

Glossary of Appalachian Terms Used in *Child of the Mountains*

‘n—than, such as “She was louder’n a baying hound”

a body—a person

acquit—show to be not guilty

afeared--afraid

afore—before

ain’t—aren’t, isn’t

all creation—everywhere

all—completely, such as “I was all dressed up”

amen—so be it; often said at the end of a prayer, but also said allowed in many mountain churches to agree with what’s said

and all—etc., and so forth, and so on

Anne of Green Gables—Written in 1908 by Lucy Maud Montgomery, this book about intelligent, spirited, optimistic Anne Shirley, a young orphan who finds a home with an older brother and sister in Canada, still touches readers today; *Anne of Green Gables* and seven sequels about Anne and her future husband and children are still available from your local library or bookstore; the series has also been made into award-winning films, which are available for rental or sale

Appalachian dialect—To learn more about Appalachian dialect, I highly recommend *Mountain Range: A Dictionary of Expressions from Appalachia to the Ozarks* by Robert Hendrickson (published by Facts on File, Inc. in 1997 as Volume IV: Facts on File Dictionary of American Regional Expressions); listen to WV dialect at <http://web.ku.edu/idea/northamerica/usa/westvirginia/westvirginia.htm> (note: they are reading a transcript instead of speaking naturally)

appeal—a request for a new hearing or trial based on new evidence or that a previous trial was not conducted properly

a-*verb*—Appalachian speech often uses “a” in front of a verb ending in “ing,” especially after the words *am, is, are, and was*

awful—very, such as “awful bad” or “awful good”

babified—babyish, childish

backside—bottom, hips

baptism—a religious ceremony in which a person is immersed in water (in most mountain churches) or sprinkled with water to symbolize that their sins are washed away by Christ

baptize—see baptism

bat an eye—blink

batting—cotton, wool, or synthetic fibers used as filling in quilts

be—sometimes used instead of *am, is, are, was, or were*

betrothed—engaged

bidding—wants someone to do

biggety—conceited, stuck up

billy goat—male goat

birthed—gave birth to

bitch—female dog

blubbering—crying

bobby socks—ankle socks that were turned down at the cuff

borned—born

brassiere—a bra

britches—pants

brung—brought

business—sometimes means *using the bathroom*, such as “She did her business afore we took the long car ride”

bust—burst

busted up—broken

busted up—broken

canning—process of preserving fruits and vegetables in jars; see <http://www.freshpreserving.com/>

cardinal—West Virginia’s state bird; male is bright red, the female is brown

care—“don’t care” means it doesn’t matter to me or even I’d like to

Carter’s Little Liver Pills—according to ads, supposedly cured sick headache, biliousness, constipation, bad complexion, bad mood, and pretty much whatever else ailed you; in 1960’s the company was forced to take the word *liver* out of the name because the FTC discovered the pills were actually an “irritative laxative”; the company was only allowed to say the pills cured anything that emptying the bowels would cure

catawampus—confused, mixed up

caught it good—got in trouble

chaw—tobacco that is chewed

Chiny—China (sometimes words that end in the schwa sound will be pronounced with an “er” ending, such as *Chiner*)

chokey—horse

chops—jaws and the skin that covers the jaws

civil case—decides if damages should be paid, also called *compensation*

clean—sometimes means *all the way* or *completely*, such as “looked clean through you”

clothesline—a line strung in the yard between two poles, two trees, or two other points; clothespins made of wood or plastic held clothes on the line to dry

clothespin dolls—these are easy and fun to make; see <http://somervillain.blogspot.com/2006/06/clothespin-world.html> to learn how

coal camp—The coal company owned the property and the houses where the people who worked for them lived.

coal mining—More than half of the electricity generated in the United States comes from coal; West Virginia produces 15% of that coal and accounts for almost 50% of US coal exports; all but two counties in West Virginia have coal reserves; 60% of WV business tax revenue comes from the coal industry and utility companies that generate electricity from coal; 40,000 WV jobs depend on the coal industry (see www.wvminesafety.org/wvcoalfacts.htm)

coal-burning stove—see a picture here: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/gontofe/293783005/>

colored—in the 1950’s, this term was acceptable to describe African Americans: the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, which was founded in 1909, continues to be an important advocacy organization

comed—came

cometh--come

commenced—started, began

company store—the coal company often owned a store that, when script was used, was the only place their workers could buy supplies; some continued to operate after script was no longer used

competent—able to understand the difference between the truth and a lie and to tell the truth in court

condone—agree with, allow

confess—admit, tell the truth, important in the Christian religion

conjure—pull up a thought

consanguinity—*relationship by a common ancestor* is the meaning used by the doctor in the story

contraptions--inventions

cooped up—trapped, like in a chicken coop

cozied up--cozy

crank ice cream maker—see pictures and recipes at <http://www.brm-icecream.com/handm.htm>

crinoline—a petticoat or slip with ruffles made from a stiff material so it keeps a skirt shaped like a bell

cuss--curse

defendant—the person, company, or organization in a trial that needs to defend his or her innocence

defense attorney—the lawyer that tries to prove the defendant is innocent

defense—the defense is the attorney who tries to prove someone is not guilty

demon—something evil, as though it comes from Satan, such as “demon liquor”

developing—sometimes means starting puberty, especially growing breasts

disgrace—shame

done—sometimes means *did*; sometimes means *already*, such as “I done did that”

dulcimer—a wood instrument, related to the guitar, that is held on the lap while the strings are plucked with the fingers; see <http://www.everythingdulcimer.com> and go to the gallery to see pictures of dulcimers, including a dulcimer with a double neck, such as the one Lydia and BJ played together; also check out the Kids and Dulcimers link to read stories about kids playing dulcimers

dump—sometimes means *bowel movement*

dyes—process of coloring fabric; see <http://www.pioneerthinking.com/naturaldyes.html>

elegy—a poem written to memorialize a person who has died

embroidery—raised designs created on fabric using colorful threads (see www.embroidery.com)

ended up--became

everbody—everybody

ever—sometimes means *every*

everthing—everything

evil eye—to look as though putting a curse on someone

excepten—except

expect—sometimes means *suspect* or *imagine*, as “I expect he wants to go”

feed-sack material—today, companies might add a toy inside a box or offer valuable prizes as gimmicks to get people to buy their products; in the early to mid twentieth century, feed, flour, and sugar companies used cotton sacks with a variety of prints and materials to lure customers; when the sack was empty, the cloth could be used as sewing fabric

fermentation—turning sugar to alcohol and carbon dioxide by using yeast

figure—understand or decide, such as “I can’t figure out” or “I figured I should go”

fitting—appropriate, such as “a fitting name”

fix up—make

fixings—a variety of foods

fix—sometimes means a bad situation, such as “He was in a fix”

flapjacks—pancakes

flat feet—collapsed arches; cause painful walking in some people, military used to refuse men with flat feet because of the need for so much walking; however, recent studies by the

military found that people with flatter feet had fewer injuries than those with higher arches

flesh and blood—a parent's child

flesh and blood—family

folks--people

fret--worry

frog in a spotlight—some mountain people like to eat frog legs and hunt frogs (called gigging); they go out in a boat and shine a flashlight or spotlight to look for eye shine from the frogs

funeral parlor fan—funeral parlors often donated cardboard fans with their advertising that people used during church services to keep cool because churches were not air conditioned

garter belt—a belt had four bands of elastic with hooks dangling from it for attaching to thigh-length nylon stockings; these were no longer needed when pantyhose were invented, but some women still choose to wear them; in the 1950's, women were expected to wear a dress, nylons, and often a hat and gloves almost every time they stepped out of the house

get right—ask forgiveness, repent

ginger—comes from a root and helps settle an upset stomach

gingham—checked or striped cotton fabric with one of the two colors usually being white

girdle—tight elastic underwear that holds in women's flab

gived--gave

go around—spin

Good Book—the Holy Bible

good—sometimes means well, such as “I felt real good”

goofy-eyed—the way two people who are in love look at each other, of course

got—sometimes means *was*, *had*, or *became*, such as “he got sick”

Grand Old Opry—the Grand Old Opry still features the top country music singers in the country; go to <http://www.opry.com/> to learn more

growed--grown

gumption—motivation

hack—cough

hairy eyeball—squinted eyes, showing eyelashes and eyebrows

hallelujah—praise to God

hammock—a hanging bed of canvas or cord that is tied to two supports, often two trees

hankies—handkerchiefs; white cotton squares that almost everyone carried in the 1950's instead of disposable tissues

harp at—nag, yell

head—sometimes means “go toward”

heap—a lot, a large amount

heaping—amount that overflows

heavenly mansion—belief that a mansion is prepared for each Christian in Heaven

Heaven—the place Christians believe they will go to after they die; a place of love and reward

hillbilly—the name is used to indicate ignorance and stupidity by outlanders; West Virginians often laugh at themselves and call each other hillbillies, in fact, the state used to publish a magazine called *The Hillbilly*, which contained stories and humor about the West Virginia; however, West Virginians are usually highly offended when someone from outside the state calls them hillbillies because they know the person is looking down on them

hissself—himself

hit—sometimes means *it*, especially at the beginning of a sentence

holler—means *to shout*, but also means *hollow*—a small valley between two mountains

home come—why

honkey-tonk—a nightclub that plays country music and serves alcohol

huff—disgusted, angry

iffen—if

imagery—the use of lively, colorful language to describe objects, actions, or ideas

imaginated—imagined

imagine—imagine

influencing testimony—if someone tells a witness what to say or a jury thinks that might have happened, the jury cannot consider what the witness said when they are deciding a guilty or not guilty verdict

jabber—talk without stopping

Jacob's ladder—an Appalachian toy that has flat, square blocks of wood on three long cords or ribbons; when you hold one end, the squares seem to flip over magically; learn how to make one at <http://www.mathematische-basteleien.de/jacob.htm>)

juice harp—an instrument, also called a Jews harp or a juice harp, that is held between the lips while a metal reed is plucked to make a variety of sounds; see <http://www.davidholt.com/music/playjawharp.html> to learn how to play a jaw harp

kerosene lamp—people without electricity often use kerosene lamps to light the house at night; many people today use them when they go camping; the author's mother told her that she had to finish all her homework before sunset because kerosene and candles were expensive; they definitely followed Ben Franklin's advice, "Early to bed, Early to rise, Makes one healthy, wealthy, and wise"

kindred spirit—Anne Shirley often talked about having a kindred spirit, someone with whom she felt connected, accepted, and understood, as though their souls were linked

kinfolk—relatives

kin—relatives

knobby—hard bumps

knower—knew or known

knowings--knowledge

knowings--knowledge

lady's slippers—pink, yellow, or white flowers in the shape of a slipper; also called Indian moccasins

land sakes—an expression of surprise or frustration

lard—white animal fat used for cooking; used to be sold in buckets

laws a mercy—Lord of mercy; many mountain people do not want to take God's name in vain, so they substituted *laws* for *Lord*

lay eyes on—see

learn by heart—memorize something that is important to you

learn—sometimes means *teach*, such as “He learned me good”

leastwise—at least

level—at the highest level, such as “tried my level best”

liar’s contest—fairs and festivals across West Virginia hold annual liar’s contests to see who can make up the best tall tale

lichen—fungus and algae that grows together on rotting wood; comes in a variety of colors

lick of—any, such as “lick of sense”

licorice—black or red stick rubbery stick candy made with flavoring from the licorice root

lightening bugs—fireflies

liquored up—drunk

lockjaw—a common name for tetanus, an infectious disease that rigidity and muscle spasms; the jaw clamps tight

lookey--look

Lord’s day—Sunday

lunch pail—men and children often carried a pail for lunch. Coal miners used a pail or bucket that had several sections because they had to carry water as well as lunch; it’s said that coal miners often ate dessert first because if the mine collapsed, they would have eaten the best part of their meal; see <http://www.thegoldweb.com/home/minerscollection.htm> for examples of coal mining equipment, including lunch pails; Lydia probably carried an empty lard bucket for her lunch pail.

make me no never mind—it doesn’t matter to me; I understand if you don’t

material—fabric

mater--tomato

mater—tomato

mess—food enough for a meal, such as “a mess of green beans”

midwifed—delivered a baby

midwife—woman who helps another woman deliver a baby

mighty—very, such as “mighty fine”

miry—deep mud

misremember—forget

mite—a tiny bug, also a small amount, such as “feeling a mite poorly”

mountain man toy—also called the lumberjack man; see a picture and examples of other Appalachian toys at <http://earthworkstrade.com/lowtechtoys.html>

muslin—a cotton fabric

mustard plaster—flour, oil, and dry mustard mixed in lukewarm water; Vaseline is placed on the chest first to prevent burning, then the mixture is added on top of a cloth

nary—not, never

never—sometimes means *ever*, such as “I won’t never tell”

new-fangled—modern

no how—anyway

none—sometimes means *any*, such as “I didn’t want none.”

no—sometimes means *any*, such as “I didn’t want no water.”

nothing—sometimes means *anything*

nowadays—now

nylon stockings—women who couldn’t afford nylons drew lines down the backs of their legs with an eyebrow pencil; see <http://searchwarp.com/swa7795.htm> for an interesting history of nylons

offen--off

ol’—abbreviation of old

old timey—old fashioned

old—doesn’t necessarily mean advanced years; in mountain speech *ol’* or *old* can be used to suggest something is extremely intense, such as “big ol’ tears”, or it can mean *affection* or *fondness for*, such as “big old dog”

on account of--because

ornery—behaving badly

our'n—ours

outgrewed—outgrew

outhouse—an outdoor toilet in a small building, usually of wood, that had one or more seats over a pit dug in the ground

outlander—someone who lives outside of West Virginia; sometimes people from outside the state are referred to as *flatlandes*

P.U.—said to indicate a stinky odor; comes from *phew*

pain—sometimes means *cause pain to* when used as a verb

pass on—to die, refers to the belief that the person goes to Heaven or Hell after death

pass wind—a polite way to say *fart*

Pearly Gates—entrance to Heaven

perplexed--puzzled

persecute—to harass, trouble, or annoy someone because of their beliefs, religion, or race; Lydia would be familiar with this term because the Christian Bible frequently uses this word to describe how people of faith were treated

plaintiff—the person, company, or organization that has issued a legal complaint against the defendant

plumb--completely

poke—a paper bag or sack

polio—the polio epidemic affected 1 in 5,000 people; polio, a disease caused by infection, left many unable to walk and some needed an iron lung to help them breathe; President Franklin Delano Roosevelt often relied on a wheelchair because he contracted polio at age 39; Dr. Jonas Salk developed the first effective polio vaccine; in 1961, he developed an oral vaccine, and the author remembers standing in a long line as a child with other children and adults to receive the vaccine on a sugar cube; see <http://www.polio.umich.edu/history/memories.html> to read memories of polio pioneers, who participated as children in 1954 trials of the injected polio vaccine; see <http://www.uihealthcare.com/depts/medmuseum/galleryexhibits/womeninhealth/redcross/redcross.html> for a picture of an iron lung and the braces children wore; see <http://www.utexas.edu/features/2005/polio/> for a picture of an overcrowded ward with iron lungs in the 1950's

ponder—think about, wonder

poorly--sick

poot—fart

prissy—acting better than other people

pro bono—lawyers sometimes offer free services for cases they believe benefit the public

prosecuting attorney—the lawyer that tries to prove the defendant is guilty

puff up—be conceited

put it out of your mind—forget about it

puzzle it out—try to understand

puzzles—check out this website for the types of puzzles Gran might have made BJ for Christmas: <http://www.homesteadtoys.com/childrens/puzzles.html>

Queen Anne’s lace—a rounded cluster of small white flowers that, together, resemble lace; also called wild carrot

quilt—sew pieces of material together to make a blanket; can also be used to make other items, such as stuffed animals, pillows, or artwork; to learn about quilting and see a video, go to <http://quilting.about.com> ; to see examples of West Virginia quilts, go to <http://wvquilters.org>

ransomed—Christians believe their passage to Heaven is bought with Christ’s blood

rant and rave—talk continuously

Rapture of the Saints—Christian belief that when Jesus returns to Earth that Christians who have died will rise from the dead and meet Jesus in the air

reckon—believe or suppose

recollect—remember

recorder—a musical instrument, related to the flute, that has holes for seven holes in the front and an upper thumb hole in the back; find out more and see pictures of recorders at <http://www.music88.com/aau.htm>

reek—to have a bad odor

remember—sometimes means *remind*, such as “She remembered me of my cousin.”

rememorize—memorize

riddance—be rid of

right—very, such as “I was right happy”

riven—split apart

run her mouth—talking nonstop

runned—ran

running water—water comes through pipes into the house instead of a well

saint—a Christian with holy behavior who is more good, kind, and patient than most people

sassafras--small, flowering tree commonly found in West Virginia; the tree's dried root bark is used to make tea and as a flavoring; some consider the tea a tonic; the author's father says his grandmother drank sassafras tea every spring to "thin the blood"

saved—a Christian belief that a person must make a decision to believe in Jesus and ask forgiveness for sins

script—Coal companies created their own currency to pay workers; the only place script could be used was the company store, which usually kept workers in debt to the coal company

script—instead of U.S. currency, coal companies once paid workers in script that could only be used at company stores

seed—sometimes means *seen*

seeing as--because

seeker—desires to know

seen—sometimes means *saw*

shalt--shall

shooting their mouth off—tattling

shotgun house—all the rooms are in a straight line—you could shoot a bullet through the front door and it would go through the back door

should ought—should; both words used for emphasis

shucking corn—peel off the outer covering or husk from the corn; also involves removing the strings

sinful—behaving in a way that goes against Christian beliefs

skedaddle—run away fast

slack jawed—mouth hanging open

smack dab—at that point

smidgen—a small amount

smooch—wet, slobbery kiss

snuck—sneak

so's—so as

solemnly--seriously

something fierce—terribly

something fierce—to a large degree, a lot, such as “missed him something fierce”

spanking—sometimes means *very*, such as “brand spanking new” or “spanking clean”

spanking—very, such as “spanking clean”

spell—a while, such as “We sat in the swing for a spell”

Standard English—the written and spoken English language that is most accepted by educated people

stirred up—upset, worried

store-bought—bought new in a store instead of handmade at home. handed down from an older family member, or used

strut—walk proudly

stuffing their faces—filling themselves with food as someone stuffs a turkey

suit—appeal to

sure and certain—absolutely

swan—Because of their religious beliefs, some mountain people are uncomfortable with the word *swear*, so they use *swan* to mean “I promise” or “I definitely mean”

sweating bullets—perspiring heavily

swolled up--swollen

tarnation—a polite word for hell

taters—potatoes

that there—that, often used for emphasis

themselves—theirself

them—sometimes means *those*, such as “I like them apples.”

these here—these; said for emphasis

they’s—they is, current English grammar substitutes *they are*

they—sometimes means *there*, such as “they also be times”

this here--this

thou—you

thou—you

throw up—vomit

thy—your

tits—breasts

titties—breasts

tizzy—nervous, excited

token--taken

token--taken

tonic—medicine that energizes and strengthens; many tonics used by mountaineers were home remedies or purchased from unregulated and unethical individuals or companies; some so-called tonics were actually harmful

took sick—became ill

took to—started to, such as “we took to eating”

train whistle—learn how you can make a whistle from a twig at
<http://www.countrylovers.co.uk/fun/whistle.htm>

tranquil--calm

trap—sometimes means *mouth*, such as shut your trap

troubling—bothered or worried feeling, such as “I felt a troubling”

tuckered out--exhausted

turn down—refuse

turned out--happened

tyke—small child

tykes—small children

union—members band together, striking if necessary, for better pay and working conditions

up and—added in front of a verb for emphasis, such as “he up and commenced to”

up and—sometimes extra words added for emphasis, such as “I up and decided to go”

up to the front—where the preacher stands in church; mountain churches often have an altar or rail in front of the preacher; at the end of a service, the preacher might invite sinners to “come up to the front to be saved”

us’ns—us

Virginny—Virginia

ward—in the 1950’s it was common to have one room called a ward with 10 or 12 patients; see <http://www.photogateway.com/ImageDetail2.asp?PreviewImageID=50060> for a picture of two boys in a hospital ward in the 1950’s

washtub—a large, round, metal tub that could be used for bathing if the house did not have running water or for washing clothes with a washboard, which is a board with a metal strip. Clothes are washed by rubbing them up and down the washboard by hand.

way of women—menstruation, having periods; this phrase was used in the Old Testament

weeping willow—a tree with slender and long drooping branches

West Virginia—WV became a state in 1864 when it broke away from Virginia to join the Union during the Civil War, to learn more about the beautiful Mountain State, visit <http://www.westvirginia.com/> , <http://wvweb.com/> and <http://www.wvtourism.com/> .
Listen to WV dialect at <http://web.ku.edu/idea/northamerica/usa/westvirginia/westvirginia.htm>

whatcha—what are you

what—sometimes means *that*, such as “them folks what was a-working”

whence--where

whilst—while

whimmy diddle—a toy made of two sticks and a propeller; one stick is rubbed on another stick with notches that has a propeller on one end; the faster the stick is rubbed against the notched stick, the faster the propeller spins; see how to make one out of pencils at <http://bobs crafts.com/bobstuff/geehaw.htm>)

whittle—using a pocket knife to carve shapes in wood (see <http://www.whittling.com/> and <http://www.desiquintans.com/whittle>)

whole entire—Appalachian speech sometimes uses two or more synonyms for emphasis, just as they use double and triple negatives for emphasis

whup—whip

woman's parts—Lydia's mother referred to her aunt having a hysterectomy to remove her uterus and ovaries. Women's body parts were not usually referred to openly, especially by mountain people, in the 1950's. In fact, if a woman had cancer or some other health problem with one of these organs, people typically said she "has female trouble."

women's work—belief that only women should do cooking, housework, and taking care of children

wore out—extremely tired

worked up—excited or upset

wringer—two metal rolls attached to some washtubs and used for draining water out of laundry; a hand crank caused the rolls to spin, pulling the clothes between them

young-uns—young ones, children