

## **Minnie Adkins**

*“I love doing my art. I would go on making it even if I couldn’t sell it. I started making art as toys when I was a child. I use to make pop guns, sling shots, bow and arrows and what have you.”*

Born in 1934 in Elliott County, Kentucky, Minnie Adkins learned to whittle as a child, making her own toys, and continued whittling and painting fanciful animals as a hobby. When she and her husband, Garland, moved to Ohio in search of work, she sold her carvings at outdoor markets for extra cash. When they returned to Elliott County in the 1980’s, Adrian Swain, a potter, began selling Minnie’s work at his craft gallery in Morehead, and it was noticed by folk art collectors. Minnie began thinking of her work in a different way, realizing that she was creating *art*, not just whittling, and that others would pay well for her creations. Her rise to fame in the folk art world was so swift that she soon had more orders than she could handle, so Garland began working with her. And they didn’t keep their good fortune to themselves! They hosted an annual event, *Day in the Country*, to bring other folk artists in their community into contact with the collectors who flocked to their gathering. *“I helped other people in my community get started as folk artists because that is what we are put here for.”* In 1997, Garland passed away. Minnie was grief-stricken, but she found solace in whittling. She collaborated with other artists like Tess Little to make pottery pieces and woven coverlets with her signature rooster design. She worked with songwriter, Mike Norris, illustrating a picture book with photos of her carvings (*Bright Blue Rooster*, Acclaim Press, 2013). Eventually she married Herman Peters, who created whimsical animals in painted metal similar to Minnie’s carved creatures. Herman passed away in 2008. Minnie continues to nurture the folk artist community of Elliott County.