

2017 's Favorite Backcountry Cook Marye Roeser has been cooking for guests since 1953. Not only can she cook, she is an accomplished artist and author. She is the mother of the extended Roeser family, who are familiar faces of Mule Days.

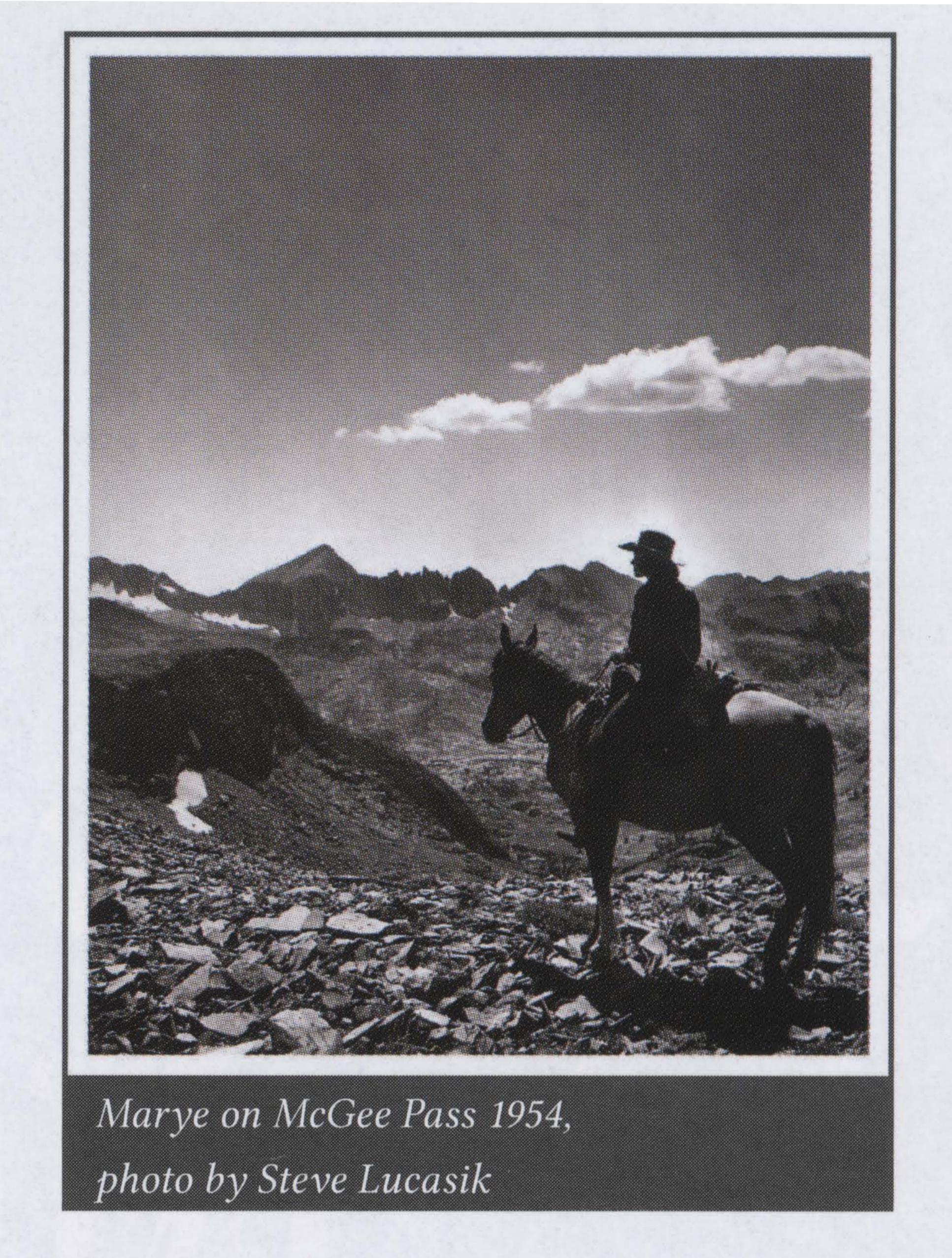
Marye and her husband Lou started working for McGee Creek Pack Station back in 1953 for the then owners Russ and Anne Johnson as cook and wrangler on pack trips. "I knew how to cook outdoors from backpacking, but it was Anne who really taught me the fine art of cooking for large groups. Anne liked using reflector ovens and pressure cookers in the backcountry which allowed for cooking a roast and baking a pie at the same time."

"We worked for Anne and Russ two years and eventually purchased Mammoth Lakes Pack Outfit. I then switched to Dutch ovens for backcountry cooking and later a folding sheepherders stove. I liked to make a good beef stew or beef burgundy in the crockpot and then pack it in a one gallon glass mayonnaise jar. The first night in camp you could heat that up really quick for dinner. Powdered soup, beef bouillon cube, crackers, soft cheese spread and instant rice were staples, as they were fast and easy to cook."

"The largest group I cooked for in the backcountry was 30 students from UC Riverside along with a crew of 5 or 6, back when we could have groups that large. It took two mules just to pack my kitchen! We also packed in art classes, maybe 25 artists and their easels. They would then go on a day ride with their easels, set them up and paint all day."

"We also did horse drives at the pack station where I cooked for 50-55 people and a crew of 30. Sometimes there would be 100 people to feed. The horse drives involved a lot of preplanning. We had steak every night but always had precooked chicken to warm up or freshly caught fish to cook. Everything was hauled in by truck, but we had no refrigeration so the food was packed in ice chests. We did have a BBQ and a 2-3 burner stove to cook on. We heated a lot of water, for dishes and for riders so they could clean up a bit from the dust."

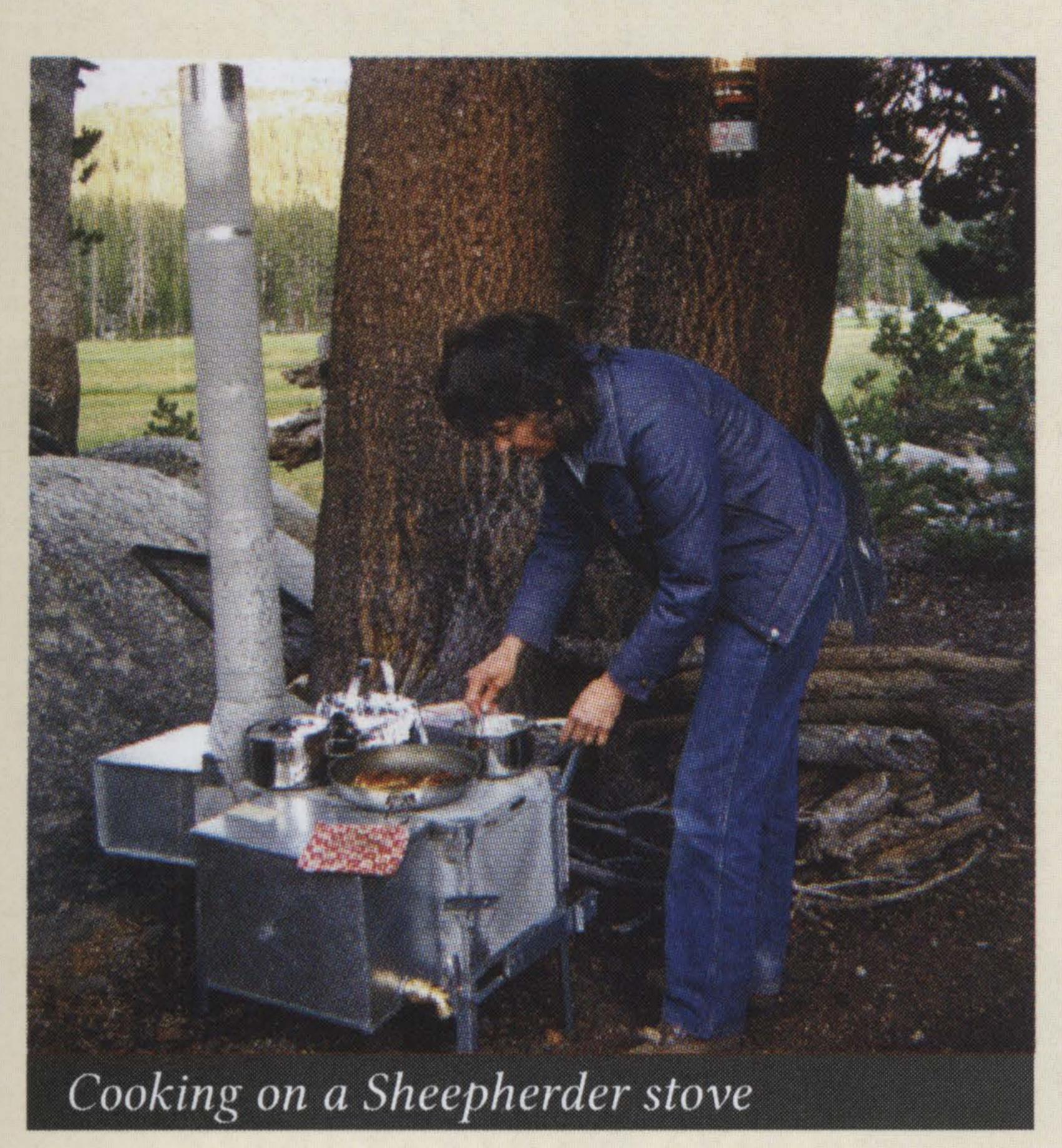
"I taught a lot of people how to cook in the backcountry including my daughters, Leslie and Kerry, who was Favorite Backcountry Cook in 2011. I made up a little booklet to take along on trips to refer to; I still have a few somewhere. The secret to being a good backcountry cook is to be well-



organized, have extra food and plenty of coffee!"

Marye's long anticipated history of commercial packing titled "Switchback Trails Across the Sierra" should be available for purchase in early summer. Stop by Mary's Western Art Boothe in the Robinson Building to add your name to the signed first edition list or just to visit.





## BACKCOUNTRY SOURDOUGH PANCAKES

I saved the 1 gallon glass jars that mayonnaise came in. One was kept in the refrigerator in the pantry of the pack station, filled with starter and ready to be used any time for pancakes or biscuits. Another jar was used on backcountry all-inclusive trips which was packed in a wooden pack box. We precooked a pot roast or stew for the first night's camp and packed it the gallon jar. Following that night, the jar was available for sourdough pancakes and biscuits. The sourdough starter was packed in a 1 quart glass mayonnaise jar for use at camp. Here is the procedure followed in camp. The night before combine in the 1 gallon jar:

- ► 1 cup starter
- ► 2 cups flour
- ▶ 1 ½ cups canned milk (combination of milk and water). Cover with a cloth and let rise overnight. The next morning, save a cup of batter to replace starter in the 1 quart jar before you make additions to the batter. After you make that most essential cowboy coffee, then add to the batter in the gallon jar:
- 2 eggs
- ▶ 2 Tbsp. sugar
- ▶ ½ tsp. salt
- ▶ 1 tsp. baking soda
- ▶ 2 Tbsp. salad oil

Blend together until smooth. Then go ahead preparing the rest of the breakfast. The mix will keep "perking" while you continue with breakfast preparations. When you are ready to fry pancakes, lightly grease the oblong pancake griddle and place over a hot fire, have a tin cup ready to dip into the batter, and a spatula for turning the hotcakes. This recipe feeds 4 to 6 persons so double it for a larger group. Remember that appetites are often ravenous in the mountains!