

OUR
MEMORIES
OF
JOHN NUTTALL

Caroline McGaffey Fryberger
Grace Taylor Himes

My cousin, Grace Himes, has written a very interesting sketch of the life of our Grandfather, John Nuttall. She has asked me to add any personal touches I might remember and I find much I have written is a direct copy of her paper.

I think my first recollection of my grandfather was when he told a funny story about a man who approached a stagecoach driver for London. The man asked the coach driver what he would charge to take a fat goose to London. The driver answered: "A shilling." The next morning the man presented himself, but with no goose. The stagecoach driver asked about the goose and the man answered: "My name is Goose and I'm a fat one." He rode to London for a shilling.

Grandfather was born at Cupola Clough, a suburb of Accrington, Lancashire, England, of very poor parents. The whole vicinity was poor, as the people were either farmers, weavers or coal miners. This part of Lancashire was called "The Forest of Rossendale" and, until the year 1500, had been kept expressly as a hunting preserve for the King's pleasure. It was about 30 sq. miles in area and prior to 1500, only 20 people lived in the Forest. They were mainly officers of the King, whose duties were to guard the deer and other game. Henry VIII passed a decree allowing others to live there and in 50 years the population jumped to 1000.

The Nuttall name is very ancient in the Forest. It is said they were either Flemish or French, the name "De Noughto," and that they came with William the Conqueror to England. Old "Nuttall Hall" was built in 1400. There is a reference to a Henry De Noughto in 1200 in "The History of Rossendale Forest" by Edward Newbegging.

There are many Nuttalls in the lists of the "Greaves" or "Reaves" of the Forest from 1559 on. The Greave was appointed by the King to keep law and order in the Forest. The name Sheriff or Shereef comes from this. The Greave had bailiffs and constables under him. A John Nuttall was a Greave in 1566. John Nuttall has been a very common name in that vicinity for hundreds of years. For this reason, it has been hard to trace our ancestors through this maze of John Nuttalls.

Grandfather's father was Thomas Nuttall, born in 1788 at Cupola Clough. He was a weaver and perhaps his father was a weaver before him. All we know of Thomas was that he married Alice Crabtree and they had 6 children, of which our grandfather, John Nuttall, was the fifth and Alice the sixth. There was a Lawrence and a Thomas and a girl. This daughter married a man by the name of Hollin and their son, John, with his wife Elizabeth came to Philipsburg, Pa. where both died. A year after the birth of Alice, Thomas, their father, died, leaving a wife with six small children with nothing. There were no benefits or unemployment compensations or relief checks in those days, so the children had to go to work to help out.

John started to work at the age of eight. He got a job as "Tier Boy" in a calico print shop, where he worked for 3 years. Then he went to work in a coal mine at Goodshaw Hill, a place near Cupola Clough and worked there until he was 17, opening and closing a curtain which controlled air currents - "A Trapper Boy." He returned to the print works for $3\frac{1}{2}$ years, but as he liked mining better, he went back to the mines and worked there for 12 years. He married by that time to Elizabeth (usually known as Betty)

They had three children born in England - Alice Elizabeth, Thomas and Susanna. Henry Pollard had died too, when Elizabeth was very young. John's mother never married again but Elizabeth's mother - Elizabeth Holt Pollard - did marry again, a man by the name of James Crabtree, a cousin of Alice, mother of John Nuttall, who had a large family.

John Nuttall decided to join his relatives and seek his fortune in America. He left his family in England and came to America in May 1849. A year passed before he felt established enough to bring them to America. They arrived in Staten Island early in 1850. This was the day of sailing ships and before the Atlantic Cable. Some steamships were in use but when grandmother and the children came over, the family considered steamships much too dangerous. I suspect they thought like a character in the play "Little Old New York" - "Fancy going to sea in a teakettle!" The trip made a lasting impression on Alice, age six, who, until her last years would recall a burial at sea and sing chanties the sailors had taught her. They were twenty-one days at sea and it was thought to be a remarkably quick passage.

On April 26, 1851 a fourth child, Martha, was born. When Martha was 2 years old, her mother, Elizabeth, died of what was called the "ague." Elizabeth's half-sister, Martha Crabtree, who had come to America with grandmother and the children, later married George Sutcliffe. His mother was Hannah Hudson, sister of Anne Hudson, first wife of James Crabtree.

After grandmother's death there were hard times for them all. Grandfather hired one housekeeper after another. One was dishonest, another intemperate. He finally said to mother, who was the oldest -

"Alice, let us try it alone." From then on he would make breakfast and plan lunch before going to work and would be at home in time to prepare supper. He would set bread at night and get up early the next morning and have it in the oven before going to work, telling mother when to take it out. One story of this time Alice liked to tell was of going into a neighbor's house where she was given a doughnut. It tasted very good and she asked how it was made. Learning as much as she could, she hurried home to get the necessary ingredients and invite the neighborhood. Just when the fun was at its best, Aunt Mary came in to find mother on a stool beside the stove over a pan of hot fat, cooking doughnuts, while children from the neighborhood, as well as the small Nuttalls, reached eager hands to receive the treat as fast as she could pass them out. "Aunt Mary" made quick work of ending the feast. At this time, mother told me of making friends with the gardeners at some of the big houses on the hill, who gave her cuttings and bulbs to plant in her little garden. She always loved flowers and a garden, and while she lived in Grandfather's house, had a conservatory.

It was about this time that grandfather began having "chills and fever" so Mr. Crabtree suggested he take a sample case of silk handkerchiefs and mufflers and see what orders he could get. The idea was to get him away from the salt air as, at that time, it was thought to be the cause of ague.

On one of these trips he met in a boarding house in Philadelphia, a widow by the name of Nuttall. Her first name was Anne but I do not know her maiden name. May Haworth told me that Anne Nuttall told her that her husband, Thomas Nuttall, had left her and their

small son in England until he found whether he wanted to settle in the new world. In due time he sent for them, but on arrival in New York, a friend met them with the news that Thomas had died several weeks before. She went on to Philadelphia and secured board in a boarding house where later on, the little son died and later grandfather met her.

One trip was planned as far west as Pittsburgh but on the train after leaving Harrisburg, Grandfather overheard some men talking about a branch road the P.R.R. were about to build in to a new coal field. So he left the train at Tyrone and walked over the line of survey, finding a small farm where the coal was opened for wagon sales. It was owned, as I remember it, by William Colegrove. They soon made a deal, grandfather putting up what money he had to bind the sale. He then returned to New York where he persuaded Mr. Crabtree to become a partner and he returned to Pennsylvania to finish paying for the land - about 250 acres. He continued the wagon trade until the railroad was finished.

Now we have them setting out on a long train trip. They stopped over in Philadelphia, where John married Anne. Returning to the house, he introduced Anne - "Well, children, I have brought you a new mother." The next day they landed at the new home and Alice, while admiring Anne's pretty clothes, especially some red shoes, proceeded to take a violent dislike to the new step-mother who had strange ideas. One cannot help but feel sorry for them all. Alice, while twelve, could not easily adapt herself to the new ways. Anne, who had always lived in towns, found the wilderness and primitive way of life not at all to her taste. The new step-mother

thought children should be suppressed, should not sit at table with their elders; nor eat of the same food. Finally, things came to such a pass that grandfather sent Alice to Staten Island, where she had the advantage of a good school as well as of homes of the various aunts and half-aunts. It certainly was all for her good. She spent two years at Staten Island. During that time a little son was born in Pennsylvania, Lawrence William - 1857.

By this time the stepmother and the older children were at war. It was then, I have been told, that Anne suggested to grandfather - "Why not send all the children to Staten Island?" "If not, I shall take my son and leave." Grandfather said: "The children were here first." The result was, she took the baby and returned to Philadelphia, where grandfather used to see them each time he made a business trip there.

When Uncle Will (Lawrence William) was seven, he perched on his father's knee and asked: "Can I live with you?" Grandfather replied: "That is for your mother to decide." As a result grandfather arrived back in Pennsylvania, telling Alice - "Here is another little one for you to raise."

Mother has told me of going to the spring house for milk or cream and finding a copperhead snake curled up on the lid of the crock. Wolves howled at the pasture fence, and one day, on her way to a neighbor's home, she was obliged to turn back because a family of bears were in the path. The prize story was: One day a great wailing came from the direction of the mine, which was beyond a piece of woodland from the farmhouse. The children decided there must have been an accident at the mines and that the women were making the outcry, so the first idea was that they should go and see

if their father was hurt. Then someone remembered the promise that no one was to go so far from home without a grownup. So they waited. When grandfather came home and they told him, he sent some men out, who found a half-eaten deer and traces of a panther.

By this time, another 600 acres had been added to the original 250 acre farm and Mr. Robert Hare Powell had bought an interest and was to manage the sales end of the business. The money was needed to build houses for the workers, the tippie from which to load railroad cars and the store. After the store was built with an apartment over it, the family moved from the little farm house and lived over the store. The railroad was opened as far as Powellton, as Mr. Powell now called it, in 1856, and grandfather began shipping coal, which was the first over the Tyrone and Clearfield Branch.

Before the road was opened to coal, a train came up over it with a number of well known people, on an inspection tour. The Morgan-Hall Co. had bought the Phillips interest. I do not know the passenger list, but I have been told there were P.R.R. officials as well as those interested in opening the new coal fields. As noon grew near, these guests began to be hungry and went into the store to buy crackers and cheese. When grandfather realized there had been no provisions made to feed the party, he went at once and invited them all for lunch and went to mother, who was rather overcome at the idea of providing lunch for so many at such short notice. However, soon she had ham and eggs, biscuits and coffee for them all. Mrs. Mull and Miss Julia Hale told me many times of the praise their mother gave on her return home, to that "young Nuttall girl" and how they must get to know her as soon as they moved up to Phillipsburg.

General Hale died July 2, 1863, so it was not until the war was over that they lived in the Philips home, which had been named "Moshannon Hall," but to the whole countryside was known as "The Mansion" or "The Big House." When the Hale family came, they called it "Halehurst" and so it is today.

Grandfather was of medium height and build. He had very heavy brows, overhanging steely blue eyes. He was a most zealous Church goer. He always attended Church on Sunday morning, Sunday School at 2:00 P.M. and, again an evening service. I can remember him sitting in the back of the store, "oyster crackers" in one hand, while with the other he was busy teaching the dog to hold a cracker on his nose until at a given signal...toss his head and catch the cracker. Grandfather had great patience and I think, taught each dog we had that trick. While the lesson was in progress, I remember grandfather's high hat, cane and Bible on the counter nearby.

John Nuttall was a good man. He objected to strong drink and the use of tobacco. He never would permit the sale of liquor on his land, but some enterprising man built a saloon or tavern just as one entered the Nuttall lands in West Virginia and put up a sign which read on one side "Last Chance" and the other "First Chance."

The school master in Powellton used to use a little ditty and I have heard both Grandfather and mother use it many times.....

"Tobacco is a filthy weed
T'was the devil sowed the seed.
It stains your fingers, soils your clothes
And makes a chimney of your nose."

Several years before he died, grandfather called his children together and told them he was about to make a will and wanted it understood, so there would be no hard feelings when the time came.

He wanted them to live in peace and harmony. At that point "Grandma," as we all called his wife, asked to speak. She said that since she had come into his life late, she had no part in making his money, so in place of her legal share, could she have the house and a small quarterly sum to live on during her life. Of course, it was arranged and I think the family all appreciated her generosity. Perhaps it was the having things understood that has made for lack of friction and strong family ties.

I have jumped ahead to the things I remember while the family were still at Powellton. Several things took place that I should have mentioned earlier.

During those years at Powellton, from 1856 until 1866, there were several winters they boarded the nearest Schoolmaster and held night school, which all attended. George W. McGaffey, having finished building the houses, and Mr. Nuttall needing a book-keeper, took that job and on December 19, 1864 married Alice. Later Mr. McGaffey joined the firm with a one-third interest.

Mr. Powell and Grandfather had had some trouble over the coal shipped and Mr. Powell said "Sell or Buy." Grandfather, not being in a position to buy, sold his interests and later "The Decatur Coal Co." opened a mine on Coal Run, built a house, store and stable on the side hill; but in two years the coal ran out and only a rock wall remained. After this, Mr. Bacon, a gentleman from Philadelphia, became a member of the firm and handled the sales end of the business. The buildings at Coal Run were taken down and loaded on flat cars and re-erected near a siding of the Morrisdale Branch of the Tyrone and Clearfield Railroad in Philipsburg. I was born in that house. So carefully had the moving been done that,

as long as we lived there, some of the upstairs rooms had never had to be repainted.

Mr. Bacon was a good friend as long as he lived. He had an interest in the "Laurel Run" mine, which was on the "long road to Osceola" about five miles distant. Grandfather was superintendent of these works also.

I remember one day, at the lunch table, something was said about a certain man working so hard. Grandfather said: "Maybe he likes to work." Mr. Bacon said: "No one likes to work." Grandfather said, as he shook a finger: "Now, Josiah, I do"....at which Mr. Bacon replied, amid a general laugh: "John, John! It is not choice with you; it is habit."

Before the family left Powellton, Uncle Tom made a trip West, partly for pleasure and to look over coal lands. He bought an Indian pony which he rode much of the way and decided to bring home. As I remember from one of his letters, he had turned back at St. Louis, because of an Indian uprising and decided to come up to Pittsburgh by boat. He left some men, with whom he had been talking, saying he must see about his pony. There had been a landing and the rail had not been replaced. There were only oil lamps and often they cast strange shadows. It is supposed that, in the poor light, he stepped over the edge of the boat and struck his head as he went down. He was a strong swimmer; but there was a blow on the back of his head when his body was taken from the river near Gallipolis. Father went down to the place where the body had been buried, having had a metallic casket sent from Pittsburgh. He then went on to Staten Island with the body, where it is buried beside grandmother in John Crabtree's lot, at the right of the Church.

The telegram to Grandfather read:

"Parkersburg, W. Va., October 13, 1868.

Thomas Nuttall crowned off Steamer "Emma Graham"
last night. Baggage and Indian pony in my possession.

M. M. Brown, Capt."

I remember "Dollie,"^u the pony, vaguely. Grandfather used to drive her and I think when Barcroft (Barkey) Crabtree used to take a young lady out for a ride, she rode Dollie, while he rode "Pet," one of the three horses, belonging to John Nuttall & Co. (Barkey was from Staten Island and spent several years with our family in the interest of his health.) He was a grandson of Jonathan.

A funny story I remember hearing: Grandfather had Dollie hitched to a light buggy to go up town. When they came to a certain corner, Dollie turned around and, in spite of all grandfather could do, took him back to the barn. He tried several times with the same result. Then he appealed to father, who took over. At that corner father walked with his arm through the bridle and there was no trouble. Later, he learned a man with a trained bear had given a performance on that corner, earlier in the day. Horses are naturally afraid of bears,

John Fryberger used to laugh about one day a telegram came to the Bank saying that grandfather would arrive on the afternoon train, not an unusual thing...so John was sent to meet him. As he reached for the bag, it dropped toward the ground. Recovering himself, he said: "Mr. Nuttall, if I am not being too inquisitive, what do you have in that bag?" Grandfather calmly replied: "Just some samples of iron ore."

Another of grandfather's stories about going to London was: "A man told his wife he had a trip to town and what should he bring her. She said her shawl was getting thin, and not very warm but, on thinking it over, she would rather have a 'Bosom pin'." Another was an order for a dress - "To be of striding width and walking sidth, a diamond back and a belt in."

I think the last visit grandfather made us, grandma and Fred Rothwell came with him. Winifred Moore was with us and when I said: "Grandpa, this is Winifred Moore," as he shook hands, "May she never grow less," said he. Winifred was a very pretty girl as well as charming.

Let us again turn to Grace's description for an intimate picture of the West Virginia home: - -

"After the death of Thomas, John again grew restless. He had heard of the good coal in West Virginia so he went down there to look around. He found the coal very good indeed, and began to buy. The Railroad had not come into Fayette County yet, so he got his land cheap. His first mine he called "Nuttallburg" and it was situated in a gorge called "New River Canyon," about 60 miles east of Charleston. It was a beautiful, primitive country at that time, and still is, in the year 1955. He began getting his mines opened, his towns, stores and Post Office built. In about two years, the railroad connected with his land and he started to ship coal.

For some time he went back and forth from Centre County, Pa. to Fayette County, W. Va. At this time Martha married a young Englishman, Jackson Taylor, from Rossendale Forest, who had come to Staten Island to work for his oldest brother, who had a woolen mill

there. This mill was later sold to Stroock. Martha and Jackson Taylor went to West Virginia to make a home for grandpa.

They lived in a small house for a few years, then the children began to come very regularly - a boy and then a girl - two years apart, so grandpa built a twenty room house sprawling over the rocks at Nuttallburg. Great boulders hung perilously up the mountains above it. The railroad and the wild and muddy New River ran along at the foot of the gorge, just below the house. The mountains were beautiful and the home happy but the air was full of coal, dust and coke oven smoke.

Uncle Will Nuttall had married Katherine DuBree, a girl from Philipsburg and they lived up the mountain above us. Will was an indefatigable Botanist and a very fine one in fact, and has had plants named for him. Their home was full of books, music, Rodgers groups, botany specimens and other things fascinating and cultural.

In Nuttallburg were many negro miners. There were only four or five white families on the place, but they had good times among themselves.

Grandpa married again, Martha Blume, a woman of suitable age and temperment, the daughter of J. L. Blume of West Virginia, with whom grandfather had many business dealings in buying his lands. They lived in a wing of the big house. I remember well going to see them. They would be sitting by their glowing coal fire, their hands folded, rocking and chatting. He was a gentle, kind old man- much interested in his business and his children. He had arranged to have a good many Englishmen to come over and help him so he had companionship and comforts. I never remember seeing him play a game, though --

not even checkers or chess. His life had always been too full of work for games. Later he built a Church at Nuttallburg, on the mountain, where all denominations had services. He was a religious man. I thought he and his people had always been Baptists but there is a difference of opinion. Some say he was a Methodist; others say he was an Episcopalian. He was good and that is what matters.

This "Era of Peace" was shattered by his decision to build a railroad up Keeneys Mountain - a tremendous engineering feat, but he was determined to get the coal out that was on top. Grandfather paid the entire cost of this railroad, which was \$290,000. It took all his savings and was a big gamble for him. The C. & O. Railroad agreed to maintain the road and charge all the lessees so much for hauling their coal, which grandfather would get. Grandfather's railroad was begun in 1892 and finished in 1894. A Virginia man named Langhorne was the engineer of this road. He was the father of Lady Astor and Charles Dana Gibson's wife (the famous Langhorne sisters).

There was a lot of terrible blasting and rocks tumbled down from the mountain, some of which hit our house and made great holes in it. By that time there was a summer farm "Holmfield" on top of Nuttallburg Mountain and we were out of danger. How much we enjoyed that home on the mountain, so bright and clean and fresh, after the smoke of the canyon. Our cousins from Philipsburg would come - Caroline McGaffey, May Todd and Jessie Taylor from New York. We rode horses, had picnics and parties, explored the forest, watched the sunsets - simple pleasures, but they were great pleasures; not to be forgotten.

Grandpa then built himself a house at DuBree. The first mine opened, which had been taken over by Fred and Herbert Rothwell, relatives from England, who had come over to help grandfather at Nuttallburg. Grandpa was happy there and he rested from his labors. He was now 80 years old and he had been working and planning for 72 years. He now had 28,000 acres of land, 7 or 8 coal mines and was considered a millionaire. His work was over and he began to fail."

NOTES BY CAROLINE FRYBERGER:

There is a story told many times about Grandfather in his later years. In West Virginia he had a custom of going to the mines to get the manifests which he would take down to the train and give to the conductor or engineer to mail, thus saving time. One day dressed in old clothes, having handed the mail to the man on the engine, he was accosted by a traveling salesman, who said: "Old man, would you like to earn a quarter?" Grandfather looked about, and finding himself so addressed, answered: "I never refused an honest quarter in my life." So the salesman handed him his bag, saying: "Take it up to the store." On reaching the store, he asked: "Where would you like to have it?" "On the counter," said the salesman. After putting the bag on the counter, grandfather walked on into the office. The salesman said to one of the clerks: "Who is that old man?" On being told "John Nuttall" - he let out "OH! my _____," grabbed the bag and went to the station to wait for the next train out of town.

The last visit I made in West Virginia during grandfather's life was after the railroad was built and I took the train up to

DuBree. The fireman gave me his seat on the engine, where I was between the boiler and the sun. It was warm but better than walking. The C. & O. would not run a passenger car, nor sell a ticket over the road.

I am Caroline, born January 11, 1873, the daughter of George William and Elizabeth Alice Nuttall McGaffey and one of the five living grandchildren of John Nuttall.

Since this was written, Fred C. Todd, has gone. He was born November 4, 1867. Married October 24, 1894 - Helen Louise Zeigler. Died September 3, 1956.