

1-24-1952

REBELS FLEEING IVY BATTLEGROUND TERMED PURSUERS "THE BLUE BRUTES",  
by Henry P. Scalf (Reprint of an article in the Floyd County Times,  
January 24, 1952)

Capt. Andrew J. May did not know, that gray November day in 1861, that the advancing Federals under General William Nelson were such a large, well equipped army. So with raw recruits and only fragmentary information about the enemy, he elected to do battle with them.

Capt. May was in a position to determine where the fighting should take place. If the battle was to be on the Big Sandy, in Floyd County, he had two choices, and there were advantages and disadvantages to both. He could withdraw across the narrow wooden bridge spanning Ivy Creek and give battle somewhat further up that road. But if the Federal force was sufficiently large, he reasoned, they could be divided with some of their number facing his forces while the rest would be deployed up Ivy Creek, through Dropping Lick Creek, over a small bridge, and thus be able to attack his men from the rear. To prevent that he chose to do battle on the higher ground below the Ivy Creek bridge. When he had deployed his troops he sat calmly on his horse awaiting the battle, instructing his men not to fire till they heard his pistol crack.

Federal scouts advanced, briefly engaging May's advance troops in a desultory skirmish, and then withdrew.

Somewhat later, the awaiting rebels could hear the movement of a large number of men up the narrow road between the mountain and the Big Sandy. Down through the shady and tortuous road came the clank of the Federal cannon as it was pushed along towards the

Confederate position. There was a brief glimpse of blue through the trailside trees, a sudden pouring of Federals up the road. Capt. May's pistol barked and the Battle of Ivy Mountain was on.

As the fighting progressed, Anthony Hatcher, a rebel soldier, found himself above the road. He saw the Confederate front give way and begin to retreat across the bridge. The Federals advanced relentlessly, moving around the side of the mountain. Some of May's men, unable to get over the bridge, flung themselves down the narrow ravine, crossed the creek, and scaled the bank onto the road on the other side. Hatcher saw that he was cut off as the enemy had already reached the bridge. Several Federal soldiers moving around the mountain soon came upon him. One, on horseback, was in front of him so Hatcher discretely threw himself behind a log. The horseman continued to advance and Hatcher called sternly "Halt, Gol darn ye!" But the advancing horseman fired on him as he passed and was shortly followed by others of his company.

Hatcher, his thigh fractured by the bullet, finally dragged himself up, and crawling through the trees came upon a few of his comrades. One of them was so seriously wounded that he was tied to a horse. Hatcher, too, was provided a mount, and one of his fellows got on behind him to hold him in the saddle.

This band of fleeing rebel soldiers, no more than a dozen of them, started up Ivy Creek. They were accompanied by some low-ranking officer whose identity is not recalled, but as they proceeded he assumed command. The seriously wounded man, who was tied to his horse, had difficulty staying in his saddle. Several times he seemed to lose consciousness and the soldiers on either side supported him

as they walked alongside his horse.

Hatcher sat tenaciously upon his horse throughout the journey though the pain in his thigh was excruciating. But, unlike the others, he knew where he was for his ancestor, John Hatcher, had settled at the mouth of Mud (the present Harold) in 1800, and Ivy Creek was only a few miles from the family home. But none of his fellows asked him about the local geography and he, suffering acutely, allowed them to travel as they wished.

They moved up Ivy Creek to its forks, turned east and, following an uninhabited water course, came up into the Sugar Camp Gap. They dropped down the almost precipitous slope into the Stratton Fork of Mare Creek, and came to the home of Tandy R. Stratton.

Tandy R., the "baron of Little Floyd County", and many of his family, including his son Hezekiah and the latter's wife Em (nee Ross), were at home. Having heard the cannon at Ivy Mountain, they knew an engagement had taken place. Upon seeing bedraggled fugitives in gray coming up the road, however, they began to fear for their safety for Tandy R. was known for his Unionist sympathies. The Confederate officer asked Tandy's family to take care of Hatcher till he recovered.

We think that Hatcher himself had suggested that he be brought to Tandy's home. He may have known that, although Tandy was a known Union sympathizer, an old friendship would overcome any political differences. But Tandy's family was in a dilemma. While Tandy favored offering Hatcher sanctuary on the basis of pre-war friendship, his wife Mahalia demurred, fearing retaliation by the Unionists if they sheltered a Confederate soldier. While they were discussing

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the matter, the Confederate officer offered the somewhat illusive promise of pay by his government.

At this stage in the negotiations Em asked about the other wounded man and was told that he would be taken to headquarters in Virginia. She told the officer in charge that he would never make it there for "he's nearly dead now." If the officer thought she was being impertinent he could not argue with her for he was still seeking shelter for Hatcher. He tried to steer the discussion back to Hatcher's care, but Em continued to ask questions. She asked about the battle.

"Where did the battle occur?"

"At a place called Ivy."

"How many men on the other side?"

"There was no end to the Blue Brutes, and they had a cannon too."

"They had more than one cannon," Em affirmed.

The officer now truly lost his patience. "How in the hell do you know?"

"I heard more than one."

"You heard them? Where are we anyway?"

"Oh, about four miles from Ivy." Em answered quietly.

The officer began to withdraw from the yard, saying to his men "Get the hell out of here. We are only four miles from Ivy and the Blue Brutes could be here any minute."

Anthony Hatcher's problem was resolved for in their flight his comrades left him behind. He convalesced with Tandy R. and his family for several months. No doctor treated him; only the Stratton household gave him whatever medical and surgical knowledge they had

as he slowly recovered.

One Sunday Dr. S.M. Ferguson, who lived near the old Hatcher estate, and was later to serve as surgeon for the 29th Infantry, USA, came by to visit with the Strattons. While the doctor was sitting on the porch talking with Tandy, Mahalia came out of the house and asked him to look in on Anthony.

"No, let the old Rebel die," he was heard to say, for his family and the Hatchers were poles apart on the key issue of the day.

But the rebel, though he was denied proper medical care, did not die. His leg healed and he lived for many years.

What happened to the other fleeing Confederate soldiers? According to Stratton family tradition, they went out the head of Mare Creek, around the head of Caney Creek, to the Rock Spring. The latter is a natural stream of water coming up out of Rock Spring Mountain, a place of legend that intrigues area people. Here the Confederate band stopped and made camp as the other wounded man was near death. Sometime in the night he died. Not able to give him a conventional burial, they placed him in a hollow chestnut log. When morning came they were gone.

BIG SANDY LAND GRANTED MEN WHO FOUGHT WITH WASHINGTON by Henry P. Scalf (Reprint of an article published in the Floyd County Times on February 21, 1952)

On February 22nd the American people celebrate the 220th birthday of the father of our country. In 1754 occurred an event in Washington's life and in our country's history that profoundly affected the settlement and development of the American frontier and the Big Sandy Valley in particular. This was the campaign that ended in the capture of Washington and his men by the French at Fort Necessity.

Washington was only twenty two when Governor Robert Dinwiddie of Virginia offered him a lieutenant colonelcy and the command of colonial troops to help drive the French from the Ohio Valley. He was to serve directly under the more mature Col. Joshua Fry, an engineer and cartographer, who had earlier been a math teacher at the College of William and Mary.

Meanwhile, the Ohio Company had begun the construction of a fort at the forks of the Ohio River and Gov. Dinwiddie had ordered Captain William Trent to raise a company of 150 men to furnish the fort. Washington was to raise another company and, upon delivering supplies to Trent, was then to assume command over him.

Though plans ultimately called for a total force of 300 men, their recruitment was delayed because the ~~the~~ Virginians were loath to volunteer. As an incentive Governor Dinwiddie promised the officers and men some 200,000 acres of western lands.

This offer of bounty lands was not as radical as it sounds, even

if one considers the tenuous nature of the English colonials' rights to the land, for available farm land in Virginia was very hard to come by.

On April 2, 1754 Washington marched his 150 men out of Alexandria for the forks of the Ohio. They were joined on the way by another small detachment, and Col. Fry was expected up the Potomac with more men and the cannon. Washington's first task was the construction of a road through the wilderness for the movement of equipment and supplies.

When Washington reached Wills Creek he was met by Capt. Trent but not the horses he was also hoping to find. Trent had left his men at the forks of the Ohio to complete the construction of the fort. While waiting for the horses, Trent's men arrived to report that the fort, which was still under construction, had been captured by the French. The builders, however, were "allowed the honors of war" and sent home.

Washington, realizing the seriousness of his position in the wilderness with an inadequate force of raw and undisciplined recruits, decided to move forward to the mouth of Redstone Creek, 37 miles from the Ohio forks. Here, at an Ohio Company storehouse, he would construct defensive works and await reinforcements. He sent sixty men forward to build a road to Redstone while he wrote letters to the governors of Maryland and Pennsylvania appealing for help.

He left Wills Creek on April 29 and shortly came upon his forward force of sixty men. But by May 9 only twenty miles of road had been completed. Then more bad news came to him. The French were finishing

the fort Trent's men had started at the forks, while the English traders in that area were retreating to the settlements, and many of the Indians they had counted on as allies had, instead, gone over to the French.

Washington finally reached the forks of the Youghiogheny River, and on May 25 was encamped at a place called Great Meadows, just over the present Pennsylvania line. Christopher Gist came into his camp to inform him that the noted French scout LaForce was then prowling in the neighborhood.

Washington took forty men and several Indian warriors, under Chief Tenacharisson (Half King-?) to search for LaForce. In the battle with the French, their commander Jumonville, was killed, and LaForce and others of his company were captured. Washington protected the captives against Tenacharisson who wanted them all killed. In disgust the Indian leader complained that his white brothers were softhearted fools, and that, in all his war experience, he had never committed such an error.

The camp at Great Meadows was being fortified, and while a trench was being dug around a section of the palisade, Washington reflected on the seriousness of his situation. Lacking sufficient manpower and supplies, and with little to look forward to, he called his new encampment Fort Necessity.

Shortly thereafter, the full responsibility for this mission fell to Washington when he was informed that Col. Fry, having reached Wills Creek, had been fatally injured in a fall from his horse.

On June 11 another attempt was made by Washington to reach the mouth of Redstone Creek. But learning there that the French had



completely rebuilt the fort at the forks, calling it Fort Duquesne,<sup>-y-</sup> and were now advancing on Fort Necessity in force, he ordered an immediate return to that position.

Several days later Washington's men were joined by a company of South Carolinians under the command of Capt. James Mackay with a King's commission. But this haughty officer refused to allow himself or his men to assist in preparing for the defense of the fort for the French attack without additional payment that Washington could not afford for his own men. The South Carolinians were there only to fight and not for mundane chores. Even the example of Washington working side by side with his own recruits had no effect. It must have been galling for Washington to toil in the torrential rain while Mackay and his men sat about and sneered.

The French, under the command of Jumonville's brother-in-law, Coulon DeVilliers, advanced relentlessly, and by July 3 had reached the inner perimeter of Washington's defenses. By then Tenacharisson and his Indians had deserted, foretelling disaster as they melted into the forest. In the ensuing battle twelve of Washington's 305 men were killed and forty three were wounded. With certain defeat awaiting him, Washington surrendered to the French, but requested and received good terms for his capitulation.

The next year Braddock was defeated by the French and their Indian allies, but Washington helped the English regulars avoid destruction.

In later years the men who had fought with Washington, Fry, and Braddock sought the promised Ohio Valley lands. Washington himself may have helped to survey some of these. At the mouth of the Big Sandy were cornerstones marked "G.W.S."

On December 15, 1772 Virginia's new governor, Dunmore, on Washington's request, issued a grant for 28,627 acres of Ohio Valley land, mostly <sup>on the lower</sup> ~~at the mouth of the~~ Big Sandy, to seventy persons. One of them was John Savage. His grant called for land "beginning at a small elm marked G.W.S. standing on the bank of the River Ohio directly at the point between the said river and the mouth of the lower or Big Sandy Creek...."

Other grants were made to "One-handed Charley" Smith, who had lost an arm in Braddock's defeat, John Fry, son of Joshua, who received land where Louisa now stands, and families of Morris and Hogan and others. To take up these grants on the Ohio, Kanawha, and Big Sandy Rivers came the land hungry whose descendants still live in this part of the country. It is believed by some that Washington himself had surveyed Fry's land at the forks of the Big Sandy, later pointing out to the son of his former commander how desirable was this location.

March 13, 1952

PATRIARCH'S STORY IS PROOF THERE IS NOTHING IN A NAME (3/13/1952)

The two were named for the same man. Though they knew each other well in the old days, there was little similarity between them. Their lives followed different paths.

Elder Clabe Mosley and old Clabe Jones were each named for Clabe Jones, Sr of Hawkins County, Tennessee. The senior Clabe was an uncle of the feud leader and a brother of John Jones, early settler on the Arnold Fork of Right Beaver Creek. Elder Clabe Mosley led a life of devotion and service to God. "Bad" Clabe Jones went down the long trail of feuds and strife, dying in 1914. Elder Mosley lives on at the age of 95, loved and honored by his neighbors.

Clabe Mosley, the son of Nathaniel and Polly Moore Mosley, was born on February 3, 1857 in Floyd County, at the head of Frasure's Creek near the present McDowell. His grandparents, Henry and Rebecca Mosley, came from Hawkins County, Tennessee. His maternal grandparents, John and Rachel Bridgman Moore, were from North Carolina and settled at the present Price on Left Beaver Creek.

Clabe Mosley has preached in the Regular Baptist Church for 67 years. He is as physically vigorous and mentally alert as a man many years younger. His brothers also lived to be old. The Rev. Linze Mosley died just before his 89th birthday. Jackson, called "Coon", lived to be 92. Ed was 91 when he died. The Mosley Church on Troublesome Creek in Knott County was named for Linze.

Clabe Mosley married Polly Terry on March 21, 1881 and settled down to earn a living on Caney Creek near the Raven post office. He makes it a point to note that his wife was not of the Casebolt-Terry family and explains why this is important. Nearly a century

ago an orphan boy from the Casebolt family was adopted by a Terry and took the latter's name. Today, his descendants call themselves Terry, but oldtimers refer to them jokingly as Casebolt-Terry, for it has often been said that "if you are a Casebolt-Terry you are no kin to the Terrys."

Long before the Mosley children--six girls and four boys--were born, Clabe had joined the church. This was in 1883. His brother Linze, then moderator of the church, baptized him. Two years later he was ordained a minister at the old log churchhouse on Caney Creek near his home. Today he still preaches at the Regular Baptist church at Topmost (in Knott County) and in other area churches.

Clabe Mosley has always enjoyed good health. "I was never sick very much," he says. "Had lumbago at one time, for about five weeks. I went to the hospital at Ironton, Ohio, and was out of Kentucky for one or two hours. This was the only time I was ever out of the state. You see, I am a Kentuckian by birth and residence."

Mosley recalled another physical problem. He had George Thornsberry pull a tooth for him with the oldtime "tooth drawers". In discussing this painful process with his friends he was told of a sure remedy for toothache: never comb your hair or shave on Sunday. "I tried it. I have not combed my hair or shaved myself on Sunday for 60 years, and I have never had the toothache since."

He likes to talk about the past, of the old hunters and their game. He recalls how squirrels were so thick on Caney when he was young. In the morning while his mother was putting a fire in the stove, his father would grab his rifle and go out into the woods and return soon with several squirrels for the morning meal.

There was plenty of wild game including deer and wild hogs. Not many bear, though, for they were nearly all gone by then. "An old hunter told me of seeing a bear and a wild boar meeting in the woods. They came up to each other and the bear grabbed the boar in a big hug. In this way they fought, the bear hugging the boar, and the boar slashing the bear with his long tusks. In a little while they quit the fight and separated. Each went out a little ways, and both lay down and died."

Since he lived in the locale of the Jones-Hall-Wright feud, he told of his acquaintance with old Clabe Jones. "He was a kindhearted man. He would read some story (in the newspaper) that affected him, and he would cry. But just rile him, and he would shoot you that quick." And he snapped his finger. "I pranked with Clabe when I was young much more than I ought to," he finished with a smile.

He knew Capt. Bolin Bill Hall of the Upper Right Beaver section. And he also knew very well another oldtime mountain patriarch--Capt. Anderson Hayes, the Confederate.

Mosley is probably the last living eyewitness to the event that started Talt Hall on his criminal career that ended with the hangman's noose at Wise, Virginia. It was on election day at the mouth of Dry Creek. "Talt Hall was a coward. He married into the Triplett family, and they kicked and cuffed him around, finally making a bad man out of him."

Everybody in the Upper Right Beaver section (of Knott County) would come to the mouth of Dry Creek to vote. Mosley recalls seeing "Billy Triplett talking to Talt and knew he was trying to get him to vote a certain way. All at once Billy kicked Talt on the shin.

Talt wheeled, snapped his fingers, and left the election ground." Mosley's son-in-law, John B. Hall of Topmost, recalled what happened next. Talt ran to Rube Sloan and asked to see his gun, pretending to want to buy it. Getting possession of the weapon, he ran back to where Billy Triplett was still standing.

Mosley continues: "Talt ran up and stuck the gun out quickly and went bang bang. Twice. Billy fell, wounded, and Talt ran to the woods. You ought to have seen the men scatter and the women all screamed. There was an old rail fence all around the hillside and Talt went around that. People said Talt got up on the fence and crowed like a rooster. But I never saw or heard that. There was a constable who pursued Talt. In a little while he came back in a big hurry."

Just why the constable returned in such a hurry was not told. For some reason he had met and retreated from a man who had been transformed from a peaceable citizen into one of the most desperate and deadly men of the hills.

Others have told that, after this event, Talt shot Billy again, this time firing through a window. But he succeeded in only wounding him. However, it was Billy's brother Henry of whom Talt was really afraid. Talt killed him near the present Hall post office. According to tradition, when Talt killed his first man, he said "I have always been old coward Talt. From now on, it's going to be old Bad Talt Hall."

Only reluctantly does one include the old feudists in an account of Elder Clabe Mosley. His was a life of such devotion to Christianity that it is the antithesis of the bad events of his time. He grew up in a household where he never heard his grandfather use a profane

word. Only Linzy, of all his brothers, ever swore an oath, and he slipped only once. Clabe himself never drank a drop of whiskey in his life.

As he approaches his 100th birthday, Elder Mosley shaves himself, reads larger print without glasses, and walks without the use of a cane. His wife died on Jan. 6, 1946, and since then he has spent most of his time at the home of his son-in-law John B. Hall of Topmost. He has 52 grandchildren, 81 great grandchildren, and one great great grandchild.

He compares life today with the old days, saying "people enjoyed life better in the old days than they do now." And after talking with him for awhile, we who are so involved with the present, think he may be right.

FLOYD'S 'HOOSIER SCHOOLMASTER' FINDS LIFE'S WORK IN THESE HILLS  
(3/20/1952)

Jesse Elliott is generally credited with bringing music to Floyd County schools.

As an eighth grader in a Miami County, Indiana school he was so fascinated by a book on the Kentucky mountains that he decided that some day he would move to this part of the country. In 1929, after working his way through DePauw University in his home state, he had the opportunity to move to eastern Kentucky. He took a job teaching math and science at the Betsy Layne school.

Shortly thereafter, in response to the suggestion by "Uncle Joe" Slater, the English-born superintendent of the Pike-Floyd Coal Co., that this school have its own band, one was organized and Elliott accepted the extra-curricular assignment as its director. In 1933 he was employed by the Floyd Co. Board of Education as band director for the entire county school system.

Except for two years spent as a medical corpsman in World War II, Elliott's commitment to Floyd County has never been interrupted. To his job at Betsy Layne and later the county's other schools Elliott has brought a missionary's zeal. His has clearly been a "labor of love" and a dedication that has kept him from even considering job offers elsewhere. In 1946, after his return from service, he married a Floyd County girl Kelsa Gearheart of Betsy Layne.

Elliott's is more than a fulltime job. In addition to his regular five day a week academic schedule he has become involved with numerous community special events--music festivals and sports



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gatherings, as well as church work on Sundays.

Yet he has also had his disappointments and frustrations. Once a fire leveled the Betsy Layne school and his precious band instruments were reduced to molten metal. Not one to give up, he and his students melted what remained of his instruments and made of them souvenirs which were then sold to raise funds for their replacements.

On another occasion, while he was attending an educational conference in Louisville, his car was broken into. Several instruments and a suitcase of band music were stolen. The thieves were later caught and the instruments were returned. But their cases and the valuable collection of band music had been discarded and were never recovered.

Such experiences as these were met with Elliott's characteristic forbearance and determination to get on with his life and responsibilities.

In addition to teaching music to thousands of Floyd County youth he has attempted through his counseling and by his own example to instill in them some basic humanitarian values. And while he is proud of those students who have won music scholarships and other honors through his guidance and the several who have gone on to professional music careers, he is prouder still of those who have become good citizens.

AURA OF OTHER DAYS MANTLES LEWIS HOME (3/27/1952)

When you walk into Cord Lewis' home on Mare Creek the present slips away, and you are far back in time, a century or more. A great clock has long since ceased to tell the hours, although the pendulum continues to swing. Time here stands still, and cries no hours, no years.

You notice in the home and the farm around it the many tools and implements made by Cord or his father that show a way of life that no longer exists.

Cord was born in 1889, the son of James and Mary Jane Ross Lewis, Squire James and his father John were early Floyd County settlers. James lived to be 96 and could remember the Civil War. Joshua Ross, on Cord's mother's side, came to the Sandy long before the Civil War from Smyth County, Va. and is said to have traded a vast bottom in northern Pike Co. for a rifle gun.

In 1922 Cord married Lucy Conn and they took up housekeeping in his parents' home. Two girls were born to them--Nealy Jane in 1925 and Mary Belle in 1929. Lucy died in 1931, and Cord's mother passed on several months later.

While some men faced with tragedy find solace in despair, Cord found his in work. He worked to rear his children who still live with him and to care for his invalid father who remained that way till he died in 1944. And Cord did so without the help of others who could have come to his assistance. "Some had money," he recalls, "and they could have helped. I did not ask, and now I'm glad."

His people had been hardworking farmers with tools of their own making. Their time-honored use was passed down through the generations

to the present. With the help of his daughters Cord still produces most of his family's food. When you visit his home he'll take you down to his deep cellar and show you his daughters' neat rows of glass jars with the family's fruit and vegetable supply for the coming months. He'll show you the stone apple kiln where the farm surplus of apples are dried awaiting winter use. There is corn in the crib and hay in the barn handcut by a scythe.

In his workshop you can see the old turning lathe he and his father made, a curious tangle of wheels, treadles, belts, and cutting knives. He'll tell you it's simple to operate, but you may suspect that that comes from long familiarity and use. This lathe furnishes most of his income. With it he makes chairs, beds, and other furniture. Unfinished chairs that are well turned out are in another building. He'll add the chairs' bottoms in the spring when hickory bark will peel "after the sap comes up". Buyers will come and carry them away in ones or twos, or a merchant will contract for all of them.

Between the workshop and the house you'll see a flock of chickens, an apiary, cows, a bull, pigs, and a sweet potato "bed" where Cord imbeds the seed to grow plants for sale.

In the house Cord's daughters will show you the beds their father made, not from store-bought lumber but the raw hand-riven walnut of the nearby woods. They are of solid walnut with four posts and uprights like a Jenny Lind, perfectly turned and substantial like their maker. But none of these are for sale.

On request the girls will show you their quilting patterns: the Drunkard's Trail, Flower Garden, Wedding Ring, Bouquet, Nine

Patch, Broken Window, Star of Bethlehem, the Tree of Paradise, and the designs of the Basket. Cord will ask if you know where he can find some cotton seed as the girls want to quilt some more and they would like to raise their own batting.

Upstairs is his great grandmother's spinning wheel, a small affair with a treadle, for Mahala Lewis Stratton, the wife of Tandy R., was a cripple and could not use a conventional wheel. In the corner is what we today might call a "what not" shelf. Cord's mother or grandmother made it from spools, slowly collected over the years.

Cord will tell you how his grandmother Jane Ross died. She was going up Mare Creek late in the day. Near dark a young man, John Crum, came along and found her lying in the road, dead. But before she died she had pulled off her slat bonnet and carefully folded it under her head.

You will come away from your visit with Cord Lewis and his daughters with a very warm feeling. You will have met a happy, well adjusted family, and have learned not only that a man can live as our forefathers did but live well and be very content with the way things used to be.

4-3-1952

SAM INGLES, FLEEING OHIO, BECAME ANOTHER KENTON (4/3/1952)

Simon Kenton looked down on the inert body of William Leachman and, thinking he had killed him, changed his name to Butler and fled in the western woods. Years later he learned that Leachman was still alive.

Kenton's story is known throughout our state because he contributed much to its early history. But there were other men who, also thinking they had killed someone, fled the law only to learn later that it was not so. Here is the story of one such man as recalled by Floyd County oldtimers.

Sometime during the Civil War there came into the Big Sandy country a young man who said he was David Johnson and had come from Ohio. He was rather vague about his past but seemed so friendly and personable that he was accepted at face value by his new neighbors. On June 29, 1866, according to Floyd County marriage records, he married Elizabeth Hunt, a daughter of James and Mattie Hunt. The Rev. William Keath, a Methodist minister, performed the ceremony.

The young couple went to housekeeping near Banner. Their only child, a son, was born to them, but on reaching manhood came down with typhoid fever and died. The Johnsons are said to have never recovered from this shock. David remained a tenant farmer with no wish to acquire land of his own. He and Elizabeth continued to live quietly on the Left Fork of Ivy until, around 1900, they decided to move back to Ohio. His neighbors were sorry they would be moving for Uncle Dave, as he had come to be known, was well liked.

For a year after their move they were not heard from. Bill Hunt, Elizabeth's brother, went off to look for them. He didn't know where

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exactly they had moved to, only that it was somewhere in southeastern Ohio. Bill spent much time asking people throughout that region of they knew of a David Johnson. But no one did.

Finally, he met a farmer who told him that he knew the person he was looking for but his name wasn't David Johnson. It was Sam Ingles. And he pointed to his home just a short distance away.

Bill found his sister and brother-in-law and heard Sam Ingles' story. The first years of the Civil War had been a troublesome time in southern Ohio. Ingles, a descendant of early Virginia settlers of Irish origin, had thought he had killed a man. In desperation he fled the state and found refuge in relatively isolated eastern Kentucky. Here he lived for a third of a century before learning, like Simon Kenton, that his adversary had not died. It was with the coming of the railroad through the Sandy valley that he heard from travelers that he was not wanted by the Ohio authorities.

He then decided to return to his native state and leave David Johnson behind in Kentucky. In Ohio he again became Sam Ingles. The farmer who directed Bill Hunt to the Ingles' home was a friend who knew the story of Sam's Kentucky sojourn and his assumed name.

Sam Ingles, alias David Johnson, and his wife Elizabeth, are buried in Ohio.

4-17-1952

SERVICE OF HALF-CENTURY GIVEN BY LAYNES TO TRAM (4/17/1952)

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Tram post office and of the Layne family's involvement with it.

Tram was established on March 5, 1902 across the river from the mouth of Ivy Creek near the present (1952) home of J.K. Stratton. T.J. (Tom) Setser, a local businessman, saw the need for an office to serve his community and perhaps attract additional trade from the Ivy Creek logging operations. The latter, in fact, suggested the name for his new office. The long, winding wooden-tracked haulway upon which logs were moved by horse or mule-drawn trucks was called a tram.

The first postmaster of record was Frank M. Layne whose family has always been involved with that office. Shortly after its establishment, the post office was moved some two miles up the river.

Running that post office, however, was not a lucrative job. Since in those days a postmaster was paid for the amount of business his office did, there were months when he might not even earn as much as five dollars for his service. But if his pay was low the labor involved in running an office was not much either. It was not really heavy work.

The railroad arrived in Floyd County in 1903 but was not to reach the Tram vicinity for several years. Until then mail for this and other area offices was carried on horseback, at first from the railhead at Whitehouse (in lower Johnson County) and, after November 1904, from the new station at Dwale. These carriers would stop at each office allowing the postmaster to pick through the bag for his local mail. A few of these early carriers are recalled: Jack

Sweeney was the first to carry Tram's mail and Clyde Huffman was his successor.

In 1907 the railroad reached Tram. Clyde Layne, who then worked at the office, recalled the first passenger train that passed the Tram bottom. It was a memorable occasion for the train picked this spot for a derailment. Judge Robert E. Stanley, father of Mrs. Ella Stanley Layne, Clyde's wife, was a passenger. Clyde was impressed with the snapping of the large steel ropes as the cars were pulled back onto the tracks.

Now that the rail station was just across the river, the horseback carriers were no longer needed. Men like James H. Powell and William T. Honaker were hired, at \$7 a month, to pick up the mail, either from the post office or at the station, and carry it across the river for home delivery.

After Frank other Laynes ran the Tram post office. There was L.D. and his daughter Zeola and her sister Dolores who is now (1952) in her 11th year as postmaster.

Some years ago Judge Stanley, after a long career as a Floyd County public official, bought the old Pem Layne farm, acquiring what was then called Powell but is now Tram Bottom. He divided this land into lots, and the homes built here and the old rail stop became the present hamlet of Tram. In a few years Dolores Layne Hicks moved the office across the river near the rail station where it is now.

In years to come the Tram post office will probably continue to be run by a member of the Layne family, and that will be good for they have always been efficient servants of the postal system.



The Laynes were involved with at least three other area post offices. Betsy Layne, established in 1908, was named for Tandy Middleton Layne's wife, the former Elizabeth Johns. Laynesville, one of the earliest of the Floyd County offices, and the forerunner of Harold, was founded in 1828 by James S. Layne, the first of his family in the county. Then there was Justell, founded by Clyde Layne in 1922, and whose only postmaster has been his wife Ella. Its name was coined from the names of two local coal operators, M.C. Justice and King Elliott.

However, my main concern in this essay is the branch of the family headed by William James Mayo and his wife Elizabeth, because the annals of Floyd County are closely associated with them and their descendants. Following their marriage in 1790, the Mayos raised twelve children, including Dicy, born 1791, Jonathan, born 1793, Mial, born 1795, Wilson, born 1797, Jacob, born 1800, Susan Charlotte, born 1802, Elizabeth, born 1807, Lucy, born 1810, Judith, born 1813, Polly, born 1814, and William James, born 1819, who died in infancy.

An interesting tradition exists as to why William decided to bring his family to Floyd County. According to the story, he came here at the request of Alexander Lackey, who had emigrated to Floyd four years earlier and established a farm at the Forks of Beaver Creek. Lackey asked William to leave his deputy clerkship in Patrick County and come to the Big Sandy, where men with his writing skills were in short supply. Here the well-educated young man would have no trouble landing the job of county clerk.

Was William James Mayo the first clerk of Floyd County? Surviving Floyd County court records show that he was County Clerk as early as 1808. William's son Jonathan, in his 1875 Old Settlers Reunion Statement, claimed that William moved his family to Floyd County in January, 1804. If that was the case, who was clerk of the county from 1800, the year that the county was established, to 1804? Notwithstanding the long tradition that Floyd County's first clerk was William James Mayo, circumstantial evidence suggests that this honor probably belongs to William's brother, the previously-mentioned Harry Burke Mayo. We will never know for sure, however, because all records from the early period were destroyed when the courthouse burned in 1808.

William James Mayo built the house standing at the corner of First Avenue and Ford Street in present-day Prestonsburg, a house now occupied by Martin Lee May. When the first Floyd County Courthouse, which stood approximately where the First National Bank stands today, burned down in 1808, court affairs were transferred to the Mayo House. It is, perhaps, the oldest house in Prestonsburg.

(Editor's Note: In May, 1954, two years after this article was written, the Mayo House was torn down. The First National Bank was also razed during this period. The bank stood on the lot directly north of Billy Ray Collins's Playhouse Restaurant. For more information about the Mayo House, see Scalf's article, "Home That Served As Courthouse Is Razed," in the June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1954 Floyd County Times. Scalf says: "The old house now being dismantled and carted away, some of its logs being preserved by history-conscious descendants, was historic. . . . The Mayo home was honored by the presence during its early days of many men who built Floyd County. In more modern times the home was owned and occupied by the late Lee P. May and family. The old landmark is being razed to make way for a modern residence to be built by Russell W. Pelfry of Prestonsburg.")

In 1808, four years after his arrival, Mayo bought a farm on the river south of Prestonsburg and built a cabin on the lot now owned by Irvin Ford. A branch ran nearby, and between the small brook and the house was a garden. It was laid out like the formal

Virginia gardens William had known in his youth, with flowering plants and fragrant herbs growing along neat and orderly paths.

Mayo's estate was a large one, but it was by no means a seignorial demesne like Judge John Graham's farm at Emma. Besides various properties in Prestonsburg, Mayo owned all the land from the southern boundary of Prestonsburg to the Corn Fork of Brandy Keg Creek. His interests also extended to certain tracts of land on Johns Creek. Today, after a lapse of a century and a half, these ancestral acres are still owned by William's descendants.

One of William's prime concerns was the education of his children. Since there were no schools in Floyd County during the frontier period, he had to tutor them himself. There is extant today, in the archives of Lucille Mayo Herndon of Prestonsburg, one of William's descendants, an old, homemade, deerskin-bound arithmetic primer which he created when he was a sixteen-year-old boy. He used it as a text when he taught his children to add, subtract, multiply and divide. Since he was a man of considerable intellectual attainments, this would have been an easy task for him.

The first three decades of the Nineteenth Century saw the mighty, irresistible tide of American settlement move farther and farther westward, and the Mayos were part of this movement. Some of William James's brothers and sisters didn't stop in Eastern Kentucky. Stephen settled in Ohio. Harry spent a few years here and then moved to Missouri. Dicy Mayo, William's daughter, married a Floyd County man by the name of John Stratton and moved to what later became Edgar County, Illinois. The Strattons established a farm near the present-day town of Paris, Illinois, and they were soon joined by Jonathan Mayo, Dicy's brother.

A few years later, Jonathan and Dicy returned to their father's farm in Floyd County and drove a flock of sheep back to their new home in Illinois. This was the first introduction of that animal into the state. We may rest assured that these Illinois immigrants wrote their father glowing reports of the marvelous crops that could be raised in the flat, fertile Illinois grasslands.

In 1825 William James Mayo surrendered the clerk's office to his son Jacob. He had been its incumbent for a quarter of a century. His impulse was to follow his children to Illinois, and when he arrived in the unsettled region, he immediately became involved in its development. When Edgar County was formed, he served as one of its early clerks. To say that Mayo was a remarkable man would be an understatement. By the time he reached his retirement years, he had served as a county clerk for three counties in three different states

But let me leave William for a moment in order to follow the fortunes of Colonel Jonathan Mayo, William's son, who settled in Edgar County several years ahead of his father. It is to Jonathan's Old Settlers Reunion Statement, composed in 1875, that we are indebted for a brief biography:

"I was born in Patrick County, Virginia, March 25<sup>th</sup>, 1793, during the administration of General Washington, of whose death I have a distinct recollection. My father moved to Floyd County, Kentucky, in January 1804, then almost a wilderness and where he had been appointed clerk of the Quarterly Sessions and County Court. In 1808 he bought a farm two miles from the courthouse to which he moved with his family. In 1815 I was appointed clerk of the Circuit Court of Floyd County but in August, 1816, I, with three others, came to Fort Harrison-Prairie, Indiana, where my brother-in-law was living."

"In September he and I entered four quarter sections of the land on the North Arm, which is now in Edgar County, and to which he removed the following spring. The three persons who had accompanied me to Fort Harrison left to return home, one, John McGuire, dying at Licking Station, about 30 miles from home, and the other two, Hiram and James Stratton, reaching home sick, the former dying that fall. I started home after the others but was taken sick at Vincennes, although I was able to ride every day but one, and reaching home after a journey of 15 days. I did not recover from my sickness until the next May."

"On the 6<sup>th</sup> of November, 1817, I was married to Mary Morgan in Floyd County, and in a short time after, with our clothing in two pairs of saddle-bags and a wallet, my wife and I, each on a horse, started for Illinois, reaching the house of my brother-in-law on the North Arm about the first of December following. Having had a cabin built during my absence, we commenced housekeeping before Christmas, there then being but five other families in what is now Edgar County, viz: Remember Blackman, John Stratton, Anthony Sanders, William Whitley and Aloysius Brown. Soon after, I went to Vincennes, a distance of about 80 miles, to lay in some necessary articles for housekeeping, bringing home among other things knives, forks, plates and spoons in my saddle-bags, a teapot in my bosom, and a bed cover which was greatly admired by neighbors and friends. I made with my own hands a bedstead out of rails and chairs out of sugar trees and a table out of a puncheon; also a cupboard by nailing up clapboards in the corner of the house. We filled our beds with prairie hay and used the new cover brought from Vincennes over blankets brought from Kentucky on our saddles. Thus equipped, with a young wife who had never kept house a day in her life, and who, in fact, had never been under the necessity of doing any work before—I commenced life in Illinois. A few months after, I bought of Anthony Sanders a quarter section of land on which was a hewed log house 18 by 20, with a puncheon floor, which was then the best house in all the country."

Jonathan composed this statement in 1875. Following the reunion, he returned to his Edgar County home and lived out the remainder of his life, dying on April 24<sup>th</sup>, 1885. Incidentally, he lost his eyesight in 1873 and spent the last twelve years of his life in total darkness.

Jonathan's sister Dicy—her full name was Dicea Ann Mayo Stratton—lived out her life in Edgar County, too. Today one of the county's townships is named after her husband, John Stratton. To my knowledge, John and Dicy Stratton raised three children—Peter Mayo, Belle, and Charlotte. Charlotte enjoyed the distinction of being the first white child born in Edgar County.

Jacob, son of William James, married Rebecca Graham, daughter of John and Rebecca Witten Graham of Graham's Bottom, where the town of Emma is located today. Being allied to the most important man in Floyd County by marriage made Jacob an important figure, too. He served as clerk until 1839, and during the 1820s, before he assumed his clerk's duties, he served in the Kentucky Legislature. His old document box that used to sit on his legislative desk is still extant in Prestonsburg. It is a black, oblong, steel container in which early legislators placed their papers, pens, and documents. After the expiration of his term of office, his wife Rebecca placed it on the mantel of their Prestonsburg home. There it continued to serve as a repository for family papers and documents.

In 1828, February 10<sup>th</sup>, to be exact, Jacob Mayo bought from H. B. Mayo a large Bible in which he later recorded some Mayo family history. The book is in excellent condition, considering the fact that it was published by Kimbler and Sharpless of Philadelphia in 1826. Only one other Floyd County family Bible is older—the Stratton Bible now owned by Solomon Hunter, which was published in 1825. The Mayo Bible is in much better condition, the Stratton Bible having been inundated by the Flood of 1862. Both books, though, are excellent sources of genealogical data. Jacob Mayo died in 1854 and is buried in the old Mayo cemetery at Lancer, a mile south of Prestonsburg.

The children of Jacob and Rebecca were William James, born 1830, Susannah Charlotte, born 1823, Tabitha, born 1835, and Julian, born 1838. At an undetermined date, this second William James died by drowning after breaking through the ice on the Big Sandy near present-day Lancer. Susannah Mayo married Samuel Walker Porter. Four children issued from this marriage: Anna, who married J. D. Mayo, Sr., J. M., who married Cynthia May, Rebecca, who married Henry Borders, and T. Lee, who married Belle Ritchie. The children of Anna and John Dick Mayo are still living on their ancestral property at Lancer.

It is impossible in an article of this kind to properly cover all the history of the descendants of Jacob Mayo of Patrick County, Virginia. His descendants are scattered far and wide through the western states. Texas received several of them. Professor Bee Mayo, a native of Floyd, founded Eastern Texas State Teachers College at Commerce, Texas. Grateful Texans later presented Floyd County with a portrait of the professor and today it hangs in the Floyd County Circuit Courtroom. And in this final quick resume of some of the early Mayos, we must not fail to mention John C. C. Mayo, the Johnson County teacher whose vision, genius, and determination gave birth to the Eastern Kentucky coal industry.

STORY OF SCHOLARLY FAMILY RECOUNTED FROM OLD RECORDS by Henry P. Scalf (Reprinted from the Floyd County Times, May 1, 1952)

The Mayos were scholars and teachers. We learn this by examining the family's archives which include an old Bible with data on births, marriages, and deaths, and handwritten textbooks transmitting to Mayo offspring their family's lore and traditions. And we can follow the family's history in the annals of Floyd County and the records of the Mayo migrations to Illinois and, later, Texas.

William James Mayo (1769-1873) came to eastern Kentucky in 1803. Back in Patrick County, Virginia whence he came he had been a deputy clerk, whose signature appears on many deeds. One, dated June 27, 1799, conveyed land on Cunningham Creek from John Hancock to Jacob Mayo, William's father.

According to the Mayo Bible, Jacob was the son of James and Martha Williamson Mayo. James (1711-1776) came from Middlesex County, Va. and moved to that part of Goochland County that became a part of Patrick and later Albemarle County. Jacob and his wife Susannah Isbell Mayo had thirteen children. In addition to William James, there was Valentine Mayo who married Judith Hancock, and among their children were Lewis Mayo (an early Big Sandy teacher), Stephen (who moved to Ohio), and Harry Burke (who came to Floyd County, where he was its first court clerk, but later moved to Missouri).

Our concern, though, is with the family of William James. On April 11, 1790 he married Elizabeth Maddox Hancock, the seventeen year old daughter of John. They had these children: Dicy (born 1791), Jonathan (born 1793), Mial (1795), Wilson (1797), Jacob (1800), Susan

Charlotte (1802), Elizabeth (1807), Lucy (1810), Judith (1813), Polly (1814) and William James (1819 who died in infancy).

According to family tradition, William James brought his family to Floyd County in 1804 in response to the request of Alexander Lackey that he leave his Virginia deputy clerkship and assume the clerkship of the newly established Floyd County. (Evidence points to another Mayo, probably William James' brother Harry B., as the county's first clerk.)

William James built his family's home at the corner of First Avenue and Ford Street in Prestonsburg, now (1952) occupied by Martin Lee May. This may be the oldest house in town. When the court house (then almost on the site of the later First National Bank building) burned in April 1808 court affairs were transferred to the Mayo home. That same year Mayo bought a farm two miles south of town where he built a cabin and formally laid out a garden like the Virginia gardens with flowering plants and herbs growing beside the paths. To this farm he soon moved his family. Over time William James came to own a number of properties in Floyd County, both in town and between the upper end of town and the Corn Fork of Brandykeg, and on Johns Creek.

One of William's main concerns was the education of his children. Since in early Floyd County the only schooling was that offered in some private homes, he had to provide for his children by himself. In the possession of a descendant, Lucy Mayo Herndon of Prestonsburg, is a homemade deerskin-bound arithmetic book that William had prepared when he was only fifteen years old and this he used for the instruction of his own children.

Several of his children later moved to other states. Dicy and her husband John Stratton moved to what would become Edgar County, Illinois, near the present Paris. Her brother Jonathan soon followed. Several years later Dicy and Jonathan returned to Floyd County and drove a flock of sheep to their Illinois home. This was the first introduction of that animal into the new state. In 1825 William James himself moved to Illinois, leaving the Floyd' clerk's position to his son Jacob. When Edgar County was organized he became its first county clerk.

Now we follow the fortunes of William's son Jonathan. According to a statement he made at the Old Settlers Reunion in 1875, he was born in Patrick County, Virginia on March 25, 1793 and came with his family to Floyd County when his father was appointed county clerk. Here, in his own words, is the rest of his story:

"I was appointed clerk of the Circuit Court of Floyd County but in August, 1816 I, with three others, came to Fort Harrison-Prairie, Indiana (sic) where my brother-in-law was living.

"In September he and I entered four quarter sections of the land on the North Arm, which is now in Edgar County, and to which he removed the following spring. The three persons who had accompanied me to Fort Harrison left to return home, one, John McGuire, dying at Licking Station, about 30 miles from home, and the other two, Hiram and James Stratton reaching home sick, the former dying that fall. I started home after the others but was taken sick at Vincennes, although I was able to ride every day but one, and reaching home after a journey of 15 days (sic). I did not recover from my sickness until the next May.



"On the 6th of November 1817, I was married to Mary Morgan in Floyd County and in a short time after, with our clothing in two pairs of saddle-bags, and a wallet, my wife and I, each on a horse, started for Illinois, reaching the house of my brother-in-law on the North Arm about the first of December following. Having had a cabin built during my absence, we commenced housekeeping before Christmas, there then being but five other families in what is now edgar county (sic) viz: Remember Blackman, John Stratton, Anthony Sanders, William Whitley, and Aloysius Brown. Soon after, I went to Vincennes, a distance of about 80 miles, to lay in some necessary articles for housekeeping, bringing home among other things knives, forks, plates and spoons in my saddle-bags, a teapot in my bosom, and a bed cover which was greatly admired by neighbors and friends. I made, with my own hands, a bedstead out of rails and chairs out of sugar trees and a table out of a puncheon; also a cupboard by nailing up clapboards in the corner of the house. We filled our beds with prairie hay and used the new cover brought from Vincennes over blankets brought from Kentucky on our saddles. Thus equipped, with a young wife who had never kept house a day in her life, and who, in fact, had never been under the necessity of doing any work before--I commenced life in Illinois. A few months after, I bought of Anthony Sanders a quarter section of land on which was a hewed log house 18 by 20, with a puncheon floor, which was then the best house in all the country."

Jonathan, who had contributed so much to the development of Edgar County, died on April 24, 1885 after being blind for twelve years. His daughter Elizabeth was the mother of Dr. Frank Crane.

Dicy Ann Mayo Stratton and her husband John also lived and died in Edgar County. A township is named for their family. They may have had three children--Peter Mayo, Belle, and Charlotte. Charlotte was the first white child born in Edgar County.

William James' son Jacob married Rebecca Graham, daughter of John and Rebecca Witten Graham of Graham's Bottom in Floyd County. He was a member of the Kentucky legislature and, until 1839, was Floyd County's clerk. His document box, a black oblong steel container in which early legislators placed their papers and writing utensils, was later on the mantel of his Prestonsburg home where it continued to be used to store his papers.

On February 10, 1828 Jacob bought from H.B. Mayo a large Bible in which family history has been recorded. This Bible, printed in 1826 by Kimbler and Sharpless of Philadelphia, is in excellent condition and is the second oldest extant Bible in Floyd County. Older by only one year is the Stratton family Bible of Solomon Hunter. Both books are excellent sources of genealogical data. Jacob died in 1854 and is buried in the old Mayo Cemetery near Prestonsburg.

Children of Jacob and Rebecca were another William James (born in 1830 who drowned in the Big Sandy near Lancer), Susannah Charlotte (born in 1832 who married Samuel Walker Porter and had four children--Anna (who married J.D. Mayo, Sr. and whose children still live near Prestonsburg), J.M. (who married Cynthia May); Rebecca (who married Henry Borders), and T. Lee (who married Belle Ritchie.) Other children of Jacob and Rebecca were Tabitha (born in 1835) and Julian (born in 1838).

It would be impossible in a short article to completely report the history of the descendants of Jacob Mayo of Patrick County, Virginia. They are scattered over several states, including Texas where Prof. Bee Mayo founded East Texas State Teachers College at Commerce. Grateful Texans presented the Floyd County Circuit Court with a portrait of him. But any report on the early Mayos can not neglect to mention John C.C. Mayo of Johnson County who brought industry and the railroad to the Big Sandy.

UNDISMAYED BY LOSS OF LEGS, HE STILL HOPES by Henry P. Scalf (Reprint of an article published in the Floyd County Times on May 15, 1952)

A customer came into Doke Griffith's jewelry store in Prestonsburg and, looking around at the neat showcases and other evidence of a well-kept shop, remarked "Doke, you seem to be doing well." After a slight pause, Mr. Griffith replied "I hope to do well."

Yet, what he might have said was "I have done well." For while life may have not done much for him, he has done an awful lot for himself. Broken in body by a mining accident, without income but with a family looking to him for support, he was never broken in spirit. Many persons with less physical infirmity might have taken to the streets with a tin cup, but Doke, abjuring the idea of public assistance, looked only to himself. He says "My whole desire was to make a living and not impose upon the public. I have been offered money upon the street but I have always refused. I have got by and never begged.

His hard life began 57 years ago on a small place on the Rock Fork of Right Beaver Creek in Knott County. At sixteen he was working around the mines in McDowell County, W.Va. Two years later he was in the mines, loading coal. Soon he had his first accident. An injury to his left ring finger resulted in amputation. But gangrene set in and his arm became seriously infected. The doctors recommended another amputation but this time he refused. Back home his mother prepared a poultice of herbs and corn meal, and with a few applications the gangrenous condition disappeared. Three days later he was squirrel hunting, using the very arm his doctors had wanted to remove.

By 1918, and now married to Minda Combs of Knott County, he was working in the Black Diamond Coal Company mines at Lackey. His oldest child, Virgil, was then but a toddler.

He had no premonition of tragedy that day of April 6, 1918 when he entered the mine. He had a helper (or as the miners would say a "back hand"), Jess Travis, who had worked with him for several months. Near them in the room they were to work were two other miners.

The roof of that room though sandstone was slaked and breaking. Doke and Travis fired a shot, resulting, in part, in a "standard" or pillar of undislodged coal. After handpicking it out, Doke turned in a cramped position to pick up his shovel. He was bent and had his legs crossed when the roof fell.

Travis fled down the heading track, but in his haste to get from under the falling roof, he stumbled over a tie and fell on his face. The other two miners heard the noise and saw Doke's light go out. They came hurriedly and, with the returning Travis assisting, pried the rock away. But Doke's back was broken and he was paralyzed from his hips down.

Doke refused to go to the hospital. He had little hope of recovery, and if he had to die he would rather it would be at home. His doctor, T.J. Chandler, now (1952) of Betsy Layne, finally convinced him to go to a Louisville hospital where he stayed for several months. After the specialists there had done all they could they sent him home telling Dr. Chandler that he would probably live for only three more years. Fourteen years later Dr. Chandler told this to Doke and they had a good laugh over it.

Now that he was home again Doke had to face the future. He settled with the compensation board for a fifty per cent disability and was paid \$3000. But since he now had to support a family (a second child, Birdie, was born only a month after the accident) that money wouldn't go far and he would need another way to make a living. He decided to go into watch repairing for he could sit in chair to work.

Good fortune came with Jack Williams, the company's bookkeeper. He and Doke ordered \$45 worth of jeweler's tools and when the package came C.O.D. Williams paid for it as a gift. This was the only pecuniary assistance Doke ever accepted. He still refers to Williams and this assistance: "He helped me get started and for that I am thankful. I went into business at Lackey. In a little while I moved my shop to Estill and stayed there about a year, From there I went to Stone Coal Creek at Garrett."

The Stone Coal watch repair shop was a small place next to the railroad tracks. Folks could see Doke in his shop seated at a little desk as they walked by. Over the next few years Doke learned the watch repair business and gained the confidence that comes from trial and effort. He often received watches by mail and would walk to the Garrett post office <sup>with his natches</sup> to return the repaired watches to these customers. Sometimes in the deep snows of winter his feet would freeze. But since his legs were paralyzed he would feel no pain. Years later these winter walks would occasion another tragedy.

In 1927 Doke came to Prestonburg. The first year was hard but as he says: "I got by and didn't beg." By then another daughter had been born. He taught his son Virgil the jewelry business and, after the Second World War, instructed several returning servicemen

seeking civilian employment how to repair watches.

Tragedy struck again in late 1949. Doke's paralyzed legs became gangrenous. The doctors attributed it to his winter walks in Garrett. In December it was necessary to remove one of his legs, and the following March the other came off.

But tragedy could not dampen Doke's indomitable spirit. Or dull his facile mind. In 1936 he began working, in his spare time, on an invention--an annunciator that looks like a clock but, when plugged into an electric circuit, tells the time by announcing the hours in a human voice. He completed it in 1948 and had it patented in May 1951. Through an agent he is now negotiating its sale to a manufacturer. Though the U.S. Patent Office refers to it as a "control system for annunciators" most people call it simply a "talking clock."

Doke Griffith can smile--not the sophisticated smile of a businessman, or a watch repairer, but of a man who has conquered adversity. Though he suffered a broken back, lost both of his legs, and now moves only in a wheelchair, he feels his life is better than it was in April 1918 when he was not expected to live but a few years. His life has been a demonstration of the unconquerable human spirit.

6-12-1952

FLOYD COMMUNITY POINTS WAY TO INTER-RACIAL UNDERSTANDING by Henry P. Scalf (Reprinted from the Floyd County Times, June 12, 1952)

Persons concerned with tolerance and equal rights and the need for laws to force man to accept the principle of universal brotherhood would do well to visit a Floyd County community and learn how men of goodwill live and work and develop mutual understanding and respect.

The old Laynes, Honakers, Rices, and Akers laid the foundation for the good relations between the colored folks of Camp Branch and their white neighbors. And over the years succeeding generations of both groups perpetuated the feelings of goodwill and mutual acceptance.

It all began with Will Honaker (1858-1935), of Powell Branch where he lived with his mother Mary and two sisters Kate and Fronia. They had been slaves to the local Honaker family. Union soldiers once came to Floyd County and tried to get the colored Honakers to leave for Ohio where they were told they would be free. So, under the protection of a small group of soldiers, the Honakers left their Powell Branch cabin and started for freedom. Sometime that day, Nancy Honaker, their white mistress, overtook them on the road and asked them to return, and they did.

Will grew to manhood and married Nancy Justice, daughter of Nathan and Florence Hogue Justice of Wise County, Virginia. Nancy was born in Wise in 1865. When she was fourteen she came with her father, Nathan, to Johns Creek and died in 1948. Nathan, born a slave, lived to be quite old and was highly respected by both races.



Will acquired the entire Camp Branch valley, some 200 acres of it, from its Layne family owners for a very nominal sum and here he and Nancy set up housekeeping. They were the first colored people to live in what's now the colored settlement of Camp Branch.

Will was an honest, sober, and hardworking man. But life was not easy for him. A stroke left him half paralyzed on one side. But he continued to work, earning his living and the respect of his white friends in spite of his handicap. Then a greater tragedy occurred. While working at Kennis Hall's sawmill, near the present Banner, he caught his clothing in the machinery and dislocated his hip. For eighteen years he was bedridden. But, aided and encouraged by his white neighbors, he eventually returned to work. though he remained a cripple for the rest of his life. For years his stooped figure could be seen along the road or in the field as he partly dragged his crippled leg. As evidence of the respect he had earned from his white neighbors, Will's mother was buried in the Layne family cemetery.

The colored folk of Camp Branch bear the names of their ancestors' masters--respected names like Justice, Amyx, Gardner, Honaker, and Lackey. Phyllis Mayo, a slave of the family of Wilson Mayo, lived to be ninety three.

Descendants of the Mayo slaves tell stories of the first court held in Prestonsburg 150 years ago, before the building of the court house. They recall how their Mayo masters built a platform of logs on which court sessions were held.

Near the old Will Honaker home is the modern residence of Otto Gardner, a descendant of slaves on Gardners Fork of Licking in

Magoffin County. In his yard is a well kept lawn, with flowers, shrubbery, and a stone wash basin in the form of a decapitated woman. This was carved by one of the Mayos and bears a remarkable resemblance to the sculptured totems of the African jungle. It is clearly one of the most striking pieces of sculpture one will ever see.

Otto Gardner is the embodiment of an ideal racial relationship he credits to the good sense of his neighbors of both races.

He was elected president of the local UMWA No. 8491 by its mostly white membership and served for two years, resigning only for ill health but remaining as Vice President. "There never was a misunderstanding because I was colored," he tells us. "My white brothers came to me for advice and I went to them."

He tells about the church of which he is an elder and its Sunday School of which he is superintendent. The church was cooperatively built by whites and colored. White carpenters did the initial construction and contributed to the church fund. When it was completed in 1945 it was free of debt. Since then the white people of nearby Tram have built their own church and the colored folk of Camp Branch have shared their offerings to help construct the parsonage.

The Camp Branch church doesn't yet have a colored pastor but is presided over by two white ministers, the Revs. James Glasby and Sebrum Cochran of Pike County. Other white ministers occasionally fill the pulpit. The Sunday School, under Gardner's direction, is wholly a colored institution. Constance Lackey, widow of James Lackey, Martha Habern, widow of John Habern, and Stella Lackey Isom are the teachers. Mrs. Lackey, whose husband died in 1949, was once a public school teacher. Mrs. Habern's husband John was for years the school's

trustee, an office she fills now.

The local schoolhouse is a gift of the Julius Rosenwald Foundation. In the early 1920s Prof. O.H. Beard came to instruct the colored children of the valley, but finding an old dilapidated school building he convinced the Floyd Schools Superintendent Harry N. Cooley, to secure a Rosenwald grant for a new structure. Completed in 1923 with two classrooms, a domestic science room, and cloakrooms. it now sits perched on the saddle of the rolling promontory between Camp Branch and the river, plainly visible from the highway. A Rosenwald official once described its site as the most beautiful of any building they had ever constructed.

Mr. Cooley vividly recalls the celebration that followed the completion of the building. The colored people who had contributed generously in labor put on one of the biggest "feeds" in the community's history for the visitors, including some from the State Education Department in Frankfort.

While it is Gardner, the spiritual leader of this community, who understands and relates to the almost ideal racial situation, it is Peter Justice who can give us the Valley's history. This goes back long before the colored people came. The branch was named for some of the largest camp meetings ever held in the Big Sandy. Decades ago, worshippers, horseswappers, and hangers-on gathered here every fall to listen to the preaching. The site was under several large beech trees and near a spring that furnished water for the crowds, and that determined its location. The meetings sometimes lasted six weeks and were a wild scene of religious fervor. Amid the preaching and the singing converts were seized with the "jerks", as oldtimers

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call it, a form of bodily rigidity induced by emotional excitement.

After the meetings were discontinued, the colored people bought the valley but retained its name. The old beeches died. A gas well was drilled near the spring whose waters sank into subterranean depths, never to reappear.

Peter Justice and Uncle Jim Honaker are representative of the propertied middle class of that neighborhood. Peter owns six houses, a large herd of cattle, and a large area of timberland. According to his neighbors, Honaker accumulated a competence and needs no help from social security.

Camp Branch residents today have come from other states in the south--Georgia, Alabama, Virginia, Mississippi. They say it's the best place they've ever found to live. Leo Adkins from Georgia rambled over the country for years before he settled here. He likes it here because the races get along so well. "Here are the best people I have ever met--the colored of Camp Branch and the whites of Tram."

"WEANING HOUSE" NEAR HERE IS STEEPED IN FAMILY HISTORY by Henry P. Scalf (Reprinted from the Floyd County Times, June 26, 1952)

In the quiet of the May's Branch Road, barely outside the lower limits of Prestonsburg, and sheltered by the shade of old and friendly trees, is "the Weaning House."

Now the home of Bascom May and his wife Annie Rhoda Mayo May, this large two-storied neatly weatherboarded residence was fashioned eighty one years ago of hand-hewn virgin poplar logs by Bascom's father Samuel May.

Samuel named it "the Weaning House" when it was still new. He used it then to set up his newly married sons in housekeeping. Whenever he did this, he'd joke that he was "weaning one of the boys" from ~~their~~ mother and dad.

The first resident of the Weaning House was David after his marriage to Martha Prater of Salyersville. By the time he was "weaned" from his parental home, some distance below May Branch, Thomas had married Jennie Booten and moved in. Sam, Jr., who married Annie Banner, was "weaned" in it. So was Harvey, after his marriage to Dora Ratliff. Each couple moved away to other homes after their "weaning."

But ~~after~~ Bascom, the youngest of Samuel May's ten children, married Annie Mayo in 1891 and moved into this house ~~and~~ never moved out.

Rich in family traditions and with all its memories the Weaning House is more than a place for mere daily living. Its story has become that of Bascom May, who turned eighty five this Monday, and

his family. And his story is but a chapter in his family's history. He'll talk about his brother Solomon P. who was killed at Mount Sterling during the Civil War and of the old brick home built by another Samuel May, father of the Confederate leader, Col. Andrew Jackson May, that's approaching the century and a half mark and stands in lonely vigil on the rolling landscape of the May family's farm.

Bascom May was born in 1867, the son of Samuel and Mary Osborne May. (In old family records her family's name is given as Osburne, one of its many spelling variations.) Solomon P., his oldest brother, who was killed in the Civil War, served under his relative Col. Andrew J. May. (Bascom may be the only man living in this section who had a brother in that war). Solomon was born on April 16, 1844 and was only seventeen when Union troops occupied Prestonsburg. As a partisan of the South and an admirer of Col. May, Solomon was determined to evade the Union draft. So he entered into a conspiracy with his mother to outwit the Union soldiers from Prestonsburg if they ever came looking for him.

As part of his plan Solomon took one of the farm's fastest horses and hid it in the May Branch woods. It was always kept bridled and saddled awaiting the day when its young master would come to it in flight. In the darkness of night he would steel away and feed his horse.

One day mother and son looked up the road to see three soldiers coming. Solomon retired to an inner room of the house, near its back door while his mother stood in the front doorway, leaning against one side of it, her arms touching the other side effectively barring entrance.

"Why are you men here?" she demanded.

"We have come for your son, Solomon. He is wanted for the Union army."

Mary May turned and called into the house: "Solomon, the soldiers have come for you."

"All right, mother, as quick as I can get my clothes together," he answered. That was the signal they had agreed on for his exit from the house. The other signal for what she would say next was when she saw him enter the May Branch woods.

The three Union troopers stood waiting for Solomon to gather his clothes. His mother peered across the farm and anxiously watched the woods. At last she saw Solomon emerge from the woods, wave, and disappear.

"You may come on in now," she said to the soldiers, "but I don't think you will find Solomon."

Searching the house and realizing they had been tricked, the three went back to Prestonsburg. Solomon was now astride his horse and headed for enlistment under Col. May. He soon enrolled in Company A, tenth Kentucky Infantry, C.S.A.

Solomon lost his life in the fighting around Mount Sterling and was buried near where he fell. His bereaved father later went there and bought a plot where he reburied his son.

Bascom's family came together last Monday for his eighty fifth birthday. Son Joe from Atlanta helped recall the other chapters of May history. He told about Thomas May (1787-1867), Bascom's grandfather, who had settled on Shelby Creek, near the mouth of Robinson Creek (in Pike County) with his father John (ne 1760). Thomas was

in love with Dorcas Patton (1790-1822) of Beaver Creek and wasted no time in courting her. He cut his foot with an axe while at work on a mill wheel and, realizing that it would be some time before he could work again, he told his father that he was going over on Beaver to see if he could talk Mary into marrying him while he was recuperating from his injury. He returned in a few days with his bride.

Bascom's father, Samuel, was a self-educated and clever man. "He was a farmer, blacksmith, cobbler, preacher, and surveyor," Bascom recalls. And also something of a mathematician. The family has an old book with arithmetic problems and their solutions that Samuel prepared.

Bascom's other siblings were Dorcas, born in 1845; David, born in 1847, who lived to be ninety six; Elizabeth, born in 1849; Mary born in 1852; Thomas born in 1855; Martha born in 1857; Samuel born in 1859; and William Harvey born in 1862. When they reached adulthood and married, Samuel gave each of them a farm or \$3000 in cash, the money coming from the crops or stock raised on the family's farm. Bascom is the only child of Samuel's yet alive.

Bascom and Annie May have never left the tranquil delights of the Weaning House, and have lived comfortably and well all these years from the soil.



7-3-1952

SOLDIER'S RETURN, BIG EVENT TO WOMAN WHO LIKES PEOPLE by Henry P. Scalf (Reprint of an article published in the Floyd County Times on July 3, 1952)

At the end of the Second World War Mrs. Columbia Roberts, the owner and operator of the Roberts Olga Telephone Company, received a call from an eastern city. It was from Norman Conn who had served overseas and was now back in the States, wanting to reach his home folks.

"He had been raised with us," Mrs. Roberts said. "While he was overseas his father had died. None of us at the exchange could talk to him, we were so full of emotion. I tried and couldn't. So we sent down the road and brought his sister, Elizabeth Roberts, who talked to him."

This was one of Mrs. Roberts' many recollections of her experiences running a small telephone exchange at Laynesville, Ky. It also tells of her genuine liking for people. If you like people it will bring you friends, and she has plenty of them.

She has courage too, for it certainly takes that for a widowed woman, with no previous experience, to buy a telephone company and make a living running it. She did this in 1928 after her husband, James Roberts, was killed in an election fight on Toler Creek.

The telephone company was started by B.F. Elliott in 1909 under a certificate of necessity issued by the Kentucky Public Service Commission. The company's line extended from Laynesville, now Harold, up Big Mud Creek, over onto Indian Creek at Wales in Pike County. It reached the post office at Hall in Knott County, ending at John

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Franklin's store. It also served the Big Sandy River between Boldman and Ivel.

In the late 1920s Mr. Elliott, a surveyor and engineer, began to lose interest in his telephone company and agreed to Mrs. Roberts' request to buy it from him. He and some of his staff stayed on for a while to assist her in the transition.

In those early days the company's switchboard had no permanent home. Mr. Elliott moved it from place to place for Mrs. Roberts until it arrived at its present location, on US 23, near the present (1952) Harold post office. Mrs. Roberts recalls that "when he carried the switchboard up the steps he said 'Now, Mrs. Roberts, I have moved this thing enough. Let it stay here.' Stay here it did."

She was reminded of an old telephone on her line. It was there when she bought the company. "That telephone has been in use all these years and has never given us a bit of trouble. We all talk about that old telephone. But as long as it gives us good service we don't bother it. It's now forty years old."

Mrs. Roberts' first years of ownership were hard ones. She worked on the line with the men, carrying wire and assisting with the ladder as the linemen had no climbing hooks. She would reach wire up the pole to Jimmy Castle, one of the linemen. Once she helped Mr. Elliott and his wife move a long line from a road right-of-way near Ivel.

Mrs. Pebble Johns, an operator for Mr. Elliott who helped train Mrs. Roberts in her new responsibilities, suggested the company's new name. It became the Roberts Olga Telephone Company for Mrs. Roberts and her daughter, Olga, who later became Mrs. Harold Conn.

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Mrs. Roberts' company has been pretty much a family affair with most of her children and their husbands and her grandchildren assisting in some way. Daughter Rachel, now Mrs. Fred Gearheart, and Rachel's oldest daughter, Mavis, were operators. Another granddaughter, Helen, now Mrs. Glenn Whitt, was her longtime principal assistant. She kept the business records and also served as operator, and her husband was a part-time lineman. Helen's sister, Nell, continues as a regular operator.

Leonard Roberts, a nephew of her late husband, served as a lineman on his way to and from the Betsy Layne School. Sometimes he'd arrive at school with a load of tools and sweat and grime on his face. His biggest experience, Mrs. Roberts recalls, was the time Bill Layne's bull ran him up a telephone poll and kept snorting guard over him there for two or three hours till neighbors, hearing his cries for help, ran the animal off.

It was Leonard, as a schoolboy lineman, who extended the line to J.K. Stratton's at Ivel. But this section of the line has since been discontinued.

One of the few non-family members who worked for the company was Sadie Ratliff. She served as an operator and as the company cook.

When she was in the kitchen Mrs. Roberts herself would answer calls.

"You hear surprising things, very interesting things on a party line," Mrs. Roberts said. Though she did not say, we know that her life as a telephone company owner has been interesting too.

7-31-1952

RUGGED AND AN INDIVIDUALIST IS "DAD" CANTERBURY AT 82 (7/31/1952)

Everybody calls John Henry Canterbury "Dad". But to see him lifting backbreaking loads, working daily in the fields or on the hillsides for himself or his neighbors, you would never think of him as a man of 82 years.

This rugged oak of a man lives on Mare Creek in Floyd County and moved here from West Virginia. He does a full day's work on the farm where he is tenant, doing any chore but mountainside plowing. He swings a 100 pound sack of feed onto his shoulder and carries it like a brawny youngster. When he is not busy tilling his own corn crop and truck patches, he helps his neighbors on their farms.

"Dad" has done a lot of living, and he tells about it in an interesting way, dropping an occasional picturesque phrase to intrigue the listener.

When it was learned that he was a native of Wayne County, West Virginia, he was once asked if he knew certain people--like the Vinsons and the Fergusons. That set him to reminiscing, and right off he came up with a striking phrase.

"Sure, I knew the oldtime Vinsons and plenty others," he recalled. "Hundreds I've known who have gone to join the great throne that makes up the pale-faced nation of the dead.

"Old Smithy Cyrus was my grandfather--the same Smith Cyrus mentioned by Ely in his history of the Big Sandy. He was a big man--weighed 328 pounds-- kept a barrel of whiskey on hand at all times, kept it in the smoke house and carried the key himself. He died in a big rocking chair by his fireside. The big chair had to be reinforced so as to hold him up.

"Well, he had a big tin dipper and a glass. The dipper was full of whiskey and he would pour a drink into the glass he held, and ever so often he would take a drink. That's the way they found him dead--in that big rocking chair, with a dipper in one hand and a glass in the other."

A living encyclopedia of mountain legend and family lore, John Henry Canterbury would tell of those early days in Wayne County when people lived under near pioneer conditions. He grew up in the home of another John Henry Canterbury, his uncle, on White's Creek, and learned there the first hand lessons of making a living by harvesting hoop poles, staves, and tanbark in the local forest.

Hoop poles were small hickory bushes used by coopers to make hoops for barrels. Wagon spokes were made from full grown hickory trees that were later finished at the local mill. Canterbury recalls how much they earned for their work because of the wide disparity of prices then and now. For the hoop poles Canterbury and his uncle received \$8 a hundred. The spokes in the crude shape they came from the forest brought them \$10 and \$12 a thousand, depending upon the grade. Tan bark was \$12 per cord, staves were \$15 a cord if they were made from good quality white oak. For tie poles, those long slim hickory saplings used to tie together logs in a raft, they earned but three cents each.

One of their main income sources was the gathering of tan bark, a Sandy Valley industry that failed to survive the increasing cost of oak timber. For this they used a special tool called the "spud". Made of steel and fashioned somewhat like a claw, it would ring a felled oak quickly and efficiently. According to oldtimers, the

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light moon of April was the ideal time to begin tanbarking. Since the sap was just coming up, the grade would be better than at other times.

Canterbury recalled the big trees on White's Creek. "I cut down oaks to make crossties, and some cuts would make eight ties. (I) split them out with wedges and a maul. No such trees now. We wasted a powerful lot of timber clearing for a new ground. But it wasn't worth much then." All of the forest products, except for the tie poles, were shipped on barges to Louisville.

Though Canterbury's boyhood was filled with hard work, it was a happy one. He remembers the many practical jokes played by him and his friends. There was the time they frightened half to death "PegLeg" Hall, the one-legged Mormon preacher. It seems that old Adolph Osner (?), a Dutchman, had seven daughters. As he did not look with favor upon the rough neighborhood swains, these boys set out to avenge themselves. One night they caught Adolph's mule, but not knowing what to do with him, they tied him to Pegleg's outside door latch, and then made a noise to attract the old man. Pegleg got up and opened the door. But since it opened inward the bridle reins on the mule tightened. The glaring firelight from Peg's hearth caused the mule to start pulling backwards, and the man was caught in that door, securely held by the stubborn animal. The loud calls for help induced the jokers to reveal themselves and free him.

Today, nearly three quarters of a century later, Dad laughs at that episode in his life as if it were yesterday. "It is good for a man to laugh," he says.

The Cyrus family traded at Hatton and Warren's general store at the mouth of Bear Creek, near the present Buchanan (in Lawrence County, Kentucky). When Jonah Hatton was out of whiskey he would go to Catlettsburg to renew his supply. Coming back one dark night he found himself with no way to get across the river. "There he was on one side of the river with a gallon jug of whiskey, and his house was on the other side. He tied the jug around his neck and tried to swim over. They found him next day washed up against a big rock. Ever since, people have called it Jonah's Rock.

There were robbers in Canterbury's boyhood whose accounts would thrill any of today's youngsters. News traveled fast the day after Frank James and his crew held up the Huntington bank. And the posses beat the forests and roads trying to pick up their trail. John Henry and several other boys were passing over Buckhorn Hill from Gragston Creek to Queens Creek. There, by the side of the road, they began to pick up the coins thrown away by the fleeing outlaws. "There were pennies, nickles, and dimes, Handfuls of 'em. Boy, we thought we were rich!"

When he reached adulthood, John Henry would go to Catlettsburg with wheat ground at Patton's mill. "I recollect well old John and Silas Patton. They were good millers. We would take four barrels of wheat at a time, and it would be made into white flour. There was the flour, the bran, and the shorts. People came from miles and miles to that mill. Some had oxen. Some had mules. Some spent two days on the <sup>trip</sup> with their wheat and flour. Some came from 50 miles away.

"This wheat we threshed ourselves," John Henry recalled, "We set the threshing machine up and it had to have six mules to work it. When I was a boy we had to tramp it out with horses or cattle. When it was all tramped out on the floor of the wheat house We would gather it up in sheets and let the wind blow the chaff away."

He told of when the first train came through that section. Farmers came from miles around to see it. To Uncle Billy Johnson it was comparable to death and judgement. Billy told his neighbors, who had missed the event, "It went by so derned fast I couldn't count the spokes in the wheel." (sic)

John Henry worked on the railroad for five years as a section hand, beating ballast and replacing ties. Now that he was earning a good living he married Emma Herald who gave him three children. This was the beginning of a marital adventure that ultimately brought him six wives, five of whom he outlived. He jokes about his marriages. "Some of these women died but I never starved 'em to death." He has two children by his present wife, the former Myrtle Allen of Pike County.

Leaving the railroad he was back in Wayne County when the Cleveland depression (of 1893) fell upon the country. "It was worse than Hoover's panic. There was no money. I hauled lumber for John Trout from Beech Fork to Twelve Pole Creek to County Farm Siding for 60 cents a day. And the day was from before daylight to after dark. What made the day so long was that we had to make two trips to call it a day, and the distance was eight miles each way. Thirty two miles of slushing with a wagon load of lumber for 60 cents."



John Henry's first mining experience was at Torchlight (in Lawrence County). Here he lay on his shoulder and with a pick dug out a crossing of slate 15 feet deep. "The depth was the same as the length of your pick handles. No mining machines in those days. To get a 'cut' of coal, the slate had to be dug out, and then you could shoot it down." His mining career lasted 32 years, broken only by a trip or two to Ohio where he unloaded iron ore, and some time spent as a fireman on the old Twelve Pole railroad where he fired a "pusher". This was the engine used to push loaded trains up Dingus Hill and through Dingus Tunnel near Canterbury Station, which was named for his people. Here he stayed for two years.

In its earlier days the Wayne Court House was called Trout's Hill for John Trout, a well-to-do businessman and farmer. John Henry's most vivid recollection was the hanging of Laburn Walker at Trout's Hill. Walker killed his cousin Alonzo Ferguson. It seems that everyone in the county went to his hanging.

"Talk about a crowded town...The hour came to hang Walker and I watched Sheriff Fisher Bowen 'pull the trigger.' I'll never forget that day. When the trigger fell, Walker dropped and his tongue protruded out of his month. I always slept in a bed beside my uncle, but that night I had to sleep with him."

The Vinsons were the dominant political family of Wayne County in its earlier days. "I knew James and Bill Vinson and Wash O'Dell. All of them were well-to-to....People called this courthouse crowd the Vinson Ring. The wags composed ditties on the political bosses like the one they sang on Wash O'Dell:

"My name is Washington O'Dell,  
I have a brother Bill;  
We belong to the Vinson crew,  
Headquarters at Trout's Hill."

When asked to explain his longevity and excellent health, John Henry says: "Be contented and satisfied with what you have. I've seen men with their heads down over things that I wouldn't give a thought." His favorite advice: "Don't let little things bother you--don't let big things come up." He bows to the years in only one respect. He uses glasses to read. He is an avid reader of western stories with plenty of action. But he has no use for the modern sex novels.

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John Henry Canterbury's boyhood was a happy one, even though it was filled with the hard work of the period. He remembers the many practical jokes played by him and the neighborhood boys. Like the time they frightened "Peg-Leg" Hall, the one-legged Mormon preacher. It seems that old Adolph Osner, a Dutchman, had seven daughters. Since he didn't look with favor on the neighborhood swains, they set out to avenge themselves. One night they caught Adolph's mule. Not knowing what to do with him, they tied him to Peg-Leg's outside door latch, and then made a noise to attract the old man. A few minutes later, Peg-Leg got up and opened the door. Since the door opened inward, the action tightened the bridle reins on the mule. Furthermore, the glaring firelight from Peg-Leg's hearth caused the animal to start pulling backwards, with the result that Peg-Leg was caught in the doorway between the door and the door frame. Peg-Leg's loud calls for help finally persuaded the jokers to come out of hiding and free him from his predicament.

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In all of John Henry's reminiscences, there is a tendency to drift back to "the good old days." There were plenty of wild turkey in Wayne County, and plenty of squirrels, too. "The pigeons were thick, like swarms of bees," he recalls. And he adds as an afterthought: "What do you suppose ever happened to all those pigeons?"

There were robbers in his boyhood, too, and Canterbury tells stories about them that would thrill the most jaded modern movie-goer. For instance, there was the time that Frank James and his gang robbed the Huntington Bank. Afterwards, news of the affair spread like wild-fire up the Big Sandy, while deputies combed the forests and the back-country roads. Soon after the robbery, John Henry and several other boys were passing over Buckhorn Hill from ~~Dragstoe~~ Dragstoe Creek to Queen's Creek. There, by the side of the road, they discovered the coins that had been discarded by the bandits in order to lighten their loads. "There were pennies, nickles, and dimes--whole handfuls of 'em. Boy, we thought that we were rich!"

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Catlettsburg with wheat ground at Patton's mill. not in Catlettsburg

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~~Uncle John raised wheat, and when John Henry reached adulthood, he often drove a team of horses to Catlettsburg, taking loads of his uncle's wheat to be ground into flour at Patton's Mill. "I vividly recall old John and Silas Patton. They were good millers. On our trips we would take four barrels at a time. At the mill the wheat would be ground into white flour. The machine would separate it into the flour, the bran, and the shorts. People traveled a great distance to use the mill. Some drove oxen and some drove mules. Some spent more than two days on the trip. Some came from fifty miles away."~~

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He well remembers the Depression of 1893 and the effect that it had on Wayne County. He calls that period "the Cleveland Depression," after the president during those years, Grover Cleveland. "It was worse than Hoover's panic. There was no money. I hauled lumber for John Trout from Beech Fork to Twelve Pole Creek, and from there to County Farm Siding, for sixty cents a day. And the day lasted from before daylight to after dark. What made the day so long was the fact that we had to make two trips to call it a day, and the distance was eight miles each way. Thirty-two miles of slushing with a wagon load of lumber for sixty cents."

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Wayne County's <sup>dominant political</sup> ~~most influential~~ family during those years was the Vinsons. "I knew James and Bill Vinson and Wash O'Dell. All of them were well-do-do. People called them "the Vinson Ring." Here's a song people used to sing about Wash O'Dell:

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I have a brother Bill.  
We belong to the Vinson crew,  
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When asked to explain the secret of his longevity and excellent health, John Henry says: "Be contented with what you have. I've seen men with their heads down over things that I wouldn't give a second thought to." His favorite saying is: "Don't let the little things bother you, and don't let the big things happen." Only one concession does he make to his advanced age--he uses glasses when he reads. He is an avid reader of westerns, but "the modern sex novel" leaves him cold.

8-21-1952

THEY PRAISED THE LORD-BUT PRAISE IS NO MORE by Henry P. Scalf  
(Reprint of an article published in the Floyd County Times,  
on August 21, 1952)

After September 1 Praise, Ky. will be no more. By a directive of the U.S. Post Office Department, the post office at the mouth of Elkhorn Creek (in Pike County) will take the name of the town it serves--Elkhorn City.

However, Praise will remain in local memory as had the slogan "Praise the Lord" from which it derived. This slogan is attributed to the famed eastern Kentucky evangelist George O. Barnes.

Barnes came to the mouth of Elkhorn from Whitesburg on August 5, 1881 and set up camp for a great meeting. With him was his daughter Marie and the piano she had taken with her on their many visits throughout the Kentucky mountains.

At that time there was no town of Elkhorn City. Only a few scattered farmsteads occupied the site. To prepare for Barnes' camp meeting rude shanty-like dwellings were thrown up by his followers along with the fifty by forty foot tent in which the multitude would be gathered.

Five hundred people showed up to watch the erection of the great tent, contributing to a chaotic situation and delaying the preparations. And there were the forebodings of a mountain storm. Barnes urged his faithful to complete the tent as quickly as possible, but few were willing to help with this when their own buildings had to be put up before the storm broke. By cajolery and constant prodding he finally got his tent erected.

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After this was done Barnes and a few helpers climbed the nearby mountain to cut a flagpole. The hillside was steep and they had to go up a considerable distance to find a tree of the right size, sixty five feet high. On this they placed a red flag and someone stitched into the flag the words "Praise the Lord". The community thus came to be known as "Camp Praise the Lord."

That first night Barnes preached but received no response to his invitation to the congregation. Yet he was heartened by the fixed attention of his listeners. The next day, with better weather, another hundred persons arrived from nearby sections of Kentucky and Virginia.

The second service, on August 6, was to be at noon, but the heat and humidity inside the tent were almost unbearable. Barnes considered deferring the preaching but then decided to proceed with it. Soon after the worship got underway, the expected storm finally broke in all its fury. Water that had gathered in the flapping folds of the tent began to come through the cracks of the cloth. While Marie played on, water splattered over her piano. Men left the tent to see about their own dwellings only to find them rainsoaked and untenable.

Barnes again thought that suspending the service to defer to the weather would be deferring to the Devil. So he preached on. The rain got worse, however, and where it had merely dripped it now began to pour in earnest. Water ran down the legs of the pianist and began to gather on the trampled earth that served as the tent's floor. Finally, when the water got too

high, Barnes did defer to the elements and ended the service. The tent emptied quickly.

Outside the camp were the sodden, dreary, disconsolate faithful. Their houses had been scant protection against the storm. But under Barnes' direction they built a great fire in the camp center and began to dry their strawbeds and wet clothing. As Barnes recalled (in his notebook) "Ever our lovely banner dropped and clung to the flagpole as if all was lost."

A camp meeting or any similar mass undertaking needs a support system. In addition to feeding and boarding Barnes' congregation it was felt by some that other services had to be provided. Patent medicine venders, like the man selling Kitchen's Vermifuge, were on hand, extolling the virtues of their remedies. Horse traders tied their nags to the trees or racked them along the creek bank to better show their qualities.

As on each of his mountain gatherings, Barnes attempted to heal the afflictions of the faithful. One night a mother brought a little child with scofula. When he approached the afflicted child, she screamed and clung to her mother. But then he laid hands upon her and she became quiet and accepted the anointing without a word. Nine others were anointed on this day.

On another day old Doc Taylor, the feudist, came in from Whitesburg and confessed the Lord. That he was to backslide afterwards was no fault of the Rev. Barnes.



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Preaching and healing went apace for several days. On August 10 some of the faithful became tourists and went off to see the nearby sights, like the "Big Narrows" and "The Towers" at the Breaks. They were mostly young folks and ill-prepared for the journey but off they went without a care. When they hadn't returned after several hours their friends at the camp began to worry. Six men went in search and found them in a cabin five miles away. It was midnight when the party returned with the tourists wet, weary, and bedraggled.

On August 14 another storm broke upon the camp but this time a bucket and pan brigade had been prepared for the tent. Buckets were placed under every leak. There was much scurrying about with cries of "here it is!" and "I've got this one!"

Sunday, August 21 would be the last day. The crowd was beginning to leave and Barnes, the experienced evangelist that he was, knew not to protract a service. He later said that the Lord had showed us plainly that it was time to close. When he preached "give me thy heart" twenty four confessed to the Lord and twenty seven were anointed. That night forty more converted. By meeting's end 358 had confessed and 356 had been anointed. "Praise the Lord" he added over and over. It's not known how many people were at the camp during the entire gathering for they came and went. There may have been almost a thousand.

On Monday the camp broke up. Marie and the piano were placed in Bro. Ferrell's wagon and Barnes took off for Pikeville on foot. They arrived before dark and supped with Ferrell. The

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Pikeville

Barneses spent the night in Col. John Dils' spacious home while preparing for their next meeting in that town.

Camp Praise the Lord was no more. Now the Praise post office has another name so it too is a thing of the past.

9-11-1952

YOU WONT LIKE THIS--IT TELLS STORY OF THE GOOD HATFIELDS by Henry P. Scalf (Reprint of an article in the Floyd County Times, September 11, 1952

The name Hatfield brings up talk of feuds and "trouble". Mention that family to an outsider and he'll listen with rapt attention. He'll believe all the old stories of ambush, death, and hatred. Too much of it is true.

But tell him of the other Hatfields who carried no muskets and plotted no ambushes, who were hardworking, God-fearing citizens, and he wont be interested. He wants to hear the old stories of bloodshed and death.

He wants to hear of Anderson, called "Devil Anse", Hatfield who lived in Logan County, West Virginia. He was the son of Ephraim and Nancy Vance Hatfield. Some of his hot blood and clannish hatred came from his mother's family. Devil Anse's grandfather Abner Vance, who was born near Abington, Virginia, was hanged for killing a Doctor Horton who had seduced his daughter. Years later mountain balladists were still singing of old Vance's death: "Vance no more shall Sandy behold/Nor drink of its crystal ware/The partial judge pronounced his doom/To the hunter, a felon's grave."

Devil's Anse's descendants--lawyers, doctors, and ministers--are respectable people today. One of the clan married Benjamin Fairless, the head of U.S. Steel.

But there were other Hatfields besides the West Virginia feudists. They were peaceable, solid citizens who helped build Floyd County and other areas in our part of the country. They were of the same

family as the feudists for common ancestors came to America from England in colonial times. They drifted westward and settled in the forested uplands of the Tug River country of what was then southwestern Virginia shortly after the last Indians had left these parts.

One of the earliest Hatfields in this country was Andrew who was born in England around 1730 and came to America, settling in Giles County. He served as a captain in the Montgomery County, Virginia militia during the Revolution. He later moved to Cabell County (now West Virginia) and lived on the Guyandotte River till his death. We don't know when he died but he was buried in a bend on that river in the center of a rugged wooded area.

Of Andrew we know little else. He brought his son Adam (and maybe others) with him to Cabell County. Adam (October 19, 1774-June 18, 1855) married Mary Williams (born in 1782) who was of Dutch descent and spoke broken English. They had six sons and six daughters. One daughter, Kate, married a Swann and they were the parents of Dr. P.H. Swann of Huntington and the grandparents of Dr. Walter C. Swann.

Moses, another of Adam and Mary's sons, was born in 1822 and died in 1895. He married Peninah Beckett (1820-1878). Among their eight children was Martha Ann (1844-1908), who married Adam Hinchman (1842-1910) whose grandchildren and great grandchildren are Floyd Countians. Each year Moses' descendants hold a family reunion near Huntington. Mrs. Tina Susan Hatfield Ashworth of Huntington is the family's chief historian.

Then there was Samuel Hatfield who, in 1854, sold Tandy Stratton land on the Big Sandy stream then called Young and now the Tandy Stratton Branch. Other Hatfields, including Joseph and James, lived

on Johns Creek. In 1818 Robert G. Scott, through his attorney James Fuller, deeded fifty acres in the Tug Valley section of the future Pike County to Jeremiah Hatfield. This was a part of the old Rev. James Madison grant of January 1796. On August 19, 1822 Nimrod Younger deeded to James Hatfield one hundred acres on the Perry County side of Quicksand Creek. This deed was recorded in both Floyd and Perry Counties.

Among those Big Sandians moving to Arkansas in the 1830s was Jeremiah, the son of Samuel Hatfield, and his inlaws, the Brown family. (The place they moved to was later called Brown's Landing.) His descendants are since scattered over the southwest.

Before leaving for Arkansas in 1835, Jeremiah arranged with John Waldeck for the apprenticing of his sixteen year old son Herman. This is how that arrangement is worded in the Floyd County records:

"Witness that the said Jeremiah Hatfield hath this day placed and bound out his son Herman Hatfield to the said John Waldeck, born the 27th day of August 1817 (sic), until he shall arrive at the age of 21 years. The said John Waldeck is to instruct and learn the said Herman all he can in the art and business of cabinet making and find and provide for the said Herman during his term of service good and wholesome meat, drink, and lodging and during said term of service the said Waldeck is to send the said Herman to school four months during which said term of the said apprentice to his master shall faithfully observe all his lawful demands, obey the said John Waldeck (sic). Is at the end of the term of the said Herman (sic) to give him two common suits of clothes and also one fine which shall be worth five dollars (sic)."

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We have thus accounted for several of the Hatfields who have been unsung because the even tenor of their ways did not appeal to the public imagination.

9-18-1952

FAMILY FAMOUS AS FRONTIERSMEN PIONEERED SETTLEMENT OF VALLEY (9/18/1952)

Heinrich Hermann (or Henry Harman, as he later came to be called) was born on the Rhine in what is now Germany around 1700. He was the ancestor of all the Harmans that helped to people southwest Virginia, southern West Virginia, and eastern Kentucky. He arrived in America in 1726 or 1727. In an old Lutheran Bible he kept a written record, in German, of his family's affairs. This invaluable document came down through the family until it entered the possession of their historian John Newton Harman, Sr. of Tazewell County, Virginia.

The first record made in the family bible was of Heinrich's marriage to Louisa Katrina: "I, Heinrich Adam Hermann, married Louisa Katrina, October 8, 1723 and have together begotten eleven children, and have lived in matrimony as true married folks should up to the year 1749 when my dear wife died March 18th and was buried the 21st, which fell on Monday. The blood of Christ cleanses us of all our sins. Amen."

Henry and Louisa brought with them to America their first two children. These were Adam, the oldest, who was born before they left Germany. and Henry, who was born on a stop on the Isle of Man. They first settled and acquired lands in Pennsylvania where their next child George was born in 1727, and his brother Daniel was born two years later. (George died in 1749, the same year as his mother.)

In 1733 the Harmans, by then having been joined by several of Henry's brothers, came into the Valley of Virginia. They are known to have resided on the New River three years before the Ingles and Drapers settled at Drapers Meadows in 1748. According to a family tradition, Henry and his brother Jacob were on a hunting expedition to the headwaters of the Clinch and Tug Rivers. They were accompanied

by George Draper and a hunter named McGary. In a fight with a party of Shawnees, Draper and McGary were killed. Heinrich Hermann died in the fall of 1767. It would require volumes to detail the story of his descendants.

Waddell's Annals of Augusta County (Va.) describes an Indian raid on the Harman family's cabin in 1749. "A party of Indians robbed the house of Adam Harman, probably on the New River, of nine deer skins and one elk skin; the next day six Indians robbed the same house of 14 deer skins and one elk skin; and the day following a number of Indians came and took away 73 deer skins and six elk skins. This shows that game was abundant and that Harman was a famous hunter. This is said to have been the first depredation by Indians on the whites west of the Allegheny."

Adam Harman and his two sons are said to have rescued Mary Ingles after her escape from the Indians in 1755. Mrs. Ingles had traveled hundreds of miles from Big Bone Lick in northern Kentucky, up the Ohio and Kanawha valleys and over onto the headwaters of the New in one of the greatest physical feats by a woman on the frontier. She and <sup>an</sup> old Dutch (or German-?) woman were the first white women known to have set foot in eastern Kentucky.

In 1758 we find Adam Harman in Captain Robert Wade's company for the protection of the Virginia border from prowling Indians. Adam, his son Daniel, and eleven others were sent to execute a band of Indians whom they intercepted at a ford two miles from Dunkard's Bottom. They killed four and wounded a fifth. Episodes like this made the Harman name a terror to the Indians.

Henry's son Mathias, born near Strasburg, Va. in 1735, is said



to have built the first cabin on the waters of the Big Sandy, at the mouth of John's Creek, in 1755. This may have been the second cabin built in what is now Kentucky. The explorer and surveyor, Dr. Thomas Walker, built the first, near the present Barbourville, five years earlier.

Daniel Harman, Sr., Henry's Pennsylvania-born son, is the ancestor of the eastern Kentucky Harmans. He was present with his father and uncle (or brother) Jacob at the fight on the Tug River when Draper and McGary were killed. And he was taken prisoner by the Indians at the time in 1757 when his brother Valentine was killed. He later escaped to tell about it.

Daniel later lived in Rowan County, North Carolina where he married, and in 1773 he returned to Virginia, settling on the Clinch River. On a trip with Peter Harman down the Big Sandy in 1777 he was again attacked by Indians, but again escaped. He died in late 1819 or early the followeing year, and his will was probated in Tazewell County, Va.

Daniel's son, also Daniel, but called "Colonel", moved to the Big Sandy around 1806 and settled near the mouth of Shelby Creek in the present Pike County. (Adam Harman, a descendant living at Keturah in Lawrence County wrote, in 1929, that Daniel had arrived as early as 1797.) Daniel is said to have killed the last Indian slain in the Sandy Valley. According to tradition, This was Black Wolf, one of the captors of Jennie Wiley, and Daniel refused to allow the dead Indian to be buried on bottom land. "Take him up on the hill and bury him. Don't waste good land with him," he is reported to have said.

Colonel Daniel married Rosannah Spurlock and they were the parents

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of five sons Adam, William, Aquilla, Dow, and Mathias, and a daughter Rachel. Aquilla has been referred to as "Old Aquilla" to distinguish him from his son Aquilla Jr., a minister, who first married Louise Keith on February 16, 1858 and, after her death, married Cynthia Stratton. Aquilla, Jr. was the father of Daniel O. Harman, the Prestonsburg teacher, and the grandfather of Guy Horn, the Floyd County jailer. Old Aquilla's other children were Mathias, Robert, Adam, and Richard.

The Harmans are one of the best documented of pioneer families. Although some work remains to be done on their eastern Kentucky branch, theirs is still a proud story and a true saga of pioneer America.

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TUNE TO WHICH HE MARCHED AS REBEL-BOY WAS FAVORITE OF FAMOUS FEUD LEADER, HATFIELD DAUGHTER-IN-LAW REMEMBERS by Henry P. Scalf (Reprint of an article published in the Floyd County Times, on October 23, 1952)

"Devil Anse" Hatfield always wanted to hear "Dixie" played on the piano when he visited his son Tennyson and his daughter-in-law Sadie at their Logan, West Virginia home. Sadie recalls her life with the Hatfield family long after their feud with the McCoys.

Devil Anse "was good-natured and kind," she remembers, "and his wife was a mother to me. Sometimes when we went to milk together he would get mad at the cows and curse. I would stand in with him for I wasn't afraid of him. He was extra nice to me."

He must have liked his daughter-in-law who "stood in" with him for he often visited with Tennyson and Sadie in their home. At each visit there was the inevitable playing of "Dixie" for Anse was a Confederate veteran and had marched to this tune in his younger and spryer days.

Sadie recalls her father-in-law's inclination to acquire all kinds of animals as pets. He had two pet bears; one died and the other became so irascible it had to be killed. He also kept owls and bees.

Anse liked to hunt wild bees. Once when he found a tree filled with honey he asked Tennyson and Sadie to help him cut it. She well remembers that journey to the hills in 1917 to

humor old Anse. This was four years before his death.

Sadie Walters married Tennyson Hatfield in 1917 at Catlettsburg. Her husband, whose name was shortened to Tennis by his intimates, was elected sheriff of Logan County in 1924 and served four years. Before that he had been a deputy under Don Chaffins.

Sadie was often in the Hatfield home and was there at their annual reunions when whole beeves were barbecued for thousands of the clan. One of them was the governor of West Virginia. At any time the Hatfields had a "standing table" where food was always bounteous.

One cold night in the winter of 1920-21 Devil Anse spent the night in Logan with Tennis and Sadie. They stayed at the Aracoma Hotel but their rooms being too warm they went outside for a short walk. When they came out onto the street Sadie noticed that Anse's shirt was unbuttoned. She called this to his attention and buttoned it for him.

Anse went home with a cold. He was sick for a week, voiceless in the last days. But before he lost his ability to talk, he asked Sadie to cut his hair and trim his beard. "The barbers might cut my ears," he said. Just before he died he called her to his bedside. But the old feudist who, at one time, was the most feared person in Logan and Pike Counties, was close to death. What he wanted to tell her was never said, and will never be known, for he could only move his lips.

There never was such a funeral in Logan County as Anse's. It's been said that as many as 5,000 persons came to it. The railway company ordered two extra coaches for the ride out of

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town. "Uncle" Dyke Garrett, who had served with Devil Anse in the Logan Wildcats, preached his funeral. And a good Christian funeral it was for Anse had been converted and baptized long before.

Tennis and Sadie later divorced and Sadie married Melvin Click of Floyd County where she continued to raise Tennis' four sons. They are Tennyson Samuel, Zach Anderson, Henry Drewry, and Billy Grant. Henry Drewry was named for West Virginia's former senator and governor. All but Billy, who lives and works in Detroit, are now (1952) residents of Cleveland, Ohio where Tennis, Sr. works in a local factory, a long way from their native mountain haunts.

EARLY FLOYD COUNTY SETTLER SOLDIERED UNDER CLARK by Henry P. Scalf  
(Reprint of an article in the Floyd County Times, November 20, 1952)

Solomon Stratton, who helped lay out Preston's Station that became the town of Prestonsburg, was the only member of George Rogers Clark's army to settle in Floyd County. Hundred of his descendants still live here.

General Clark had been given explicit instructions by the Virginia government then engaged in a war for independence to limit the use of Virginia troops to direct combat within her own territory. If Clark wanted men for an expeditionary force elsewhere he would have to find them outside of Virginia. One apparent exception was Solomon Stratton of Montgomery County, Va.

Stratton was then in his late twenties, older than most of Clark's men, and was married with children (by then Harry and Richard), in stark contrast to his fellow soldiers.

Clark's army arrived at Corn Island (now Louisville) on May 27, 1778. In June, while they were preparing for their mission, there was an eclipse of the sun, an awe-inspiring event for the superstitious. They arrived at Kaskaskia on July 4, 1778 and captured it by surprise.

Vincennes was captured the following February after one of the most difficult marches in American military history. The little band marched through swamps and water, snow and ice. They suffered from cold, hunger and fatigue. But their efforts ended in victory.

"On the banks of the Wabash on that February morning," Clark's biographer Ross F. Lockridge wrote, "was enacted a miracle of warfare.

A band of rugged frontier riflemen, by sheer gallantry and peerless marksmanship actually silenced a British garrison."

At the end of the campaign Clark and his men returned to the scattered frontier settlements whence they came. But while his exploits made Clark a public hero, most of his men settled into relative obscurity. Stratton, in a sense, disappeared for five years.

We next find him in 1783, settled on 245 acres on Virginia's New River, but we know nothing further about him till 1797. There is no record of his activities in those years. He never applied for a pension. We actually know very little of his life before he came to Floyd County. We think he was born in the 1750s but can't be more precise than that. We know he married a girl named Jane probably in Virginia, but we don't know her last name. His son Harry may have been born in 1773 since he was about 76 when he died in 1849/50.

It was not till 1797 that we again become aware of Solomon Stratton. And this was by way of an eastern Kentucky land title unearthed by this writer.

Here is a little background. On February 7, 1787 Col. John Preston and John Smith (the Deputy Surveyor of Montgomery County, Virginia) attracted by opportunities to own land in the Big Sandy valley, contracted for the services of Matthias Harman, Henry Skaggs, and others of Tazewell County, Virginia to acquire 100,000 acres of quality land. This was entered on March 9, 1787.

Ten years later an agreement was worked out between Harman, Major Andrew Hood, and Solomon Stratton to survey this land. John Graham, then only 21 but already technically proficient, was hired to do

the actual surveying. The site of Prestons Station (that became Prestonsburg) was surveyed that year along with thousands of acres of valley land above the mouth of Johns Creek. As his work progressed, Graham became more enthused with the land and its possibilities.

Stratton acquired some of this land too--all of the bottom land on the north side of the river between the present Betsy Layne and Ivy Creek. He built his home about one fourth of a mile south of the mouth of Mare Creek, on the site of the later Thomas Leslie house. where he died in 1819. He is buried in the old Stratton Cemetery at the mouth of Mare. Most of his land was passed on to his sons.



FIRST OF McGUIRE FAMILY HERE WAS MAGISTRATE AND MINISTER by Henry P. Scalf (Reprint of an article in the Floyd County Times on November 27, 1952)

Centuries ago the McGuire family lived in the Scottish Highlands. After a number of years members of the family settled in Ireland, and still later some of their descendants came to America. Who they were and where they settled we have not yet learned.

The first McGuires we do know of--John, William, and Jesse--can be traced back to the late eighteenth century to that section of Virginia that is now Tazewell County. Though he remained in Tazewell for his entire life, William is known to have acquired land in the Big Sandy valley by purchase or pre-emption, but like many others he was later to be involved in litigation over disputed ownership.

In his lifetime William knew all of the prominent Big Sandians. On the frontier, where courthouses were few and far between, men like John Graham, John Hatcher, Harry Stratton, and Spencer Adkins would entrust their official papers to William and his wife Mary for safekeeping in their Tazewell County home.

The McGuires were witnesses in one of the most memorable land suits of the early nineteenth century. The land in question was the 150 acre Graham's Bottom in Floyd County which formed the nucleus of the Graham homestead at the present Emma. John Graham had leased the land, which was really a part of the John Preston grant, to John Hackworth and Moses Preston. In a deposition Hackworth stated that he bought out Moses Preston and, later, John Graham, and that this sales agreement had been deposited with the McGuires in Tazewell.

About a mile and a half above (west of) Keturah was the Cadmus post office established on May 29, 1903 by Jesse Blaborn Hall. According to his successor, Willis Roberts, the office was named for the legendary Phoenician prince who introduced the first alphabet to the ancient Greeks. The story goes that Charles Stewart, a local man and a college graduate, when such was rare, could speak five languages and would tell his neighbors the classical derivations of common English words, claiming they all came from Cadmus.<sup>11</sup> After several short moves, Marie Carey, its last postmaster, moved the office to the vicinity of the Green Valley School, nearly two miles from Ky 3, where it closed in April 1950. Kansas and Michigan also had post offices called Cadmus.

A mile above Cadmus, at the mouth of Cooksey Fork, William H. Moore established the Marvin post office on January 16, 1906. On April 2, 1910, when James Allen Rice became postmaster, the office was renamed Dennis for Rice's fifteen year old son. It closed in late February 1951. The Marvin name has not yet been derived.

The earliest Cat Creek post office was Olioville [oh/lee/oh/vihl] whose name derivation is also unknown. It was established on December 2, 1885 by Andrew Jackson Webb, a local distiller and storekeeper, at the mouth of Cool Branch of what was then Thompson's Fork (now Big Cat). In 1913 the office was moved half a mile east and closed in February of the followin

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One day Graham and Hackworth showed up at the McGuire home to pick up the agreement and redeposit it at John Hatcher's home at the mouth of Mud Creek back in Floyd County. Though this document was later destroyed in a fire, the facts therein were subsequently borne out by the personal testimony of several witnesses, including the McGuires who came all the way here for that purpose.

William McGuire died and is buried in Tazewell County. His specific relationship to other McGuires, though, is uncertain. He may have been the father of Cornelius, Floyd County's pioneer Methodist preacher, and a brother to Jesse. How he was related to John McGuire is not known.

John, who married Nancy, the daughter of Johns Creek pioneer William Robert Leslie, is known to have bought, on April 9, 1816, 230 acres at and around the mouth of Buffalo Creek from John Graham for \$150. His family later sold this land to John Crider in whose family it remained till the federal government acquired title to it for the Dewey Reservoir. John died sometime between April 1816 and October 23 of that year. His widow shortly married Richard Elkins and they may have moved to Harts Creek in the present Lincoln County, West Virginia. John and Nancy's children were William and Nancy.

Our continued pursuit of the McGuire story will be difficult since we question the accuracy of available genealogical data. Our uncertainty about which limb of the family tree we're on begins with Cornelius McGuire. He was a lay preacher and among the first of Floyd County's justices of the peace who, according to Joy Sparks, a Stratton descendant living in Ashland, married Esther, the daughter of Solomon Stratton, in Montgomery County, Va. on December 29, 1787.

The story is told of how Cornelius converted his neighbor and brother-in-law Henry (Harry) Stratton, another Floyd County magistrate. Sometime in the 1790s Harry, the son of Solomon Stratton, had built a two story log house near the mouth of Tom's Creek, ten miles above Prestonsburg while Cornelius built a cabin a few hundred yards south, along the present (1952) US 23. The two families maintained close relations. One night, in 1796, Harry went up the path to visit the McGuires. On nearing the cabin he heard a man's voice in prayer. Such a thing being unusual in this new land at that time. he approached ever closer to the cabin's open door and looked in to see Cornelius and Esther kneeling on the bare floor talking to God. Then and there, according to Redford's History of Methodism in Kentucky, Mr. Stratton "was seized with conviction and, rushing into the house, fell upon his knees and cried for mercy until he was powerfully converted."

This was one of life's great moments for Cornelius McGuire in his long life of consecration to Christ. Another was when Harry requested a service in his home down the road. In this early day there were comparatively few settlers in Floyd County. Attending this meeting were the Laynes from the present Betsy Layne, the Johns, the Mayos from near Prestionsburg, and the Auxiers from Blockhouse Bottom. To them Cornelius preached the first Methodist sermon in the Big Sandy.

For another decade Cornelius labored for the Lord. When, in 1809, he was worn and unable to travel the far distances to shepherd his scattered pioneer flock, he asked his bishop to assign a duly ordained minister to serve the Big Sandy. The Sandy River Circuit

was thus created and Benjamin Edge was placed in charge. No stone marks the burial place of the first apostle of Big Sandy Methodism.

According to family historians, Cornelius and Esther may have had the following children: Solomon, Jesse, William, Mary, Peggy, Lavina, Jane, Nancy, and Harry. Solomon, who may have been their first born, married Susannah Garriot on January 14, 1812. Jesse married Susannah's sister Elizabeth on April 17, 1821. They were the daughters of Elem Garriot. (Their brother Gabriol Garriott [or Garrett] is the ancestor of many contemporary Floyd Countians of that family.) By 1831 Solomon and Susannah had sold their interest in McGuire land in Floyd County and moved to Edgar County, Illinois. Jesse and Elizabeth's son Garrett McGuire married Jane, the daughter of H.W. and Phoebe Sellards Stratton.

William, who lived in a large estate on Johns Creek, served with Col. Andrew Jackson May's Confederate troops and died in July 1886. Though on marriage records he is said to have married Polly Stratton on July 25, 1827, his will of February 9, 1886 refers to his wife as Amy. In some other references she is mentioned as Mary, the daughter of Hiram and Hannah Leslie Stratton, whose brother Solomon had married Nancy McGuire, another of Cornelius's daughters. After Nancy's death, Solomon married Mary Jones. In a codicil to his will William mentions two of his children Louviska McGuire Vaughan and Wesley C. McGuire to whom he left a dollar each, explaining that he had made prior arrangements for them. Other children for whom his will provided were Esther McGuire Richie, Nancy Jane McGuire, and the heirs of his son John P. The latter had been killed in 1863 while fighting for Dr. Robert Jackson against the Blackburns at the

mouth of River Branch of Johns Creek and was buried in the nearby Jackson cemetery. Still other devisees of William were Sarah McGuire Foley, Arminta McGuire Romans, Rosa McGuire Damron, and his son Solomon, a large landowner on Johns Creek and a director of the First National Bank in Prestonsburg.

Other children of Cornelius and Esther were Mary who married a Pruitt, Peggy who married Henry B. Mayo, Lavina who married George Martin, and Harry S. who married Diana K. Friend. <sup>Their</sup> ~~his~~ daughter Jane<sup>^</sup> apparently never married.

The early Floyd County phase of the McGuire story is but one chapter of that family's history. Descendants, direct and collateral, have moved to all sections of the country and have written their own chapters. But we here must remember and celebrate the McGuire contributions to the settlement and development of the Big Sandy.

'COURTIN' CHAIR' FEATURE OF OLD HOUSE THAT NEVER MOVED, WAS IN 4 COUNTIES by Henry P. Scalf (Reprinted from the Floyd County Times, January 14, 1954)

In an old house, near the mouth of Breedings Creek in Knott County, live the five Johnsons--three brothers and two sisters --Patrick, John D., Sidney, Elizabeth, and Allie. Four are unmarried. Patrick, the oldest, is 83. Portraits of their ancestors--Simeon Johnson, lawyer, teacher, and scholar; Fieldon Johnson, lawyer, landowner, and Knott's first County Attorney; and Fielding's wife Sarah (nee Dotson)--look down upon them from the house's interior walls.

Visitors to the Johnson home are shown the family's most prized possessions and told something of their early history. Among the family's heirlooms are their corded, hand-turned fourposter beds that were brought to the house by Sarah Johnson. These came from her first home, the Mansion House, in Wise, Virginia, after the death of her father, Jackie Dotson, Wise County's first sheriff. (The Mansion House was better known as the Dotson Hotel, one of southwest Virginia's famous hostelries.) At least two of the beds she brought with her have names: one is called the Apple Bed for an apple is carved on the end of each post; Another is the Acorn Bed for the acorns carved on its posts. The bed's coverlets were also brought from Virginia along with tableware and some pitchers lacquered in gold that came from her mother Lucinda's Matney family.

Visitors are also shown the wedding plate, a large platter from which each Johnson bride or groom ate his or her first dinner. and the old Kentucky rifle which George Washington Johnson took on deer

hunts, and some of the old clothing worn by early Johnsons, including Sarah's wedding dress, preserved for nearly three quarters of a century, and Simeon Johnson's baby clothes.

Patrick Johnson strikes the fire in the ancient fireplace and tells visitors of the prominent eastern Kentuckians who once visited their home. This was when it was a noted stopping place on the road between Whitesburg and McPherson (now Hindman). Court officials of mountain circuits stayed here as, in earlier years, did Revolutionary War veterans passing through the area seeking land. It was here that the Rev. Simeon Justice and his fellow ministers, William Salisbury and Electious Thompspon, met and planned the founding of the earliest Baptist churches in this part of the country.

According to historical records, Thomas and Adelpia Carter Johnson and Thomas's brothers Patrick and William, were the family's eastern Kentucky progenitors. They came from the Yadkin Valley of North Carolina through Pound Gap sometime in the first decade of the nineteenth century. On January 20, 1806 Patrick took up fifty acres on Rockhouse Fork. Seven years later he married Anna Martin (nee 1794), the daughter of William and Susannah Tudor Martin who had settled on Right Beaver Creek about the same time. William Martin may also have come originally from North Carolina though he lived in Virginia before moving to eastern Kentucky. Patrick and Anna later set up housekeeping on the Isaac Fork of Right Beaver.

Sometime before 1810 Thomas and Adelpia built the old Breedings Creek house. At first it was near the side of the hill in front of a "steep gut" but the likelihood of sudden freshets convinced them to move the building 100 yards nearer the creek bank. This



was in Floyd County then, but the creation of new counties has placed it successively in Perry, Letcher, and Knott.

Thomas and Adelpia's children were George Washington, William, Artie, and Fanny, not a large family by pioneer standards. Even so, Adelpia's life must have been quite a busy one for she was the only educated woman in a large area. She may have been the local school teacher, and was often called to write letters for her neighbors and area churches.

Neighbors were far apart in this early Floyd County section. Other Carr Fork families (for Breedings Creek is a branch of Carr) were Thomas and Jane Hammonds Francis who came here from Virginia in 1816, Crockett and Susan Grigsby Ritchie who had arrived the year before, and John and Nancy Combs. Into these and other area families the Johnson children married. George Washington married Sarah Francis; Artie married Nicholas Smith, son of Richard of Ary. We don't know who William and Fanny married.

Thomas Johnson died in 1828 and was buried nearby. On October 1, 1834, forty seven year old Adelpia married sixty nine year old Rev. Simeon Justice in Hazard. He had been a friend of the Johnsons for years, officiating at their marriages and often staying at the Breedings Creek home while he was riding the ministerial circuit, organizing churches. He is known to have helped organize the first Baptist church in Perry County in 1809, the Indian Bottom church on the North Fork the following year, and another at the home of Stephen Caudill near the mouth of Sandlick on August 13, 1815.

Simeon and Adelpia lived together for twelve years, but it's not known how much of that time was spent in the Breedings Creek

house. which, during that time, was the home of George Washington and Sarah. We know that Simeon owned property in the present Floyd County, and lived there for a time since Alexander Lackey of Prestonsburg, in support of Simeon's petition for a Revolutionary War pension, once testified that they had been neighbors for nine or ten years.

Simeon's pension papers revealed much about his early life and war service. He was born in Pittsylvania County, Virginia on June 4, 1765. His family moved to Rutherford County, North Carolina, but later moved to the community of Ninety Six in South Carolina where his mother died. Simeon, his father John, and a brother, also John, enlisted at Fort Rutledge in 1777. His brother who may have been slightly older, was appointed fifer and Simeon, then only twelve, became the company's drummer. Capt. Benjamin Tutt gave the three enlistees a small amount of bounty money.

Simeon served most of his three year enlistment at Fort Rutledge, but in February 1780 he was sent to Augusta, Georgia. In May he was back at Fort Rutledge. His term of enlistment ended in June of that year but "times were very squally and it was thought imprudent to discharge the men at the fort." Squally they were, indeed, for Fort Rutledge was captured by the British and Simeon was made prisoner, not to be parolled till July.

After his discharge he lived in South Carolina till 1795 when he moved to Tennessee and lived there for four years. Then he moved to Buncombe County, North Carolina, and in 1807 came to Floyd County. After his death on January 16, 1846, Adelpia went to live with George and Sarah in their Breedings Creek home. In 1853 she requested of

Letcher County judge Green Adams a pension for being the widow of a Revolutionary War soldier. She died and was buried on Irishman Creek.

Another family heirloom, but now in the possession of Jethro Amburgey of Hindman, was a chair Simeon made that was used by his descendants as a "courting chair." It testifies to its maker and original owner's weight, some 400 pounds, for it could easily accommodate two ordinary-sized persons at the same time.

George and Sarah Johnson had eight children: Fieldon (called Babe), George, Leslie, Simeon, Sarah, Susan, Thomas, and Adelpia (named for her grandmother). Susan married George Eversole; Thomas married Lucy Eversole; and Adelpia married Washington Combs.

The old Breedings Creek house continued to be a stopping place for travelers between the county towns of Whitesburg, Hazard, McPherson, and Prestonsburg. Patrick Johnson tells us that when he was a child he heard his father call to many a traveler "Light and stay" or "Light and tell us the news."

Fieldon Johnson was a lawyer whose practice was mainly in the Whiteburg court until the formation of Knott County. But sometimes he took cases in Wise, Virginia. On one such occasion he met his wife, Sarah Dotson.

Knott was organized in 1884 from parts of Floyd, Perry, Letcher, and Breathitt Counties. Fieldon and Whitesburg attorney Tom Fitzpatrick were strong supporters of the new county and assisted the Letcher representative, Robert Bates, in securing passage of the enabling legislation.

McPherson, the local post office, and the community, aptly called the Forks of the Troublesome, became Hindman when that place was named the new county's seat. It was then sparsely populated. F.P. "Chick" Allen ran the local store and near him lived Lewis Hays. Wagon roads connected the town with neighboring county seats. Fieldon Johnson, on hand for the county's organization, described the event as pretty wild. Heavy drinking, dancing in the roadways, and the shooting of firearms led to several altercations. Personal affronts were settled by fisticuffs, and the noise was such that the commissioners were forced to move to Lewis Hays' home to complete their work.

At the Hays home arguments were frequent and often bitter. Bolling Hall from Beaver was appointed to lay off the county into magisterial districts. But he refused to serve since he was being deprived of his office as Floyd County assessor. Finally, the wrangling ended and Knott County was duly organized.

According to the Louisville Commercial of July 8, 1885, "The close of the festivities at what became the town of Hindman was a fitting climax. The local magistrate lay on his back in the sand in the bottom of the dry creek, and was singing with all his might until he became too drowsy longer to make exertion. (sic) Many others lay on the grass."

Fieldon became Knott's first county attorney and Lewis Hays was named its first court clerk. Fieldon continued to live on Breedings Creek, and when his father died in 1904, he formally occupied the old house built by his grandparents. It was his wife Sarah who preserved for the present generation the home's many

antiques. After Fieldon's death she lived with her memories of her families--the Matneys, Dotsons, and Johnsons. One son, Simeon, married Sarah Francis and they are the parents of Willard "Sprout" Johnson, once a member of the Carr Creek Indians and now that team's coach.

Almost exactly opposite the mouth of Breedings Creek is the four mile long valley of Defeated Creek. According to Patrick Johnson, it was named back in pioneer days in this fashion. There was an encampment of whites on Troublesome Creek one winter and Willie Carr (sometimes called Old Man Carr) and another man strayed on a hunting trip to that valley and built there a rude shelter. That night Indians attacked their camp and Carr and his companion, along with their dogs, fled across the ice. Carr tripped over one of the dogs and fell into the creek. Indians were quickly upon him and he was killed and scalped. Thus was named Defeated Creek. It's but a legend but it may be true. It certainly reflects the collective memory of the five surviving members of the Johnson family which go back to the earliest settlement of that part of the country. at least a century and a half ago, and to them it's a priceless memory.

[Editor's note: Even the house is a memory for the lower end of Breedings Creek is now in the 710 acre Carr Fork Lake that was completed in 1976.]

6-3-1954

HOME THAT SERVED HERE AS COURTHOUSE IS RAZED by Henry P. Scalf  
(Reprinted from the Floyd County Times, June 3, 1954)

On the morning of April 16, 1808 William James Mayo stood by his home at the corner of Ford Street and First Avenue in Prestonsburg and, looking toward the site of the present (1954) municipal building, saw the log courthouse go up in flames.

Mayo, who who been a deputy county clerk in his native Patrick County, Virginia, and would later become the county clerk of Edgar County, Illinois, was, at the time of the fire, clerk of both the Floyd county and circuit courts. All the early Floyd records went up in flames save a single order book that Mayo probably had at home.

Mayo most likely built his Prestonsburg home soon after he arrived in town with his wife, Elizabeth Hancock Mayo, and at least five of their children. According to family tradition, while still in Virginia in 1799, Mayo accepted the invitation of Alexander Lackey of Floyd Co. to serve as the new county's first clerk. After the fire the new Mayo home served as temporary quarters of the county government. The first meeting of the Circuit Court was held here on April 18, 1808 and present were the Hon. John Graham and Alexander Lackey, associate judges.

Little was accomplished at this first meeting. David Brown was sworn in as a practicing attorney. The Grand Jury, under its foreman Abraham Beavers, "retired to consult on the presentments and after sometime returned into (sic) court and, having made no presentments, were discharged."

The old order book describing the official events occurring in the Mayo home, is, as stated in its fly leaf, "a record of orders-- begun April 1808 and ending in October 1818." It includes a lone entry giving the date of the court house fire. On April 19 the court met in the Mayo home again and appointed Harry Stratton, Cornelius McGuire, David Morgan, John Spurlock, and Robert Meade commissioners under "the act for the relief of persons who may have been or may be injured by the destruction of the records of any court." The commissioners were asked to advertise their duties for ten days and then to meet at the Mayo home and "proceed to reinstate the records and papers of this court with those of the late Quarterly Superior court that were in the office of the clerk of this court and were destroyed by fire on the morning of the Sixteenth Instant."

By today's standards the old Mayo home was pretty rugged. But like the new county it lasted for a century and a half. Giant poplars were hewn and laid in a saddle notch. Rocks were handdressed and the house had a chimney. At the time of the fire it probably had only two rooms. Additions were made in the succeeding decades and it was eventually weatherboarded probably by one of the Ford or Mayo families that owned it after the Mayos moved out.

In 1804 Mayo is known to have bought a farm, now called the Mayo Farm, on the present (1954) highway south of town. But since the court was using his town house, it was most likely that he had not yet built a home on his new property. But he is known to have moved some time before he left for Illinois (in 1825). His son Jacob succeeded him as Floyd clerk from 1825 to 1835. Some Mayo descendants still live on the farm.

6-3-1954

-3-

Until recently Mayo's Prestonsburg home, one of the town's oldest structures, was owned and occupied by Lee P. May and the family of his son Martin Lee. But it is now (1954) being dismantled to make way for a new home to be built by Russell W. Pelphrey of Prestonsburg.

Sharing in age and history with the Mayo home is a nearby house owned by the Johns Family that served as the courtroom for the local magistrate Solomon DeRossett.



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C-10-1954

OLD HOME OF BETSY LAYNE STANDS, LONG UNTENANTED by Henry P. Scalf  
(Reprinted from the Floyd County Times, June 10, 1954)

Residents of Betsy Layne vaguely recall that their post office, established some fifty years ago, was named for an old lady. But none remember that she was Elizabeth Johns Layne, nor that she and her husband, Tandy Middleton Layne, had acquired a large farm at the site of the present Justell post office (on the west side of the Big Sandy River). And they don't know that sometime after the Laynes married on April 21, 1831, they built a log house that, by 1954, was still standing on their farm.

Tandy and Elizabeth were the children of pioneers. Tandy was the son of James Stratton and Caty (Hager) Layne. Elizabeth (called Betsy) was a daughter of Thomas and Nancy (Layne) Johns. Nancy and James Shannon were first cousins. The elder Laynes and Johns had come to Floyd County from Amherst County, Virginia a decade before Tandy and Betsy's birth. Nancy rode horseback to Kentucky with a two year old child lying in her arms.

Tandy and Betsy's 776 acre farm on the Layne family estate was large compared to today's Floyd County farmsteads. The Layne farm is now (1954) but 640 acres, owned by Claibourne Bailey. In its 125 year history, this farm had only two voluntary title transfers, a possible record for the fewest such property transfers in Floyd County. The first was in 1918 when a railroad right-of-way was secured to the new Pike-Floyd Coal Company mine, and the second was when Bailey sold some land on the Betsy Layne Branch.

Tandy and Betsy's children were Emma, who married John Powell; Mary, who married Harvey Childress; Thomas, who married Ann Weddington; and Jane, who married Anthony Hatcher.

The two story Layne home, long unoccupied, was made of hand-planed poplar lumber of the finest quality. A small cramped stairway goes up from the front room to two large upstairs rooms. A lean-to kitchen and dining room, now falling down, were built by Tandy on the west side. Large chimneys of crude hand-carved native stone stand at each end of the house. Tandy's nearby slave house is long gone.

James Shannon Layne operated a store across the river from his son's home, near the present (1954) residence of James H. Loar, a Layne descendant.

In 1841 three of Tandy's brothers--William Henry, Sam George, and John Lewis--died of typhoid. Sam and John's tombstones lay on the grass near Loar's garden. Mr. Loar recalls the old story of how a family difference prevented the erection of the stones after they were bought. Tandy and Betsy and Tandy's parents are buried on the hill overlooking the community from the railroad side.

Betsy survived Tandy's death by many years, long enough to be vaguely remembered by today's oldtimers. For most of that time she lived alone. Their farm was bought by Dr. S.M. Ferguson in 1876 and tenants, (including Richard P. Robinson) lived in the old house until recently.

Dr. Ferguson, who lived near the Pike County line (at the present Boldman), died in 1904. His heirs sold the Layne farm to the Big Mud Coal Company owned by John C.C. Mayo, Walter S. Harkins, and others. Shortly thereafter, the Betsy Layne rail station was estab-

lished. The coal company was soon sold to the Olive Hill Brick Company who planned to ship the local coal to its Carter County plant.

The local post office was opened on the east side of the river on May 1, 1908 and named for the old lady local people remembered from years before. But since October 1922 the office at the site of the old Layne farm on the west side of the river has been Justell, a name coined from Justice and Elliott, the operators of a nearby mine. An earlier post office serving the present Betsy Layne post office site was Laynesville, named for James Shannon.

The local railway station remains Betsy Layne and the old Layne house still stands, recalling that once there lived an old lady whom everyone called Betsy Layne.

[Editor's note: the Layne house no longer stands, having collapsed several years after this column was published.]

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# TON WAS NEIGHBOR ONSBURG IN 1800

BY HENRY P. SCALE

158 miles by the said river, including the islands thereof to the beginning shall form one distinct county, and be called and known by the name of Kanawha." By this act, the site of Prestonsburg was in Kanawha county, Virginia.

The Mason county line was partly designated "thence along the said line to Big Sandy, and down the same to the Ohio." Effective date of the act was May 1, 1788. Mason was created by a subdivision of Bourbon county that had the Big Sandy for a border and Kanawha county was carved from Greenbrier and Montgomery counties, both in Virginia then but in separate states now.

The two counties bordered each other for ten years. Then in 1798 the Kentucky Legislature created Fleming county, Kentucky. Again Big Sandy became a border line, this time between Fleming county, Kentucky and Kanawha county, Virginia. The act created Fleming county approved by the Governor of Kentucky, Feb. 10, 1798 stated "Thence with the dividing ridge between the waters of Licking and the Ohio until it strikes the waters of Sandy, thence down such branch, east to Sandy." The obscurity of this designated line didn't bother the Kentucky legislators. They didn't know nor care much about Eastern Kentucky.

Kanawha and Fleming counties remained with common border until the year 1800 when Floyd was formed. The eastern boundary of this new Kentucky county was at the forks of Sandy, the present Louisa. If you had lived at or above The Point on the Lavisa Fork of Big Sandy in 1800 and had business to transact at the county seat you would have had to come to Prestonsburg, either on foot or horseback. If you had lived across the river near the present site of Fort Gay, originally called Cassville, and had business to do at the county seat you would have had to make

a hazardous and weary journey to the Kanawha River, where Charleston now stands. Nearly a hundred miles! Only it wasn't Charleston. It was Charles Town, a struggling frontier village, founded by George Clendenin and named for his father, Charles Clendenin. It had been chartered in 1704. Originally the place was the site of Fort Lee.

Some of the original names of the present city of Charleston were "The Town at the Mouth of Elk", Clendennin's Settlement," and "Clendennin's Fort." When Kanawha county was formed, the justices named, in "the commission of peace", met "at the house of William Clendenin."

Southern West Virginia was for the first years of the nineteenth century, an almost empty land. When the Indians were pushed out, the ruggedness of the terrain discouraged home seekers. This accounts for the late subdivision of the vast area of original Kanawha county. But slowly settlers filled the narrow valleys and bottoms. Cabell county, named for William H. Cabell, who was governor of Virginia from 1805 to 1808, was formed from Kanawha in 1809. Barboursville remained the county seat until 1807 when it was moved to Huntington. Floyd county, Kentucky, now bordered Cabell county, Virginia.

The Big Sandy River remained the border between Floyd county and Cabell county until Lawrence county, Kentucky was created in 1821. In 1842 Wayne county, Virginia, was formed. It was named for Gen. "Mad Anthony" Wayne, of Fallen Timbers fame. The county seat was laid off at the forks of Twelvepole Creek and named Trout's Hill, honoring Abraham Trout, owner of the land. The name was changed to Wayne in 1882 when it was incorporated. Many of the settlers from Floyd county helped people Wayne county, among the families being the Sellards, Sullivans, Fraleys, and Deans. Wayne, originally a part of Kanawha and Lawrence (originally carved from Floyd and Greenup), remain today with the Big Sandy separating them.

The Virginia legislature created two Mason counties, both named for George Mason, author

of the Virginia Constitution, and a member of the convention that framed the Constitution of the United States. The first was Mason county, Kentucky, in 1788, but four years later Kentucky became a state and Virginia had no county honoring him. In 1804, the first partition of Kanawha took place and a new county was created which the Virginia legislators named Mason. Virginia lost this county to West Virginia in 1863. Although Virginia created a number of counties in her later history, she claims none now named Mason. But she tried twice.

Both early Floyd and early Kanawha counties were a vast area of wilderness when their borders joined on the Big Sandy. But today between the two lie the county of Martin, in Kentucky, and the counties of Boone, Mingo and Logan, in West Virginia. Some of the early settlers of Cabell had to travel a hundred miles or more to vote, an old history informs us. Which, is of course, a great distance. But if, in that period between 1800 and 1809 you were living in Prestonsburg and had wanted to visit the seat of a neighboring county you would have had to travel a "fur piece," indeed.

CHARLESTON WAS NEIGHBOR OF PRESTONBURG IN  
1800 by Henry P. Scaif (Reprinted from  
the Floyd County Times, 12/9/1954)

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Though it's now <sup>highway</sup> 158 miles between  
Maysville, the ~~county~~ seat of Mason Co., Ky,  
and Charleston, the seat of Kanawha  
Co., W.Va., there was a line when the 2  
co's. joined on the BSR. There was  
also a line when Floyd Co. bordered on  
Kanawha.

Between ~~(1)~~ Mason + Kanawha  
~~(2)~~ there are now 8 Ky. counties and  
2 W.Va. counties. Both counties were  
created by the Virginia leg. in 1800.  
Kentucky didn't become a separate  
state until 1792 while W.Va. ~~(1)~~ ~~(was)~~  
~~(a part)~~ remained a part of Va. till 1863.  
~~(2)~~ By the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> cent.  
Kanawha embraced ~~(1)~~ the ~~(2)~~  
western and southern section of the  
present W.Va. and bordered <sup>on</sup> the Br.  
of Va. ~~(1)~~ Acc. to Henning's Statutes  
of Va. Chap. XIV, the act creating

Kanawha Co. ~~by~~ was approved by the voters on 11/14/1788: "~~An act for~~"

"Be it enacted by the General Ass., that from and after the first day of October next, those parts of the counties of Greenbrier and Montgomery, within the following bounds, to wit: beginning at the mouth of Great Sandy in the said county of Montgomery; thence up the said river to the line of the said county to the mt. generally known by the name of Cumberland mountain; thence a northeast course along the said mountain to the Great Kanawha, crossing the same at the end of Gawley mountain; thence along the said mountain to the line of Harrison county; <sup>thence</sup> ~~thence~~ a short line to the Ohio River; thence <sup>^</sup> down the said river, including the islands thereof to the

beginning shall form one distinct county, and be called and known by the name of Kanawha." By this act the site of Prestonsburg was in Kanawha county, Virginia (2)

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Effective May 1, 1788 marion was created from a part of Bourbon Co. that originally bordered on the BS

The 2 co's, bordered on each other for 10 yrs. In 1792 the Ky. leg. created Fleming Co. - the BS' as its border with Kanawha Co. (~~According to acts of the~~

~~Ky. & Va.~~) K. + F co's. retained the common border till 1800 when Floyd was formed. The e boundary of the new Ky. Co. was the fork of the Sandy, the site of the present city of Louisa. ~~Those living~~ persons living east of the BS, in Kanawha

4/11  
W. Va. would have had to make a <sup>long</sup> ~~long~~ <sup>7</sup>  
hazardous ~~trip~~ <sup>of nearly 100 miles</sup> trip to the  
Kanawha R. where the Kanawha  
seat of Charleston ~~was~~ <sup>is</sup> located.  
Only it was Charlestown then, a  
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<sup>early</sup> Charleston, the site of what was  
1st called Fort Lee, went by  
several ~~names~~ names: "The Town at the  
mouth of Elk," "Clendenin's settle-  
ment," and "Clendenin's Fort." With  
the formation of K. Co. ~~the~~ its  
1st commissioners (or ruling  
body) met at the Wm Clendenin's  
home.

For the 1st 40-<sup>50</sup> years of the 19<sup>th</sup> cent  
W. Va. was very sparsely settled. Even  
after the Indians were displaced,  
white settlement was discouraged by the

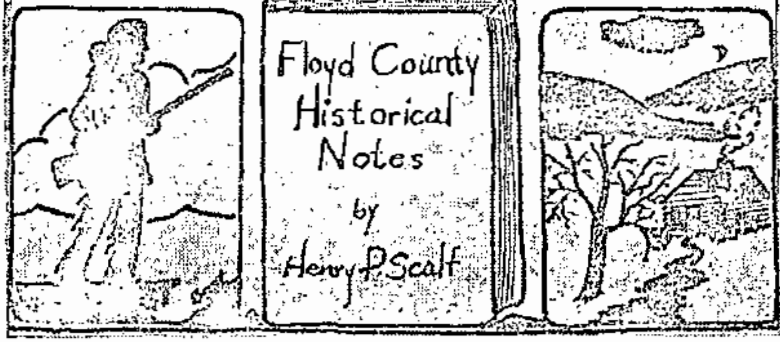
roughness of the land, <sup>relatively</sup> their accounting for the late subdivision of the orig. ~~large~~ Kanawha Co. But slowly settlers ~~it~~ began to fill the narrow valleys.

Cabell Co. named for Wm. H. Cabell, Va's gov. from 1805 to 1808, was taken from Kanawha in 1809.

Barboursville remained ~~in~~ Cabell Co. until 1887 when it was moved to Huntington, Floyd Co. now bordered Cabell Co, Va.

1-6-1955

Telma Stewart  
of P. burg, Ky.  
Student of  
Leonard Roberts at  
Morehead State U  
1961.



The early Damron family in Virginia came from Suffolk, England, where churches recorded the marriages and births of numerous members of this large land-holding family. The name is of French origin and it is thought that the family resided originally among the French of Belgium. The name is spelled Dameron, Damron, Damrell, Damarell, the first two being the spelling used most often in America.

We first hear of captain John Dameron in 1619, and in 1640, he was probably master of the ship Duty, which brought the Birdwell prison convicts to Virginia. The first Demerons or Damrons to settle in this country, according to early records, were Lawrence and his wife, Dorothy, who settled around 1652 in Northumberland land county, Virginia, overlooking the Chesapeake Bay, in Wicomaco Parish, which he founded and where he owned 2,000 acres, granted by the crown. Old Wicomaco Parish church is still standing and also the Damron burying ground is preserved, but in bad condition. His children were Bartholomew, George, Thomas, possibly Samuel, and Dorothy. The main descendants of George, son of Lawrence, the immigrant, kept the original land until 1849. The Damrons have settled in most all southern and western states.

Lazarus, son of George and grandson of Lawrence the immigrant, was the first one to leave Northumberland county, Virginia. He settled in Albermarle county, Virginia. His wife was Elizabeth Smith Damron and his children were John, George, Richard, Moses, Winifred, Judith and Hannah.

There are many descendants in this county and adjoining counties today.

Moses, Captain John, Lazarus and Richard, likely descendants of Moses of Albermarle county, were in Russell county, Virginia, at the beginning of the county. This county was taken from Washington county. Records state that Moses John and Lazarus, were in Washington county, Virginia around 1780 and 1786 where Moses and Lazarus were noted Indian fighters and spies employed by the government in this capacity. Lazarus' companion in this undertaking was James Fraley, who settled in Lawrence county, Kentucky. Lazarus also fought at King's Mountain during the Revolution. Captain John was in the Battle of Brandywine, Germantown and Valley Forge and became adjutant of the 72nd Virginia Regiment of Militia, 2nd Battalion, of Russell county.

The first deed written in Russell county was from James Osborne to Moses Damron in 1786, for land on the Clinch river, which in 1791 was deeded to Captain John. Moses and wife Sarah sold their land and went to Fleming county, Kentucky, in 1798 according to Russell county records.

Lazarus and wife, Nancy sold land on Lewis Creek and came to Floyd county, in 1805, and Richard probably came with him where he owned land on Shelby Creek in 1808. Captain John sold his Russell county land in 1805 and moved to Tennessee and then to Franklin county, Illinois, in the capacity of a traveling Methodist Minister. His grave is marked by the uniform Revolutionary marker in Drake cemetery in Franklin County.



1-6-1955

# Lieut. Thornsbury, Prisoner-of-War, Composed Ballad on Lookout Mt.

By Henry P. Scalf *Jan. 6, 1955 issue*

*Floyd Co. Times*

*Thelma Stewart of P.burg, Floyd Co. Ky. one of Leonard Roberts' students, Morehead St. U. 1961.*



Lt. James M. Thornsbury  
(1838-1890)  
39th Ky. Inf. USA

Lieutenant James M. Thornsbury (1838-1890), Union soldier and prisoner of the Confederacy for several months, had many bitter memories of his captivity, so many in fact that after he escaped and rejoined his fellows, he sat down on the top of Lookout Mountain near Chattanooga and wrote a poem to express his travail. The old ballad, written 90 years ago, is in the possession of James Thornsbury, of Cow Creek, who is a grandson. Other bits of the family history are contributed by Mrs. Betty Michael, of Pikeville, only surviving daughter of the Union soldier. Mrs. Michael attained, the day before Christmas, to the age of four score years.

Not all the memories of James M. Thornsbury were of cruel treatment in a Confederate prison. He happily recalled his youth on the Levisa Fork of Big Sandy near Card Creek. His parents, John ("Uncle Jackie") and Elizabeth Thornsbury, lived in a two-room log cabin there. All around, abounded game. The land was heavily forested, broken only by a few settler cabins of which the Thornsbury's was one.

There was the time, he would recall, when his mother was down near the river washing under a giant sycamore. Her utensils for the work were primitive, but were in common use in a land living under pioneer conditions. She had a wash trough made from a large hollow poplar log, the depth of the depression greater at one end. Clothes were "battled" in this trough-like wooden tub, standing on legs. She used a "battling stick", an oar-like wooden tool, about an inch thick and three feet long.

While his mother was engaged in this weekly chore, James stood nearby, listened to the bay of deer hounds. The sound came nearer, there was a sudden splash as a deer, chased by many dogs, plunged into the river and began to swim across. It came out on Mrs. Thornsbury's side, near the wash site. It could scarcely walk, staggered as it attempted to run. Betty Thornsbury killed it with a stroke of the "battling stick." It was, some said, the last deer killed on the Levisa Fork.

When the Civil War broke upon unhappy Eastern Kentucky, James was 22 years of age. In 1860 he had married Mary Stump (1843-1917), a daughter of George and Betty Ann Williams Stump, Levisa Fork natives. The first child was on the

way when James went into the service. It was born a few months after he was gone. He never saw this son, for the child died while James was in the 39th Kentucky Mounted Infantry.

Thornsbury's ballad gives us no light on his service prior to his capture by the Confederates. Perhaps everything in his war record faded, in his mind, into insignificance before the indignities he suffered in a Confederate prisoner of war camp. He wrote the ballad in late December 1864, while on his way back to Kentucky. Since he informs us, in his metered mean, that he was captured, Jan. 9, 1864, he was a captive approximately 11 months. The ballad of nine stanzas, entitled "Trials of a Union Soldier", follows. The old manuscript, has written under the title: "This was composed by Lieut. James M. Thornsbury on the Lookout Mountain, Chattanooga, Tenn., 10th day of Dec. 1864."

On the ninth of January, eighteen hundred and sixty four  
I was taken by the Rebels on Big Sandy's shore.  
My sword and pistol, they quickly took away,  
I stood in the snow and not a word could say.

My pocketbook and money, I quickly threw down  
And made them believe that I surely had none.  
They marched me to Wytheville and there I took a car;  
From there I went to Richmond, a prisoner of war.

And there I remained until months rolled around;  
During all this time my feet were never on the ground.  
In Libby prison I was kept until the seventh day of May  
But quickly we got orders and then we marched away.

We were transported southward, down to Macon town,  
In the state of old Georgia, a thousand miles from home;  
My troubles there were great, with not very much to eat,  
In the sun we were kept and nearly died from heat.

The fall of Atlanta was the cause of General Hood  
To begin his retreat and that was very good  
And when the news came, it did quickly sound;

The prisoners had to leave and go to Charles Town.

And when we were there near the ocean shore,  
The sound of Foster's cannon soon began to roar.  
The shells did fly, the town began to burn;  
It was very funny to see the Rebels run.

And it was not long until we were carried down  
To Columbia, South Carolina, the course is not known.  
The camp was very bad, what time I remained,  
With not a house nor shelter to keep us from the rain.

So one day I concluded I would no longer stay,  
With boldness and courage I quickly marched away.  
The Southern Confederacy I left it behind  
And started up the river a better land to find.

And when I arrived at Knoxville, Tennessee,  
I was treated like a brother and set at liberty.  
And now I have met my friends in communion  
Where the stars and stripes are waving for the Union.

The "better land" Lieutenant Thornsbury wanted to find was the Levisa Fork of Big Sandy in Pike county. In all, 10 children were born to James and Mary, of whom only Mrs. Betty Michael survives. The ballad-writing Union soldier died in 1890 at Pikeville. He was 52 years of age.

*End*

*E. Spence (Civil War)*

One son, Lauchie Qullman Thornsbery, was educated at Louisville for the profession of medicine, in the same class with Dr. Walk Stumbo, of this county. Dr Thornsbery married Pearl Scott, daughter of Martin and Jane Blankenship Scott, of Johns Creek. They had one son.

Pearl Scott Thornsbery died in 1911, is buried at Gulnare, Pike county. Dr. Thornsbery went back to his native Levisa Fork, began to practice medicine in that section. He was shot and killed in 1915 in an affray, growing out of an election difficulty, it was said.

Dr. Thornsbery and his father, Lieut. James M. Thornsbery, are buried on the Levisa Fork of the Big Sandy near Card Creek.

(The spelling of the family name used here is that used today by most of the descendants of Lieut. James M. Thornbury. Some, however, spell it Thousberry, and Civil War records use this variation).

# David Musick Tragedy Retold As Marker Unveiled at Grave

(Address of E. J. Sutherland, Clinchwood, Virginia, prepared for delivery at the dedication of the David Musick Monument near Honaker, Virginia, August 19, 1956).

Two hundred years ago this land of peace and happiness on the headwaters of Clinch River was the hunting-ground of several tribes of ferocious Indians. It was originally neutral ground among the tribes. It never became the fixed home of the red men, but annually it was visited by roving bands of savage hunters, who frequently brought their families into this hunters' paradise for long camping trips during the hunting season. The fierce Shawnee and other Northern tribes and the capricious Cherokees and many Southern tribes often met each other on these hunting tours on Clinch River, sometimes in friendly rivalry, but at other times their meeting ended in bloody battles.

Prior to the coming of the white men into Southwest Virginia, a rather peaceful tribe of Indians called Xelanas occupied most of this section. The more warlike Cherokees and Shawnees coveted their beautiful homeland and drove them out.

White adventurers began to explore Southwest Virginia about two hundred years ago. Dr. Thomas Walker and his companions in 1749-1750 came westward from Albemarle county, Virginia, and passed through Southwest Virginia and out into Kentucky at Cumberland Gap. The next year Christopher Gist explored Eastern Kentucky, and then came eastward through Pound Gap into Virginia. Another twenty years elapsed before the white settlers swarmed into the Clinch territory.

When white people first came to this country, the Indians were comparatively friendly. Several treaties with the Indians had secured a hazy title to the land in Southwest Virginia for the state. However many of the red men resented the encroachment of the white man into their former happy hunting-ground. It took but little provocation to arouse the furious anger of the red men against the white settlers. Therefore from both North and South bloody forays of Indian warriors burst savagely on the pioneer settlements. The whites were at first sparsely settled, and these isolated homes provided shining targets for Indian attacks without much danger of retaliation. The first settlements usually contained a blockhouse into which the harassed white families could take

leaders sent occasional reports of Indian atrocities to the Governor at Richmond, with urgent requests for aid for the outnumbered and harassed settlers. Among these records are the following items briefly stated:

March 27, 1786, two families in New Garden killed or captured; Aug. 12, 1786, Capt. Moore and family murdered on Bhestone; March 17, 1787; three persons killed in Castlewood by Cherokees; May 19, 1787, reported John English's family killed at Castlewood in March last (See next item above); May 15, 1783, three boys carried off in Rye Cove; June 24, 1788, Elines (Elams?), 3 Breedings of New Garden went "pinnuqueling" and were killed on Black Mountain; Oct. 20, 1789, Wiley family reported killed or captured; July 4, 1793, reported Mrs. Wiley escaped from the Indians; Sept. 3, 1790, reported 6 or 8 persons killed on Clinch; Oct. 28, 1791, Secretary of War Knox informs the Governor that President Washington was giving orders for the protection of Russell county.

Dec. 2, 1791, Capt. Andrew Lewis appointed to protect frontier; — 1791, guards required in Baptist Valley, Richlands and New Garden (10 men);

Aug. 24, 1792, Capt. Lewis reported that 4 persons were killed, and 12 to 14 taken prisoners by the Indians in New Garden; April 15, 1794, affidavit of Elizabeth Livingston's captivity among the Indians; April 29, 1794, reported that Capt. Bench, halfbreed savage, had been killed, and his scalp sent to the Governor "as proof that he is no more."

The above items have been taken from the Calendar of Virginia State Papers. Many other atrocities have been omitted from the list.

I am indebted to my long-time friend, Rev. Grover C. Musick, for this exciting story of David Musick. Grover Musick is a great-great-grandson of the martyred David Musick. He secured this story from his great-aunt, Mrs. Annie (Musick) Fletcher (born 1832, died 1927), a granddaughter of David Musick. Her narrative follows:

"My grandfather, David Musick, married Annie McKinney, of Russell County, Virginia, and at the time of his death in 1792, his family consisted of his wife, and the following children: Samuel, Abraham, Elijah, Electious, and Phoebe. They lived on a farm near the present town of Honaker.

"Two of the boys, Abraham and Elijah, went early one morning for firewood with which to prepare

they found a young mare, and after securing her, they placed the meat on her and had young Abraham, the eldest son, mount her. This boy, Abraham, had red hair, and the Indians were fond of him and treated him very fine. Not so however with Electious, the youngest son, who refused to eat the raw meat along the way, and cried a great deal. As a punishment, they rubbed his face against an oak tree, cutting the flesh deeply. He carried the scars with him to his grave.

"The course the Indians and their captives followed led over Big A Mountain into the present county of Buchanan, down a ridge which bears the name of Indian Ridge in memory of this event, following Indian Creek, which also takes its name for this event. They then came to Russell Fork River, down which they went through the Sand Lick section of Dickenson county to the Junction of Russell Fork River with Russell Frater Creek, where the present town of Haysl is now located.

"Night coming on they decided to camp there. Crossing a knoll a few yards above where Russell Frater enters Russell Fork, they forded the river to what was at that time a small island. An Indian brave, who could speak a little English, said as they were crossing: "White man no come here."

"Little did they know about their peril, for close upon them was a posse of white settlers, who a little later in the night, sighting their camp-fire, moved into hiding behind the knoll and anxiously awaited the coming of dawn to attack and release Mrs. Musick and her children. All of the Indians undoubtedly would have been killed had the orders of the Captain of the posse been obeyed. One of the posse became so excited that he fired before the order to fire was given.

"When Mrs. Musick heard the firing, she and the children rushed toward the whites, she carrying the baby, Phoebe, in her arms. One of the Indians threw his tomahawk at her, but missed, sticking it in an oak tree. Another Indian threw pieces of burning firewood at her. An overruling Providence surely must have saved the family.

"The result of the attack: One Indian killed, another seriously wounded, but who was able to escape with his companions with much pain, as was indicated by his screams. Some years ago a human skeleton was found under a cliff not far from Haysl, supposedly that of the wounded Indian. Then began the long thirty-mile journey back to

plore Southwest Virginia about two hundred years ago. Dr. Thomas Walker and his companions in 1749-1750 came westward from Albemarle county, Virginia, and passed through Southwest Virginia and out into Kentucky at Cumberland Gap. The next year Christopher Gist explored Eastern Kentucky, and then came eastward through Found Gap into Virginia. Another twenty years elapsed before the white settlers swarmed into the Clinch territory.

When white people first came to this country, the Indians were comparatively friendly. Several treaties with the Indians had secured a hazy title to the land in Southwest Virginia for the state. However many of the red men resented the encroachment of the white man into their former happy hunting-ground. It took but little provocation to arouse the furious anger of the red men against the white settlers. Therefore from both North and South bloody forays of Indian warriors burst savagely on the pioneer settlements. The whites were at first sparsely settled, and these isolated homes provided shining targets for Indian attacks without much danger of retaliation. The first settlements usually contained a blockhouse into which the harassed white families could take refuge when the storm broke suddenly. But many of the braver or more careless settlers lost their own lives and often those of their families by making their homes in extreme frontier sections.

Hardly had the white settlers established their homes in what is now Washington, Russell and Tazewell counties when the red men began to stalk them stealthily from the surrounding forests. The settlements on the Bluestone River and at Richlands, New Garden, Castlewood and Fort Blackmore on the Clinch River became frequent targets for the Indians. Tradition keeps alive some of these wilderness tragedies, and the few remaining records speak meagerly but eloquently of the struggle for life and civilization along the flaming Virginia frontier.

The thrilling stories of the capture and miraculous escape of Jenny Wiley from the Indians, the marvelous exploits of the various members of the Harman family, the horrors of the massacre of Capt. James Moore, and the struggles of other hardy Indian fighters in the early days of Tazewell county, have been fittingly told by historians. The murder of the brave James Douglas near Little Moccasin Gap, and the harrowing experiences of the early settlers on the upper Holston River in Washington county have likewise been committed to everlasting print, but very little has been written about the Indian atrocities in Russell County.

Many of the settlers of Russell county served against the forays of the red men even before Russell county was establishing in 1786. Captains Russell, Smith and Boone

Aug. 24, 1792, Capt. Lewis reported that 4 persons were killed, and 12 to 14 taken prisoners by the Indians in New Garden; April 15, 1791, affidavit of Elizabeth Livingston's captivity among the Indians; April 29, 1794, reported that Capt. Dench, halfbreed savage, had been killed, and his scalp sent to the Governor "as proof that he is no more."

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"Two of the boys, Abraham and Elijah, went early one morning for firewood with which to prepare breakfast. They were surprised by a party of Indians (not known how many), but were able to reach their home. The doors were barred, and the defense of the home began. David Musick had a flint-lock rifle. He found it would not fire, due to the fact his house had been burned previous to this, injuring the gun. Mrs. Musick touched fire to the gun, hoping to ignite the powder, but to no avail. Mr. Musick was shot through the thigh by an arrow from the bow of the Indians, and fainted from loss of blood. The Indians broke into the home, killing and scalping him and making prisoners of his wife and children. They then plundered the house and ate what they found of prepared food, their hands gory with blood.

"While the Indians were attacking the house, a neighbor, who had come to the Musick home to borrow a plow, on seeing the Indians became so excited he ran with all speed possible. On reaching the yard of his home he fell dead. He must have had a weak heart.

"The evening previous to the massacre of Mr. Musick the same band of Indians scalped a girl named Brunley, who lived in the same community. They came upon her late in the evening, while churning at a spring house some distance from her house. Strange to say they scalped her alive, leaving her to die. The girl crawled some distance to an old stable and hid in some flax, which was stored in the building. She was found alive, and recovered.

"But to resume my story of the Musick family and the Indians.

"Telling Mrs. Musick and the children to get ready, they started

they were crossing; "White man no come here."

"Little did they know about their peril, for close upon them was a posse of white settlers, who a little later in the night, sighting their camp-fire, moved into hiding behind the knoll and anxiously awaited the coming of dawn to attack and release Mrs. Musick and her children. All of the Indians undoubtedly would have been killed had the orders of the Captain of the posse been obeyed. One of the posse became so excited that he fired before the order to fire was given.

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"The posse being very much worn out by the long and arduous trip, when they reached the foot of Sandy Ridge decided to camp for the night at a large spring. But Mrs. Musick insisted they cross the mountain to Clinch River side before camping. Later discovery proved her fear correct, for the party of Indians had turned back after the fight and pursued the whites, following them to the big spring and camping on the proposed camp site of the whites. They gave up the chase here and returned to Ohio."

Such were the sufferings and heroic spirit of the ancestors of many of the citizens of this pleasant community. This monument will be an ever-present reminder to the the present and future generations of the trials of the Clinch River pioneers.

# Site of Prestonsburg Was Part Of Preston's 100,000 Acres

Sept. 27, 1956  
By HENRY P. SCALF

The 2,000-acre survey of John Graham, made for Col. John Preston, of Montgomery county, Virginia, covering the present site of Prestonsburg, was probably not the first that embraced the area but it was the first that stood the test of time and the courts. It was contested by Michael Montgomery and Robert Young in 1812 and required a year of litigation before the question of the validity of the survey was resolved in favor of Graham.

Many attorneys in abstracting titles for clients never bother to trace the chain of ownership of real property back to the original Virginia grant, but Marshall Davidson, Prestonsburg attorney, has just completed a chronological chain of title for a client here that goes back through 159 years to the Graham survey. It contains much Big Sandy history and refers to owners of Prestonsburg real estate who figured prominently in the area's history.

The abstract is in its first few pages a document of historical wealth, and because of its contribution to the history of Prestonsburg it is heavily excerpted here with annotations.

"Floyd county was originally part of a county of the Commonwealth of Virginia, as was the rest of Kentucky until Kentucky became a separate state in 1792 at which time the present Floyd county was a part of the county of Mason, later becoming part of Montgomery and Fleming counties until it was formed into Floyd county in 1800. According to W. R. Jilson's 'Land Grants in Kentucky' . . . when Kentucky became a state in 1792 all Virginia grants west of the Big Sandy were placed with the Register of the Land Office in the State Capitol and the Old Kentucky Grants began in 1793. Grants west of the Big Sandy would include Virginia Grants for land in Kentucky, as the Big Sandy referred to is the Tug Fork, forming the Kentucky-Virginia border.

(The designation of the "main branch of the Big Sandy" as the border between Kentucky and Virginia was the subject of much controversy between the two states and was resolved by commissioners in 1799 who met at the forks where Louisa now stands and under the influence of too much strong drink mistakenly declared the rising Tug Fork was the larger branch and thus the boundary line. It has been observed that if the commissioners had remained sober the town of Prestonsburg would probably be in

1787, in favor of John Graham, assignee of John Preston of Montgomery county, Virginia. This survey and patent is recorded in Floyd county Survey Book C, pages 39-41. The assignment of the survey by Preston to Graham was made by John Smith, attorney-in-fact for John Preston on Jan. 10, 1812. The survey was filed as No. 6564 in the Kentucky Land Register's office at Frankfort, Ky., on Jan. 13, 1812.

(It is evident from these dates that as soon as the assignment was made John Graham rode horseback to Frankfort and registered the survey.)

"This survey was contested in a suit by Michael Montgomery and Robert Young against John Graham, filed July 11, 1812; suit was dismissed in favor of Graham on July 7, 1813. On the same date, viz: July 7, 1813, this same land, as surveyed, was the subject of a Kentucky Land Grant by Governor Isaac Shelby to John Graham, as is recorded in Book 18, pp. 89-92; granted July 7, 1813, recorded July 9, 1813.

"This 2,000-acre survey or patent included the present site of Prestonsburg and adjacent territory."

"It is quite possible that this 2,000-acre survey or patent embraced a number of smaller patents or surveys by the same parties that were senior to this 2,000-acre survey, including the survey of the town of Prestonsburg itself. It appears, as was typical, that only the bottom land along the stream was surveyed and that this 2,000-acre patent embraced the Levisa Fork of the Big Sandy River with two strips of land on either side, extending from the water's edge to the ridgecrest, beginning at a point on the river below the mouth of May's Branch and extending up the river to a point above the mouth of Cow Creek. A stake at the Forks of May's Branch marks a point in the 'back line' of the 2,000 acre survey or patent and also marks the lower corner of the five-acre Lot No. 11 of the original survey of the town of Prestonsburg. Judging from the language of the original survey and the topography of the ground, this marked beech (JG) probably stood at the lower end of the large bottom below May's Branch and this entire bottom was included in and marked the beginning of the 2,000-acre patent. The original survey of the town of Prestonsburg was made May 13, 1797 under Col. John Preston's Grant by John Graham, D. S. M. C. (Deputy Surveyor, Mason county, Ky.) for the Adventurers

March 1, 1815, as recorded in Deed Book A, page 198. The tract with which this abstract is concerned was a part of the 98-acre tract conveyed to Mason Williams of Morgan county, Kentucky, by John Graham, on October 21, 1818, as is recorded in Deed Book A, page 559.

(Mason Williams, a Baptist minister, was one of the founders of Morgan county in 1823. He preached the first sermon in the new Morgan county courthouse and traveled extensively in Eastern Kentucky to preach the Gospel. He was prominent in the affairs of early Floyd and served as Justice of the Peace, being elected in 1819. He was one of the commissioners designated by statute to help locate the county seat of Johnson county in 1844).

"An adjoining tract of 50 acres was later acquired by the same Mason Williams, as assignee of John Yost by a survey of May 18, 1819, under Land Office Warrant No. 2131 as is recorded in Floyd county Survey Book A, page 314. . . ."

"The abstract notes that this Yost tract begins "at a hickory on the Graveyard Branch in the line of John Preston's 2,000 acre survey," and is designated in the chain of title as Tract B.)

"On October 25, 1834, Tract A of 98 acres was conveyed by Mason Williams and his wife Sarah to William M. Smith, as recorded in Deed Book C, page 461, and later, November 10, 1853, the 50-acre Tract B was conveyed by Mason Williams (alone), still of Morgan county, to William M. Smith."

The land after that was conveyed to James M. Smith and in 1865 by Smith to Jerome B. Burrows, of Ashtabula county, Ohio, for \$5,000. The two tracts became known as the Smiths, Burrows or Garfield tract, and were conveyed by Jerome and Eva C. Burrows to Robert S. Friend, March 17, 1890. Friend sold to the Garfield Land and Improvement Company, May 9, 1890, reserving only a 50-foot square in the Smith cemetery for his family. The consideration was \$140,000, paid for by 1,400 shares of stock in the grantees corporation.

The Garfield Land and Improvement Company's Articles of Incorporation were dated March 24, 1890, and listed as incorporators were P. D. Harrison, Isaac Richmond, R. S. Friend, T. H. Baldwin, S. T. Nickles, Walter S. Harkins, John C. C. Mayo, and A. H. Stewart. It was capitalized at \$280,000 in shares of \$100 each. Its stated business was the buying and selling of land.



est from Mrs. Robert inserted in this column. "Would you ask any of ers about Matilda Pres- t "Belle of Big Sandy", vone knows anything rge W. Lewis, born May about two miles above ? Ask, if they do, that act F. M. McConnell), Fayetteville, Arkansas. he son of Bracken and Preston Lewis."

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"Floyd county was originally part of a county of the Commonwealth of Virginia, as was the rest of Kentucky until Kentucky became a separate state in 1792 at which time the present Floyd county was a part of the county of Mason, later becoming part of Montgomery and Fleming counties until it was formed into Floyd county in 1800. According to W. R. Jilson's 'Land Grants in Kentucky,' . . . when Kentucky became a state in 1792 all Virginia grants west of the Big Sandy were placed with the Register of the Land Office in the State Capitol and the Old Kentucky Grants began in 1793. Grants west of the Big Sandy would include Virginia Grants for land in Kentucky, as the Big Sandy referred to is the Tug Fork, forming the Kentucky-Virginia border.

(The designation of the "main branch of the Big Sandy" as the border between Kentucky and Virginia was the subject of much controversy between the two states and was resolved by commissioners in 1799 who met at the forks where Louisa now stands and under the influence of too much strong drink mistakenly declared the rising Tug Fork was the larger branch and thus the boundary line. It has been observed that if the commissioners had remained sober the town of Prestonsburg would probably be in West Virginia today.)

"One of these Virginia grants, for 100,000 acres, was issued on or about March 9, 1787 to John Preston and a portion of this 100,000-acre grant, a 2,000-acre patent, was surveyed for him by John Graham on June 27, 1797, which survey and patent was duly entered in Book 18, pp. 89-92 of the records of registry of the land office at the Kentucky State Capitol, now in the office of the Secretary of State, under Land Office Treasury Warrants Nos. 19,078 and 19,079, entered March 9,

to Frankfort and registered the survey.)

"This survey was contested in a suit by Michael Montgomery and Robert Young against John Graham, filed July 11, 1812; suit was dismissed in favor of Graham on July 7, 1813. On the same date, viz: July 7, 1813, this same land, as surveyed, was the subject of a Kentucky Land Grant by Governor Isaac Shelby to John Graham, as is recorded in Book 18, pp. 89-92; granted July 7, 1813, recorded July 9, 1813.

"This 2,000-acre survey or patent included the present site of Prestonsburg and adjacent territory."

"It is quite possible that this 2,000-acre survey or patent embraced a number of smaller patents or surveys by the same parties that were senior to this 2,000-acre survey, including the survey of the town of Prestonsburg itself. It appears, as was typical, that only the bottom land along the stream was surveyed and that this 2,000-acre patent embraced the Levisa Fork of the Big Sandy River with two strips of land on either side, extending from the water's edge to the ridgecrest, beginning at a point on the river below the mouth of May's Branch and extending up the river to a point above the mouth of Cow Creek. A stake at the Forks of May's Branch marks a point in the 'back line' of the 2,000 acre survey or patent and also marks the lower corner of the five-acre Lot No. 11 of the original survey of the town of Prestonsburg. Judging from the language of the original survey and the topography of the ground; this marked beech (JG) probably stood at the lower end of the large bottom below May's Branch and this entire bottom was included in and marked the beginning of the 2,000-acre patent. The original survey of the town of Prestonsburg was made May 13, 1797 under Col. John Preston's Grant by John Graham, D. S. M. C., (Deputy Surveyor, Mason county, Ky.) for the Adventurers under Major Andrew Hood, Matthias Harman, and Solomon Stratton. The original plat and other records having been burned in a courthouse fire, it was ordered at the Sept. 1810, term of the Floyd County Court that a copy of this plat be recorded and it was so recorded by William J Mayo, clerk of that court in September, 1810 in Deed Book A, page 60.

"John Graham sold most of the upper portion of the town of Prestonsburg to John Spurlock on

preach the Gospel. He was prominent in the affairs of early Floyd and served as Justice of the Peace, being elected in 1819. He was one of the commissioners designated by statute to help locate the county seat of Johnson county in 1844).

"An adjoining tract of 50 acres was later acquired by the same Mason Williams, as assignee of John Yost by a survey of May 18, 1819, under Land Office Warrant No. 2131 as is recorded in Floyd county Survey Book A, page 314. . . ."

"The abstract notes that this Yost tract begins 'at a hickory on the Graveyard Branch in the line of John Preston's 2,000 acre survey,' and is designated in the chain of title as Tract B.)

"On October 25, 1834, Tract A of 98 acres was conveyed by Mason Williams and his wife Sarah to William M. Smith, as recorded in Deed Book C, page 451, and later, November 10, 1853, the 50-acre Tract B was conveyed by Mason Williams (alone), still of Morgan county, to William M. Smith."

The land after that was conveyed to James M. Smith and in 1865 by Smith to Jerome B. Burrows, of Ashabula county, Ohio, for \$5,000. The two tracts became known as the Smiths, Burrows or Garfield tract, and were conveyed by Jerome and Eva C. Burrows to Robert S. Friend, March 17, 1890. Friend sold to the Garfield Land and Improvement Company, May 9, 1890, reserving only a 50-foot square in the Smith cemetery for his family. The consideration was \$140,000, paid for by 1,400 shares of stock in the grantee corporation.

The Garfield Land and Improvement Company's Articles of Incorporation were dated March 24, 1890, and listed as incorporators were P. D. Harmon, Isaac Richmond, R. S. Friend, T. H. Baidridge, S. T. Nickels, Walter S. Harkins, John C. C. Mayo, and A. H. Stewart. It was capitalized at \$280,000 in shares of \$100 each. Its stated business was the buying and selling of land.

The company failed to pay taxes as Jerome Burrows had also failed for several years, and the sheriff was directed to sell the property. Sheriff M. T. Allen, sold 90 acres to B. C. May and after that the land passed through the hands of many other grantees. May and his wife, Annie L. May, sold to A. J. Davidson in 1895. Davidson sued the Garfield Land and Improvement Company for possession of the land, and after litigation the land was sold to satisfy the tax lien. F. A. Hopkins bought the land at a Commissioner's sale in 1899. The land, soon partitioned, was subsequently owned by divers parties, among whom was W. S. Harkins.

Attorney Davidson describes for purposes of clarification of Tract A and B another tract of 20 acres east of the other tracts. On Oct. 6, 1816, John Graham

11-8-1956

FIRE, ENGULFING VALLEY'S FOREST, FOUGHT BY UNITED COMMUNITY by Henry P. Scalf (Reprinted from the Floyd County Times, November 8, 1956)

The first evidence of the big fire came one evening in late October when most of the farmers and loggers of the Buffalo, Mare, and Caney Creek watersheds were planning to retire for the night. Someone spotted a faint glow on the Buffalo ridge, emanating from the head of Clark Branch.

It had been dry for weeks. The creek beds were as parched as the much traveled roads. To drop a match or even to build a fire to boil water for the family wash was to risk a conflagration. A sudden puff of wind could whip up many small fires in the grass, in fence corners, or at the edges of the woods. Wind-borne sparks could ignite a blaze that would soon engulf fields and fences for miles.

The residents of the area who gazed at the incipient glow over the Buffalo Creek ridges in late 1914 gave little thought to either timber or game preservation. They were mainly concerned with fences encircling the hill pastures. Those long zig-zag lines of split rails kept their sheep from running wild and stray animals from besetting their crops.

Farmers went to bed that night worrying about the next day, wondering if the wind would gain strength, and calculating how long it would be before their fences would be endangered. Many got up in the night, stared at the demarcation between ridge and sky, saw that the glow was a bit higher and brighter. Few slept well that night.

Daylight came and the men went to their usual tasks, except for

those who lived on Clark Branch. Jim Henry Burchett owned several hundred acres there, almost completely surrounded by those split rail fences, many made of yellow poplar logs years ago by his father. Those rails were as "light as a feather" now and lay in beds of leaves. Burchett called on his sons and neighbors and one or two of his tenants, and with an odd assortment of rakes, pitchforks, hoes, and other farm tools they climbed the hill. They did not know it then but many would not return home, except for food and water, for several days.

They climbed the hill, Indian file, throwing the leaves from a wide swath. Slowly they worked toward the ridge. When they reached the crest they deployed right and left, chopping out dead tree branches and rolling decaying logs aside. An elderly man lagged behind the lengthening ring and fired the north side. The blaze erupted quickly, moving downhill, the burned area becoming a protective shield against "wildcat" fires behind the men ahead.

But you can "back fire a ring" only so far because, inevitably, you approach other property lines, and the blaze you set to protect yourself may destroy a neighbor's fences or his barn or other buildings. The Burchett crew stopped their procedure after a few hundred feet and began to clear out a ring toward the bottom to seal off the burning woods. Having done this, they reascended the mountain, moved the ring east along the crest of the ridge again. Their efforts were nearing an end as they expected to quit somewhere on Buffalo, near the Boyd farm.

Suddenly, one of the lead men looked out into the smoke-filled air and stared intently toward the valley bottom. Others also stopped



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their work and looked and listened. They could see a deep gray billow of smoke rising and mushrooming below them. There were faint noises from crackling wood as it burned, all coming up under them from far down the mountainside. "Great God!" a man cried out, "They've raked a ring around their fences and are firing above it. They'll burn us up!"

The slow moving action of a moment before became a fierce effort now as each man dug in at his work. The ring moved along and men, completing tasks behind, ran ahead to other tasks. Suddenly, a billow of smoke swept across the ridge, and in a moment there was heard the rush of a mighty fire that created a propelling wind as it expanded and heated the air. No one spoke and no one looked up. They raked and chopped and dug. The ring was moving faster now and in a few minutes they were far enough east of the onrushing fire to stop. When they did there was a great wall of red flame that swept up and died on the ridge.

Landowners from farther up Buffalo Creek now joined the Burchett crew, and some of the latter went home to eat and bring back food and water to the others. A man went down to the road, walked up the creek, seeking help and begging the farmers to rake a ring around their hill fences. Twilight came, and a man reappeared on the mountain with water and food. Sitting down on the ridge, leaning against giant trees, they ate. But they had no water to wash so many rubbed smoke-filled red eyes with their grimy hands.

Relief came after dark. News had spread in the bottom that the men from Clark Branch had raked a ring up the ridge to their section. Bob, Jim, John, and Beb Scalf, Golden Adkins, Ireland Thompson,

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and others arrived with rakes, hoes, and axes. At midnight several of the original crew, urged by their fellows, went home. The ring reached the Nunnery Fork where the widowed Rebecca Nunnery lived. Her son Sherman joined the firefighters.

To protect the Nunnery Fork farm a ring was raked down a point to the creek. The men were thinking of going home now for the fire was practically sealed off on Lower Buffalo Creek. They climbed back to the ridge, intending to "walk the ring" to find danger spots or breakovers. Pausing to wind on the high ridge they saw a red spot in the woods farther up the creek. It grew bigger and moved out in all directions. How this fire had been ignited no one could say. Maybe it was a hunter bent on enjoying a forest blaze. Or a carelessly thrown match.

Again, they deployed in single file, stringing along the crest of the ridge. According to a quickly formed plan, they took the ring around the Nunnery farm and off to the creek again. Daylight came, then noon, and another evening. Aunt Becky Nunnery sent food and water. The men were now beyond the last fire and had passed the Paw Paw Fork.

They stopped on the high mountain to eat and rest. By then the fire had swept over to the far side of Buffalo Creek. The men sat for an hour or more. Several dozed on the hard ground; one or two talked of fox hunting, a few discussed their crops. Several wanted only to rest before starting for home.

But many of them objected to leaving the fire at that time. They were afraid that if they did the fire would move on to Mare Creek, destroying the fences of their kinsmen. They began to debate

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this issue, each expressing his opinion in desultory fashion. Nothing had been decided when they saw a lantern bobbing up and down along the ridge several hundred yards away.

A half hour later the lantern bearer came into view followed by three Mare Creek residents. They joined in the argument, begging for help to take the ring further up Buffalo. The Mare Creek land-owners won. No matter how tired a man might be he couldn't resist an appeal to help save a lot of fence.

It was past midnight when they stopped again. Bob Scalf, who was to die a few years later in an Argonne wheat field, was sent to Mare Creek for water and food. The crew, now numbering at least a dozen men, fell down on beds of leaves just under the summit of Bedstead Mountain. Nearby was the evergreen-crested top of Pine Knob.

The ring stretched out west from where the men sat, snaked along the ridge crest for several miles. They argued over how long it was. Some said it was five miles. Another argued that they had raked, side rings and all, a protective path for eight hours. Finally, they quieted down and a few fell asleep. All awaited food and water.

Soon there was perfect silence as the little cluster of fire-fighters lay on the leaves. How long they lay there, with every muscle and nerve weary from the effort, no one could recall. A man yelled and they rose to their feet, groggy and leaning on their tools. All eyes turned to stare at a sudden shower of wind-borne sparks coming from the other side of Buffalo.

Thousands of sparks sank into the deep canyon-like valley but others were carried almost to the feet of the watchers. It was now a question of time till the whole mountain where they were standing

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would be a blazing inferno. After quick consultation they started again to rake, talking intermittently of the absolute necessity of continuing the ring around the head of Mare Creek and through the Courtney Gap <sup>to</sup> ~~of~~ Harmons Branch. They moved out around a great flat, under the smoke-covered tops of the Pine Knob and Bedstead Mountain.

So intent were the men on their work that none saw the initial spark that fired the upper reaches of the mountain. When they looked it seemed as if there must have been some giant explosion. Flames were sweeping up the mountains, carried by the increasing wind. The men paused to watch, through the flames and smoke, the giant trees that soon toppled over. Swiftly the wall of fire moved toward the crest of the mountain, with the noise of exploding rocks like distant thunder.

It was the capricious wind that saved them from continued effort. No one can anticipate a wind's vagaries in an area ringed by mountain forest fires. It shifted, blowing almost at right angles to its former course. The fire came to a sudden stop in its mad sweep around the steep sides of the hill. Almost simultaneously with the change of wind, every man sank to the ground. Now and then a squirrel and a raccoon or two scampered by, fleeing the fire.

Down in the bottom Bob Scalf and two young boys he had recruited started the long climb up Bedstead Mountain. Each carried several food-filled buckets and jugs of water. Bob had two jugs in a sack thrown over his shoulders. He carried a bucket in his left hand and swung a lantern with his right. The two youngsters tagged along, stumbling in the path, enjoying the adventure of dark places and sudden falls.

Bob and the boys found the fire fighters curled up in grotesque positions asleep in the leaves. All grumbled when they ~~were~~ were awakened. They ate lustily, drank loudly from the jugs. The two boys scampered about on the outer edge of the group, chasing each other in the leaves. One, hearing an animal squeal, found a chipmunk seared and dying.

"You know, I think it's going to rain," said Bob, pointing at the sky.

"No such luck," someone answered.

They all stared through the trees and spotted rain clouds coming from the west.

"West winds bring rain," a man said. "Yep," and his voice rose a bit, "It's going to rain."

The clouds thickened and from the outer ring a man observed quietly: "This is one that ain't going around."

Bob Scalf sat propped against a tree, humming a tune in his deep bass.

"Sing us a song, Bob," a Buffalo neighbor urged. Others added to the request.

Bob fumbled slowly in his pocket, bringing out a tuning fork. He always carried it with him when he sang at parties and stag gatherings. He tapped the fork against a stone, listening to the vibrations. "What are you going to sing, Bob?" a man asked. There was no reply. The old singing master was listening to his fork.

Slowly, the deep bass notes of "Rock of Ages" wafted on the mountain. Many joined in a moment; others hummed the ancient tune for all knew the hymn.

The song ended, and no one spoke until the magic of the old hymn faded.

"You know what I think?" one said. "I think we are going to get wet."

They picked up their tools and prepared to leave. Bob and the two boys retrieved their buckets and jugs. The first rain drops pelted the green leaves. "You know," a man said, proudly, "nary a farmer lost a rail of fence."

"Not a rail has burned," another agreed. As he spoke, a pheasant rushed across the bench and disappeared in the darkness. "You know, though, somehow I think these big fires make the hunting bad."

There was a crash on the mountain and a billow of smoke and sparks as a tree fell. "I think, too, there's an awful lot of timber wasted," he added.

"Quit worrying about the timber," he was told. "There'll be timber when we ain't around. But I'm like you about the huntin.' There just ain't much game for a long time after a big woods fire."

The men were preparing to leave now. Some were going back along the flat to take the ridge home, while others would move cautiously in the pale light down the steep slope of Bedstead Mountain.

12-20-1956

COLORFUL HISTORY AND LEGEND ABOUND IN BIG SANDY VALLEY by Henry P. Scalf (Reprinted from the Floyd County Times, December 20, 1956)

The people of the Big Sandy area may be more conscious of their early history than are people of any other section of Appalachia.

Their longtime isolation was broken half a century ago by the intrusion of the railroad. Their emergence into the twentieth century was but a step, psychologically, from the log cabin era when the settlers fought Indians and tried to tame the primitive wilderness.

Oldtimers of the Johns Creek area of Pike and Floyd Counties often refer to William Robert Leslie as "the First Man." It was Daniel Boone, they declare, who brought Leslie to Johns Creek and showed him the wide bottoms.

Leslie climbed a high ridge at the mouth of Big Brushy Creek and, looking over the pristine valley, exclaimed: "Great God, what a place to live!" The Leslie settlement is history, but legends like those about the First Man, have been perpetuated in this area for years.

On a day when the sun shines and visibility has no ceiling save the blue canopy of the sky, you can climb Old Bedstead, a 1,700 foot mountain in eastern Floyd County, and view a large section of the Big Sandy Valley. You know that north is Johns Creek with its branches--Buffalo, Caney, Big Brushy and Bent. South is the Big Sandy River, with the high knobs of Sugar Camp and Brandy Keg jutting up like rugged sentinels.

Each place name suggests a legend. Bedstead Mountain received its name when Tandy R. Stratton, having need of another bed, took

an axe and went up a little <sup>valley,</sup> At the foot of the hill that bears this name, he cut down a giant poplar, and with deft carpenter strokes he fashioned himself a bed. He slept on it for a decade, and after he died his children, recalling how it was made, preserved it in an attic.

The Bedstead Branch flows into Mare Creek, a tributary of the Big Sandy. The Strattons settled Mare Creek and, in 1821, when the dividing line between Pike and Floyd Counties was run, the family found itself in Pike. "I don't like to do business in Piketon," the clan head said, and began a fight to get back in mother Floyd. He made it twenty four years later when the General Assembly passed a special act for his benefit.

But his land didn't touch Floyd County anywhere, and although by legislative act he was no longer in Pike County, he was still surrounded by it. Oldtimers <sup>have</sup> called the 1,000 acre tract "Little Floyd County." In between Floyd and Little Floyd was a quarter mile stretch claimed by both counties. A confused judge once named it "No Man's Land." Scarcely a year goes by that Stratton descendants on their farm don't fight, legally or otherwise, to stay in Floyd County.

Buffalo Gap is a low pass in the ridge between Little Floyd and the headwaters of Buffalo Creek. Streams with such picturesque names as Big Rough, Paw Paw, Twin Branch, and White Oak Creek head in this wooded country. In the mountainside near the Broad Hollow are caves --dark holes in the rocks leading to nobody knows where. One was visited by <sup>the</sup> Rev. Robert Adams when he was a boy nearly a century ago. He pushed aside leaves and animal bones as he wiggled through the tight dark tunnels and emerged several hundred feet downstream.



No one has tried that since.

The Big Sandy is a great place to live, as the Great Man said, and especially so if you like to hear the old legends about it. Some of these may be trivial and of interest to none but the local residents. But others may intrigue everyone in the region.

There was the Wolf Creek posse which, in 1847, went after Bill Pruitt and killed him on the headwaters of Tug River.

Abner James was sentenced to hang. His brother-in-law Billy McCoy rode to Frankfort and begged Gov. William Owsley to pardon the condemned man. He secured the pardon and hurriedly rode back to Big Sandy, arriving the night before the day set for the execution. That was history.

Stories told around many a fireside embellished the account of Billy McCoy's ride from Frankfort. He is said to have killed four horses in a wild breakneck ride, arriving in Louisa on the day of the execution. He plunged through a large crowd toward the moving wagon in which Abner James rode, sitting on a rude coffin. McCoy passed the governor's pardon to the sheriff. Legend insists that James then stood up, and flapping his arms, crowed like a cock: "The jury said I'd hang; the governor says I won't." Just where history ends and legend begins no one can say, and most don't care. History has ruined many a good story.

Jenny Wiley's capture by the Indians in 1789 in Ab's Valley, Virginia, is history and legend. Historians tell of her capture and the death of five of her children and a brother at the hands of a mongrel band led by Black Wolf, the Shawnee, and of her escape to Harmon's Station, the first settlement in eastern Kentucky, midway

between the present Prestonsburg and Paintsville. The Harmons escorted Mrs. Wiley back to Virginia, but she and her husband, Thomas, returned to the Big Sandy, becoming two of Johnson County's first settlers.

Over the years she told and retold the story of her captivity and rescue to her children and neighbors. The legend grew after her death. The Auxiers, founders of Blockhouse Bottom, at East Point, often related the story of how Mrs. Wiley was led on the escape path by a bird flying along the trail. Members of the Borders family, nieces and nephews of Mrs. Wiley, added to the legends. They would tell of how, Running wildly through the forest, she wore out her mocassins. Stumbling along on frozen ground, her feet cut and bleeding, she found the still warm carcasses of a buffalo her pursuers had killed. She parted the warm flesh and stood on it until her pain went away. These are legends, unverifiable by the historians, but told and retold on the Big Sandy.

Stories like the Wiley captivity had a tremendous impact on the consciousness of pioneer families. Historic and legendary accounts of her experience have become so confusing that historians have accepted, with little credit, what is said to be known about her. In the remote sections of the Big Sandy mothers still sing their babies to sleep with the Jenny Wiley lullaby. And when they get older and start to stray from their homes children hear their mothers call in warning "Jenny Wiley, Jenny Wiley", and they hurriedly return to their homes.

As one travels up the Big Sandy, passes Pikeville, turns up Shelby Creek, and crosses over onto the headwaters of Elkhorn, he comes

to the foot of Pound Mountain. Here is Pound Gap through which passed the first settlers of the Big Sandy Valley. A great highway is being finished through this historic pass. But not long ago the road was only a wagon trail, rocky and beaten under by at least a century of traffic. Col. James A. Garfield, the Union commander in that area, fought a battle there and routed the surprised Confederates.

Picket Rock stands like a sentinel a few hundred yards from the gap. So named because Confederate commanders posted men there to watch down the Sandy road, it is better known as the site of Dr. M.B. Taylor's massacre of the Ira Mullins family. In 1892 Taylor, the Red Fox of "The Trail of the Lonesome Pine", and two associates, the Fleming brothers, hid in a jumble of rocks and fatally shot five of that family as they approached the gap. Only Jane Mullins and Ira's fourteen year old son escaped. For a while Dr. Taylor hid in the woods of Letcher, Pike, and Wise Counties while his two associates fled to West Virginia.

The authorities sent for Ed Hall, a Floyd County native, whom everyone called "The Mountain Man Hunter." When outlaws defied other peace officers, Ed Hall would be sent to bring them in. He found Dr. Taylor in a fruit tree box at the Bluefield, W.Va. express office where his son had shipped him from Norton, Virginia. [Editor's note: Actually Dr. Taylor was found in a freight car in the Bluefield railyards where he was waiting to hop another freight for Florida.] Taylor died on the scaffold but Ed Hall was sick then and did not see him die. Later Hall and two others walked six days into West Virginia to get the Fleming brothers. After killing Cal Fleming, they brought his brother, Heenon, back for trial.

Dr. Taylor, murderer and mystic, was an educated man who mixed science and sorcery to cure his mountain patients. He was a deputy United States marshal for a few years and rode the woodland trails under the towering Cumberland cliffs with his winchester and a long telescope. He was expert at tracking his adversaries as well as avoiding them. It is said that, on occasion, he would put his shoes on backwards to elude pursuers. He preached a long sermon to the crowd that had come to see him hang, saying that on the third day he would rise from his grave. Nobody admitted believing him, but just in case they left a lighted lantern on his grave for a week.

John Wright, known as Devil Judd Tolliver in John Fox's "Trail of the Lonesome Pine", lived in a big two-story log house on Elkhorn Creek, near the present Jenkins. He was host to travelers through that area who cared to accept his hospitality. A friend of Bad Talt Hall, the Beaver Creek outlaw, he had a man take Talt's body from the scaffold in Wise and return it to Kentucky for burial. Wright and Talt had feuded with "Old" Clabe Jones, the Floyd and Knott County badman. Wright and Jones, with their respective henchmen, would travel back and forth over the headwaters of Beaver, Elkhorn, and Troubleome Creeks. Both were duly deputized peace officers and fought their feud under the authority of the law with warrants for each other's arrest. But the warrants issued by different counties were never served.

The Civil War added to the legends of the Big Sandy. The battle of Ivy Mountain was fought in 1861. "Bull" Nelson, Union leader, drove the Confederates under Col. A.J. May back toward Virginia. It was a rebel debacle, but southern sympathizers would not have

it so. They composed a song, singing it in defiance of history:

"You ought to have heard them Yankees' shinbones  
rattle

When at the Ivy Narrows they were stricken with  
horrors."

The song was written by a mountain balladist long after the fight when few Big Sandians would admit the Confederates had lost the battle. But Anthony Hatcher and five of his fellow rebels knew it then. Hatcher had a thigh bone broken by a "Blue Brute" bullet, and his friends quickly put him on a horse and fled up Ivy Creek. Entering Mare Creek through the Sugar Camp Gap, they dropped the wounded man off at a Union home where a pre-war friendship brought care and medical attention. The other soldiers, one seriously wounded, climbed a hill on the road to Pikeville and camped on Rock Spring Mountain that night. Here is a natural spring emerging from a rock near the top of the mountain. The wounded man died that night, and as no other means of burial was convenient, his comrades crammed him into a hollow chestnut log and left in the morning. In later years the story of the burial on Rock Spring Mountain was told around many firesides.

The legends are easily recalled because the transition from pioneer days to the present was slower in the Big Sandy than in any other section of Kentucky. The Indians clung to the valley after they had surrendered the rest of Kentucky, and the isolation of the area was pronounced until late in the nineteenth century. Suddenly emerging into the twentieth century, the people of our valley looked back on their long history as if it were but yesterday.

Big Sandians talk of Daniel Boone as if he lived only a few years ago. The Auxiers have a buffalo robe he gave one of their ancestors when he was leaving Blockhouse Bottom. The Leslies have a powder horn he gave "the First Man." Midway up Right Beaver Creek, on a stone overlooking the hamlet of Eastern, is carved the lettering "D.B. 1775." Whether the frontiersman sat down there on an eastern Kentucky hunting trip and cut his initials has been debated by historians but not by local residents. The initials are there and Boone was there.

The mere facts of history in the Big Sandy never suffer for embellishment. Nelson Boggs of Lawrence County, a member of the 14th Kentucky Infantry, was killed at their battle of Middle Creek in 1862 while serving under Col. Garfield. This much is historic fact. But oldtimers say that, in the carnage of battle, his comrades picked up his body and hefted it into the crotch of an apple tree until the battle was over. True or not, this is a typical Big Sandy elaboration.

Another belief is that the Federals falsified their casualties list. Returning Confederates were told by their kinsmen and friends back in the valley that large numbers of the Union dead and wounded were loaded on the barges and shipped downstream to Louisa and Catlettsburg. The story served to salve the pride of the defeated troops of Confederate Gen. Humphrey Marshall.

Though many sections of Kentucky have had as much history as the Big Sandy Valley, no accounts of the events occurring elsewhere were as romantic or picturesque as ours.

July 30, 1959 Issue of

# HARDIN JESTED ON SCAFFOLD WITH EXECUTIONER AT GRUNDY

Floyd  
County  
Times

By HENRY P. SCALF

The sun dropped slowly over the mountain rampart that guarded the deep recesses of Andy Branch. Down in the valley the road was rutted from the hauling of giant logs. Puffs of a cold, evening breeze whipped dust around a man on foot who trudged in the lengthening shadows.

Scott Ellis was on a mission for a court in Mingo county, West Virginia. He was seeking John Mounts, Andy Branch logger, to serve a summons. Up the branch a young man sat upon a log by the roadside, muttered and caressed the long barrel of a .32 Winchester rifle. Higher up the valley, Harve Mounts, his day's labor ended, walked down the road to procure salt for his ox team while John Mounts, his nephew, stayed at the log "pit," to do late chores. Fate was weaving a pattern in the dark valley; the warp and woof would meet, and there would be blood in the dust of the road.

Ellis was tired and it was late but he hurried along the path. Back behind him was Tug River into which the Andy Branch flowed. A mile and a half from the mouth of the branch the Kentucky-Virginia line ran obliquely across the stream. The lower reaches of the branch was in Pike county, Kentucky, the upper half was in Buchanan coun-

ty, Virginia. Ellis trusted that John Mounts would respect the summons of the Mingo county court and go with him to Williamson.

Autumn evenings are cool in the mountains, sometimes cold. It was September 24, 1897, and there was a hint of frost in the air. Ellis walked briskly around a curve of the road, saw a man sitting on a log with a rifle.

Ellis told him he was looking for John Mounts and asked his name.

"I am John Hardin," the man replied, rubbing his hands over the length of the gun and scarcely looking up. "John Mounts is up the hollow," he added shortly.

Ellis went on up the road, found John Mounts at the log yard. The logger said that he had his team to look after but that if the officer would go up the road with him on the errand he would accompany him back at once. The two walked up Andy Branch. Harve Mounts, who had gone for salt, caught up with them and they unyoked the oxen and gave them salt. The trio started back down the valley.

Half a mile above the state line in Virginia the trees reached out, almost completing a canopy over the road. Here the shadows were deeper, here John Hardin sat on a log, caressing the wea-

pon he held. Hardin heard the voices of the three men coming down the road and he barricaded himself behind a tree stump. The long rifle pointed in the direction of the voices.

Ellis and the two loggers approached the log upon which Hardin had been sitting when the officer had gone by an hour before. Noting that he was no longer there, their eyes searched the locale, saw the rifleman about 30 yards away. He was rising from behind the stump, muttering curses on John Mounts.

The gun spoke and John Mounts spun around, blood spouting from an abdominal wound. Seizing an ironwood bush, he sought to remain unright but failed and slumped in the road. In a few seconds he began to pull himself up, got to his knees. He began to plead for his life, mixing his pleas to his killer with supplications to God.

Ellis and the victim's uncle, Harve Mounts, shouted at Hardin not to fire again but the ambusher took a few steps, raised the rifle. Mounts was on his knees, praying and crying, "I am bound to die." The rifle fired again. John Mounts cried in agony, fell over full length in the dust. Harve Mounts jumped behind a walnut tree. The gun spoke again.  
(See Story No. 5, Page 4)

Thelma Stewart,  
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and this time Ellis spun around, blood streaming from his hand and shoulder. Harve Mounts dashed from the protection of the tree and sprinted up the road. Ellis ran after him, holding a hand red with blood but looked back as he raced for life. The killer was running the other way, his rifle held high in his right hand as he fled.

Ellis and Mounts ran up the road until they came to the cabin of Oliver Clay, who had heard the shots. An inspection of Ellis' wounded hand and shoulder showed no serious injury and after a hurried and crude dressing to stop the blood, the three went down the branch to aid the stricken John Mounts. They found him in agony, rising and falling, crawling and staggering until he was several feet from where he was shot.

The dying man looked up at Clay, said weakly, "Lord, I'm bound to die. I am bound to die."

He prayed and talked and cried in agony. Shuddering from cold, he begged Clay to get him to a fire. Clay went back to his cabin, returned with an axe, built a roaring fire in the road. Harve Mounts went to get assistance to move his dying nephew.

Ellis watched as the young logger grew weaker. Now and then he moved him a bit, seeking to keep him warm, for he complained steadily of the cold.

"I am bound to die, Oliver," Mounts said. "Get me to a house. Take me to a fire. I am freezing. I want to die by a fire in a house."

Clay picked him up, had to let him slide back to the ground, for Mounts was a large man. Harve Mounts returned in a few minutes. He was alone. He and Ellis had a short conference. The uncle went away again, leaving Clay with the dying man.

Sometime later—some said it was hours—neighbors in the sparsely settled area came to the scene. They saw Mounts was dying and decided against moving him. He died at three o'clock in the morning.

The body of the dead West Virginia logger lay in the road until 11 o'clock when his wife, Sarah, arrived on muleback. She had the body of her husband removed across Tug River to their home.

The ambush-killer, beginning to realize the enormity of his crime as soon as it was done, continued to flee down the Andy Branch. The exact trail he took to escape is not known but a mountain ballad, "The Legend of John Hardin," says that, coming to Tug River and not finding a boat, he plunged into the stream and swam across in an

due. The train was late and Hardin sought safety in the woodlands.

Six days later, James Charles, sheriff of Buchanan county, approached him at War Eagle, West Virginia. He was brought to Grundy, Virginia, and incarcerated in the little wooden jail, Sept. 30, 1897.

Mountain minstrels sang for years a typical ballad, of how Hardin tried to escape but was captured because the "eastbound train was late."

The day Sheriff Charles arrived at Grundy with his prisoner an examination of the charge was made. Hardin waived it to the Buchanan county grand jury. He was indicted Oct. 27 and by agreement of counsel of both sides the case was docketed for Nov. 3.

The court at the beginning of the trial placed the prisoner in the custody of two hefty deputy sheriffs, J. N. W. Blankenship and H. M. Francis. These two took every precaution to see that the 21-year-old Criminal did not escape, and during the trial the two flanked Hardin's every move from the courtroom to the jail.

The trial, at which he pleaded "not guilty," lasted five days. On the afternoon of the fifth day, final arguments having been completed, the jury retired. They returned in a short while to announce disagreement. Judge G. L. Counts sent them back to try again. The next morning the jury filed into court and handed Judge Counts its decision. The prisoner was guilty of murder in the first degree. The defense moved for a new trial. It was overruled.

Judge Counts ordered the prisoner to stand up. The spectators were quiet, realizing that the first degree murder verdict carried no other sentence but death. Slowly the judge intoned that Hardin was to be hanged by the neck "until you are dead, dead, dead. May God have mercy on your soul." The condemned man was led away, escorted by Blankenship and Francis.

Legal maneuvering consumed weeks. There was an appeal but the sands of time ran out for John Hardin. The day of execution was set for Dec. 17.

In the meantime it had been concluded by the authorities that the wooden jail was insufficient to hold a prisoner as desperate as a man sentenced to hanging must be. He was taken to the Tazewell jail.

Considerable sentiment was worked up for Hardin, many people expressing the opinion that hanging was too severe a crime for a man to suffer because he had killed another in a jealous rage. As one writer expressed it, "Hanging was a kind of justice that didn't seem a man's just portion."

and a half below the town of Grundy on the Levisa Fork of the Big Sandy river. The structure completed, Sheriff Charles ordered himself a black suit. Relatives of Hardin came to the sheriff, solicited the body and said they would take it at the scaffold for burial on Andy Branch. This errand done, they went out and ordered a black suit for their kinsman.

The day of execution approaching, Sheriff Charles and his deputy, Paris Charles, went to Tazewell to claim their prisoner. On their return they traveled by train to Raven, Virginia, where the three began a long horseback ride to Grundy.

Twenty-four hours before Hardin was to go to his death he requested the rites of baptism and before a great concourse of people on the bank of the Levisa Fork, Elder Wallace Compton officiated at the ceremony.

Hanging day arrived and so did thousands of people from the entire tri-state area. It was the greatest crowd that had ever jammed into the mountain town on the Levisa Fork. Wagons loaded with entire families came from all the main head stream valleys of the Tug and Big Sandy.

Early in the morning Sheriff Charles saw to the last preparation for his official duties. The home-made coffin, lined and covered with white satin, was placed in a wagon drawn up beside the little jail.

A few minutes past noon Charles and a deputy entered the condemned man's cell. Hardin, comforted by his wife, Lizzie, in his last hours, was neatly shaven and dressed in the black suit. He was ready, he said. The shadow of the scaffold had effected a reconciliation between husband and wife.

Sheriff Charles, his deputy, the prisoner and wife, entered the wagon. Hardin and Lizzie sat down on the white coffin, neither speaking, neither paying any attention to thousands lining the wooden sidewalks. The mule-drawn wagon lumbered down the muddy street.

Hardin and his escort walked up the thirteen steps of the scaffold with unchanging mien. Sheriff Charles was grim and sombre. Elder Compton began to pray. Hardin bowed his head and there were those who said they saw his lips moving with a last minute supplication. The prayer ended, some one began a song. Hardin stood and joined his voice with the others.

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Asked if he had anything to say, Hardin addressed the crowd:

"I am here for killing a man because of my wife. My wife was the cause of it all. I thought I was doing right when I killed Mounts but now I see I was wrong. The Lord has forgiven me for it and I am ready to die."

He announced he had composed a hymn that he would like to sing. It was titled, "Let Thy Bosom Be My Pillow."

Taking a sheet of paper from his pocket, he slowly unfolded it. "On this scaffold high for murder, Let Thy bosom be my pillow," he sang.

The song ended, he bowed his head in prayer. In a few moments he looked up, said quietly: "I am prepared to go. I will soon be free from sin, prison, death and misery."

\* Sheriff Charles looked at his watch, told Hardin he had but nine minutes to live.

"That's a short life," the prisoner quipped with a smile.

He took a piece of tobacco from his pocket and while reaching it to Charles requested him to give it to a Mrs. Dennis who was in the crowd. "I am ready now," he said. "Don't tell me when you are ready to let me drop."

Charles adjusted the rope and prepared to slip a black hood over Hardin's face.

The killer of John Mounts saw the sheriff's action, and remembered the cigar he had put in his mouth a moment before, reached it to the man who was to execute him, said sardonically: "I will this cigar to you."

The sheriff held the cigar in his left hand, raised his right arm to swing down with a hatchet to cut the rope that would send John Hardin to death.

The spectacle of a man going to his death as nonchalantly as Hardin endeared him in the hearts of the rugged mountaineers. Even today, in the recesses of the Cumberlands, there are places where people will gather in the late evenings and sing, "The Legend of John Hardin," to the accompaniment of a guitar or banjo.

They sing of how an eastbound train was late and of John Hardin who went to his death with a jest and smile.

BIG SANDY RIVERMEN'S CUSTOMS REVIEWED IN FLOYD COUNTY LAWSUIT by  
Henry P. Scalf (Reprinted from the Paintsville Herald, February 15,  
1956)

Fifty years ago a "drummer" for a Knoxville wholesale drygoods company walked into J.P. Laven's store at Dwale and sold him a bill of merchandise. The goods were shipped to the rail terminal at Whitehouse from which it was brought up the Big Sandy to Dwale. The carrier dropped Laven's merchandise in the water. The ensuing lawsuit reveals many old riparian customs.

Several years after Laven initiated his suit against the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Company the Kentucky Court of Appeals rendered its decision. Judge W.E. Settle, reviewing the case, recalled bits of old river lore, long unmentioned but still recalled by old-timers.

In his decision Judge Settle wrote:

"Appellee (Laven) was a country merchant, his residence and store at that time being at Dwale, a post office situated in Floyd County upon the Big Sandy, about 30 miles from Whitehouse. There is no railroad from Whitehouse to Dwale, and the public roads between those points being mountainous and practically impassable for wagons, the only way of transporting merchandise or other freight from one of these points to the other is by the boats running the Big Sandy river; both small steamboats and 'pushboats' being used

for that purpose.

"The pushboat is a flat boat operated by poles in the hands of experienced boatmen. The Big Sandy River is a swift, though shallow mountain stream, subject to sudden rise and fall. Much of the time its depth is not sufficient for the running of steamboats but it is always sufficient for the operation of pushboats. It often happens however that a sudden rise in the river will stop the running of pushboats up streams, as in such cases the unusual force of the current resulting from the increase in the volume of water becomes too great for the boats to be propelled against it by pushing. When the pushboats are caught by these rises, they make a landing and tie up until the river runs down to such a stage as will enable them to proceed; but if while one of the pushboats is tied up, a steamboat passes going to the same point of destination it is the custom for the freight of the pushboat to be transferred to the steamboat for further transportation and delivery to the consignees, by which arrangement, without additional cost, a quicker delivery of such freight would result than would be accomplished by the pushboat."

So much for the customs of the river as reviewed by Judge Settle. After many years' evolution the river customs brought trouble to several parties and a lawsuit for the railroad company. The box of goods unloaded from the railway car at Whitehouse had a soggy adventure.

One of the men who had trouble from the box of goods was Green Wells, an old riverman and captain of several pushboats for hire. He operated up and down the Big Sandy, wherever his boats could get business. As he was often in Whitehouse he was entrusted by the upper Sandy merchants to transport many a barrel of sugar, salt, and flour.

Whitehouse, as the railroad's southern terminus, was a boomtown, the wharfs and rail station piled with freight and crowded with people. But if that freight were allowed to accumulate the congestion would overflow the storage facilities. So here another custom of the river would come to play. At the suggestion of the terminal freight man, boat owners would often take goods on their boats without being asked by the consignees and deliver them, collecting at the final destination, usually from a very pleased merchant.

When the box of drygoods from Knoxville arrived at Whitehouse the freightman in charge asked Wells to deliver it by pushboat to Laven. Wells really tried his best. He had delivered goods to Laven before and he knew that his Dwale friend would willingly pay the river freight. Since the box had been at Whitehouse for eight days, he assumed that Laven would be anxious to receive his merchandise as soon as possible.

Judge Settle, in his decision, noted that "at that time there were as many as 200 merchants and others residing and doing business

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upon and contiguous to Big Sandy river whose goods and freight were shipped to and received at Whitehouse and from there carried by steam or pushboats to the consignees." He felt that with such a large amount of freight accumulating at that place the agent was justified in offering Laven's goods to Wells for delivery.

Wells placed Laven's box on his pushboat. His men, using their arms and stout poles, moved up the river. The water was low and only the steamboats of light draught were on the river that day. A few clouds were a harbinger of rain, but Wells and his men, river veterans, had no premonition of trouble. They had weathered many heavy rains on the Big Sandy before.

Suddenly, in the early afternoon, the heavens opened and the pushboat crews hastily swung tarpaulins over the piles of freight and pushed steadily upstream. An hour or so later they met the first signs of a rising river. Still they pushed ahead. Finally Wells reluctantly tied his pushboat to a riverside tree and humped up his boat to wait out the storm.

Later that day Wells saw the steamboat Sea Gull churning its way upstream, towing a lighter. Not being able to tell how long he might be forced to wait out the storm, he arranged with the Sea Gull's captain to transfer Laven's goods while he would stay with the pushboat, waiting for the storm to subside.

The Sea Gull moved up the river against the storm, pulling the lighter loaded with merchandise including the Dwale-bound box. It was getting late in the day and the Sea Gull was making slow headway. Suddenly, out of the murky atmosphere of the river, a whistle sounded from a boat downriver-bound. It was the Dr. York which hove into

sight only a short distance from the Sea Gull and struck the lighter overturning it. Down to the bottom of the Big Sandy went Laven's box.

For three hours the crews fished in the river for merchandise, impeded by the rain and the rising waters. Finally, all was recovered, including Laven's box, and loaded again on the Sea Gull for its continuing journey. At night, hours later, Laven's box, soggy from its mishap in the river, was unloaded at its destination.

Laven opened the box in his store and pulled out piles of wet, faded and wrinkled merchandise. He refused to pay the Knoxville shipper. The firm sued him. Laven employed the law firm of A.J. and W.H. May, and sued the C&O. In the Floyd Circuit Court he procured a judgement for \$645.35 against the railway. The latter appealed, and Judge Settle, basing his decision on river customs, reversed the Floyd Court's judgement. Settle thought that the custom of the railway company in transshipping goods to upper Sandy merchants without authority from the consignees was well established and accepted by Laven and others.

So we know that at least one Big Sandy custom has received judicial recognition.

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11-8-1956

FIRE, ENGULFING VALLEY'S FOREST, FOUGHT BY UNITED COMMUNITY by Henry P. Scalf (Reprinted from the Floyd County Times, November 8, 1956)

The first evidence of the big fire came one evening in late October when most of the farmers and loggers of the Buffalo, Mare, and Caney Creek watersheds were planning to retire for the night. Someone spotted a faint glow on the Buffalo ridge, emanating from the head of Clark Branch.

It had been dry for weeks. The creek beds were as parched as the much traveled roads. To drop a match or even to build a fire to boil water for the family wash was to risk a conflagration. A sudden puff of wind could whip up many small fires in the grass, in fence corners, or at the edges of the woods. Wind-borne sparks could ignite a blaze that would soon engulf fields and fences for miles.

The residents of the area who gazed at the incipient glow over the Buffalo Creek ridges in late 1914 gave little thought to either timber or game preservation. They were mainly concerned with fences encircling the hill pastures. Those long zig-zag lines of split rails kept their sheep from running wild and stray animals from besetting their crops.

Farmers went to bed that night worrying about the next day, wondering if the wind would gain strength, and calculating how long it would be before their fences would be endangered. Many got up in the night, stared at the demarcation between ridge and sky, saw that the glow was a bit higher and brighter. Few slept well that night.

Daylight came and the men went to their usual tasks, except for

those who lived on Clark Branch. Jim Henry Burchett owned several hundred acres there, almost completely surrounded by those split rail fences, many made of yellow poplar logs years ago by his father. Those rails were as "light as a feather" now and lay in beds of leaves. Burchett called on his sons and neighbors and one or two of his tenants, and with an odd assortment of rakes, pitchforks, hoes, and other farm tools they climbed the hill. They did not know it then but many would not return home, except for food and water, for several days.

They climbed the hill, Indian file, throwing the leaves from a wide swath. Slowly they worked toward the ridge. When they reached the crest they deployed right and left, chopping out dead tree branches and rolling decaying logs aside. An elderly man lagged behind the lengthening ring and fired the north side. The blaze erupted quickly, moving downhill, the burned area becoming a protective shield against "wildcat" fires behind the men ahead.

But you can "back fire a ring" only so far because, inevitably, you approach other property lines, and the blaze you set to protect yourself may destroy a neighbor's fences or his barn or other buildings. The Burchett crew stopped their procedure after a few hundred feet and began to clear out a ring toward the bottom to seal off the burning woods. Having done this, they re climbed the mountain, moved the ring east along the crest of the ridge again. Their efforts were nearing an end as they expected to quit somewhere on Buffalo, near the Boyd farm.

Suddenly, one of the lead men looked out into the smoke-filled air and stared intently toward the valley bottom. Others also stopped

their work and looked and listened. They could see a deep gray billow of smoke rising and mushrooming below them. There were faint noises from crackling wood as it burned, all coming up under them from far down the mountainside. "Great God!" a man cried out, "They've raked a ring around their fences and are firing above it. They'll burn us up!"

The slow moving action of a moment before became a fierce effort now as each man dug in at his work. The ring moved along and men, completing tasks behind, ran ahead to other tasks. Suddenly, a billow of smoke swept across the ridge, and in a moment there was heard the rush of a mighty fire that created a propelling wind as it expanded and heated the air. No one spoke and no one looked up. They raked and chopped and dug. The ring was moving faster now and in a few minutes they were far enough east of the onrushing fire to stop. When they did there was a great wall of red flame that swept up and died on the ridge.

Landowners from farther up Buffalo Creek now joined the Burchett crew, and some of the latter went home to eat and bring back food and water to the others. A man went down to the road, walked up the creek, seeking help and begging the farmers to rake a ring around their hill fences. Twilight came, and a man reappeared on the mountain with water and food. Sitting down on the ridge, leaning against giant trees, they ate. But they had no water to wash so many rubbed smoke-filled red eyes with their grimy hands.

Relief came after dark. News had spread in the bottom that the men from Clark Branch had raked a ring up the ridge to their section. Bob, Jim, John, and Beb Scalf, Golden Adkins, Ireland Thompson,

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and others arrived with rakes, hoes, and axes. At midnight several of the original crew, urged by their fellows, went home. The ring reached the Nunnery Fork where the widowed Rebecca Nunnery lived. Her son Sherman joined the firefighters.

To protect the Nunnery Fork farm a ring was raked down a point to the creek. The men were thinking of going home now for the fire was practically sealed off on Lower Buffalo Creek. They climbed back to the ridge, intending to "walk the ring" to find danger spots or breakovers. Pausing to wind on the high ridge they saw a red spot in the woods farther up the creek. It grew bigger and moved out in all directions. How this fire had been ignited no one could say. Maybe it was a hunter bent on enjoying a forest blaze. Or a carelessly thrown match.

Again, they deployed in single file, stringing along the crest of the ridge. According to a quickly formed plan, they took the ring around the Nunnery farm and off to the creek again. Daylight came, then noon, and another evening. Aunt Becky Nunnery sent food and water. The men were now beyond the last fire and had passed the Paw Paw Fork.

They stopped on the high mountain to eat and rest. By then the fire had swept over to the far side of Buffalo Creek. The men sat for an hour or more. Several dozed on the hard ground; one or two talked of fox hunting, a few discussed their crops. Several wanted only to rest before starting for home.

But many of them objected to leaving the fire at that time. They were afraid that if they did the fire would move on to Mare Creek, destroying the fences of their kinsmen. They began to debate

this issue, each expressing his opinion in desultory fashion. Nothing had been decided when they saw a lantern bobbing up and down along the ridge several hundred yards away.

A half hour later the lantern bearer came into view followed by three Mare Creek residents. They joined in the argument, begging for help to take the ring further up Buffalo. The Mare Creek landowners won. No matter how tired a man might be he couldn't resist an appeal to help save a lot of fence.

It was past midnight when they stopped again. Bob Scalf, who was to die a few years later in an Argonne wheat field, was sent to Mare Creek for water and food. The crew, now numbering at least a dozen men, fell down on beds of leaves just under the summit of Bedstead Mountain. Nearby was the evergreen-crested top of Pine Knob.

The ring stretched out west from where the men sat, snaked along the ridge crest for several miles. They argued over how long it was. Some said it was five miles. Another argued that they had raked, side rings and all, a protective path for eight hours. Finally, they quieted down and a few fell asleep. All awaited food and water.

Soon there was perfect silence as the little cluster of fire-fighters lay on the leaves. How long they lay there, with every muscle and nerve weary from the effort, no one could recall. A man yelled and they rose to their feet, groggy and leaning on their tools. All eyes turned to stare at a sudden shower of wind-borne sparks coming from the other side of Buffalo.

Thousands of sparks sank into the deep canyon-like valley but others were carried almost to the feet of the watchers. It was now a question of time till the whole mountain where they were standing



would be a blazing inferno. After quick consultation they started again to rake, talking intermittently of the absolute necessity of continuing the ring around the head of Mare Creek and through the Courtney Gap <sup>to</sup> of Harmons Branch. They moved out around a great flat, under the smoke-covered tops of the Pine Knob and Bedstead Mountain.

So intent were the men on their work that none saw the initial spark that fired the upper reaches of the mountain. When they looked it seemed as if there must have been some giant explosion. Flames were sweeping up the mountains, carried by the increasing wind. The men paused to watch, through the flames and smoke, the giant trees that soon toppled over. Swiftly the wall of fire moved toward the crest of the mountain, with the noise of exploding rocks like distant thunder.

It was the capricious wind that saved them from continued effort. No one can anticipate a wind's vagaries in an area ringed by mountain forest fires. It shifted, blowing almost at right angles to its former course. The fire came to a sudden stop in its mad sweep around the steep sides of the hill. Almost simultaneously with the change of wind, every man sank to the ground. Now and then a squirrel and a raccoon or two scampered by, fleeing the fire.

Down in the bottom Bob Scalf and two young boys he had recruited started the long climb up Bedstead Mountain. Each carried several food-filled buckets and jugs of water. Bob had two jugs in a sack thrown over his shoulders. He carried a bucket in his left hand and swung a lantern with his right. The two youngsters tagged along, stumbling in the path, enjoying the adventure of dark places and sudden falls.

Bob and the boys found the fire fighters curled up in grotesque positions asleep in the leaves. All grumbled when they ~~were~~ were awakened. They ate lustily, drank loudly from the jugs. The two boys scampered about on the outer edge of the group, chasing each other in the leaves. One, hearing an animal squeal, found a chipmunk seared and dying.

"You know, I think it's going to rain," said Bob, pointing at the sky.

"No such luck," someone answered.

They all stared through the trees and spotted rain clouds coming from the west.

"West winds bring rain," a man said. "Yep," and his voice rose a bit, "It's going to rain."

The clouds thickened and from the outer ring a man observed quietly: "This is one that ain't going around."

Bob Scalf sat propped against a tree, humming a tune in his deep bass.

"Sing us a song, Bob," a Buffalo neighbor urged. Others added to the request.

Bob fumbled slowly in his pocket, bringing out a tuning fork. He always carried it with him when he sang at parties and stag gatherings. He tapped the fork against a stone, listening to the vibrations. "What are you going to sing, Bob?" a man asked. There was no reply. The old singing master was listening to his fork.

Slowly, the deep bass notes of "Rock of Ages" wafted on the mountain. Many joined in a moment; others hummed the ancient tune for all knew the hymn.

The song ended, and no one spoke until the magic of the old hymn faded.

"You know what I think?" one said. "I think we are going to get wet."

They picked up their tools and prepared to leave. Bob and the two boys retrieved their buckets and jugs. The first rain drops pelted the green leaves. "You know," a man said, proudly, "nary a farmer lost a rail of fence."

"Not a rail has burned," another agreed. As he spoke, a pheasant rushed across the bench and disappeared in the darkness. "You know, though, somehow I think these big fires make the hunting bad."

There was a crash on the mountain and a billow of smoke and sparks as a tree fell. "I think, too, there's an awful lot of timber wasted," he added.

"Quit worrying about the timber," he was told. "There'll be timber when we ain't around. But I'm like you about the huntin.' There just ain't much game for a long time after a big woods fire."

The men were preparing to leave now. Some were going back along the flat to take the ridge home, while others would move cautiously in the pale light down the steep slope of Bedstead Mountain.

12-20-1956

COLORFUL HISTORY AND LEGEND ABOUND IN BIG SANDY VALLEY by Henry P. Scalf (Reprinted from the Floyd County Times, December 20, 1956)

The people of the Big Sandy area may be more conscious of their early history than are people of any other section of Appalachia.

Their longtime isolation was broken half a century ago by the intrusion of the railroad. Their emergence into the twentieth century was but a step, psychologically, from the log cabin era when the settlers fought Indians and tried to tame the primitive wilderness.

Oldtimers of the Johns Creek area of Pike and Floyd Counties often refer to William Robert Leslie as "the First Man." It was Daniel Boone, they declare, who brought Leslie to Johns Creek and showed him the wide bottoms.

Leslie climbed a high ridge at the mouth of Big Brushy Creek and, looking over the pristine valley, exclaimed: "Great God, what a place to live!" The Leslie settlement is history, but legends like those about the First Man, have been perpetuated in this area for years.

On a day when the sun shines and visibility has no ceiling save the blue canopy of the sky, you can climb Old Bedstead, a 1,700 foot mountain in eastern Floyd County, and view a large section of the Big Sandy Valley. You know that north is Johns Creek with its branches--Buffalo, Caney, Big Brushy and Bent. South is the Big Sandy River, with the high knobs of Sugar Camp and Brandy Keg jutting up like rugged sentinels.

Each place name suggests a legend. Bedstead Mountain received its name when Tandy R. Stratton, having need of another bed, took

an axe and went up a little <sup>valley,</sup> At the foot of the hill that bears this name, he cut down a giant poplar, and with deft carpenter strokes he fashioned himself a bed. He slept on it for a decade, and after he died his children, recalling how it was made, preserved it in an attic.

The Bedstead Branch flows into Mare Creek, a tributary of the Big Sandy. The Strattons settled Mare Creek and, in 1821, when the dividing line between Pike and Floyd Counties was run, the family found itself in Pike. "I don't like to do business in Piketon," the clan head said, and began a fight to get back in mother Floyd. He made it twenty four years later when the General Assembly passed a special act for his benefit.

But his land didn't touch Floyd County anywhere, and although by legislative act he was no longer in Pike County, he was still surrounded by it. Oldtimers <sup>have</sup> called the 1,000 acre tract "Little Floyd County." In between Floyd and Little Floyd was a quarter mile stretch claimed by both counties. A confused judge once named it "No Man's Land." Scarcely a year goes by that Stratton descendants on their farm don't fight, legally or otherwise, to stay in Floyd County.

Buffalo Gap is a low pass in the ridge between Little Floyd and the headwaters of Buffalo Creek. Streams with such picturesque names as Big Rough, Paw Paw, Twin Branch, and White Oak Creek head in this wooded country. In the mountainside near the Broad Hollow are caves --dark holes in the rocks leading to nobody knows where. One was visited by <sup>the</sup> Rev. Robert Adams when he was a boy nearly a century ago. He pushed aside leaves and animal bones as he wiggled through the tight dark tunnels and emerged several hundred feet downstream.

No one has tried that since.

The Big Sandy is a great place to live, as the Great Man said, and especially so if you like to hear the old legends about it. Some of these may be trivial and of interest to none but the local residents. But others may intrigue everyone in the region.

There was the Wolf Creek posse which, in 1847, went after Bill Pruitt and killed him on the headwaters of Tug River.

Abner James was sentenced to hang. His brother-in-law Billy McCoy rode to Frankfort and begged Gov. William Owsley to pardon the condemned man. He secured the pardon and hurriedly rode back to Big Sandy, arriving the night before the day set for the execution. That was history.

Stories told around many a fireside embellished the account of Billy McCoy's ride from Frankfort. He is said to have killed four horses in a wild breakneck ride, arriving in Louisa on the day of the execution. He plunged through a large crowd toward the moving wagon in which Abner James rode, sitting on a rude coffin. McCoy passed the governor's pardon to the sheriff. Legend insists that James then stood up, and flapping his arms, crowed like a cock: "The jury said I'd hang; the governor says I won't." Just where history ends and legend begins no one can say, and most don't care. History has ruined many a good story.

Jenny Wiley's capture by the Indians in 1789 in Ab's Valley, Virginia, is history and legend. Historians tell of her capture and the death of five of her children and a brother at the hands of a mongrel band led by Black Wolf, the Shawnee, and of her escape to Harmon's Station, the first settlement in eastern Kentucky, midway

between the present Prestonsburg and Paintsville. The Harmons escorted Mrs. Wiley back to Virginia, but she and her husband, Thomas, returned to the Big Sandy, becoming two of Johnson County's first settlers.

Over the years she told and retold the story of her captivity and rescue to her children and neighbors. The legend grew after her death. The Auxiers, founders of Blockhouse Bottom, at East Point, often related the story of how Mrs. Wiley was led on the escape path by a bird flying along the trail. Members of the Borders family, nieces and nephews of Mrs. Wiley, added to the legends. They would tell of how, Running wildly through the forest, she wore out her moccasins. Stumbling along on frozen ground, her feet cut and bleeding, she found the still warm carcasses of a buffalo her pursuers had killed. She parted the warm flesh and stood on it until her pain went away. These are legends, unverifiable by the historians, but told and retold on the Big Sandy.

Stories like the Wiley captivity had a tremendous impact on the consciousness of pioneer families. Historic and legendary accounts of her experience have become so confusing that historians have accepted, with little credit, what is said to be known about her. In the remote sections of the Big Sandy mothers still sing their babies to sleep with the Jenny Wiley lullaby. And when they get older and start to stray from their homes children hear their mothers call in warning "Jenny Wiley, Jenny Wiley", and they hurriedly return to their homes.

As one travels up the Big Sandy, passes Pikeville, turns up Shelby Creek, and crosses over onto the headwaters of Elkhorn, he comes

to the foot of Pound Mountain. Here is Pound Gap through which passed the first settlers of the Big Sandy Valley. A great highway is being finished through this historic pass. But not long ago the road was only a wagon trail, rocky and beaten under by at least a century of traffic. Col. James A. Garfield, the Union commander in that area, fought a battle there and routed the surprised Confederates.

Picket Rock stands like a sentinel a few hundred yards from the gap. So named because Confederate commanders posted men there to watch down the Sandy road, it is better known as the site of Dr. M.B. Taylor's massacre of the Ira Mullins family. In 1892 Taylor, the Red Fox of "The Trail of the Lonesome Pine", and two associates, the Fleming brothers, hid in a jumble of rocks and fatally shot five of that family as they approached the gap. Only Jane Mullins and Ira's fourteen year old son escaped. For a while Dr. Taylor hid in the woods of Letcher, Pike, and Wise Counties while his two associates fled to West Virginia.

The authorities sent for Ed Hall, a Floyd County native, whom everyone called "The Mountain Man Hunter." When outlaws defied other peace officers, Ed Hall would be sent to bring them in. He found Dr. Taylor in a fruit tree box at the Bluefield, W.Va. express office where his son had shipped him from Norton, Virginia. [Editor's note: Actually Dr. Taylor was found in a freight car in the Bluefield railyards where he was waiting to hop another freight for Florida.] Taylor died on the scaffold but Ed Hall was sick then and did not see him die. Later Hall and two others walked six days into West Virginia to get the Fleming brothers. After killing Cal Fleming, they brought his brother, Heenon, back for trial.



Dr. Taylor, murderer and mystic, was an educated man who mixed science and sorcery to cure his mountain patients. He was a deputy United States marshal for a few years and rode the woodland trails under the towering Cumberland cliffs with his winchester and a long telescope. He was expert at tracking his adversaries as well as avoiding them. It is said that, on occasion, he would put his shoes on backwards to elude pursuers. He preached a long sermon to the crowd that had come to see him hang, saying that on the third day he would rise from his grave. Nobody admitted believing him, but just in case they left a lighted lantern on his grave for a week.

John Wright, known as Devil Judd Tolliver in John Fox's "Trail of the Lonesome Pine", lived in a big two-story log house on Elkhorn Creek, near the present Jenkins. He was host to travelers through that area who cared to accept his hospitality. A friend of Bad Talt Hall, the Beaver Creek outlaw, he had a man take Talt's body from the scaffold in Wise and return it to Kentucky for burial. Wright and Talt had feuded with "Old" Clabe Jones, the Floyd and Knott County badman. Wright and Jones, with their respective henchmen, would travel back and forth over the headwaters of Beaver, Elkhorn, and Troubleome Creeks. Both were duly deputized peace officers and fought their feud under the authority of the law with warrants for each other's arrest. But the warrants issued by different counties were never served.

The Civil War added to the legends of the Big Sandy. The battle of Ivy Mountain was fought in 1861. "Bull" Nelson, Union leader, drove the Confederates under Col. A.J. May back toward Virginia. It was a rebel debacle, but southern sympathizers would not have

it so. They composed a song, singing it in defiance of history:

"You ought to have heard them Yankees' shinbones  
rattle

When at the Ivy Narrows they were stricken with  
horrors."

The song was written by a mountain balladist long after the fight when few Big Sandians would admit the Confederates had lost the battle. But Anthony Hatcher and five of his fellow rebels knew it then. Hatcher had a thigh bone broken by a "Blue Brute" bullet, and his friends quickly put him on a horse and fled up Ivy Creek. Entering Mare Creek through the Sugar Camp Gap, they dropped the wounded man off at a Union home where a pre-war friendship brought care and medical attention. The other soldiers, one seriously wounded, climbed a hill on the road to Pikeville and camped on Rock Spring Mountain that night. Here is a natural spring emerging from a rock near the top of the mountain. The wounded man died that night, and as no other means of burial was convenient, his comrades crammed him into a hollow chestnut log and left in the morning. In later years the story of the burial on Rock Spring Mountain was told around many firesides.

The legends are easily recalled because the transition from pioneer days to the present was slower in the Big Sandy than in any other section of Kentucky. The Indians clung to the valley after they had surrendered the rest of Kentucky, and the isolation of the area was pronounced until late in the nineteenth century. Suddenly emerging into the twentieth century, the people of our valley looked back on their long history as if it were but yesterday.

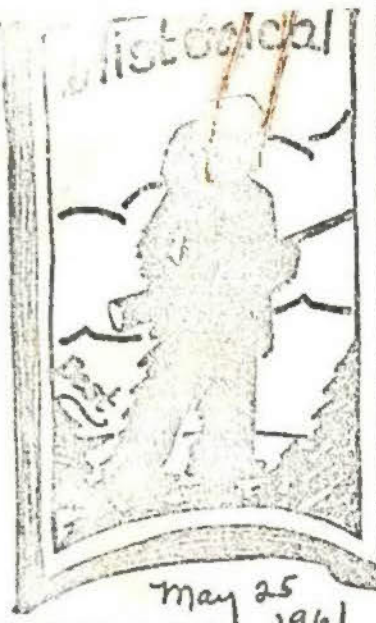
Big Sandians talk of Daniel Boone as if he lived only a few years ago. The Auxiers have a buffalo robe he gave one of their ancestors when he was leaving Blockhouse Bottom. The Leslies have a powder horn he gave "the First Man." Midway up Right Beaver Creek, on a stone overlooking the hamlet of Eastern, is carved the lettering "D.B. 1775." Whether the frontiersman sat down there on an eastern Kentucky hunting trip and cut his initials has been debated by historians but not by local residents. The initials are there and Boone was there.

The mere facts of history in the Big Sandy never suffer for embellishment. Nelson Boggs of Lawrence County, a member of the 14th Kentucky Infantry, was killed at the battle of Middle Creek in 1862 while serving under Col. Garfield. This much is historic fact. But oldtimers say that, in the carnage of battle, his comrades picked up his body and hefted it into the crotch of an apple tree until the battle was over. True or not, this is a typical Big Sandy elaboration.

Another belief is that the Federals falsified their casualties list. Returning Confederates were told by their kinsmen and friends back in the valley that large numbers of the Union dead and wounded were loaded on the barges and shipped downstream to Louisa and Catlettsburg. The story served to salve the pride of the defeated troops of Confederate Gen. Humphrey Marshall.

Though many sections of Kentucky have had as much history as the Big Sandy Valley, no accounts of the events occurring elsewhere were as romantic or picturesque as ours.

15-43  
 Thelma  
 Stewart  
 of P'burg,  
 Floyd Co., Ky.  
 student of  
 Leonard  
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May 25 1961

Floyd Co. Times

**HE WANTED A MULE**

Paul Gearheart, president of the Harold Telephone Company, contributes this week's column. It is a good "piece o' writing" and a good story. It is offered here as submitted. He entitled it, "One Against A Throng."

One evening, late in the spring of 1899, the foreman of a sawmill approached one of his teamsters with a rather unexpected enquiry: "Jim, which one of the mules is the best traveler?"

"Old Kate, I guess," came the reply, "why?"

"No particular reason, just admiring your team," the foreman complimented.

After a few minutes it dawned on the teamster what was being planned.

The foreman was a big grizzled mountaineer named Buckley, who was a henchman and sawmill overseer for Devil Anse Hatfield, undisputed leader of the feuding Hatfield clan of Island Creek, West Virginia.

Buckley's trademark was a wide gun-belt glistening with small reflectors and shiny cartridges, bagging down on the right side from the weight of a heavy revolver. He always wore leather riding leggings and carried a Long Tom rifle across his shoulder when he walked, and used it to lean on when he stood.

It was generally understood that the feud with the McCoy family, who lived in Pike county, had ended nine years earlier. But the Hatfields had kept a constant vigil, lest a new outbreak should catch them off guard.

The dividing line between the two feuding clans was the Turn Fork of Big Sandy River. Twenty miles to the northeast lay Island Creek, the home of Devil Anse's adherents. The McCoy's lived south of the line in Pike county, Kentucky.

Over the years it had been a week's task for a Hatfield sentry to make the long trip to Matewan, on the Turn Fork to get the news of any maneuver of the enemy.

The round-trip usually required a full night's hard ride, an almost unbearable task for a work animal.

James Roberts had brought the fine team, his young wife and their 13-month-old daughter from Floyd county, Ky., to seek employment in the sawmill industry which was then thriving on Island Creek. He prized his work animals highly, and was rather reluctant to have a member of the clan steal one of his mules for making the long journey to Matewan.

After work was finished for the day, Roberts went home with a troubled mind. He told his wife of the incident at the mill and together they planned their strategy in the event the suspicion materialized.

The Roberts family occupied a small two room log house on Cob Fork, about a mile from the mill. The tramroad ran close by the hut and on into the virgin timber.

The mules were kept in a little barn, about 100 yards down the branch and about 200 feet to the right of the tramroad.

At dusk Jim took his .38 caliber pistol, for which he had only one cartridge, and went to the barn where he had planned to lie and wait. Climbing into the corn crib, he gathered a bed of sticks under him and lay still. The muffled snort and shift of the mules behind him and the occasional report from an owl on the hillside prevented complete silence.

fields  
 Hardly an hour had passed when he heard faint footsteps coming up the tramroad. Very shortly whispering voices became audible. Maybe it was someone coming to visit his home, he hoped.

His hopes vanished quickly when two shadowy forms turned off the tramroad and headed straight for the barn. Roberts' heart leaped within him when he recognized the approaching voices as that of Buckley and Devil Anse. He leveled his revolver through a crack in the crib, hoping to get the two men in position, one behind the other. This was the only chance of getting both men with his only shot. As fate would have it, the two men remained separated.

When the visitors reached the crib door, the young watchman lurched forward and shouted, "Throw your hands up, boys," an order readily obeyed by the surprised intruders.

Jim talked fast and nervously. "Somebody's been stealing my corn and I've been watching it," he said.

"Is that so?" Devil Anse was quick to inquire. "Buckley and me was down at the mill and thought we'd come up and spend the night with you," Hatfield added.

Eager to smooth out a rather embarrassing and probably a dangerous situation, Roberts welcomed the two men to spend the night at his home.

The Spanish American War had stimulated business generally all over the country. Island Creek's lumber industry flourished. The coming of the railroad to the Guyan River valley provided an outlet for the rough lumber produced here.

The conversation casually shifted to the war and the general economy as Roberts and his guests went to the house and prepared to retire. A bed was made ready for Buckley and Hatfield in one room while Jim, his wife and young child occupied the other. Buckley carefully placed his rifle and revolver within easy reach from his bed. Even though the host did not sleep any at all, the night passed without incident.

A few nights later while the Roberts family was preparing for bed, a loud thump at the back door echoed through the house, immediately followed by a loud whinny. In a flash hoofbeats rushing by the house carried the interloper swiftly away.

Fearing that he was only one against a multitude, the young Kentuckian's mind reflected on the massacre of the McCoy family which occurred a few years before, and only a few miles away. Reason taught him that to stand against such odds was not courage but suicide.

Early the following morning he piled all his belongings on his shackly buckboard and headed south toward his native Floyd county.

# HISTORICAL NOTES

## Historic-sounding gap road was pioneer route to the west

by Henry P. Scott  
(Reprinted from the Floyd County Times, June 13, 1963.)

The old road connecting Virginia and the west by way of the Big Sandy Valley is gone now, except for bits of wagon trail that have survived here and there, at the back of bottoms or around hill-sides.

Between Ivel and Tram, on the north side of the river and above U.S. Highway 23, a short segment begins at a field fence and ends a few hundred feet south in a yard at the top of a low hill. For the last 60 years or so, its only travelers have been leaves, twigs, and rolling stones.

From the top of the hill, where the short stretch of ancient road ends in a yard, you can see the village of Tram and the white houses in the river bottoms.

Down under the promitory are the remains of the old log house that domiciled the domestic slaves of Colonel Harry Stratton, one of the founders of Floyd County and an early justice of the peace. Water birches grow in a dump where his own house once stood and where, in 1795, the region's first Methodist Sunday School class was held.

Eight years after Col. Harry built the house, the Virginia Road was authorized. The old pioneers who had come from Virginia to Kentucky wanted a road back east over which they could drive their herds of hogs and cattle to market. The lawmakers of Frankfort authorized it in 1802. It began at Mt. Sterling and ended at Pound Gap, which was then called Sounding Gap.

There it connected with a road leading to Richmond. By most settlers it was called the Virginia Road, by others the Sounding Gap Road. Later it came to be known as the Mt. Sterling-Pound Gap Road.

At first it was not really a road, only a path beaten out by the bison, the Indians, and the first white immigrants. It followed ridges and streams, and the first attempts to negotiate it with ox-drawn wagons were foolhardy adventures inviting disaster. Many are the traditions of broken axles that forced some of the founding families to settle in Eastern Kentucky when they had originally planned to reach the Blue Grass.

After that first legislative notice in 1802, the lawmakers neglected or forgot the road for 18 years. Then, in 1817, when Alexander Lackey of Prestonsburg was a member of the Kentucky House of Representatives, a bill was passed to open a road from Mt. Sterling via Prestonsburg to the Kentucky-Virginia line. Lackey was named

one of the three commissioners to establish it. For many years this road was the subject of several legislative acts and many Floyd County court orders.

In the period from 1836 to 1847, the legislature was especially generous when it came to Eastern Kentucky roads. Between Owingsville and the Big Sandy River the lawmakers spent \$168,783.83. Between Mt. Sterling and the Virginia line they authorized the expenditure of \$23,243.40.

However, recognizing that the section between Pikeston and Sounding Gap covered atrocious terrain, they allocated an additional sum of \$6,324.00 for it. These improvements did little more than make the road passable for most of the year.

Before and after the road was improved, it was a highway for immigrants. They emerged through Pound Gap, traveled down Shelby Creek, and followed the river north and west, the covered wagons rolling and swaying with the slow movement of the oxen that drew the families and their possessions west.

Scores of the migrating families stopped at Col. Harry's and stayed the night. It was a house of good cheer and commodious enough for company.

When the road was built, Floyd County was a wilderness empire, broken here and there by pioneer cabins. The town of Prestonsburg, then a log cabin hamlet of less than a dozen souls, was the only town between Abingdon, Virginia and Washington, the county seat of Mason County, Kentucky.

Floyd County began at Pound Gap and extended west to Blackwater Creek in present-day Morgan County. Its northern boundary was the Tug River, and on the south it bordered the North Fork of the Kentucky River.

The year that the road was built, the legislature carved Clay County out of Floyd, because its inhabitants were complaining about the hundred and fifty miles of rough trail they had to ride to reach their county seat at Prestonsburg.

Col. Harry would sit on a bench in his huge living room tending the fire in his fireplace and listening to the immigrants as they talked about going west.

The Territory of Ohio had just achieved statehood and the town of Chillicothe was the new state capital. A few score miles from Chillicothe was the Wabash River, and across it were the vast, rolling grasslands of Indiana. Further west was a virgin grassland known as Illinois.

Many were the nights that Col. Harry had for company old Spencer Adkins, whose home was

at present-day Millard in Pike County. The two were fast friends and had hunted and explored the valley in the days when the creeks had no names. Years later, when litigation over land titles arose,

Stratton and Adkins often served as witnesses in court. Universally referred to as the Old Hunters, they told of finding streams that had

(See Notes, page seven)

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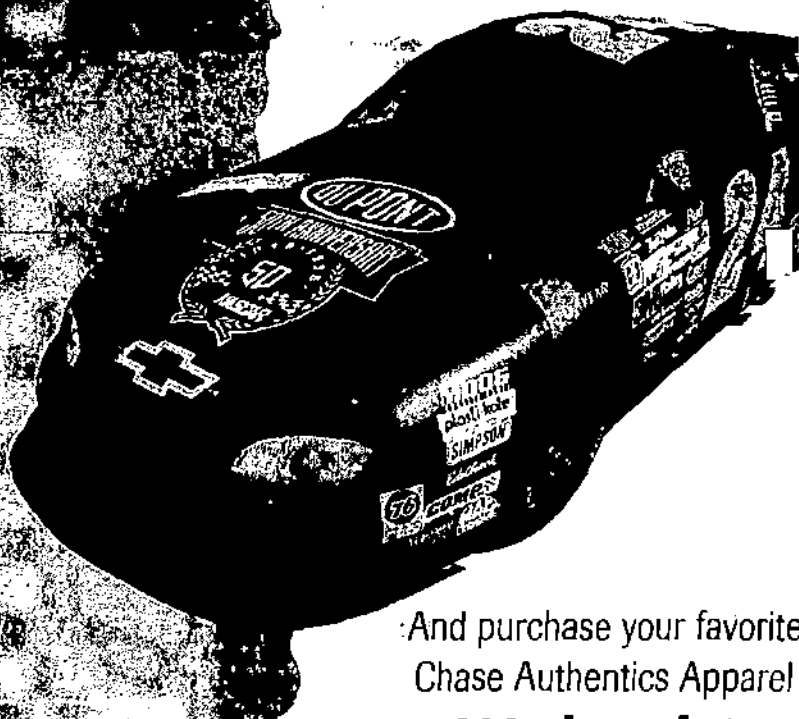
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BOONE MAY HAVE CARVED HIS INITIALS IN YEAR 1775 ON A GOOSE CREEK ROCK by Henry P. Scalf (Reprinted from the Floyd County Times, date unknown)

Near the Osborne High Rocks on the S.C. Allen farm on Goose Creek, a branch of Right Beaver, is a jumbled pile of flat rocks. For anyone coming around the big bench and seeking a place to sit and view the countryside, no more inviting place can be found than a large sandstone with a table-like top. From atop this stone one can see the sweep of the valley below, and by looking back he can view the Turkey Creek gap silhouetted, notch-like, against the sky.

The stone is inscribed with the legend "D.B. 1775." This may resemble similar sets of initials known to have been carved by Daniel Boone on trees, gunlocks, and other stones.

Some oldtimers say the Goose Creek carving has been there for decades, and may even go back to when the valley was first settled. Others are frankly skeptical, thinking that some jokester did the carving, laughing as he did (as hill people often say) "out of the side of his mouth." Whether the carving is authentic or not, it has been subject to considerable discussion for a long time.

Mr Allen, the landowner, has no opinion about the carving's authenticity. It was there when he was a boy. He got interested in the stone when his sister Rosalie, the wife of Judge William Pharmer Leslie of Texas, on a visit here, made a fascimile of the carving, took it to Harrodsburg and compared it with some known Boone initials. She came away convinced that the Goose Creek initials are genuine.

We know that Boone was in Kentucky in the winter of 1767-8. He and William Hill passed through Pound Gap, followed Elkhorn Creek through Shelby Gap, and proceeded down Shelby Creek to the Big Sandy River. They descended that stream to the mouth of Middle Creek, and went up the latter, following bison and deer tracks to a salt lick at the present David. Upon their arrival a great snow fell and they were forced to camp through the winter by the spring, shooting the deer and bison that came to the lick. The bison were the first they ever saw.

But we can only conjecture whether Boone returned to this section of Kentucky in 1775. In late 1774 he is known to have been at Capt. John Blackmore's Fort on the Clinch River, standing guard against the Indians. And we know that, in January of 1775, he had entered Kentucky for, according to the Draper Manuscripts in the Wisconsin Historical Society, he was camped with a party on the Kentucky River. Boone then had the habit of wandering off by himself on hunting trips and thus might have left his Kentucky River friends and headed north, entering Beaver Creek. Or he could have visited Beaver Creek on some lone journey from Fort Blackmore either before or just after his Kentucky River trip. We only know for sure that he had entered Kentucky in January 1775.

If, in early 1775, Boone had traveled cross-country from Pound Gap to the salt lick that he and Hill had visited eight years before. he could have descended Shelby Creek and gone up either Indian Creek or Robinson Creek. If he had ascended Indian Creek he would have come onto Left Beaver near Abner Fork. If he followed Robinson Creek he would have come out near the head of Big Mud Creek, thence through

the gap to Left Beaver. He would then have descended Left Beaver for a distance and crossed the dividing ridge to the Goose Creek area. Perhaps so. Perhaps he sat down on a big flat rock and carved his initials for posterity. He often did that.

But Dr. J.H. Allen, who was reared on the Goose Creek farm where the initials are found, is skeptical. He doesn't believe the initials are Boone's. He is sure that when he first saw the initials they had a "fresh look." He thinks they may have been carved as a practical joke by Van Martin when he was out squirrel hunting, for Martin was not above such a practical joke.

The only thing we can conclude about the alleged Boone carving is that its authenticity is as yet undetermined.



## BOOKS OF FLOYD SETTLERS WERE RARE AND TREASURED

The commissioners, who, headed by Harry Stratton, settled in 1839 the estate of John Sellards, a brother of Jenny Wiley, meticulously wrote for the court record every item of value in the Sellards personal estate. In the old goose-quill penmanship of the period was listed "I Book . . . \$1.00". The record does not say but it was evidently a Bible and was the only one possessed by the old pioneer when he died.

In homes all over the Big Sandy section the early settlers possessed only the one book. Treasured beyond all other items, The Book became the repository of birth, marriage and death dates, for where else should sacred events be recorded except in the Sacred Book?

The oldest Bible in existence in Floyd county is the Stratton Bible. Solomon Hunter Stratton bought it from a subscription agent in 1826. The genealogical data written into it by the Stratton hand is a valuable record for those who search for dates of birth and death. In 1826 Jacob Mayo bought a similar Bible except, unlike the Stratton book, it did not contain the Apocrypha. Into the blanks reserved for records the competent Mayo hand wrote his family record. The old book is now in the possession of Mrs. Lucille Mayo Herndon, a descendant.

In 1832 The American Tract Society published one of Jonathan Edwards' treatises on the religious affections. A copy was purchased by a member of the Stratton family and lay on the table next to the Sacred Word until 1869 when the owner died. A son came into possession of the old book and kept it, with a few other books he had been able to purchase, until he died in 1904. Today his descendants treasure the volume because of its rareness and age. The original owners valued it because books of any kind were rare in Eastern Kentucky.

Some of the early settlers brought book into Big Sandy from Virginia and North Carolina. A few of these early books were handmade. William James Mayo, a scholar of the early days, made with his own hands arithmetic books for school use and self-instruction. One example of the Mayo craftsmanship, made by him in 1769 when he was 16 years of age in Patrick county, Virginia, is still extant. When he was a householder in Floyd county he used the volume for the instruction of his own children, as there were no public schools.

Joseph Bevins came from Ireland to America in 1774. After Revolutionary service he moved westward into the hills of Eastern Kentucky, settling on Johns Creek. In his trunks, carried over the mountains, were a few books, chiefly volumes of instruction and practical use. Constant perusal by descendants of the first Bevins wore the backs away. They were rebound in deer-skin.

Textbooks were so rare in the early schools of Big Sandy that the Bible was in universal use as a reader. Gradually some of the old texts that oldsters look back upon with fond memories, like Webster's Speller, commonly called the Blue Back Speller, McGuffey's Readers and Ray's arithmetics, found a gradually increasing use. There were no tree textbooks in those days and the scarcity of money on the mountain farms limited wide ownership.

In this day of many, many books, it is difficult for Eastern Kentuckians to appreciate the value the early settler placed upon his few books. This value, reflected in great care through the decades, was because of the rarity of books.

Today books are not rare but distribution is limited. This limited distribution the Bookmobile will eliminate.

## TWO FROM COUNTY BRAVED GUNS TO VOTE FOR "ABE"



LINDSAY LAYNE



Two men voted for Abraham Lincoln for president in 1860 at Laynesville precinct, in this county. They voted for him in the presence of grim-faced men who sat with shotguns across their laps and threatened to shoot the first man who called his vote for Old Abe.

The two voters were Lindsay Layne and his son, Moses Sautford Layne.

Abraham Lincoln was so unpopular in Kentucky in 1860 that he polled only 1,366 votes in the entire state. The Democratic party, the predominant one, had split wide open on the question of the day, and after the nomi-

nation of Stephen A. Douglas by the party at Baltimore the preceding summer, dissidents of the party of Jefferson had met in the same city in May and nominated John Bell of Tennessee for president and Edward Everett of Massachusetts for vice-president. The Bell group took the name Constitutional Union party and carried Kentucky by a substantial majority.

Floyd county was a thin cauldron of political division in 1860. In the Laynesville precinct lived adherents of the north and south. James S. Layne, father of Lindsay, was a slaveholder but

his son had refused to own any human chattels; Lindsay, who was afterwards a lieutenant and quartermaster of the 30th Ky. Mounted Infantry, and who still later was county judge, lived at the mouth of the Coldwater Branch. His son Moses was now full grown but unmarried and at home. Here in the vicinity of the present Harold lived several families of Confederate sympathies—Hatchers, Meades and others. Union sympathizers were going to vote for Bell and Everett. Men, who were inclined to vote for honest Abraham Lincoln, and voting was open by calling out your name and the candidate's name, faced censure and threats.

Election morning, and word was passed around that men with shotguns would enforce the ban on Lincoln votes. It was an hour of grave consideration for Lindsay Layne but he decided to go and cast his vote as he had planned. Moses, his son, wanted to do the same and there was considerable discussion, with the son receiving a paternal order to stay at home. Lindsay trudged alone up the river road to the polls.

Around the voting place was assembled a group of men. Some sat with shotguns in their hands, awaiting Lincoln voters. Lindsay must have waited sometime before he voted, since we know he had left home alone but when he pushed in to cry out his vote, Moses was behind him. "Mark one down for old Abe," called out Lindsay. "Just mark down another one," was cried over his shoulder by Moses. The clerk wrote the two votes down, the only two Lincoln received in the Laynesville precinct.

Having voted, father and son turned away and started home. Not a word was spoken by the crowd, not a gun was lifted to fire. Men everywhere have recognized and respected courage.

Moses "Saint" Layne was married, the following month and lived for years at the mouth of Tom's Creek near the present Ivcl. He lived to a great age, dying in the late 1920's. One of the proudest moments of his life, he was wont to recall for his children, was when he stood behind his father and in the face of guns voted for Abraham Lincoln.

# Spurlock Looks Back at 90 On 'Memories' of Varied Life

Today, vigorous and alert, despite the weight of many years, B. M. Spurlock, of West Prestonsburg, looks back on life with many remembrances. Although he is still serving as chairman of the board of directors of the bank he helped found, he lives semi-retired after long years as a school teacher, merchant, steambot man, and banker. He studied to become a doctor, he says with a smile, but was turned aside in his first days of practise by a maternity case.

His long versatile career adds up to nine decades of life. He was born on Spurlock Creek, a tributary of Left Beaver, near the present Printer, October 2, 1864. His parents were Hiram Kenas Spurlock and Elizabeth Martin Spurlock. Hiram's father was a son of another Hiram Spurlock, who in turn was a son of John Spurlock, the pioneer settler and founder of Prestonsburg. The first Spurlock built a house in 1791 just back of where Mrs. Jo M. Davidson now resides on Court street. B. M. Spurlock remembers logs, parts of the walls and other relics of the pioneer Spurlock's house after it was torn down. To be living in 1955 and a great-grandson of a pioneer who came here before the Indians were subdued is a distinction longevity has conferred, it is thought, upon no other living Floyd countian.

out the Johns store. Ralph Booten was a blacksmith-lawyer, ran a shop, built wagons and practised law. Isaac Richmond established a store in 1869. He remembers P. D. Harrison, manager here of the chain store owned by his Baltimore family; remembers that Harrison sold him, a green country lad, a coat with a twisted lining.

Young Spurlock began teaching at Simpson Branch. He taught three months for \$66. That meager pay



—Folaroid 1-Minute Photo by The Times  
B. M. Spurlock, 90, and Julia Langley Spurlock, 86, at their home in West Prestonsburg.

Although Beriah Magoffin had been forced, because of his Southern sympathies to resign the governorship of the state two years before B. M. Spurlock was born, his parents bestowed the name of the ex-governor upon him. Perhaps due to the dearth of reliable news incident to the turmoil of Civil War, they thought he was still governor. He went to school at a place called Halbert Hill on the main creek above the mouth of Spurlock. Soon, in the quest of the few additional educational advantages Prestonsburg offered, he came here.

husband in desperate need to fetch a doctor for his wife, came for Beriah. "I bucked on that kind of a case," he said. Tom Allen went in his stead and Spurlock dropped out of the medical profession.

He got together a little money, put in a store at the mouth of Spurlock, taught school at the same time, letting a clerk run the business while he was teaching. Drs. Walk and Ed Slumbo were his pupils. He recalls how Walk got his first book. The boy came to the store

Prestonsburg had no paved streets then, not even a concrete sidewalk. A few places had board walks. Mr. Spurlock talks about stores and hotels that are only strange and unfamiliar names to us now. "Daddy" Steele had a hotel here. John Layne had a hotel near where the First National Bank stands. John G. Johns had a store near the site of the present Bank Josephine.

He likes to talk about Prestonsburg, decades ago. Dr. Gardner, who married Belle Callihan, bought

John W. Langley. Born Dec. 10, 1868, she is 86 years of age. She met Mr. Spurlock at a subscription school Will Langley, her brother, had started at Katy Friend Branch, on Middle Creek, near here.

They were not married right soon. Julia Langley wanted an education herself and, having met the necessary requirements, she began to teach on Spurlock Fork of Middle Creek. She recalls her teaching career, little human interest matters that are dear to her. She rode horseback to Abbott Creek one time about a school there. When

from Beaver Creek to Spurlock to see his daughter Susan Click Langley, and on his return to Beaver Creek as he neared his home, the horse threw him. He lived 15 days, dying March 1, 1898, five months

after Julia, his granddaughter, was married. Tradition in the family, repeated by Mrs. Spurlock, is that the parents of James Click lived to be much older than that. James Click's father, lived to be 120 and his mother to 115.

The circumstances of Beriah Spurlock's first store venture at West Prestonsburg is related by him. One Sunday he walked across from Prestonsburg to visit a cousin, W. Y. Harris, who had a store. He helped some as a clerk that day, continued to help a great deal. Finally he took charge of it altogether for Harris. A newly-elected sheriff asked Harris to go his bond, which he did. The sheriff failed and Harris was a ruined man. Creditors descended upon his property and, since the sheriff could not preside at a sale selling his own property, a creditor bid it in.

Before the purchaser left the ground he learned that Spurlock was interested in buying the store. He approached the Floyd countian, said, "Do you want this store?" He said he did, but indicated that he had no money. "He sold me that store without any money or even a note," Mr. Spurlock likes to recall. He paid the debt off and ran the business for years.

The store was robbed nine times. These robberies were getting serious and after the eighth he procured some bloodhounds, tracked the criminals down. The next time it was robbed, the burglars turned arsonists and burned it. That was in 1913.

But the year the store burned railway trains were running up the Big Sandy. Before that Beriah had worked on steamboats. He was clerk on the Fair Play, from Callettsburg to Pikeville. At other times he served in other river trade capacities. He was manager of a push boat run from Richardson to Huffman warehouse, above Pikeville.

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Young Spurlock began teaching at Simpson Branch. He taught three months for \$66. That meager pay didn't discourage him, for he continued in the profession; taught the next year at Halbert Hill where he was first initiated into the mysteries of education, followed that with a year on Spurlock. He came to Prestonsburg again, got hold of a textbook on medicine, began to peruse it. After studying sometime, he came within Dr. Gardner's notice. Gardner sent him his first patient. "Dave Allen's wife had a "rising" on her breast, Gardner was sent for but couldn't go. He sent his lancet, said, "get Beriah to do it."

The maternity case that thwarted a medical career came up right after he incised the woman's breast. Another man, Tan Allen, was studying the same medical text as Spurlock. "One of us knew as much as the other," Mr. Spurlock recalls, "and that was nothing." He emphasized the word, "nothing." A

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The store venture at the mouth of Spurlock didn't last long because Spurlock was looking for more education. He came back to Prestonsburg again, sat in a schoolroom presided over by Albert Stephens. Assisting in the school was a Prof. Hayes, of Hancock county, Ky. "Hayes was a lazy sort of fellow and asked me to hear classes recite for him. I became a sort of assistant teacher," he recalls.

It was about this time that he met the future Mrs. Spurlock. She was Julia Langley, daughter of the Rev. Joseph and Susan Click Langley, and, as most Floyd countians know, a sister of Congressman

—Polaroid 1-Minute Photo by The Times

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They were not married right soon. Julia Langley wanted an education herself and, having met the necessary requirements, she began to teach on Spurlock Fork of Middle Creek. She recalls her teaching career, little human interest matters that are dear to her. She rode horseback to Abbott Creek one time to see about a school there. When she arrived at the trustee's home, she found Frank Risner had preceded her and the trustee had "passed" his word only a few minutes before. "I've got nothing against a lady teaching the school," the trustee told her as if there may have been some that did object to women in the schoolroom. He divided the school, giving each half of the time to teach. She taught a total of nine years.

Beriah and Julia were married. September 9, 1897. That was 59 years ago. Both are aged now; Mr. Spurlock is four years older. But if both were to look forward to the great ages of her ancestors, they would be blessed with great age indeed. James Click, her grandfather, lived to be 107. He was born Dec. 20, 1790, at King's Salt Works in Virginia, came to Kentucky in "the year one," as he designated the date of 1801. He traveled horseback

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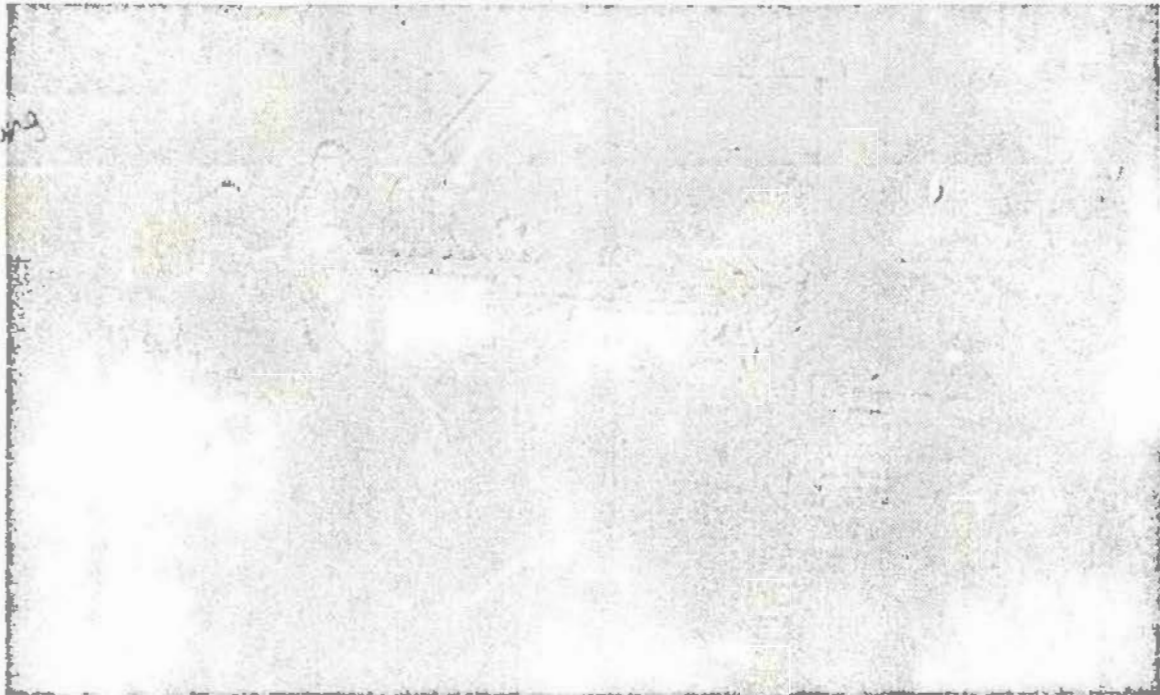
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Mr. Spurlock remembers the first steamboat he saw. It was the Jerry Osborn. Others he remembers vividly were the Favorite, Cando, Tom Spurlock, Mary L. Hatcher and Andy Hatcher. He managed a warehouse and operated a wharf boat for years. He was required to ride into adjoining counties and collect freight charges from some consignee. While doing this he took orders for the Catletsburg wholesale houses, from as far away as Hindman and Salyersville. His first banking business was done with the Catletsburg National Bank in order to clear large checks received by freight.

At one time he was in business with his brother, D. W. (Wheeler) Spurlock, in a retail establishment at West Prestonsburg. D. W. sold out his half-interest to Beriah, bought a farm in Ohio. He came back, dissatisfied, bought not only his half but Beriah's part, too.

# SCREAMS OF CONDEMNED FEUDIST HORRIFIED ONLOOKERS AT HANGING



Ellison Mounts, second man from the left with hat over his face, on the scaffold at Pikeville, where he was hanged, Feb. 18, 1890, for the murder of Allifair McCoy. Identified, besides Mounts, are Pike County Sheriff W. H. Maynard, extreme right. Kneeling, next to him, is Rev. J. W. Grover praying for the condemned man.

By HENRY P. SCALF

Many men have gone to their death by hanging with a hymn or prayer on their lips. Others, tight-lipped and benumbed by the horror of approaching death, have died with few words.

Ellison "Cotton Top" Mounts did neither. As the black cowl was being adjusted over his face and until the jerk of the rope shut off his words, he screamed, again and again: "The Hatfields made me do it."

Crowds, too, react differently. The people sang and prayed with Bad Tom Smith, of Breathitt county, who was hanged at Jackson in 1895. The people stood mute and unmoving as Bad Talt Hall died at Wise, Virginia, three years earlier. At Pikeville, however, when the hempen rope choked out the last cries of Cotton Top Mounts the people screamed in unison. Scores, men and women, fainted. The screams ceased, died only when the doctor stopped the spinning body to see if the Hatfield henchman was dead.

Mounts was partly right. The Hatfields coerced him to go along with them, New Year's Day, 1888, to burn the Randolph McCoy home on Blackberry Creek and massacre the family. They hadn't pulled the trigger, though, that fired the bullet into Allifair McCoy, a crippled daughter of the clan chieftain. It was Mounts who shot her down as she stood in the doorway.

It was said that Mounts "didn't know much," that he was illiterate and a pawn in the hands of the Hatfields. The blonde, bumbling yokel was a relative of Devil Anse Hatfield but his exact spot in the family tree was never determined. The Hatfield clan never failed to mention the ties of consanguinity when he was asked to go on a raid or ambush a McCoy adherent. Mounts noticed, too, that when they wanted him and called him kinsman they usually had their hands on guns.

Association of Mounts with his kinsmen in their war with the McCoy's had put a price on his head before he took part in the raid on Blackberry Creek and he found it expedient to stay on the West Virginia side of the Tug Fork of Big Sandy.

Mostly he stayed near his mother's home, "piddled and puttered" about the place. Here the Hatfields always found him when he was needed and it was from here he watched for Frank Phillips, the Pike county deputy sheriff who was making life miserable for the Hatfield clan.

Phillips had a habit of dashing across the Tug into West Virginia with a posse of officers at unpredictable times, seizing and carrying away Hatfield adherents wanted at Pikeville. Late in 1887 the Pike officer went after, of all people, a McCoy. Selkirk McCoy had at first been aligned on the side of his kinsmen but, having married a Hatfield girl, he changed sides. He had rendered service to his people in court when the two clans fought over the ownership of a hog but, married he dropped his allegiance and was with the Hatfields when three McCoy's were murdered at a sinkhole on the Kentucky side of Tug. For his participation in this he was indicted. Phillips went after him.

*Thelma Stewart  
Floyd County, Ky.  
one of Leonard Roberts' students,  
Newhead  
5-4-4.  
1961.*

*MR. Scalf sent me this  
Clipping From Floyd County  
Times - I don't know date  
of paper - fairly recent issue,  
I think.*

*Exp. (Floyd)*

It is said that the Hatfields feared only two men—Jim McCoy and Frank Phillips. Devil Anse himself, spoke admiringly of the "nerve" of Jim McCoy and saved him from death on one occasion when his clan held McCoy captive. For Frank Phillips their actions spoke louder than words. Unless the Hatfields were traveling in a body or surreptitiously alone in the woods they steered clear of the Kentucky side. At home armed guards watched the mountain trails for a Phillips-led posse.

The capture of Selkirk McCoy put the Hatfields to thinking. Unless they ended the vendetta by eliminating Randolph McCoy and his family there would be a continuance of the struggle, with Phillips picking them up one by one in sudden raids across the border. Out of their thinking evolved murder and fire, of a kind that shocked a nation and caused a distinguished judge of the Kentucky Court of Appeals to

say that you had to go back to the annals of "savage life" to find a counterpart in crime.

Devil Anse and his henchman decided to kill Randolph McCoy and all his family. To do this there was a calling of the clan. Johnse Hatfield, son of the chieftain, and Tom "Guerrilla" Chambers went out to round up their kinsmen. One of those enlisted was "Cotton Top" Mounts.

They found Mounts at home on the Guyandotte River, putting shingles on the house. At first he demurred to joining the proposed venture but Johnse reminded him that there was a reward of \$500 on

(Continued from Page One)

his head and Phillips could get him next. Mounts succumbed to the arguments and went along. At Devil Anse's home on Island Creek where he met his comrades in crime. To go out that night and murder the McCoy's the Hatfield leader named his sons, Cap, Johnse and Bob. To participate also were Elliott Hatfield, Chambers, Mounts, Charles Gillespie and French Ellis. Anse pleaded illness as an excuse not to go but put Jim Vance in charge. Vance gave his men a briefing, threatened he "would kill any man that went back on him that night if powder would burn."

They went by a devious trail, emerged on Blackberry Creek near midnight. Approaching the home of Randolph McCoy, they put on masks. Vance again gave a "pop" talk, reminded them that if the family was wiped out no witnesses would remain of former deeds, and that a leader with a will to carry on for the McCoy's would be dead.

Surrounding the cabin, each assumed a strategic place to watch doors. Jim Vance stayed out in front of the house and called loudly for surrender. Johnse fired at the frontdoor. He was answered by the gun of Calvin McCoy from an upstairs window. Johnse yelled with pain, a bullet in his shoulder. The battle, planned by the Hatfields to end a war, lasted perhaps half an hour.

Jim Vance tried to fire the house by flinging a match into cotton hanging on the outside of the house. He failed. Tom Chambers then climbed upon the house, tore loose a shingle and stuck a burning pine stick through the hole. Calvin McCoy shot three fingers off and Chambers rolled off the house and ran.

The burning piece of pine fell at the side of the house, a threat to its destruction. Calvin called to his sister Allifair to pour water on it. Opening the door, she emptied a bucket of water in the direction of the fire but in her excitement the aim was inaccurate. There being no more water, she tried again with a churn of milk. This, too, failed. Seeing that the house must now burn, Allifair opened the kitchen door and stared at the masked faces.

"Cap Hatfield, you're out there. I know your voice," she said.

Some one shouted, "Damn her, kill that girl." "Cotton Top" Mounts raised his rifle, shot her dead in the doorway. Her sisters, Josephine and Addie, dragged her body inside.

At a cry that Allifair was killed, Sarah McCoy, wife of the McCoy leader, ran from the house. Jim Vance knocked her down with his rifle butt. Johnse, seeing she was not dead, struck her over the head with a revolver. She lay there awhile, but finally began to crawl away while the Hatfields were seeking to kill Calvin and Randolph as they fled the house.

Randolph made it to the woods but Calvin didn't. A fusillade of shots brought him down near the corner. The two other girls also succeeded in making their escape, and, watching from the woods, they saw the Hatfields ride away. They returned to the house and dragged Allifair's body out of the burning house.

Several hours later old Randolph McCoy, shivering with cold and the agony of great tragedy, stumbled down a path toward the charred remains of his house. He found the bodies of Calvin and Allifair. He saw they were dead. He searched on for others, heard a moan and moved carefully through the moonlight. His wife was lying in a welter of blood, her hair matted with it and frozen to the ground. He picked her

up in his arms, saw she was still living. He carried her up the trail toward a neighbor's house.

The Hatfields rode back to West Virginia, cursing their luck. The battle to end a war had been unsuccessful. Old Randolph had escaped and two other murders would be charged to them. Frank Phillips would come riding again.

Frank Phillips did ride again, but he failed to catch any of the Hatfields for a long time. They were wary, and several fled. Charles Gillespie went over into Virginia where an alert officer nabbed him for the reward. It was a month before they caught "Cotton Top" Mounts, and the honor didn't go to Phillips, although he had made several sudden plunges into the Tug country and a few times had led sorties to the headwaters of the Guyandotte.

Two smart detectives, Treve Gibson and Dan Cunningham, were out to get some of the reward money. They ambushed Mounts on the head of Mate Creek, held a gun in his face and began to put the handcuffs on. From somewhere came rifle shots. One struck Gibson in the leg. Cunningham pulled comrade and prisoner both into the bushes. The next day Mounts was lodged in the Pike county jail.

Mounts confessed his misdeeds to Pike county attorney Lee Ferguson, implicated all of the Hatfield clan that had participated in the murders of Tolbert, Palmer and young Randolph McCoy early in the feud. He detailed the carnage at Blackberry Creek and named his accomplices. Trial of the Hatfields, Mounts and their friends in crime, was held at Pikeville in August, 1889, Judge John M. Rice presiding. Mounts was sentenced to die by hanging. It was said that the highly emotional testimony of Sarah McCoy had a devastating effect on Mount's defense. In the meantime, Sheriff W. H. Maynard assembled three "hacks," surrounded them with 25 mounted guards and started for Lexington with all of the convicted prisoners except Mounts. Maynard was not taking any chances that a foray led by Hatfields would release their kinsmen.

Maynard got to Prestonsburg late in the evening. The day had been rough, rain had fallen in torrential sheets and the mud-spattered guards welcomed an opportunity to stop and rest. They dismounted and a crowd of the curious assembled. Some one took Maynard aside, told him that he had heard Cap Hatfield was in Knox county trying to raise a gang to take his prisoners before he got to Richardson, the railway terminal. Maynard hastily put his caravan back on the road. Frank Phillips accompanied the group to Richardson, but returned to Pikeville from there.

Gov. Simon B. Brucker, after many court delays finally allowed Mounts to go to the scaffold. Feb. 18, 1890, was set as the day of retribution. Mounts moaned to the newspapers at the jail, chewed constantly on long, black cigars.

However, his Hatfield friends hadn't deserted him. At the start of their plans they decided to put "all their eggs in one basket." They would forget about court appeals, for they recognized the condemned man didn't have a chance in court. They would take him out of the Pikeville jail. Just how, they didn't know. But if they didn't get him out of there they would, as a last resort, either take him on hanging day or shoot him dead to keep the McCoy's from getting the satisfaction of seeing him die.

To further their plans, spies were sent to Pikeville, the jail was thoroughly inspected, but counter-spies found it out. Sheriff Maynard doubled the jail guard, making it especially heavy at night.

Soon, as February 18 drew near, the sound of hammering came from French Hollow at the north end of town where the scaffold was being erected. Day after day passed and Mounts chewed on the black cigars, evidencing little interest in the attempts of Rev. J. W. Glover to get him to pray. People began to say he was crazy. He must be, for who, in his right senses, would remain so stubborn about imploring his Master when the scaffold awaited? He finally confided to Glover on the day of execution that he was ready to die.

Hanging day came, and thousands poured into Pikeville. From Virginia, West Virginia and all of the eastern section of Kentucky they jammed into the little village. Some said there were as many as eight thousand people there. They had been coming for two days and were finding the few hotels filled and slept in their wagons. Maynard took a special interest in the jail the last few days, inspected the guard every few hours. He had many decisions to make, one of them a denial of Mounts' strange request to see the scaffold. Officers said it was a ruse to get out so the Hatfields could rescue him.

Frank Phillips, hating the Hatfields and loving whiskey, decided to celebrate on hanging day. Early he was parading and staggering up and down the muddy streets, swaggering with two revolvers. Let him carouse a bit, Maynard told his deputies and the Pikeville militia that was on guard. Louder and louder grew the intoxicated man's talk. Louder and louder he bragged about the Hatfields he had arrested.

Things began to get serious when he threatened people, swore that he had the Hatfields on the run and now he'd run any man out of Pikeville "who just looks cross-eyed at me." Maynard heard about his deputy's drunken threats and went out to calm him down.

Having no success in quieting the man, Maynard took a few deputies aside and whispered for them to close in slowly. They did, got Phillips and began to lead him away. Sheriff Maynard was knocked down, kicked a few times. He lay in the muddy streets, yelling for the militia. They came on a run and under the threat of drawn bayonets the disturbance ceased. Maynard interceded for his deputy and Bud McCoy. Don't put them in jail, he said. They wanted to see the hanging. The rest of the day the sheriff walked with a limp, clutched at his back. Somebody had kicked him fiercely and he had an idea it was Bud McCoy.

Maynard went to the jail, served the death warrant. The condemned man was red-eyed from loss of sleep and the chain smoking of black cigars. Rev. Glover, who was also a doctor, held prayer. Mounts was marched out to a waiting wagon between guards consisting of the militia, sheriff's deputies and specially deputized townsmen. Maynard was taking no risks. The wagon held a box in which lay a cheap casket. Mounts was told to sit on it.

French Hollow was packed with humanity when the wagon arrived, and officers shoved people aside. The curious and morbid and many with hatred in their eyes climbed up on the valley sides and up higher into a graveyard, overlooking the scaffold.

The 25-year-old Mounts betrayed little emotion, now and then smoothed back his thick, blonde hair. He gazed at the scaffold with disinterest, walked with firm step.

Deputy Sheriff Harry Weddington asked him if he had anything to say before he died. Mounts replied simply that he was prepared to die and that he hoped his friends would all meet him in heaven. Rev. Glover cried, "Amen."

Silence, now, silence as deep as the cemetery above at night. The people did not move as the black cowl was pulled down over the blonde hair and the white face.

Then, suddenly, the silence was dispelled by Mounts, saying, "The Hatfields made me do it, the Hatfields made me do it."

The crowd saw a rising arm, clutched a hatchet. It descended quickly, the trap door rope was

severed and Mounts dropped into eternity.

It was then the crowd screamed and in the strain of excitement scores fainted and fell or were caught by bystanders. Many afterward said the pent-up emotion of the people was released, not in a scream, but in a long shriek. Others said it was a great, ululating moan.

The scaffold was left standing for several years as a warning to evildoers and for use if it was needed again. Poker players began to seek the site and here in this sanctuary where no Pikevillian not inclined to drink or mischief would venture at night, drunken carousals were regularly held. One night a particularly vicious fight took place under the awesome structure, and the authorities had it torn down.

*Explosion*