

Helen's mother missed her home in the mill village. She wanted electricity, a toilet that flushed, to be on the bus route instead of a dirt road, and all the other amenities that she had known in mill village. Eventually, after the mill had opened up again, they signed the pledge and moved back to mill village.

## THE MEMORIES OF RUBY RECTOR

The memories of Ruby Rector, Helen's mother, were preserved in a small booklet entitled *Reflections in a Squirrel's Eye*. Helen once had her mother's copy of this, and she had given it, along with old family photographs, to her daughter. Helen "borrowed back" the copy from her daughter, and entrusted it to the researcher on loan, after having taped her name and telephone number to the cover, saying, "you never know, you [the researcher] might get in an auto accident or something and no one would know who to return it to."

Helen said her mother was interviewed in 1978 by a student for a school project. The name of the school is not shown in the booklet. [Note: When John P. Rankin read this manuscript in 2007, he recognized the booklet being discussed here as one that was reportedly done as a student project at the J.O. Johnson High School.] The project was certainly a worthy one, and the teacher, the sponsors, and the student interviewers, should be applauded for preserving history. The article, "Looking Back," allows Ruby Rector to "speak to us" 27 years after she spoke with the student Marie Godwin. It is presented in its entirety below.

In the days before running water and electricity reached the outskirts of Madison County, life was slower and simpler, and perhaps in its own way happier. Madison County was the cotton capital of the United States and was not yet the Space Capital of the world. Farming functioned more as a food source than an income. Both luxuries and essentials were made by hand, slowly and with much care. The result of the work remains, but a few people remember their making and the circumstances involved. Mrs. Ruby Rector, daughter of a Madison County farmer remembers and was kind enough to share her memories.

"I think we had a lot of fun. We was just a bunch of wild country young'uns. We did just about anything we'd get a chance to."

"We'd get out and build playhouses. We'd always get as far away from the house as we could so we couldn't hear Momma holler for us to come do something. We'd gather moss and make carpets on the floor, and get broke dishes and wash 'em and clean 'em up and have things to sit 'em on. We'd get up in the mountain and climb trees and prowl around. We used to have a lot of fun playing like that."

"Kids don't get out and play now like we used to. We'd get outside and play ball and play everything like that. We used to play two-