

Local traditions and customs spot lighted in the Park City  
Daily News from September 6, until October 31, 1996.

The customs and traditions I found manifested themselves in advertisements , photographs , articles and hints about what to do on the weekend . They ranged from quilting exhibits to bourbon festivals but the idea that they were local in origin was never lost . These are items that we can relate to our own lives because it is what local people do . They involve festivals and celebrations with roots in the past while maintaining a vital link to the people of today . They offer people a chance to be involved in their community by participating in something people in this area have always done , this gives people a sense of belonging and home . This is one of the few areas in which the paper promotes a sense of community by focusing on local events . Most of the papers coverage centers around national events but by highlighting a few areas of local interest every week they can make people feel like they are truly covering the events that affect them .

These items are generally found in the paper's Pursuits section which is only published on Friday . This section usually contained one or two items pertaining to the local area along with the comics section and the classified . It was broken off from the main paper which contained news and sports so that you would know that this information directly affected your life . The purpose of the section is to tell you what is going on in this area so you could go out and participate if you wanted to . It tells you what other people in the community are doing and what's important to them so that you can better understand your role in this society . It's a way of explaining community beliefs and traditions and showcasing those groups that are practicing those traditions .

The two months I covered were at the beginning of Autumn so it was no surprise that

most of the items I found could be related to it in one way or another . There was only one article relating to another season and that was a small announcement for a flower show that signaled the end of Summer . The ad ran on Sept. 17 , and it specifically mentions the coming of fall . With the coming of fall only one county fair was mentioned (Sept. 8) but several harvest and autumn festivals were included . These Autumn references begin to appear the week of Sept . 20-26 , with the first appearances of both Halloween and fall colors . This first mention of Halloween was in an advertisement for a pumpkin patch and the first article about Halloween does not appear until October 29 . The late start the paper gets in talking about Halloween is made up for by the amount of coverage they give it once it arrives . From October 29-31 the paper contains three photographs and six articles about Halloween , ranging from its origin to how to keep you children safe .

Next to Halloween the fall colors are the most frequently mentioned topic . The fall colors are a reason to get out and take pride in your community , at least that is how the paper wants us to think . By always including the fall colors in the Get out and GO! section they want us to know that people from this area have always enjoyed the changing of the leaves and that we too should share in this tradition . This is all implied because they never tell you what you are supposed to do they just give you information about what areas are the best . There was never a disclaimer telling readers to go outside and look at the leaves changing colors , it is assumed that you would want to do this on your own . Judging from the amount of coverage this gets in the paper if you do not enjoy seeing the leaves change then there are only a few other options to choose from this time of year .

The many harvest festivals that make it into advertisements and articles are one other

choice that relate to local customs and traditions . These first appear toward the end of September and by the middle of October they are gone . These festivals highlight area crops such as tobacco , apples and pumpkins . The festivals that deal with pumpkins are obviously centered around Halloween and they continue throughout the entire month of October , but the tobacco festival and the apple festival are one time only events . The Tobacco festival included a large photograph and a feature article while the pumpkin and apple festivals were simply advertisements someone had purchased in order to make a profit . The paper placed more emphasis on tobacco because it is more important economically to the region than either pumpkins or apples . Tobacco farming is a tradition in this area and more people have a direct connection to it than any other crop .

The paper has a preconceived notion of what counts as customary and traditional in this area and ethnic diversity rarely enters that picture . The only ethnic group mentioned were American Indians and they were only mentioned once . They were mentioned on Sept. 6 which is important because there are no holidays or community events to write about at that time . They seemed to be mentioned because the county fair season was over and it was still to soon to talk about Autumn. This is the only ethnic group singled out so we are to assume that the rest of the population shares the same heritage and upbringing and therefore the same traditions . There are no mentions of African-American customs or Latin-American people so either they do not exist or they share the same customs this area has always known .

The Daily News has an extremely narrow view of this area and it's reflected in the local customs they choose to cover . They stick to mainstream customs and ideas and showcase only those things they believe most people will agree with . The one controversial topic they covered

was the tobacco festival, and here that is only controversial when people speak out against it .  
They tend to focus on things they believe we all have in common like holidays and fall colors .  
This tendency to focus on holidays can be plainly seen with their first mention of Christmas on  
October 31 .

On the surface the Daily News seems to be concentrating on local area customs but once  
you dig deeper you see that this coverage has more to do with national traditions than local ones .  
Just like their coverage of news , their coverage of local customs takes it direction from what's  
important at the national level . Their local customs could be set anywhere in the mid-south or  
south and people could never tell . With few exceptions they have homogenized are local heritage  
and traditions and made them fit in anywhere in the United States , there is very little in their  
coverage that is truly a local custom .