

Ballad of the Brown Mountain Lights



Lulu Belle and Scotty Wiseman

“The Sweethearts of Country Music”

This beloved husband-and-wife team enjoyed enormous national popularity due to regular appearances on “National Barn Dance,” a Chicago-based radio broadcast during the 1930s-40s with 20 million listeners, which rivaled the Grand Ole Opry. Perhaps best known for their self-penned classic, “Have I Told You Lately That I Love You?” the Wisemans starred in several movies and hosted their own daily television program for eight years. They retired from show business in 1958 and returned home to North Carolina.

Scotty Wiseman’s “Legend of the Brown Mountain Lights” and Uncle Fate Wiseman.

Lafayette “Uncle Fate” Wiseman had been a cattle drover and wagon driver as a boy before the Civil War. He loved to view Brown Mountain from the edge of Linville Gorge that now bears his name — “Wiseman’s View.” Uncle Fate was one of the first people to tell the outside world about the Brown Mountain Lights and passed down his tales to his great-nephew, musician Scotty Wiseman. One legend Uncle Fate passed on to great-nephew Scotty was of a low country planter who lost his way in the mountains while hunting. A faithful old slave came up to search for him with a lantern — without success. “Now the old slave is gone but his spirit wanders on and the old lantern still casts its light.”

Scotty Wiseman immortalized Uncle Fate’s legend in the song he wrote in 1961, entitled “**Brown Mountain Light.**” The song pays homage to the Wiseman family’s rich history with the mysterious Brown Mountain Lights.

FOR SALE: A CD with Scotty Wiseman’s ballad of the “Brown Mountain Light,” sung by Tommy Faile, is FOR SALE by the Avery County Historical Society and Museum. Look for the Society’s tent at the 2007 Brown Mountain Lights festival.

"Brown Mountain Light" Lyrics

Way out on the old Linville Mountain,
Where the bear and the catamount reign;
There's a strange ghostly light, can be seen every night,
Which no scientist nor hunter can explain.

Chorus: *High, high on the mountain, and down in the canyon below
It shines like the crown of an angel, and fades as the mists come and go.
'Way, 'way over yonder, Night after night until dawn,
A faithful old slave, come back from the grave,
Is searching, searching, for his master who's long, long gone.*

In the days of the old covered wagons,
When they camped on the flat for the night;
With the stars growing dim on the high gorge rim,
They would watch for the Brown Mountain light.

Chorus

Long years ago a southern planter
Came hunting in this wild land alone;
And here, so they say, the hunter lost his way,
And never returned to his home.

Chorus

His trusty old slave brought a lantern
And searched, but in vain, day and night;
Now the old slave is gone, but his spirit wanders on,
And the old lantern still casts its light.

Chorus

