

Written by Arrington McCoy,
7th grade student at Providence Day School

"THE OLD BADMAN"

as told by Lizzie

Lizzie was a slave. Even after the Civil War she lived and worked on the McCoy Farm in north Mecklenburg County. She was a mammy to my great grandfather, Joseph B. McCoy and his 11 brothers and sisters. She would entertain the children with stories and riddles. Most have been lost, but a few have been preserved by word of mouth. My father, Tom McCoy, told me these stories and this the first time they have been written down.

To understand this story, you need to picture what Mecklenburg County was like 120 years ago. There were no cars. There were few stores. The food you ate was raised and prepared on the farm. There was no electricity or refrigeration. Meat was smoked to prevent it from spoiling. The smoke house had no windows so the smoke wouldn't escape and the floor was dirt so the building couldn't catch on fire. People raised their own wheat and made their own bread. However, they didn't make their own flour. The wheat was carried to the mill to be made into flour and the mill owner was paid by you giving him some of the flour. The nearest houses were miles away so the children's closest friends were pets, brothers and sisters.

The Story of the Old Badman

A little boy had three dogs, Junga, German, and Ring. He spent his days hunting and playing with the dogs. He loved them and they loved him. Though the dogs might range far afield, the dogs would always come immediately to the boy when he played this song on his horn.

"Tu to, my Junga, Tu tu my German, Poor Ring, long time a comin', they want me to die, they want me to die. "

One day the little boy's mother told him to take two bags of wheat to the mill to be ground. She told him to leave his dogs at home, and to lock them in the smokehouse so they wouldn't follow him. The little boy felt bad about this because the dogs went with him wherever he went. But, he was a good boy and did what his mother told him. He took the wheat and started off down the path through the woods to the mill. As he

was walking along, he came upon a squirrel in the middle of the road. And the squirrel was dancing *"Hi lippity lowly. Hi lippity lowly. Hi lippity lowly."* So the little boy played his horn for the squirrel.

"Tu tu my Junga, Tu tu my German, Poor Ring, long time a comin', they want me to die, they want me to die."

When he finished playing, the squirrel said, " You play very well little boy, but there's worst yet to come." Back at the farm, the dogs who had been sleeping on the dry dirt on the smokehouse floor woke up and started looking for a way out, because they had never not come to the little boy before when he had played his horn. Well, the little boy continued on down the road. At the next bend he came upon a possum, dancing in the middle of the road. *"Hi lippity lowly . Hi lippity lowly. Hi lippity lowly."* So the little boy played his horn for the possum.

"Tu tu my Junga, Tu tu my German, Poor Ring, long time a comin', they want me to die, they want me to die."

The possum said, "You play very well little boy, but the worst is yet to come." The dogs could tell that the boy was farther away. They probed every crack looking for a way out of the smokehouse. The little boy continued down the road. Next he came upon a coon. And the coon was dancing. *"Hi lippity lowly. Hi lippity lowly. Hi lippity lowly."* The little boy played his horn for the coon.

"Tu tu my Junga, Tu tu my German, Poor Ring, long time a comin they want me to die, they want me to die."

The coon said, "You play very well little boy, but there's worse yet to come." The dogs were becoming frantic. The little boy had never had to play three times before the dogs were at his side. The boy continued on, till he came to a dark section where the road narrowed. A tall, dark figure of a man stood off to the side of the road in the shadows and when the little boy moved to go past, the figure stepped in and blocked his way. It was the Old Bad Man! When the boy lifted his horn to his lips to play, the old bad man grabbed him and carried him off through the woods under his arm. He carried him a long way, deep into the woods into a section where the boy and his dogs had never gone before. Finally he came to a stone wall with a door in it. The Old Badman carried the boy through this door and locked it behind him. Then he went through another, and another, and another. After passing though seven walls altogether, they came to the Badman's house. The old Badman took the little boy to a room in the back of the house and chained his arms and legs to the wall. Human bones were scattered all around the room and a large stone sharpening wheel sat in the middle. The old Badman got out a big, long knife and started to sharpen it. As he spun

the stone with the foot pedal, the little boy asked to have one wish granted before he died. Even the old Badman couldn't deny his final wish. The little boy asked for seven times to pray, and this was his prayer.

"Tu to my Junga, Tu tu my German, Poor Ring, long time a comin', they want me to die, they want me to die."

At this time, the dogs were positively frantic to get out and go to the little boy. They had begun diggin' and scratchin' at the floor of the old smokehouse.... And the little boy played again.

"Tu tu my Junga, Tu tu my German, Poor Ring, long time a comin', they want me to die, they want me to die."

By the time he had finished the second time a little light was showing through the hole in the smokehouse floor. By the time he had finished playing a third time, Junga's nose was sticking out from under the wall of the smokehouse and they were diggin' and a scratchin'... The boy played a fourth time.

"Tu tu my Junga, Tu to my German, Poor Ring, long time a comm, they want me to die, they want me to die."

And at that time the dogs broke out from under the smokehouse and ran to the woods on the trail of the little boy - first Junga, then German, then Ring. By the time they came to the place where the old Badman had grabbed the little boy, he was starting to play for the sixth time.

"Tu tu my Junga, Tu to my German, Poor Ring, long time a comin', they want me to die, they want me to die."

Back at the Badman's house the little boy lifted his horn and started to play for the last time.

"Tu tu my Junga, Tu tu my German,..."

The old Badman stopped sharpening his knife and looked at its gleaming edge and took a step towards the little boy who continued to play.

"Poor Ring ,long time a comin'. "

The dogs had reached the walls surrounding the old Badman's house. They didn't even slow down. They jumped over that first wall. They jumped over that second wall, the

third, the fourth, the fifth, the sixth and the seventh! They ran into the Badman's house, jumped on him and ate him up! And it took seven days and seven nights for the dogs to chew the chains off that little boy so they could go home.

Aunt Lizzie's Riddle

*As I sat on rility-rality
I looked over into trility-trality.
I saw a rip-rap catch a mumblecumpipe and
Carry him into the prilcomsheres.*

Translation:

*As I sat on the fence
I looked over into the pasture.
I saw a fox catch a rabbit
and carry him into the woods.*