

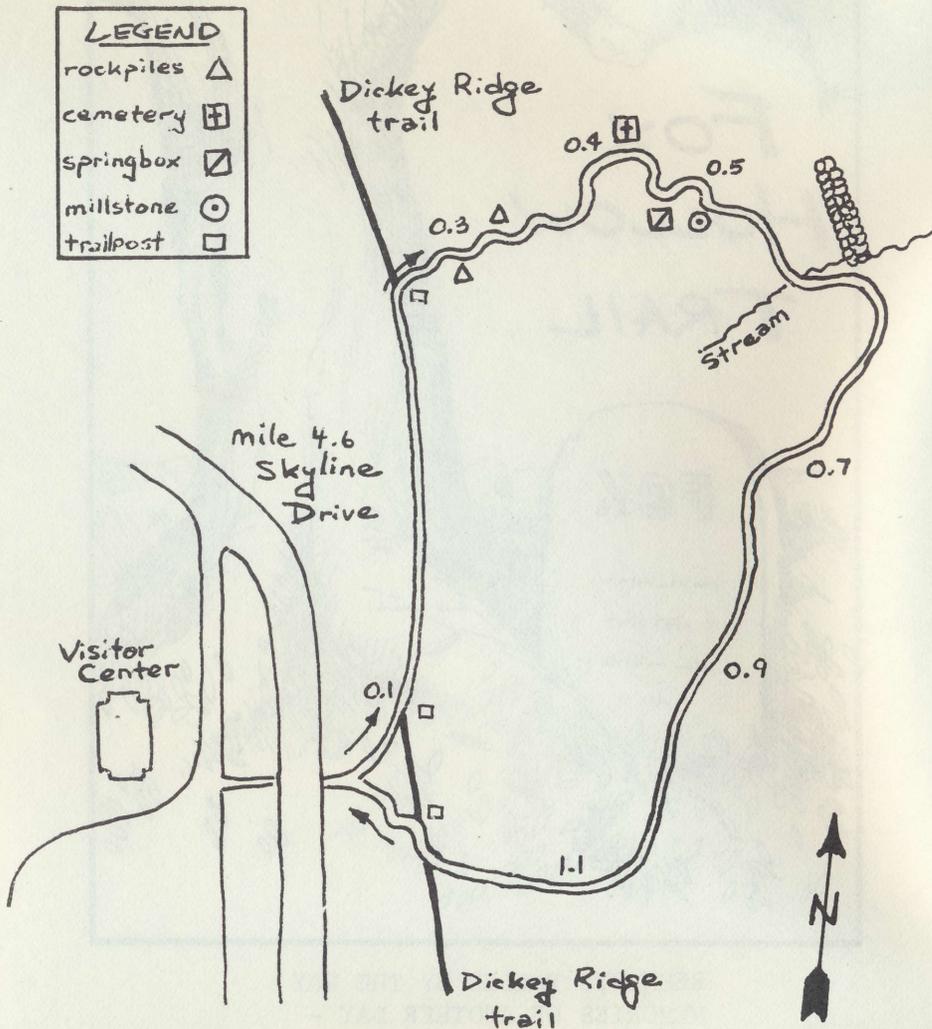
REMNANTS FALLEN BY THE WAY
MEMORIES OF ANOTHER DAY -
PIECES OF THE PAST.

Dickey Ridge

Shenandoah National Park

Published by Shenandoah Natural History Association

Fox Hollow, with its many relics of the past, contains outstanding evidence that people thrived in these mountains before the Park was established.



This is a SELF-GUIDING trail. There are no numbered posts along the trail. Use this map and the directions in this booklet to guide you along this 1.2 mile loop trail. Read the landscape as you walk and the history of the Fox family will come alive for you.

Let's begin...But first an explanation.

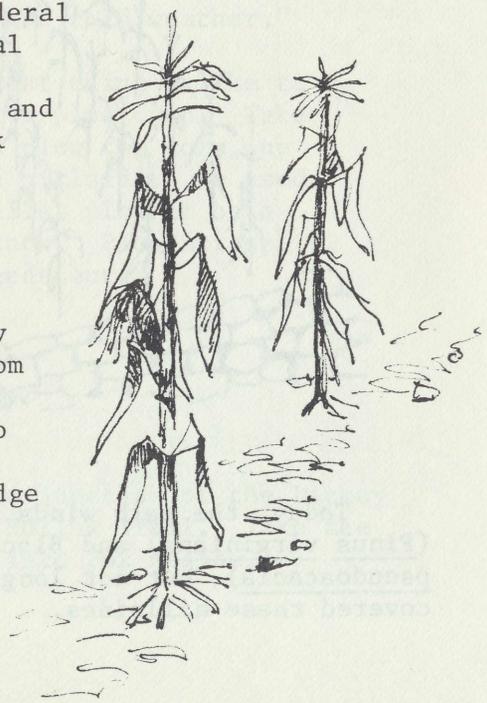
Shenandoah National Park is unique. Unlike most national parks which were created on public lands especially set aside as park lands, Shenandoah National Park was formed by the acquisition of 3,870 separate tracts of privately owned land.

In 1926, the U.S. Congress responded to the need for a large national park in the east by authorizing Shenandoah National Park. However, they did not permit the expenditure of any Federal funds for purchasing the land. All the land for this "nature park" had to be donated without cost to the Federal Government. If there was to be a national park in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, the State had to undertake the tremendous task of purchasing the land and resettling the 432 families who lived on that land within the proposed Park boundary.

For nearly ten years, the State of Virginia struggled to meet the challenge of collecting money, buying land, and helping to resettle most of the mountain families to seven resettlement communities outside the Park. Finally in 1935, the task was completed and the Commonwealth of Virginia donated 176,430 acres to the Federal Government. The National Park Service began its management of the area, and Shenandoah National Park became a reality.

TO BEGIN - Walk directly across Skyline Drive from the south end of the visitor center. Bear to the left (north) on the well traveled Dickey Ridge Trail.

Enjoy your walk!



0.1 Gone, But Not Forgotten

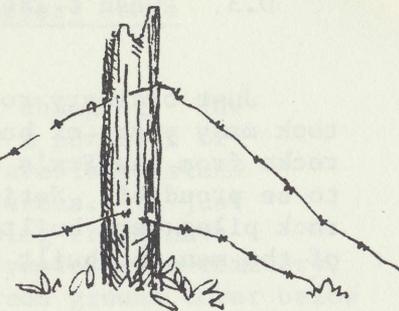
Hundreds of families gave up their homes and a way of life so that we can enjoy the Park today. One such family was the Fox family. Before 1936, four generations of Foxes made this hollow their home. About 150 years ago, Thomas and Martha Fox settled in this hollow as tenant farmers. After working nineteen years, they had earned enough money to buy the land on which they had toiled so many years. That year was 1856. They paid \$5,000 for a 450 acre tract on the east slope of Dickey Ridge.

Thomas and Martha's descendants were farmers too, living on the food they grew and the animals they raised. They grew a variety of crops. Fields of grain were planted, especially corn.



Today, the path winds through Virginia Pine (*Pinus virginiana*) and Black Locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), but not long ago cornfields covered these hillsides.

The Fox houses and barns are gone. Their fields and pastures have returned to forest. Their history is a part of the past, but it lives on in the rock piles, family cemetery and artifacts they have left behind.



We also have the words of Lemuel Fox, Jr. who spent the first twenty years of his life on his Uncle Winfield's farm in Fox Hollow. In 1976, he returned to walk this trail and record his recollections of his boyhood home.

"Well, we'd start the garden in about the first of May, then we'd raise the garden from then on until it got cold weather."

"About the best thing I like to do, I like to plow corn. Take a horse and plow the corn, up here on the hillside. We used to climb hills, plow it both ways, you know. Plow across it, keep the weeds out."

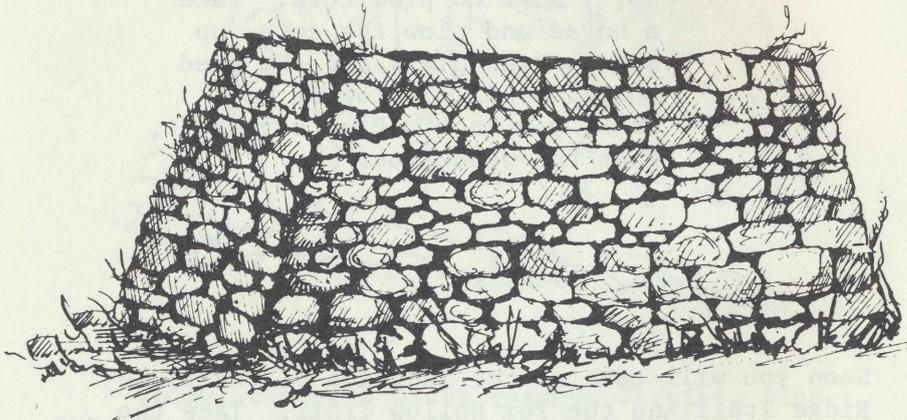
Soon you will come to the junction of the Dickey Ridge Trail and the Fox Hollow Trail. Take the path to the right, down into Fox Hollow.

0.3 "Wasn't Them That Put Them There"

Just ordinary rock piles, or are they? It took many years of backbreaking work to clear these rocks from the Fox's fields, a hard task, but one to be proud of. Notice the meticulous way these rock piles were built. It is a clue to the character of the men who built them.

Townspeople, needing rocks to build homes, were encouraged to gather rocks from the fields and several homes in Front Royal are built with them. While the gathering of stones from the fields was permitted, no one was allowed to disturb the rock piles. Lemuel explains why:

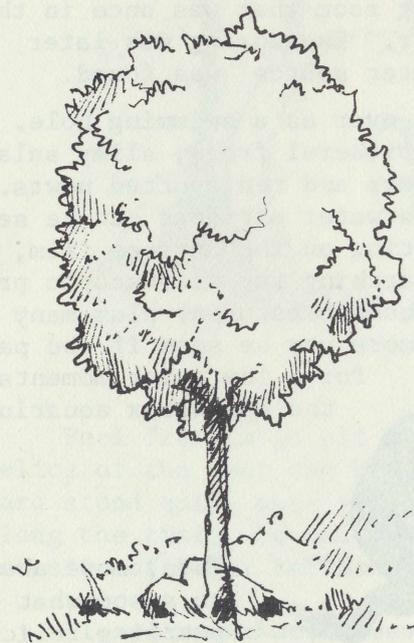
"My uncle wouldn't let them take them out of the rock pile. Wanted them to pick them out of the fields. Now you know the man who piled them rocks up knew what he was doing. To stay there that many years. Probably that rock pile is a hundred, over a hundred, maybe a couple hundred years old."



Follow the trail to the cemetery.

0.4 The Changing Cemetery Scene

Life on earth is forever changing. The Fox cemetery provides us with a portrait of this change. Today, these gravestones stand in the shade of black locust trees. In just four decades, these fast-growing trees have invaded the open sunlight of yesterday's cemetery. Notice the low-growing evergreen ground cover below your feet. Periwinkle, also known as myrtle or cemetery weed, was often planted around homesites and cemeteries. The survival of the periwinkle contrasts with the Black Cherry tree. Its rotten limbs no longer bear fruit, but Lemuel remembers a different time:



"I picked many a cherry off this tree. Black-heart cherries. Be plowing corn and I'd get up there and eat cherries. Rest the horse. I'd set up there and eat cherries...Lord a'mercy, I wish...I wish I could crawl back that young."

As you walk down to the spring box, notice the flat area to your left where the Fox garden grew.

0.5 Springbox Aquarium

Because they lived before the days of electricity and modern refrigeration, the Foxes, like other mountain families were faced with the problem of preserving perishable foods during the warm months. They solved the problem by building springhouses. Springhouses are small buildings or enclosures built around or near a spring. Food stored inside the springhouse was kept "refrigerated" by the cold flowing spring water.

"In our springhouse, we kept milk and butter and everything right in the springhouse. Kept it just as cold and nice."

This springbox was not here when the Foxes lived in this hollow. This structure was built as a Park water supply for the dining room that was once in the Dickey Ridge Visitor Center. The spring was later abandoned when a better water source was found.

Now it has been taken over as a swimming hole. Resident swimmers include pickerel frogs, slimy salamanders and red spotted newts. Often water striders can be seen skating on the surface film, searching for microscopic prey. These creatures, plus many more may be seen if you pause for a few quiet moments by the springbox aquarium.

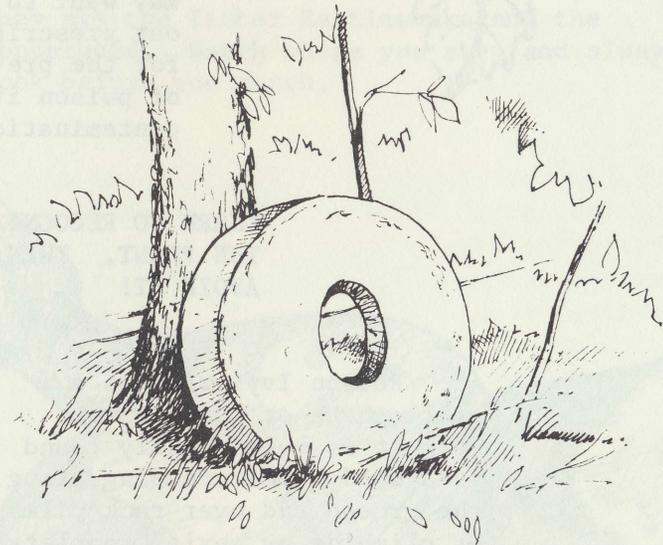


Then, move ahead to a somewhat puzzling relic.

0.5 A Millstone?

Are you puzzled by the location of this millstone? Without a reliable stream for power, do you think that there was ever a mill nearby? We turn to Lemuel for an answer:

"There wasn't any mill down here anywhere...there was two millstones, stayed here for years and years. They was here when I was here. Just as a walkway."



Feel free to go off the trail and browse. Many relics of the past can be found. The Fox's house and barn stood quite near your present location. Further along the trail, beyond the stone wall, was the former homesite of Edgar Merchant, the Fox's nearest neighbor.

Please remember, however, that these relics are now museum pieces. They should be left in place for others to enjoy.

Explore Carefully!

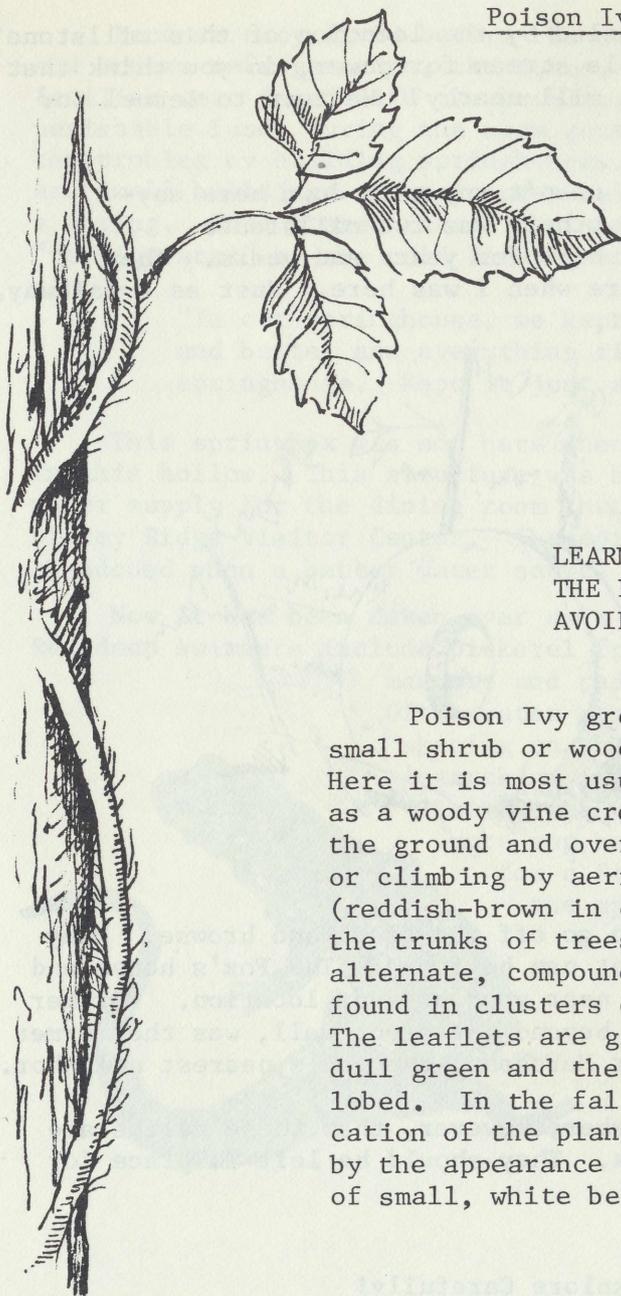
CAUTION!

Poison Ivy

As Lemuel put it, there has always been "Quite a bit" of poison ivy in the area. You may want to follow our prescription for the prevention of poison ivy contamination.

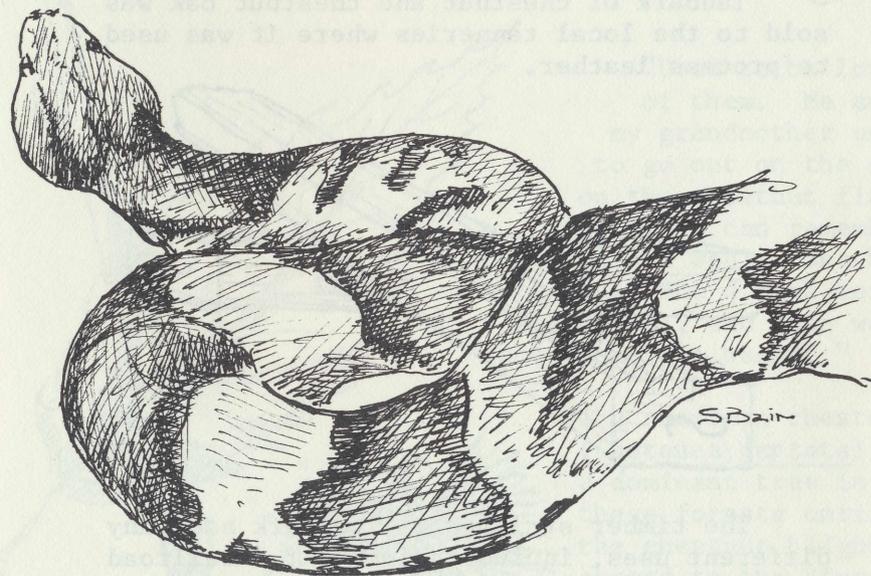
LEARN TO RECOGNIZE
THE PLANT. THEN
AVOID IT!

Poison Ivy grows as a small shrub or woody vine. Here it is most usually found as a woody vine creeping along the ground and over rock piles or climbing by aerial rootlets (reddish-brown in color) up the trunks of trees. The alternate, compound leaves are found in clusters of three. The leaflets are glossy or dull green and the edges are lobed. In the fall, identification of the plant is aided by the appearance of clusters of small, white berry-like fruits.



...and Snakes

The rocks and vines along the trails are favorite places for snakes; however, they make as much of an effort to avoid us as we do to try to avoid them. Two poisonous species of snakes occur here. They are the Timber Rattlesnake and the Copperhead. Watch where you step and always look before you reach.



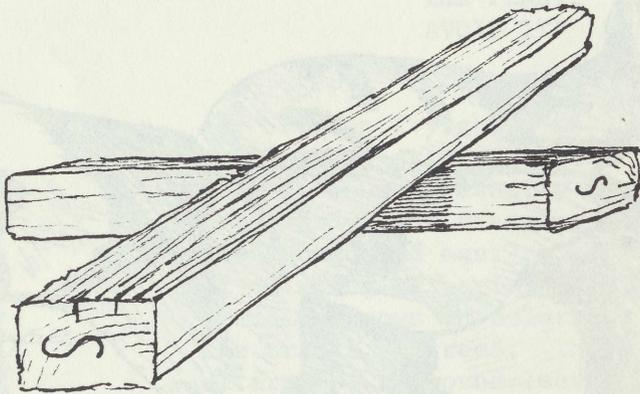
After crossing the stream, you will soon turn onto the old road, now just a trace, that linked the Fox family to the town of Front Royal.

Timber and Tanbark

Household goods including coffee, kerosene and tools were purchased with cash. Early settlers could depend on timber and tanbark as cash crops.

"They cut tan bark in the spring of the year, you know, when the sap was up."

Tanbark of chestnut and chestnut oak was sold to the local tanneries where it was used to process leather.



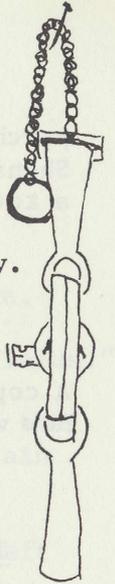
The timber stripped of its bark had many different uses, including lumber for railroad ties.

"In the fall they'd cut...hew railroad ties, hew them by hand with a broad ax...they's haul them down to Front Royal, load them in a boxcar."

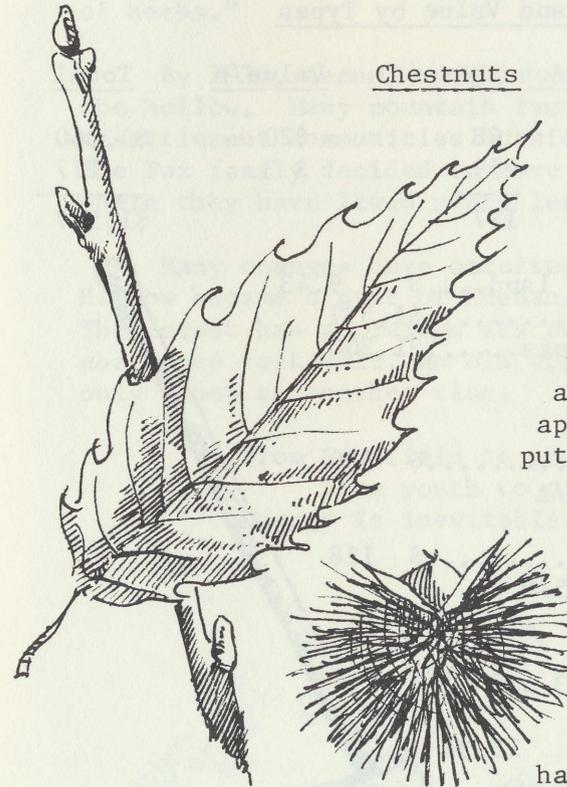
Trapping

"I used to trap. I caught two red foxes one winter. One brought fifteen dollars; the other one, twelve."

The red fox is rarely seen in the Park today. They prefer the open country of the valley and piedmont regions outside the Park. Now that the mountains have been reclaimed by forests, the red fox has been replaced by the gray fox which thrives in the woodland habitat.



Chestnuts



"Used to be lots of them. Me and my grandmother used to go out on the ridge on the chestnut flats there. I can remember when she would take her apron...She'd pick her apron full, and then we'd put them in a basket."

The American chestnut (Castanea dentata) was a dominant tree in these forests until the chestnut blight spread to the Blue Ridge Mountains. By 1920, the fungus disease had killed all the mature chestnut trees in the area. The mountain people suffered when this tree was gone. They could no longer depend on its timber, tannin, or nuts as cash crops.

0.9 A Past Appraisal

In 1930, the Fox's land was appraised for purchase by the State of Virginia as a part of Shenandoah National Park. Mr. Fox was given a total of \$3,065 for his homesite.

\$1,537 for the land
 \$1,200 for the barn and house
 \$ 328 for timber and orchard land

A copy of the original assessment appears below. How would you assess this same land today?

Acreage and Value by Types

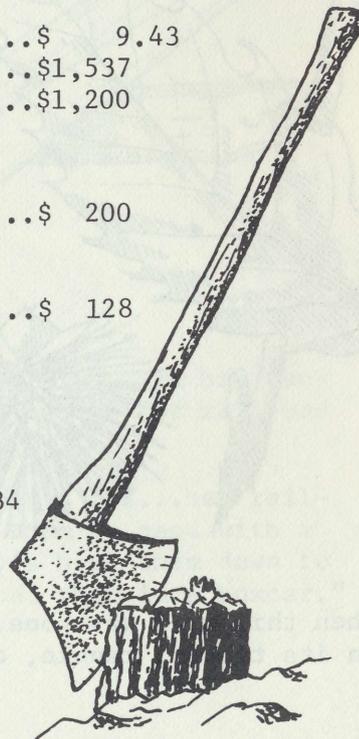
<u>Types</u>	<u>Acreages (A)</u>	<u>Value/A</u>	<u>Total</u>
Cultivated land	68	\$20	\$1,360
Slope	59	\$ 3	177
	<u>127</u>		<u>\$1,537</u>

Value per Acre for land....\$ 9.43
 Value of land.....\$1,537
 Value of Improvements.....\$1,200
 House - \$800
 Barn - \$400
 Value of Orchard.....\$ 200
 4 Acres @\$50/A
 Value of Timber.....\$ 128
 32 M Feet @\$5/M Ft.
 (M=1000)

Value of tract - \$3,065

Value per Acre - \$ 23.34

Be alert! The trail will turn sharply uphill to the right.



1.1 Change

Soon the trail will return you to the clearing where you began your hike.

Half a century ago:

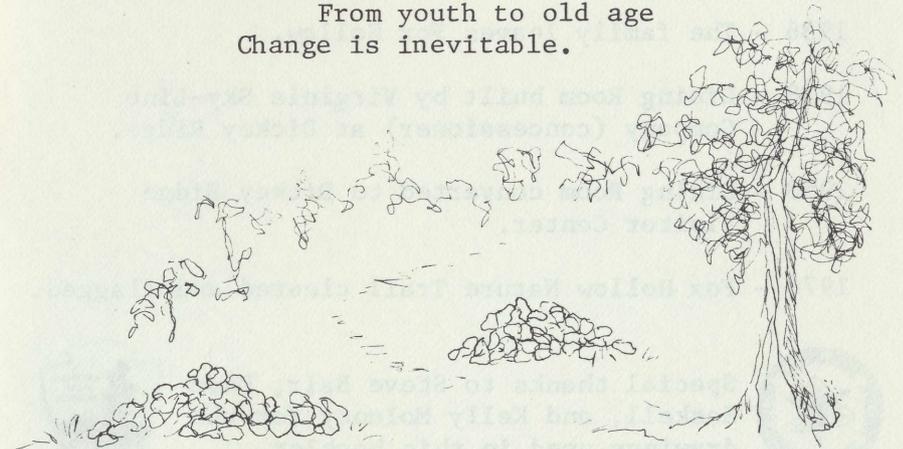
"All this was clear. You could see all the way across the mountain, and all the way to the top of the mountain. All of it was cleared fields."

In just a lifetime, Lemuel Fox has seen the cornfields of his boyhood "grow into a mountain of herbs."

By 1936, Lemuel and his relatives had left the hollow. Many mountain families moved to resettlement communities outside the Park. The Fox family decided to move to Front Royal where they have lived since leaving the Park.

Many changes have occurred since Fox Hollow became a part of Shenandoah National Park. The forest has reclaimed its own again; an abandoned rock wall, an old apple tree are the only clues to another time.

From Cornfield to shaded wood
 From youth to old age
 Change is inevitable.



Chronology

- 1835 - Thomas and Martha Fox settle in the Front Royal area.
- 1856 - Thomas pays \$5,000 for 450 acres in Fox Hollow.
- 1861 - Three of Thomas' sons enlist in the Confederate Army.
- 1863 - Son, Lemuel Sr., released from Union Prisoner of War Camp. Only son to return to father's farm.
- 1916 - Lemuel Sr. dies. Fox land is divided between four sons - Winfield, Ollie, Henry, and Samuel.
- 1920 - Lemuel Fox, Jr. moves to Fox Hollow. Spends the next twenty years living with his Uncle Winfield.
- 1926 - Act of Congress authorizes Shenandoah National Park.
- 1930 - Fox land is appraised for future inclusion in newly created Shenandoah National Park.
- 1936 - The family leaves Fox Hollow.
- 1938 - Dining Room built by Virginia Sky-Line Company (concessioner) at Dickey Ridge.
- 1958 - Dining Room converted to Dickey Ridge Visitor Center.
- 1976 - Fox Hollow Nature Trail cleared and flagged.



Special thanks to Steve Bair, Dave Haskell, and Kelly Moloney for the drawings used in this booklet.

Printed 1982

