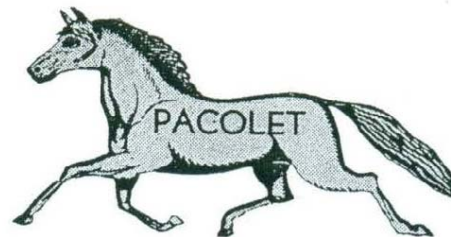


PMES May Festivals

Album 14



During the 1920's the Pacolet community was famous for the May Festivals that featured the students of the [Pacolet Mills Elementary School](#). The presentation was held in the amphitheater next to the school and large crowds attended. This album has several photos of scenes from these festivals. Unfortunately, almost none of the students in any of these pictures are identified. If you know someone in these pictures please let us know. Not all of the locations of the pictures in this album were identified. The school at the [Pacolet Manufacturing Company](#) facility in New Holland, Georgia also had May Festivals and it is possible that some of the pictures were made there.

Dr. A. Vermont, a Professor of Romance Languages at nearby Converse College in Spartanburg, SC attended one of the festivals. Dr. Vermont wrote an article for the *Spartanburg Herald Journal* newspaper about what he had seen. This very complimentary article can be read in the following pages.

DO YOU WANT TO GO ABROAD?

By Dr. A. Vermont
Professor of Romance Languages
Converse College

The other night, I was at Pacolet and together with thousands of people witnessed the annual May Festival. It was beautiful. To begin with, the setting could not have been more picturesque. The open air theater is on the side of a rather steep hill, where thousands can easily find comfortable seats. The stage proper is a leveled part of that same hill, and is large enough to accommodate a thousand players. The background is another hill covered with green trees. The wings are green hedges. Two rows of swaying poplars complete the exits. I doubt that one could find around here a prettier place for an outdoor pageant.

As to the latter, the whole school seemed to take part in it. There was plenty of color and movement. The costumes were selected, planned and executed with the greatest skill. The subject matter was well adapted to an outdoor performance.

Then I began to think that if this festival was sufficiently advertised, it would help to put this part of the Carolinas on the map. We all agree that Pacolet is one of the showplaces around here. Its school, under the excellent direction of Misses Dozier and Venable, it has reached an unusual degree of excellence. We take all that for granted. The thing I wish to insist on is that if some cities of Europe or even in this country had as fine a festival as they pull off every year at Pacolet, they would advertise it to the four corners of the earth and invite tourists from everywhere to come and see it.

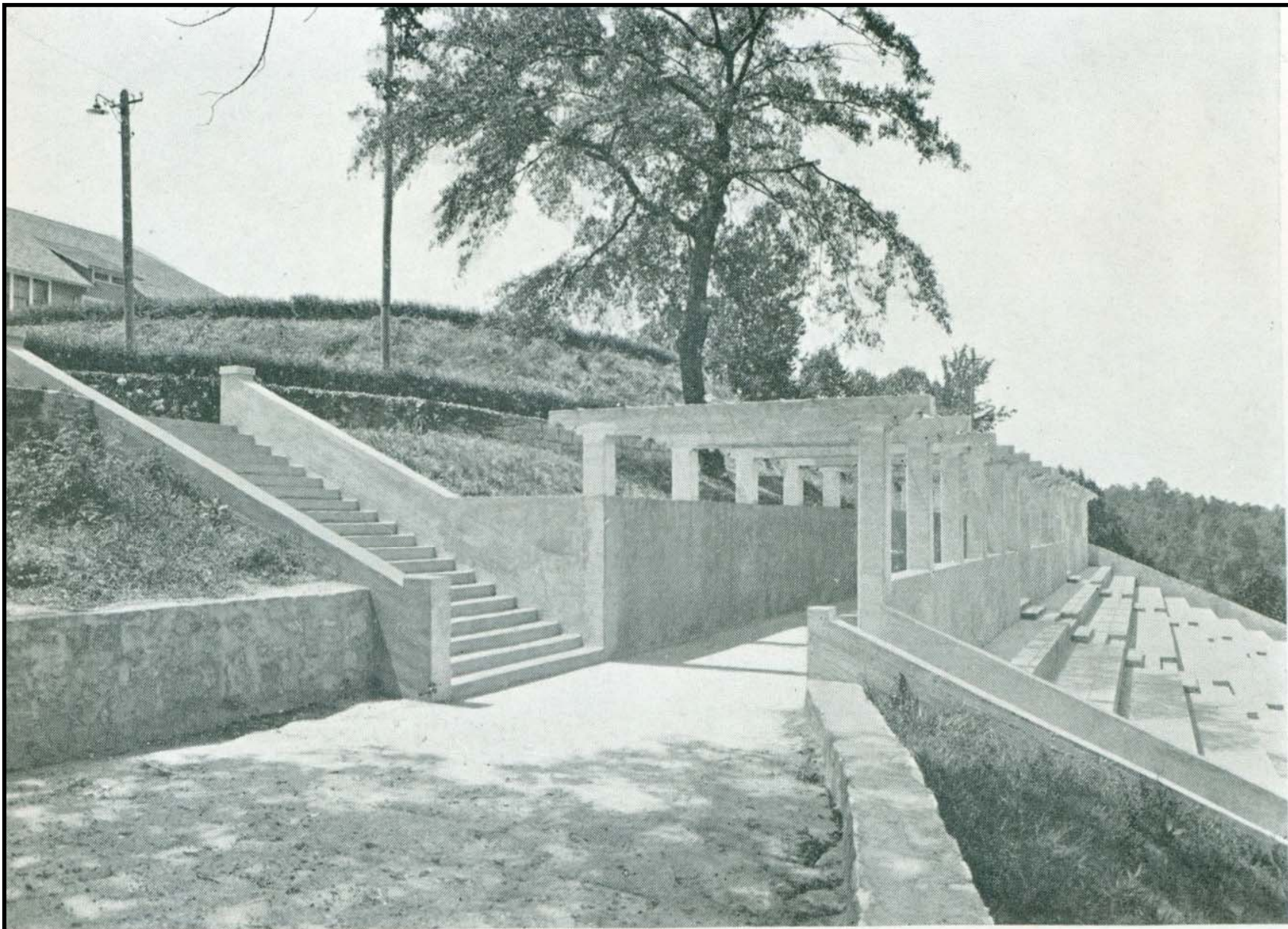
I am of the opinion that the Pacolet people are on the eve of developing something really big. There is no telling what the May pageant may grow to. Eventually, the people of the village will possess a strong artistic sense along the lines of the work so auspiciously begun and adults will have their part in the celebration. And, given the enthusiasm of the Pacolet people, the skillful guidance of the teachers, the enlightened support of such men as President V. M. Montgomery of the Pacolet corporation, big things are assured for the future. May festival at Pacolet is worth any man's trip to the village that beckons, festooned in green, in the lovely hills of our beautiful Piedmont.

And, sitting there, thinking, brought back to me memories of another great festival which has grown out of the devotion of a people, though a religious devotion. I mean the Passion Play at Oberammergau. There, too, the setting is in the hills. However, the play is given more or less outside and more or less inside. That is to say that the players are on an open air stage, whilst the audience is sheltered under a huge, rather ugly roof. But, the play redeems whatever artistic imperfection and physical discomfort there may be.

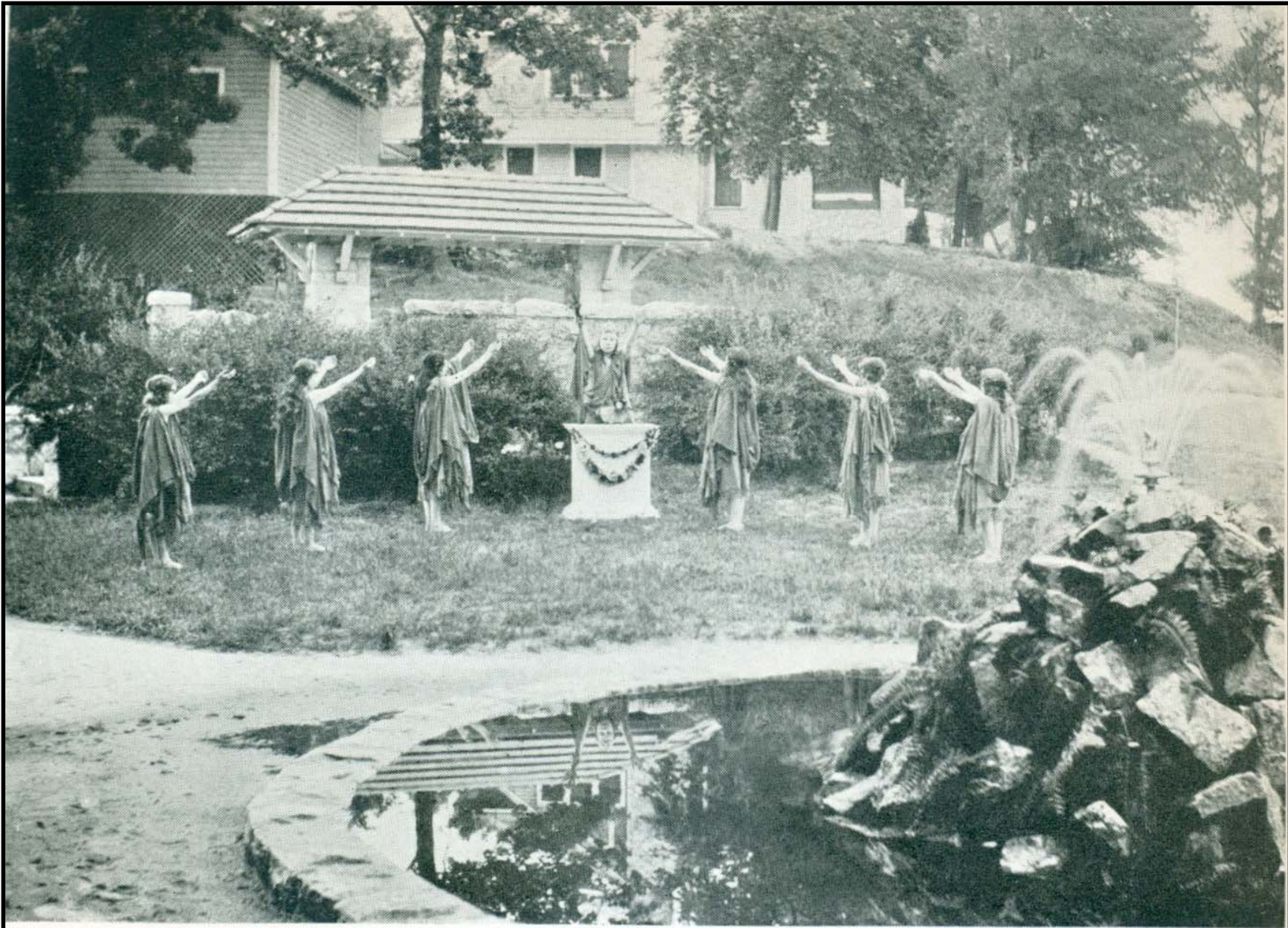
Sometimes the snow falls on the performers and the spectators are wrapped in blankets. Never mind everything goes on as if nothing had happened, and, the strange thing of it all, you forget that you are cold, hungry, or whatever you may be, just to follow the divine tragedy that is enacted before you.

Oberammergau had an humble beginning. Thousands flock every ten years to the pretty village to see the play, and they will continue to go until the end of time. There is a sincerity about those actors which can be found nowhere else.

Their religious enthusiasm carries over what sometimes might appear crude and even surprising. Which makes me think also of the last edition of the Literary Digest in which there appeared photographs of the new film which will depict the King of Kings. I glanced at the picture of the man who represents Christ and received a decided shock. Somehow the Saviour, which all of us imagine, is the conventional Christ of the great masters, the great conventional Christ whose picture we find in the catacombs and in the early churches. It will be hard for us to get away from the impression almost indelibly made on our minds and to accept the screen version of the story of Christ..As the French say: "qui vivra, verra." Which means, "to see is to believe."



THE LARGE CONCRETE STADIUM WILL SEAT THE ENTIRE VILLAGE. PRACTICALLY
6,000 PEOPLE SAW THE 1927 MAY FESTIVAL FROM THIS STADIUM
AND THE SURROUNDING TERRACES



IN A MAY PAGEANT, "CERES AND PERSEPHONE," CERES INVOKES THE HELP OF THE GODS TO RESCUE PERSEPHONE

This photo to advertise the festival was taken at the [Mill Superintendent's House](#) on [Hotel Hill](#), not at the stadium.



CHILDREN OF MANY LANDS IN THE MAY FESTIVAL. FIVE HUNDRED CHILDREN AT EACH OF PACOLET MANUFACTURING COMPANY'S SCHOOLS PARTICIPATE IN THE ANNUAL MAY FETES



THE "QUEEN OF HEARTS" AND "OLE KING COLE" DANCE A MINUET AT THE "MOTHER GOOSE" PAGEANT



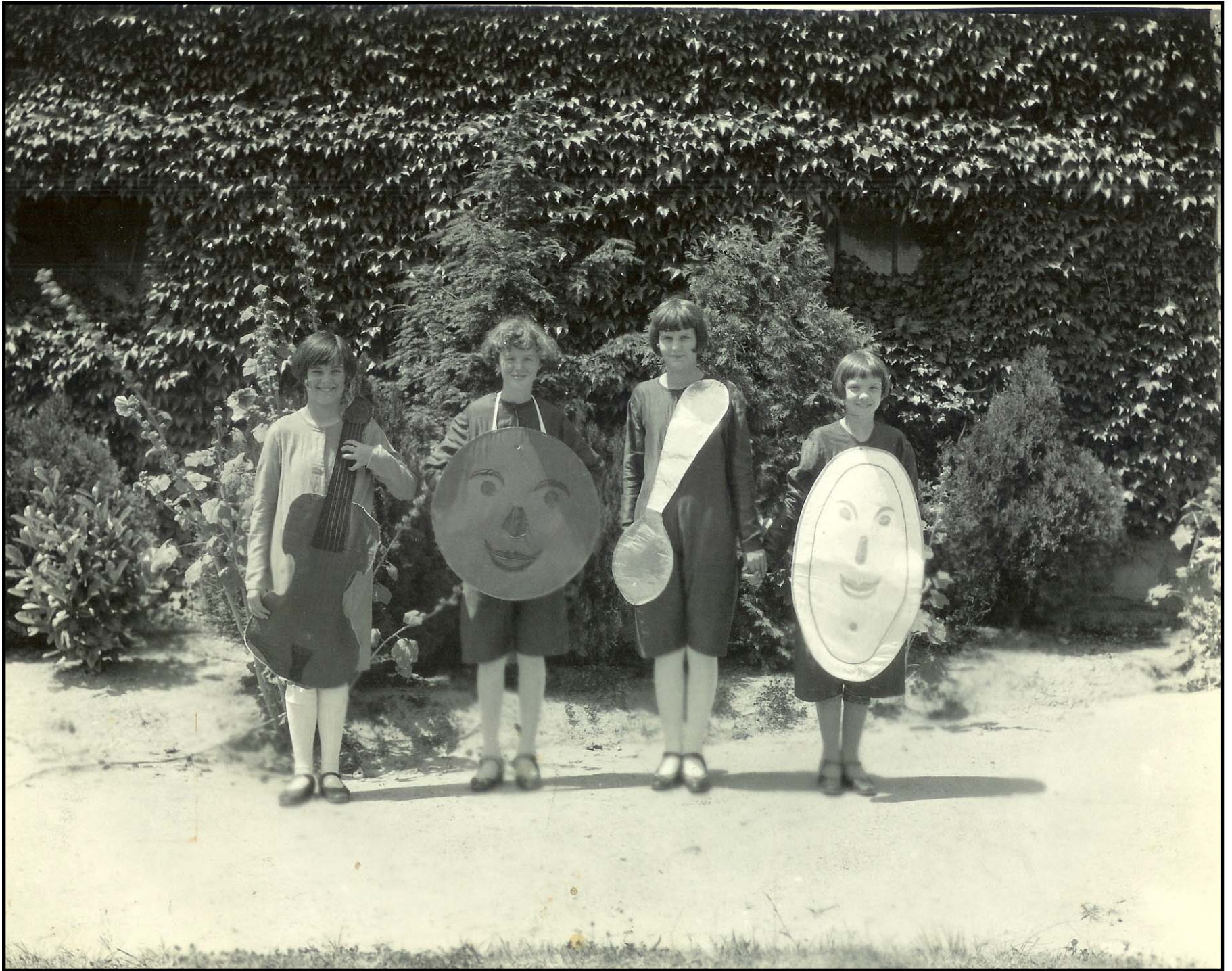
MOTHER GOOSE AND SOME OF HER CHILDREN AT THE MAY FETE, 1927

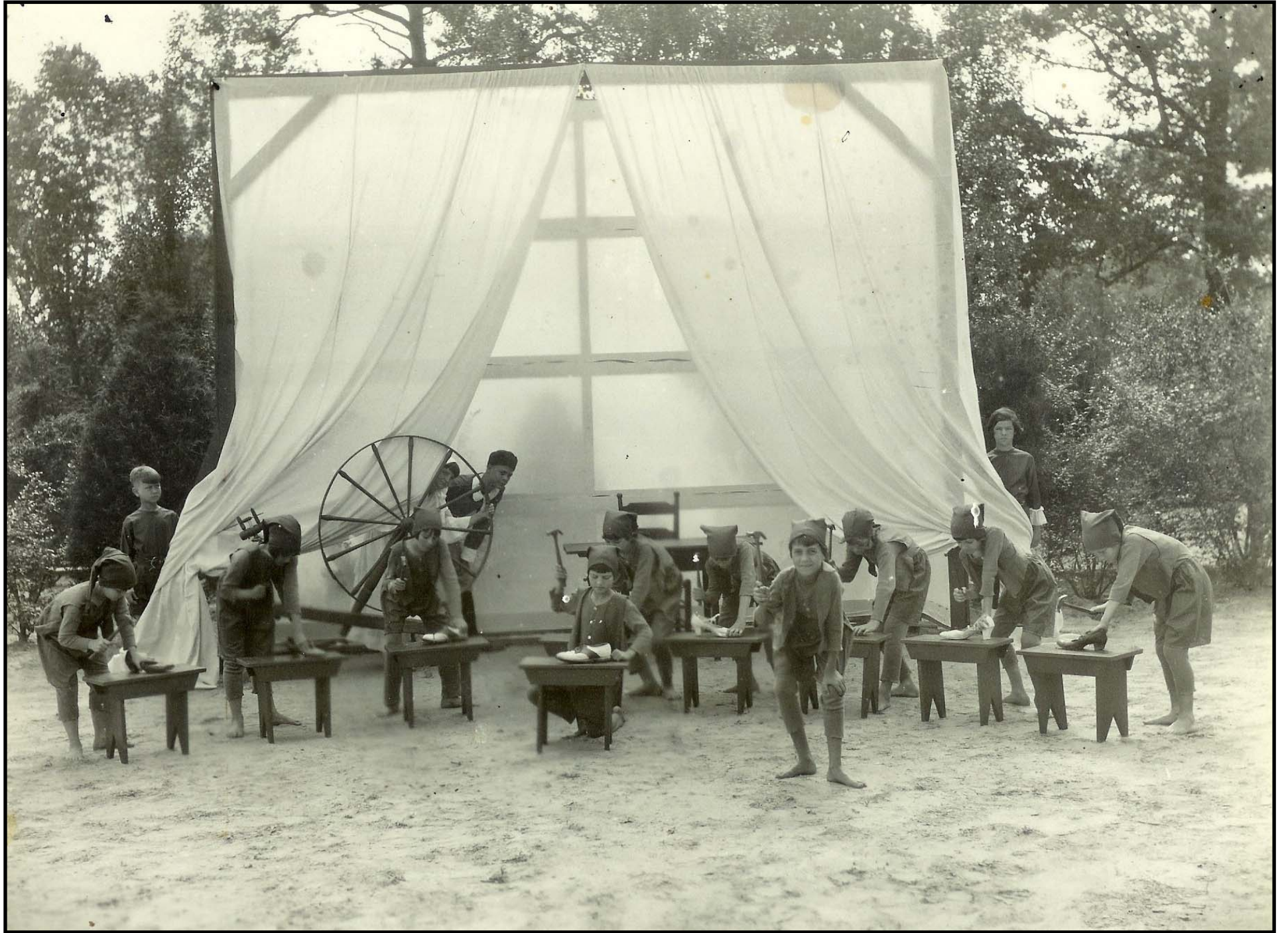


HARLEQUIN AND COLUMBINE DELIGHT AN APPRECIATIVE AUDIENCE WITH AN INTERPRETATIVE DANCE













This photo is used courtesy of Jerry Hodge. His mother, Mary Ragan Hodge is 3rd from the right. Forest Owensby is 4th from the right. Lewis Wilkins is 1st from the left. Taken at the [Mill Superintendent's House](#) on [Hotel Hill](#).