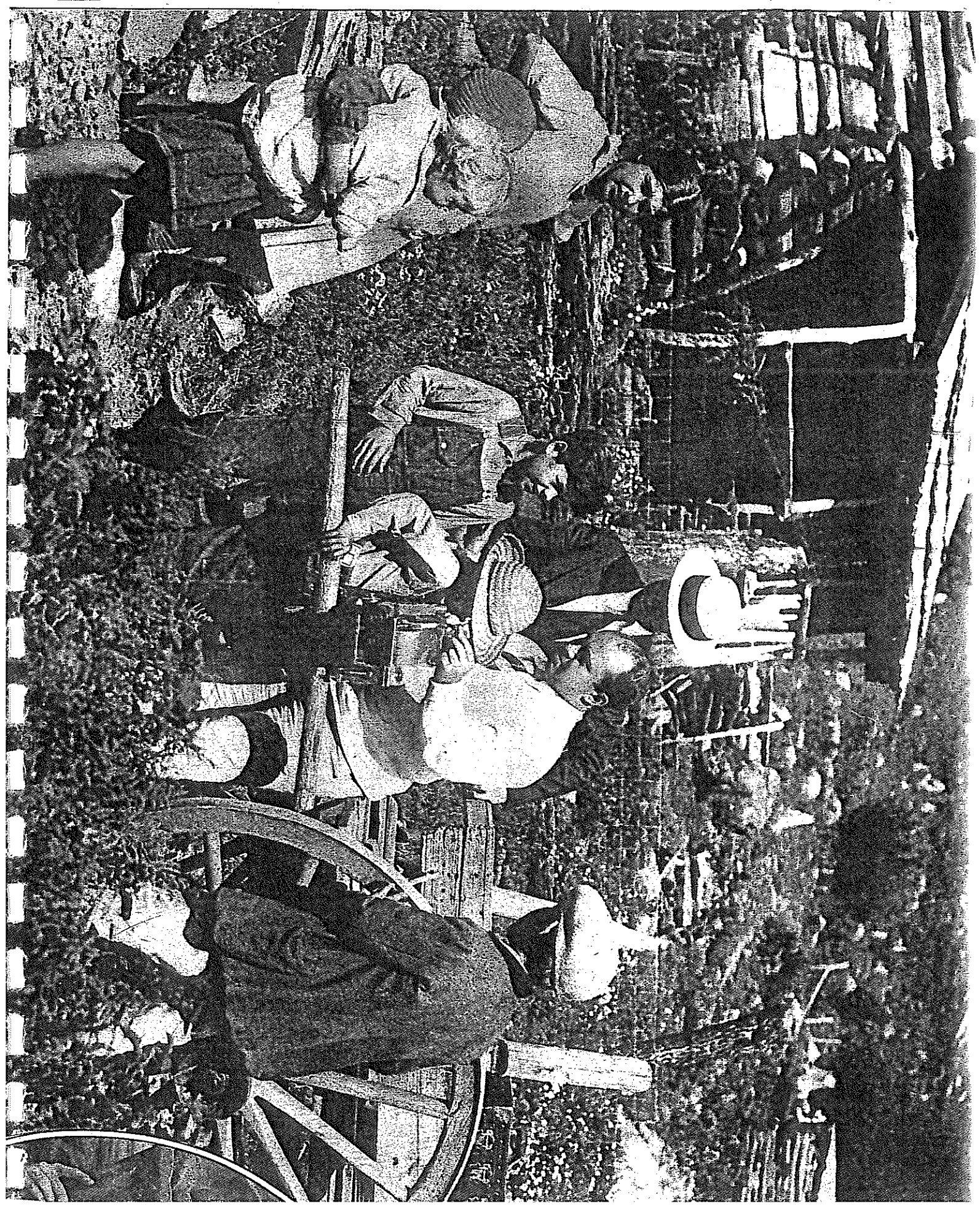
WETSEL MIDDLE SCHOOL LIBRARY
MADISON, VA 22727

Herbert Hoover Rapidan Community School on Rapidan Road March 3, 1930

the 11-Year-Old Neighbor and Protege of the President at His Summer Camp in the Mountains, Who Had Luncheon With the President and Sold Him a Possum for $5. He Is Shown at the Left in the Group Examining the Movie Camera. (Times Wide World Photos, Washington Bureau.)

N.Y. Times 9/22/29



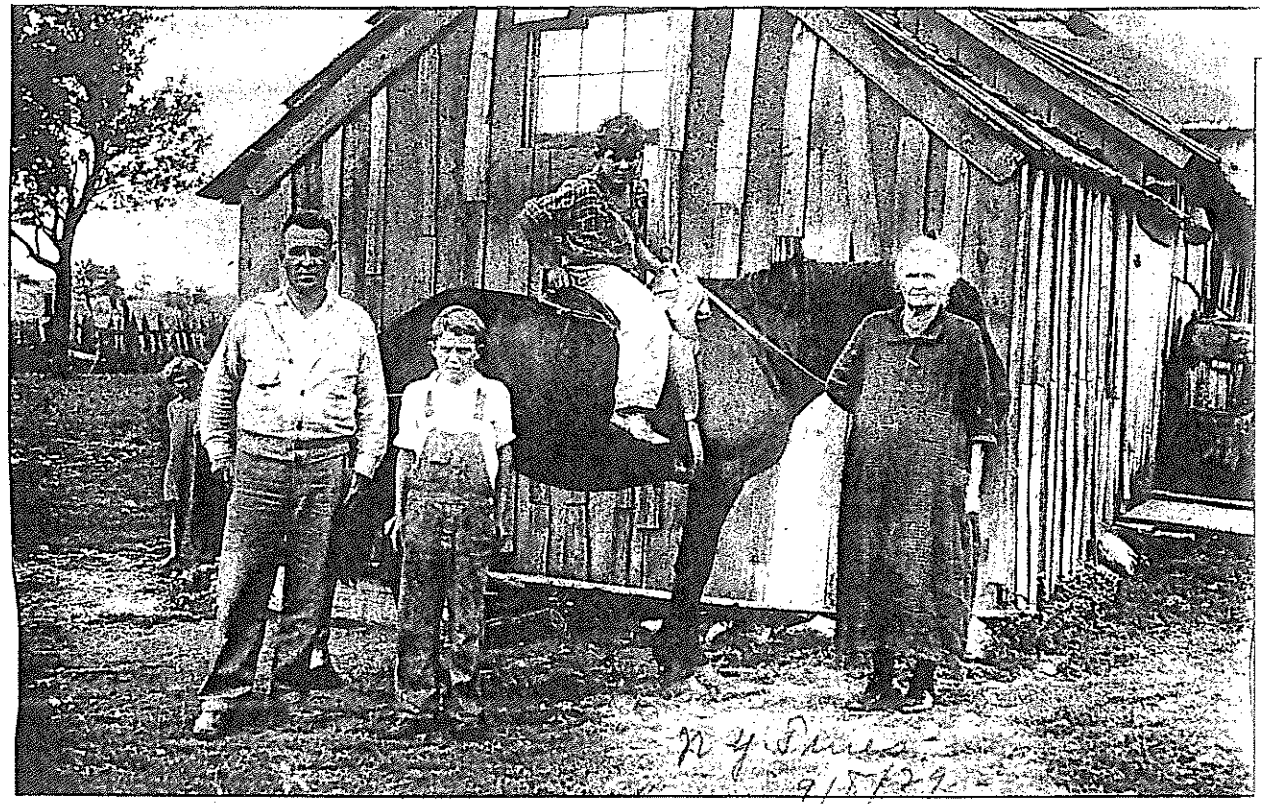
NEW YORK
Herald Tribune
SUNDAY, MARCH 2, 1930

Star 7/27/30

Mrs. Hoover attends the last day of school at Dark Hollow. She is seen in the school room with pupils and Miss Christine Vest, teacher of the little mountain school which was sponsored by President Hoover.

© Associated Press Photo.

New York Times 9/8/29



N Y Times 9/15/29

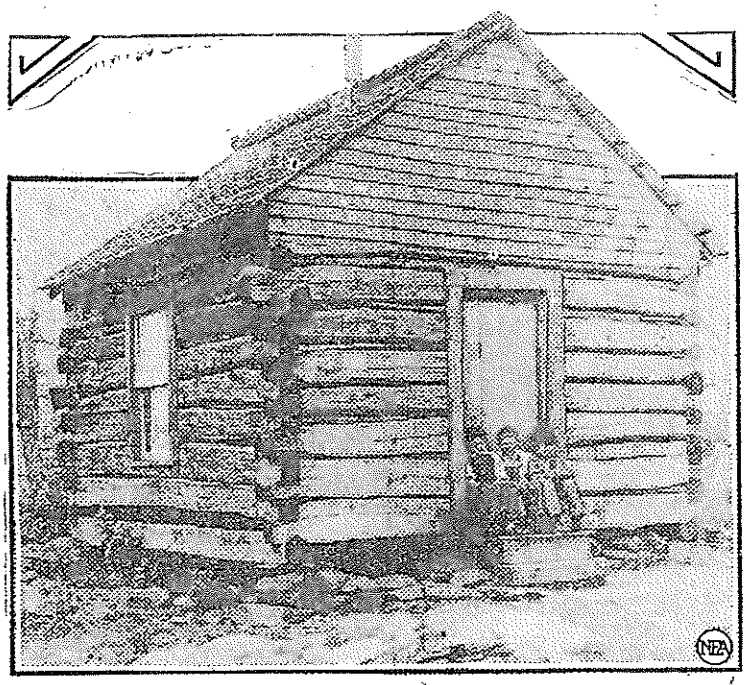
PROTEGES AND NEIGHBORS OF THE PRESIDENT: A TYPICAL BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAIN FAMILY,

Whose Children Will Benefit by the Plan Which Mr. Hoover Has Initiated to Provide a New School Building Near His Summer Camp. They Are Mr. and Mrs. K. B. Weakley, With Their Sons, Jimmie and Nathan.

(Times Wide World Photos, Washington Bureau.)

THE WASHINGTON DAILY NEWS: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

Hoover Helps Get School



It never was much of a school house, but it was better than none. Now this dilapidated educational institution in the mountains near President Hoover's summer camp in Virginia has been abandoned and children in the vicinity have to walk from seven to ten miles for instruction in the three R's. But there'll be a new school building soon on the site of the one shown above, and the President himself is heading a committee to raise funds for its construction.

New York World 9/11/29

HOOVER NOT THE ONLY ONE

Another President, Jackson, Owned Property in the Shenandoah

LURAY, Va.—Preident Hoover isn't the first President to own land in the Shenadoah National Park which will become property of the United States.

According to a bit of history made public by a perual of the cousr records in Rappahannock County, Andrew Jackson, "Old Hickory," was part owner of a tract of land with his uncle, Richard Jackson, who, with the President's father, came to this country from Ulster County, Ireland.

Richard Jackson, who was a member of th Virginia Militia fro m Culpeper County, believed to have been the famous "Culpeper Rifles," built the place now known as the Braxton Eastham place, then called "Variety of Roses."

According to history, Richard Jackson had such great admiration for Gen. Washington, whom he fought under, that he founded the village of "Washington," now the county seat of Rappahannock.

AL VIRGINIA HILL BILLY HOLDS INTEREST OF HOOVER

uth Visits Camp to Present Possum and Is Invited to "Private" Conference by President.

ossibly one of the most interesting and amusing experiences President r has had since spending his week end at his mountain retreat on the aters of the Rapidan River in Virginia was the visit to the camp last day of Ray McKinley, an 11-year-old product of the Blue Ridge Mountains real Virginia Hill Billy in the making.

his sturdy, handsome, unschooled and unabashed lad was the life of the so to speak for nearly an hour during the dull period of the Sabbath ning. He had come to the camp merely to present a baby possum which had caught himself and which he wanted the President to add to his ion of pets.

also wanted to shake hands with an who had defeated "Al" Smith. had no idea that he was to be made emporary member of the President's ning party, or that he was to be ally entertained by that great and his wife, or that he was to ked to for a long period by both, that he was to enjoy a generous e of the President's birthday cake, or that he was to sing to these two distinguished individuals and receive applause.

But all of this and a lot more happened to Ray on his visit to the camp. He frankly admitted during his visit that he had thought a heap about Mr. Hoover and was "sorta glad he was elected," although, as he explained, some of the mountain folk were for Al Smith.

"My paw was such a bum guesser he had to climb a tall hickory tree after the election," Ray told the group about him, which included the President and Mrs. Hoover. He never cracked a smile.

The President made it obvious that he was interested in the lad and called the boy aside and they talked together quite awhile. The President sat in a camp chair during this confab, while Ray stood leaning against a tree. He said he had had no schooling and that the six brothers and sisters, the oldest of whom was about 16, never had any schooling. He said he had never heard of his father being able to read or wri'e or his "maw" either. He seemed proud to say, however, that his father was a smart man; that he knew his religion and that he did lots of preaching around the mountains.

Ray provoked a loud laugh from those standing around when he said he had never heard of Lindbergh. The flying colonel himself was greatly amused at this.

Knows Hill Billy Songs.

When asked by one of the members of the party if he knew any of the Hill Billy songs the boy indignantly replied that he knew them all, whereupon, without aid of musical accompaniment, he started singing "I Will Meet You Up There in the Morning." The words and music of this song suggested to those in the party that it was a hymn of the mountain people, but Ray insisted it was one of the popular airs. Before he departed the President gave him several of the little novelties that had figured in his birthday celebration the night before. These represented mostly puzzles and knickknacks. The possum which he brought to the camp was in a soap box with one side open and covered with chicken wire. The little animal was left in the camp by the President when he returned to Washington and indications are that it will become the camp pet and that it will be left permanently at the camp instead of being brought to the White House menagerie.

Ray's visit to the camp is understood to have been due to previous talks he had with Mrs. Hoover, Lawrence Ritchie, one of the President's secretaries; Mark Sullivan, journalist and author, and Lieut. Comdr. Joel T. Boone, White House physician, who encountered the lad while on a horseback ride several weeks ago.

Madison Citizens Prepare.

Word has been received at the White House that there has been activity on the part of the citizens of Madison Court House and vicinity, where the President is to be entertained in a fashion expressive of the appreciation of the people of Madison County, Va., of his establishing the Summer White House in that section.

From all accounts this celebration is to be one of the biggest things in the history of Madison County, and is expected to draw many thousands of persons from all parts of the State. The festivities are to be held at the Madison County fair grounds. Gov. Byrd and other prominent officials of the Old Dominion will be present. Representative Garber, in whose district Madison is located, will be the master of ceremonies. Gov. Byrd will make the speech, expressing the appreciation of Madison County, and President Hoover will respond. The ceremonies are scheduled to begin at 11 o'clock in the morning on next Saturday, and after an hour or so of oratory and gay music furnished by the Marine Band from Quantico, Va., there will be field sports and other amusements, including horseshoe pitching and a barbecue.

Virginia Village Has Clean-up Day in Anticipation of Saturday Call.

By the Associated Press.

MADISON, Va., August 13.—Madison is finding the prospect of entertaining so distinguished a guest as the President of the United States altogether thrilling and just a bit disturbing.

Proud and grateful that he chose a spot within its confines for his fishing preserve and desiring to tell him so, the citizens of the county invited Mr. Hoover to pay them a visit next Saturday. He accepted and has promised a short informal address in response to the expressions of thanks. So Saturday was designated "Madison County day," and mighty preparations were begun.

Not often is it the good fortune of a small Virginia village to play host to such an important personage. There has been much frantic searching of precedents and seeking of advice. The members of the community are unanimous in their anxiety and determination that the Chief Executive be received in true presidential fashion, with all the customs and traditions associated with a presidential visit fully observed.

Village Stirred.

Today an unusual stir of activity replaced the accustomed quiet and serenity of the village. From the number of farm people driving into town it might have been "court day" but for the fact that they were attired in work-a-day overalls instead of Sunday bests and were directed toward the county fair grounds on the edge of town.

Rakes and shovels, hammers and saws were ready there for willing hands. The debris from the last county fair and numerous picnic parties had to be cleaned up, a speakers' stand built and an ornate gateway constructed at the entrance. In addition, the roadway over which the presidential party will pass after entering the grounds had to be graveled and smoothed over generally. The day was designated "Clean-up day."

The workers had been recruited by members of the Madison County Chamber of Commerce, who have been touring the county for days, not only for this particular purpose, but as well to solicit money for necessary expenses and to gather calves and pigs for the big barbecue that is to follow the ceremonies. More than 5,000 people are expected, and the traditions of Southern hospitality would not be fulfilled unless there was food enough for all.

Plans Complete.

Plans for the President's reception have been worked over and over and are now complete. A detail of State motor-cycle police will meet him at the town limits and escort him to the fair grounds. A field artillery piece has been obtained with which to fire the presidential salute of 21 guns, and a band will be on hand to strike up at the appropriate moment the tune that tells of a President's coming, "Hail to the Chief." In addition, the famous Richmond Blues will be there to act as a guard of honor.

Mr. Hoover plans to go to his fishing preserve in the nearby Blue Ridge Mountains on Friday and motor to Madison for the ceremonies on Saturday morning. Representative Garber of the congressional district which embraces Madison will introduce Gov. Harry F. Byrd, who will tell the President of the county's gratitude.

Mr. Hoover's address will follow.

The ceremonies over, the Chief Executive will return to his fishing lodge. The people of the county, however, will make a day of it. There will be the barbecue and then the afternoon will be filled with sports, fly casting contests and a horseshoe-pitching tournament. Plans for another "clean-up day" have been left for the future.

Lyia Virginia

April 16, 1931

Dear Miss Fesler

I wish you were up here to day. The grass is green and the birds are singing It is getting beautiful up in the mountains. We had a good time hunting Easter eggs. I wish you could have been up here. They are going to put us up a new flag Polesome time this week. I miss Fesler I read in the Madison Eagle where you were going to get married. I am sorry you can't go with us to the fair this year. Come up and visit us again before you get married we all would be glad to have you come.

6 in - Virginia

Miss West and Miss Tate
and the rest of us are
going to hike up to
J Double Top I wish
you could go along.
The snow was a foot
deep up here the depth
of this month. We made
snow men and we rolled
great big balls of snow.
We had a grand time.
Tell Miss Digger I wish
she could have been

up here at Easter we
had a grand time. The
apple trees are in bloom
down in the valley. But
they are not bloom up
here yet.

respectfully
yours Reda Burcher.

The Evening Star.
WITH SUNDAY MORNING EDITION
WASHINGTON, D. C., THURSDAY, APRIL 4, 1929—FIFTY-EIGHT PAGES.

Mrs. Hoover Breaks Precedent Driving Out in Her Auto

First Time Wife of a President Has Operated Car While in White House

BY T. RUSSELL YOUNG.

Another White House precedent was established today when Mrs. Hoover took three house guests for an automobile ride in her privately owned car and did the driving herself. Neither a secret service man nor a chauffeur accompanied the party.

During the trip the distinguished driver suffered a fate often befalling less notable pilots, when the male occupant of another car "stole" the right-of-way.

Uses Her Private Car.

Mr. and Mrs. Hoover recently added two of their own automobiles to the official White House cars, the explanation at the time being that they would like to go automobiling at certain times when they would attract as little attention as possible, and they believed that cars without the White House emblems and displaying numbers on their tags of denominations such as any ordinary citizen uses would answer this purpose. Neither of these cars had been used until Mrs. Hoover took hers out today.

With her on the ride were Mrs. Adolph Ochs, Mrs. Edgar Ricard and Miss Ricard of New York, who are visiting at the White House. They had not seen the cherry blossoms in Potomac Park at close view, so Mrs. Hoover hit upon the idea of killing two birds with one stone—gratifying the wish of her guests by taking them to see the blossoms and trying out her new car.

The party entered the car, a large limousine, from the rear portico of the White House shortly after 9 o'clock. The departmental rush was about over at the time, but she had not gone far before she found herself in a jam. It was not a serious one and she soon extricated herself and was speeding along in a happy fashion.

A Bit Impatient.

She remained calm during this little jam, but not wholly patient. She tooted her horn as automobilists do when they think they have waited long enough and the ungallant man in the car who, according to all the rules of automobile etiquette should have given the right of way to Mrs. Hoover's car and those lined up behind her, waved her back with his hand as she cautiously started to edge her way through. From good judgment rather than from preference she relinquished her claim to the right of way and waited until another opportunity presented itself. She did not have to wait long.

This is said to be the first time that a First Lady has driven a car in Washington while living at the White House, but those who know Mrs. Hoover well say that she will be seen frequently from now on at the wheel.

4-7-30

N. Y. Times 4/7/30

THE

Hoover Walks in Mud to Visit Rapidan School; Motors Back to Capital in a Driving Rain

Special to The New York Times.

WASHINGTON, April 6.—Refreshed by the first week-end visit he has made this year to his Rapidan camp in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, President Hoover motored back to Washington through a driving rainstorm this afternoon, reaching the White House at 5:30 o'clock. With him were Secretary of Commerce Lamont, Secretary of the Interior Wilbur, Attorney General Mitchell, Representative Franklin Fort of New Jersey, Captain Joel T. Boone, U. S. N., and Lawrence Richey, all of whom had been Mr. Hoover's guests on the trout fishing trip, which began Friday afternoon.

The half day that the President spent today on the Rapidan before leaving for Washington was a quiet one, the sole incident out of the ordinary being a visit to the mountain school he built last Winter. This morning he and his guests went in a light station wagon over the rain-soaked road to the vicinity of the school house. Three hundred yards from the building they were forced to leave the wagon and walk the rest of the distance through the heavy mud.

Miss Christine Vest, the school's teacher, had just concluded a Sunday school service when the President arrived, and a number of the pupils were still there. Mr. Hoover, who had never seen the school, inspected the structure and its facilities, and plied Miss Vest with a number of questions concerning the progress of her pupils. He was much pleased to hear her say the mountain boys and girls were eager for "schooling," as they express it.

Mr. Hoover never fishes on Sunday and his rod and reel were laid aside today. The President's luck yesterday, however, when he caught the Virginia legal limit of twenty brook trout, seemed sufficient satisfaction for one week-end. In fact, the outing was said to be such a success that Mr. Hoover wishes to repeat it if possible at the end of the present week. If unforeseen developments do not prevent, the President will go often to the Rapidan camp to enjoy his favorite sport of fishing.

A fire was necessary in camp this morning, the beautiful skies of yesterday having been blotted out by low-hanging, leaden clouds, from which a chilly rain fell relentlessly.

On the motor trip back to Washington this afternoon Mr. Hoover passed over several stretches of bad road on which three automobiles had been wrecked during the day.

24 boxes Crayones.
" paste - quart size
24 school scissors
1 pair teacher's shears.
148 pencils - school pencils.
*1 box paper clips
1 box thumb tacks.
24 rulers
2 yard sticks
1 Rubber type printing set.
12 volley balls. ~~Cancels with one.~~
1 volley ball net.
24 pen staffs & points
*1 set number flash cards.
1 bell.
2 boxes self piercing paper fasteners.
5 pounds modeling clay.
* yarn for weaving
1 set flash cards (phonic drill cards).
100 gummed stars (gold)
100 " " (blue)
3 yds. dark green burlap for mounting written work
*1 ticket punch
~~24 tin cups~~
24 Song books (Community) as 101 Best Songs.
000 sheets paper News print 9"X12"
100 " " colored paper for cutting various colors
100 " " " mounting " "
000 " " white ruled.

* by those of second choice
** third choice

* of secondary necessity
** least necessary but useful

W. E. Carson

State Commission on Conservation and Development

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BUREAUS OF THE COMMISSION
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STATE PUBLICITY

April 2, 1930

Miss Fesler
please write & return
RC
recd April 12

Hon. Lawrence Richey
Washington, D. C.

My dear Richey:

I am enclosing you a letter that I received from Raymond V. Long, Supervisor of School Buildings of the State of Virginia. Mr. Long was making a final report to me on the building of the President's Community School, and I have been so much struck by the fact that all the work that was done on the building was by local talent that it occurred to me this might interest the President and Mrs. Hoover; and there has been racing through my mind ever since I read this letter the possibility of vocational training for the mountaineers.

We have quite a responsibility in taking over the Park toward the people whose homes are there, as we turn them loose in the world, and from Long's experience it looks as if with a little training these people could be fitted for the competitive life that they must enter into when they leave the mountains.

Yours truly,

W E Carson
Wm. E. Carson
Chairman

WEC:D

Encl.

In any direction you looked, there were dead Chestnut trees that had lost their bark and most of their limbs. Their grey color gave them an eerie ghost-like appearance, especially on a foggy or rainy night. These dead trees also told the tale of the loss of income the mountain families had depended upon for so long. For years, these trees had yielded many bushels of nuts gathered each fall and marketed for food, clothes and shoes. The Chestnut blight had cut this income off in short order. There the dead trees stood as a constant reminder of better days.

From the front porch of the school in any direction, there was a beautiful view -- Old Rag Mountain to the left; Fork Mountain to the right; Double Top, directly in front. In between these mountains, lay the valley below. Always some shade of blue, but never the same, any two days of all the years I was there.

The school house was an oblong frame building, stained brown and foundation of native stone. It contained a good-sized school room, cloak room and wash room. The other half of the

house was comfortable living quarters for the teacher, consisting of an attractive living room with one of the most handsome stone fireplaces I ever saw -- kitchen, bath, and bedroom on first floor, a bedroom and storage room on second floor.

The school room was light, cheerful and floor covered with linoleum. At first, the building was heated by chestnut wood fires. This proved impossible as they would not keep fire overnight and Miss Dyer, Ruth and I found our water pipes frozen the first morning after going there. The second year, we used hard coal which proved much more satisfactory and certainly less trouble and far more comfortable.

If I went away for the week end in winter, it was necessary to turn off the water, drain the water pipes, drain the hot water tank, put salt in all drains and traps and in the toilet bowl. In self defense, I became a plumber, could and did crawl under the kitchen floor to thaw out water pipes more than once.

In the living room, there was a good radio with a loud speaker in the school room that could easily be plugged in. This furnished many happy, profitable hours for old and young alike. They liked music, especially hymns and sermons. The radio was one of the greatest mysteries they encountered. I tried many

times in my feeble way to explain its workings -- to all it was truly a "magic box".

On rainy days, the children asked to have it turned on at the noon hour and the parents found it great entertainment in the evenings. From these evening gatherings, I got my adult night school pupils. The most faithful was Mr. George Burraker, father of 9 children. He could read simple print but could not write, read script, or read numbers. He loved using the blackboard and his first wish was to learn to write his own name. Then, we added the other members of his family. When he had learned to write them all, I asked him to write them on the blackboard. He did so in a strong, bold script. When he had finished, they covered the entire board. He stood back to admire his work and turned to me in utter amazement, saying, "Indeed, Miss Vest, I didn't know there were so many in my family!" He worked hard, learned well, and soon was reading the Bible with much understanding. It was his favorite reading and he increased his preaching efforts. He learned to write simple letters, address envelopes, etc. He worked long hours on writing numbers -- adding, subtracting, and simple multiplication.

We focused our attention on the arithmetic to be used at the store where he did his buying. The use of the foot ruler, etc. He took great satisfaction in following the addition of his bills at the grocery store. He qualified to vote and was a happy man to vote for Mr. Hoover in November, 1932.

When I learned later these people were to move from their mountain homes because of the Park, it gave me a very special feeling of accomplishment to know I had helped this man to be better able to take care of himself and his family when he moved and had to adjust to a new and much more complex world.

Another very special pleasure was teaching my neighbor, Aunt Fannie Weakley, to write her name. She was in her late 70's and writing her name seemed to be all she desired. The last time I saw her was in the spring of 1933 when I walked over to say goodbye. There she sat on her front porch in the warm spring sunshine practicing writing her name. She was using a brown paper bag as writing paper and a wooden shingle to support the paper. By her side, was another large paper bag, cut into pages, each containing "Fannie Weakley" written over and over until all the bag was covered. I understand until her

Herbert Hoover Presidential Library
PPI- Witcofski, Christine Vest

death, she spent many hours writing her name with great satisfaction and much pride.

The children were a unique group in many ways. Here they were less than 100 miles from our National Capitol and so isolated that one entire family of six children of school age had never attended school. Because of the long distance to be walked each day, others had attended school only a few days each school year. It remained to be seen if the President's school could be made interesting enough for those who must walk up the mountain would attend regularly. Many used a walking stick in climbing and many were a little stooped as they bent forward climbing.

They ranged in ages from 6 to 17. Like any other group of children, they varied in native intelligence. Some were more industrious and some more eager to learn.

From the very minute I knew I was to teach these children of varied ages and experience, I stewed and fretted over what my approach would be in starting the older children. I knew it could not be the regular way I was to use for the young. For the young, I would begin similar to any 6 year old. I felt they

Herbert Hoover Presidential Library
PPI, Witcofski, Christine West

were eager to learn, but how could I stimulate their interest in the very essentials of learning? Then two days before school began, I had the answer. Because I was to be so far from a town and supplies, I carried in my possession a Sears-Roebuck catalogue. I laid it on a table in the living room and like lightening, two older girls helping me, began devouring its pages. Reda Burraker asked: "How long will it take to learn how to write out an order to Sears?" I could not tell her that, but I told myself here was my answer. I secured more catalogues from people in Madison County and I was ready to begin. The girls selected the dress they liked and we learned the word DRESS. Later, the numbers made up the price, then to write the word, and so we went until they could read and write and knew their numbers. We branched out to other books and later regular grade work, but always, if interest began to wane, I produced the catalogue for inspiration.

The use of the catalogue was not limited to the girls, For the older boys, we began with pictures of shoes, tools, the foot ruler, and prices to use in number work.

Lou Wit - Gen Acc. File.

LOU HENRY HOOVER 2-6-78

I met Mrs, Hoover when I went to Washington for an interview to teach the mountain school Mr. Hoover was having built for the children near his camp on the Rapidan River, near Criglersville, Va. I was not accustomed to meeting such prominent people. I am sure my heart beat extra fast as I took a taxi to the White House. The Chief Usher greeted me saying Mrs. Hoover would see me soon and took me to the Red Room. Mrs. Hoover came down seeing friends off to Palo Alto. The Chief Usher told her I was there. She greeted me and immediately put me at ease and we went upstairs to her sitting room. She told me about the school the President was building - she asked some questions about my experience and I met other people who questioned me and told me more about the school.

Two people at this time, Miss Susan Dyer and Miss Ruth Fesler (now Mrs. Robert Lipman) became my close and life long friends. Ruth Fesler Lipman, Mrs. Hoover's Secretary was a great help to me. Most of the correspondence concerning the school was from her and the majority by phone or in person. Miss Dyer, a close personal friend of Mrs. Hoover was a Stanford graduate - she and Mrs. Hoover had worked together in Girl Scout work. If she were alive, she could tell us a great deal about Mrs. Hoover.

Mrs. Hoover was always thinking of others. Busy as she was in the White House she did so many nice and wonderful things for me. I ate lunch at the White House many times. They invited me to one of the large receptions. I arrived early to dress for the occasion. After the reception, I went up to the second floor with the Hoovers and had refreshments with them and members of the Cabinet and their wives. I spent the night, had breakfast, did some shopping and returned to Camp. If I was in Washington shopping and I had more packages than I could manage on the train, I took them to the White House and they came up in the station wagon later. I recall one day I had all sorts of packages etc., that I had bought at the ten cent store. I hailed a

AC. 521

taxi and told the driver "White House please". He looked at me and my packages and said "lady, are you sure?". I told him yes but not to the front entrance. He seemed releived when I told the guard at the gate my name and he passed me through.

I can't recall all the many nice and thoughtful things Mrs. Hoover did for me when she was at Camp Rapidan. Many times I was invited to dinner and some times for lunch on Saturday. The President and Mrs. Hoover were always interested in all the things the school children did. Mrs. Hoover knew many of their names and where they lived. They often inquired about my barber shop! (using a tree stump as a chair, I cut the boys hair many times). Once I found a wild flower I did'nt know and asked Mrs. Hoover if she knew its name. She was not familiar with it and took it back to the White House and found the name for me.

I recall having lunch with the Hoovers a short time before the 1932 election. Some people had been saying things about the President that were not true. Before the President joined us, Mrs. Hoover asked me to tell the President anything amusing and interesting that the school children had said or were doing - I was happy to do so. With Mrs. Hoover, Mr. Hoover came first. Anything she could do to lighten his load, she did. She set a good example for any wife to follow.

Mrs. Hoover knew more about more things than any woman I ever knew. She had been many places and knew so much about each place. When they lived in China, she learned the language - this fact was much more impressive to me later. After I married we lived in Peking, China, two years. I soon realized I was not going to get very far with the language but always admired her ability to learn Chinese.

Mrs. Hoover was beautiful; beautiful white hair, bright eyes and friendly smile. She always looked lovely in anything she wore. I don't think her photographs ever did her justice. I became very fond of her and always felt I was very fortunate, indeed, to have known her. The mountain people loved her too. They liked having her stop to chat when she was out riding horseback. The children would gather around to talk without hesitation.

Mrs. Hoover had been invited to a horse show and she invited me to go with her and the Daughter of a Palo Alto friend about my age. The show was at Fort Myer Army Base in Virginia - we received much attention. Mrs. Hoover liked to ride. At Camp, she rode a big horse and he set the pace. I rode with her a few times and my horse, Princess, had to walk fast to keep up. I did my riding after school hours.

Mrs. Hoover liked the wild flowers on the mountain and the laurel bushes at Camp. In the fall when the leaves were so beautiful she would decorate Camp with branches of colored leaves. She kept all sorts of games, puzzles, etc., for guests who did not care to ride horseback or hike through the woods. When nights were cold there were roaring fires in fireplaces. Conversations were always lively and interesting. Food was good and substantial, especially if Mr. Hoover had been fishing.

The second year I was there, Mrs. Hoover asked if I liked flowers - I told her I did. She had plants brought out - geraniums and scarlet sage. They got pleanty sunshine and beautiful. Once when I went to Camp for lunch, I took a beautiful bouquet of them and Mrs. Hoover was so pleased and said Mr. Hoover liked red so much

I knew many of the people living in Madison and Criglersville, Va., Mrs. Hoover bought chests of drawers for Camp from E. A. Clore & Sons (fine furniture since 1830) near Madison. It had been family owned for all these years and still is. He made beautiful early american furniture of cherry and walnut. In 1952 my husband and I went to Madison and bought six ladder back dining room chairs. The present owner told us he was about 12 years old remembered how much they admired Mrs. Hoover and how her buying chests of drawers really made people interested and increased their business greatly.

Mrs. Hoover stopped other places when she was out driving around. People waved to her as she passed by. She liked to drive over the country roads. There were beautiful old homes and country churches and farm land with abundant crops which she enjoyed seeing.

My husband was stationed in Washington 1954 - 1956 and 1960 - 1964, and we visited Madison county occasionally and firends would often talk of Mrs. Hoover and say "she was a fine woman".

When the Hoovers rode horseback to select the place to build their camp, they used horses belonging to people in Criglersville. The young lady who let Mrs. Hoover ride her horse is still living and well remembers Mrs. Hoover and that special day.

People in Madison still recall "Hoover Day". It was to welcome them to the county. Hundreds were there, dinner for everyone. They recall how gracious and friendly Mrs. Hoover was and what she said about the delicious food. Approximately one and a half years ago we visited friends in Syria, Va., and one elderly lady came to see us and brought a rolled picture taken "Hoover Day". Another lady said she saw Mrs. Hoover more than once and thought she was a beautiful lady. I replied "Yes, she was a beautiful lady in so many ways".

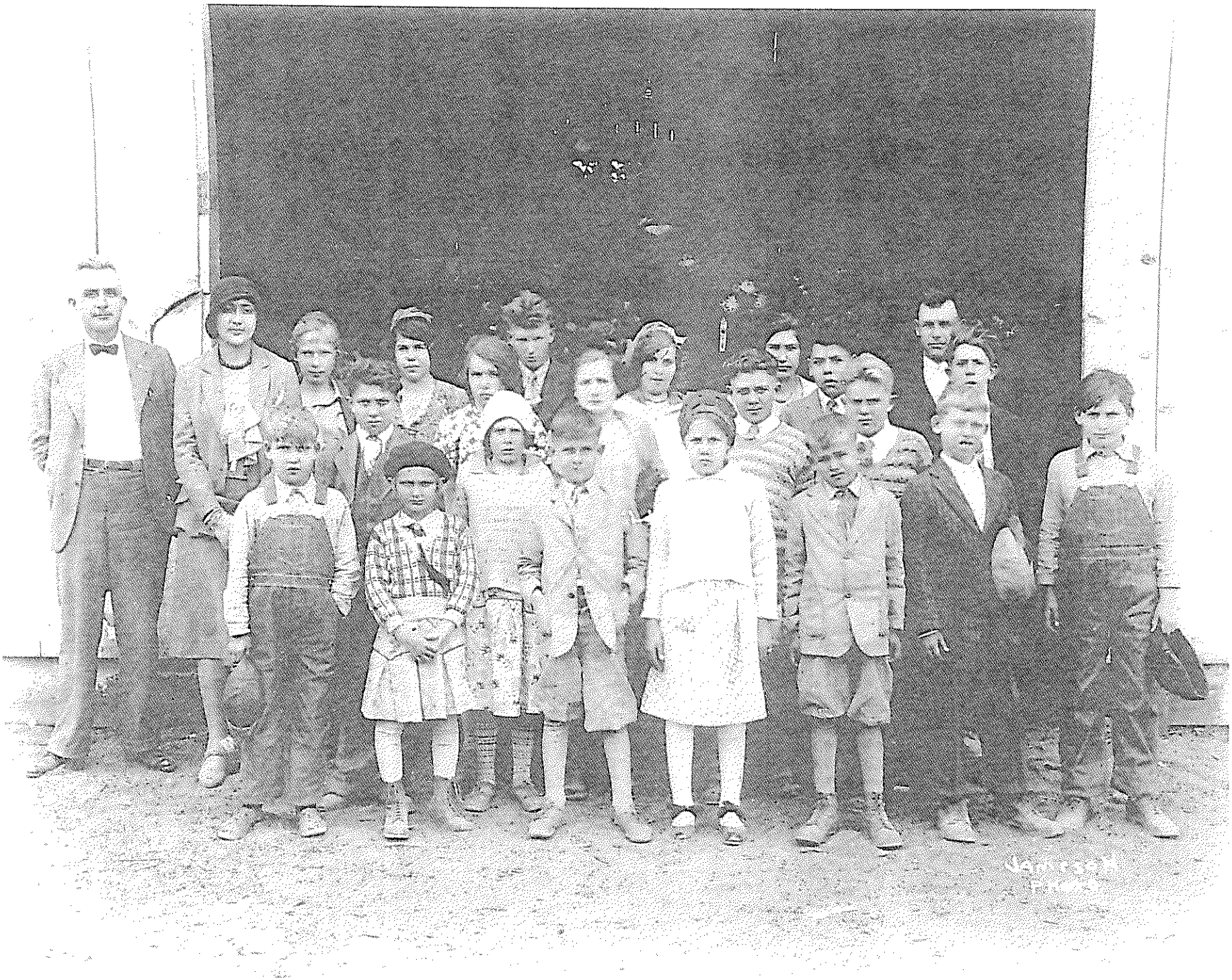
Mrs. Hoover was truly an uncommon woman, an unusual woman. She was bright and used her mind continually. I had a feeling difficult tasks challenged her. I know in the early days when her sons were small, she took them with her and they went everywhere Mr. Hoover went. Many years later, I did the same with our two sons. There were times it was'nt easy.

I don't think there is any way of knowing how much Mrs. Hoover contributed to Mr. Hoover's career. I doubt he could have told us how much. I know he did not have to be concerned about things she did, especially when he was President. She helped lighten his load of work many times and many ways.

Christine R. Witcofski

Mrs. Lou K. Witcofski
4913 Morro Blvd.,
Portsmouth, Va. 23703

6 February, 1978.



At the Madison County Fair in front of the flower barn (1931).

At the Madison County Fair in front of the Flower Barn (1931)

From left to right

Front Row:

Irwin Hurt, Myrtle Weakley, Myrtle Cave, Harold Buraker, Eva Mae Buraker, Gratton Buraker, Alvin Meadows (holding hat), Lloyd Hurt (holding hat)

Middle Row:

Burley Weakley (boy in tie), Bess Cave (in flowered dress), Celia Buraker, Nathan Weakley (in V-neck sweater), James Weakley (in V-neck sweater),

Back Row:

Mr. Yowell (superintendent of Madison County Schools), Christine Vest (teacher), Della Meadows, Pauline Buraker, Bealey Hurt, Rosa Hurt, Reda Buraker, Ray Buraker (in suit coat and tie), Mr. George Buraker, Rueben Cave