well as their families.

The people in this photo standing in the middle of the Missouri Pacific tracks, are identified (L-R) as
Joe and Roxie McCollum, Goldberg and Maxie. Maxie seems to have been quite a character. Again
This photo was taken from the road in front of the hotel looking east.



Taken from the Commissary side of the railroad, looking West now, three of the men sit on a car parked in front of the hotel. The doctor's office is on the right of the hotel building. Of interest is the fact that Although the hotel is symmetrical in appearance, the door and window spacing and type are definitely not.



In front of the hotel, we see Roxie, Irene, Joe, Maxie and Goldberg, in clockwise fashion from upper left. Apparently Mac took the photo. They look dressed for an outing.



This photo, taken of the group by Roxie, shows us Maxie, Joe, Irene, Mac and Goldberg. From this photo it really appears as if Joe and Mac are brothers, which based Joe's last name and Mac's nick name is highly probable. To the right of the hotel is the doctors office. It still stands, across the tracks in extremely precarious condition. The photo also shows us someone's brand new very clean 1941 Ford Deluxe sedan. That someone spent a fair amount of cash on this beauty, with its chrome trim, chrome hub caps and wheel rings and finally the big, wide whitewall tires. Want to bet that it belongs to Maxie?

Roxie & Mac & Sue Gilliam



Finally, the group went on a short road trip out from Long Leaf. This photo shows Mac and Roxie together holding the young girl identified as Sue Gilliam. The location is not identified in the photo but the whole look of the road is that of a railroad grade, and a railroad grade very similar to this is what is now Redmond Road, off of Cady Street east of McNary. This would have been the old Red River and Gulf branch to the Louisiana Sawmill Co, at Bolton. In the 1930's this grade was reused by the Hillyer Edwards Fuller Co, to reach its hardwood lands on the north shore of Lake Cocodrie. Abandoned in 1939 it looks very fresh in this photo.