

(pg. 173)

DEWEY O'DELL WATSON: JANUARY 29, 1919:
CHAPTER 15

Another long time companion of Luke Denny⁶ is 70-year-old Dewey O'Dell Watson, of Smith County, Tennessee. Watson was interviewed December 28, 1987, on his rural farm just north of Interstate 40, east of Carthage and Gordonsville.

Suddenly Watson commented, "Luke do you remember the time we drove to Wilson County to pick up that new still?"

Without hesitation the old whiskey runner pulled his brown cap off and said, "Someone got word to me in the middle to late 60s - - about the time Dewey and I made my last big whiskey "Coca-Cola jug" run - - that an old friend of mine had died. He lived in the northwest corner of Wilson County. His widow and her sister wanted to get rid of his still. Dewey and I drove there and loaded in into the back of a truck. We tied furniture wrap over it. It was a beautiful 500 gallon pot. I don't think a gallon had been put through her."

Both men started laughing. They kept pointing at each other for several minutes, then finally Watson cheerfully explained. "You will not believe what happened to us on the way back between Grant and New Middleton (Smith County). See it was broad daylight. The blasted cover flew off the still. Can't you just imagine that? There we were, in the middle of the day, with this huge 500 gallon moonshine still with the top shining. The copper pot seemed as bright as the sun. However, no one came. We quickly threw the ropes back across the still and took it to a spot not too far from my house, here. Then, some asshole stole it before we could sell it," Watson angrily replied.

Watson arose, without saying why he was leaving, and departed the living room. The red-faced, stout farmer returned with a Mason jar full of the clear whiskey. He smiled and said, "This is what the modern moonshine looks like." Both men shook the jar to see how much the moonshine would bead. After each took a whiff, to check its special smelling aroma, they

(pg. 174)

agreed the small pearl-like beads were enough to call the moonshine 'double sugar' or as Denny put it, "This brew is 'gin-u-wine'."

"This is how we used to do it in the moonshining days," Denny added. "some younger folks call it cloggin', but it really isn't cloggin'. We call it buck dancin'. I believe it is what the early pioneers did during the trapping rendezvous. Many times I have seen buck dancin' performed by moonshiners in the mud around stills, in barns and at bootlegging joints."

After showing us around his barn, Dewey Watson pointed out his prize hogs and dogs. As the happy man waved good-bye he concluded, "Luke don't stay away so long next time. Boy it sure is good to see ya."

As the four-wheeler picked up speed and turned the first bend, a tear dripped down Luke Denny's cheek. He softly uttered, "True friends are hard to find these days. Dewey Watson is a man who will stick with you through thick and thin. He's one hell've friend."

Note: Chapter 35 contains Luke Denny's last big moonshine run. Dewey Watson rode shotgun to and from James (Dickie) Clinton's Jackson County still.