

- **Claiborne County Progress**

Nell Quesenbery Report

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Scent of Pomegranate and Yard-Long Beans

FALL FEAST OF THE SEASONS

By Nell Quesenbery

Every month has its different flowering colors. These are the older, royal days of summer. In the fields, mostly wildflowers bloom their majestic purple and gold. The late summer sun shines still brighter as the unexpected north wind pricks us with its sudden chill, causing the tall, sturdy tree to loosen its first leaf.

Garden truck has been on my mind lately. Heavy-laden, smoke house shelves groan under jars of jellies, beans, beets, corn, pickles, apples, pears, sweet pepper relish, chow-chow and that old standby - tomatoes.

Recently, however, several letters have arrived; between peeling, cutting, snapping and bouts of steam pressure, I've enjoyed reading them.

My friends, Herman and Bess Livesay, who live in the Allegheny Mountains of West Virginia, wrote to me telling how much they enjoyed their visit here this summer. They especially enjoyed Herman's nephews, Jimmy, Jackie and Bennie Livesay, the boys' families and lovely, long lake-filled days.

Many years ago, Herman and Bess lived in Claiborne County. Herman was in the Navy during World War II. After the war, he served as Claiborne County Court Clerk. Bess taught grade school in the Claiborne County School System.

Bess writes that Herman "has a bet up" with a West Virginian. Herman claims, "There is such a thing as a pomegranate." The West Virginian says, "There is no such thing." Bess wants

me to ask Jack, “Does he remember pomegranates?” She describes, “They have such a good odor. They are orange and yellow, larger than a lemon.” Bess wonders, “Do they grow wild or can you buy the seed?”

Jack remembers pomegranates, and so do I. Herman, tell this West Virginia man that almost every school year, someone would give me a pomegranate to hold. Besides, King Solomon especially liked pomegranates.

If anyone knows about the seed or can help Herman, write: Herman Livesay, 1217 Woodland Drive, Charleston, West Virginia 25302.

Have you ever seen yard-long beans? They look just like slender green snakes hanging from the tall corn. They keep producing in a never-ending supply. I’ve canned run after run of these beans.

Imogene (Joe) Love gave the seed to me the day that Jack, her family and others dug Andrew Jordan’s grave in the Greer Cemetery. The Greer Cemetery is located in the Ball Creek section of Straight Creek Road, where the Quesenbery’s and Love’s have been neighbors for generations. Some of these Love’s are close friends to the Quesenbery family, while others are cousins. Jack has always felt a special feeling for Joe Love and his brother, Ray Love, who died last summer.

I showed Jack the little jar of oddly shaped bean seeds that Imogene had given me. We decided not to use them as they were covered with a white powder and might be wormy.

Anticipatorily, we planted Shellies, little Red Goose, white half-runners, corn field pole beans, greasy back beans and my favorite, old-timey little speckled brown bunch beans. A. (Clay) Evans had given us these little brown seed that had been in her family nearly fifty years. Very sadly, we watched all our beans fail.

So in desperation, we planted the odd-looking, powdery beans we’d scorned and pushed back. There was only enough seed for about twenty hills. Uninterestedly, we watched them grow until they caught our attention by their superabundance. Using fat trimmed from ham for a rich seasoning, we found the new beans to be quite tasty.

Beginning to feel “bean rich,” as we, too, had canned green beans sitting on our shelves, we became interested in these yard-long pole beans.

Imogene (Joe) Love told me one of Mrs. George (Gracie) Brown’s boys, either Roy Thomas or Henry Lee Thomas, had brought the seed in from Indiana about four years ago. Ray Love had been given a few of these seeds. Ray, in turn, gave his brother, Joe Love, enough to plant one hill.

Joe was amazed at how these bean vines produced. He saved all his new beans for seed.

Returning from his farm, Jack stopped in Lone Mountain and showed the beans to the crowd at Bill Walker’s store. Impressed, Bill Walker (Imogene Love’s brother) had Jack promise to save him some seed.

But Millard Waldon said he already knew of the beans. He went on to tell how he and Ray Love were in Scottie’s all night diner. Millard lived nearby, and before Ray died, there were times he just couldn’t sleep. Anyway, toward dawn, Ray said, “Well, I guess I’ll go pick my beans.”

“What!” Millard exclaimed. “It’s still dark.”

Ray answered, “It don’t have to be daylight to pick my beans. I can pick them by feel.”

“Well!” Millard said. “This I’ve got to see,” going with Ray that morning to his bean patch.

Now Jack carefully saves seed to give his friends.

My father, Dennis Marchio, was born September 22, 1910. Happy birthday, Dad.