

Mary Webb Rowe has enjoyed her life filled with travel overseas

**By Patsy Bradley
Guest Writer**

Mary Webb Rowe has made 21 overseas mission trips and probably would still do it if she could stay young. It started when she was on the North Carolina Board of the WMU (Women's Missionary Union) of the Baptist Church. She was asked if she would like to go to Panama to teach handcrafts at a camp for women there. She said she would. This was in 1979 or 1980. She went back four times. She stayed at a bungalow in the jungle owned by the Baptist Missionary Union there.

The facilities were modern with even a swimming pool. The camp was on the ocean but they didn't swim in the ocean because there was too much fishing going on there. They fished for scallops. Each time she stayed two weeks. The last time



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she went she went to cook for a large retirement party that was given for a missionary couple that was retiring.

She went to Poland and stayed for a month where she cooked for a crew of Baptist men from the United States who were there to build a dormitory.

She went to Botswana, Africa and cooked for a crew of men who built a church in 17 days. They dedicated it the day they flew out. On these trips she always had another lady with her. They went in pairs. Mary said she found this trip the most interesting because it was the most challenging. It was very rural. The people still lived in huts. She and her partner stayed in a missionary bungalow and the men stayed in tents.

They went in early spring when it was very beautiful. Some would get up at 5 a.m. to see the sunrise. At the end of this trip they visited Victoria Falls, because it was close. Mary said that the English girl who piloted the plane to view the falls had been trained in Mount Airy. Mary checked her to see if she knew certain people here and she did. The English girl explained that she had gone to New York for flight school and was sent to North Carolina because the air over New York was so crowded.

Mary said that every where she went and was asked where she was from and said Mount Airy, N.C., she was asked if she knew Andy Griffith.

In Russia she and her partner refurbished the apartment that was provided for them as it was very dull. The crew of men went to build a seminary.

The rest of Mary's trips were for bible schools in Germany, France, Switzerland and all over Europe. She and her partner always had to provide the equipment for the crafts they taught. Nowadays the scissors for the children could get not get through customs! Once when she was sick at the last minute and couldn't go she asked her daughter Martha Vaughn to take her suitcase to Charlotte to meet her partner to take for her. She had bought some knives for the kitchen because she always found the knives provided inadequate. Martha asked her mother not to do that

again, because she had a hard time getting them through customs!

Mary says he has had two very good lives, the first as a housewife. She raised her 3 children - David, Martha Rowe Vaughn and Henry - all of Mount Airy. Her second life has been as a traveller.

She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. A.G. Webb and was born and raised in Mount Airy. She is the next to the last of eight children. All are gone now except Mary and her younger sister Christine Beamer, also of Mount Airy.

Now she makes quilt tops. She designs

and sews the little pieces together for others to sew on the backs and do the quilting. She has made blankets for premature babies at Brenner Hospital in Winston Salem. The Christmas tree decorated with little teddy bears with movable parts that was displayed at the Historical Museum this past Christmas was hers. She made the teddy bears. There are other worthy activities too numerous to mention.

Those who follow Mary's activities know that she'll never be idle. She will always be doing something great with her hands for other people.