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[T.H. Phillips]

October 8, 1939

T. H. Phillips, Farmer

Jacobs Fork

Ethel Deal, Writer

Lila J. [Bruguiere?], Reviser Original Names Changed Names

T.H. Phillip H. B. Moffat

Emma Campbell Mary McGregor

Kallie Reinhart Sallie Burkhart

Sue Reinhart Lou Burkhart

Massouria Reinhart Magnolia Burkhart

Hagar M'f'g Co. Kruger M'f'g Co.

Jacobs Forks Perrys Forks

Hickory Briarwood

Raleigh Morton

Burke County Banks County

Catawba Mills Cherokee Mills

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Oak Grove Plainfield

Plateau Ridgecrest

Potts Creek Redbranch

Patterson Mills Watterson Mills

Lenoir-Rhyne Leroy-Raines

Caldwell County Bedford County C9 - N.C. Box 1.

Mr. Moffat, a big man with iron gray hair and blue eyes, eased himself down by the arms of his chair.

“Sorry to have kept you waiting. I'm one of the County Commissioners and this being the first Monday in the month we've been having our regular meeting. I live out at Perrys Forks on a farm. I've never lived in town. Reckon that's because I come from a long line of farmers. I own my farm and farm it. I'd like to say here that I've made a success of it. Farming is a man's job. You can't make nothing if you don't get down to brass tacks and do it right. The way I run my land I don't have the same crops on the same piece of ground every year. A man can't expect to keep his land up and put nothing back in the ground. Clover is a good builder and also a profit. I raise cotton, corn, wheat and plenty of vegetables for our own use and some for market. My father was a farmer and a good one too. He made a good living at it but there were nine of us children. A college education was out of the question for us.”

Mr. Moffat sat back, crossed his legs and prepared to enjoy the interview.

“I've worked my way up from a humble beginning to my present position as a leader in the County. At the age of seventeen I left home and took a job on a farm. Farming was all I knew at that time. I got paid eight dollars a month and board. That was good wages them

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times. After a year I quit the farm and went to work for a textile corporation in Briarwood. I stayed with this firm two years. Like most boys I was restless and wanted to be always trying something new. Nothing could have been more different from mill work than my next job. I got a position as a guard at the State Penitentiary at Morton. I made \$25.00 a month and my board was furnished. I liked it fine there and was invited by the Superintendent to stay on for a visit after I quit. On my way back home from Morton I rode in the chartered car that was bringing the Waldensians to Valdese. You remember about them, of course. They were foreigners who settled up there in Banks county some forty years ago.

“About this time I had another adventure. I was married to Miss Mary McGregor. That's one job I've never wanted to change. The next thing I tried my hand at was the pottery business at Plainfield and I operated a cotton gin at the same time. Then I switched back to manufacturing and was made manager of the Cherokee Woolen Mills. Things used to be run a little different then. Only men were used in that mill. Misses Sallie, Lou and Magnolia Burkhart were the first ladies to be employed there. They received for their services twenty five cents a day when a day was from dawn to dark.

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“In 1900 I organized the Redbranch Woolen Mills near Ridgecrest. The plant was old when I bought it and was operated with the crudest machinery. You could hear the water wheel of the old mill miles away. But I changed all that.” Mr. Moffat expanded his chest, put his thumbs in his vest pockets and took a long breath. “I put in new machinery to make silk and cotton hose according to the new style. Before, they had made only woolen hose. They also produced raw wool for retail sale in the homes. You know our mothers used to spin and weave and make our clothes. I never knew what it was to have a ready made suit before I was married. A few years after I started the Redbranch Mill my wife and I bought out the entire stock. Just before the World War I bought the Watterson Woolen Mills in Bedford County and moved the whole plant down to Redbranch. Soon the water power proved insufficient to operate the increased machinery. Then came the World War and

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an embargo was placed on raw wool. Not a pound could be bought. I sold the Mills to the Kruger Manufacturing Company and settled down to farming.

“I belong to the Wesley Chapel Methodist Church, I am Chairman of the Board of Stewards in that organization and I've been a delegate to the Annual Conference for the past six years. I am also Choir Director and teach a class of young folks. I've served as County Game Warden. I am one 4 of the County Commissioners. At present I am Vice-Chairman of the Farmers Cooperative Exchange Stores and have also served as Director. I am Secretary of the Soil Erosion Project and a member of the Federal Land Bank Adjustment Committee.” Mr. Moffat smiled as he finished.

“It sounds like I'm bragging, don't it? I really don't mean it that way. I am only trying to show you a man can succeed without much education. What I have I got in the public schools. I'm glad I can give my sons something better, but I think if it's in a man to succeed nothing can keep him down. I've got four boys. Two of them have finished at Leroy-Raines College and two are still at school. My children have a better chance then I've had. What they will make of it I don't know.

“My ambition is to serve my fellow man to the best of my ability. My wife and I take a great interest in church work and most of our leisure time is taken up in this way. I'm never too tired to go to singing at our own Church or any other denomination. I believe all churches should be sociable and visit each other. My wife and I like to visit friends and take long drives. We both vote the Democratic ticket without any squabbling. If a woman want wants to vote it's her right to do so. We own our home and a car too. I could quit and not work any more if I wanted to but I don't want to. I don't think I could be happy if I wasn't 5 busy.

Mr. Moffat looked at his watch. “I didn't realize I had been so long at telling all of this” he said. I thanked him for giving me so much of his time.

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“Oh, I've enjoyed talking to you. I have got lots of faults and one of them is talking too much.” He brushed his felt hat off with his coat sleeve, straightened his tie and adjusted his well fitting blue serge suit.

“By-the-way.” He hesitated a moment. “I don't hardly know how to say it. You spoke of using fictitious names in your stories. Of course it makes no difference but I just wanted you to know that I have no objections to your using my own.”