Trees Above with Coal Below

By

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Illustrations

Preface

In 1870 my grandfather, John Nuttall, purchased his first parcel of land on the C&O (Chesapeake and Ohio Railway), that followed the north bank of New River which cuts Fayette County West Virginia, in two. Annually buying more lands during the next 26 years, he acquired a large boundary none of which has yet been sold.

The time will come when dozens of questions my granddaughters would like to ask about their lands and the activities of their ancestors; with no living person able to give the answers, I have undertaken the task of telling them everything that comes to my mind on back to John Nuttall.

This history is intended and believed to be a truthful, factual account, but due allowance must be made for the fact that the writer is not an authority on any of the subjects discussed unless it possibly be about corner trees. I am simply telling what I saw, heard, did, and believed as a layman, but it will soon be discovered that it is principally an old man enjoying himself reminiscing.

Inasmuch as I was named for my grandfather, it occurred to me that I could escape the odium of spelling out my own name a hundred times also eliminate a few hundred personal pronouns if I used only his initials when referring to my grandfather, then I went a step further by euphonizing his J.N. initials into the name of Jayne.

[Note: June 2013] – The author died in 1967 – this book has served as a primary source document ever since.

Chapter One

New River arising in North Carolina flows 200 miles northeast until it is 50 miles due west of Roanoke, Virginia. Here it makes a left turn to its gap through the Allegheny mountain, then flows 200 miles northwest all the way through West Virginia to the Ohio River.

Thirty-five miles inside of West Virginia it receives the waters of the Greenbrier River coming from the northeast along the western side of the Allegheny and 65 miles farther northwest, New River is again augmented by the Gauley River which also comes from the northeast.

Between these two confluences, New River had to abrade its channel through innumerable seams of rock that were slow to weather away and still remain to protect the stratums under each one of them, thereby giving the river such steep sides as to place the canyon in the category of a gorge that is a thousand feet deep. From the Greenbrier to the Gauley, New River flows to almost every point of the compass in its tortuous journey. To avoid confusion to the reader we will assume that it flows due west.

Meadow River with its source about 20 miles north of New River and 20 miles west of the Greenbrier, flows west parallel to New River to empty into the Gauley 30 miles above its mouth. New River, Meadow River and the Gauley with steep banks, boulders in their beds and along the banks, never had any trail of any kind nor could any canoe negotiate those rivers. There is still no passage along them in Fayette county excepting the roadbed blasted out by the railroads.

The crest of the Allegheny became the boundary line between Virginia and West Virginia. The first adventurer who followed the James River up to its source then went straight up and over the Allegheny, crossed about 50 miles north of the New River gap and entered Greenbrier county West Virginia. Here he found good soil with fine grasslands along the Greenbrier River that flows only 12 miles below the crest at this place. Greenbrier county reaches 50 miles westward from the crest, the north half of Fayette county carries on for another 50 miles, then Kanawha county extends another 50 miles down the Kanawha River with Charleston located 38 miles below the Gauley junction.

West of the Gauley, New River met no more thick rock seams. Therefore it has no boulders in its channel, level ground along its banks, and more gently receding hillsides. Because of this sudden peacefulness after dashing through the New River gorge, the stream is given a new name to become the Kanawha River from the Gauley on to the Ohio, some 85 miles.

From the Gauley up to the Greenbrier the strata is rising at a grade of one to two percent towards the southeast from whence New River is flowing down at a grade of one fourth of one percent or 13 feet to the mile a grade of 2 percent being 105 feet to the mile.

At the Gauley junction the largest of the rock seams, the Fayette seam 1 1 0 feet thick is at water

level. Following southeast up New River for 12 miles the rise of the strata has carried the Fayette seam to the top of the canyon where it becomes an immense rampart rimming the top of the gorge for the next 3 miles upriver.

At the spot where the Fayette rock seam first reaches the top on the north side, Fern Creek falls over it to tumble a thousand feet down to New River and two miles upriver Short Creek does likewise. Between these two creeks the rampart is unscalable by man or animal. One more mile upriver is Keeneys Creek, a larger creek that has now cut through the

Fayette seam to end the rampart, but the creek falls over many another lesser rock seam on its way down to New River. Short Creek and Keeneys Creek are to be the locale of this narrative.

On its course past these three creeks, New River roars as the swift current dashes against the mass of boulders obstructing its passage, although it would not appear that a drop of only 13 feet to the mile would set up such a strong current. The flow of a river is a law of gravity hard to understand; the Mississippi drops only 6 inches to the mile which would seem close to stagnation yet its current moves along at a good pace.

The boundary now known as West Virginia was the home of the Mingo, Shawnee, and Delaware Indian tribes who were too ignorant to be able to read or understand the deed which conveyed these lands from the English Crown to the colony of Virginia. The Indians put up a brave defense when the Virginians began inching into the grasslands of Greenbrier county and surprisingly the Crown suddenly sided with the Indians and ordered the Virginians to stay out of West Virginia as it honestly belonged to the Indians.

In 1768 the Crown purchased from the Indians all lands lying south (or east) of the Ohio, but payment was made to the Chiefs who lived north of West Virginia. They promptly consumed the liquid assets of the sale price leaving little or nothing for the three West Virginia tribes, who continued to fight for their homelands.

After this sale the lands belonged to the Crown personally with Virginia having no claim at all, therefore they still could not issue any land grants. None of these affairs stopped the white men from pushing into Greenbrier county insofar as they could fight off the Indians and drive them back.

The Revolutionary War automatically restored West Virginia to Virginia. By that time Greenbrier had so many settlers that Virginia was warranted in giving them a road over the Allegheny to drive or haul their farm products to the Virginian markets.

On the north side of the Kanawha River eight miles above Charleston there were some springs of salt water that had long been a mecca for the Indians. When the white settlers along the Ohio heard of these springs they began paddling up the Kanawha to satisfy their craving for salt. Seeing good lands along the upper Kanawha Valley the visitors began to settle there at the same time and speed

as in Greenbrier, the first two or three building their cabins right at the springs to spend their whole time boiling off salt to trade. To obtain one pound of salt they had to boil down 50 gallons of the water. Now the customers did not have to bring their big kettle nor be away from home for such a long time, therefore the salt grew into big business.

Instead of getting their salt from the seaboard, the Greenbrier settlers found it cheaper and quicker to follow an old buffalo trail through the north half of Fayette to the Kanawha. The Kanawha settlers clamored for the Greenbrier road to be extended through Fayette to give them access to their Capitol and of course both Fayette and Greenbrier joined in on this petition for the road, which they got about 1785. The New River and Meadow River canyons being impassable, the road had to follow the ridge midway between them, skirting along the head of Keeneys Creek, Short Creek, and Fern Creek.

Thirty years later this road was so worn down as to be near impassable and it was replaced by the James River and Kanawha Turnpike, completed in 1824. The turnpike in general followed the first road with only one big detour; when it reached the apex above the mouth of the Gauley it followed the outcrop of the Fayette rock seam down to bridge the mouth of the Gauley whereas the old buffalo trail and first road had to swing to the right to follow Rich Creek down to where the Gauley could be forded fifteen miles above its mouth.

Virginia did not see fit to grant any land deeds to private citizens in Fayette County along either of these roads until 1780. There have been conflicting statements about their rules no doubt due to the fact that they changed their policies from time to time. It seems that at first they would give only a couple of hundred acres but they soon became more generous in order to get those wild lands on the tax rolls.

A settler needing every one of his pennies to establish and equip his new home seldom wanted to pay taxes on any more land than he needed and there were only a few settlers who took as many as 600 acres. A lone man could not farm more than 40 acres but 200 acres seemed to be the most popular acreage. This allowed a replacement of the first fields as they wore out, with 20 acres of woodlands to supply bean poles, fence rails and fuel and the extra 100 acres were for any child who might wish to live next door if they got the land as a gift. The acreages varied from 75 up to 500 all in accord with the means or the size of the family.

To get a deed, known as a patent, from Virginia, the applicant had to go on the ground to choose what he wanted and make local enquiry as to whether or not that land had been patented to anybody else as yet, then employ a patent surveyor to run it off, plat his notes on paper and triangulate it to compute the acreage. The surveyor's report was sent to Richmond where a clerk would copy the metes and bounds, known as the "calls," the corner trees, and all other data on to a sheepskin parchment, using excellent ink; the Governor would sign it and impress a state seal with red ribbon into the lower corner. Those patents were substantial instruments that now, 150 years later, look as fresh as though issued ten years ago, if the patent was never unduly exposed. The patent itself was

excellent but the surveying was the exact opposite. Locality place names came into existence naturally in accordance with the vagaries of nature and whether it was by chance or by patent dictum from Richmond, the localities were about 2 miles square.

The area bounded on the west by Fern Creek, on the east by Keeneys Creek, with Short Creek in the middle, on the north by the turnpike and on the south by the cliff rampart at the top of the New River gorge was called Chestnutburg because of the unusually large number of those trees. To the west of Chestnutburg was Pine Spring, named for a large spring that flowed from the base of a big hemlock. To the northwest of Pine Spring the underbrush was a mass of dogwoods to give that large boundary the locality names of Dogwood Gap, Dogwood Ridge, Dogwood Flats and Dogwood Creek.

Illustrators and writers made it a common practice to enliven their product by picturing the turnpike stagecoaches as always going at a brisk trot or at a gallop, even though they knew this to be contrary to the facts.

On all hills, the road workers cut a small ditch across the road, tossing up the dirt to form a little embankment on the lower side of the ditch; these ditches were known as thankyou-marms because the pitching of the vehicle crossing them caused a rider's body to make a slight bow as would be made when thanking a person for a gift.

The thank-you-marms were made to carry off the rain waters to keep them from running down the ruts to ruin the road, and they were spaced at 30 on up to 150 feet apart in accord with the steepness of the grade; a stagecoach could not survive hitting the thank-you-marms at any speed greater than a slow jog. On level ground there were rocks, ruts, chugholes and marshy places, so that the stages could seldom do better than a dogtrot averaging six miles an hour in near level country and four miles an hour in the mountainous sections.

The turnpike company having barely enough funds to complete the road, could build no taverns and had to choose settlers homes, as close as possible to being about 12 miles apart for horse-changing relay stations, with other larger homes at 50 or 60 mile intervals for overnight stops.

With fresh horses every 12 miles the stage maintained its dogtrotting average steadily all day for ten or eleven hours to cover a lot of ground and to also come close to shaking the livers loose in the passengers.

The drivers had no such ordeal, during the years of the daily runs; a driver would leave a tavern at 7 A.M. take his stage 12 miles east in 2 hours, he and his four horses rest for six or seven hours then bring back a westbound stage.

On the west slope of the Allegheny there were a great number of sulphur springs for 30 miles on down from the crest, with a resort built around each good spring as the expanding roads reached

them.

On the first road to Greenbrier there was an especially odoriferous spring, with a whitish mineral deposit, six miles below the crest, that was named the White Sulphur Spring, and a tavern was built beside it. This tavern was so successful that it quickly grew into a resort that was, at its peak, able to accept two hundred guests at a time, and this spurred other men into building resorts at other springs on a road; there was the Red Sulphur Spring, the Green and the Blue, the Old Sweet Springs and the Sweet Chalybeate.

To prevent muddiness around the spring, a cupola was built over it and the spring boxed in to direct the overflow into a narrow outlet channel; hanging to a nail in each post of the cupola there was a gourd drinking dipper that would often last several years before developing a leaky crack. If there were any germs in West Virginia during the nineteenth century nobody knew it, therefore such a possibility did in no way worry or discommode any citizen. Every farm spring or well had its gourd dipper for all comers and when the germs grew out into moss after a few years of usage it made the water taste all the better.

The water of two of the sulphur springs was rather pleasant to drink, a couple of them passable, the White simply terrible.

The denizens of the eastern seaboard lowlands had an unwarranted faith in the healing properties of the sulphur12 springs and with the White so awful they guessed it must have the most of what would cure ailing innards. Many early day springs public or private were boxed in with beegums.

The gum trees have a weakness which makes it possible for fungi to gain entrance and eat out all of the inner wood inside the trunk, but the shell keeps the tree growing.

Any crack in the shell of a hollow gum would soon be discovered by a bee and become a hive; the settlers would chop down these hollow gums, saw them into four feet lengths and set them up in the orchard, where a colony would voluntarily hive or the settler would transfer a queen bee from a bee tree that had been located and felled in the woods.

If a farmer's spring got too low to dip water from it in dry spells or if it was located where every rain muddied it or the farm creatures could foul it he would dig a hole five feet deep, place a 51/2 foot beegum in it, tamp the dirt back tightly all around the beegum and put a flat rock on top of the gum. With the top six inches above ground no dirt could get into the water, it was always cool and clean, always stood filled up to ground level, in dry spells it tapped water five feet underground, and it could be seen to be pure. The wells were completely enclosed around the top to prevent children or animals from falling into them and so dark that you could not see what lesser creatures might have fallen in and be floating in the water; when you lifted the board or rock from a beegum spring and reached in with the gourd dipper you could see and remove any snake, chipmunk or cat that might be in there.

In fairness to the White Sulphur Springs it should be stated that if you go to the creek when thirsty it is still a delightful resort, its surrounding woods pretty all year, in bloom, in fall coloring or with snow on the limbs.

Six miles westward from the White the turnpike crossed the Greenbrier River on a covered bridge that had window holes for light and ventilation; from that high vantage point a traveler could see to the bottom of the clear river with a good view into the aquatic life. Two catfish wriggling along the bottom in search of food, five bass that do not feed during midday idling in the eddy of a pier, a small water turtle called a skilpot slowly and awkwardly clawing his way across the river to visit relatives over there. A three mile climb out of the canyon brought the turnpike to Lewisburg, the county seat of Greenbrier, built on the steep sides of a deep little ravine; it was a bothersome location yet it produced the finest citizens and no doubt as true in this century as it was in the nineteenth.

Fifty miles west of Lewisburg, after having gone fifteen miles inside of Fayette county, the stagecoaches arrived at the Locust Lane tavern that was famous the whole length of the turnpike.

Fayette had quantities of honey locust trees whose winged seed pods would sail along to take root in sunny open spaces that had good virgin soil; being hardy and of fast growth, their roots and later shade would choke off opposition tree seedlings.

Because their rapid growth assured early arrival of good shade, also because they did not grow high enough to endanger buildings in a wind storm the farmers welcomed and encouraged their locust trees around the house and barn.

The first and second owners of the Locust Lane patent had slaves to clear long fields beside the turnpike, the house and barn at the northwest edge of the fields. The prevailing winds carried the seed pods down the pike to lodge in every zig and zag of the snake fencing with the result that a half mile of the pike became solidly lined on both sides with locust trees whose limbs met overhead.

In spring when the trees were loaded with their fragrant blooms, it was fairly intoxicating to ride through that half mile bower; there was the hum of a myriad of bees collecting the nectar of the blooms, the singing of the birds gobbling bugs on the blooms or building their nests. The mass of low vegetation in the fence corners provided well-hidden spots for the ground-nesting birds, the bob-whites, and meadowlarks that could be heard calling or singing in the fields, while over in the woods a grouse was giving voice to his sentiments by drumming on a log.

The stagecoaches carried only a fraction of the turnpike travelers and to obtain some ready cash from the other travelers, every man who owned large enough a house and barn or could enlarge what he had, took out a tavern license if he had a healthy wife able to do that extra work. There was a tavern every four miles through north Fayette, the Alderson tavern located four miles west of

Locust Lane, fording Keeneys Creek on the way to it, with a one mile climb up out of that hollow.

The Alderson tavern was a duplicate of Locust Lane, with slaves and long fields but the house and barn were at the southeast edge where the locust seeds were carried into the woods. The Alderson fence comers were filled with vegetation indigenous to Fayette, half of it aesthetic, the other half of practical value - huckleberries, blackberries, chinquapins, wild roses, clematis, field lilies and sassafras.

Every spring the turnpike housewife would give an order to dig some sassafras roots which she would boil to make a tea of the broth; this tea contained nothing of vitamin or medicinal value but grandma had said it did and with cream and sugar added, it was far easier to get the tea into the mouths of the family than the alternative of sulphur and molasses.

The sassafras tea came into vogue after the families had consumed all of the wild onions, known as ramps, that were within gathering distance of their homes; the ramps did have vitamins but eating their roots gradually decreased the supply, although there were plenty in the remote hollows as late as 1920.

The presence of a ramp eater could be detected before he could be seen or heard; a serving of a half dozen ramps would ooze from the pores as well as from the breath, for the next twenty hours and since West Virginia never did pass any ramp laws, there was no way to keep a ramp eater from attending church services or other public gatherings.

One mile west of the Alderson tavern, the Chestnutburg road took off from the turnpike, leading south to the Short Creek community and some fourteen miles farther west the pike arrived at the mouth of the Gauley over which a bridge was built three times but was soon burned down each time.

The covered bridges were a welcome haven to run for or to linger in when a thunderstorm was about to break, also, when riding horseback in an all day rain with your raincoat spread out to include the saddle, the covered bridge was the only place where you could dismount and the saddle not get wet.

The ferry was far more interesting than a bridge because it took you to the river's edge and held you there long enough for you to observe the basic life of the river. When a horseback rider reached the high water mark at a ferry landing he pulled the horse to one side of the road and took hold of the piece of iron that might be a lid lifter or a leg of a discarded stove, which piece of iron was suspended by vine, wire or by rope from the limb of a tree. The iron was struck against a similarly suspended iron rim from a broken wagon wheel; the clanging reached the ears of the ferryman, hoeing unseen in his corn field across the river and he yelled an acknowledgment of the call, "I will be over in a minute," despite the fact that it would be 15 minutes before he could be landed on your side.

In north Fayette the Woods, the Carnefax and the Miller ferries were located at a quiet pool of the river where nature's daily routine had no human disturbance except the home of the ferryman who had to make three-fourths of his living by farming, since there was little travel on those roads.

At the summons tree in summer, the traveler would always get the odors of something in bloom, fringe tree, magnolia, rhododendron, laurel, honeysuckle vine or azalea bushes, arbutus, violets, or wild roses.

As the horse pulled for the river to get a drink, these odors of blooming things became overpowered by the musty smell of the river with its fishes, its mosses and the damp overhanging bushes.

A water snake sunning on a bush dropped into the safety of the river, followed by two frogs that leaped in, mistakenly believing that the horse and rider were more dangerous than the snake. All snakes would eat a frog whenever they could catch one, but they would never touch a toad, probably because they were afraid of getting warts in their throat the same as children got warts on their hands by handling a toad.

While the horse was drinking, a school of bass fry came along hugging close to shore in a sincere effort to not be a party to any cannibalism; when they reached the deeper water of the ferry landing they put on full steam ahead but a bass who made his living by lurking nearby, dashed up to grab a daughter from the vanguard, darted to deeper water to get her swallowed then came again to grab a nephew.

Tracks in the sand told of a possum having patrolled his beat along the shore last night on a shopping tour with his remarkably long list of edibles. It was common belief that when a possum was caught by surprise, he keeled over on the theory that nobody would want a dead possum, but his temporary demise is a faint and not a feint; the Koala bears have the same weakness to such extent that they will drop in real death if the fright be extreme.

The clatter of the mooring chain reverberates throughout the canyon when the ferryman tosses it into the bottom of the ferryboat, silencing all wild life for 15 seconds with no sounds but the plopping of another water snake, a couple of frogs and a water turtle sliding from his sunning log.

A heron on his sandbar fifty yards above the ferryboat outstretches his wings, takes five running steps, flaps his wings a half dozen times and coasts up to the next sandbar, his neck in a graceful loop; the cranes fly with their necks craned straight ahead.

As the ferryboat approaches the landing the ferryman is taking detailed inventory of the stranger's clothes, shoes, horse and all accouterments hoping to get some clue to identity or business, also looking for something that can be praised as an opening wedge for a cross-examination. The ferryman perforce but cheerfully has to serve as the local news column and must learn all he can

during the trip across the river.

"Howdy Mister! That is a fine saddle you are riding, where did you get a saddle like that?"

"This is what they call a McClellan saddle and I ordered it from Montgomery Ward."

"How much does a saddle like that cost?"

"It cost me $28.00 and $1.40 freight. I saw one in Charleston one day and they were asking $35.00 for it."

The cantle of a McClellan saddle was built up nearly three inches higher than on the average saddle, this bit of backrest being a big help on all-day rides. The pommel had a knob on top to prevent anything tied to it, or the reins, from slipping off; it also had rings stapled into the saddletree, to which rings a bedroll or anything else could be tied back of the saddle and a rolled raincoat tied in front, with high enough pommel to keep it off the saddle. With the addition of a pair of saddlebags, a man could carry a lot of stuff for his journey be it a long trip or only one day.

Continuing his repertorial duty the ferryman said, "I don't believe I know your name." "My name is Frank Kelling," the stranger replied.

A bass had jumped up to catch a skimming bug, the disturbance sending out heavier than usual concentric rings of wavelets; pointing to the rings, the stranger said, "that must have been a whopper. Do you catch many big ones in this pool?"

"No, I don't have the time to stand around with a pole. I just set my trotline evenings and get all the catfish that we are needing; besides, a blue cat is a whole lot better eatings than any bass; I turn the mudcats loose if I got enough blue cats on the trotline to fill our needs."

The stranger was very discourteous in giving no more information than his bare name in reply to the ferryman’s polite question, therefore he had forced upon himself t second question of the backwoods formula.

"If it be any of my business what might you be doing these parts?"

"I am on my way to Summersville to investigate the tit to a piece of land."

"Be you a lawyer Mr. Kelling?"

"No, I am just a private citizen."

The traveler impolitely blocked the interview by discussing crops and the weather, giving the ferryman no opening f another query until the boat touched shore. As he was riding off the boat the

ferryman used his last opportunity to ask, “Where did you say you lived, Mr. Kelling?”

Chapter Two

At the end of the Revolutionary War, Virginia, short of cash, had to pay off its soldiers and the older militia by giving them land warrants entitling them to a certain number of acres wherever they might choose them. It seems that if a subaltern was entitled to $120.00 he was given warrants for 6000 acres which indicates a valuation of two cents an acre.

A majority of the recipients, too old for pioneering, or satisfied with their present home, offered their warrants for sale, some at two cents an acre, a few at only one cent an acre. As there were a couple million warrants issued, middlemen would buy them at as low a price as possible then sell them at three cents an acre. They found plenty of takers.

Hundreds of Easterners who had heard of the rich soil of Greenbrier county believed that the lands west of the Allegheny would surely increase in value and that they were a good investment at only three cents an acre. After deciding how many acres they could afford to purchase then pay the annual tax bills for a number of years, they set out for Greenbrier to look for good land and very soon took all of that, after which they had to push on into North Fayette.

Thirty years later, if an investor or a settler went west on the turnpike it was easy to see what lands had been taken by homesteaders who were living on their patent but very difficult to learn the boundary lines of unoccupied land that had been taken up by an investor. There was endless overlapping, some innocent, most of it purposeful.

In January or February 1827, Sam McVey, the pioneer of Chestnutburg, went west on the turnpike to stake out a future homestead if he could find suitable land. He got as far as the Alderson Tavern on the north edge of Chestnutburg before he could find any satisfactory land not yet taken up by a settler or one of the many investors.

Mr. Alderson wanting only good neighbors back of his tavern had been discouraging all investors who made enquiries also any other strangers whose looks he did not like, but he took a fancy to Sam and told him there was good land between his tavern and the New River cliffs. Sam got the local patent surveyor, Mr. Tyree, to run off 200 acres and went back home. As soon as the surveyor sent his report, Sam forwarded it to Richmond and got his patent, although he was not yet ready to move.

In the spring of 1831 Sam and his bride loaded a canvass-covered wagon to the brim and set out for Chestnutburg, walking up all hills with Sam getting on the wagon only to apply the brakes on down grades.

Upon arrival at the Alderson tavern they received a warm welcome and had plenty to talk about after supper.

"Since you were here," Mr. Alderson said, "there have been nigh to a dozen people making enquiries but since you wrote to tell me that you were planning to take more than that 200 acres and you had a brother and a couple of friends wanting to settle here, my conscience allowed me to tell everybody that the lands back of me had been spoken for.

"I have made several trips back there and have picked out the spot for you to build your cabin on Short Creek, and in the morning, you and I and my slave Tom can chop out the underbrush to get your wagon there within four hours."

In the morning Mrs. Alderson packed a hamper with food not only for dinner for four but also enough extra to supply the McVeys two more days.

At the chosen location Mr. Alderson proudly expounded upon its virtues.

"There is land along the pike west of my place but it is a solid hopeless mass of big trees. At this place you can see a bit of grassland on each side of Short Creek, not many trees, plenty of near-level ground and over there you have a good all-year spring."

The McVeys were very pleased at having found such a good place for their homestead and since food was their immediate big problem their first questions were relative to that subject.

"Mr. Alderson, is there any good deer stand nearby?" Sam enquired.

"Yes there is and that is one reason I chose this spot for you," Mr. Alderson replied. "It is a short mile down the creek to where it falls over the cliffs and 200 yards west of the falls there is a four foot cleft in the cliffs through which animals can get up or down and it has become a trail for them as this is the only place where they can get across New River this side of the Gauley. There are a couple of places where they can get down to the river, but at those places the river is too swift or too full of boulders for an animal to be able to swim across. Below this cleft the river bed is so filled with boulders at one spot that they become a dam to back up the water and form a large pool where any creature can easily swim across."

This was good news to Sam but disconcerting to his wife Mary who now had a question in her mind. "Mr. Alderson, do many panthers and bears travel that trail?"

"Yes they do, Mrs. McVey, but their trail goes west from the cleft and up along the west bank of Fern Creek so that you have nothing to fear from them. If ever you do meet up with one of our little black bears it will run west a lot faster than you can run east and no panther has ever attacked a man so far as I know. Besides that, your puppy, Prince, is a guarantee against any panther coming close enough to give you a scare.

"I do not know how the word got passed around, but all panthers somehow learned that every dog

has the backing of a man with a deadly gun, and a panther will run for its life if it hears even the tiniest dog barking at it."

This reply was sufficiently consoling to turn Mary's thoughts back to food and she said, "We saw plenty of blackberry and huckleberry bushes along the pike but I see none here. Do you know of any nearby?"

"Yes you will find all you can want over along the brow of the cliffs which will give you a long tote the first couple of years; they need full sunlight and as soon as you get your lands cleared they will begin coming up in all of your fence comers to be real handy for you the rest of your days."

Mr. Alderson with a lot of pride in the location he had chosen continued his talk about food supplies, saying, "The first three foods that will be ready for you to eat in about a month, are the sarvice berries, ramps and polk and I saw a little shoot of polk starting to break through right back there. Before the sarvice berries are all gone, the huckleberries will begin to ripen, then the blackberries and before they are gone you can get all the pawpaws you want along the creek just back of the cliffs."

In response to Sam's observation that he could see they would have plenty of chestnuts in the fall, Mr. Alderson switched over to the subject of nuts by saying, "There are two butternut trees back there a bit west of the route we came and over that way near the cliffs there is a grove of black walnuts, with a hickorynut tree almost anywhere, and in six weeks you can dig up a mess of chestnuts any time you want them."

Sam said, "That is something new to me, digging up chestnuts in June."

"Whenever I mention it to other people, they are surprised too," Mr. Alderson replied. "It might be that it happens only here where there are so many leftover chestnuts. After filling their nest up in a white oak, the provident gray squirrel will walk around a chestnut tree, listening to each fallen nut to find out if a worm be chewing inside of it; if it hears no worm it will dig a hole 21/2 inches deep, drop the nut in it and cover it. In March after it has eaten up the nuts of the nest, at a time when snow is covering every landmark, I have seen the squirrel come down from his nest, run over to the chestnut tree, dig up a chestnut which he puts in one cheek, hop over to get another one for the other cheek and run back home. They might bury 70 nuts around one tree and I don't know how they can remember the exact spot of each one of those nuts. In June the nuts send up a shoot to betray their location and you can dig them up with any little stick; they are a mite earthy with the sweetness gone but they still have all their food value. They were the property of the 200 squirrels that lost their lives to weasels, wildcats or other enemies."

Mr. Alderson went on to tell them that he had seen only one persimmon tree back of his tavern but there might be another one or two. "There are plenty down along the river bank and the time to get yourselves a sackful is in January when freezes have shrivelled and blackened them, made them

sweet and dried out beyond quick spoiling. A year ago when I went down to the river to get some catfish I noticed a good bed of strawberries on the west bank of Short Creek about 80 yards above the river."

Sam idly remarked, "I guess it will be quite awhile before I can find any spare time to waste on fishing, much as I enjoy it."

This spurred Mr. Alderson into extolling the virtues of New Rivers blue cats. "It could be a waste of time to catch bass but the blue cats are as good as deer meat and it pays as well to get that good food from the river as to get it from any other source. Besides that fact, night is the best time to catch catfish and you will lose nothing more than two hours of sleep."

Sam, intrigued with the idea that he could enjoy some fishing with no pang of conscience for wasting valuable time, asked for more information about the fish in New River and Mr. Alderson gladly expounded on that subject.

"If you catch bass you have the nuisance of scaling them and with every bite of a fried bass you have got a couple of bones in your mouth, but you can peel the hide from a catfish like it was a glove and after the fish has been cooked you can lay the meat off from the backbone and have no more bones to contend with. The meat of a blue cat is sweet, tender and white with a bluish cast. Mudcat meat is yellowish, not so pleasing to the eye, tougher, and no sweetness, yet a perfectly satisfactory food.

"Another thing about the catfish is that they do not die quickly like the bass or trout; you take a sack along with you, tie it to a bush on the edge and allow it to lie in the river to put your catfish in it as you catch them. Then on your way home douse that sack in the creek every few minutes. By the time you get home a couple of them will be dead for you to eat that day and if you put the others in your water trough they will stay alive to keep fresh for several days."

Sam, now won over to the fishing idea, asked, "Do you know where we could buy some hooks and line, Mr. Alderson?"

"That matter is easily solved as I will be glad to loan you the four throw lines that Tom and I use whenever we go to the river and until you get a barn with wormy ground around it, I will loan you some of my worms too."

Mary, seeing herself as a partner in the fishing business who would much rather skin a fish than have to scrape scales, had a question to ask: "You tell about catching catfish, but supposing the bass take all of our bait. Is there any way to scare them off without the catfish going along?"

"The throw lines take care of that, Mrs. McVey. The bass are top feeders, while the catfish are bottom feeders and the throw lines sink to the bottom. The eels are shoreline feeders that upturn

small rocks at the water line to get crawfish, salamanders, hellgrammites or minnows, therefore you seldom catch an eel on a throw line but if you do get one, it will stay alive to keep fresh longer than any fish."

During all the talking, Mary had been pleasantly dreaming of her excursions to harvest nature's bounty of free foods, until she suddenly had the disconcerting thought that it was about time for the snakes to be coming out of their winter quarters.

"Mr. Alderson, over in Virginia it was dangerous to go berrying because the snakes like berries. There were more snakes in a berry patch than anywhere else. Is that true up here too?"

"Both yes and no, Mrs. McVey. Snakes do not eat berries, but they are always cold which makes them the same as the berry bushes in wanting warm sunny places. There is also the greater reason that under the berry bushes is the best place for the snakes to catch their kind of food, chipmunks, young rabbits, woods mice, little possums or grouse chicks.

"Berrying is dangerous for a careless person, but you can make it perfectly safe by watching where each foot is placed and using a stick to poke into and scare away a snake from spots where you cannot see the ground."

"Do you have many poisonous snakes around here?" Sam enquired.

"We have more than we want but I suppose it is about normal for the wilds. We have only the copperheads that never exceed three feet in length and the timber rattlesnakes that do not exceed four feet, although I never saw one more than about three feet nine inches and neither one can kill you.

"I have heard of several people that got struck by one or the other and they had a mighty sore arm or leg for a week but that was all."

In 1831 they did not know quite as much about snakes as is known today but they were not far from the actual facts. It is possible for a copperhead or timber rattlesnake to kill a man but very slight chance of it. The snake must be a full grown adult before it has a poison sac large enough to hold a fatal amount of venom and its fangs must penetrate a vein; another requirement is that the snake must not have recently had a meal the capture of which drained their poison sac which refills rather slowly since they eat only every ten days.

One more feature about the snakes is that many a man has often time been within striking distance and never knew it. The snakes will coil up beside a path so overgrown with weeds or bushes that they cannot be seen, but they are lying in wait for food and they do not want to waste their ammunition on anything too large to be swallowed. If you keep going you are safe but if you should stop to tie a shoe string, the snake will think it has been discovered, that its life is in danger and it will

strike in self-defence.

Before leaving, Mr. Alderson said, "If ever you all need anything or any help you be sure to call on us, and in a couple of days we will send Tom or Melissa down here with some more food to tide you along. As soon as you get your logs snaked in let me know and I will send out word for the cabin raising."

It should perhaps be explained that snaking logs had nothing to do with snakes. With a horse pulling a log by a chain stapled into the front end the rear end would slide from side to side with the sloping ground or in hitting against trees, to give the log or a sled the motion of a moving snake, therefore these logs would be snaked to the cabin site in distinction from a straight drag or a haul on a wagon.

The location chosen for Sam's home was not on the 200 acres that he had patented but his cabin gave him prior right to patent several hundred acres around the cabin. It would take a whole day of tramping to determine what he would want to include in his next patent plus another day or two with the surveyor to run it off and there was too much else to be done to get his home started.

Out west the homesteaders had trouble finding posts for their fencing, hard work digging the holes and the heavy expense of buying barbed wire. At Chestnutburg the abundance of chestnut trees solved the fencing problem with no need for any posts, or wire. Chestnut is the easiest of all trees to chop down and to split into fence rails that were laid on the ground six to the southeast then interlocked with six more rails to the northeast, thereby forming the zigzag snake fencing of the east. A horse or a cow could have pushed it open but for some reason they considered it to be an unbreakable barrier and the snake fence did not even need any gates. All you need do was to select any one of the interlocks and swing the rails aside one by one to provide an opening for any stock or swing them all the way back for a wagon, then pull them back to restore the interlock, a job of a few minutes.

In 1824 Isaac Reynolds had patented 200 acres over next to Keeneys Creek as a foresighted provision for the future; his widowed mother was living with him and she was too infirm to go to the wilderness, but maybe he might some day wish to move.

After Sam had patented his 200 acres in 1827 he told his friend Henry McGraw about Chestnutburg and in 1829 McGraw made the journey to Chestnutburg to patent 154 acres over next to Fern Creek, although not yet ready to move.

Sam's glowing reports about nature's wealth of green foods, the blue cats of the river, the ease of obtaining bear or deer at the trail through the crevice in the cliffs set off quite an immigration into Chestnutburg in 1832. Sam first chose and patented 496 acres for himself, with 450 acres to the north of it for his brother Alexander. Then Lewis Bowyer took 446 acres to the east and Abe Price chose 65 acres south of McGraw.

All was well and normal for Sam and Mary throughout 1831, with sundry ups and downs as must be expected. The only scare they had was on a stormy night when they heard some loud deep groaning interspersed with a couple of shrill squeals such as no living creature and only ghosts could utter. This sent shivers up their spines and they were so puzzled and worried about it that Mary walked up to the Alderson tavern the next day to discuss it. Mrs. Alderson could offer no explanation and called her husband, who laughed at them. "That is an unearthly noise, Mary, and no wonder you were scairt; it is something rare and I have heard it only once myself."

"As you know, lightning often knocks the upper half off from a yellow poplar, oak, or chestnut, then the inner wood rots out leaving nothing but a hollow shell. It sometimes happens that a supple hickory or ash is growing close beside that shell and when the wind blows hard from the right direction that hickory will be blown and bent over to rub against that shell to produce some terrible sounds and I don't mind confessing that the time I heard it, I ran for home as fast as I could go. I had taken shelter under a beech until that storm had passed but after I heard that first groan I didn't mind the rain at all."

As to the beech, the Indians handed down to the white men a well-founded canon to take shelter under a beech tree during a thunderstorm, because a beech was never hit by lightning. Although the Indians probably had not known the good reasons for this fact, it was because the beech has a smoothly rounded top with no central spire sticking up to attract a bolt and there are almost always taller trees beside it to catch any nearby strike.

As the first months passed, the McVeys found even more foods than Mr. Alderson had had time to enumerate in their first talk about the foods of nature's free largesse. If a large tree get blown down, the tearing up of its roots leaves a large hole that will hold water if it happen to be in clayey ground, and in a few decades the hole becomes filled with dirt to create a good bear wallow. In 1909 there was the remnant of an old bear wallow on Brackens Creek, the trees around it well scratched where the bears utilized the bark to get the mud out from under their claws. By the time the wallow has dried out to be too stiff for wallowing, the mud turtles move in and Sam found two such places where air holes betrayed the abode of a couple of turtles that are good food in soup or a stew.

The McVeys also found their fill of wild grapes and the larger fox grapes both of which are sweetened by the first frost.

In order to make jellies or preserves with the strawberries, blackberries, huckleberries, sarvice berries, elderberries or grapes, the McVeys had to purchase sugar at the store on the pike near the Alderson tavern, and to obtain the sugar they had to dig "sang" to trade for it. The fact that ginseng roots have no medicinal value never did dampen the Chinese belief that ginseng roots were a better cure-all than the American snake oil, and after 1000 years of digging up the roots had depleted the China supply they had to pay the price to buy it elsewhere. There are only a few places in the world where ginseng grows and the dank hollows of Fayette's three rivers happened to be one of those places, or it should be said that the Appalachian mountain range was one of the places, as Fayette

was not the only place in America.

In West Virginia it was called "sang" and a day of sanging was about the most fun that the settlers had; it was similar to an Easter egg hunt with higher stakes for the adults. The settlers conserved the sang on their own patent as money in the bank and did their sanging on some investors patent. Sang was as good as cash at the turnpike stores. During their first summer Sam and Mary had to dig some of their own sang because they could not spare a day off to go farther, but in their second year they could go to investor patents where they might find a root worth a nickel right away, a root worth ten cents a half hour later and in another hour find a clump worth a quarter, or maybe in a whole day find only a half dollars worth. A day of sanging had all the fun of gambling with no risk of losing any of your own nickels.

The one limitation was that the first frost killed the stalk that quickly rotted to leave no identification of the roots underneath and it did not grow up quickly in spring. At the time when the stalk stood ut3 as a beckoning flag, the settler was too busy every day with his farm work.

About 12 miles east of Chestnutburg, on the turnpike, there was a man named Anderson Amick who was more farsighted than the average. Between the pike and the creek opposite his house he had some land unsuitable for farming but he had found some sang on it and thereafter whenever he found any sang in the woods, he dug it up carefully and transplanted it opposite his house to make that bit of land his savings bank that paid interest by way of the sang growing a little larger every year. Each summer he made a few more deposits in his bank until by 1911 he estimated that he might have $3000.00 worth of sang in his patch, a right nice nest egg that was growing all the time.

The sang furnished dollars to Fayette diggers for 100 years.

A lowly family named "Roe", living up a hollow on the eastern slope of the Alleghany began coming to Fayette to dig sang about 1880 and members of that family made a living by sanging for the next forty years. They first worked down Meadow River, going up each hollow, then worked both up and down the Gauley, finding enough sang roots to keep them through the winters. They established bases in some abandoned cabin or under a cliff, living on berries, fish, small game and any shoat or calf that had wandered out of sight of the owner's farm. Being inveterate thieves, they at some time robbed every country store in north Fayette to obtain salt, sugar, shoes, blankets and all other articles that they might need, but since they never harmed a citizen, public indignation failed to reach the pitch of organizing a posse to drive them out.

On the night that they robbed the Jayne store, the constable, named Ross, deputized five men to join him in a tracking search that resulted in catching four of the Roes at dusk. The Roes had cached their plunder which could not be found, therefore Ross could not produce any convicting evidence. At those various times when some of the Roes did get convicted, they thoroughly enjoyed the restful comforts of the jail.

Whenever a Roe heard me coming along a hollow in which he was working, he would freeze like a hog or a pheasant to not disclose his presence. If I did see the Roe I would wave a greeting but he would turn on his heel, knowing that he had no friend in Fayette.

One day while bailing out my skiff at the beaver pond, I was startled by a voice at my back saying, "Ferry us over the river". Not a word was said during the ferry, no thanks, nothing but that one curt command, all because they knew no better and had a very limited vocabulary, a fact that I learned in the courtroom whenever one was on trial.

One night around 1916 a couple of Roes casing Anderson Amick's little store, discovered his sang patch that would become the Roe's jackpot. Every evening one of the Roes stood in the bushes on watch until finally there came an evening when the entire Anderson family went to a social gathering, whereupon the Roes went to work to dig nearly a thousand dollars worth of roots before the family returned.

The next morning when the theft came to light there was little that Mr. Amick could do as he had no way to prove that the sang in the Roe sacks came from his patch, presuming that he was first able to find them and their sacks of sang.

It was the first of December before Sam had the time to choose the boundaries of the patent for himself and for his brother Alex. He left word at the tavern for Mr. Tyree to make the survey whenever convenient and upon his arrival Mr. Tyree first asked Sam to point out what he wanted.

"Virginia likes us to tie up to some patent already issued if possible to do so," the surveyor informed Sam. "Two years ago I surveyed 200 acres for a man named Reynolds but something happened to hold him and he has never been back as yet.

"What you are wanting is close enough to the Reynolds patent for us to tie up to his red oak and white oak corner over there to the east, so we will go there to make our start."

At the Reynolds corner Tyree jammed his iron-tipped staff into the ground until it would stand upright, set his compass on it, waited a moment for the needle to quiet down, then took a look in the direction toward which Sam had said he wished to go from there.

Seeing that the needle was quivering between 25 and 25 1/2 he wrote S 25 W in his notebook; another look at the compass showed that the line would pass about 20 feet to the right of a distant chestnut with its top knocked off by lightning.

There are 60 minutes in a degree and 15 minutes to right or left will make a big difference in the end of any long line but the patent surveyors quoted only the closest full degree with no hint as to which side of that degree the compass had been flickering.

Putting the compass back in its case and the strap over his shoulder, the surveyor headed for the chestnut after taking hold of the end of the chain, with Sam holding the rear end of the chain at the starting point.

All distances were quoted in poles, a pole being 16 1/2 feet and a chain was 4 poles in length.

The surveyor scuffed the ground when the chain became taut, made his first distance tally mark in his notebook and went on towards the chestnut tree, with Sam following and then stopping, when he reached the scuff, for the surveyor to make another tally mark.

As they walked along, the chain was dragged over fallen trees around rocks, uphill and downhill, guessing the distances across any deep little ravine, through briar patches or laurel thickets.

Before they got to the chestnut, when Sam reached another scuff mark he called out that he now wished to make a right turn and walked up to the surveyor who was looking for suitable corner trees.

"There is a fine maple," Sam said pointing to the tree that was ten feet from the end of their line.

The compass degrees and distances, known as the "calls" were shamefully inaccurate but the patent surveyors did strive to get good corner trees, although the striving was often as upsetting as the calls; they would at times walk to one side 150 feet to get two white oaks but say nothing about that offset when writing their report.

"That maple is good for only about 30 more years," Tyree said, "and we aim to cut corner trees that will still be here for your children to go by.

"We also prefer to get more than one tree for fear it may get struck by lightning or become uprooted."

"What kind of trees are you wanting?" Sam asked, and the surveyor replied, "The trees of long life are the white oak, red oak, yellow poplar, hemlock and chestnut. A white oak will sometimes live past 400 years and the others will approach maybe 300 years. A sycamore will also live a long time but we don't want them because they shed their outer bark every year and the axe licks will peel off too quickly, although sometimes we can find no better tree at the end of a line.

"Do you mean by that, Mr. Tyree, that a chestnut 300 years old has 300 layers of bark on it?"

Tyree took his pipe out of his pocket filled and lit it then leaned against a tree to explain the situation to Sam.

"Each year's growth of bark on a tree is on the inside next to the wood, expanding the older layers just a wee bit every year and in about 100 years the outmost layers will split into ridges. In another

50 years those ridges in a rough barked tree will be an inch wide with fissures an inch deep and an inch wide between every two ridges, but the axe cuts can still be seen on six of those ridges. Pretty soon the outmost bark containing the trace of axe cuts will slough off and fall to the ground but if you scratch in the leaves you can find those fallen pieces for many more years to prove your corner if it be a tannin tree.

"All of the oaks have enough tannin in the bark to keep it from rotting quickly; the chestnut oak has the most tannin and hemlock is second."

"I mind me once I was hunting for a hemlock corner tree, could find no standing hemlock, but I saw where some big tree had fallen and rotted.

SEE INSERT

"The wood was all rotted but I saw pieces of bark to show that the tree had been a hemlock and when I scratched in the leaves at the place that would have been head height when the tree was standing, I found pieces of bark that had the old axe cuts, not yet rotted."

Tyree had been looking around for corner trees while talking but there was no tree of long life close enough and the best he could see was a beech, a maple, and an elm standing fairly close together 80 feet to the left. In each of those trees Tyree cut with his belt hatchet, three licks at head height, each lick 2 1/2 inches below the other, pointing in the direction from which they had come; stepping around he cut three similar licks in each tree to point in the direction they would take from there.

Knowing that these trees would be gone within 100 years, Tyree cut two licks on each side of each tree of long life that he passed as he went forward on the second line. These line trees would be an invaluable guide to prove the correct line after those corner trees had fallen and rotted.

In surveying Alexander's land to the north of Sam's chosen ground they had proceeded 132 poles westerly for the south line, when Sam called ahead to Tyree that he would now like to turn north.

While looking around for suitable corner trees Tyree said, "I am pretty certain that we are now well inside of the Thompson 1009 acre patent. How far are you planning to run north from here?"

"I would guess it to be maybe 150 poles but if we are inside another patent I had better change my plans and choose a different boundary," Sam replied.

Stepping over to sit on a log and gesturing for Sam to sit beside him, Tyree said, "we will rest a few minutes while I tell you something else about patents."

"About forty years ago when there were maybe a million land warrants for sale many of them

priced at two or three cents an acre, there were some men of means who thought they could make a fortune buying land at that price and a few of them went in right up to their ears.

"In this part of the country, Henry Banks was the first big buyer, who took out close to 80,000 acres all told, then in 1795 a fellow named Andrew Moore came along to take out 43,000 acres and the south corner of that is about 3 miles west of here; the Banks patents are scattered all around.

"At that rate it looked like the land would soon all be taken up and that tempted a lot of other men to take a fling at it by coming over here to take out a patent for 500 or for 5000 acres according to their means for buying the warrants and paying the annual tax bills.

"Every year since 1795 there have been Easterners taking out a patent around here, none of them seeming to realize that we got so much land that these speculators have no chance to sell their lands at any profit. With every five years of taxes paid, they have to charge more and more for their land just to come out even on the deal, while newcomers like yourself take out your own free patent with no thought of wanting to pay any speculator four cents an acre for his land.

"That fellow Andrew Moore paid his tax bills on his 43,000 acres for 14 years, unable to sell any of it and seeing no hope he let it go delinquent, or to be more exact, he sold it to Wm. McClung for six shillings in 1809 and McClung could get nowhere so he let it go in 1811."

"What happens when they let it go delinquent?" Sam asked, "and who owns that 43,000 acres now?"

"A commissioner of delinquent lands gets it," Tyree explained, "and he sells any piece of it that he can for any offer that he considers near reasonable and up to now he has been able to sell only about a fourth of it, but to help dispose of it they are building a road up into it and that ought to make it possible to sell it off a bit faster.

"Every year these speculators are beginning to see that their tax bills are putting their patents up out of reach for any sale and they are letting them go delinquent and it is my belief that this man Thompson will do the same, or for all I know he might already have done so. The commissioner does not get the patents until the end of the fifth year of nonpayment of the tax bills. This is fine level land right here and if I was you I would take the chance of including it in your brother's patent."

"Will my brother's title be perfectly good if Thompson's patent goes delinquent and won't the Commissioner have any claim on it?" Sam asked.

"Your title becomes perfect as soon as the senior title is forfeited and no person can later take it away from you so long as you keep your taxes paid. That fellow Banks was the first to patent a choice 100 acres on the road two miles west of here, that has a fine spring and some good meadow

land; a man named Bilbro taking out a patent to the east of it ran around to include that 100 acres, then another man did the same to the south and again to the west. That 100 acres is in four different patents, but the oldest title is good so long as its taxes are paid; if Banks goes under, Bilbro will own it and when his patent goes delinquent, the man to the south will get it."

"Well supposing Bilbro gives up his patent, couldn't he hold that 100 acres?" Sam questioned. "No, the law says you cannot make an acre of your patent have good title unless you pay up all taxes on the whole thing."

Upon completion of the surveying Sam said, "You can leave your reports at the tavern for me when you have finished them, but I may not see you for some time. Can you figure now how much I will owe you?"

"I charge by the day" Tyree replied, "for the time it takes to make the survey, plat the calls on paper, triangulate to estimate the acreage and fill out the report blanks as to acreage, location, corner trees and the calls.

"It so happens that my charge seems to most always amount to about a cent an acre. Since your brother's patent bordered on yours I had to run only their outer lines, and if agreeable to you I believe seven dollars will be close enough."

Sam paid him but not with American money - he paid in Spanish dollars. The Revolution put a stop to the shipments of English currency which became more scarce each year thereafter, but Spain had always been generous in supplying plenty of money for its North American colonies going so far as to establish two mints on this continent for them.

The new United States was so extremely dilatory in producing its own currency that the entire populace was using Spanish money before any action was taken; in 1794 a mint was opened in Philadelphia but it produced only nickels and pennies and few of them. After waiting so long, the United States to avoid utter confusion, had to make its own dollar to be of the same value as the Spanish dollar; the only change was in dividing the American dollar into tenths instead of the Spanish eighths, but there was no trouble about that since two of the Spanish eighths or reals equalled one American quarter.

Today the assessor does not assess your piano, or rug at full value; in 1830 the citizens had no rugs but they were in greater need of some tax easement which by custom was given to them by the surveyor who usually knocked about 20% off the acreage. If a patent contained 240 acres it was reported as 200 acres and the assessor had to use that acreage until the day came when an official resurvey showed a different acreage. An assessor cannot change the acreage of any tract until and unless he has in hand a later responsible resurvey of that tract.

There was one outstanding exceptional instance where a parcel of land on Crooked Ridge was

estimated to contain 100 acres with taxes paid on 100 acres until finally it was divided into three parts with each part containing 100 acres by a late survey.

The kindness was in order in itself but it created the bad situation wherein each purchaser of a patent wanted no resurvey that would increase his tax bills. This dearth of resurveys resulted in corner trees falling and rotting before any surveyor came along to discover the fallen tree and remark its location. Up until about 1825 if a surveyor found a fallen corner tree he pinpointed its stump by cutting catfaces in surrounding trees all pointing to that stump; a catface was three licks cut in the position of two eyes with a mouth below them. About 1830 they began cutting the pointers with the three licks of a corner tree under each other, but the pointer distinguishable from a corner tree in having the licks on only one side whereas a corner tree had the cuts on two sides. It is against the law for anybody but a licensed surveyor to cut pointers or corners.

The surveying was bad enough but would have been much worse had not the agonic line been running down through north Fayette when most of the lands were being surveyed.

That mysterious force which pulls a compass needle is never still and in its pull of a compass needle in Fayette it has been dropping south from true north veering about two minutes a year to the west ever since 1800. True north, upon which all accurate surveying must be based, is affixed by sextant and chronometer, sighting on heavenly bodies with always the same result. It can be seen that in certain places of the world, a compass being pulled by the magnetic force will at the same time be pointing to true north and that line around the earth along which this is the case is called the agonic line, which was running down through the east side of Greenbrier in 1800. By 1840 the westward veer of the magnetic force brought the agonic line over in Fayette, and today it runs along the west edge of West Virginia; a needle in Portland, Maine is now being pulled 17 degrees west of true north while a needle in San Diego is being pulled 24 1/2 degrees east of true north.

The Fayette patent surveyors had no sextant or chronometer and quoted only what the needle pointed towards.

The surveyors' carelessness about their degrees and distances was due to, and mitigated by, the fact that the law gave precedence to the corner trees; if the surveyor chose trees of long life for his corner cuts, it did not matter so much about the calls between them.

Within 150 years the cuts in the bark would have sloughed off but the licks were always hit hard enough to reach the inner wood to cause a discolored burl to form around the injury and those burls would remain for the life of the tree. A surveyor 200 years later hunting for a white oak corner might see no cuts in the bark but he could chip off the bark at head height and prove the corner by finding the three burls, which could also be found in a tree that had fallen and was half rotted.

A corner of two white oaks predominated in the old patent calls, because the surveyors would step aside more than a hundred feet to get such a corner.

It was 50 years before a commissioner of forfeited lands was able to sell the last piece of the Moore 43,417 acre patent. Henry Banks did not let his lands go delinquent but it was about 80 years before the last one of his patents was sold, many of them at from one to two dollars an acre. At his death an administrator was appointed to sell them and he met the same difficulties in finding buyers, that the commissioners had, with the supply so much greater than the demand.

The Thompson 1009 patent went delinquent as Mr. Tyree had anticipated.

Chapter Three

Two weeks later Sam was sitting in front of the tavern fire Treading a letter from Alexander wherein his brother said he would like to get his cabin raised before he brought his wife and two little children to Fayette. He wanted to bring a wagonload of gear early in February, store it in Sam's barn, haul in the logs for the cabin, clear a couple of acres for his garden, go back for his family and return to Fayette in time for plowing his garden.

Mr. Alderson who had been helping Tom repair a stall in the barn came in to warm his hands and talk to Sam for a few minutes and Sam told him about Alexander's letter.

"That fits in fine with something I was going to talk to you about" Alderson said. "Peter Bowyer is looking for somebody to partner with him at his sugar grove and ever since I heard it I have been thinking that you are the man who most needs that sugar and syrup since you got nothing yet to trade for it.

"Peter's son who has been helping him recent years has gone to the Kanawha to get a job as a bargeman with one of their steamboats".

"I need it alright Mr. Alderson but I can't leave Mary and it isn't costing us too much to buy our sugar."

"We always have a spare room this time of year," Mr. Alderson said "and we would be pleased to have Mary and the baby visit with us for a week. If your brother comes, he can look after your place while you folks are away and I will tell Peter that you will join him."

"That is real nice of you Mr. Alderson; it will be a big help to me and I know Mary will enjoy that visit a lot. How do you get to that sugar grove from my place?"

"You go down Contrary Creek that heads on your road, to where it empties into Keeneys Creek, cross over and go a half mile up Keeney to the first branch on the other side, follow it up a mile then take the left fork, and I will send Tom down to tell you when it is time to go."

During the sugar grove discussion Sam had been looking into the coal fire of the tavern and the mention of young Bowyer working on a barge gave Sam a new thought. Alderson had found a coal seam that cropped on the side of the Keeneys Creek hollow on the edge of his property; the seam must lie under all of the Alderson property and also under Sam's 200 acres and those barges were busy hauling coal out of the Kanawha upper valley.

"Mr. Alderson do you reckon that they will ever be wanting the coal that is under your property?"

"No, Sam, it is too thin to ever be mined; it is only 3 1/2 feet thick and they say that a coal mine

has to have 5 feet of headroom for the mules. Down on the Kanawha their coal seams are five and six feet thick and they are not making too much money at that; to mine a 3 1/2 foot seam they would have to drill, blast, dig up and haul out a foot and a half of slate to get their headroom and that would be entirely too expensive, even if there was any way to get it out of here.

"There are enough thick seams on the Kanawha to take care of this part of the country for a long time to come." ' The sugar groves of Fayette were a strange disposition of nature apparently planned for the sole benefit of man to give him a year's supply of sugar and syrup with only a short distance to have to carry the sap to the central boiling kettle.

There might be 5 or 25 trees to a grove, all bunched together with no other trees doing much trespassing and the groves might be one mile or 10 miles apart. Thirty-five gallons of sap which is 5% sugar can be drawn from an adult sugar maple tree without harm to it, or 40 gallons from the largest trees, enough to produce one gallon of rich thick syrup for home use.

No matter when you stop boiling the sap, the contents of the kettle will be pure and unadulterated; if you intend to sell the syrup you are not going to keep on boiling it down until you have only one gallon to sell. The maple syrup on the market pours easily at the slightest tilt, whereas the syrup made for home use was so thick that it moved very slowly.

A two inch hole was bored into the tree with 3/8 inch bit, a spout placed in the hole with a trough underneath and the sap would flow at the rate of 4 gallons a day from a full-grown tree; 100 gallons of sap would yield about 18 pounds of sugar.

Syrup can also be made from the common red maple that grows everywhere but it is not practical for three reasons; the trees are scattered too far apart for any central kettle, they are smaller with much less sap per tree and their sap contains only about 3% sugar.

The wood of the magnolia is very soft to make it easy to fashion into anything; it is also light in weight for moving or carrying, yet it is one of the most durable of the woods, which means slow to rot when exposed to dampness or to the elements. These attributes made it excellent for water troughs or for the troughs that were left in the woods from year to year for sugaring.

There are three kinds of magnolia but only the one commonly called a cucumber tree grew large enough for making troughs from its trunk; a second specie tries to atone for its small trunk by producing tremendous leaves that may be 2 1/2 feet long and a foot wide and it is called the umbrella tree.

The sugar groves were a blessing to the first settlers but later they became only a luxury or a commercial article for trade.

Unless there was a grove within short walking distance of a home, a man could not take his family

into the snowy woods for a week, nor did he care to leave his family and his chores for that long. It was far more convenient to plant an acre to sugar cane or sorghum that the whole family could help harvest and carry to the press, with no privations of the distant woods.

Peter Bowyer made maple sugar every year for trading purposes, chiefly for Kanawha salt, although he and his wife enjoyed the sugar and syrup for their own use; Sam was joining him to conserve his cash.

Almost all Fayette trees had some quality of special benefit to man and the sourwood, or sorrel tree furnished the sled runners; it was a small tree, the average one being just the right size, tough enough to withstand the bumps, and it had no low limbs to create rough places in the runners. The sourwood sleds would slide over soft ground or mud holes that would bog a wagon wheel and they were made narrow enough to weave between trees in the woods. Sam loaded his blankets, food and equipment into his sled when it was time to start the sugaring at the first good thaw near the end of winter; during the years, Peter Bowyer had consumed all firewood around the grove and it had been agreed that Sam would bring his horse and sled to haul firewood in to the kettle.

There were many pioneers who had no sugar grove, no invitation to share with somebody else, who could not leave their home for so long and still others who did not adjudge the maple sugar to be worth all the work entailed in getting it, nor the discomforts of living in the woods for a week when snow was not yet melted except in the open places.

Such families did not have to go without sweets, as there were enough bee trees to supply everybody and obtaining honey was only a one day job.

Bees dare not drink at a stream because any wavelet or swirl of a breeze might knock them into the water where they could not swim nor could they fly with water grabbing their wings on the down sweep. They do their drinking at a marshy spot where the water is only knee deep to them.

Going to such a spot, the bee hunter cups his hand over a drinking bee that will fly up and cling to the palm from which it can be slapped into a glass jar, paper bag or any kind of a container.

After collecting 15 to 20 bees, the hunter watches an uncaught bee fly up, circle a couple of times to get his bearings then head for his home hive which might be to the northeast.

Walking to the top of the ridge in that direction the hunter chops out all brush in a 20 foot diameter to give him unobstructed vision, as he frees one of his bees, watches it circle then head for that hive.

If one freed bee should strike out in some other direction he is from some other hive and the hunter must free another of his captured bees that will take flight to the northeast toward the bee tree for which they had first started. If the second bee also heads to one side, the hunter may guess

that he might have more bees from the second hive than from the first one and make a turn to go that way.

When the hunter has been led to the bee tree and chops it down, the crash of the fall partially stuns and stupefies the bees, then a stick with rags tied around the end of it, is ignited and its smoke makes the bees still more comatose. The hunter and his helper can safely filch the unbroken combs and ladle into a kettle the honey from the broken ones, and there were enough bee trees to give everybody all the honey he could want.

There was an ingenious trap for wild turkeys that did not catch enough turkeys to warrant a busy farmer in spending his hours on it but the trap gave a small boy hours of pleasure and he was the proudest man in the whole country whenever he came home lugging a turkey almost as large as himself.

A turkey cannot quickly wing its large body up off the ground to be out of the reach of a springing wild cat or fox, consequently they prefer to feed on the top of a narrow ridge where a few running steps and a couple of wing flaps will carry them over the edge of the ridge and safely above the hollow. Almost every farm had such a ridge nearby in Fayette but the boy could use only those ridges that had upon them a good stand of chestnuts and acorns to attract the turkeys.

On such a ridge the father would show his boy how to make the trap then leave the job to the boy. Two 4 1/2 foot lengths of sapling were cut, pointed, and driven into the ground to stand 2 1/2 feet high and 4 feet apart; ten feet distant another pair of stakes were driven in, and two ten foot saplings were attached to the outer pair of stakes. Along the length of the long saplings at one foot intervals, four foot length 3 were laid along the top and secured by hickory withes, string, wire or nails, whatever they had at home to use. This trap was constructed in the long daylight of spring evenings so that by fall the human odor would all be washed off.

As soon as the first good frost opened the burs and the chestnuts and acorns began falling to the ground, dusk would set in about 4:30 P.M., sending the birds and squirrels to their night quarters.

At dusk before supper the boy would take a half gallon of shelled corn to his trap, drop a kernel every 10 inches-leading from one end of the trap for 100 feet and likewise from the other end of the trap, then lay a handful on the ground in the center of the trap.

A turkey feeding at daybreak would pick up one of these corn trails, eat his way to the trap and seeing that it was wide open on all four sides he did not fear to walk on in under the cross slats to get that good handful of corn. It is their habit to raise their heads to look and listen every 20 seconds; at the corn pile they had a bit of trouble getting their head and long neck up between two of the slats, became alarmed and tried to run but whichever way they turned, a cross slat or a side sapling hit the bottom of their neck, and they found they could not fly, or run.

A turkey knows of no way to get its head to the ground except to stick it forward and when the trapped turkey attempted to lower its head, there was a slat under its neck.

It was securely trapped until it would fall of exhaustion many hours later.

The Kanawha valley booming from the steamboats with barges that gave cheap transportation for the timber, coal, and salt, could not produce enough of nature's yields to supply the demands and a couple of teamsters made their living by loading their wagon with salt and driving east on the turnpike into Fayette county. They traded principally with the stores but also with the citizens for maple sugar or syrup, ginseng, pelts or bear grease.

Both soap and candles were made of tallow, a large part of which came from the bears that had a good amount of fat before hibernation. To make tallow into soap it was mixed with wood ashes, the potash being the element that turned the trick and by misfortune the sugar trees had more potash than the wood of other trees. Since there was no need and no thought of any conservation, many a good sugar tree was felled simply for its ashes but the wood choppers did not trespass into a sugar grove. While the Fayette settlers were felling sugar trees for the ashes, other settlers out west were killing buffaloes to only get the tongue for a meal.

Sam and Mary were lonesome the first year but gave it little thought, as they were too busy to do any visiting even if they had neighbors, and they were cheered by the news that friends and relatives were making plans to arrive during the next year.

John and William McVey in 1830 had purchased the Ephraim Claypole patent to the west on Keeneys Creek. They arrived in 1832 along with Henry McGraw and Abraham Price to the southwest of Sam with Alexander to the north. Bowyer sold his patent to Wm. Rogers who arrived in 1836, then later John Rogers bought the Reynolds patent.

A good half of the investors in North Fayette, tiring of .throwing good tax money into worthless land, allowed their patents to go delinquent after realizing that there was still plenty of free lands to supply all demands. The Commissioner of Delinquent Lands in this district had tens of thousands of acres to sell at a couple of cents an acre or whatever reasonable offer he could obtain for any portions of it, a circumstance that caused land values to increase very slowly.

Shortly after Fayette county was formed in February 1831 by taking slices out of Greenbrier to the east, Nicholas county to the north and Kanawha on the west, the new county commissioners adopted a policy that the citizens would be given jobs, insofar as it would be practical and possible, at working on the roads as many days or hours as necessary to earn the amount of their tax tickets. This was what encouraged Sam and Alex McVey to patent so much land, the taxes on which they could easily earn by working close to home for a couple of days of their own choosing when farm work was slack.

It was George Alderson who informed the McVeys of this policy and recommended their large acreages, by going on to say, "There are three families planning to settle on the west side of Fern Creek near the cliffs next year, and within another year or so there should be a good dozen of you to petition the court for a road.

"It will cost the county very little to build a road down along the top of the west bank of Fern Creek that is level all the way from the pike, at the west of my place, down to the cliffs. You two live only a quarter mile apart and it won't be much work for you to whack out your own road across Fern Creek to that road if the county should decide that you folks are not enough to justify the county in paying for your fork until there are more people."

This road was given the name of the Chestnutburg Road which afforded an enjoyable peaceful walk or horseback ride through the wilds and virgin woods for the next eighty years, even after it was abandoned by the county and replaced by a new road a mile east of it. Nobody ever lived within sight or hearing of the first 2 1/2 miles of that road, still true today.

West Virginia seceded from Virginia in 1862 and joined the Union a year later, by which time all lands in North Fayette suitable for farming had been taken up.

Land was valued only for its farming possibilities, under which valuation, the mass of big trees was as great a handicap or hindrance as rocky or steep ground. During the 1860's the price of remote isolated lands or land too rocky or hilly to farm was 25c an acre ranging on up to 75c an acre for level ground alongside the turnpike, good land except for all those large trees.

In 1853 the completion of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, which surmounted the Allegheny by following up the Potomac River, brought prosperity to Baltimore, also to Washington, on a branch line.

The Richmond fathers and financiers fretting over their good city being left at a standstill, conceived the idea of building a railroad to start on the Chesapeake Bay, follow the James River to the Allegheny, cross over it to the Greenbrier River, down it to New River, on down New River and the Kanawha, then cross-country from Charleston to the Ohio.

The first attempt took the railroad almost to the Allegheny and the second try reached the top of the mountain before it ran out of money.

In 1869 the promoters succeeded in convincing Mr. Huntington that the railroad was a worthy project and he took it over guaranteeing its completion and naming it the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad.

When he got this news George Alderson saw no hope of selling his spare land at a price to yield him much net profit; the turnpike travel would fall to a dribble upon completion of the C&O.

Neither could the Chestnutburg citizens see any increase in the value of their lands, as the coal seam was too thin to compete with the Kanawha and there was such a vast amount of timber everywhere that it could have little value unless close to a railroad. From Chestnutburg it would cost more than its f.o.b. selling price, to haul it down that Mountainside to the railroad.

On a day that had turned chilly in the spring of 1870, a westbound stage stopped at the Alderson tavern for noon dinner and the passengers gathered around the fire in the big room to get warm while the food was being set on the table.

An ordinary looking passenger of a slight but wiry build took more than a warming interest in the fire which was of coal instead of the wood that had, so far along the route, been used in the fireplaces. Noting the molten coal in the grate, the flame, the ashes, and the raw coal in the bucket, the stranger perceived that the coal was of excellent quality. Turning to the host, the stranger asked, "where did you get this coal Mr. Alderson?"

"Two years ago when I was hunting for a cow that had wandered off to calve, I saw something black on the bank of Keeneys Creek about a mile from here; I dug into it with the end of a dead tree limb, found a seam of coal 3 1/2 feet thick and been digging into it ever since although I follow it sidewise and don't risk going underneath anything to get it." "Are you a coal man Mr. ---?"

"Yes that is my business and my name is Jonathan Jayne. I have a couple of small mines up in Pennsylvania and I am now on my way to Kanawha to have a look at the eleven coal seams that I hear they have down there."

Mr. Alderson had given his 3 1/2 foot coal seam no value because he estimated it too thin to be mined considering that down on the Kanawha their seams were four to seven feet thick, yet here was some little ray of hope.

Stepping over to poke the fire into greater flame and brightness Mr. Alderson said, "Our local patent surveyor Tyree was climbing down Keeneys Creek last year to check on a patent corner that was in dispute on New River and he said he saw this seam uncovered by a slide about 300 feet below the cliff line and it looked to be nigh onto four feet thick down there. If you have any mind to buy any coal lands, Mr. Jayne, you can get all the land you want around here if you would be willing to pay as much as a dollar an acre for it."

This coal seam had been discovered in two other places in north Fayette and had been named the Sewell seam in honor of the first discoverer but no value had been placed upon it, therefore there had been no thought of distinguishing between surface and mineral. All land was sold in fee, which means both top and what may be underneath.

Mr. Jayne continued on to the Kanawha to find their prices sky high and their coal seams of low grade, but they were prospering because of the convenient cheap steamboat and barge

transportation down the Kanawha to the Ohio towns. The Kanawha did have one seam, the Eagle seam, that was of the same quality as the Sewell seam but Mr. Jayne did not happen to learn of it or see it. Returning to the Alderson tavern, Mr. Jayne laid over two days to make some investigations. Mr. Alderson saddled two horses to take them down the Chestnutburg road for a view of the gorge from the cliffs then on over to the Keeneys Creek ford from whence they walked down the creek to New River where Mr. Jayne saw enough near level ground for a tipple and sidetracks.

In the evening as they sat in front of the coal fire Mr. Alderson found it difficult to talk about anything but the hope of getting Mr. Jayne to open a mine at the mouth of Keeneys Creek.

"If you could see fit to open a mine here Mr. Jayne, everybody would do all they could to help you. If you would start to work this fall as soon as the crops are all in, the whole Chestnutburg settlement would turn out to work for you until plowing time next spring, then they would board any men you might want to bring here from your Pennsylvania works."

"Thank you Mr. Alderson. I am giving it serious thought, but that steep, rocky gorge with so little level ground presents a big problem and as you know, thin coal is a lot more expensive to mine than the thicker coal, as we must have five feet of headroom on all passageways. However this coal appears to be of high grade which counts for a lot; I will take a lump back with me to get it analyzed in Philadelphia and that might decide the question one way or another."

The visit of Mr. Jayne set the Chestnutburg community all agog with pleasant hopes, plans and dreams of how they could profit from a coal mine at the mouth of Keeneys Creek. The evening after Mr. Jayne left, a half-dozen of the settlers went to the Alderson tavern to get firsthand information of every word and hint that Mr. Jayne may have uttered.

William McVey, recognized as the man of most wide experience, automatically served as the natural leader of the settlement in business matters.

"What did he say, George, when you named a dollar an acre?"

"He never batted an eye, William, and then I wished I had set a higher figure for the good of the rest of you. He said that ventilation prevented a mine from going back more than a half mile, therefore he could not reach my coal and would not want it."

Alexander McVey, happy to learn that he would be within that limit, addressed his remark to the whole group, "how much an acre do you suppose we might dare ask for our lands if he decides to open a mine here?"

William replied, "There is big money in coal mining under ordinary conditions but that river canyon is no ordinary condition and the coal seam so far up above the railroad too. Then there is another thing; Mr. Jayne can get all the land he wants clear up and down the river at a dollar an acre

and if we get too greedy we will just scare him off."

Mr. Rogers, whose land would be closest to the mine said, "I have been thinking hard about this ever since I first heard of it and I have about made up my mind to ask $6 an acre for my patent. If Mr. Jayne will agree to that I am going to try one more step and ask that I be allowed to reserve free the surface of my house and garden and the new field I just finished clearing."

William McVey replied to this saying, "That is two hundred times what you paid for that patent, but I am willing for you to make a try at it, provided you promise to back down if Mr. Jayne puts up any holler about that price. Your patent is the prime one and what Mr. Jayne decides to do may depend on the deal between you two and we don't want to all lose out by you scaring him off to look for another location where the land is only a dollar an acre and there is plenty such places right and left."

George Alderson now expressed his opinion by saying "Mr. Jayne talked to me like a mighty fair man without any deceit; if he had been a tricky fellow all he need do was to tell us he was an investor wanting lands and every one of us would have been glad to sell him at a dollar an acre. He said outright that he was wanting to open a coal mine and when I asked him if there was big profit in a mine he made no bones about telling me that there was big profit in it, barring no unusual misfortune.

"You fellows want to get all you can for your land and I believe maybe you can get the $6 if you handle it decent like; if Rogers stands on his ear and says $6 or nothing I know what I would do if I was Jayne - I would say good day, gentlemen, I will go take a look a couple of miles upriver."

Heads nodded in recognition of that obvious possibility and George continued, "He asked me to tell him who owned the patents he would need and take him to see those owners if he came back and if he does come back I will take him to Rogers first and you tell him polite like, that you naturally want to get as much for your land as you can and ask him could he see fit to give you as much as $6 an acre. Keep it friendly so you can easy back down if he says a flat no and let nobody get too obstinate about it."

In November Mr. Jayne was back at the tavern ready to buy his lands and as soon as they had eaten their noon dinner, George Alderson saddled horses on which they set out to see Rogers. As they approached each cabin the trodding of the horses would be heard and bring the family out front to give a friendly greeting, setting everybody on edge to learn the outcome of the Rogers deal. At one home, before the two men were out of her sight, the housewife set out on a running walk to go tell her sister's family that the big day had arrived.

When Rogers named his $6 price Mr. Jayne was taken aback and stared into the fire while Alderson and Rogers looked at each other and were on the verge of lowering their price when Mr. Jayne replied.

"Four years ago I bought the lands and opened a mine in Pennsylvania, spent two years of hard work and a lot of money getting it fully developed, then the coal seam disappeared. I drove headings through the slate and clay in all directions but could not pick up any coal seam and had to abandon the mine. This Sewell seam is totally untried. When I drive back into it, it might disappear or it might become too thin to mine; on the other hand the presumptions are all in my favor and I will pay your price, although I can do no more than make part payments this trip."

Lands were bought at prices that varied from $4 to $8 according to how they compared with the Rogers patent.

It was a great disappointment to George Alderson to be left out and one day he made another try saying, "Mr. Jayne you told McGraw that the mining of coal required as much timber as grew on virgin land above each acre, for track ties, room props, mine cars, tipples and trestles. The reservations that folks are making of their homes and fields when they sell to you must amount to near 500 acres of timber that you don't get for mining the coal under those reserved acres. My wild lands have timber and why couldn't you buy them as a timber proposition at a dollar an acre?"

Mr. Jayne would have a year of dead expense before his mine could ship coal and could not well spare any cash on an investment for the future but he did yield to Mr. Alderson's plea and paid $547 for the 547 acres, the mineral under which he did not believe he could ever reach. Thirty years later, improvement of the ventilating system by using electric fans did make it possible to reach the Alderson coal but nobody in 1870 could foresee that. This was the only land that he got at the expected price of a dollar an acre.

Mr. Jayne bought 1500 acres for his mine which he named Keeneys Creek. Since several of the patents reached over into the river gorge or the creek hollow where the coal had been washed away, he had only about seven to eight hundred acres of coal, but that would keep the mine alive for 40 years. This extension into the creek hollow or river canyon brought the price of a few patents down to $2 an acre because they had little coal left in them.

The C&O, built from both ends, met at Hawksnest 8 miles below Keeneys Creek, where the completion of the bridge across New River opened the road for business in February 1873, after many delays in blasting its way down New River. One gang worked westward down the north side, the other on the south side. The rise of the strata caused the Raleigh rock seam, 30 to 80 feet thick, to form the bed of the river under shallow water at Hawksnest, thereby giving a bridge a fine ready-made foundation. Also it was far easier to bridge New River here than to bridge the wider Gauley River mouth 7 miles below, if the railroad had stayed on the north side.

By the time the C&O rails reached Keeneys Creek the mine was fully developed ready to ship coal in quantity to give Mr. Jayne income from 3 mines. Having found that the Sewell seam at this place had no squeeze-outs, no gas, free drainage, with sound top, he decided to open a larger mine on Short Creek one mile, downriver, and bought another 1500 acres for it. About 400 acres of this

covered the river canyon with no coal, but Short Creek had not cut down to form any hollow, nor to even quite reach the Fayette rock that was 300 feet above the Sewell seam.

The Keeneys Creek mine, soon to be called Old Keeney, was left at its present stage to produce 250 tons a day while the new mine named Jayne was planned to be twice as large. It did reach the 500 ton capacity but the C&O seemed to never be able to furnish or haul that many cars, therefore the Jayne mine had to be satisfied with 400 tons a day. The railroad cars were apportioned in ratio to the productive capacity of each mine, with never enough cars to satisfy all.

INSERT 3 PICTURES

To operate his two mines Mr. Jayne had 220 bank cars, 30 mules, and 4 monitors with approximately 120 miners, 25 drivers, nearly 40 trappers and track-layers inside and 20 men outside. When the coke ovens were built there were more than 30 coke drawers. Half of the workers lived in their own homes on top, and Mr. Jayne built 110 houses for the others.

Beside the Short Creek falls the cliffs were broken in such a way that with only a little blasting a road could be carried to a point where there was a sheer drop of only 25 feet, which was bridged by lowering trees to lie parallel to the cliffs until there was a long ramp of easy grade leading from top to bottom. A zigzagging road was constructed down to the mine, then when the village came into being, the county built a real road by digging into the hillside downward for a half mile west then a half mile east with only the one U turn. For several years a bear or a deer would pass through the village, following their ancient trail.

It was the belief of Mr. Jayne that the safest and most profitable investment that a man could make was the purchase of wild lands which had natural resources on or under them. Such lands should increase in value as steadily as almost anything else, they could not be affected or lost because of a business or financial panic, no trusted employee could embezzle them. The income from the two rather small Decatur mines in Pennsylvania, with this addition of the Keeneys Creek mine, supplied the funds for the heavier expenses of developing and equipping the Jayne mine and after that,

Mr. Jayne spent about half of his annual income in buying more lands. He bought all lands from Fern Creek upriver to a half mile above the mouth of Keeneys Creek for a 3 1/2 mile river frontage with Short Creek and the Jayne mine in the middle of this frontage, then advanced on back to the turnpike with everything between those two creeks, the back end much wider because Keeneys Creek swung off to the east. That done, he bought everything, roughly speaking, within 2 miles of Keeneys Creek on up to its source, but one half of the coal under those acres had been carried away by the wide Keeneys Creek hollow with a half dozen tributaries.

This buying was purposeful and sufficient to satisfy him but he was led much farther afield by insistent sellers offering low prices. He bought a strip two miles wide running east for 5 miles beyond the head of Keeneys Creek, a similar strip running west from the head of Fern Creek along

the south side of the turnpike for 3 miles then turned north to carry that 2 mile width on back to Meadow River and inched into Nicholas county, across Meadow River. The reason for these arms that were very roughly 2 miles wide was a general policy of refusing to buy more unless it adjoined a tract he already owned and it was coincidence that created the arms.

On the west brow of Big Sewell mountain some 5 miles east of his most easterly patent, there was a 960 acre patent which Marion Gwinn wished to sell under a court order appointing him to do so in 1876. The patent was a mass of ridges with deep hollows, unfit for farming, the coal seam too thin to ever be mined. It was located a half mile south of the turnpike with no outlet, and nobody placed any value on timber remote from a railroad.

Mr. Gwinn first visited Mr. Jayne who did not want it, even though it was priced at only $1500. For eight years Mr. Gwinn tried to sell it without success, then he returned to ask Mr. Jayne to please buy it so that the court order could be carried out and closed. Mr. Jayne bought it as a favor, at the same time well aware that the favor could show no loss.

A few days later J. W. Heavener Adm. for H. 0. Middleton, a deceased investor, hearing of this sale visited Mr. Jayne to complain that it was unfair of Mr. Jayne to purchase the Gwinn patent and refuse to buy the Middleton patent of 876 acres that was exactly the same kind of land on the north side of the turnpike. It was priced at only a thousand dollars which Mr. Jayne had once turned down but now he yielded to his friend Heavener and bought it. Mr. Ford, who owned a 650 acre patent adjoining the Heavener tract, came to Jayne as soon as he heard of the Heavener sale. He said his land had no deep hollows, had access to the old Campaign Road and was worth twice as much, that he had long been trying to sell it as he badly needed the money and Mr. Jayne gave in to his plea.

Mr. Jayne was strictly a coal operator who at his advanced age could take little interest in anything else. He bought his outlying patents only because he had the cash to spare, was doing a favor for a man eager to sell, and knew that he could not lose at those prices. He never went to look at those patents, had none surveyed, took the seller's word as to ownership, preferred to have the sellers old deed copied on to a new blank deed form by a turnpike conveyancer, sent it to the courthouse by whomever might next be going over there, to have it recorded, then gave it no more thought. He was very negligent about business details, resulting in many troubles and expenses for his heirs, yet a man who spends his hours on details seldom has the spare time to plan and accomplish bigger things.

It was his contention that his own employees had the same opportunities that he had had if they would put their pennies and nickels in the bank instead of into their mouths in the form of pop, peanuts, candy, tobacco, bananas and the expensive items like sardines, canned peaches, and canned salmon.

"If you want fish go to the river and get them free," he argued, "and if you want fruit, we will sell

you at 50c a bushel, apples that are as nourishing as the canned peaches which cost you $8 a bushel."

Chapter Four

To open a mine on the side of the gorge, 700 feet above New River, the first task was to dig out a portion of the hillside to create enough level ground for the scalehouse, drumhouse, blacksmith shop, carpenter shop, a track to the slatedump trestle, a tipple and an area for the posts, known as props, that the miners placed in their rooms for support of the roof. A mine had top, bottom and pillars, but in the rooms they used the word "roof" instead of top.

A mine that went straight in from the side of a hill or hollow was known as a drift mine and all of the improvements at the mouth were included in the word "driftmouth," but if they had to use a drum to run the coal down to the railroad sidetracks, the "drumhouse" was the inclusive word. If a mine had to sink a shaft to reach the coal, all of these improvements around the top of the shaft were called the "Headhouse" a term often incorrectly applied to a driftmouth or drumhouse.

With no mine map in hand it will be difficult to explain the mine's system of entries, therefore we will reduce an imaginary mine to a simple skeleton. The main entry, 10 feet wide and 5 feet high will be driven straight back through the center, leaving 30 foot pillars of coal untouched on each side for permanent support of the roof. Thirty feet to the left, the aircourse is driven alongside with the same dimensions and when the two have been driven inside 100 feet, a large hole, called a "breakthrough" is cut through the intervening 30 foot pillar so that air can circulate up the entry, pass through the hole and drift back down the aircourse. With every hundred feet of advance a new breakthrough is cut and the preceding one filled with slate and chinked to be airtight.

The third breakthrough is cut diagonally so that a track can be laid through it to bring the coal and slate of the aircourse over on to the main entry to be taken outside, with a trapdoor installed on this cross-over track to prevent the air current from short-circuiting through there. At this same time a brick furnace is built in the mouth of the aircourse, its fairly tall chimney outside; the stone mason and carpenter sealing it up so that it could pull no outside air, and they also cut into the pillar to provide a walkway and a door for the furnace tender to wheel in coal to feed the furnace. A small fire in the furnace would send enough hot air up the chimney to pull a good current of air up the main entry to the last open breakthrough and back down the aircourse to the furnace.

At approximately 600 foot stages, a butt entry with its aircourse would be driven off to the right from the main entry over to the boundary line, also to the left from the aircourse over to the left boundary line; since these butt entries would be in use only a few years, 15 foot pillars were sufficient for them. A trapdoor was placed on the main entry midway between a butt entry and its aircourse, whereupon the incoming air current had to travel up that butt entry to its last open breakthrough, come back down its aircourse to rejoin the main entry on the inner side of the trapdoor, then proceed up the main entry until the next trapdoor detoured it up the next butt entry. The same thing happens to the air current as it returns down the main entry aircourse. It was a surprising fact that a roaring fire in that furnace would send such a blast of hot air up the chimney as

to pull an adequate current of air for two miles of these meanderings. The inside of the mine was quite similar to the national caves with just naturally plenty of air and no need for any breeze. This was true in the moist Jayne mines, maybe not true everywhere.

The miner driving an entry could advance only a couple of feet a day as he had to undercut, shoot and load out the 3 1/2 foot coal, then drill, shoot and load out 18 inches of the bottom slate, even though he could have a helper. Some of this limited production of coal was used in the furnace, some for the stoves of the growing village and it might be ten days before they could get 40 tons in the tipple needed to fill an early day railroad car. It would be a year or so before the butt entries could reach the boundary lines to give the mine profitable full production.

The coal must be mined from the extremities first, to thereby allow the roofs to fall harmlessly behind the miners as they worked their way back inside, from the boundary lines towards the main entry.

As soon as two parallel butt entries reached the boundary line, the bankboss would chalk room numbers along them at 30 foot intervals, and assign two miners to each room, to dig out all of the coal for a width of 25 feet and a depth of 250 feet until they met another pair of miners working towards them from the other butt entry. Upon getting their room shaped up, two miners in a 3 1/2 foot seam would advance 8 feet a day with a production of 10 tons. For quite temporary support of their roof they left a 5 foot pillar of coal around their room, also placed in the room maybe 8 props for extra support.

Props were free without limit, it being up to the miner to determine how many were necessary for his own roof, but since the coal seam varied from 3 up to 5 feet in thickness, the timberman could not cut all props to be of the same length. Arriving at the drumhouse in the morning, one of the miners, with tape measure in hand, went to the prop pile to select such props as he might be needing, of the proper length, chalk his room number on them and a driver would then or later toss them into an empty car to be delivered to that room.

The other miner went to the scalehouse to get from his hook a half dozen brass tags into which his number was stamped, one of which he would hang on to the nail on the east side of each car they loaded out that day.

As a precaution against possible favoritism, the weighboss in the little scalehouse on the west side of the scales, must chalk up on the daily weigh sheet, the weight of each car brought out, then step around to take from the nail, the brass tag showing whom should be credited for that weight. Periodical weighing of empty cars told the bookkeeper how many pounds to deduct for the car and how many pounds to credit to each number.

Arriving in their room, the miner whose turn it was had to lie on the bottom to make the undercut, just high enough for swinging his pick and as far back as he could reasonably reach which was four

feet, very hard work. The undercut is to give the coal some place to go when shot down. The other miner, using a 5 foot auger with a shoulder brace, drilled three holes across in the top of the seam, poured powder charges into three paper cups of his own making, stuck them in the holes, laid a fuse to reach out to the face and tamped the hole tightly with muck scraped from the bottom. After the shooting, the coal had to be broken up with a sledge hammer because they had so little shoveling room between the car and the roof.

The first shooting was ready by noon, which coincided nicely with eating their dinner out in the entry while the smoke dissipated, then the next shot was ready to light at quitting time. Walking out at quitting time the booms of the shootings sounded like heavy cannonading on a distant battle-field, this illusion amplified by the smell of burnt powder.

Lying on the bottom for the undercut or shoveling in such close quarters gave the miners many a skin break that would produce a blue sear unless all black grime was washed out before it healed; if it were a real cut you got a blue scar for life, or for several years if it was only a good scratch. The blue scars of the miners were on a par with the tattooings of sailors.

Up until 1900 the word "mines" was used only collectively, each mine known as a coal bank, wherein they had bank mules, bank cars, and a bankboss, with the workers donning their bank clothes, bankcaps and banklamps in the mornings. The one and only exception was that those who dug coal were called miners and nobody else had a right to use that word; if you asked anybody else his occupation he would say he was a driver, a tracklayer, a tippleman, a furnace tender, weighboss, stableboss, drumrunner or coke drawer. Soon after 1900 the word "mine" began to supplant the word "bank" but the other terms of bankboss and banklamps hung on until about 1920.

After the two rooms at the end of a butt entry had been worked out, they pulled the pillars upon which the roof was resting so heavily that the miners need do nothing more than swing a pick into them and pull out the coal; this pillar work was the big bonus for the miners as it was the custom to pay them the same price for this coal as for the coal that had to be undercut and shot down. Towards the end of the pillarpulling the roof might groan as it settled down a half inch, a couple of the props creak as the weight became heavier on them, very disturbing to a novice but entirely routine for the miners who knew their top. Tops differed from mile to mile.

The Jayne mine had a top of thick solid slate that would not fall until from 20 to 30 hours after the pillars had been pulled from under it. The Rothwell mine 3 miles away had a roof of sandstone that would not fall until from 30 to 60 days later; another mine 2 miles from the Jayne mine had a roof of broken slate ready to fall at once and it cost so much to timber that bad top that the mine made very little profit.

Miners needing little light, or smoke, used a small banklamp of coffee pot shape, 2 1/2 inches high, the snout a half inch higher; drivers with no worry about smoke, wishing to see as far ahead as possible, used a lamp twice as large, while all other men used the intermediate size, all lamps using

lard oil. A pint flask of lard oil was sufficient for all day, whereas kerosene would burn more rapidly, with more smoke and with some fume to create a bit of risk in refilling the lamp while it was burning, and you cannot refill any lamp in total darkness.

The only trouble with that lard oil was that it would congeal in freezing weather so that on a winter morning you could buy none at the store because it would not flow from the spigot, nor would it flow out your own gallon can on the back porch.

The Sewell seam was plagued with veins of slate that might continue for 100 feet or 100 yards, 2 or 3 inches thick, in the midst of the seam, also veins of boney 2 to 5 inches thick, most frequently on the top of the seam, all of which the miners must toss aside at their own loss of tonnage produced by them.

The term "dirty coal" meant that the ton had some slate or boney in it to anger the consumers, not only for receiving less real coal than they paid for but more because the slate choked their grate bars. Boney that is halfway between coal and slate will disintegrate in a hot fire but it produces no heat; a mine's reputation depended upon shipping only "clean coal" that was all coal with no boney or slate in it.

The most troublesome duty of the bankboss was acting as front desk room clerk in assigning miners to their rooms; in golf or cards, the player is inclined to accept his lucky days as normal for him and complains bitterly when the law of averages gives him some bad days and the miners felt the same way about their room assignments. Some rooms had clean coal, others had one of the dirty veins; along one butt entry the coal was 4 feet thick and only 3 feet on another entry to yield only three fourths as much tonnage in return for the hard work of the undercut and shooting.

The bankboss must be firm and use impartial fairness in rotating the room assignments to keep each miner's yearly average as near equal as possible. It was not only a loss of tonnage but a lot of trouble for the miners to knock loose and throw aside all pieces of slate or boney, consequently a daily temptation to shovel more or less dirty coal into their cars.

The second duty of the weighboss was to scan every car that he dumped into the drumhouse tipple to see if any miner had loaded out any dirty coal and to dock him for it if there was any. There were plenty of men that could be trusted to chalk up honest weights but not many with the moral courage to dock for slate; it was so much easier to pretend that he had not seen that slate rather than offend his neighbor, his lodge brother or a relative.

For many years the Jayne mine had a weighboss, Jim Tully, a man of such high integrity that neither side could doubt his true weights and he had the courage to allow no dirty coal to be loaded out, despite the fact that he had been a miner and had five sons and other relatives working inside.

The eastern terminus of the C&O on the Chesapeake Bay was a convenient place for the navy to

bunker many of its ships and upon hearing the rumor that the Jayne mine was shipping clean coal they sent a lot of orders. The only ship now remembered was the Kearsarge in which ship the Jayne village took great pride.

The original Kearsarge was a corvette built in New Hampshire in 1861 and named for a mountain in that state. In 1894 it sank after hitting the Roncadof reef in the Caribbean and was replaced by a battleship completed in 1898, and bunkered with Jayne coal for its shakedown cruise. Although only 11,500 tons displacement, it was the mightiest of that day; twelve years later the newer battleships were up to 20,000 tons displacement. The moral courage of Jim Tully won the navy orders for Jayne coal.

A monitor holding ten tons was a steel tube with a door at the lower end, hinged at the top and fastened with a crossbar, the upper end open with a lower lip extending forward to catch the coal dumped into it at the drumhouse tipple. Down at the sidetrack tipple, beside the dumping cradle, two iron rails sloping upwards forced the bar up to open the door. At the driftmouth they had a large wooden drum, set in concrete with strong springs clamped against the axle on each side, and a roof to protect it from the weather; it was open on all sides but the roof gave it the title of a house. The very long wire rope or cable was given a few cross twists around the drum to prevent slipping, then the weight of the loaded monitor going down pulled the empty one back up. Bolted to the top was a sketchy railing to hold any boxes or barrels of supplies to be sent up to the drumhouse. Riding down the side of the gorge clinging to that brief railing was a mite too scenic for full enjoyment of the view up and down the canyon. It had been troublesome laying a track down the side of the gorge for those monitors.

A long lever extended forward six feet above ground from the drum and the drumrunner, who had to be hefty, regulated the speed of the trips with the weight of his body by pulling down on the lever and hooking it under his arm. If he lost his hold, the lever would fly up to stop the trip at once, a good safety factor. The drumrunner had to become expert in gauging his stopping point almost to the inch, for if those ten tons hit the dumping cradle at the bottom, the least bit too hard it would tear out the cradle and if he slowed down to ease the monitor into the cradle a few inches at a time he would consume so many minutes on each trip that he could not deliver 400 or more tons a day. On days of rain, snow or fog or the first and last hour of short winter days he could not even see the sidetrack tipple and had to gauge by the upcoming monitor. It took some time for a drumrunner to acquire expert gauging of his eyes and of his touch on the brake lever.

Nothing good or bad can be said that would be applicable to all coal mines. West Virginia has 102 coal seams, 60 of them entirely worthless because they are measurable in inches and too thin; 24 of the other seams might thicken up to 3 or four feet in an area large enough for 4 or 5 mines and 18 of the seams have coal thick enough to warrant 2 dozen or 8 dozen mines.

No two of the seams are exactly the same and they differ in analysis or thickness, in their roofs, in the amount of gas or water or in being clean or dirty. No two mines in the same seam have exactly

the same conditions nor will a large mine be uniform in anything throughout its whole area. It would behoove a miner to carefully choose his mine but there was nothing published to tell which mines had a dangerous amount of gas, unsafe roof or too much water. Having no money for investigating travels the miners had to take their chances on whatever mine was nearby or that had a job open.

The Jayne mine was able to drive its entries to the northeast, cutting across the rise of the strata at such angle as to give free drainage and to favor the loaded cars being brought out, yet not enough grade to make it difficult for the mules to pull the empties back inside. Many people have the idea that a coal mine is bone dry and full of dust, but not so; there was a stream of water flowing out of each Jayne entry every day of the year. You could raise no dust digging into the Coalburg seam on the Kanawha, that had a water content of 3.65% and all seams have some amount of water in them.

The Jayne mine with no gas, sound roof, and minimum of dust was an ideal place in which to spend a working lifetime and many men did so without harm. There was not enough dust to ever obscure vision or to be noticeable in breathing. What dust there was, passed through the lungs harmlessly like any other innocuous dusts of the country roads or the trains. The original Keeneys Creek bankboss, after spending most of his life in the mines died of old age at 89, an impossible feat if the dust had been injurious. Many other men worked 20, 30 or 40 years in the mine without developing any respiratory afflictions.

In the Jayne mine they had the same 54 degree temperature every hour of the year, which is close to perfect for working; no heat, no cold, no changes; no insects to sting, bite or get in the eyes; no ants, chiggers, snakes, hornets, poison ivy or briars; no rain or snow, no winds to blow dirt into the eye. No moving thing could catch you unawares and hit you, because you could hear a trip coming in plenty of time to step into a side entry or old breakthrough or you could lie in the ditch beside the track in case of emergency. Entries were always straight with no curves and the drivers who were always looking ahead, could see a long way and so could the pedestrian. When the pedestrian waved his banklamp horizontally, that was notice to the driver to slow down, while a vertical wave told the driver that all was well.

Since coal is the residue or product of decomposed vegetation, largely of the fern family, it contained a lot of methane or marsh gas that is called firedamp in the mines. In some large or small areas a seam may still hold a dangerous amount of this gas while another area may have not enough to be of any consideration or perhaps all gas has escaped from a section several miles in diameter. As this gas is without odor or color and perfectly harmless to a creature as large as man, the miners never knew it if they began digging into a gaseous area, but it would kill a canary. Therefore in the ancient days they used canaries; if the canary keeled over, the miner knocked off work until the air current could carry off that accumulation of gas. In a coal seam there are no holes in which gas can collect. It is in every cubic inch of the coal and escapes when that coal is broken up by the undercut, the shooting, the sledgehammer and the shoveling into the car.

In developing the Keeneys Creek mine, the first one in the Sewell seam, they had to watch closely until the entries had reached the extremities, then, upon meeting with no gas, they could relax. Unfortunately there was too much relaxation in the coal industry with not enough inspections. Miners on one entry might begin digging into a gaseous area where the gas would slowly accumulate in their rooms, maybe drift out into their entry and sometimes another entry might also tap a gaseous area and nobody know it. If a miner's banklamp or his shot ignited the gas, the explosion would extend as far as there was enough gas or dust to carry the ignition flame, perhaps only in one room, along one entry, or throughout the mine.

The law of physics that causes water to collect on the outside of a pitcher of ice water on a hot day works the same way in a coal mine. When the hot air of summer is pulled into the main entry and reduced from 90 degrees to the 54 degrees of the mine, the contraction squeezes the moisture from the air, depositing it on the roof, pillars and bottom of the entry to make that entry be wettest on the hottest days. Conversely, when the 15 degree air of winter is pulled in, the expansion of the air up to the 54 degrees gathers the mine's normal moisture to make the entry become driest on the coldest days. It does not take the slow-moving incoming air very long to make its temperature adjustment, and the moisture incidence cannot continue throughout the mine yet there does seem to be a strong relationship between explosions and the outside air.

In 1839 the government began keeping a record of all coal mine disasters, classifying an explosion as being a disaster only if more than 19 men were killed, and there have been about 150 disasters since 1839. If you tally the 26 worst disasters where the explosion extended throughout the mine, you will find that only 2 of them occurred in the hot summer months. Or you can take another approach; June, July and August making up one fourth of a year should have had 37 disasters, one fourth of the total, but there were only 12 in those three months of hot weather, and 4 of those 12 just barely did get on the list, as only 20 or 21 lives were lost in each of those four.

The lesser explosions that did not get on the government list of disasters were more numerous than the disasters, but at long last all explosions have now been virtually eliminated by laws requiring stronger air currents, constant inspections, and forbidding any flame of any kind inside of a mine. This wonderful blessing wiped out all of the glamour of the flaming banklamps, and coupled with that loss, machinery has ended the mule and driver days. Machines undercut the coal, it is forced down by air expansion, a loading machine puts it into the cars brought out by a haul motor or by a conveyor belt, while "employees" wearing electric head lights have replaced the "miners." The air current is pushed into the entry by an electric fan, with another fan pulling the current out of the aircourse, or booster fans wherever needed. Although gas was the principal cause of the explosions it should be stated that there were several other factors including atmospheric conditions. Also gone are the blue scars, as a mine must now have a first aid station to cleanse and bandage any skin breaks or scratches, which is an admirable requirement, although it has paradoxically increased the coal mining casualties, since a treatment at first aid is listed as a casualty.

The writer knows and is discussing only the mines around Keeneys Creek and is not saying that the Jayne mine had no dust nor that all mines are ideal places in which to work. But it is galling to have the copy writers picture all mines as being an inferno of heat, of crashing slate falls, of choking dust that cakes the lungs. Professional photographers have also helped to give a false impression by using burnt cork to thoroughly blacken the face, neck and ears of all mine workers before taking their pictures. The copy writers and photographers seem to believe that their calumnies are justifiable because it adds drama and local color to their products.

There are undoubtedly some mines that are quite dusty, but there can never be any choking cloud of dust as reported by copy writers; bituminous coal dust dry enough to rise and permeate the air is so highly inflammable that a mine would blow up long before there could be any choking cloud of dust.

The track layers and drivers of the Short Creek mine could have found no better job nor any better working conditions outside but it must be admitted that the miner's job was far short of being ideal. As their room advanced on back from the air current of their entry they cut breakthroughs through the 5 foot pillars around their rooms to obtain some current, but the air at the face of the seam where they worked became a bit stuffy although not so much so as to produce any shortage of oxygen nor make them long for more air. They did not have the 5 foot of headroom in their rooms and they often had to lie on a moist clammy bottom to make their undercut. It was hard work in cramped quarters, yet they were not slaves. They were miners of their own free choice who had no thought of making application for any outside jobs; the unpleasant features were fully offset by the constant 54 degree temperature, and the absence of insects, rains, bitter cold or heat.

Chapter Five

In the analysis of a coal seam the carbon is the element that produces the heat and the volatile is the smoke, the proportion of the ton that goes up the chimney as a total loss as well as a sooty nuisance. The Sewell seam averaged 72% carbon and 23 % volatile; down on the Kanawha, excluding their good Eagle seam, the other ten seams averaged 56% carbon and 38% volatile, which meant that 38% of the ton went up the chimney. There are many bituminous seams with a carbon content in the upper fifties which fact points out that wood with its cleanliness, good odor and 50% carbon content is well in the running as a fuel.

Anthracite has little in common with bituminous coal; it usually lies in huge folds or loops that cannot be followed by a track and is hard as rock, which two facts make it more than twice as costly to mine as bituminous. A good wood fire has to be kindled to get anthracite ignited, then it will simmer at even temperature for ten hours, whereas bituminous coal, easier to ignite will produce much higher heat but burn itself out in 3 to 4 hours. Anthracite was of especial value to home owners, as it would simmer all night and not have to be rekindled in the morning like bituminous, or it would simmer all day while the family was in town or country.

Anthracite averages 87% carbon with very little smoke therefore a consumer gets a lot more heat from a ton to help offset its high cost. Only the bituminous coal will fuse to make coke but not all seams will do so; the Sewell seam made good coke but on the Kanawha only their Eagle, Gas, and Ansted seams would make coke.

As soon as Mr. Jayne got his mine fully developed at Short Creek, he built a high tipple by his sidetrack, sheathed it with perforated sheet iron and erected a long high trestle to carry the monitors from the Mountainside over to the top of the tipple. As each monitor dumped its load into the top of the tipple, all of the fine stuff called "slack" fell through the holes into a large bin underneath the sheet iron.

Eighty coke ovens were constructed to radiate out from the tipple in double rows, with dirt filled in the middle of each double row to provide a track over which mules would pull a five ton lorry for filling the ovens. Producing coke from high quality coal was only slightly more profitable than to sell the raw coal but there were other advantages, one being that the coke market had no summer doldrums, and in winter the railroad coke cars did not become as hard to get as the coal cars.

Large fireboxes burning 24 hours a day liked the slack coal but all lesser consumers wanted no slack that would fall through their grate bars; the slack coal fused into coke better than the lumps and drawing off the slack at the tipple made the car of raw coal much more desirable for small grates. A fire had to be kindled to get each new oven hot and after that heating. the bricks would continue to retain enough heat for each refilling of slack to soon become ignited from spontaneous combustion.

Each oven held five tons of slack which would yield three tons of coke with 10% of the Sewell coal's 72% carbon becoming consumed in the burning; coke is the pure carbon with all else burned off but the ash which amounted to 2 1/2 % of the Sewell coal.

Coke is tough and porous so that air can circulate all through it with no caving in and will produce far greater heat than raw coal with its smothering smoke full of impurities. The lack of impurities and high heat of coke are needed for most smelting, especially for making steel.

The beehive ovens had a 2 foot opening at the top, with a 3 foot doorway at the bottom facing the loading platform by the sidetrack. After the 5 tons of slack had simmered for 48 hours, the coke drawer extinguished the fire with a hose, pulled out the coke and shoveled it into the railroad car. He replaced the bricks in the doorway, leaving two out for draft then the draftman went around to replace one brick or a half brick to reduce the draft as the burning progressed.

Those 80 ovens gave the gorge a rosy glow as you looked down into it on a winter evening, in summer time too, after dark.

A German named Koppers who had invented a retort that would catch the liquid tars from coke oven smoke, sold his patent to the Mellons shortly before the first world war.

The ordinary eaters and drinkers would be surprised if they knew how many of their soft drinks, confections and candies were flavored with fruit and berry juices extracted from coal tar.

In the winter of 1893-4, a panic had thrown thousands of men out of work in the Midwest and a crusader named Jacob Coxey haranged the idle groups to go to Washington and all be there by the 27th of April to make a concerted demand upon the government for relief. He was a powerful persuader who induced 20,000 men to go, half of them going on the C&O because the nights were still cold and it was the most southerly route. There was a through east bound freight passing Short Creek at 6 P.M. and the men would drop off by the dozen to get a warm bed on the coke oven platforms for the night. They knocked on all doors for supper and for breakfast and could not be turned down as they were jobless men, not bums; the village was kept busy a full week trying to feed those men.

Coxey's idea was humanitarian but not practical because no provision was made to care for the men in Washington and they had to be dispersed by the army because the camp they attempted to set up became a dangerous pesthole of 20,000 men with insufficient sanitary provisions.

At the Jayne mine a tramroad was built to run along the Mountainside for a half mile upriver from the main entry drumhouse, also a half mile downriver, with two entries driven in from each tramroad, each with its aircourse and furnace.

The drumhouse was a busy, noisy nerve center when the mine got going full tilt, the wooden drum

creaking, bankcars being dumped into the tipple, the crash of slate being dumped on the slate trestle, the banging of the coal as it fell from the tipple into the monitors, the carpenters sawing or hammering as they worked on trapdoors or replaced the oak board floors, sides or endgates of bankcars, the blacksmith pounding on his anvil or loudly berating a mule that would not hold his foot still for shoeing. In the mouth of the main entry they cut into the pillar to make room for a second track to hold the empty cars waiting to be taken back inside, leaving a six foot walkway for the mules between the two tracks. This was called a parting and a third of a mile inside they made another parting, with the main entry driver making his run between these two partings; inside drivers would deliver the cars from the inside parting to the miner's rooms.

The bankcars had no brakes and had to be stopped or held by inserting a sprag between two of the three iron spokes of the little iron wheels; as the wheel turned, the sprag would be jammed against the iron framework of the car to lock that wheel.

A sprag was made of the durable tough locust; hickory is maybe tougher but not durable and would rot within a few years of lying in the dampness of the mine. The sprag was a foot long, 21/2 inches in diameter in the middle and pointed at each end; to properly get that sprag inserted between two spokes of a fast revolving little wheel was an art learned by few, but the main entry driver had to be an expert. If you pushed too hard your hand might follow it through the opening and if you did not push hard enough the tip end would hit the framework and be snapped back with a force to break a bone. They spoke of throwing sprags into a wheel but it required a more delicate precise touch than throwing would indicate.

Mules had to be trained to obey verbal commands before being taken inside since a driver could handle no reins nor could he often swing a whip; if a mule failed to obey the verbal commands he would have to be sold outside, therefore it was seldom that any whip was necessary but it was the custom for every driver to wear around his neck a blacksnake whip with short handle as the proud badge of his trade. The whip was a nuisance but it was in the same category as the major's sword or waiter's towel on the arm; when a driver got home from work, if his mother or wife asked him to go to the store to get a pound of Arbuckles coffee before cleaning up, he would wear his whip.

The main entry driver arriving at the inside parting with his 8 empties, laid a sprag in a wheel of each car to prevent it from rolling back, turned his two mules that were hitched tandem, took them down the walkway and hooked the trace into the front coupling of the 8 loads to be taken out. The two brightest mules of the mine, got rewarded by being put on the main entry run and they were near human in their comprehension of what must and must not be done. In response to a stern "whoa" they would not move an inch in any direction, they quickened their pace in keeping with the urgency of the driver's "git-ups" and they slowed down in accord with the inflections or repetitions of the driver's “whoaps”. The car bumpers were one foot wide with the corners rounded off and a large V cut into the middle to get at the coupling; the driver had to stand on the bumper sidewise with one foot in front of the other, find a handhold on the endgate between two lumps of coal, to

hold himself on at all times and his body had to be scrunched down to be not more than 3 1/2 feet high.

The main entry driver walked back to the rear of his 8 loads, jumped on its sprag to free it, jerked it out and by the time he had removed the 8 sprags his trip was ready to start moving by gravity. Hopping on the front bumper and finding a good handhold he said "lets go" and the mules began walking; as the trip gained some speed his git-up started the mules on a slow jog which soon had to become a trot.

As they approached the first trapdoor the driver leaned to one side to see if the trapper's light was moving to open that door; the driver had 30,000 pounds rolling behind him with no brakes and he could not stop, nor was there any place he could jump but straight ahead.

As they passed through the trapdoor opening, the driver was leaning forward with his hand on the rump of the rear mule to hold the trip back as much as he could and he had to have the strength to hold it within safe speed.

As soon as the lead mule reached the walkway of the driftmouth parting the driver said "haw" while he was taking the trace out of the coupling to hook it into the hipstrap of the rear mule. The lead mule began side-stepping over the rails on to the walkway as neatly as a dance step, careful to lose none of his forward speed while doing so and he would maintain that trot right on outside if the driver failed to say whoa.

The rear mule did his sidestepping in his turn and when they were both over in the clear the driver said whoa and the mules stood stockstill, knowing that if they lolled 15 inches to one side a corner of a passing car might catch them. With no insects around, those two mules stood motionless with no twitching of skin or ears, no swish of the tail, no blinking of eyelids, the only motion being the bellowing of their lungs sending jets of steam from their nostrils to reach almost to the bottom. With steam also rising from their sweating bodies they looked like two creatures from the underworld, which they almost were.

The driver rode past his mules to hop off at the sprag pile where he grabbed a sprag in each hand and got enough thrown in to bring the trip to a stop outside with the front car on or almost on the scales; to a spectator it looked as though that trip would surely roll right on over the Mountainside but it never did.

Newspaper articles have said that the life of a mine mule was brief - maybe true somewhere but not in north Fayette. The Jayne mules pulled cars on smooth rails with the grade never exceeding 2 %, perfect weather, no flies and it is doubtful if they would have traded places with an outdoor mule, if given a choice. Mules outside on the county roads had to pull their loads over rocks, out of chugholes, up grades of eight or ten percent and suffer from zero weather, rain, snow, or blistering sun, with gnats and flies stinging, pestering, or getting into their eyes.

Beside each trapdoor, a niche was cut out of the pillar, with an armful of hay laid in it to make a comfortable seat for the trapper who had nothing to do but to open that door whenever he heard a trip coming. Trapping would have been the ideal job for a man too old to work or handicapped, but an elderly man presented too great a risk; sitting still in the quiet darkness, listening to the droplets of water plopping into a puddle on the bottom was more soporific than counting sheep. An elderly man would sooner or later fall asleep and that would be fatal; the trapping jobs were given to boys of 13 to 16 not yet ready for work.

At the age of 13 the boys had a passable knowledge of the three R's and if they had ambition or a prodding mother they could continue some studies while sitting beside their trapdoors, which had to be opened only about every half hour.

A trapper would get a job as a driver when he was 17 and at 20 he would often pair up with a relative or friend as a miner, although this progression was in no respect a custom or a rule, as everybody followed his own inclinations. Daily wages crept up slowly until 1900 when the rate became $1.40 for a ten hour day, drivers got $1.50 and miners were paid .40c a ton, customarily loading out 5 tons a day for a $2.00 return, and in 1908 wages had risen to .17c an hour for common labor. In 1894 the operator received .82 1/2c a ton for his coal, in 1908 it was a dollar a ton, in 1920 it became $2.00 a ton, then with the rapidly increasing wage rates it reached $8.00 a ton; these high wages forced the operators into more and more mechanization that brought the price down to $5.00 a ton for the operator in 1959, and the railroad freight charge had by then, risen to be $4.55 a ton for hauling that coal to any point on the line.

Coal operators and olive growers look at their products through opposite ends of their telescopes; small olives are branded as being large, extra large, jumbo or mammoth, whereas the egg size of coal is as large as ostrich eggs, the nut size as big as walnuts, the pea size twice the size of any pea and the same with buckwheat.

All home owners and small users wanted what was called stove coal, the size of door knobs, but after shooting and breaking up the anthracite coal, the operators' screens yielded seven different sizes, lump, egg, stove, nut, pea, buckwheat and smithing, all of which must be sold.

In an effort to reduce the demands for stove coal, the anthracite operators priced it at fifty cents a ton higher than other sizes, also they would not sell a dealer a car of stove coal alone; the dealer must buy two other cars of another size and use his own ingenuity in disposing of them as best he could.

For the first three or four decades of its mining, there was no screening of the coal along New River, largely because the consumers appeared to be satisfied with the "run-of-mine". Another reason for the lack of screening was that the bituminous coal, so much softer and more brittle than the rock-like anthracite, could not well hold its uniform screened sizes throughout the many dumpings between the screen bins and the consumers' furnace doors.

In the southeast corner of West Virginia and southwest corner of Virginia there is the Pocahontas coal seam that is midway between bituminous and anthracite in hardness and in good analysis; it lies in even beds to make it possible to mine and sell it at bituminous prices.

The luckiest of all coal consumers were those who lived on a railroad which could deliver to them the good Pocahontas coal, or coal from any other equally good seam, at one freight charge. There are hundreds of coal seams, very few of which are exactly the same and not many men who know the details of each of those seams.

The large commercial users of coal preferred the bituminous not only because it was a great deal cheaper but also because it produced a hotter fire. The anthracite simmering for ten hours was excellent for the homes and smaller consumers, but they were disposed to place no orders until frost sent a chill into their homes or place of business.

The anthracite operators tried to equalize the summer 'doldrums and winter rush by quoting a low mine price in May, then raising that price on the popular stove coal by 25c a ton each month until October. They hoped to induce the home owners to begin filling their cellars in spring but it is hard to change human nature; the citizens were not interested in coal when the world around them was comfortably warm without coal, and the winter rush was eased only slightly in spite of the higher cost from October to April.

A long time ago it became evident that if a railroad charged so much a mile for hauling coal, those mines closest to the markets would get all of the business and nobody could afford to open a mine farther back where the freight charges would be higher.

The railroads wishing to get the revenue from as much coal as possible also from the villages of each new mine got together to agree upon a flat freight rate for hauling coal at that same price whether the haul be one mile or a thousand miles. This was a fine idea that increased business tremendously, but it had some peculiar effects; to switch a car of coal over to another railroad cost the buyer a second freight charge, which meant that New River could sell only to consumers who lived on the C&O, a very limited market. At first the Jayne mines could sell their good coal to C&O users but the Kanawha had to continue shipping their low grade coal out by steamboat and barges. As new mines in the Sewell seam flooded the C&O market it looked bad for a while until New England came to the rescue; having only a trifling amount of low grade coal of their own, they had to pay two freight charges and had been buying coal some of which was good, some not.

New England switched over to buy the New River coal as soon as they learned that all of it was of high grade; boats charging less than a second railroad freight rate carried the C&O coal from Newport News up to the New England ports.

In 1920 the freight of all railroads was $2.74 a ton, today it is $4.55 a ton which figures out to be a cost of $30,000.00 for hauling one acre of four foot coal to the nearest or to the farthest market.

A pencil and paper says that an acre of Sewell coal should contain 1770 tons for each foot of thickness of the seam, but at best not more than 1400 tons per foot could reach the Newport News scales by which tonnage the operator was paid.

A ton of coal suffered losses from rains, winds, spillage and thefts on its way from the miner's room to Newport News; the ventilating furnaces and the village also took a bite out of it.

Of all the commodities needed in a home, coal was by far the most difficult to obtain at Jayne; the coal was brought down the mountain in the monitors that dumped it into the top of the high tipple. If a loaded monitor dumped its load short of the tipple, the upper monitor would not reach the drumhouse tipple to get refilled, with the result that the two empty monitors would become stranded. Coke ovens blocked wagons from reaching the tipple on one side, coal cars and sidetracks on the other side; the only access to that coal was at the bottom of the tipple where the carloader, after loading and dropping his last car of the day, would open the chute allowing coal to spill on the sidetrack where men could come with buckets to get it. With this being the situation at most of the New River mines, it was a condoned common practice to steal coal from the railroad cars, in slow transit or when standing at a station, sidetrack or assembly yard.

The company store played a big part in the lives of all the people connected with the mine; it was the meeting place for the women who took it over in the mornings and the men met there after supper while awaiting the distribution of the evening mail which arrived at 7 P.M. The cellar that had stone walls and iron barred windows so dirty as to give little light, was like a dungeon excepting for the appetizing odors of the kegs, casks, hogsheads and barrels of salt pork, vinegar, molasses, pickled pigs feet, dill pickles and cider. In bins that Were like horse stalls there was cabbage, onions, potatoes, apples, turnips, all cellar supplies carried upstairs as needed, by the warehouseman.

Uncle Charley whose eyes were failing was clerk of the counter dispensing bananas, oranges, tobacco, pop and several other items.

One evening Nelson a driver, came home from the store with news of a little gold strike that he had accidentally made; "I asked Uncle Charley for a nickel's worth of tobacco, laid a three cent piece on the counter and while I was fishing in my pocket for the two cents, he put my three cent piece in the till, gave me my tobacco and a nickel in change." The three cent piece and the dime were of the same size and color and were hard to tell apart.

Nelson's father said it was dishonest to take advantage of Uncle Charley like that, but Nelson's brother thought of the three cent pieces that he had, and said nothing.

Each evening the store manager opened the tills to remove the surplus or refill the bowls in which the coins were getting low, and a couple of months after Nelson's discovery, the manager began to wonder why all of the three cent pieces landed in Uncle Charley's till. As soon as he got the puzzle

solved he wiped out the bonanza by putting a pair of specs on the mother lode.

The company store used the same markup as the city competitive stores but it forged ahead of them by being freed of any bargain sales, running any leader at cost to entice customers into the store and no expenses for advertising. If any standard article was improved to make the old stock obsolete the city stores must hurry up with a bargain sale at cost to dispose of the old stock; the company store did not buy the improved commodity until it had sold the old stock at regular prices.

In taking the annual inventory to learn the year's profits the manager had to list everything at its cost price not at its future possible selling price, therefore whenever a crate of shoes arrived he marked on each box the cost price for his inventory day and the selling price for the guidance of the clerks. To prevent anybody else from knowing the cost prices, the manager used a word containing 10 different letters, the first letter to represent the numeral one and the last letter to represent the numeral naught.

It was possible for a curious person to crack the secret code word. If an article sold at 25c it must have cost somewhere between 13 and 19 cents and if the cost price penciled on it was ci the c must stand for the numeral one and be the first letter of the secret word. If a pair of shoes was priced at $3.90 the cost must have been two dollars and something, consequently if the cost letters were etr, the e must represent the numeral 2 and be the second letter of the word. By the time you got the puzzle all put together to learn that the word was centralism the manager would change it to guineafowl and you had to start all over again, but it was fun working on it.

In the New River field new mines were opened at a rapid pace and each mine must have a doctor but the state did not have enough experienced doctors to supply all the mines on the several different railroads.

Many of the company doctors had little education medical or otherwise, but as soon as they got the job they automatically became a physician, a surgeon, a veterinary, a doctor of internal medicine and an exodontist. They stood up to all of these titles nobly but it was a fortunate fact that everybody was living such a healthy life that nature needed little assistance in its wonderful curative power. If a sick man got well, the doctor got credit for it; if the patient died, the doctor had done all that was possible to save him and it was simply God's will that the man should die. By this criterion the doctors quickly acquired an excellent reputation to securely establish them.

Getting an aching tooth pulled was an ordeal not soon forgotten. You were told to sit in the folding chair in the office, while the company doctor used his foot to pull out the box of teeth to have it handy for the next addition; it was on the floor under the row of shelves partially hidden by two curtains. The box of teeth was proof of the doctor's vast experience and self-evident success but the patient looking down into that box thought of things other than of the doctor's experience and past successes.

The doctor reached up to get the forceps from the top shelf, told you to open your mouth, then pushed the forceps up along the tooth tearing the gums away from it, worked the forceps back and forth to loosen the tooth from the jawbone then wrapped one arm around the patient's head to keep it from coming off with the tooth, gave a mighty yank and it was out.

It was the custom of the mines to deduct one dollar a month from each married man with a half dollar from each single man to pay the doctor's salary, and since this gave him a greater income than other doctors got in the towns, it was the custom for the company doctor to furnish free of cost all medicines and medical supplies. This was not a very good rule, with bread costing so much less than bismuth, yet some bread pills could actually speed recovery, by giving a patient peace of mind and confidence that they would cure him.

Half of the men lived in their own homes on top of the gorge, the other half lived in the houses that Mr. Jayne built for them; those on top, locally called the mountain men, having a good garden, a fruit orchard, horse, cow and chickens, raised nearly half their own food, utilized their spare hours in building up their little farm and saved money regularly.

Those men living at the rocky bottom with no room for anything but the house had no such advantages and they fell prey to the temptations of the store, the candy, peanuts, bananas, pop, cigars and cheese with salt crackers or the large cookies with a raisin in the center, also the sardines.

It seemed to be the ambition of all bottom men to own their own home on top and many did have the will power to shun the store temptations, save their money and own their own home in about ten years. After two months of work they could start off by buying 5 or 10 acres of surface from Mr. Jayne at a dollar an acre, a nominal charge to offset the $5 that Mr. Jayne had to pay the lawyer for drawing up the deed. Year by year the man would gradually get a house built, a barn, some fruit trees set out, the place fenced, the ground cleared for the garden, a cow, a horse and a couple of shoats. The build-up of that home for old age gave a worker a goal that kept him pleased and satisfied with each month of progress.

Drawing a coke oven was a strenuous hot job even in winter and to escape part of the summer's hot sun, the coke drawers started to work at 4 A.M.; they were paid by the oven, the stronger men finishing in 8 or maybe in 7 hours while the weakest men might have to spend 10 hours.

The coke drawers finishing work in the middle of the day, were the men who answered the calls for volunteers to do odd jobs that consisted mainly of carrying a car load of supplies from the sidetrack up to the store.

One of these jobs would be to carry a carload of powder to the stone powderhouse, a time when the men must be alert to see that no smoking man came near and no children that might have a cap pistol.

The adage about playing with dynamite is so very inapt, since you can play with dynamite all day and suffer no harm, while the tiniest spark will set off powder, any piece of metal hitting any rock can send out a fatal spark. Fire has no effect upon dynamite, it can even be consumed by a small fire provided that fire does not become great enough to reach 324 degrees; it can be dropped, kicked or stepped on accidentally, with no harm and there is an official record of a box of dynamite falling 20 feet without exploding.

Some two thousand years ago both China and India discovered that an explosive of a sort could be made with saltpeter, but it was not until the 14th century that two Germans worked on the old discovery to perfect it into what became known as black powder. There was later a slight betterment in the refining of it and a small change in the proportions to make them become 75% saltpeter, 15% charcoal and 10% sulphur, but the ordinary coal mines had no other explosive until close to 1900.

In 1846 an Italian named Sobrero discovered nitroglycerin but it was so powerful that he was afraid to handle it and nothing happened until 21 years later when Alfred Nobel decided to risk his life experimenting with it. He lived to discover that if the nitroglycerin was thoroughly mixed with a certain kind of dirt it became toned down to where a man could safely use it but the public was afraid of it.

In the 1880s Dupont took the risk of manufacturing it but it still had a reputation of being dangerous and it was about 1900 before enough was sold to warrant the mass production that brought its price down to where an ordinary coal mine could afford to use it.

It was also in the 1880s that some other experimenter discovered a new explosive could be made from sawdust, cotton and sulphuric acid, with greater power than the old black powder also with little smoke, but here again it was 1900 before its price got down to be in reach of the mines. This new explosive, called smokeless powder, relegated the old black powder to firecrackers and military or naval saluting, where the greater noise and dense smoke became an asset instead of a fault. An important man wants the windows shaken and would never be satisfied with a slight pop and no smoke; the saluting, the fireworks and the terrific bombardments of the Westerns have kept some of the old black powder factories still going.

Since 1900 there has been continual activity in discovering various better and diversified explosives.

Chapter Six

On an April evening of 1887, after the store closed at 7 0 P.M. with the air too chilly for sitting on the front porch or steps of the store, several men who lived in the west part of the village went to the coke ovens to sit on the ends of the lorry track ties for an hour of talk before bedtime. Unless it be windy, the coke oven flames went straight up five feet before scattering any smoke, therefore sitting on the ties was a nice warm place where the men gathered in cold weather, unbothered by any smoke.

Thurston a miner opened the conversation by saying, "Mr. Jayne has been climbing up and down the whole mountainside the last couple of days. What do you suppose he is hunting for?"

Preacher Hubbard, a miner during the week, pastor of the colored church on Sundays, said, "Will Jayne is daffy about his botany; he puts his tin box on his shoulder and goes up to the cliffs most every evening gathering weeds and toadstools and maybe the old man, with more spare time, is helping him."

A third man said, "Nobody 71 years old is going to wear hisself out hunting for weeds on this steep canyon. The tippleman at Keeneys Creek told me that Mr. Jayne has been scrambling all up and down that hollow too and he thought Mr. Jayne was hunting for sang."

Jim Calloway opined, "He ain't so hard up as to work like that hoping to find a dollar's worth of sang. He has got something bigger than that on his mind."

To obtain more business the C&O was starting, or had contracted to build, branch lines up creeks where new coal mines could be opened and Mr. Jayne with a hope that he might persuade the C&O to build up Keeneys Creek, was trying to figure out if it could possibly be done up that steep Mountainside.

Starting out with the fact that a 4% grade rises 200 feet to the mile he estimated that a branch could begin at the mouth of Keeneys Creek, to go west for one mile to place the track above the upper edge of the Jayne village, continue another half mile for a switchback then climb on up east for another mile and a half to come alongside the creek at a point where its drop or rise would be no more than 4 % on up almost to the turnpike.

Mr. Jayne owned the land up that hollow for seven mines of medium size, and went to talk about it with Mr. Ingalls the president of the C&O who listened courteously but could not believe a branch could be built up Keeneys Creek. Mr. Jayne offered to pay all costs if the C&O would have their engineers make a preliminary survey to prove or disprove his contention that it was possible, to which proposition Mr. Ingalls agreed with the reservation that it might be several months before they could get around to it. The engineers were busy on applications already accepted and contracted for: a 12 mile branch up Loup Creek from Thurmond, a 3 mile branch up to Ansted from

Hawksnest and a 12 mile branch up the Gauley in Fayette with others in Kanawha county. (This Loup Creek is not misspelled; to loup means to leap and this creek did more leaping than looping. On the west edge of Fayette there is a Loop Creek that loops.)

Nearly a year later Mr. Ingalls informed Mr. Jayne that he was correct in his argument that a branch could be built up Keeneys Creek but the engineers report stated that it would require 7 miles of track at a cost of $40,000.00 a mile. The report also added that there were creeks in Kanawha up which a branch could be built at a cost of less than $30,000 a mile to get the same amount of coal. Mr. Jayne countered with an offer to pay one third of all costs of his branch, so as to reduce its expenses to normal. Mr. Ingalls thought this was fair and said he would recommend it at the next directors meeting.

Mr. Low of the Lowmoor Iron Company on the east side of the Allegheny had bought lands across the river from Fern Creek, where he planned to make his own coke. As soon as he heard of the Jayne proposal, he visited Mr. Ingalls with an offer to pay all the costs of a bridge across New River at Fern Creek, if the C&O would give him trackage for a mine on his lands.

The C&O had great need for a second track through this steepest portion of the New River canyon but it would cause still more slides if they tried to dig out any more of the hillside; their second track should be built on the south side from the Hawksnest bridge up to Sewell. Mr. Low said that if he got a track he did not care where his bridge was built. The C&O notified Mr. Jayne that these seven miles on the south side would consume all of their unpledged expansion monies. Finally it was agreed that Mr. Jayne would build the branch himself, then the C&O would operate and maintain it forever after and deliver all coal from his lands down to the main line at no further costs.

Construction contractors were so busy throughout the United States that none could be had ready to start on a new job and Mr. Jayne signed up with a Mr. Langhorn of Virginia, who could start next spring when he had finished the contract he was then working on.

Mr. Langhorn was well recommended as a contractor but much better known as being the father of three unusually attractive daughters. One daughter later married Charles Dana Gibson the portrait painter and another, Nancy, married Wm. Waldorf Astor, who built the Waldorf Astoria hotel in New York then moved to England where he acquired titles by some means other than by birth or by marriage. From that day to this, the voluble insuppressible Lady Nancy Astor has never hesitated to stand up and tell the world her opinions of current events.

As soon as the branch was assured in 1891 Mr. Jayne verbally promised a lease to his closest friend Fred Rothwell, who was the Jayne store manager and got first choice. Second choice went to his bankboss W. H. Holland, the other five leases to local friends no one of whom had the $12,000, preferably $15,000, that was necessary for opening a mine of medium size in that day.

When the branch construction started in the spring of 1892, the lessees put a few men to work on

the slow job of driving the main entry and aircourse, chopping brush and trees to make room for the houses, tipples and sundry improvements. The branch was not fully completed until January 1896.

Not until 1893 did Mr. Jayne take the time for a trip to Fayetteville to get a lawyer to draw up the leases, telling him the terms of 10c a ton for all coal shipped, with 16c a ton for coke, and no minimum royalty clause. The omission of any minimum royalty was contrary to all the principles of the lawyer, who delivered a lecture about that. "Mr. Jayne you are making a big error in omitting the minimum royalty. Your lands are now assessed at $6 an acre as wild lands but the minute you put land in a coal mine lease, it is undeniably valuable land the valuation of which will be increased up to from $40 to $60 an acre to greatly increase your tax bills and you have to pay the taxes on those lands until the mine is worked out and abandoned.

"The quicker that coal is mined, the sooner will you get that royalty money to invest in something else and with no minimum $3000 annual royalty clause they can dawdle as much as they wish, at your expense."

"These leases are not supposed to be cold business," Mr. Jayne replied. "The lessees are all friends of mine whom I wish to repay for their help to me and they will be obliged to go slow because they have not the money to go fast. It is my wish to give them all the leeway they want in building up their mine as best they can with what they have."

Mr. Jayne further explained his attitude by saying, "If a person inherits more cash or income than they need for normal living, it too often turns their heads into wanting luxuries greater than they can afford and they end up broke. I wish to leave my four children only sufficient income for a comfortable existence and I would be glad to have that income continue to perhaps give some pin money to my great-grandchildren.

"To slow down and perpetuate the income is the principal reason why I put all of my cash into the building of that branch and I have no desire for a rapid production of coal to yield a larger royalty in the near future."

The total acreage in a Keeneys Creek lease meant little because the hollows of the creek and its tributaries had cut through and carried off so many acres of coal, therefore I will quote only the number of acres that had coal. The leases varied from 400 up to 600 acres, these differences caused chiefly by Mr. Jayne's preference for a natural line like a creek or a county road instead of a surveyor's stakes that would all soon be gone.

He himself drew up the first lease that was written out although it was not the first one vocally given. It started at the mouth of Contrary Creek, (the first west tributary of Keeneys Creek), followed it up and along its north fork to the county road, down the county road to Keeneys Creek at Winona, then down the creek to the beginning. There could be no later disputes about fallen corner trees or lost stakes of a surveyor; nobody knew how many acres might be in that boundary

but anybody could visually see that there was enough. The other lessees persuaded him to have their leases more definitely surveyed so that they could be mapped.

In 1884 Mr. Jayne gave to his son Will (Lawrence William) and to his son-in-law Jackson Taylor, each a one third interest in the two New River mines which thereupon became a leasehold that must pay to the landlord, Mr. Jayne, the customary 10c a ton royalty. Having his own good reasons for distrusting all surveyors and attorneys, he wrote this lease himself, using New River for the south boundary line and Keeneys Creek for the east line. As there was no natural boundary line for north or west he did little more than wave his hands to indicate those two boundary lines but since it was all in the family, those two lines were later determined amicably.

His aversion to surveyors and to the bar resulted in a number of future troubles and expenses for his heirs but it can at least be said that no lawyer got his shirt as payment of the fee for having advised him how to button it.

His land reached to Fern Creek on the west but he could not use it for the western boundary line because he was at that time planning to open a third mine between Fern Creek and this new leasehold that was entitled "Nuttallburg Coal & Coke Company."

Before the C&O was completed, its work train began bringing some heavy goods that were stenciled only for "Nuttall, W. Va." not bothering to stencil the full name of John Nuttall. When the C&O ordered its timetables and tariff sheets it jumped at the conclusion that the new mine at Short Creek had been named "Nuttall" and had it listed as such, with the printing completed before Mr. Jayne knew about it. He had no particular objection excepting he did wish it could have had a burg or a ville attached to it, and he got his burg when he applied for a post office. Thereafter all mail must have a burg, everything else without a burg, but there was no confusion as the train mail clerks and the crews on the C&O understood the situation.

Before leaving this subject I will add that Mr. Jayne in 1884 made gifts of equal value to his two sons-in-law who were operating his two mines in Pennsylvania, Geo. McGaffey being given a partnership while John Todd requested and received cash of equal value, then retired soon afterwards.

One acre of 31/2 foot Sewell coal had a maximum potential of 6000 tons, part of which became scattered around the room by the shooting, the sledge hammer breaking it up and could not be shoveled from the uneven bottom. Another portion was slate or boney that had to be tossed aside with some coal clinging to it. The ventilating furnaces took a bite and so did the village and the miners' homes. Winds, rains and spillage took their toll at the dumpings into the drumhouse tipple, from it into the monitors, from them into the sidetrack tipple, from it into the railroad cars. On the 400 mile journey to Newport News the depletions continued from wind, rain, bumping and theft, to leave a possible 4000 tons per acre for a royalty of $400 at the Newport News scales by which the operator and landlord was paid.

After deducting the original cost, 30 to 40 years of taxes paid on those lands and sundry miscellaneous expenses it is my personal but amateur guess that a landlord's final net was close to $300 an acre. It was impossible to ascertain the final net because each railroad car had coal from all over the mine, and the 30 foot pillars of coal along the haulways and their aircourses were not pulled and loaded out until the last thing, after the records of the first 10 or 15 years had been purposely or accidentally burned to make room for the books of later years.

By 1895 there were so many mines that no one of them could get all of the orders or empty railroad cars that they wanted and a decade later they were reduced to operating only four days a week - speaking very generally. If a mine produced 400 tons a day, as at Jayne, for 200 days, it exhausted 20 acres of coal while Old Keeney mined out 10 to 15 acres a year; with 2700 acres of coal, that combined leasehold lasted for 80 years. A mine up on Keeneys Creek producing 250 tons a day for 200 days would last for 33 years if it had 400 acres of coal in its lease.

INSERT PICTURE HERE

The Jayne estate happened to have just enough coal lands around the perimeter to add about 200 acres to each lease, thereby prolonging them for a life of about 50 years, speaking roughly, omitting many minor details. The executors of the estate holding a differing opinion about minimum royalties added that clause whenever they had a chance or gave more land.

When the branch construction came along within a literal stone's throw above our house it was a good thing that we had no radio or vacuum sweeper to destroy our longer range of hearing. Every three or four hours, there would come the cry of "Fire, Fire, Fire" when we all had to run to get under the lower side of a boulder or house chimney. Roots and rocks would spatter all around us, then the "All Over" cry, and we resumed our pursuits. A two foot rock went clear through our two-story house to the cellar, a one foot rock stopped on the second floor with a half dozen on the attic floor. One Sunday morning before we were awake, an eight foot boulder came loose to roll down, tearing through our back porch, bursting a hole in the bedroom wall four feet from my parents' bed, where it got stopped by a sleeper. This sleeper was not my father. It was an oak floor sill that stood five feet above ground at that spot, and as the floor boards and joists were nailed to it, it had the backing of the whole house.

The branch went on to the switchback, then came at us again on the upper grade.

The grading gang yelled "fire" to torment us but they were followed by the track-laying gang that sang all day intermittently; every track gang had a song leader on up until 1920. In laying track, an engine pushes in front of it, a car of rails, a car of ties and a flatcar with a derrick to unload the ties and rails. After the gang places the ties and spikes the rails to them, the engine pushes a hopper bottom car of cinder or slag ballast to be evenly spilled on to the ties and the men must tamp that ballast underneath the ties to give them a solid, even base. There were songs for different jobs, the main song being for the tie tamping when the song leader set a brisk tempo to get far more tamping

in an hour than would be done if each man hit a lick when he felt like it. On one word of the song, the shovels were lifted, swung back on the second word and every man whammed his shovel on the third word. With all working and singing in unison the tamping was fun instead of a monotonous drudgery.

The gang grading the south side C&O track was held up many months by a long high cliff that reached to the edge of the river opposite our village. Their only tools for demolishing this big cliff, were a 3 pound hammer swung on a 5 foot handle and a chisel that a man held with both hands between his outstretched legs, giving it a quarter turn after each blow, washing out the cuttings with a tomato can and bucket of water. The only explosive was the ancient black powder poured into that hole that could not go very deep. In the evenings this gang gathered on a sandbar opposite the mouth of Short Creek at the upper end of our large pool, to treat us to some beautiful singing of popular songs, "Down on the Wabash" or "I've Been Working on the Railroad." There was also a tearful song of a train passenger whose refrain was, "She is in the baggage car ahead," referring to his wife's body.

It was free grand opera for us, with harmonious tunes in place of screeching, the singers at ease instead of not knowing what to do with their hands and they had stomachs far more pleasing to the eye. One singer was standing at the water's edge holding a fishing pole, another mending a torn shirt, two had their elbows buried in the sand, a fifth leaning against a tree as he whittled, the sixth man gathering more wood for the fire, each one carrying his part of the song. We saw only what was lighted from the fire that was reflected in the river, many of the men only forms or shadows. The audience was equally at ease, at liberty to remove coat or shoes, no skirmishing about whom had the right to use an intervening arm rest.

The river down-current flowed along our north side of the pool until it hit the damming pile of boulders, called the rapids, where only half of the current could get through. The other half became shunted to the south side to form a slow upriver current all the way up to the sandbar. On Sunday morning the south side of the river was dotted with men washing their clothes, or swimming in the quiet upcurrent, many of them hanging on to a powder can.

Powder was packed in five gallon tins sealed with a depressed bung and the cans had a one inch flange on each end to prevent the can from rusting when stacked on the damp floor of the stone powder houses. After use, the bung could be pressed back in to make the can airtight, capable of sustaining 150 pounds in water and I suppose all New River boys learned to swim with a powder can as their only instructor. They could hold on to the flanges until they learned how to navigate with their legs, then learn to travel with two legs and one arm and no further danger of sinking.

Before the construction reached the bank opposite our village, my father had a boat to enable him to botanize on the uninhabited south side of the river and kept it tied at the upper end of the pool. Either he or a borrower had discovered that one foot could be placed in the boat, a push given by the land foot then the passenger could sit down to enjoy the scenery for a seven minute free ride

down with the current until 100 feet above the rapids. Then a half dozen strokes with the oars would put the boat over into the slow upriver current for a half hour drift up to the top of the pool, where the boat would be turned around once or twice before being caught in the down current.

One morning a young C&O surveyor who had just received a letter from his girl asked to borrow my father's boat while I was present and I got my father's consent for me to go along. The surveyor wanted to enjoy reading his letter with no talking to anybody else and at the riverbank he either bought me off or in some other manner persuaded me that it would be more fun to go up Short Creek and see bow many crawfish I could catch without a bent pin and piece of bacon. Trees and boulders prevented the village from seeing the north or near half of the river, consequently nobody saw the surveyor or me leaving each other nor could they see us after we were on our separate ways.

It must have been an endearing sentence in the letter that caused a fatal delay in pulling out of the down-current. Mr. Tully phoned down from the drumhouse that as he was dumping a bankcar into the tipple he glanced down at the river and saw a boat in the air a few feet above the rapids and a body falling out of it. A search of the rapids and of the river for a mile below revealed no trace of the boat or of a body, and when I showed up for dinner I received such a warm welcome that I felt I was some kind of a hero.

The surveyor had a friend who was a diver that came to make an effort to find the body that the down-current on our near side of the river had without doubt wedged between two of the mass of boulders. The diver acquainted with currentless waters, had little comprehension of the force of the New River current and he also became wedged between two boulders from which he could not be extricated, except in pieces with dynamite. As stated elsewhere dynamite was being manufactured but too expensive and too fearful for everyday use by anybody except those few men who understood it.

A scare like that should have made a pair of parents want to keep a close eye on their only child for a week at least but it worked the other way with my parents. It made them more sure than ever that some guardian angel had been assigned to watch over me, thereby relieving my parents of all worry or responsibility and I continued to enjoy unrestricted freedom to roam.

There were approximately 20 mines along New River on the 18 mile stretch between Hawksnest and Thurmond, with as many drownings in the river as there were deaths inside those mines, excepting two explosions in the Red Ash mine across the river from Firecreek. To a man who knows none of the details or explanations, nothing but the cold printed statements, it seems a shame that any mine should blow up a second time but it also happened at Switchback, W. Va., Diamondville, Wyo. and McAlester, Okla.

The center of the Keeneys Creek hollow was well filled with sights, sounds and odors as the branch progressed that far by June 1894; the sawing and hammering of the carpenters building

houses for the town of Winona and for the mine villages, the mild booms of shootings in the entries and their aircourses, the whining of Blazer's sawmill, teamsters cracking their whips as proof that they were doing their utmost to speed the delivery of the lumber or other goods. There were the odors of two magnolias, patches of arbutus, many azaleas, fresh lumber, dead leaves, burning brush piles, bread baking in the mud outdoor ovens of two families of foreign birth.

In the woods on the edge of all the hubbub Hazel Legg was steadily whacking away with his adze hewing timbers for trestles, tipples and driftmouth posts. Born about 1845 on a farm near Meadow River, there were few opportunities open to satisfy his early ambition to learn some skill or trade in addition to farming, and he chose hewing, taking every chance he found to help a hewer. Although there is some skill to be learned, the principal item is to build up the muscles that will enable a man to swing his adze ten hours a day and he was recommended to Mr. Jayne to hew the timbers for the old Keeneys Creek and the Jayne mines, and now when close to 50 years old, he was called back into harness to hew the timbers for the new Keeneys Creek mines.

If a timber be sawn its rough surface becomes a mass of tiny holes in which moisture can collect to cause rotting, but if the timber be hewn, the hard glancing blows of the adze seal all minute holes, leaving a slick surface through which moisture cannot penetrate.

Mr. Jayne revelling in all this busyness he had created in the hollow, built a house back of the Rothwell store and moved up there in 1895 where he could be in the midst of it.

Everything was rosy until about the end of 1896 when the mines began running into troubles to slow them down with permanently crippling effect. The Holland mine named Ballenger had a badly broken top that had to be timbered up at heavy extra expense that made a big hole in their capital, and Fred Rothwell ran into a rock fault that stopped his main entry and aircourse; then other mines began to hit that fault. To determine the width and direction of that rock fault, they would have had to honeycomb their lease with test drill holes at $300 a hole which nobody could afford. Decades later it was learned the hard way that the fault which was rock instead of the coal seam, meandered all around the hollow in some places 2000 feet thick, and it was this fault more than the original lack of capital that slowed the mines down to last for so long at a slow pace.

After moving to the Rothwell village, Mr. Jayne sat down with no more plans and soon began to slip, perking up briefly when Fayette County honored him in 1896 by carving out a seventh magisterial district to include most of his lands, naming it Nuttall District.

September 17th, 1897 he died, leaving everything, share and share alike, to his four children and appointing his three sons-in-law and my father to be the executors of his estate, to serve without pay and without bond. The immediate cause of his death was grief over the loss of his closest friend Fred Rothwell who died on the 14th as the result of injury from his horse falling on him. As soon as Fred had been given his lease, he sent for his brother Herbert to come to Jayne and learn how to manage the store so that he could take Fred's place, then, after the death of Fred, Herbert became

manager of the Rothwell mine.

There was no map, no list of deeds, nobody knew the corners or boundary lines, no titles had been abstracted. Six weeks later the executors were handed 194 tax tickets which would not tally with the list they made showing 253 deeds counting both to and from. They turned this problem over to a lawyer who worked on it more than a month with no success; therefore the executors could do nothing but pay whatever tax tickets were handed to them each year. Dozens of the deeds were so hazy, indefinite or conflicting that nobody could interpret the meaning unless they knew the ancestry of that patent, which too often could not be learned from the courthouse records.

Carl Thompson deeded 100 acres of his patent to his daughter Anne and her groom Frank Johnson, telling them he would be glad to pay the taxes for them, therefore they need not have the deed recorded. Anne and Frank Johnson sold their 100 acres to Mr. Jayne, and the assessor could make no transfer because there was no land charged to them on the land books, nor could the lawyer find any records of the Johnsons having ever acquired any land. Sarah Jones who before her marriage had inherited her father's 180 acres, married Bill Remley, and the Remleys sold to Mr. Jayne, with the same result that the records showed no land acquired by the Remleys, it being on the records under the name of Sarah Jones. Another deed transferred the Jayne 70 acre tract to the N.R.C.Co if their coal seam ran continuously into the Jayne tract, and the N.R.C.Co transferred its 550 acre tract to Jayne insofar as the coal under the Jayne 185 acre tract ran continuously into the 550 acres, something that nobody could determine at that time. The ramifications were endless and hopeless, until I had surveyed those patents and learned their histories, which sounds as though I was quite clever, but my knowledge was almost unavoidable. Spending the nights with neighbors while I was surveying, we naturally talked of corners, titles and ancestries in the evenings, where I learned the histories of the patents which neither required nor proved any intellectual skill on my part.

In 1901 the executors had the estate surveyed by two young men who were good engineers, not botanists nor woodsmen; they failed to find so many of the fallen corner trees, drove a stake and were further off at the next stake. The two crews spent 18 months on the field work then produced a good map that was a great "help even if it did have many errors in it, but when they returned to Pennsylvania there was still nobody in Fayette county who knew the location of any of the corners or boundary lines. Since a stake is no proof of an old corner tree they could not cut any comer licks in any trees and within a couple of years all trace of their survey was gone.

The map showed about two dozen holes or inlets that would prevent a mine entry getting from one tract into another, and my father was requested to purchase those interfering tracts. He had bought ten of them when he got the idea that the executors ought to drill some test holes to guide them as to where they should do the most buying and how much they should pay for them. In 1904 they contracted for a dozen test holes at $2.25 a foot, the average depth to be about 300 feet, and found that none of the outlying lands had coal thick enough to ever be mined, which was a very hard

blow. The estate had no coal excepting what was immediately adjacent to the Keeneys Creek mines. There was about 1500 acres of 4 foot coal on Brackens Creek, with a six inch parting of slate in the middle of it to make its mining prohibitive until about 12 years ago as the Keeneys Creek mines were snuffing out, a Mr. Massey 16ased those 1500 acres. He put up a crusher and separator to dispose of the slate, and his royalties have been slightly exceeding the annual tax bills on the whole estate.

The old estate is still intact largely because nobody wants it, and partly because many of the heirs have hopes that something else might some day turn up even as they found a way to mine that Brackens Creek coal with its slate parting.

The Keeneys Creek branch was strictly a coal road of such steep grade that a shifter could pull only 9 empty cars upgrade and could carry no caboose that would be too much in the way when dropping empties on to side tracks and pulling out the loaded cars. The C&O allowed no riders on the branch but the brakemen could hardly rap the knuckles of Mr. Jayne if they saw him clambering aboard and the friendly crew extended this riding privilege to other members of the Jayne family while the C&O with equal kindness looked the other way to see no riders.

A hundred trips did not lessen the pleasure of riding in the engine cab, sitting beside the boiler in winter time on the seat of Will Higgins the fireman or, in summer, standing on the other side talking with Mr. Deering the engineer. Coming down in good weather I would frequently stand on top of a loaded coal car with Pat Gallagher the conductor and enjoy the view up and down the canyon, shaking our fists at Mr. Deering if we failed to notice that we were approaching a sharp curve and his application of the brakes toppled us.

It was a railroad rule that nobody could ride in the cab of an engine without invitation from the engineer, nor could anybody but the brakemen ride on the cars without permission of the conductor; the engineer sets the speed while the conductor gives the orders for stopping and starting.

It would appear that the crew on the Keeneys Creek branch, with no caboose, would apply for a better run as soon as their seniority rights would entitle them to it, but Mr. Deering and the Kibler brothers the brakemen, chose to stay where they were, after the C&O agreed to pay them the higher wages of the better runs as their seniority rights grew. On the branch, making two trips a day, they were home for every meal and every night, there could be no collision with another train, they traveled at slow speeds, they were off every Sunday and holiday, and it caused no upset if one of them was 15 minutes late in arriving some morning.

Mr. Deering had yet another reason for preferring the one train branch. On the main line before he took the branch job, his train had been ordered on to a sidetrack to await the passing of a fast train that was late and he fell asleep during the wait. Suddenly he was wakened by the roar of the approaching fast train, saw it coming at him head-on, jumped over the bank from the cab and broke his leg; in his sleep he forgot that he was on a sidetrack.

In weather of 15 degrees, the Kiblers filled a box with oily cotton waste at the engine house, pulling it out little by little with two sticks to keep a fire going on the beam between two cars, where they huddled over it facing each other looking like two Indians in powwow.

Before Pat Gallagher became conductor there was one who dawdled in the mine stores up the branch with an eye to an hour of overtime, while Mr. Deering wished to do his duty as well as to not keep his family waiting for supper. He disposed of that conductor by no longer inviting him into the cab in bad weather, thereby condemning him to squat on the beam opposite the Kiblers to hold a hand over their psychological fire that was 90% optical illusion, and he soon left.

The airbrakes were a simple device whereby the engineer threw his compressed air into his train to push the brakebands against the wheels, the only flaw being that if there was a break in the air hose line the whole train became freewheeling with no brakes. It was about 1928 that Westinghouse produced a braking system to work in the opposite manner by use of some very clever valves with an air storage tank for each set of wheel trucks. When the engineer throws his 110 pounds of air into the train it frees all brakes, that will begin to tighten as he lessens the pressure and will lock every wheel immediately if the hose line breaks. If a car be new with everything fitting snugly, those brakes will hold for two days before the storage air has leaked out, therefore if a coupling should break or a drawhead pull out on a steep grade there will be no danger. Not long ago an engineer ran through an open drawbridge to plunge into the river in New Jersey and his train would have followed in the old days, but with the new system, as soon as the engine went over to break the air line every wheel on the train was immediately locked to save it.

On the steep grade of the branch the engine must always be in front when bringing down its 12 loaded coal cars, which rule necessitated a stop before it entered the switchback. The engine was uncoupled, the valve turned to hold the air in the trip while the engine journeyed to the lower grade with the conductor acting as switchman. The two brakemen then opened the hose at each end of their trip, hurried to take position on the two center cars, the trip roared through the switch on up the switchback track while the two brakemen hurried to set the hand brakes on the cars to prevent them from rolling back down before the engine could back up to be recoupled by the conductor and be in front for the rest of the way down.

In 1895 a perverse fate caused the two center cars to jump the track at the switch, snap their couplings and roll over the hill carrying the two brakemen to their death. They were replaced by the Kiblers and there were no more accidents worth mentioning. Harrowing as it was, all villagers felt a compulsion to help or to watch those crushed bodies being dug out of the wreckage, the grief of those living nearby considerably softened by the sight of the 100 tons of coal dumped in their back yards.

The C&O suffered thefts from their cars of other things besides the coal, one being ice from their refrigerated cars. On top at each end of these cars there was a hatch into which they put 100 pound cakes of ice at their icing stations. Since ice was very hard to come by, if a family was in great need

of some ice, a man could climb up, lift off the hatch, toss out two cakes that perhaps had melted to 60 pounds at that hour and be gone before a brakeman could arrive. Since the brakeman had to use both hands to climb up, he could not carry that ice back up, and the thief could return to get the ice after the train pulled out.

The dastardly theft was a tramp pulling the oily cotton waste from an axle housing to give him a good start for his night's fire, something easily done at such places as at Whitcombs Boulder when a train stopped to take water at the Fern Creek tank. Soon thereafter the axle would become red hot, the train stopped to cool the axle by throwing water on it, then repacked. The hot boxes were often the result of a crack in the journal box allowing the oil to leak out, consequently trains too often had to make stops for hot boxes or for frozen brake bands that made a wheel red hot.

If you were sitting by your fire on a stormy evening while a westbound freight rumbled by, and a few minutes later from the distance you heard the engineer send out four long whistles, you got a sympathetically clear picture of the unlucky flagman who had been so comfortable in the caboose. He had to hurry getting into his overcoat, putting on his rubbers, light his red lantern, stick two torpedoes and a red fusee in his pockets and hustle to the east to protect his train that had to stop for a hot box. The brakemen had to sit up in the cupola watching for any such trouble spots.

Telephone poles were placed 175 feet apart and the flagman must go to the eighth pole, where he placed his two torpedoes three feet apart on the rail on the engineer's side and bent the tin flanges around the edge of the rail to hold them there. The minutes dragged slowly until he heard the five long whistles calling him in, then he raised the globe of his lantern to light the fusee, jammed its sharp spike into the ground and ran for his train. The fusee burning for five minutes gave notice to any following train to clamp on the brakes and after it had burned out, the torpedoes warned that the train ahead had to make an unexpected stop, was behind its schedule and watch out for it.

All trains ran east or west, none north or south, due to the fact that there were many whistle signals, two of which were for sending out and recalling a flagman to the east, two more to the west, and if they had four more for north and south it would be too many to readily remember them all. Miami being a few miles west of New York, a train going down to Miami was westbound and coming back up it was eastbound, this old rule apparently no longer in effect, as I have recently seen timetables quoting north and south trains.

On the days when it was full dark at 8 P.M., the biggest daily event at Jayne was the passing of the fast train #2. When we stood on our sidetrack on eye level with the train windows, only 12 feet away from us as the train slowly chugged upgrade, we had time to see every feature of the train life, which seemed to us to be another world.

The engineer, in a dangerous seat through this gorge, was always as immovable as a statue, leaning out looking ahead intently on the far side of the cab, his left hand on the throttle ready to cut off the steam and switch to the air lever if he saw anything dubious on his track.

The fireman was never still, even when no muscle was in use he weirdly slithered around in discordance with the rest of the cab as he stood on the apron. The engine and its tender are two separate vehicles the space between them covered by a large sheet iron apron bolted to the tender and reaching into the cab on up to the firebox as a form of coal chute. The cab was lighted by a lantern swaying from a hook in the top, throwing alternating light and shadow on the phantomlike fireman whose apron would slide or heave when the cab did not do so. If he had the door of the firebox open to light him up as he stooped to shovel coal, he resembled a busy demon. On some evenings he would be hanging to the hand rails on the side of the cab, swinging far out into space as his arms would reach, while he examined the smoke which he could not see from within the cab. If the smoke was thick and black it told him that the coal had fused to form a smothering blanket that prevented proper combustion and he must break it up with his rod.

As the day coaches came along, the newsbutch with his large basket could be seen on tour, closely scrutinizing each passenger in an attempt to adjudge his tastes. On the lap of one man he would lay a book of jokes, a slightly salacious novel to another, a love story for a third person, and upon his return he would pick them up or gladly answer any questions about them. He was not allowed to pester any passenger or make any sales pitch.

At 8 P.M. the porter was starting to make up berth #1 and as there was no club car the occupants of #1 were standing unhappily in the vestibule not at all pleased about having to retire at 8:15. In the dining car a few wealthy people were enjoying rare delicacies that made your mouth water; lamb chops, Maytag oysters on the half shell, lettuce with Rochefort dressing, Neapolitan ice cream, or foods that were out of season for us.

On the local trains the best selling items aside from newspapers, were cologne packaged in replicas of railroad lanterns and brightly colored candies in glass pistols, that made welcome gifts for the home folks as the company stores carried nothing of that sort.

The stores had an excellent stock of day to day goods but failed badly at Christmas time in having almost nothing out of the daily ordinary for a man to buy for his wife excepting four varieties of iridescent glass vases. Every home had -one, and until it got knocked over and broken to need a replacement, a man was driven into buying, as his wife's Christmas present, a good pocket knife, a washtub or a new axe.

The most interested spectator on our sidetrack was a farm produce peddler who lived north of the turnpike where trains were scarce. Every week a distant farmer would load his wagon with sundry products from his own farm or often half of it from neighbors and peddle it in our village. Since the company owned all the land these competitors of the company store could have been ordered off but they were performing a valuable service in offering the populace good foods so many of which the store did not have in sufficient quantity on those days. The farmer peddled until 8 P.M., watched #2 pass, then went to bed in his wagon close to the store and the next morning he was gone before the village was awake, excepting the early-rising coke drawers.

All farm wagons had brackets bolted to the upper outside edge of the side boards of the wagon bed to hold the ends of long hickory withes that were bent to loop five feet above the bed of the wagon. The long canvas cover, sold separately, had string along the edges for tying it to the brackets, with a drawstring sewn in at each end of the canvas.

If the family wished to go anywhere during inclement weather, the farmer filled the bed with hay, spread a blanket over the hay, placed a basket of fruit or other food in a corner, tied on the canvas cover and loaded the family. After pulling the drawstrings to close the ends, the family had as snug a den as anybody could wish, always fragrant with the hay and the food basket, but if it were in the ramp season you might prefer to walk outside.

On the day of a public hanging at Fayetteville, these canvas-covered wagons converged into the town to camp among the trees at the northeast edge of the town where they had firewood and Wolf Creek as a close water supply for washing their cooking utensils. Although the thrill of seeing a man hung was plenty to draw a crowd, half of them came only because it was an excuse for a big gathering where the men could trade a knife or a horse while the women exchanged recipes or patterns, or showed off handiwork of which they were proud.

Chapter Seven

Jonathan Jayne's son Will, after going to schools in Pennsylvania until he was 21, came to Short Creek in 1878 to find a place at the mines. In school he took such deep interest in his botany classes that the teachers gave him extra attention after hours and took him for walks in the woods on Saturdays and Sundays until he had become a full-fledged botanist in knowledge and in heart by the time he graduated.

At Jayne he went out every evening to gather plants and spent all of his spare moments in identifying his finds, among which were a couple of fungi that he could not identify. These he sent to his former teacher who sent them on to a higher authority who reported that they were a new discovery and would be named for my father by tacking ii to the end of his name.

Dr. Millspaugh of the State University hearing of these new finds came to Jayne to do some browsing himself, this visit starting a lifelong friendship between the two botanists.

Their first joint venture was in helping to create a West Virginia tree exhibit at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893; in 1896 they published a book on the flora of West Virginia which was a big task with 2,584 flora listed.

In 1919 Dr. Millspaugh had become curator of the botanical department of the Field Museum in Chicago. One day during a conference somebody remarked that no botanist had ever gone inland on Catalina Island to find out to what extent the mainland flora had changed after its separation or what new flora might have sprung up on that island.

All parties agreed on wishing that some botanist could be found to undertake this job but they could think of nobody willing or able to go into exile for a year to comb that island.

This was in 1919 and on the next day Dr. Millspaugh thought of his old friend my father who was at that time president of a bank in Pennsylvania, but Dr. Millspaugh had been told that the job was largely honorary, the duties more social than clerical.

Dr. Millspaugh wrote asking my father if he could be tempted to take a sabbatical leave of a year to comb Catalina Island, to which he replied that nothing would please him better than to have this good excuse to again enjoy the freedom of the outdoors.

On Catalina he met up with boars, goats and rattlesnakes, no one of them ever belligerent; he had thought that all fourfooted mammals must have regular drinks of fresh water and was surprised to see goats stepping into the surf to drink.

The boars and some of the goats, carried as a fresh meat supply on the Spanish galleons or accompanying pirate ships, got a start on the off-shore California islands by escaping from the

butcher or swimming ashore from a sinking or wrecked ship; in some instances a couple of pairs of goats were planted on an island by a man who had dreams of harvesting the increase. In dry seasons the goats had to drink in springs down near the shoreline where the water became more and more salty until the metabolism of some goats became adjusted to accept salt water and they handed this adjustment down to their offspring.

The wild burros of the Southwest deserts have been working on the same principle of survival without fresh water, although they have gone a bit further with their adaptation to local conditions; up to the present date they have increased the number of hours that they can live without any water at all, until it now totals four months. Part of the success of the wild burros being able to go so long without water is due to the fact that in their veins they have a small portion of the blood of their ancestors, the wild asses of the Persian deserts that can go through life with never a drink of any water.

Dr. Millspaugh and my father, having other duties to perform, were unable to assemble the Catalina data for the printing until 1924; the book has nothing of interest to the layman except perhaps in giving the names of the 26 canyons of the island, but some botanists give it a good value.

At the Chicago World's Fair of 1893, West Virginia exhibited a statement that the Appalachian watershed contained more trees of more different kinds, than any other part of the world of near equal area, and that West Virginia had more hardwood timber than any other state in the Union. The pronouncement also said that the State had 84 different kinds of trees and proved that claim by exhibiting a wheel from each of them; a wheel is a slice sawn from the big end of a felled tree.

Pennsylvania created a Division of Forestry that published a list of more than 120 trees found in that State, but West Virginia had no such thing; if a farmer had a couple of weeping willows it never occurred to him to report that fact to anybody nor would he know to whom to make any such report. The weeping willow and many another tree failed to get on the West Virginia list because the compilers had seen no such tree themselves and had no official report of such trees having been found.

However, the tree list of a State is more than fifty per cent farcical and no State has more than sixty different bona fide trees, if you discard the lone specimens and those that got on the list by botanical technicality. If one single black spruce is found in a State, the black spruce becomes listed as one of the trees of that State, and if anybody discovers and reports some one lowly Hercules Club that has reached a height of 25 feet then the Hercules Club becomes listed as one of the trees of that State. Under this farfetched system, if West Virginia had the means to search every nook of the State, it could no doubt get 130 "trees" on its list.

Technically, a tree is a growth of a single stem, with a minimum height of 25 feet, or in one or two instances 20 feet when it is decidedly neither bush nor shrub. Nearly all trees, bushes and shrubs need some sunlight on their leaves and if a bush or a shrub gets a good start in any spot where other

growths put it in the shade it may sometimes have the strength to grow as much as 40 feet high in its struggle to reach the sunlight. That lone tall specimen will win for that bush or shrub, a place on a state tree list.

For whatever it may be worth as a bit of West Virginia tree history, the Chicago tree list was as follows: Ash, white, black, mountain, prickly; Alder, mountain; Beech, *Fagus atropunicea,* water; Birch, red, yellow, hybrid; Basswood, yellow, white; Buckeye, purple, *Aesculus glabra;* Box Elder, listed separately but actually one of the maples; Butternut which perhaps could have more properly been listed as the white walnut; Balsam Fir; Chestnut; Wild Cherry, Serotina, Pennsylvania; Cucumber that is one of the three magnolias; Cottonwood; Wild Crab, Dogwood; Elm, white, red the latter often called slippery elm; Fringe Tree; Gum, black (or sour), sweet (or liquidambar); Fox Grape; Hackberry; Black Haw; Hemlock; Hercules Club; Hickory; bitter, red, shagbark; Holly, mountain, white; Ironwood or Hombeam; Juniper; Laurel; Locust, yellow, honey; Magnolia, tripetala, Fraseri, also the acuminata that has been listed as a Cucumber; Mulberry, paper, *Morus rubra;* Maple, blistered, sugar, black, white, red, striped, also that Box Elder; Osage Orange; Oak, black, Spanish, swamp, laurel, chestnut, blackjack, white, red; Persimmon; Yellow Poplar; Pine, white, yellow, pitch; Papaw; Rhododendron; Redbud; Sycamore; Sassafras; Silver Bell; Sourwood or Sorrel; Black Spruce; Spicewood, Bensoin; Sumac; Service; Thorn; Tree of Heaven.

Neither the Chicago exhibit nor the book on the Flora of West Virginia went any further than to list the trees and give the particulars of the wheels, but they deserve a lot more recognition than that, in any discussion about West Virginia.

No two of these 84 trees have the same leaf pattern, the same bark design, the same wood, the same make-up or contour.

In winter, a patent surveyor could go so far as to identify each tree that was outlined on the top of a distant ridge; the yellow poplar has limbs of the largest size, the fewest in number, placed higher above ground than any other tree; the beeches and the oaks retain many of their leaves until late spring, true of no other trees; the limbs and branches of the maple are slender, the oaks thicker and stubbier; some trees have smoothly rounded tops, some are conical.

Almost every one of the real trees has some individual characteristic of particular value to man, usually in its wood, sometimes in its bark or sap. The white ash is especially good for making oars since it is tough, durable, lighter in weight than other woods that have those same qualities, and it has the desirable amount of flexibility for oars. The only other flexible West Virginia woods are the hickory and Osage Orange, the hickory not durable and 28% heavier, the Osage Orange 20% heavier than the ash.

The Beech wood is tough and hard to split but will quickly rot when exposed to the changing weathers; contrarily it will outlast other woods when kept submerged, therefore it is excellent for mill races or for underwater pilings and is tough enough to withstand the blows of a pile driver.

Gathering the tiny little teaberry plants, growing 2 to 3 inches high, to obtain the wintergreen flavor was a tedious job until it was found that the bark of a black birch would yield exactly the same flavor. The thin easily handled bark of the white birch is almost the only bark of near equal handiness that is impervious to water, to thereby make it valuable for a canoe, a cape or a roof for a lean-to-shelter.

The basswood, or linden, often called a wahoo or a beetree by the patent surveyors, has inner bark of long tough fibers that can be made into string or woven into baskets or mats, the long fibers known as bast or bass. The name of beetree came from the fact that the flowers or blooms contain more nectar than any other bloom at that time of year, the bees often filling their combs with this honey. The locusts bloomed a month earlier.

The buckeye seemed to have been made especially for wooden legs, as it is the lightest of the woods, next to the poplar, and yet so tough that it will not split when thumped on pavements or rocks.

Dogwood has less silica than any other wood, a deficiency that makes it slow to break, warp or splinter, or to scratch anything. Indians liked it for arrow shafts so well that pioneers called it arrowwood; jewelers and opticians used a sharp splinter of dogwood for cleaning dust out of a tiny socket because the tip would not break off readily nor would it scratch.

The elm is the only other tree with bast fibers in its bark, not so good as the basswood, but the wood of the elm has longer fibers than any other wood; an elm plank with its long fibers will sustain a much heavier weight than a plank of other wood and it is also very durable. The C&O used elm planks for sliding heavy goods from boxcar to station platform and the durability kept the planks from rotting when lying on the station platforms all year.

The value of hickory wood is in being so flexible, tough and strong, but it has the weakness of not being durable.

The shellbark hickory and the sycamore are the only Fayette trees which shed their outer layers of bark to lower their worth for corner trees, although it did sometimes happen that no other tree was nearby.

The bark of the hemlock called spruce pine by the patent surveyors is well saturated with tannic acid to make it valuable for tanning, second to the chestnut oak; Spanish oak bark would have second rating but it is rather scarce, also a smaller tree with less bark. Ironwood or hornbeam wood has every good quality except total lack of flexibility, a lack that proved to be its best asset by making it a good crowbar. Locust is a fast grower yet quite tough and one of the most durable of the woods, excellent for fence posts, ground sills, coal mine sprags or in any contact with dampness or wet ground.

Magnolia wood is soft, easy to fashion, light in weight to move or carry and very durable, qualities that put it at the top for all kinds of troughs, although the cucumber is the only one that grows large enough for such purposes. The patent surveyors of north Fayette never mentioned a magnolia; they spoke only of a cucumber, or an elkwood which is the one with the two foot leaves, sometimes called an umbrella tree.

The Osage Orange has every good quality with the added bonus of being very colorful with streaks of orange, red, yellow or brown, prized by the Indians for making their bows. Its natural habitat, running from Arkansas to Iowa was the land of the Osages, and its fruit is the size and shape of an orange. It was transplanted to other parts of the country as a novelty but scarce outside its homelands; it is evident that one was found in West Virginia to lengthen the questionable tree list.

North America has two dozen species of the poplar family, but the most notorious one, the yellow poplar, is not a poplar in any feature whatever. The yellow poplar stands by itself as a liriodendron or tulip tree with no relatives in this country, although technically, by remote ancestry, it can be classed as a distant offspring of the magnolia family.

The yellow poplar wheel exhibited in Chicago was 11 1/2 feet in diameter and that one tree produced 25,000 feet of merchantable lumber; if you drive across the continent today on any of the transcontinental routes the largest hardwood tree that you will likely see will contain no more than 3000 feet of merchantable lumber.

The wood is soft, easy to fashion, one of the lightest in weight, but neither strong nor durable; it has, however, high value for veneering usages.

Another famous misnomer is the sycamore. There are perhaps two dozen sycamores carefully nurtured in the United States, none in the woods; it is a native of the Levant with none elsewhere excepting a few transplantings. In Europe during Medieval days, religious pageants or dramas were top entertainments for the Christians, the script usually calling for a sycamore tree, apparently because the audience enjoyed seeing Zaccheus the short man who had to climb a sycamore in order to see Jesus.

In England they found the buttonwood, of the Plane tree family, to be the most suitable substitute for the sycamore and used it so often that they began calling a buttonwood, a sycamore, and brought that name over when they found buttonwoods in America.

It happens that the two misnamed trees are the largest hardwood trees in the United States, sometimes reaching a height of 200 feet, although rarely, but their wood has almost opposite characteristics.

The buttonwood is tough and hard to split, to make it desirable for butcher blocks and oxbows; the beech, gum and buckeye are also hard to split and good enough for the farmer's backyard chopping

block but those trees seldom grow large enough for the big butcher blocks.

Extract of vanilla made from the vanilla beans has always been expensive and it was long known that pine wood contained a small amount of vanilla flavor. In the latter part of the nineteenth century a worthy chemist working on this little clue, discovered that if he made up a batch of pine wood glucose and put some oil of cloves into it, the whole thing would acquire such a strong vanilla flavor that a cupful of it would flavor a large batch of any other substance.

This cheaper product, vanillin, was quite a boon to bakers, candymakers and chocolate factories; it is refined to a consistency similar to sugar.

In speaking of hardwood trees there should perhaps be a reminder that all needle or cone bearing trees are classed as softwoods, all others as hardwoods, disregarding the fact that many hardwoods are softer than many softwoods.

It would appear to be cheating to list a wild grape vine as a tree but that wild fox grape wheel had more justification for being in the tree exhibit than many another so-called tree.

That particular grape vine was a single stem nearly two feet in diameter growing 80 feet high with branches 18 inches in diameter.

Of the 84 listed trees, only 28 were of sufficient size and numerical quantity to be properly designated as being a component part of the Fayette county timber.

Leaving his two sons-in-law George McGaffey and John Todd to manage the Pennsylvania mines, Mr. Jayne took his son Lawrence William and his third son-in-law Jackson Taylor, who were much younger than McGaffey and Todd, to West Virginia where they would help with the outside management as each of them had a strong distaste for the inside of a mine and would never go inside if they could help it. There is no way to account for this aversion except that they must have been afflicted with some claustrophobia.

In 1894 Jackson Taylor bought the 50 cleared acres of the old Alex McVey farm on top as a happy summer playground for his seven children and built a frame addition to the old log cabin. To house guests he put a second story on the old log barn nearby that had become a storage building. It became such a pleasant place that it attracted many visitors, half of them with invitation, the other half with gall.

At the same time my father with only one child, built a two-room shack on the brink of the cliffs directly above the drumhouse and the coke ovens below, where there were few guests because of the shortage of room, of food and no barn to stable or feed a horse. The shack was a camping resort without a stove, all food brought along or cooked in the open stone fireplace once a day.

The snakes had been well killed off at the McVey farm and at the shack there was no trouble underfoot but there was the disquietude of having snakes drop on your shoulder as a family of tree snakes had grown up at that one place. Those snakes, slim, with a length of 2 1/2 feet, could climb trees by hooking their segments on to pieces of bark and they could drop down as far as 25 feet without harm. They went up after bird eggs or fledglings, often losing their balance when trying to crawl along the top of a limb to get out to a nest, also they did nothing but drop when they had their fill; the leaves prevented them from seeing what might be below on the ground.

Sitting on the edge of the cliffs you could see the main entry trips roll out of the driftmouth, the monitors hustling up and down the Mountainside, little figures walking around down in the village, other figures drawing coke from the ovens, a man, mule, and lorry refilling the drawn ovens, the river and the C&O trains or you could lie on your back to watch the soaring birds.

Since the bottom of the gorge was always ten degrees warmer than the top of the cliffs, the rising warmer air abetted by the heat of the ovens created a constant updraft along the edge of which buzzards coasted with a view down into the gorge as well as into the woods back of the cliffs. They would sail by the hour 100 feet above the cliffs never moving a wing and doing nothing but bank to get turned at each end of their beat and the chicken hawks offering no competition in their different diet were allowed to ride on the buzzards' roller coaster.

At 11 A.M. #3 the fast train from the East came downriver with the mail and as it passed Keeneys Creek a puff of steam would emerge from its whistle chamber, the sound of that whistle reaching the top of the cliffs a long time later. This whistle was the engineer giving notice to the mail car that the train was now one mile from the Jayne station; a clerk took the Jayne mail sack from its rack, pulled the drawstrings, locked it, carried it forward to drop it beside the right hand door.

Inside of the left hand door a strong spring kept the grabarm clamped against the inside of the car; opening that door the clerk pushed the grabarm around to stand straight out of the car and fastened it out by sticking a pawl in the ratchet of the mechanism. The Jayne outgoing mail sack was tied in the middle with the mail evenly distributed in the two ends and suspended from a crane beside the track; when the grabarm hit the middle of the sack the arm got knocked back a couple of inches to allow the pawl to drop from the ratchet, then the spring slammed the grabarm with the mail sack drooped over it back inside of the car.

After setting the grabarm, the clerk stepped over to the right door, opened it and tossed out the incoming sack which bounced and rolled as it hit the rails and ties of the sidetrack in front of the station. Nothing but the written or printed word could survive its arrival at Jayne by mail.

It was a peaceful pretty sight to look down into the gorge day or night; after dark the gorge was given a rosy tint by the coke oven flames and at 8 P.M. #2 the fast train from the west came upriver all alight resembling a large glowworm as its one bright eye lighted up first one side then the other side of the gorge as it went around ridges and dipped into the hollows.

The little specks of light moving around in the village were the banklamps of men going here and there for another bucket of water or of coal; every man bought his new replacement bankcap and banklamp ahead of time to wear the clean cap in the evenings after having cleaned up. With the lamp on top of the head both hands are free for carrying, you get a much longer range of vision and there is no light in the eye to blind it. The ovens gave enough light to see to walk but did not light up the far side of rocks, bushes or other obstacles and the village had copperheads; they were not crawling all around but four or five would be killed each summer, enough to demand watchfulness of every step, and the lamp on the head gave the necessary lighting.

The village had a band, the members of which would practice individually on the porches on summer evenings and as a unit on Saturday nights; the notes of those horns carried up to the cliffs by the updraft, became mellowed to sound far sweeter than when you stood right beside them on the Fourth of July, although it was a very fine band at any distance.

Speaking of the Fourth it was in this year that my father ordered some fireworks for me with one item being a folded paper balloon that became seven feet high and five feet in diameter when expanded. Attached to it was a basket of excelsior soaked in a chemical that was ignited to fill the balloon with gas; it was set adrift at dark and the gas aided by the updraft carried the balloon on up to maybe 700 feet above the cliffs where the light wind began carrying it southeast.

The populace had seen pictures of real balloons with a man in the basket and when the people saw that paper balloon their eyes told them it must be a real balloon appearing small because so high above the earth, and next morning reports went out in the county that a balloon had passed across Fayette far up but people could be seen in it. One report stated that the balloon caught afire and the terrified people could be seen leaning over the edge of the basket; another report was that one of the people with clothes afire jumped out, this was a burning piece of excelsior falling off. The balloon was found next day at Firecreek seven miles upriver.

Father's dreams of enjoying the trains and the buzzards were shattered a month after he built the shack; he was as religious as the average man but my mother went a great deal further.

On a Sunday morning she said "Will, it is not right that the colored folks have a church and the white people have none; it is all wrong for us to be up here on Sunday and we must build a church which can be in the lower corner of our stableyard in the center of the village."

"Katherine it won't work," father said, "we have families of five denominations all living in peace and if we start a church they will begin falling out, each arguing to have a minister of their particular faith.

He had to hold evening services too and one night when all heads were bowed in prayer he started off a sentence earnestly beseeching God, then all that was heard were some footfalls and a slight scuffle; those who peeked saw him fussing with the oil lamp trying to get the old wick turned up a

little higher so he could see what it was that he was asking God to do for them.

Chapter Eight

One of the beauties of youth is the ability to digest everything that has been declared to be edible. Correlated to this there is an almost constant desire to eat something and so few homes that will give their child enough food to keep him going until the next meal hour. Short Creek still had the free foods of the pioneer days for which you could rustle in case you received no response from hanging around a neighbor's back door dropping hungry hints.

The McVey's wild strawberry bed on the east bank of Short Creek having been destroyed by houses built on it, a person had to walk two miles down the tracks to Whitcomb's Boulder to obtain a sufficient quantity of one pint per visit. This was a dangerous journey with the roar of the river exceeding the rumble of an approaching train doing no buffing downgrade, but all canyon dwellers who had to walk the tracks to travel up or down the river instinctively knew that they must walk on the outer ends of the ties and keep looking behind. Despite my watchfulness there were times when my only warning of a train was a quiver in the ties which I adjudge could be felt about 150 yards ahead of the train, or whatever distance it might be that granted you five seconds to jump off.

There were hundreds of sweet papaws in the village but their banana flavor is so strong that you can eat only two in any half day. Blackberries were everywhere, followed in season by their poor relatives the dewberries that grow on a ground- running vine, the berries more seedy and not quite as sweet. All along the riverbank the persimmon trees grew at the high-water mark and nowhere else in the gorge.

On a January day when dusk started at 4 P.M. I was hopping from one boulder to the next one beside a persimmon tree and saw a possum down there eating a fallen fruit; he also saw me and keeled over. Picking him up by the tail I was proudly on my way to the store with my prize but on one jump I had to throw out my hands to maintain my balance and in doing so I slammed the possum against a little gum tree. Reasoning that death was proving to be no better than being alive he opened his eyes, showed his teeth and raised his head to scare me into giving him his freedom. When alarmed, possums always show twenty teeth, which is a bluff but a good one. Possums being omnivorous including carrion, their meat did not appeal to me but on an overnight stop on Sewell Mountain, possum was the supper entree and I found it easy to assume that this particular possum had been eating only nice foods, although it was far too greasy to make me want a second helping.

Fayette also had many ground hogs that were similar to a possum although better in their diet, and in looks. In scouting for fruits I would at times see a ground hog hole, get my .22, take a seat nearby and sit there for hours waiting for it to come out or return home.

In that almost impenetrable jungle of the Mountainside between Fern Creek and Short Creek there were numbers of wild grapes with the larger fox grapes here or there, while the elderberries grew only along the mine tramroads. The sarvice berries were close beneath the cliffs with the

huckleberries, chinquapins, tea berries on the brow of the cliffs also the partridge berries, on a ground vine, known as checker berry in other states. A few hundred yards back of the cliffs were the chestnuts, hickory nuts, hazel nuts and a grove of black walnuts undamaged since the McVey days. The huckleberries of the east are smaller but have more sweetness, flavor and tenderness than their relatives, the blue berries of the west.

Hogs could digest the shells to fatten on beechnuts. If a man spent an hour on digging the meat out of those twisted shells, he would obtain 50 calories of food in comparison with 100 calories burned up during his labors.

The copperheads would have made this harvesting dangerous for a foreigner but a native son at an early age acquired an eye that never failed to spot that copper color with its blotches and bring you to a halt before the rest of the brain knew what was wrong. In a slate cliff, back of our house which was on the upper edge of the village, a pair of copperheads had their little den and apparently we killed their offspring each year but never got the parents. Some one of us was within one foot of a copperhead many a time with never a strike. Linnie, raised in a city, with no trained eye, almost touched one while picking cucumbers and stepped right over one another time. The copperheads earnestly desired to live and let live, except at meal hours and twice I was really conscience stricken for having killed one that had spared me.

The Fayette snakes used their limited ammunition to obtain food and would not strike a larger animal that was attending to its own business giving no indication that it meant any harm to other creatures doing the same thing. If a horse or cow grazed up close to a hidden snake or a man slowly picked berries, the snake would either leave or lay low, but it is an offense to anybody to get stepped on or pushed around.

Mr. Jayne built a flume to carry water from Short Creek along the upper edge of the village to the coke oven reservoir, with branch flumes to carry water down to central parts of the town. At the west edge of our garden above our house my father had a stone reservoir from which the water was piped down to the house. Our raspberry patch was beside this reservoir that leaked to provide a living for frogs and lizards to help feed our snakes. On my tenth birthday I got a .22 rifle which I took up to the raspberry patch and lying on the ground I shot at the snakes I had seen always under those bushes. It should be a good guess to say that there was a garter snake, a blacksnake and a copperhead.

I do not know what theories or beliefs my parents held to make it possible for them to allow me so much freedom to go where I wished and do as I pleased despite the dangers that beset the steep riverbank, the railroad tracks, the high cliffs and the berry bushes. The mine was really the safest place for me as I was always in sight of some man who would give me a warning or an order, although a boy raised at the mine was so well aware of the maneuvering of the bank cars, mules and monitors that he was not apt to linger at any interfering spot.

The arrival of the main entry trip with the graceful sidestepping of the two mules at no loss of their forward speed, and the driver throwing in sprags to slide the wheels, stirred my admiration every time I watched it. Between those trips I could stand beside the drumrunner to follow the progress of the monitors but I stayed away from the blacksmith shop.

It was the custom to deduct one cent a ton from the miner's envelopes to pay the blacksmith for keeping their picks sharpened. In 1898 when drivers received $1.60 a day and miners averaged $2 a day, if the miners produced 350 tons a day Jack Cutlip the blacksmith received $3.50 a day out of which he was supposed to pay for a helper. Having ambition and great strength he worked so hard that he got by with very little help and those long hours of steady work ten to twelve hours six days a week made him short-tempered. He was too busy to have any time for thinking or worrying about the fact that children were afraid to hang around his shop or offer to help him find some tool that was not where it should be when he needed it in a hurry.

On nine out of ten visits to the mine I climbed up to the Oliver entry, the one farthest upriver, to await the outcoming of Joe and hop on the rear end of his trip for a ride along the tramroad to the drumhouse. On the return with the two mules plodding upgrade, I could sit in the front empty beside Joe who knew all about the world at 17, and could give me lots of information, all of which was reasonable even if it sometimes differed from what the books said.

On a June day when we saw a dark column reaching from earth to sky at the horizon and I asked its meaning Joe said, "That is the sun pulling water up into the clouds for our rains. Do you see all them frog eggs in that puddle there? Well all ditches and puddles is plumb full of frog eggs this time of year and thousands of those eggs get pulled up with the water and they hatch out up in the clouds and that is how come we have a frog rain every spring."

In springtime there would come a day when a shower would send us into the store and a half hour later when we came out, the ground was covered with little frogs from a half inch to an inch in length, hopping this way and that in bewilderment not knowing where to go after having been rained down upon the earth. These frog rains occurred all over the state not just at Jayne, most noticeable in front of stores and I am ashamed to tell how old I was before I gave enough thought to the frog rains to realize that the frogs were not rained down from the clouds.

North Fayette had a normal distribution of rattlesnakes and nobody could explain why no rattlesnake was ever seen in our canyon; the cliffs seemed to be a stopper for so many things, the huckleberries, teaberries, arbutus, partridge berries, chicken hawks and lightning strikes.

On another ride with Joe, a blacksnake stalking a frog slithered into the bushes at our approach, which prompted me to ask the wise Joe why we had no rattlesnakes in our gorge; he could explain things that nobody else knew. "John, that blacksnake is the reason; we got hundreds of blacksnakes and they kill a rattlesnake every time they meet."

"Blacksnakes have no poison." I said. "How can a blacksnake kill a rattlesnake?"

"A blacksnake is longer and slimmer and can go a lot faster than a rattler," Joe explained, "and it can wrap itself around a rattler's neck before the rattler gets a chance to make any strike, so don't you ever kill no blacksnakes."

Having seen so many snakes in our garden, this snake information was most interesting and I said, "Joe what else do you know about blacksnakes?"

"Well John all I can think of right this minute is that the blacksnakes is the smartest of them all and the reason they so smart is because they have to look out for themselves ever since they is hatched. They never have no mother to protect them or teach them nothing, or feed them. Another thing about them smart blacksnakes is that on a hungry day when they can find nothing better, they look all around to make sure nobody is seeing them, then they wrap around the hind leg of a cow and fill up on milk."

"If nobody sees them stealing milk how do they know about it?" I asked.

"Oh they can tell by the udder having only half the usual amount of milk at milking time."

"Joe are rattlesnakes hatched like blacksnakes?"

"No they is born like other creatures excepting they ain't borned until they are up in their teens. They get no mother care neither but they are old enough to not need any and they have got their fangs and poison."

I still had one more snake question to ask, "Did you ever see a hoop snake?"

"No we don't have none of them in Fayette but they have them over in Virginia and one evening when my uncle was squirrel hunting sitting quiet on a ridge listening for any squirrel cuttings dropping on the leaves, he saw a hoop snake come up from the hollow, cross the ridge then stick its tail in its mouth and roll down the other side. Every time it got going too fast to dodge the trees it straightened to a stop then started out again."

According to official herpetology Joe was correct only about a blacksnake laying eggs back to which she never returns, and that rattlesnakes are not born until well developed, with fangs and poison sac ready for business.

West Virginia has a breed of land frogs less than two inches in length at maturity, also thousands of toads. When their eggs have metamorphosed from egg to tadpole, to little toads or frogs, they go into hiding until a certain warm spring rain induces all of them to come out of hiding at the same time with many of them migrating while others set up their stations under a rock, clump of dirt or

piece of wood. This may occur anywhere in the United States, although it is most frequently seen in front of a West Virginia store where melon rinds, sardine tins, bits of crackers or cheese draw the flies to support a large colony of hidden toads or those little frogs.

Virginia has a mud snake with a habit of lying in a near perfect circle but it does no rolling.

As a birthday or Christmas gift, a majority of the boys were given a bankcap and lamp to light their path on errands after dark, more particularly for the short days of winter when it became full dark at 5 P.M.

On a day before I was allowed to ride all the way inside, I wore my bank lamp when I went up for a tramroad ride with Joe and after he had gone on inside I lit my lamp and walked inside to the first cross entry to enjoy the light of my lamp and hearing my footfalls. At the cross entry I became interested in some fungi that were growing on an old post, one of which grew in the form of a shelf that had a flat top eight or nine inches in diameter. Using hand pressure in lieu of weights I estimated that the shelf could hold 15 pounds before it began breaking loose from the post. I had intended to come out before Joe returned, but I had not yet finished looking around when I heard the distant rumble of the trip coming out and in another moment the faint blur of Joe's large driver's banklamp could be seen. I would stand in the cross entry until the trip had passed then run out to overtake it and hop on to the rear bumper.

The approaching rumble changed into the clanking of couplings, the rattle of the loose trace chains on the downgrade, the thudding of the eight iron shod hooves hitting the bottom; two git-ups from Joe were so mild as to meaning nothing more than for the mules to maintain their present pace with no slackening.

As the lead mule passed the mouth of the cross entry its head was down as though charging and it appeared to be going much faster than actuality because of its closeness and the narrow area of vision. The head of the rear mule was against the rump of the lead mule requesting it to please move a mite faster to keep out of the way of those behind it. Then Joe came into sight, his arms outstretched with one hand on the endgate to hold him on, the other hand against the rump of the rear mule, his whip dangling from around his neck. The snout of his banklamp being only one inch below the roof, the flame was spread out to make it appear that the whole top of his head was a torch.

For me, the inside of the mine had a fascination that never thinned and that could be found nowhere else in the world; the hollowness of the footfalls of man or mule, the weird tone of the voice of the bankboss standing on a butt entry talking to two miners at work 200 feet back in their room at the face of the seam, the thumping of picks digging into the undercuts or the muffled blows of the sledge hammer breaking up the coal after the shot. The coal had a slight distinctive odor, the burning lard oil resembled Christmas candles, the tang of burnt powder, the fragrance of freshly cut timber in the track ties, the room props or the 4x4 wooden rails that the miners used for a track in

their rooms.

The colorful flaming banklamps were pleasing to the eye at any distance or on top of your own head. Upon entering the mine the drivers' big lamps gave barely sufficient light but a half hour later the miner's little lamp was ample light for every purpose. If you step outside for one good look in broad daylight all eye adjustment for the dark is immediately lost and upon returning inside it takes 25 minutes for the eyes to completely regain all and full adjustment for the dark, but you can notice improvement every five minutes.

Although the foregoing statements about me and the mine are entirely truthful some salt should be added for proper digestion. If I had been compelled to dig coal six days a week for my living with nothing better in sight for the future it is most doubtful whether I would have gloried so much in the sights, sounds and fragrances of my room. You could draw out of a miner nothing more than a grunt when you remarked on what a snug, nice room he had. However I say again that a miner could have done no better anywhere outside, providing that his mine had sound top and no gas.

There were no trout in our three creeks but plenty in Brackens Creek that was a three and a half hour horseback ride distant, where I went the first time on my twelfth birthday, equipped with 4 hooks, two ten-foot lengths of line and a lunch, Fayette fishing style. Even if I had known of fly rods and flies they could not have been used on Brackens Creek that was almost completely overhung with trees or bushes, principally rhododendrons. A sapling or dead branch was all the pole you needed, while an overturned rock yielded good bait underneath, grubs, worms, larvae.

I never learned what was the food that fed so many grouse, locally called pheasants, along Brackens Creek, but I could clearly see that it was the grouse that supported Fayette's last sizable colony of wildcats, one fork of the creek being named Wildcat Branch.

In later years, when surveying on Brackens Creek I was scratching in the leaves hunting for any piece of hemlock bark that might have an old axe cut. A wildcat to the windward unable to smell me, mistook my scratching to be the work of a rasorial grouse and crept along a fallen tree to investigate. As he emerged from among the dense rhododendron leaves, I saw him at the same instant that he saw me. Each of us equally surprised and scared, one brief meeting of our eyes informed us that we were in complete accord about wishing to part company as quickly as possible. A wildcat will never attack a human being unless it be wounded, its kitten mistreated or it be cornered, leaving it no choice but to fight for its life.

At the home of Miletus Simms on the Gauley where I often visited, they had caught a little wildcat kitten and raised it as a house cat, a unique but thoughtless thing to do because within a few months the entire household was reduced to slow motion and constant watchfulness. The cat liked to be gently stroked and have its ears scratched, but any sudden movement would send it into an instinctive defense of sinking its claws and teeth into the offending limb of hand or leg, although it would recover its composure in time to not sink deep enough for any more damage than a few

drops of blood. At a meal you dared not move your feet or your chair to or from the table without first looking to see where the cat might be. It was troublesome, yet quite a novelty and I suppose not many people have enjoyed the privilege of scratching the left ear of an unmuzzled wildcat.

A county road followed the west bank of the Gauley from its mouth for 15 miles up to the Miletus Simms farm, where the road turned left to follow up Little Elk Creek to go on into Nicholas county. A half mile upriver above the Simms farm an admirable Swiss family named Kunz had a farm and above them the Gauley was virgin wilderness with not even a horse trail along the bank. The Simms farm was at the ancient buffalo ford, the first place up the Gauley where it could be forded without any cliffs or boulders to block the ingress and egress of a creature as large as a buffalo or a horse.

At the age of 13 in 1898 I rode on the route of the old trail down Rich Creek, then a half mile up along the level east bank of the river to and across the ford, to spend a few days boarding at the Simms home for some bass fishing. Bass could no longer live in New River since Virginian industries had partially contaminated the waters, or at least made them too muddy for the bass. On the east side of the ford, Sam Simms, son of Miletus, had a farm and a boy of my age named Jesse who talked so much about the beaver pond that I asked him to take me up to see it on Sunday. It was about two miles up on the west bank of the Gauley.

Some softness in the strata permitting quicker abrasion by the flowing waters had caused the river to swing left on a loop leading back to the right, to leave about two acres of level ground with a trickle of water flowing across it. A wandering pair of beavers seeing the possibilities, built a dam, a home and enlarged the intake channel to create a pond 50 feet in diameter, which was at this time inhabited by mud turtles and bull frogs. Sixty feet above and back from this pond away from the river, there was a cliff under which the river had long ago washed out a space 5 feet high in front, shallowing to the back and 15 feet wide, facing the southeast to make a fine abode for a camper. During the next eight years I went to the beaver pond every summer for a week or two, sometimes with a companion, more often alone with Jesse walking up to spend the weekends with me and thoughtfully bring along some potatoes, apples, honey or whatever was in season, and most welcome of all, some bread.

For my trip, my supplies were limited to what could be jammed into two burlap sacks that were tied to lie across the saddle, with no room for any such niceties as a blanket or change of clothes. Having a young boy's desire to make a pretense that he has become an adult, I would live on the land, scorning the softness of civilization.

Trading the use of my horse for the use of their skiff at the Simms or Kunz farm, I started out the next morning to laboriously and wetly row through the pools and drag the boat through the riffles to arrive at the beaver pond, close to 3 P.M. tired, hungry and wet, but there was work to be done.

One big advantage of the cliff home was that spiders spun their webs all the way across from cliff

to ground to scare off or catch all mosquitoes therefore I was careful to tear away only enough webs to allow my entrance. After storing my supplies under the cliff, I shinnied up a hemlock to chop off two or three limbs, then lopped off small branches to pile them up for a springy bed, that smelled sweeter than the occupant.

The next duty on the list was to gather flat stones to be piled up in a careful manner, so that the spider fry pan with its edge on each pile would be held above the fire, for which kindling wood must be carried in. After getting a fire started I chopped a small sapling for a pole to which I tied a hook and line, slapped my hand on a grasshopper for bait and caught three bass, which I fried for supper and breakfast, in the grease from a slice of the ten pound hunk of bacon brought with me.

A trot line was a one hundred foot length of heavy cord, one end of which was tied to a bush at the edge of the water, the other end tied around a rectangular rock, weighing near 80 pounds, that was balanced on the rear end of the boat, which was rowed across the river until the tautened line pulled it off. Going back to shore to pick up the trot line and lay it across the bow to keep the boat from floating away, a one foot hook and line was tied on at two foot spacings out to the anchor, a task performed on the first morning. If you had no boat you had to use throw lines that were the same thing except that the trotline was cut into three parts to use a small stone that could easily be tossed in and pulled out. The throw line covered only the bank whereas the trot line reached out to attract the catfish traveling in midstream as well as along your near bank. The weakness of a throw line was that the anchor rock or some fish might get caught on rocks when pulling it in. It caught only the catfish which are bottom feeders, although a bass would sometimes grab a hook as a trotline was being raised or lowered.

My three yards of mosquito netting was tied to two small saplings to make a seine which I took, with the minnow bucket, upriver to Sugar Creek to get the bucket filled with **a** hundred minnows that were the only sure-fire bait for all denizens of the river. To catch bass the hook was put through the lips of the minnow allowing it to swim around near the top, while catfish preferred to have the hook hidden by running it through the minnow from head almost to tail. As catfish did most of their feeding at night a trotline was not baited until dusk and was run and rebaited every three to four hours as the fire died down to awaken you with the chill induced by having no blanket. Even though you might be cold and sleepy you were always eager to raise that trotline and feel the tugs of a one pounder, a two pounder and another that ought to weigh six pounds.

I enjoyed sitting by my fire at bedtime smoking my pipe, dreaming of all the things I would do in later years, listening to the cherunging of the bullfrogs, the call of a whippoorwill, or the splash of a muskrat; it was a peaceful joy to live in the woods and commune with God's creatures. Then an infernal owl would arrive to utter such disquieting threats that I wished I was in my safe comfortable bed at home.

On one visit I discovered that a blacksnake had his home among the pile of rocks directly in front of my den and I was very careful to make no move that might alarm it as at that time I believed

blacksnakes killed rattlesnakes. I tossed into the rocks pieces of fish to feed him, and by the end of my visit we were on the same terms as with the copperheads at home, although he was a far better companion, serving as my guardian, as I then thought.

In addition to the freedom from flies and mosquitoes, the Gauley cliff had doodlebugs to free it of ants by scaring off the wise ants or consuming the unwise ones. Under all cliffs or boulders in Fayette where wind or rain could not reach in for destruction, the doodlebugs dug so many traps that an ant could not walk 12 inches without encountering one of the traps. The trap was an inverted cone dug down for two inches, with a diameter of two inches at the top at the ground level; the dirt was chewed into powdery fineness then the bug hid in the dirt at the bottom. Every ant that came along had so much curiosity that he must take a look to see what might be down in that hole. Placing its front feet on the rim, it leaned over to peer down, the ground gave way under the weight on its front feet and it slid to the bottom to be eaten by the hidden doodlebug.

At noon of the third day at the cliff a thunderstorm began to brew and all fish bit ravenously before a storm. They would also grab any bait if the river began to rise or become milky from a storm at the headwaters, then the fish would ignore all bait until the river was back to normal.

Taking my hook and line and minnow bucket I rowed up the pool to the foot of the next riffle locally named the big roughs, tied the boat to a bush and caught bass as fast as I could handle them, about 20 during an hour and a half, dropping them into the water in the bottom of the skiff.

A hundred and fifty yards from the cliff den, Beech Run falling over the cliff, had washed out a pool 12 feet in diameter and three feet deep in the middle, its outlet a mass of small rocks, where I chinked every hole that was large enough for a fish to swim through. The 20 bass, unhurt by merely having had a hook in the mouth, were put in one of the burlap sacks and dumped into this pool, all but three that would be cooked for supper and breakfast. There would be no biting for the next couple of days but that was of no concern to me with a storage pool full of fish that I could dip out with the seine. The next morning when I walked around to the pool to gloat over my larder there was not a fish in sight; everybody has to live and learn. The bass are top feeders that do a lot of jumping to grab flying insects and they had jumped the dam and kept on jumping until they reached the river 50 feet below the pool. Thereafter I put in the storage pool only the catfish that are bottom feeders and do no jumping.

The next afternoon, out of fish, I shot four bullfrogs, cut off their legs, skinned them and laid them on a tin plate, then three hours later when the grease was sizzling in the spider pan, I dropped the first leg into it and the leg made a leap to the rocks below. Retrieving the leg I went to the river bank to get a small board I had seen, again dropped that leg into the pan and it made another leap before I could clamp the board over it. On the next try, I tilted the board barely enough to push the legs in one at a time, then marveled at the bombardment of those jumping legs. There is no exaggeration whatever in this account of the frog legs.

In preparation for another meal of frog legs I took a notion to salt them before dropping, or rather before pushing them in the fry pan and that stinging salt triggered another exodus of leaping legs. This phenomenon of muscular reflex action is also true of snakes.

On a Saturday evening when Jesse arrived at dusk he reported that he had been given a bad scare by foolishly jumping over a log and landing beside a snake, but it proved to be only a garter snake. This led me to remark that I had seen a fellow in Charleston wearing a belt of rattlesnake skin and I wished I could get one for myself. At the time, the river was muddy with no fishing and I was living on frogs and gray squirrels which gave Jesse a good idea.

"In the morning we can go up on the ridge and while you are hunting for squirrels I will roam around to see if I can find a rattlesnake and perhaps we can get you its hide, and I know how to cure it by soaking it in alum water."

I slept soundly, dreaming of Jesse killing a rattler, cutting off the hide, curing it and what a hit I would make in wearing around my waist the skin of a deadly rattler. As we started up the hill in the morning shortly after daybreak, Jesse took the hatchet and when I asked what for he told me something that had not occurred to me.

"We will have to cut two forked sticks to pin down the snake and then chop its head off with the hatchet. If we killed it with rocks the skin would be broken and ruined."

His talk of "we" was only slightly disconcerting. I had pictured the killer standing at a safe distance throwing rocks, but Jesse had the hatchet and I certainly was not going to request him to hand it to me for the beheading.

Within an hour I had shot two squirrels when I heard a yell from Jesse and started towards him, at the same time keeping an eye open for a possible third squirrel, in no particular hurry to arrive before the kill.

"Hurry up, John, he is trying to get in his hole!", Jesse called.

The snake was coiled in defense 40 feet from his safety retreat underneath a boulder with Jesse blocking the route by jumping up and down shaking the hatchet at the rattler.

"You come here John and keep him from getting into his hole while I cut the forks."

I obeyed his orders although I did wish I might be the one who could cut the saplings. It was difficult to shoo a hog or a chicken that was determined to pass you and I had little stomach for blocking an alarmed rattlesnake darting its forked tongue and shaking its rattles watching its chance to get around me.

While awaiting my arrival Jesse had spotted two small saplings that forked seven feet above ground, which he chopped down and cut off the two branches at a distance to leave a good prong for pinning the snake to the ground. Handing one to me as I laid my gun aside he said, "We can't pin him while he is coiled so we must poke him until he decides to run and stretches out." The snake did uncoil but his head was towards his safety hole and it was looking between our legs. We used our prongs to flop it around and Jesse got his prong placed a foot back of its head while I made a thrust near the middle of the body. As Jesse eased up on his hold so as to move it up closer to the head, the snake was able to pull its head out and swung it around so wildly that there was no chance to again get it pinned to the ground. Jesse placed his prong beside mine and at his call of "now" we gave it a toss of five feet then pounced on it before it could coil or twist.

This maneuvering was not so dangerous as it sounds. The West Virginia snakes have an inherent urge to retreat to safety, with no inclination to make any attack, and the striking distance of a four foot snake is only 20 inches. After chopping off the head we continued our squirrel hunt for maybe 40 minutes to allow time for the body to finish its death throes of squirming. Jesse opened his pocket knife to lay it on a log for cutting off the skin, took hold of the snake at the middle of its body and was struck on the wrist by the stump of the snake's neck.

Six years later, during my surveying, whenever I killed a rattler I pulled off the rattles to show as proof of my prowess, but I used care by laying a heavy rock on the head with the weight of my body on one foot placed beside the rock, directly behind the neck. If I showed my rattle to any old-timer he would say, "John you got to be wary about pulling rattles off a freshly dead rattler," but I could reassure him by telling of my Gauley experience. It was fortunate for me that I learned that lesson safely as a spectator of a decapitated rattler.

A couple of past experiences gave me the idea of using a bit of trickery that might catch a bass when the river was muddy and they would not take a hook. If the river is up one foot or more all West Virginia bass seem disposed to hang to the shores but they are fearful of a drifting log becoming stranded to block their exit out into the river after it goes down. Being professional jumpers, if a log comes along between a bass and the main stream it will jump over the log rather than take the chance of being crushed by going under it. A bass once jumped into my boat on the Cheat River when I came to shore broadside and it happened again on the Greenbrier; the third time was at the beaver pond where the boat was floating close to shore as I was leaving. At this place the shoreline had an indentation six feet deep and eight feet wide with the bottom graduating gently. On my next visit when the river became muddy, using one oar to steer, I guided the boat to slowly float past this indenture where the bottom of the boat had only an inch or two of clearance under it. My trick worked when a bass trying to jump back into the river landed in my boat. I rowed back upstream to float down again all day long and am sorry to report that the trick works only once in every four hours, or once in every 30 passes, but I still claim that it was a clever way to get a bass.

The Gauley diet was not restricted solely to fish, frog and squirrel. Along the banks there were

huckleberries, blackberries, dewberries, mulberries, and sarvice berries, with ramps, the wild onions, in the hollows.

The shore-feeding eels are seldom caught because the fishermen's baited hooks are out in the river, but I did once catch an eel on a trotline hook that was close to the shore. After cleaning that squirming snaky thing it was eaten with will power, not with relish, the meat more similar to frog legs than to fish. To keep an eel from jumping, it was customary to cut it into two inch lengths for the fry pan.

Those mysterious eels, born only in salt water, start out as transparent little elvers, obtaining sufficient food to grow into eels before they reach the Gauley or New River and no male eel leaves his salt water. Having the ability to travel as far as a mile overland, a female eel, after consuming the shore food of a stream, will cross a ridge to another stream, but sometimes a magnetic disturbance will upset its compass bearings and there is no stream over there. The eel will then continue its search for water and become so famished that she will plunk into the first water she smells, a roadside puddle, a watering trough, a farm well or a beegum spring. Within two years these lady eels get lonesome and begin to worry about maybe the world supply of eels might be getting dangerously low, and they turn around for the return trip back down to enjoy some companionship and salt water bathing. The Gauley and New River eels did not exceed three feet in length.

The Gauley also had a strange example of evolution, in the water dogs that have a body like a newborn puppy, stand on four squat legs and have a thick blunt tail. They have evolved from the lowly little salamander that is flat-bodied with lateral legs and long slim tail, and will no doubt eventually emerge to become land animals, having now developed into sometimes being two feet in length.

Chapter Nine

It was my misfortune to be born with a restlessness that allowed me no satisfaction, peace or pleasure from sitting down with a good book, even on a rainy day. This disposition was the result of both inheritance and environment, as my parents were always on the go, taking trips near and far.

However, I must get some education and I was sent to preparatory school and college in New Jersey, back of Trenton, for seven years, where I did my duty in always being on the safe side of the passing grade of 70.

After seven years of watching for some aptitude that failed to appear, my father had a brief talk with me.

"John, when your school days are over I want you to live on what you yourself can make, with no more money from me unless you are in serious distress. I hate to turn you loose fitted for nothing better than day labor, therefore I am going to send you to law school before your school days end.

"Even though you may decide that you do not wish to practice that profession, a knowledge of the laws should be a big help to you in whatever you might choose to do."

Entering the law school of the West Virginia University, I was immensely pleased with the prospect that two years hence, I would know the laws of the land. Nobody had told us that there could be no such accomplishment as that. My enthusiasm suffered its first 15 degree drop by my being put to work at learning the laws of ancient England as interpreted in 1780 by a Mr. Blackstone; no Fayette compatriot could be bluffed or brought to heel by me quoting the offenses and penalties of 1780.

A month later I discovered that law school was only the first semester of a life time of studying not only to learn the many laws that could not be encompassed within the two years of schooling, but also to keep abreast of the laws that I did know and which were annually changed by court decisions, legislative enactments, or rulings by federal or state department chiefs. The income tax law has been changed almost every year since its inception.

A few months later when it occurred to me that I had never relished my own hot disputes, I decided that I did not wish to enlist for a life time in the front lines fighting battles for other people. However it should be worth my while to continue my law studies so as to learn how to commit minor crimes like a tort or a tmesis in such manner as to escape the legal penalties.

Obsessed with the charms of a mine I began dreaming of becoming a coal operator and evolved a plan that was in no way unreasonable. I would go to work in the Jayne mine, requesting to be transferred from one job to another until I had learned all of the fundamentals within two years. On the many days when the mine could not operate because it had no cars, I would get the bookkeeper

to show me how to make up the payrolls and the other office work, also question the store manager.

Within the limited range of my knowledge of Fayette leases, it seemed that all leases good or bad had the same terms and it apparently was deemed to be unethical for any landlord to ask a bonus for a good lease. There were many instances where a friend was given a good lease, then he took to himself the bonus by turning around to sell his lease for ten, twenty or even fifty thousand dollars. Another practice was wherein a man with little money was given a good lease, retained a half interest and sold the other half interest to one or more friends who put up the money necessary for its opening and development, a procedure that was part of my plan.

The New York Central was buying rights-of-way for a railroad up the Gauley and Meadow River, including rights through the three miles that the Jayne estate owned along Meadow River and I would surely be first in line to obtain a lease on Meadow River. There would be no difficulty in getting partners who would furnish the capital and I could easily employ an experienced bankboss, bookkeeper and store manager. As to selling my coal all I need do would be to sign up with the agent chosen by some experienced operator.

The operators, busy managing their mine with no time for going on the road as salesmen or again as collectors, yielded this task to selling agents who adopted a strange pattern of submitting bids on the first of April each year, contracting to purchase all of a mine's output during the following twelve months, at a fixed price not subject to the fluctuations of the market.

Enquiries informed an operator that the agent offering 98c a ton had no financial backing and if the market dropped he would fold up leaving that operator without any orders. Another agent offering 97c a ton for so much of your coal as he could sell, was in business to stay and would not fold up but you questioned whether he could sell enough coal to keep your mine busy. A third agent, offering 95c a ton had in his pocket enough public utility contracts to assure the sale of your entire output and perhaps you had better accept his lower price. Choosing your agent was no simple matter, and all contracts were limited by the number of cars that the C&O could handle.

My plans had only one serious defect, which was that the Jayne executors had never divulged the results of their test hole drilling and I did not know that the Jayne back lands on Meadow River and elsewhere had no coal.

Before we moved to San Diego, my father and I seldom had any talks because he was always engrossed in some estate or mine problem, or his botany. On our trips he spent his spare hours in reading, all of which made it instinctive in me to never bother him with any questions or discussions. He never did ask me anything about my plans or my finances and not until I was 43 years old did he tell me anything about his finances, therefore I did not talk to him about my coal operator hopes.

On the happy day when I applied for a job in the Jayne mine, the manager who was a total stranger

turned me down flat to give me a staggering blow.

In a previous June back in 1903, when the two mines had been sold, my uncle Jackson Taylor had moved to Swarthmore where he could keep his family intact while educating his three younger children.

My parents had moved to Philipsburg, Pa., where they built a new house, leaving everything as it had always been in the old home at Jayne, curtains, rugs, plated silverware, dishes, linen, cooking utensils, all of which were too dirty, chipped or frayed for a new home and hardly worth the cost of crating, shipping or storing.

As all of my old clothes and treasures were also in the old home I did want to live there. It was no longer a Jayne leasehold and the new manager must have judged that I either could not or would not give a good day's work or more likely, he was afraid that I would see too much. They owned the leasehold but they were Jayne lessees, and the lessees did not always live up to the terms of their leasehold agreements.

It was necessary for me to now find some other job and the only opening I could get was with the C&O section gang that was short by one man. Mr. Burdette, the section boss was also skeptical of my abilities, but since the C&O paid the same 17c an hour that the mines paid for day labor, all men chose the climatic advantages of a mine and Mr. Burdette was hard put to get the extra man he needed. He agreed to take me on trial, which I interpreted to mean that I must work harder than anybody else. The C&O allowed no adumbral bowers to grow over its tracks; the sun beat down from above then bounced back up from the ties, ballast and steel rails.

It was true that I put forth twice as much effort as anybody else, but I did not accomplish twice as much; the others worked at ease while I groaned and grunted. Mr. Burdette as section boss had the privilege of standing idle while supervising, but for the first two weeks after obtaining my services he worked alongside of us to make up for what his new man failed to get done, although at the age of 21 it did not take long for my body to make adjustments.

Mr. Burdette's gruffness of speech and of mien kept me worried but inside he had tact, sympathy and understanding. When he saw that I was ready to drop, he would give a terse command, "John, go get the boys a bucket of fresh water." It was a 15 minute round trip to the nearest spring where I would fill the bucket then wash and return revived.

It was hard work, bringing out several quarts of sweat each day but within two weeks it became almost a pleasure that produced hitherto unknown joy in eating, drinking water, sleeping or just sitting idle in the evening. It was also satisfying to at last learn what made some of the world's wheels go around and get acquainted with fishplates, angle bars and tie plates. Pumping a handcar was not quite as much fun as it had appeared to be when sitting on the bank watching it go by.

The C&O paid off in gold and silver, and what a thrill it was to dump my pay envelope into my hand to gloat over those shiny gold pieces that I had earned. We worked 60 hours a week, the kindly C&O allowing us to quit a half hour early on Saturdays with no loss of that unearned 8 1/2c. This was our only opportunity to go swimming before supper time, on week days.

The sweating at hard labor outdoors made me all the more eager to get inside a mine where there was no sun. Herbert Rothwell who operated one of the mines up on Keeneys Creek accepted my application for a job in his mine where I was absolutely and completely happy. In January it was dark when we went in to work at 7 A.M., dark when we came out at 5:30 and I was granted my request to help the mine engineer on Sundays or work on a haul motor that had broken down with the result that I never saw daylight in January, no hardship for me. Since the steel rails of the mine pulled a compass needle, all mine surveying had to be by plumb bobs that were really more accurate than the needles. If an entry was to be driven in at N 15 E the surveyor would drive two stakes two feet apart outside, at the chosen location and drive in tacks that were exactly on line with N 15 E.

A month later the bankboss would lie on the ground to sight along the stakes in guiding the miner inside to make two smudges on the roof to be on the correct line. Six months later the engineer set up his transit on the stakes while his helper went inside to hold his banklamp to the roof and tilt it up to make a smudge when the surveyor signaled it was on line, then another smudge three feet farther in. Drilling holes in the slate top at the smudges, the helper drove in two lead spuds that had a ring on the end to which was tied plumb bobs, the rings tapped on the side until the surveyor waved that both strings were hanging on N 15 E. Locking the needle and walking on beyond the bobs to sight back at them, the surveyor adjusted the tripods until the telescope was on line then swung it around 180 degrees to look forward inside and direct the helper in making two more smudges for another pair of plumb bobs. If a side entry was driven off to the right, all the surveyor need do was to set up his transit on the main entry on its line then swing the telescope around 90 degrees to establish two bobs to direct the course of that side entry.

Twice a year the engineer came to set up spuds for the advancing entries and measure all advances to plat them on the mine map and keep it up to date. This work must be done on Sundays when no trips were running and I got the job of spud driver, a title carrying no more prestige than a section hand, but I had perfect weather in there, with little real work, on Sundays. In January and February 1907 there had been three explosion disasters with three lesser explosions, then no more until the cold weather returned in December when there were four disasters. One of them was Monongah in the northern part of West Virginia, the worst of all time, killing 361 men. Two weeks later a small mine near Monongah blew up killing 8 men, all of which should have had a very sobering effect upon all mine workers, but we at the Rothwell mine had enough faith in our particular well-tested locality to hold no qualms. At least, we had no worry until the morning that we saw a warning painted on the timber at the top of the main entry driftmouth; it said, "Prepare to meet God," which was quite disturbing.

Herbert Rothwell was a kindly man of considerable wisdom who was a great help to me, by giving information and advice during evening talks. In one of these talks when he asked me how much did I know about the Jayne estate I replied, "I know nothing at all excepting what I heard the men saying about the Jayne mine or what I saw at Jayne. My father was always too deeply engrossed in his botany to ever talk to me or tell me anything."

Mr. Rothwell then said, "Well then I will tell you some things you ought to know about the property. There is no member of your family who knows a single corner or boundary line and since you are the only member left in West Virginia I think you should apply your energy to learning some of the boundary lines on Sundays or on days that the mine receives no empties and cannot run. Whatever you can learn will be a benefit not only to your family but to you personally since you are to inherit a fourth interest in the estate."

As it had never before occurred to me that I would some day become a fourth owner, this remark immediately gave me the desire to learn the boundary lines, and I was eager to start at once. It turned out that I never did own or inherit any interest in the property, nor did I ever receive any of its income, directly or indirectly.

In 1930, anticipating the birth and rapid growth of inheritance taxes and that they would require a running mate of gift taxes, I requested my father to deed his fourth interest to my son Jack while it could be done free, and he executed the deed in September when Jack became 21.

Mr. Rothwell went on to inform me that inasmuch as nobody knew or could watch the boundary lines, the owner of a portable sawmill who bought the timber on the back of some farm was tempted to keep on cutting well back inside of any adjoining Jayne patent. In the hope of preventing these thefts, my father, before moving to Philipsburg, had employed an old patent surveyor Wm. Hume to keep an eye on the portable sawmills.

Herbert Rothwell said, "Mr. Hume lives at the Blume mine two miles up the creek, has a bad knee on which he can no longer walk, is 80 years old and I heard that he was hunting for somebody to take his place watching the mills.

"He knows maybe 15 or possibly 20 of the estate's 400 corners and I am sure he will be willing to show them to you if I loan you my horse for him to ride. Then I will loan you my compass for you to go out and run the lines from those corners after your father sends you the calls for those patents."

Mr. Hume was a genuine woodsman who knew all about hunting for old corner trees. When I arrived on the next Sunday morning he measured my shoe then said, "Your shoe is 12 inches long which is fine and will save you a lot of figuring and we will soon measure your stride."

As I walked along beside the horse we left our tracks in a wet place and Mr. Hume stopped to

order me to go back to measure my stride by placing one foot in front of the other and we saw that I was two inches short of a 3 foot stride. "You can easily stretch your stride to be two inches longer John, and hereafter every time you walk through dust or mud you hitch back to measure and within a month you can be hitting a regular 3 foot stride, then in your surveying all you need do is to count your steps for distances with no need for any chain or any helper."

The original surveying had been so slipshod that counting my steps would take me just as close to where the old corner trees had stood as a modern surveyor accurately measuring to the inch, really closer, as I later discovered.

Mr. Hume showed me one corner of a McVey patent, a Blume, a Cavendish, a Tully and a Cooper patent that were easily reached on horseback. Then he said, "Most of the patents around here were surveyed close to 70 years ago and since then the compass needles have been pulled to the west at a rate of about 2 minutes a year. In running by those patent calls you should allow for a difference of 2 1/2 degrees; if the patent calls for N 30 E you run your line at 32 1/2 by a compass today to be on that same line, or if your call be to the northwest you subtract 2 1/2 degrees."

After my father had sent to me the calls for those patents I became enthused about finding the second, the third and the fourth corners of the McVey patent. My father had taught me to identify all trees by the leaves in summer and by the bark in winter, and following a suggestion of Mr. Hume I carried a hatchet to chop into fallen trees to learn the difference in their grains, so that I would be able to chop into a tree that no longer had any identifying leaves or bark and tell by the grain what kind it was.

Some two months later Mr. Hume wrote to the executors to tell them that I had taken a keen interest in surveying, that he could no longer get around and he thought that I could look after the sawmills on Sundays.

The Jayne executors got to thinking that they needed a West Virginia agent for many more duties than watching sawmills and they offered me that job at $75 a month. At the time I was helper on a cutting machine that made the undercuts for the miners in their rooms, too happy to be willing to come out and I told Herbert that I would write back to say I could attend to the estate duties on Sundays and days the mine did not run and would do that for $25 a month.

Mr. Rothwell might be able to produce the same tonnage without my help; there might be a doubt about that but there is no question about him drawing a big sigh of relief to get the heedless youth out of his mine intact with all four limbs. However that warm-hearted good man was entirely sincere in saying, "John you have done all of the inside work that you can need; you are enjoying yourself in there but you are simply marking time and it is far more important that you now go to work to learn the boundary lines and all else about the estate."

That night I began thinking about the satisfaction of finding the corners, the fact that $75 was a lot

more than $42 and I gave thought to the furnished home down at Jayne and of Linnie Vance to whom I had become engaged at law school. I took the new job and we got married April 14th, 1908.

My father said it would likely be a long time before I would get out of town again and for a wedding present he would give us a trip wherever we wished to go. My wish to go reached much farther than he had expected but he did no hedging other than to give me a check for only the necessary expenses with nothing extra for liqueurs, cabs, shopping or hat pools.

It wiped out the life savings of both the groom and the bride to get us back to Jayne on a passenger train. What little we had left we invested in buying 6 Rhode Island Red hens and a rooster, and he was quite a rooster; 85 percent of our first hatchings were roosters.

Being skinny with no weight to carry, well used to climbing up and down the mountain I was right well suited for my new job. The Fayette compasses were 10 1/2 inches long and 5 inches wide weighing 4 pounds that must be set on a staff that was difficult to jam far enough into the ground to stand upright. My father found for me a more modern compass that was only 4 inches in diameter weighing one pound that could be carried in the pocket, a wonderful time saver. It had a magnifying mirror that could be flipped up so that you could read the compass by holding it up in front of your eyes. With that compass and counting my strides for measurement, I did the fastest surveying that Fayette had ever seen, so far as running the lines were concerned; the long hours were spent in searching for the old fallen trees.

My progress soon had me walking 5 miles to my day's work and 6 miles for the return but I had worked up to it gradually, and you never tire at a job in which you are deeply interested. It was not worthwhile walking so far for a short day of work so I left home at 5:45 and returned at 5:45. The days seemed short to me and I assumed they were short for Linnie too as I never gave a thought to her being all alone in that large house 12 hours a day.

In late fall when the leaves had fallen to enable me to take longer sights for faster time, and again in early spring, I sent Linnie home to visit while I surveyed the distant patents, spending each night at whatever nearby farm house would take me in. Talking during the evenings in these homes I was able to get valuable information about corners and titles, trees, snakes and the hogs that gave me so many bad scares in the woods.

When a suckling pig is weaned it becomes a shoat that grows into a pig when adult and after it attains a weight of 120 pounds it becomes a hog. In the spring the farmers turned their shoats loose to grow and fatten on the abundance of mast, first the beechnuts and finally the acorns. By late fall roundup time they have become half wild, also a few escape the roundup to become still wilder. If they heard me approaching them in the woods they would freeze in the hope that I would bypass them and if I continued on towards them they would not give up hope until I was within 60 feet, then the hog would expel its breath through its nose to make an alarming whistling snort and tear

off through the underbrush like a bear on a rampage. The grouse had the same habit and would make a frightening uproar on their takeoff.

Although I killed perhaps a dozen copperheads and a dozen rattlers I got only two scares from them, one occurring in spring when I was trotting downhill through a dense patch of bracken, believing the snakes had not yet come out. Suddenly I heard a rattle right beside my feet, where the covering of bracken hid all sight of the ground and diffused the sound so that I could not tell whether the rattle was in front or behind. All I dared do was to freeze with some sweating during the freezing, and it was probably no more than three minutes until I saw a bracken quiver to my right then another quiver a few feet farther on. I knew the snake had left yet I feared to take a step and I compromised by making a leap to land 5 feet ahead. That rattler was wanting only to be left alone and was wishing for trouble no more than I.

On another day I was walking through an ancient field where even the broom sage could grow only 6 inches high, over near Meadow River where human beings seldom went anymore and I spied a huge blacksnake coming at me holding its head six inches above ground to not lose sight of me. I knew that no snake ever chased a man in Fayette, yet it was evident that this one had not been told about that rule and I took to my heels. A blacksnake can make good time but it cannot go fast enough to catch a scared man. When shortage of breath at last stopped me and I saw no snake I realized that my blacksnake must have been chasing a field mouse and having its eyes focused on the ground it was unaware of my presence. That snake was a whopper in my telling until a man informed me that the Fayette blacksnakes never exceeded 6 feet.

Late in September a chill wind came down from the north dropping the temperature from 75 to 40 overnight, and on my way back to work next morning I came across a rattlesnake lying full length, apparently dead but without a bruise. Getting no response when I poked it with a stick, I chopped its head off with my belt hatchet then pulled off the rattles as another trophy, unearned. The snakes having no thermostatic mechanism, their blood has to be of the same temperature as the surrounding air; at 50 they can barely move, at 40 they become completely paralyzed and at 32 they die. If I had not killed this snake it would have been able to go its way four hours later when the sun had warmed the air up to 55 degrees.

It was my custom to eat my lunch facing the wind so that the creatures could not detect my presence and the next spring while eating my sandwiches I saw an escapee hog sauntering towards me until it dashed to the left where it circled around, darting inside the circle about every ten seconds which told me that it had found a rattlesnake. If it had been a harmless snake the hog would pounce on it with no cautious circling. In spring when food was scarce the escapee hogs must have lived largely upon snakes as there were many evidences of it.

Before turning their shoats loose, one farmer would cut a notch in the bottom of the left ear, another farmer cut his notch on the upper side with a third owner cutting the end off and three other men could use the right ear. This forestalled any disputes or feuds about ownerships.

If a hog dies a slow death as from some disease or poison, its tail unfolds to straighten out but if it meets a violent death the tail stays kinked.

We would have been up to our knees in squirrels along the old abandoned Chestnutburg road if it had not been for the owls that must eat their own weight in fresh meat every night, and who were especially fond of infant or young squirrels. It was my bad luck to frequently have to travel that road at dusk or after dark to run the gauntlet of those dangerous owls whose voice boxes would send a steady current of fears running along your spine. Upon leaving the turnpike to start down the Chestnutburg road, the whoo-whoo of a hootowl to the north, answered by another one to the south gave notice that those deep woods belonged to the owls after sundown and you were trespassing at your own peril. It was easy to imagine that you could hear a dead twig snapping on your right, under the stealthy approach of a panther, and at times there were hazy apparitions that would not stay still long enough for identification. My pace increased when a screech owl let out its mournful wail, sounding like a lost spirit floating in limbo, so lonesome that it yearned to have my soul for company; then I really made time when a hootowl started on its alternate cry that closely resembled the screaming of a girl being murdered. The yowling of the owls at dusk has enabled many a man to arrive home much less late than he otherwise would have.

For my eastern surveying I often spent a night at the home of Anderson Amick, on the pike at the western foot of Big Sewell Mountain, where they were not wanting any boarders, but too hospitable to turn a man away. The Amicks lived far back from a railhead, but they could have given valuable lessons on the five meanings of the word "gentility" to many a railroad coal operator. Sitting on their front porch in the evening after supper there were more crepuscular noises conducive to sleep than could be heard anywhere else. The subdued singing of the thrushes from early until late dusk, the sleepy twittering of smaller birds, the plaintive call of the whippoorwill, the cicadas making a surprisingly loud noise by doing nothing more than shaking their stomachs, with the orthopterous insects doing equally well in rubbing their legs against their wings. The tree frogs gargled, a fox barked, answered by another one farther away, the faint tinkling of the bells on the neighbors cows that had lain down to chew their cud after being milked. In the safety of the Amick porch it was fun to hear the screaming of a hootowl scaring the wits out of some poor fellow who was late in getting home. Not all of these sounds could be heard on the same night, but if some were missing they were replaced by others, the crying of a wildcat, the baying of hounds on a coon hunt or the yipping of guineas that had been aroused by some suspicious noise.

The guineas that were better watchdogs than the fourfooted ones, would yip at everything that was out of place, not where it should be, a stray cat, a snake or rabbit in the yard, a shirt blown off the clothesline or at me trying to walk unobtrusively along the road. On those farms where the dog followed the man to the fields or down the road, the housewife who wanted notice of every event, kept some guineas if her nerves could withstand the yipping: if she wanted peace she had no guineas. Guineas were seldom kept for any other purpose because they laid fewer eggs than hens and their meat was not as good as chicken. In recent years the plush restaurants have been cashing

in on the scarcity of guineas by advertising them to be a rare delicacy, and many patrons have fallen for it, willing to pay the extra price for the privilege of eating a scarce entree.

INSERT PICTURE

Chapter Ten

Mr. Jayne owned everything along Keeneys Creek excepting that he overlooked 57 acres of surface in the center of the hollow on the west bank of the creek and R. M. Holliday the owner of that surface sold lots upon which the village of Winona quickly sprang up. It soon had a Masonic lodge that I joined a few months after I was married. It was worth the long walk up and back to have the opportunity to leisurely talk to friends, but we were all in the habit of going to bed at nine and the rituals kept us up until midnight. By 10 o'clock the elders were nodding with an occasional whistle or snore during a solemn part of the ceremonies.

Coming home, after I passed the last mine, there was a mile and a half of woods before the tracks swung around into the river canyon, that was also woods which were much more fearsome at midnight than at dusk. On some nights the owls would holler and scream at me until I became so queasy that I began looking behind, and when you start doing that you are in a bad fix with your muscles cocked to set you off on a run at the drop of a pebble or the rustle of a leaf.

To compensate for those trips there were other nights when everything was covered with a foot of snow that sparkled under the flame of the banklamp, with hundreds of icicles glistening on the cliffs of the upper side of the track, the whiteness of the snow and green of the hemlocks intensified by their contrast, the owls in no mood to howl, no sounds but the crunching of the snow underfoot and the tinkling of the swaying banklamp hitting first one then the other side of the tin visor of the bankcap.

After the first lonesome year I got the company of John Fraser who was not afraid of owls nor of anything else.

At the end of the Spanish-American War in August 1898, New River was hit by a crippling labor shortage but the war could have had nothing to do with it as it was not much of a war; it lasted only 5 months with just 290 American soldiers killed in action although more died of diseases. If any stray worker did happen along he did no more than wipe his feet on the red carpet of the Jayne mine then walk on up to the Keeneys Creek mines where the houses were new and close to the mine. The coal seam of the two mines up at the end of the branch cropped right beside the tracks and was on a level with the top of the railroad cars, to be very convenient for the workers and a money-saver for the operators, with no monitor dumpings or haul and no mountain for the workers to climb.

Unable to get enough miners to keep the drivers, tracklayers, drumrunner, tipple men and other such workers busy, the Jayne mine made no more profit after August 1898, and when Jayne and Old Keeney were offered for sale in 1903 the best price that could be obtained was a hundred thousand. Two years later when coal prices were higher, the two mines were resold for $175,000.00, then sold again two years after that for $250,000.00.

Mr. Tully had retired to his well-stocked 20 acre farm at the first sale, many new workers were

brought in by the succeeding owners and by 1907 the mine had acquired a bad name for shipping dirty coal. The third owners brought John Fraser to be bankboss with a prime duty of stopping the loading-out of dirty coal, which he did stop.

Henry Ford than began buying Jayne coal and in a couple of years he took a notion to buy the mine, paying $500,000.00 for it and spending another hundred thousand on betterments, one of which was to replace the monitors with a conveyor belt. Another few years passed until a Ford auditor suggested to Mr. Ford that he take the time to examine the cost sheets of his coal mine, which revealed to him that his own coal was costing him a lot more per ton than the open market price of the same coal from the Keeneys Creek mines. He was so chagrined and disgusted that he wiped his hands clean of coal mining and a bit later the Maryland-New River Co. bought the mine for $200,000.00. Mr. Ford never showed me his books and I quote these prices only because I believe them to be close to the truth.

It was the good fortune of the Jayne heirs that the Maryland-New River Co. gradually bought all of the old leasehold mines on the Jayne estate; their first manager M. L. Garvey followed by his brother J. W. Garvey were above any trickery or cheating.

Although the leases required all coal thick or thin to be mined, no landlord expected any lessee to mine coal so thin as to show a loss; if the operating expenses of a mine were such that they would lose money mining coal that was only 2 foot nine inches thick, they were obligated to mine all coal that was 2 foot ten inches or more in thickness.

An operator hoping to sell his mine, wanted his books to show as much profit as possible and so did a manager who wished to prove his abilities; they preferred to mine 3 1/2 foot coal for a profit of 4c a ton rather than coal 2 foot 1 inches thick with a profit of one cent a ton. If two butt entries heading towards the boundary line ran into coal that was only 2 foot 1 inches thick, it was an old trick to tell the miners that they were now at the boundary line, which meant that they should pull the pillars and come on back. After the roof had fallen nobody could get in there to inspect or check nor to later mine the coal that had been left.

Miners seldom knew any boundary lines but there was one miner who did know and at a lodge meeting he told me that this had been done in his mine. This was before Maryland had bought it. This news gave me a perfect excuse to inspect all the mines twice a year for a total of 18 days of roaming through every entry of each mine, which was more fun than to go fishing. At another mine the measurements showed that this same trick had been played; if 15 acres were rendered irretrievable by fallen top it was a royalty loss of $5000.00 to the lessor.

The days of inspections under the leadership of Philip Konrad, a mining engineer, were as agreeable as the lodge meetings, since I was able to enter a room whenever so disposed and speak a minute with the two miners. All was pleasant except for the abominable curtains of which the struggling Keeneys Creek mines had too many. If the entry and aircourse ventilated by a furnace or

a fan had less than a mile of meandering there was air to spare, which made it possible for the operator to use curtains and save the expense of trapdoors and the wages of trappers. The mules had to learn to duck their heads into that curtain which then fell from the rump of the mule to envelope the driver, dragged along the top of a loaded bank car to gather up a quart of coal slack to be dumped in my neck as I clung to the rear end of the car. The driver and I had to use one hand to hang on, the other hand to hold our banklamp down between our legs to keep the flame from being snuffed out and we had no third hand for warding off that curtain. I hoped that if I ever got a lease anywhere, I would be able to afford trapdoors instead of curtains but I believe that the law abolished curtains before I did finally get in on a lease.

The Jayne estate did not publish the results of their drilling and not until I began working for them did I learn that they had no more workable coal on their lands. About the same time I also learned that all good coal lands were by now under lease with nothing left for me, which had a smothering effect upon my dreams of becoming a coal operator but did not kill them.

Having forgotten to mention it at a suitable place I will here explain why it took me so long with so much walking to survey the boundary lines. The lands ran five miles from New River up along Fern Creek to its source at the turnpike, turned west for three miles along the south side of the pike, turned north for seven miles to Meadow River, then reached a mile up into Nicholas county. It was also 16 miles along the turnpike from the most easterly corner to the most westerly corner. This distance was caused by some detached parcels on the sides, but all of these distances were the result of strips with nothing like 16 square miles owned, which would be 164,000 acres, and the estate had only one sixth of that much land.

The Winona Blue Lodge was the first of the Masonic orders and I would have liked to go on up to the Shrine, but I had not the money for that. What little we could save went to Montgomery Ward, and searching through their catalogue to see what all we could get for our savings gave each of us far more pleasure than any higher Masonry could offer.

The lease across the creek from Winona was given to Wm. Masters who named his mine "Masters." The south line of this lease was the county road on which the C&O established an agency where collect freight could be shipped, paid for and received and this agency was listed as "Masters" on the tariff sheets. There was no express office up there so it had to be sent to Jayne; Thurmond, 11 miles upriver, was central for our whole district; Jayne had a telegraph office but it had no phone for relaying messages, therefore telegrams for Keeneys Creek must be sent to Sewell, which office had a telephone. Masters soon sold out to people who renamed the mine to be "Smokeless" and prepaid freight could be shipped direct to the mines. Every Tuesday and Friday the branch shifter took two empty boxcars to Jayne to load them with freight and express for delivery to the creek mines.

The Smokeless letterheads must have held the world record for diversity of instructions: Post office, Winona, W.Va.; express office, Jayne, W.Va.; ship prepaid freight to Smokeless, W.Va.;

telegrams, Sewell, W.Va.; telephone, Thurmond, W. Va.; railroad station, Keeneys Creek, W.Va.; ship collect freight to Masters, W.Va.

When the Rothwell mine applied for a post office they named it DuBree, my mother's maiden name, and she was so pleased that she built a church for them. It was up to Mr. Rothwell to have it swept and a fire kindled before services in winter. He had to repair the leak in the roof, replace a broken window glass, dump cinders on the muddy path and he must attend all services. At Sunnyside 5 miles downriver the manager was thoughtlessly quite courteous to my mother and she gave him a church; thereafter every mine manager in the district had to be careful to not do anything that might please my mother. The Jayne church started out to be a Community Church, but became Presbyterian as soon as my mother's mother came for a visit, then the other two were unquestionably Presbyterian. My grandmother believed that God would be justified in sending another flood that would wipe out all but the Presbyterians, a bit drastic perhaps, yet not without some merit.

There was no contract between the Jayne estate and me. I was appointed their agent to see that no more timber was stolen, to dun for overdue royalty payments and spend all spare time hunting for corner trees, not only to establish the corners but at the same time to be learning the boundary lines. In surveying 12 hours a day six days a week I accumulated enough credit to compensate for my absence during the six week sessions of the legislature. The surveying also had the interruptions of the mine inspections and the abstracting at the courthouse on rainy days, so that it was 5 years before I finished.

Near the end of the work I discovered a 40 acre tract in the Ballenger lease that did not belong to the Jayne estate and after a day of searching at the courthouse I found that it belonged to a man whom I will call Withers. If a landlord grants a lease he, by law, guarantees the title to those lands, therefore the Jayne estate must now buy that tract at the owner's price, since the coal had been mined from it. Five acres of the coal had been carried away by a creek tributary, the coal was only 3 feet thick and the owner elected to set the price at ten cents a ton for the coal, the thickness of which could be measured, as the pillars had not yet been pulled along the haulways.

Using the commonly accepted figure that it was possible to obtain 1400 tons per acre for each foot of thickness, the 3 feet amounted to 4200 tons an acre which was multiplied by 35 to total 147,000 tons that paid $14,700.00 royalty at ten cents a ton. Two entries with their aircourses had been driven into this tract for a state penalty of $500 for each trespass, amounting to $2000.00. That 40 acre tract that could have been bought at $10 an acre when the lease was granted now cost $16,700.00, a price that gives a completely false conception of the profits in coal mining. This was the price set by the owner with a headlock on the buyer whose hands were tied behind him.

The final net profit to the Jayne heirs from such lands as had workable coal should have been not much more than $300 an acre which was produced slowly for 75 years, with nothing slow about the annual tax bills.

If you take the number of Jayne acres that had coal thick enough to be mined and multiply by $300 an acre you get a deceptively large sum of money. In actual application the annual 75th part of the total was reduced by the yearly tax bills on all of the lands, then the remainder divided among the four heirs to give no one of them anything approaching any wealth, from the royalty payments.

Mr. Jayne bought about 15 patents direct from the patentee, all other tracts purchased from a third, a fifth, or a seventh owner, with errors occurring in so many copyings of the calls from one deed to the next one. Nearly every week of my surveying I would meet up with a call for N 10 W 74 poles that was plainly incorrect, as I knew that line should go northeast. On days of too much rain or snow for surveying I would go to Fayetteville to examine the records of the Jayne chain of title in an effort to find the copying mistake, and if I failed to find it, I would abstract the neighbors chain of title to see what call it quoted for that common line.

These many days in the courthouse enabled me to become acquainted with the officials, the politicians and lawyers and I liked every one of them. Being totally thoughtless and evidently having too high an opinion of myself, I believed that everybody was as fond of me as I was of them. All slurs, slapdowns or insults were interpreted by me as being ironic humor or perhaps my mutual good friend simply was not feeling well at the moment. A man dumb enough to hold such an attitude was fortunate in sleeping soundly with no lying awake trying to devise a way to get even with somebody that had belittled you or offended you. I must have been close to fifty before I was willing to admit that there were some people who did not love me. Another advantage was that many potential enemies were disarmed by having an insult answered with a confident smile of unquestioned mutual friendship.

In June 1910 two politicians asked me if it would be alright with me to be put on the slate for the legislature and I replied that it certainly would be satisfactory with me; it was so gratifying to have this proof of the correctness of my general belief about my likeableness. Two or three years later it dawned on me that I had been only the paper wrapping around the meat that the politicians were wanting.

Voters have a strong predilection to put their X mark in front of a name that is familiar to them, even though that name might be famous for horse-stealing. The politicians thought it would help their ticket to have my grandfather's name on it, and in order to get the use of it, they had to take me since I was named for him. I was only 24, had not yet voted, knew nothing about politics, and must bestir myself to find out the difference between a Republican and a Democrat, but both parties gave me the same answer of being in favor of sensible tariffs, no toadying to special interests, lower taxes and better bridges.

Another question confronting me was how did those two men acquire the right to choose the candidates and what was a slate. The editor of the county newspaper was one of the slatemakers because the paper had such great influence in boosting the slated candidate and belittling any other man who might announce his independent candidacy for that office. A well-known popular lawyer

who was the county's best orator had influence similar to the newspaper by making speeches during the campaign in addition to his daily talking. A third slatemaker was the party chairman who had the right to name half the election officers that would work for the slate and be on hand rain or shine to form a starting nucleus at every precinct, although the most value was in being able to select cooperative clerks. It was the duty of the clerk to go into the booth, upon request, to assist the illiterate or the befuddled. In buying votes, the seller is ordered to ask the clerk to assist him, the clerk writes down the names and every hour or so steps outside to give the list to the buyer who then pays the two dollars. Also, a good party worker, eager to get Smith nominated or elected can tell his ten employees that they must vote for Smith and to make sure that they do so, he can order them to ask the clerk to assist them.

In Fayette, the fourth slatemaker was a wealthy bachelor who made generous contributions to the campaign expenses. A big donor often expected to get his money back in courthouse favors, but this man was honest. He made his contribution only for the fun of being a party to a contest and of being able to choose or veto the officials; he would receive top priority on all legal and ethical requests, receive a warm welcome in all offices and obtain inside information about all county affairs.

Although I was vocally opposed to buying votes I was no crusader and readily joined the large majority of the Fayette citizens who complacently accepted the buying as an incurable affliction of politics. For my part I never heard any member of my party mention vote buying and I doubt if there was any talking about it. The campaign manager apparently kept himself in the clear by doing nothing more than promise a precinct party worker the sum of $50 to see to it that his precinct delivered the same number of Republican votes as at the last election, with $3 extra for each vote above that quota, and it was up to the worker to argue, cajole or buy. There were no shenanigans in the rural precincts of home owners.

Since the legislature paid only four dollars a day while in session we could not stay at a hotel yet we fared right well, especially during the first session when a friend went to Florida for two months and gave us the use of their home.

The legislature was no financial benefit but it was a midwinter treat for us to have the warm buildings and paved sidewalks and a real joy to mingle with old school friends, so many of whom were in the legislature or in state offices. One member was Linnie's uncle, Dr. D. H. Courtney who received an honest appointment to the committee on Taxation & Finance, for reasons opposite to mine.

The legislature was in session January 15th to March 1st, the days of worst weather for surveying, which made the legislative job doubly agreeable. Upon my arrival I hurried over to the Kanawha Hotel that was the political headquarters, to hunt for school friends who had been elected. On the front steps I met up with Tom Banner (a fictitious name) whom I had liked the few times we had met and I was flattered to discover that I had apparently made a good impression on him too, as he

said, "Why hello John, so glad to see you again, I sure was pleased to read about you getting elected.

"I want you to have lunch with me and a couple of delegates from Cabell county whom I think you will like and be glad to meet."

I telephoned Linnie that I was making friends fast and had an invitation to eat lunch at the Kanawha with some delegates.

At the table when Tom announced, "There are now nine of us," I then learned that he was a candidate for Speaker and that I had been shanghaied on to his ship. Not at all pleased about my capture I was thinking of jumping ship if I decided that either of the other two candidates was any better man.

Turning to me Tom enquired, "Can we count on the other two delegates from Fayette?" to which I cautiously replied, "I have not talked with them since election day and do not know how they be disposed," while thinking to myself that I would have to dodge Tom until I could learn more about the candidates. Before bedtime that first day I learned that the other two candidates were no better, therefore I might as well stay with Tom who was more or less of a friend and the other two were strangers.

On the first roll call for Speaker, Tom received only 15 of the 86 House votes which I supposed was the end of his candidacy, but not so. At the lunch hour he cornered the number two candidate with a proposition; "Harold, my 15 votes will be enough to put you over. If I withdraw in your favor will you appoint me chairman of the committee on Taxation and Finance, also allow me to help choose the members so that I can be sure of a cooperative majority?"

This was the top committee to which all of the most important bills were referred, to be killed by pocket death or sent back to the House with a favorable or unfavorable recommendation. The pocket death meant that the chairman kept the bill in his pocket never bringing it up for discussion, making one excuse after another if any member of the committee made enquiries about it.

One of the men appointed to give this committee the benefit of his experience and knowledge of State affairs was me, chosen solely because I would be an undisturbing nonentity who could upset no cart. I did not have the wisdom nor sufficient information to stand up in committee meeting to present a sound counter argument either for or against any bill.

Contrary to these factual statements nobody could fool my mother up in Pennsylvania or pull any wool over her eyes; she knew perfectly well why the State of West Virginia had ordered its Speaker to appoint her son to be on this committee.

Let nobody assume that they know to whom I am referring, as I served under four different

Speakers and I am not saying at which session this happened. There were two full-scale special sessions during my tenure.

The house was operated by the Speaker with possibly 7 leaders and six lieutenants, the reason for this being that not more than 14 of the members were competent to perform the duties. The remaining 72 of us members were nothing but sheep contentedly grazing on the sweet grass of the honor and importance that had been bestowed upon us by our home counties. The only notoriety we could hope for was to be recognized by the Speaker to make the motion to adjourn for lunch, then we would have our name printed in the Journal next day. Charley, who sat next to me, stood up five times without recognization then gave up, saying, "John, there is not a darned thing we can do but light a cigar, put our feet on the desk and look important to the gallery."

The state levied a $500.00 penalty payable to the aggrieved, for each entry or aircourse that trespassed into another man's property which law gave me the idea of introducing a bill to affix a penalty upon any sawmill operator who cut into the timber of any man who did not live on that tract to be aware of the invasion.

Meeting Tom Banner on the street one noon I asked him how I should proceed to get my bill written up. "John I hate to say it, yet I see no way to change the situation. You have not got a chance, as there are only five members who know how to draw up your bill and they have no time for you. A bill must have the correct legal wording with proper legislative phraseology and you must guarantee that it does not improperly abrogate nor abridge any law already in the code."

I said, "I saw you drop a bill in the hopper. Couldn't you write it for me?"

"No, John, I got Wellman of Ohio county to draw that up for me; he has a couple of bills that will be referred to my committee."

Each party elected a couple of men to be whips whose duty it was to go around telling the sheep of his party when to vote no or yes, but I did not get the benefit of that advice because I was listed as "Independent."

Of course I got into a peck of trouble trying to go it alone. A Democrat introduced a bill making it unlawful for any man to buy or wear the emblem or regalia of any lodge unless he was a bona fide member of such lodge that had been legally chartered by the national headquarters of that lodge. Even though I knew that Democrats were tricky, I voted for the bill as I believed it to be all wrong that any bum could buy and wear a Masonic emblem. In the next campaign the opposition newspaper informed the Fayette citizens that I was one of the men who tried to outlaw the colored folks' lodges from which they received so much innocent pleasure. The colored men's lodges were State organizations that had no national headquarters to issue charters.

It having come time for a workmen's compensation law, a bill was introduced in both the House

and the Senate which latter would pay a widow $10.00 a month more than the House bill, so I voted against the House bill hoping to kill it and accept the Senate bill when it was sent over to us. Our bill passed first, was sent to the Senate which dropped its own bill and passed ours with me on the record as the cold-blooded coal operator who voted against that bill, unwilling to allow a poor widow even the pitiful stipend of $30 a month. Any man of good judgment would never allow himself to be recorded as voting against any bill as popular as the compensation law, but dozens of legislators in the states as well as in congress have been caught in that kind of a trap.

The reason why the House had so many sheep with so few bellwethers was that the counties so seldom slated a man for an office because of his fitness. The legislative spots were too often used to pacify some good party worker who was disgruntled about not being slated for Justice of the Peace, or to mollify a faithful man who had hoped to be appointed a deputy sheriff, or perhaps as a launching pad for the son or nephew of one of the slatemakers. If the spots were not needed for any of these placations, they were handed out as a friendly gesture of goodwill to classes or groups. One time the three spots of Fayette would go to a railroad conductor, a sawyer and a Union Secretary, next time to a bankboss, a farmer and a doctor.

Chapter Eleven

After five years of surveying, interrupted by semiannual , inspections of the nine mines, four sessions of the legislature, days of examining the old deed calls at the courthouse, we moved to Fayetteville to work on the tax tickets, that were in a terrible mess.

Two years previously, seeing no future to my job, I had filed my application with the Corn Products Co. which had advertised that it wanted young men who would grow up with it. My father, rightly worried about those tax tickets, insisted that it was to my own interest, as well as a duty to the family, to stay with the estate until I could unscramble the tickets, a job that could not be done unless you had first become acquainted with the ancestry of each patent, the acreages, the adjoining patents and the localities in which each tract was situated. There was never any map or description of the localities and their boundary lines, yet those boundary lines must be known. The estate had several tracts each of 100, 120, 150, 170 and 200 acres and you must know in what locality and in what district each one was situated.

Each year every tract in the county was copied on to a new land book, this work not compared for errors because the law required the taxpayer to give notice if there was any mistake in his tickets.

At some time during the 30 years of copying, a 94 acre tract got copied as 49 acres, became delinquent on the missing 45 acres which had to be figured for each year and redeemed with compound interest. A tract of 140 acres got copied to be 170 acres, but you got no refund or credit for having paid on 30 extra acres; every few years a copier would miss a line and that tract was no longer on the tax rolls. In addition to the mistakes of the copying, there were a dozen tracts that never got transferred on to the land books at the time of purchase, another dozen that were sold but never transferred. When I finally got all of the errors corrected and the missing tracts or portions of a tract redeemed, I consolidated all adjoining tracts to bring the 194 tickets down to 30 that could be more easily checked each year.

My next job was as Circuit Clerk, which perhaps has no counterpart in any other state, unless it be Virginia.

In 1831 when Fayette county was created largely from the west part of Greenbrier, all Circuit Clerks were on a fee system whereby their pay was commensurate with their amount of work, 20c for each summons that they filled out, 40c for another kind, 25c for each paper filed and so forth. By January 1915 these fees had grown to give the Circuit Clerk an unreasonably large income. The Circuit Clerk, who was also jury commissioner, made up the lists of jurymen, drew out and summoned 30 or 40 for each term of court, civil, criminal or grand, swore them for each trial, also swore every plaintiff, defendant and witness, heard all trials, gave all jurymen their pay checks. Every paper, civil, criminal, divorce or chancery was filed in his office, also the indictments, and he collected all fines; he had entire charge of naturalization, passports and pistol licenses; he was also

the ballot commissioner and as such must determine who was entitled to get on the ballot, make up the forms, have them printed, package them with the proper number for each precinct and see to their delivery. He had a deputy to do the tedious work of writing the orders in the order book or issuing summonses for witnesses and others.

McDowell county had the reputation of being the toughest county with Fayette second. I know nothing about McDowell but in Fayette it was seldom that a man murdered anybody unless the victim was a buddy or a close friend. Two good friends would drink enough whiskey to lose their reason, one would accuse the other of cheating in the card game or of stealing a girl or a banklamp, to start a fight that ended with the death of one of them.

In the hope of curbing the murders West Virginia enacted a severe pistol law with a penalty of I believe, 6 months in jail for anybody carrying a concealed weapon unless he had a license. To obtain a license you must first advertise in the paper of your intent to apply so as to give notice to anybody who might wish to object. A month later you appeared before the Judge to give a good reason why he should allow you to obtain a license, then you went to the circuit clerk who charged you $10 for the state license, $2.50 for his services, $1.50 for the advertisement, and $17.50 to the agent who wrote up the surety bond of $3500.00 payable to anybody wrongfully injured by your pistol. Not many men could afford these costs and a day off from work, but they still carried their gun, the only difference being that they must discard the bulging .38 and buy a small .32 or a Colt .25 automatic.

Unless you have had the experience, you would not guess how much it bolsters your courage and enhances peace of mind if you have a pistol in your pocket when walking a lonesome track after dark or hurrying through the owls' woods. On my trips to Fayetteville, when the courthouse closed at 5 P.M., I walked home, half the year in the dark, as I passed the fearsome Whitcomb's Boulder two miles down river below Jayne, a quarter mile above the mouth of Fern Creek. Since nobody ever did live within drainage distance of Fern Creek the C&O put up a water tank to utilize the pure water for its trains, all of which excepting the fast through trains, stopped to fill up at this tank. Whitcomb's Boulder was an extra large one on the lower side of the tracks and under its lower side the river had washed out a space that would protect ten men from winds and rains. While the westbound freights were taking water its tramps discovered this hide-out that quickly became a headquarters not only for westward travelers but also for the eastward because a sharp curve slowed the freights to make it possible to hop on or off.

There were tales of holdups, murders and dead bodies at Whitcomb's Boulder that was out of sight and sound of all human beings or habitations. As I was walking home on a spring evening before any leaves were out I noticed on the lower side of the track, 150 yards west of the boulder, something heaped up similar to a grave. Upon going down to investigate I found the traces of five graves, as proof of the tales I had heard. After making enquiries, I learned that those bodies were the cause of all the tales, but there was nothing sinister about their demises; the county had paid

successive section gangs to bury the bodies found there. One body was washed ashore from upriver, another was a tramp who fell under the wheels when trying to hop a freight, a third was a tramp who died of natural causes in their camp, a fourth was one of the section gang who died with no papers to show where he came from nor where any relatives might live. Although I no longer need fear a murder, it was still a comfort to have a gun in my pocket as I walked along there after dark.

Anderson (Devil Anse) Hatfield of the McCoy feud had several sons to help him, two of whom became deputy sheriffs in Fayette, Elias stationed at Winona to keep the peace in Nuttall District, Troy on Loup Creek.

Elias preached to all of us to carry no gun unless it be a .38, saying, "If you hit a man in a vital place with anything of lesser caliber than a .38 that man will have several seconds of life left in him to give him time to kill you before he drops, but a .38 will knock him out at once, therefore if you do not have a .38 you had best not start any shooting."

In his tragic death he proved his point. He and Troy got into a fracas, at a town named Boomer, during which fatal bullets were shot into both of them, but they were able to kill their adversary because he had shot them with a .32 pistol.

During the first two years after our marriage, I was drawn to serve on both the civil and the criminal jury, where I did not differ from the other jurors in believing that the judge's instructions were right out of the horse's mouth, the judge's own ideas. Not until I became the clerk who heard the wrangling in the back room did I learn that the judges had nothing to do with their instructions. The lawyers for the plaintiff or the prosecuting attorney, and for the defense, each wrote up a set of instructions that they wanted the judge to give. The judge said, "Charley I won't give your instruction #4 because it is almost telling the jury to find for the defense."

Charley replied, "If you don't give it I will appeal and the Supreme Court will throw it back at you. In Wayne county there was a case of Smith vs. Jones wherein the evidence was the same as in this trial and the judge refused to give that same instruction and the Supreme Court held that the judge was in error and they declared the case to be a mistrial and sent it back."

Charley was right and the judge had to give that instruction, much as he disliked it. The three men often argued for two hours as to which instructions the judge should select from the two lists prepared by the two lawyers. It was an unwritten law of the courthouse that no jury would ever be given an inkling of these facts, and the judge solemnly read the instructions as being his own ideas of what legal facts the jury should be told.

The worst miscarriage of justice in the murder trials was wherein an unscrupulous lawyer advised his client, the murderer, to testify that he shot in self-defense, fearing for his own life because the victim had put his hand to his hip pocket as though to draw a pistol. After getting that on the record

the judge was compelled to give the moth-eaten instruction: "If the defendant had good reason to believe his own life was in danger, he had the right to kill his opponent in self-defense." The jury would find the defendant not guilty because they believed the judge knew more about the case than they had been allowed to hear and the judge was trying to tell them to render that verdict.

Linnie and I lived in the same bracket as before the election so that every month during the six years of my term we were able to buy a few more shares of some stock that would rise in value during those six years to amplify our savings. If I should get reelected we could salt away enough to end all our financial problems, but near the end of the term the legislature finally got around to abolishing the exorbitant fee system and putting the clerks on a flat salary based on population that would amount to $3000 for Fayette. This was still a good salary but its value dampened by being only half of what I had been getting, so I began looking for some coal opportunity. The job of Circuit Clerk had no future and whenever I would fail to get reelected I would be inexperienced and unfit for anything else.

In the last year of my term my always helpful friend Herbert Rothwell came to tell me some wonderful news: The Sewell seam had been discovered on the head waters of Meadow Creek near the top of some high hills in the northwest corner of Greenbrier, five feet thick on the lands of the Gauley Mountain Co., an eastern holding company that had enough coal for six large leases. A lease on 5 foot Sewell coal would warrant a bonus of at least $30,000.00 but the Gauley Mountain Co. observed the rule of giving the leases free to friends, and they were all given out before outsiders got news of the find.

Herbert Rothwell had sold his mines to the Maryland-New River Co. and had gone over to buy a home in Lewisburg for his retirement, where he heard of this, and made enquiries to find out if he and I could buy some stock in any one of the leases.

Two Lewisburg brothers had been given one of the leases because they were honest likable friends. In 1920 a mine could not be opened for less than a hundred thousand, which the brothers did not have. They did have plenty of applicants wanting to buy stock, and the brothers were wise enough to select only friends whom they knew would never take over the control to squeeze them out or maybe vote themselves salaries with none for the brothers, who had to sell two thirds of the stock. They also wished to have stockholders who knew something about coal mining, and could be a help, not a hindrance. My first year away to school was at the Lee Military Academy in Lewisburg in 1898 where I saw those two good men almost daily and had seen them often enough since that year to maintain our friendships; therefore they told Mr. Rothwell that he and I could buy as much stock as we wished.

When Mr. Rothwell gave me this good news I was immensely pleased with the good fortune that he had obtained for me and after thanking him I said, "I am almost as anxious to get myself into a mine as to get my money in it. Do you suppose I could get any job?"

"I don't know, John, but we are to have an organizational meeting next month and we will see. Harry Blackburn is to be the manager of the new mine and you can talk with him at the meeting."

"Court will be in session," I said, "and I cannot attend, but you please drop a hint for me."

At the meeting, Bellburn was chosen as the name for the mine and I was given the job of assistant manager, which news filled my cup to the brim.

Two weeks later Harry Blackburn, manager of the Firecreek mine, 7 miles upriver above Jayne, came to Fayetteville to have a talk with me.

"John, I am obligated to stay at Firecreek until they can replace me and the man they have selected cannot come until next May. How soon after your term expires would it suit you to go up there to make a start?"

"The next morning," I replied.

"That is fine. I hate to ask you to go up into that snow in January but coal prices are high and all of us are eager to get started as quickly as possible."

John and Tom Raine had built a 20 mile railroad from the C&O up to the turnpike at the east foot of Big Sewell mountain where they established a large band mill naming their village Rainelle. Their railroad went on one more mile north to Meadow River, then several miles on down the river to get the timber from the hollows of Big Sewell and on beyond that. Opposite the point where their railroad met the river, was the mouth of Meadow Creek on the north bank, that flowed 11 miles from those high hills where the Sewell seam had been found. The six new mines would have to build their own branch up that creek, the money for which a bank would loan to be repaid by charging each mine so much a ton for all coal hauled over it. Construction of the branch had already started and our mine was the first one up the hollow; by the first of January the grading should be within a mile of our lease, the track gang a mile behind the grading gang. Three miles above our lease an old county road crossed the hollow on the lease granted to Quinn Morton and Walter Wood of Charleston who named their village Quinwood. They had already set up a portable sawmill and were busily hauling in other supplies by truck to get a headstart on everybody else.

Mr. Blackburn continued the discussion of plans by saying, "A man named Burdette had a little house on our lease and I wish you would first do whatever cleaning and patching is necessary to make it habitable and Quinwood has agreed to give you board and half a bed until you can get that done.

"I will ship to Rainelle, cots, blankets, kitchen utensils and nonfreezable food such as flour, cornmeal, rice, beans, molasses, some axes and other stuff. You please buy or hire a horse and sled to haul these goods from the end of the new track up to the cabin, then scout a route over which you

can snake our sawmill to our lease. You will see two small but deep little hollows on the grading, not yet bridged, so you will have to take to the woods to skirt them up higher where the hollow is not so deep. You will have to locate and hire two yoke of oxen for that and when you get the sawmill placed I will send you a sawmill crew and a cook."

Arriving at Rainelle in the dark of 5 P.M. January 1st 1921, I found the village overflowing with no spare bed in town, leaving me no choice but to hoist my two suitcases and foot it up to Quinwood where I arrived at 9 P.M. There was no trail up Meadow Creek beyond the railroad grading and the long way around from Rainelle to Quinwood by county road was blocked with snow. Stepping inside the Burdette cabin enroute, I had mixed emotions as I viewed my home for the next couple of months. Tacked to the outside were some animal hides that had evidently been imperfect for sale as a pelt and were used for household leather.

In due time the sawmill crew having sawn enough lumber for a start, Mr. Blackburn sent two carpenters who put up our first house as quickly as the lumber was produced. The mines wanted hundreds of men who were eager to come but there was no housing for them. One eager man saw a piano box at Rainelle, begged the work train to haul it to the end of the rails, and lived or rather slept in it. Another man named George Washington George built a brush lean-to on the edge of our lease where I was the first to catch him and put him to work at clearing the brush from our proposed tramroad.

The completion of the first house enabled us to take on ten more men, our progress compounding rapidly with each additional house. By this time the rails had reached our lease to bring us a couple of stoves but that was not easily done as it was the duty of the construction boss to finish that branch not to haul freight.

The first two weeks or so in a new house we were snug and warm sitting around the potbellied stove in the evenings while it snowed or the cold winds blew outside, then the heat of the stove began shrinking the green boards to give us a healthy cross-ventilation that we were not yet wanting, although the cracks became convenient for sweeping the muddy floor.

The trials of snow, cold, long hours of work, limited diet seemed trivial in comparison with my dreams of the rosy future. Thick clean coal with little expense of shooting bottom slate for headroom, the seam at tipple height with short haul and high prices for the coal. After the war there was a prolonged demand for coal that had inched the mine price up to $2 a ton, with the Union two jumps behind, unable, as yet, to overtake and capture the generous profits.

Chapter Twelve

At last I had realized my lifelong ambition to become firmly planted in a coal mine. Although I was not the head of it, Mr. Blackburn was the same type of kindly considerate man as Mr. Rothwell had been. If I was botching anything, instead of calling me down or making fun of me, each of those men would say, "That doesn't look quite right, John. Let us try doing it another way and see if maybe it will work out a little better."

My gloating over having attained my goal lasted only a few months until I was yanked out of the coal bank and pushed into a money bank. Nearly three fourths of the necessary housing had been constructed, each mine had a payroll of several thousand dollars, all sugar bowls overflowing with cash, no bank at Rainelle and we had great need for a bank. It fell to my lot to be the man who must go out into the world to learn how to open and operate a bank, because I was the most expendable man in the hollow, all other possible candidates too valuable to be spared, but Mr. Blackburn would have no trouble at all in replacing me.

To soothe me they argued that the citizens would not entrust their money to a stranger, and being an early arriver, I had the largest acquaintance, also many of the men were from Fayette where I had long known them. If this had happened six months sooner I would have flatly refused to leave my mine and Mr. Blackburn but now I put up no fight because I was getting homesick for my wife and boy and could see no hope to get a house of my own for perhaps another half year. If I accepted the new job I could leave at once to live with my family for a month while learning my duties, and it was promised that a house would be built for me at Quinwood, where the bank would be located on the county road.

Learning the clerical duties was routine, but the organizational features not so easy. Under West Virginia law, if a bank failed, a stockholder lost not only his $500 of stock but another $500 to help make amends and we could promise no big dividends. For our stockholders I must first choose men who would do the bank the most good, then persuade them to buy some stock. To win the more valuable stockholders the only enticement I had was to say that we wanted them to be a vice president or a director.

For nearly a year I ran the bank all alone, the most unorthodox bank in the state. The work took 9 hours a day but the bank became the meeting place to take up another 3 hours of entertaining depositors and if I had to be there from 7 to 7 it might as well be open for business. If I had to go to Lewisburg I put a sign on the door saying the bank would open at 5 P.M. upon my return, and if I wanted to go down to Bellburn the bank would be closed from 9 to 11 A.M.

By the end of the first year we had assets of $250,000.00 to justify the salary of an assistant, and I believe they were up to $700,000.00 at the end of the third year. At the close of the second year we felt warranted in having a modern up-to-date bank building of steel and concrete; there being such a

premium on housing that I got only a shack at first.

Although I played no part in the later life of the bank with no credit coming to me for it, I nevertheless take a sort of parental pride in saying that the Bank of Quinwood weathered the terrible banking storms of 1930 to 1934 and is today healthier than it was in my day. After the coal had all been worked out of the Meadow Creek hollow, the bank moved down to Rainelle where it politically changed its name to become the Bank of Rainelle.

At Quinwood all entertainment had to be of our own finding, but none the less enjoyable because it had to partake of the simplicity of the wild woods, trout fishing, hunting for a black walnut tree in early fall, gathering chestnuts in late fall, shooting gray squirrels for a good stew. There was one memorable Sunday morning in April when I said to Linnie, "There is an unnatural balminess in the air that portends a change of weather, which ought to make the trout grab anything, so let us go over to Browns Creek for the day."

All excursions must be on Sundays because everybody worked six full days. Linnie made sandwiches while I put some fishing line, hooks, a big pocketknife and a screwdriver in a large water bucket, then our lunch on top.

It took us nearly two hours to walk up to the end of the track, then over the ridge to pick up an old foot trail, that led down to Browns Creek.

Finding a likely pool I cut two 8 foot little saplings to which I tied ten-foot lengths of line with hook attached, upturned a rock and used the screwdriver for digging up the soft damp ground to get grubs, birch worms or earth worms for bait. All West Virginia creeks were so overgrown with bushes that it was difficult to find a partially open space on the bank where you could break down enough bushes so that you could yank a trout out of the water onto the bank without getting the line entangled.

One of our first catches being of questionable length, I dumped everything out of the bucket, filled it half-full of water and dropped the mootable trout in to postpone a likely hassle with my conscience. The law required you to throw back any trout that measured less than 7 inches from nose to fork of tail and I knew the exact spot on my wrist that would be 7 inches from the tip of my finger, but I also knew that if you bent your finger and conscience, a shorter fork could be made to reach that legal spot. We soon had enough trout of legal length to make it possible for me to become an honorable sportsman by tossing back the two short fish.

After lunch I cleared a space beside another pool where we had so much fun that we lost track of the time until we began to get chilly. Then I went to work cleaning our catch and cutting off the heads and tails to get rid of the offals as well as to lighten the load that I would have to tote back home. We caught 40 trout with only two as large as 9 inches.

By the time we got to the top of the ridge it was dusk and the owls began tuning up as soon as they saw us. This was Linnie's only experience of being caught in the owl's woods on foot after the end of a day and she did not like it at all; she had been lagging behind but the owls revitalized her muscles.

At home we dumped our bucket of fish into a tub of water on the back porch that was solid ice the next morning, to solve our refrigeration, but we had to use the hatchet and screwdriver to chop out each meal. It was another one of those 50 degree drops that came maybe twice a year.

A screwdriver came in handy for many uses and so did its little cousin the horseshoe nail. In all bankcaps there was a slot in the tin visor to hold a horseshoe nail that came free with the cap, to be used for removing dirt that might clog the airhole in the lid of the banklamp and to pry fresh wicking up from the snout of the lamp as the old became crisp and fell off. It could also be used to dig grime out of a cut or used after the noon dinner.

Speaking of trout reminds me of another old pioneer trick of getting food in the wilderness without equipment from a sporting goods store.

In surveying a detached part of Jayne land I had to get some neighbor to show me a common corner as a starting point for my work.

On a day in late fall I headed for the home of A. J. Withrow who lived on. Laurel Creek a short distance above its mouth in Meadow River, at the northwest base of Big Sewell Mountain, a large Monadnock 1200 feet high, created by being topped with the thick Fayette rock seam.

In all of the backcountry homes it was deemed to be more hospitable to serve hot biscuits instead of bread, therefore all of my lunches consisted of two biscuits cut in two, spread with jam and a thick slice of bacon in the middle. At one time it was bear bacon that was all fat, not so good as hog bacon. In the morning as I was fixing my lunch with what was on the table, Mr. Withrow joined me saying, "There is no farm work pressing at this time of year and I believe I will spend the day with you to find out where those other corners are that I do not know."

We turned up the east fork of Laurel Creek to reach the corner he knew and as soon as I started out on my call for the first line, Mr. Withrow said, "I am going to follow the creek to hunt for a good trout rock and when you reach the end of your line you holler to me."

In reply to my enquiry as to what was a trout rock he explained it to me: "When the water in a creek is real low like it is now, the trout have to gather in the little pools that provide hiding places for them, very often under a rock that is maybe three or four feet in diameter, pretty much flat and resting on some smaller stones that give a space underneath that rock.

"If the top of that rock be within two inches above or below the water level you can drop a

hundred pound rock on to that rock in the creek and the concussion will stun all the trout underneath for several seconds to give you time to reach under and grab them before they come to."

Since all patent calls quoted only the closest full degree I always looked to right and left hoping to see two licks of a line tree that would tell me whether the patent surveyor had been running to the north or to the south of the full degree quoted. On this first line I spied a line tree about 70 feet to my left to prove that the surveyor had actually been running close to 15 minutes north of that full degree. The deed called for a Spanish oak and linden, which latter tree I knew would be entirely gone, but I soon found a fallen Spanish oak that had not yet fully rotted. Searching at the place that would have been head height when the tree was standing and allowing for its pitch as it toppled, I found in the leaves some bits of bark that still showed the old axe licks.

Upon yelling to Mr. Withrow, he came up to see the find, then insisted that I must cut some catfaces in surrounding trees to mark that corner, which certainly should have been done, but it would never do to allow interested parties to cut corners at places of their own choosing. The law allows only a licensed surveyor to cut any corner licks and I was not a graduate licensed surveyor, consequently all I could do was to keep places like this one clear in mind and revisit them every year or two to keep the memory fresh.

Mr. Withrow having seen only a very dubious trout rock went back to the creek to soon return with news that he had found a good one, to which we went on our way home that evening. With me helping him to lift above our heads a rock that must have weighed a hundred pounds we dropped it, then we each reached under the rock in the creek where I got a trout in each hand and he got three.

Mr. Withrow had a gristmill also a sawmill. To the outer free side of his water wheel he had bolted a crank to which was fastened a long shaft, that ran along the shore, with an upright saw attached to the far end of the shaft in such manner that as the water wheel turned, the saw was moved up and down vertically. With two old bankcar axles and the four wheels he had built a log carriage and a track that sloped at the proper degree to keep a log gently pushing against that big crosscut saw. At 6 P.M. he laid his freshly sawn board on the stack, pushed the carriage back up the track, shifted the log one inch and at 6 A.M. he had another board. It was primitive but it produced 730 boards a year at no cost and with not much extra work.

As to the trout rock, I looked for another one every time I crossed a creek but never did find one, as the requirements are infrequent and they change with the stage of the water.

However, on Arrowwood creek in the dogwood country, I saw the evidence of another way of applying the same principle. If a glass jar developed a small crack to make it unfit for canning purposes, the mother would give it to the boy who would fill it half full of lime and take it to a good pool in the nearest trout creek, where he would fill the other half of the jar with water. After screwing the lid tightly, he tied the neck of the jar to a small rock and placed it in the pool so that

the jar would float a foot or so above the bottom. The combination of lime and water generated such a powerful gas that it would explode the jar and stun the fish in any small pool; that is, it would stun small fish like the brook trout which seldom exceeded 10 inches.

In three days I had located the corners of the two Jayne patents on the north side of the pike, then I moved to the southwest base of Big Sewell to work on the three patents on the south side of the pike, all the land being on the western slope just below the brink.

My new host lived adjacent to a locality with the catchy place name of Hell's Half Acre, which was only a joking bit of plagiarism. A little south of it was Shades of Death Creek that sounded ominous, but the name derived from the fact that the hollow was at all hours darkened by a heavy stand of hemlocks on each side of the creek.

On my way over to my new boarding place the clouds became heavier until it was snowing by the time I arrived at what I will call the Smithers home. The next morning, when I went to the back porch to wash my face before breakfast, the water bucket was coated with a quarter inch of ice. Mr. Smithers broke the ice, lifted out all his fingers could grasp, poured water into the tin basin for me, but there were plenty of slivers to hurt my face. The towel was hanging to a nail in the rafter to the right of the basin, a mirror suspended from another nail to the left, the family comb on top of the rafter.

There being sufficient snow to show tracks, Mr. Smithers decided to spend the day with me, taking along his shotgun to get any game he might see, and like all citizens, he had some natural desire to get acquainted with corners in his vicinity.

At 4:45 P.M. on that day dusk began to set in, the hour when the possums, skunks and owls start their night's work. We saw a possum not so close as to fell him in a faint of fear, but it scared him into the nearest hiding place. The snow was almost melted, but we saw some tracks to show that the possum had taken refuge in a tree that had a large hole in its base. Asking for my belt hatchet, Mr. Smithers cut down a small sapling that forked 8 feet above ground, where the trunk was one inch in diameter, then chopped off the two forks to leave one and a half inches of stubs. With his pocket knife he whittled the two stubs to sharp points, then pushed the sapling up inside of the hollow base until he felt the softness of the possum; jabbing the two sharp prongs into the hide of the poor possum he gave the sapling two twists to firmly wrap the skin around the two prongs and pulled the possum out of the tree.

On Meadow Creek the mines were nearly a mile apart, no county road up or down the hollow, and almost always a lot of mud on the path to the railroad tracks if you wished to walk to the next village, therefore there were no parties and scarcely any visiting among the womenfolk. At the bank I had visitors all day to make my life pleasant. Linnie voiced no complaints, but near the end of my third year, some little incident that I have forgotten, made me aware of the fact that it was not fair to Linnie for me to settle down for keeps in that remote hollow, nor would it be to the

advantage of our boy either. Jack was away at school to make life lonesome for us in our house.

My $3000 salary was entirely satisfactory but it could never rise much higher and the mine had become an investment that would get along nicely without my help no matter where I lived. It had come time for me to look for some job or occupation out in the world where we could have social gatherings, restaurants, pavements, dentist, plumber and grocery stores.

Upon mentioning these thoughts to a cousin who lived outside York, Penna., he said he knew of a business opportunity in York that might interest me. He was a director in the York Trust Co., which was about to foreclose on the York Chocolate Co. which could no longer meet its obligations. It had been operated too extravagantly, one trouble being that the owner had too kind a heart to be able to fire some associates whose daily tasks could have been performed in three hours of real work.

On our investigation visit we were charmed with York especially the farmers' market to which the Pennsylvania Dutch brought so many good foods that we had not tasted while up Meadow Creek, and it took only an hour and a half to drive to the stores of Baltimore. If I endorsed a loan for the chocolate factory, my money would at least be safe because I would be the bookkeeper and treasurer. The owner had reached the point where he could borrow no more money nor did he have the cash for buying raw materials or meeting the payrolls to keep the factory going much longer.

A York candy man told the bank that the factory could be made profitable and the notes soon paid off if the bank could find a man who would work long hours to fill the places of the deposed supernumeraries, and I became that man. The candy man would stop in at odd hours to give policy and efficiency advice, I would become secretary, treasurer, bookkeeper, sales manager and shipping clerk, while the former owner would remain as production manager. We would become the new owners of the, factory as soon as the notes were paid off.

It was a solid week before I could fully comprehend their complicated set of corporation books, during which time I learned that there was only one man who could take inventory. The production manager was the only one who could estimate how many pounds of beans were in the roaster, how many barrels of sugar in process, how many tons of chocolate in the mixing vat, in the cooler, in the wrapping room, how much milk and how many almonds on hand. Whether the factory wished to show a profit or a loss for any given month was entirely in his hands to report what he wished, something that is true of most businesses. You cannot trust a business financial statement unless you know the truth of their inventory total, which so few men can know.

The sales manager was the next to go, after the bookkeeper, then the shipping clerk. You could spend your life on studying shipping and not learn all there was to know, but the traveling agents of boats, trucking firms and railroads gave you good tips. We sold a lot to the Piggly-Wiggly stores and I remember that a shipment to their Chattanooga store could get the cheapest freight costs in sending it by truck to Baltimore, by boat on to Wilmington, N.C., then by train over to

Chattanooga. Chocolate for our Los Angeles customers went by truck to New York, then by boat, but we had to plaster those cartons with notices to please keep that chocolate away from any hot pipes. Any strong heat such as sun shining on a station platform will cause the cocoa butter to melt and ooze and turn the dark brown chocolate into a dirty gray that the public associates with age, and they will not buy that stale stuff even though it was only three days old, in no way damaged by its gray color.

The coffee plant native to Africa was transplanted to South America where nearly all coffee is now grown. The Cacao tree native to Central America was transplanted to Africa which produces most of our cacao beans. These cacao beans are roasted, hulled and put through a press to extract the oil that is cacao butter but commonly called cocoa butter, and a good half of the residue of cocoa powder is run through powerful presses to make it smooth as the butter, which is how the public wants it to be. The public also wants its chocolate to be rich, therefore all of the cocoa butter is mixed back into part of the cocoa powder together with sugar and some vanillin. The surplus cocoa powder can be sold cheaply to a cocoa factory or you can buy the cocoa butter to make it into more chocolate. In the older days this powder was thrown out because it is insoluble; if you tossed a shovelful into a tub of water it would float on top all day. It was perhaps 80 years ago that a chemist discovered a chemical that could be mixed with this powder to make it sink and partially dissolve, but if you make a cup of cocoa you will notice a lot in the bottom that did not dissolve. Cocoa with the cocoa butter pressed out is obviously far less fattening than the chocolate which contains twice its original amount of the butter, also milk chocolate is less fattening than plain chocolate, since one pound of whole milk cannot compare with one pound of cocoa butter.

In buying an almond bar I was always pleased to find an extra almond in it and on a guess that others might feel the same way we were generous with our almonds. At the place where the almonds were dropped into the molten chocolate, the almonds cost us 9c a pound while the chocolate had cost l c.

The molten chocolate flowed from the mixing vat into a distributing tank that had a half dozen sets of dispensing nipples, one set for the little buds, and ranging on up to the filling of the ten pound pans. The containers were on a conveyor belt that passed through a cooling box to deliver the hardened chocolate to the refrigerated packing room. The ten pound slabs that required no more wrapping than a piece of brown paper, cost us 14c a pound and we sold it at 20c a pound or at 17c a pound by the carload to the manufacturers of the national candy-bars.

All of the chocolate was of the same grade and quality, differing only in being with or without milk, or sometimes the ten pound slabs used for coating were without sugar. A local candy store tried to give its customers a bargain by breaking up a ten pound slab and offering it for sale at 40c a pound but nobody would buy any of it because the public eyes adjudged that chocolate to be something inferior, and preferred to pay 80c a pound for the wrapped products.

After two years of hard work we were able to repay the bank loans, an event that becomes an

excellent stopping place for this West Virginia narrative that has by mischance emigrated out of that worthy State.