

(pg. 114)

DOUGLAS (DOUG) MADEWELL
DECEMBER 31, 1913
CHAPTER 4

Seventy-six-year-old Douglas (Doug) Madewell said to his old friend Luke Denny, “I grew up with Luke and have known him all my life. We went to the Rock Springs one room schoolhouse, and during the late thirties I rode shotgun while Luke drove the moonshine around these parts of Tennessee. You might say I loaded and unloaded the whiskey more than anyone else from probably 1937 to 1941. To be very honest with you I can’t remember just how many times we hauled moonshine, but a quick guess would be way over 50 times,” Madewell said during his interview in his Baxter, Tennessee apartment, February 20, 1988.

Before a question was asked the short, but wiry man, looked at Luke and said, “I hope we can get in the book how we fought against each other during the cat trial in school.”

Without hesitation Luke, four years Madewell’s junior, tapped his can on the floor and said, “By all means. I had forgotten how you out did me on your tale of how the cat died. Now that trial was something to behold, let me tell you and the students loved it. Didn’t they Doug?” And, before Doug could respond the two senior citizens started laughing so hard they nearly cried.

“Here’s what happened,” Denny started the tale, but before he could continue his childhood buddy stopped him and said, “Let me tell it Luke.” And, again the two nearly fell from their seats, laughing.

Madewell opened the story with, I believe it was in 1928. Clarence Upchurch, we called him Pete, had drown a cat in Rock Spring. When our teacher, Mrs. Martha Beasley Maddux, found out about it she was mad, but wanted to teach us all a lesson in courtroom practices so she told everyone in the small one room school there was going to be a trial on Friday and everyone would become a member of the court. If they didn’t have a part to play then they were part of the courtroom audience.

(pg. 115)

“Mrs. Maddux selected Wilson Crook to be the judge and you were the government’s prosecutor, Madewell added, but Denny interrupted, “Doug, let’s get this straight. My correct title was Attorney General. I remember that because Mrs. Maddux made me say Attorney General five or six times before the class.” Again the two started laughing and laughing and finally Doug said, “I’ll tell it Luke.”

Madewell paused for a moment and said, “It was my job to get Pete Upchurch off and I will never forget how Pete and I dreamed up things to say about that cat. First we said the cat probably got a cramp and drown because it couldn’t swim, but Luke objected and

Judge Crook wouldn't let us use that so the only thing we could come up with was the cat had a heart attack and I told Luke, before the class, "Now prove the cat didn't have a heart attack. That stopped Luke dead in his tracks. For once Luke was speechless and he said something like, 'Doug, I guess you got me. That's one I can't top.' And the judge said, 'Case dismissed because of lack of evidence against Mr. Clarence (Pete) Upchurch.'

"Okay, you won that one Doug and you never let me live it down," Luke said. I think I tried to prove you saw Pete throw the cat in the spring and you kept saying, "Now how can you say that Mr. Attorney General, did you actually see me or my client throw that cat in the water?" "Doug, you had me so turned around that day I forgot I was asking you the questions and before long I was answering my questions to you. It was fun and the school learned a lot from that mock trial."

Madewell returned to the conversation, but the expression on his face changed. "Remember when we nearly got caught by the Putnam County Sheriff Marion Warren in '39? It was in late '39 or early '40. The sheriff got after us in Buffalo Valley and I knew he was going to catch us for sure. It seem3d he would gain ground on us at every bend in the road. Then I saw a car's taillights about a mile in front of us and I knew we were going to get caught that night. We couldn't turn around as the sheriff was about a mile behind us. I'll never forget what you said when we came to the top of the grade just behind the car. You said, 'Watch this.'

(pg. 117)

Both stopped for a moment and Luke placed his ankles around the bottom of his walking stick and commented, "Many times Doug went with me to unload down at this lady's tavern in Hartsville. We hauled in five gallon jacket cans a lot during the late '30s and poured the whiskey out into any container she had. Do you remember that big pan she had? It must have held 15 or 20 gallons."

Denny's moonshine riding partner said, "Sure I remember the pan, but do you remember that big butter churn?" Again, both grinned from ear to ear. Madewell added, "Every once in a while I would grab me a bottle of her government whiskey and she would smile. She had a big bowl full of quarters and half-dollars for change and it was under the table. I can see her making change. She'd pull that tablecloth up and pull out a handful of coins and then throw the extra ones back down in the bowl. Buddy, that women sold a lot of whiskey."

Denny said as he looked upward, "Yeah, I would have loved for her to be in the book. She would have given us permission but she died and her kids and grandkids might not want the world to know how they got their start; from moonshine money. I had a '40 For back then. It would hold 120 gallons, but normally we carried about 75 to 80 gallons in it.

"Wait a second. How about the time down at the lady's place when we were unloading and head a banjo picker singing and playing and it wasn't coming from the bar area? It

was coming from a bedroom and we peeked through a small opening and there, big as life, was a bald headed man sitting on the side of the bed singing and playing the banjo all by himself. And he was good, too.”

The shotgun commented, “Now I had forgotten all about that. His head was slick as a onion peel. Once again, laughter filled the small Baxter living room. Madewell laughed so hard he got choked a little on his Red Man chewing tobacco.

Denny said that many of the Rock Spring residents will recall Doug Madewell as a farmer who could grow good corn and tobacco. And, he was good at plowing with mules, a lost art whose time has come and gone.