



But today we just drove on awhile. I had almost fallen asleep when the breeze stopped blowing in. Papa Jess had pulled off the road. “Wake up, Ginny.”

Beyond a fence by the side of the road, a beautiful meadow stretched out. I didn’t recognize the place. “Where are we, Papa Jess?”

“Come on.” He climbed the fence and lifted me over.



We threaded our way through the tall grass till we came to a big rock. I climbed up and sat down. “See that spot over there,” he asked, “where that little rise is? That’s where it was.”

“Where what was, Papa Jess?”

“Our house. And we had a barn that was up on that curve right over there – a little to the right of the one that’s there now. Our road came in just beyond that.” His blue eyes got a little glassy, and he began to tell me a story I’d never heard

before – about himself when he was my age, and his Mom and Dad and sister Maggie, and about how the Parkway came and took part of their farm.





In the last few months, though, things had gotten really hard. It was right in the middle of what they called the Depression. Us kids didn't really know what that meant, except that nobody, including us, had much money. People that

had gone off to find jobs in the milltowns down the mountain were drifting back, saying the mills had closed and there weren't any jobs anymore.

And it seemed like every day somebody else's farm was put up for sale.

The E. P. Simms Farm Now Owned By
W. A. Clarke, Sells

At Public AUCTION

Friday, September 27, 1935
10:30 A. M.
On The Premises, Near Elk Creek, Virginia

Description and Location
On State and National highway 21, about two miles South of Elk Creek High School, on the waters of Elk Creek, Subdivided into different tracts, about 90 acres, you can buy as much or as little as you want: 30 acres of good nice bottom land, a very productive farm: good dwelling house, two good barns and other out-buildings, running water to the house. Rural route passes by the house.
No better tract of land for sale in Grayson County. Title absolutely good, no lien against this property.

TERMS: 20% Cash, Balance in One, Two and Three Years' Time

Music By The Famous Buck Mountain Band

Free Lunch - - - Sacks of Sugar to the Lucky Guessers

Personal Property
HORSES, TRUCKS, FARM MACHINERY

Don't Forget The Time—On Lucky Friday, September 27, 1935.

Being Sold by the Request of the Owner

PARSONS AUCTION COMPANY
"Sellers Of The Earth" Independence, Va.



Through it all, Mama and Daddy kept talking about President Roosevelt and how he was going to help us.

They said the government was giving people jobs building dams over in Tennessee, and schoolhouses and parks and such all over the country.



I was lying on the floor playing with some little toy cars when Mama nudged Daddy's foot. "The paper says they're gonna build a road through here, Gene."

"Bout time," Daddy murmured, half asleep.

"Some kind of 'Parkway' they're callin' it," she said. "Gonna run from that new park in the Great Smokies to the other new one in the Shenandoah Valley - over 400 miles long they say it'll be. Sounds like it might be something like that big new road they opened over at Fancy Gap a few years ago."

Mama read on, "Says here them business men down in Asheville had a lot to do with it."

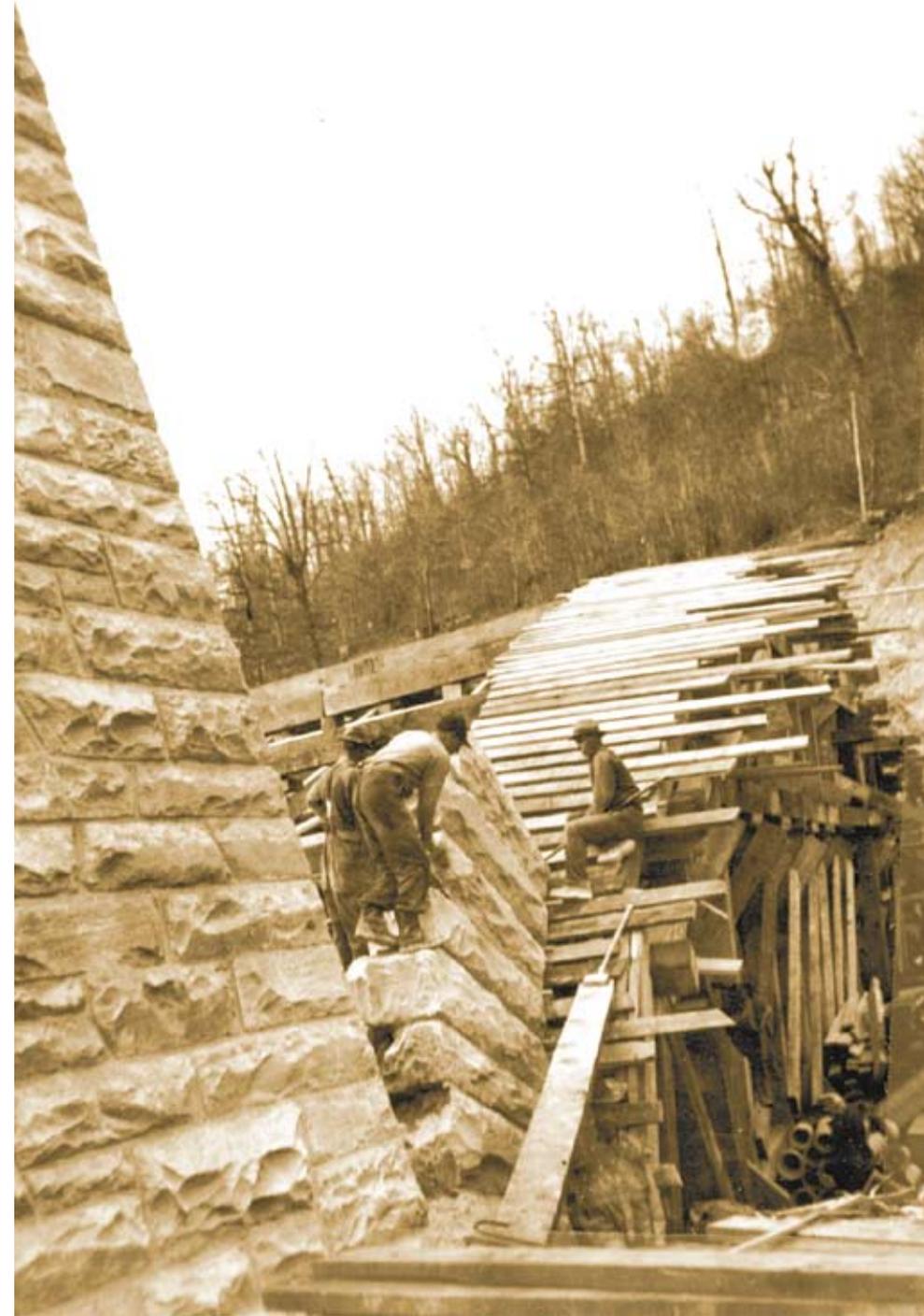


We had never even been to Asheville. But the paper said Asheville was in a real bad way. In the 20s, they'd done an awful lot of building down there - lots of new neighborhoods, big old tall government buildings, and fancy hotels.

And then the Depression hit, and the tourists - who didn't have any money either - stopped coming. The Asheville hotel men thought the Parkway would bring the tourists - and their money - back, so they worked hard to make sure it would pass close to town on its way to the Great Smokies.



For the time being, anyway, all we could do was wait. Daddy went to work every day that fall while Mama and Maggie and I kept the farm going. Carving through our mountains took big machines and explosives, and he was driving the big dump trucks and learning how to do some surveying. Daddy seemed to feel a little bit better as the paychecks kept coming in, and he was proud of the road they were building, even if some of it was dangerous work.



Sometimes on Sundays we'd get in the truck and go to see the big arched stone bridges they were building. "I've never seen bridges like these," I said. "I can't wait till we can drive over or under them." Daddy knew some of the men who were building them, and sometimes they would let us get out and walk across.