



VIEW FROM OUR PLACE

Life in the Country

Each season brings something new to this corner of North Carolina.

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At a time when the world is connected by the click of a button, it is easy to think that time has forgotten our little piece of the country. Chip, North Carolina, which is nestled between the two small towns of Mount Gilead and Troy in almost the center of the state, has been forgotten in many ways. But I'm certainly not going to complain about that.

To appreciate the view from our place, which is near the Uwharrie National Forest, it's important to understand the past. In my case, our family has lived in Chip, our little community without so much as a name sign, as far back as anyone around can remember. In

fact, we believe our family goes back 200 years here. My great-grandfather and his father before him ran the country store that bore our family name.

The dirt road of my childhood that runs in front of my house has now been paved, yet many things remain the same.

I remember waiting impatiently for the mailman—my best friend's daddy—to stop each day as I hoped for something interesting in the box. Often the mailman is still the only person who drives by besides the residents, but these days my childhood mailman's son delivers our packages.

As a child, I thought everyone lived like this, surrounded by family and love. It wasn't until I

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started school that I learned many children didn't regularly see their grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. *How strange*, I thought.

Today, I take pleasure in getting to share many of the same aspects of country life that my ancestors enjoyed with Payton, my 8-year-old daughter, and I find a special

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comfort in that. Holding my daughter's hand, walking with my parents, Truett and Barbara Haywood, and friendly Cooter, the neighbors' dog who thinks he belongs to all of us, I am reminded of what is really important.

Each season brings something new, but still repeats the endless cycle of life in the country. Spring brings the rebirth of the heirloom flowers my grandmother grew—morning glories, 4 o'clocks and wild Queen Anne's lace that we dye with food coloring. We marvel

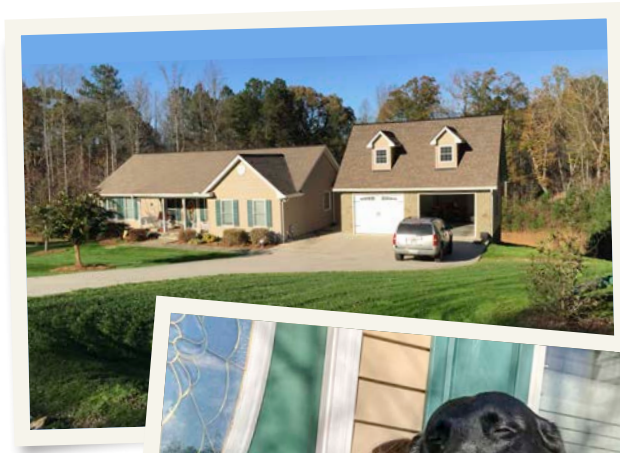
at all of the animal babies—deer, birds that hatch in our flowerpots, turkeys, foxes and rabbits. Just about everyone counts the “buns” playing in the yard.

Summer brings a seemingly nonstop flow of garden-fresh vegetables, just like the ones my grandfather used to plant with the rusty tractor. Blueberry picking still fills the sweltering July days as we load our buckets with the frosty blue orbs, but we always find time to rest on the porch before an afternoon thunderstorm. Crisp fall

is ushered in, causing the oak, maple and sweet gum leaves to blush with its whispers. The season brings the family holiday meals to enjoy together. Finally, the quiet of winter arrives, with an occasional dusting of snow—to the children's delight—and restful walks in the woods to the river with my daddy, completing a year in the life of our place in the country.

Someone once told me it was sad that I had lived in the same place all of my life, but I believe the opposite is true. What is really sad is if someone never finds a place—like ours—to truly call home. 🌀

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