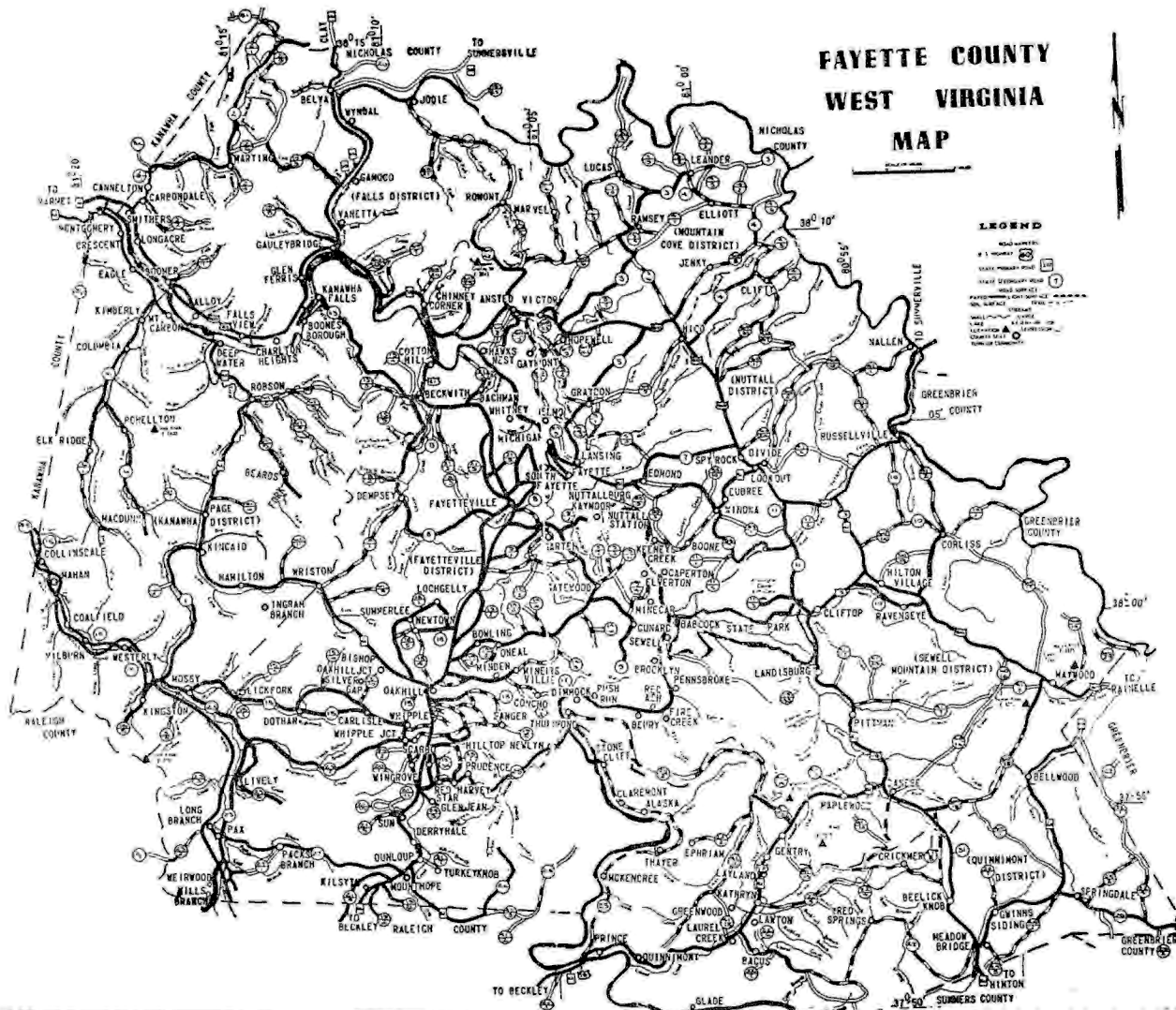


1999-01-01



# HISTORICAL NOTES

*on*

## FAYETTE COUNTY W. VA.

by

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and

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and Europe, 1944 and 1945.



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## DEDICATION

To

HON. CHARLES E. MAHAN, JR., LL. D.

Noted Lawyer, Successful Business Man,  
Prominent Banker, Eminent Churchman,  
and Distinguished Citizen whose Hearten-  
ing Encouragement led to the Production  
of this Volume. It is Dedicated to him in  
Appreciation of his Abiding Interest in the  
History of Fayette County. . . .

## FOREWORD

First of all, your attention is called to the name of this book. It is what the volume intends to portray,—“Historical Notes on Fayette County, West Virginia” and not a definitive history. There is a whole raft of Fayette County history that interests no one and that is not even touched upon in this presentation. Much contained herein is the county’s living history and such as people inquire about today. All the history of Fayette County could not be contained in a volume of this compass.

No little effort has been made to get the story in each case correct. However, you know and I know, too, that to turn out a perfect product of this nature is well nigh impossible. It is the old story all over again that we can not all be brilliant because someone’s simply got to do the work! That is the apology for writing this book. Where mistakes are found the reader is humbly asked to have mercy on the writer who had to do the best he could where he was with what he had.

In a few cases the author has used an axe that was borrowed for the occasion. An instance of this is to be found in the employment of Milton W. Humphrey’s story of Fayette County in the Civil War. He knew more about it than anyone I have ever known because he was in it when the history was being made. That puts Humphreys’ chapter in the class of expert testimony. Where use has been made of stories that were written by others the names of the authors are stated where known.

Greatly am I indebted to Homer Wells, Beckley, W. Va., photographer for supplying many of the pictures used herein. Frank Mauritz, Oak Hill photographer, likewise helped in this respect.

Typing of the manuscript was largely the work of the author but Miss Mary Grace Lilly was the one who copied the long chapter by Milton Humphreys on the part Fayette County had in the stirring local events of the early 1860’s.

George Armstrong helped with the story of EMCO, the big plant at Alloy in the lower end of the county.



Since this book will have its major circulation in Fayette County it is hoped it will give our citizens some light on the great political subdivision wherein they live. In that happy hope it is sent forth for your reading pleasure.

C. Shirley Donnelly

Oak Hill, W. Va.

April, 1958.

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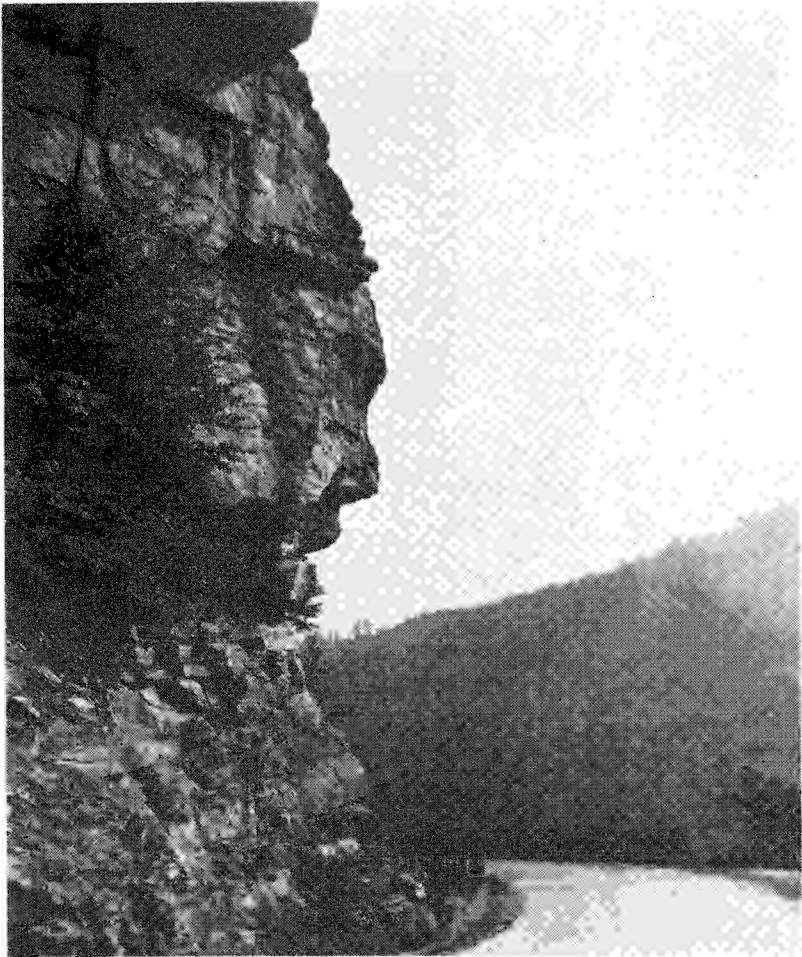
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Unusual stone profile picture of what Homer L. Wells, the first person to make a photograph of this face, calls "The Old Man of the Canyon." This is found on the left hand side of the mountain just as the traveller is about to cross the high Honey Creek bridge on Route 19 from Chimney Corner as he heads Fayetteville way. This photograph was made about 1930 when Edward and Jack Diamond were building the Chimney Corner road house which is still standing at the junction of The Midland Trail and U. S. Highway No. 21. Hundreds of feet below this natural wonder, New River struggles in its boulder-strewn bed on the way to its plunge over Kanawha Falls two miles distant. This great stone face is one of majestic proportions and as fine an example of natural sculpturing as one will find in all the world.

## Chapter One

# GENESIS OF FAYETTE COUNTY

### Prehistoric Stone Ruins on Armstrong Mountain

The traveler on U. S. 21-60, just east of Boomer in Fayette County, may notice one of the state's historic markers. This is the inscription it bears:

"Ancient Works. On a ridge between Armstrong and Loop Creeks across the river are extensive prehistoric stone ruins whose walls are several miles long, and enclose a large area. Many of these stones are from the valley below the old wall."

The ruins referred to are near the summit of the lofty and almost precipitate mountain. Oldest work of man in the county, these so called "walls" are draped around the shoulders of the towering eminence. Strictly speaking, the works are not walls as finished objects of masonry are usually known but rambling ricks of rocks instead.

Existence of them was familiar to the Indians of West Virginia, it is said. Early white settlers in the Great Kanawha Valley likewise were acquainted with them. Capt. William N. Page, whose name was given the community of Page, was among the first people in the area to devote study to the mysterious objects. Much of the information he embodied in his writings on this subject deals with what he heard from older residents of this region. Legend was given great credence by Page and he preserved some of these in an article he wrote for Dr. John P. Hale's History of the Kanawha Valley in the early 1890's.

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Loup and Armstrong Creeks pour their flood into the Great Kanawha River, the first named at Deepwater, and the latter stream some three miles farther west. These two mountain tributaries of the Kanawha run an almost parallel course for close on to ten miles before they empty into the river. Between these two creeks rises Armstrong Mountain. It is approximately 1,500 feet above sea level where it faces the river at Mount Carbon.

Around the mountain about 300 feet and more from the crest run these rock rows. If they were in one long wall they would extend several miles in length. These tend to make an inclosure of the top of the mountain where the land is practically level for perhaps 40 acres or more.

At one place where this summit is the narrowest a row of rocks were built across this flat plot. In one of the sections made by this line of partition is a spring of water which Captain Page first found in 1877. It was said by a Dr. Buster, pioneer settler on Armstrong Creek, that when he first saw this water supply it was quite extensive; that this water came from a well that had been sunk on the watershed, and its flow drained into a sort of pool some distance below the vein. When Dr. Buster first saw the pool he estimated it was at least ten feet long and six feet in diameter, with a depth of about four feet.

Heaps of stones, circular in shape, were found hard by this water supply. No cement was used in constructing these mysterious works. Some stretches of them are quite large while others are quite low and unimpressive. Here and there the lower ricks have been all but covered over by soil that has been washed upon them by the rains of the centuries. Some of the highest ricks reach a height of eight to ten or twelve feet.

Within the inclosure atop Armstrong Mountain one can scarcely find a stone big enough to throw at a bird. Whoever removed the rocks from the flat summit seems to have made a clean sweep of all the stones. Where jutting cliffs were encountered on the face of the mountain there were no rocks piled on the top of the high places.

Within what amounts to the inclosure on top of this mountain are mighty trees that belong to the forest primeval. Some of these are huge black walnut trees such as are seldom found in an out-of-the-way location like this one. There on the flat surface of the land grows a species of coarse grass that would appear native to some other locale.

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Between the base of Armstrong Mountain and the south bank of the river was found a mighty city of the dead when the C & O Railway built its road through that territory in 1872. It

is thought that here were buried the ancient people who built the wall and perhaps lived within its confines in their halcyon days. Skeletons unearthed were of average height. With them were found such items as Indians and others interred with their dead. Here and there on the mountain side appear what seems to be cairns, or burial places of the early peoples who inhabited this community.

Who were these aboriginal people? Why did they build a rock series like the ones to be seen on this mountain to this day? These are questions which have long gone unanswered. What is more the answers may never be known. As one sees these works in late winter or early spring before leaves and weeds hide them from view he tends to formulate his own replies to the queries. Smithsonian Institute sent P. W. Norris, an aged and ailing archaeologist, to investigate this matter but he died there in 1885 during the time he was engaged in the interesting assignment.

Perhaps it is reasonable to assume that a tribe of Indians had their town on Armstrong Mountain and hunted in this vicinity. Then, too, they removed the rocks from the level summit and built them into a sort of fire wall around the lower reaches of the top. It is conceivable that the Shawnees who traveled up and down the Kanawha Valley would not be inclined to climb the steep mountain to war on the more peaceful tribe upon the mountain but would set fire to the woods and try to "smoke them out."

Presence of great walnut trees there might argue that these trees are the descendants of the nuts carried there by Indians for food. When the walnuts were cracked and the shells dropped on the earth the remaining particles of kernels in the castaway shells germinated and grew up as small trees. These in time became mammoth trees, died away, and others grew from the nuts from these trees to take their place.

In the fertile soil on the flat land it is conceivable the squaws raised corn and other edibles to supplement the venison rations supplied by the Indian men who roved the woods and bagged the meat supply. There are other theories about the walls and the people who built them. One guess is as good as another in the matter of solving their mystery.



### Fayette County's First White Men

Governor Berkeley of Virginia was curious about what lay to the west of the Alleghany Mountains in Virginia. Consequently he commissioned Major General Abram Wood to find out. That assignment had as its objective the "finding out the ebbing and flowing of the water on the other side of ye mountains." For some reason General Wood could not make the trip himself but detailed Captain Thomas Batts, Thomas Wood, Robert Fallam, Jack Neasam—one of General Wood's servants —, and Perecute, an Appomattox Indian Chief, to carry out the exploration. Perecute was to go as guide of the group. They left the Appomattox town, now Petersburg, Virginia, on the first of September, 1671. A week later the party had crossed the crest of the Blue Ridge. By Sept., 13th, they were on what we now know as Swope's Knob in Monroe County. Pressing on westward, the men reached Kanawha Falls on the afternoon of Sept., 16, 1671. Thus they became, as far as is known, the first white men to tread the soil of Fayette County.

When the Fallam and Batts detail got near the great 21-foot falls of the mighty river they "had sight of a curious river like the Thames at Chelsea, but had a fall that made a great noise," as they recorded it in their journal. There at Kanawha Falls they went into bivouac and rested a time. In the course of their brief encampment here is what was written in their daily diary:

" Sept. 17th. Early in the morning we went to seek some trees to mark, our Indians being impatient of longer delay, by reason it was like to be bad weather, and that it was so difficult to get provision. We found four trees exceeding fit for our purpose, that had been half barked by our Indians, standing one after another (the trees). We first proclaimed the King in these words: 'Long live Charles ye 2nd, by the grace of God, King of England, Scotland, France, Ireland and Virginia of the territories thereunto belonging; defender of the faith, & c.; fired some guns and went to the first tree which we marked thus C R with a pair of marking irons for His Sacred Majesty; then the next thus, W B., for the right hon'ble Governor Sir William Berkeley; the third thus A W for the hon'ble Major-General Wood; the last thus R F., P. for Perecute, who said he would turn Englishman, and on another tree hard by

these letters, one under another E N., T T., N.P., V E R., after which we had done, we went ourselves down to the riverside, but not without great difficulty, it being a piece of very rich ground whereon the Mohicans had formerly lived and grown up so with weeds and small prickly locusts and thistles to a great height that it was almost impossible to pass. It cost us hard labor to get through. When we came to the river side we found it better and broader than we expected, much like the James river at Col. Staggs the falls much like these falls, we imagine by the water marks that it flows about three feet. It was ebbing water when we were here. We set up a stick by the water side, but found it ebb very slowly. Our Indians kept up such a hollowing that we durst not stay away any longer to make further trial. Immediately upon our coming to quarters, we returned homewards."

Such was the discovery of Kanawha Falls on Sept., 16, 1671, almost 300 years ago. One of the Historic Markers in Fayette County recites:

"On New River, 1671, Batts and Fallam officially claimed the Mississippi Valley for Great Britain in opposition to the claim of France."

And that memorable claim, which was fully established with the fall of Quebec in 1759, was made where the village of Kanawha Falls is located today.

### **Early Settlements in Fayette County**

Since the first permanent settler in the Kanawha Valley was William Morris, Sr., who built his log cabin at Cedar Grove at the mouth of Kelly's Creek in 1774, it follows that the first settlement in Fayette County came after that memorable year. Walter Kelly had come to Kelly's Creek the year before the arrival of Morris but had fallen victim to the Indians who still roamed the region with hatred in their hearts for the white men who were poaching on their hunting lands. Out of Lewisburg and in the direction of Charleston wound a wagon road as early as 1786. This was known as the Koontz New Road. This road passed through what is now Ansted. At Ansted the route wheeled northwest, went over the mountain and came out on the Gauley River at Jodie. Thence the road crossed the river and went up Twenty Mile Creek. After

traversing some ridges the road emerged on the north bank of Kanawha River and meandered on to the mouth of Elk where Charles Clendenin and George Clendenin lived. There the town that grew up around the Clendenin cabins took the name of Charleston from the given name of Charles Clendenin. Over this early road came settlers. Years later this road was to be replaced by the James River and Kanawha Turnpike. From this road a few miles west of Lewisburg another road swung off. It was referred to as "the old State Road." This latter thoroughfare passed over Sewell Mountain and came to what was afterwards Ansted. At this point the road took a left hand turn and crossed New River at Bowyer's Ferry. This is at Sewell where Mann's Creek empties into New River. Crossing the river at Bowyer's Ferry the road swung up over the hill and emerged on present Route 21 about five miles from Fayetteville. Continuing westward this highway crossed Cotton Hill and went on to Montgomery's Ferry and thence down the south bank of the Kanawha toward Charleston. It was over these several roads that pioneer people came in search of friends and fortune.

First settlers in Fayette County appear to have been a group of "squatters,"—persons without legal title to land whereon they located. Those "squatters" built homes at Ansted about the year 1790, exact year being unknown. Among them were the families of James Lykens, William Parrish, James Taylor, Bailey Wood, and others. These were a religious people of the Baptist persuasion and built at Ansted the first meeting house in the county. That log church stood across the road from the later day historic Tyree Tavern and a hundred yards or so to the east of it. They called it the Hopewell Baptist Church. Early records, if kept, have been lost. Hopewell Baptist Church some miles west of the town of Ansted is the outgrowth of that early organization.

As early as 1798 there was living at the mouth of Mann's Creek on New River a settler known as "Old Peter Bowyer." This spot is the site of Sewell. On January 18, 1806, the General Assembly of Virginia granted Bowyer a license to operate a ferry across New River. That ferry, as far as is known, was the first business venture in Fayette County. That same year of 1798 found Andrew Lykens buying land where today Page

sprawls on Loup Creek. Up this stream from the land of Lykens, John Spangler purchased property at present day Kincaid in 1810. By the year Spangler settled at Kincaid, Peter Bowyer was the only resident of Fayetteville as we now know it. First white person to live at Mt. Hope was William Blake, Sr. What year he moved there to live is unknown but he bought a boundary of 3,062 acres there in 1796 for a quarter an acre. Aaron Stockton of New Jersey had built on the banks of Kanawha River at what we know as Glen Ferris, in 1812. Eight years after Stockton settled at Kanawha Falls, William Blake built a house at Oak Hill at the place where the Lundale Farm manor house now is, thus becoming the first man to live in the present metropolis of Fayette County. To accomodate his neighbors with bread materials, Jacob Kelly was operating a grist mill at Robson on lower Loup Creek a few miles below the homes of Andrew Lykens and John Spangler by 1828 or earlier. Jacob Smith was living at Quinnimont by 1827. Three times was he married and his children numbered twenty-four.

Gauley Bridge had become the home place of James Hodge Miller by 1831. Over at Kingston on Paint Creek, about 1830, Robin Scarborough had constructed a log dwelling and was living in it with his family. By 1837 Charles Bibb and his wife, Elizabeth Gatewood-Bibb had sold the ferry business which they had previously purchased from "Old Peter Bowyer" and had taken up residence on the 300 acre tract where the village of Gatewood is today. It was named Gatewood by Charles Bibb in honor of the maiden name of his helpmeet. Elias Lively was living at Lively on Paint Creek by 1845. To this day that area is the land of the Livelys. One of the pioneer families of the county is the numerous Toney group. Progenitor of this large number of people was Jesse Toney. That worthy built a cabin at Dothan on the waters of Mossy Creek and moved into it on Friday, March 17, 1848. There, on April 6, 1849, Harrison Toney was born. He was the first white child to be born in all that extensive region. Something like the time Jesse Toney came to the Mossy Creek section, there was building up a colony of people from Massachusetts at New Haven, first county seat of Fayette County. They were spiritualists and were led by J. H. Hopping and other eminent leaders. There at New Haven this group published a paper which was called *The*

*Mountain Cove Harbinger and Spiritual Journal*. It began publication in 1852 and was the first effort at journalism in Fayette.

From Amherst County, Virginia, came L. W. Jones to the Sanger section in 1849. There on the lands drained by Meadow Fork Creek, Jones settled and reared one of the most influential families Fayette County has ever had within her bounds. By 1844 Philip Thurmond and his family were living at Minden as the place is named today. When Thurmond came there from Amherst County, Va., home of L. W. Jones as well, he found two bachelor brothers by the name of Arbuckle living on the New River tributary. When the Arbuckle brothers settled there has never been found out but it was from them the turgid little stream takes its name. Attracted by the possibilities of water power offered by Laurel Creek at Beckwith, the Warner family came to that spot from Massachusetts in 1858, or thereabouts. Farther up the stream another dwelling had been reared before the coming of the Warners. It was the home of Isaac Abbot of Andover, Massachusetts. William Humphreys was the original settler on Pack's Branch, now spelled "Pax." Exact year Humphrey's home was built there is not known for certain but it is generally believed to be 1840.

By 1861, when the Civil War broke out there was a population of 5,997 in this county. These were widespread over the 730 square miles area of that time. In 1837 Fayetteville, first known as Vandalia, had become the county seat of justice. This site, known first as Vandalia, took its name from Abraham Vandal, Revolutionary war soldier, who had acquired the land some twenty years before from a man by the name of Reed.

From the settlement of "squatters" at Ansted in approximately 1790, during George Washington's first term as President, Fayette County has grown to be one of the great empire counties of West Virginia. Federal Census of 1950 gave the county a population of 80,628. After the formation of Summers County with a part of the territory of Fayette in 1871, Fayette County was left with an area of 666.50 square miles.

## Chapter Two

# FAYETTE COUNTY, LAND OF LEGENDS

Like many other regions which abound in wild scenery and natural wonders, Fayette County has its share of tales of grandeur. These legends are largely the figments of the fertile imagination of pioneer people but they persist to this day. Generation after generation passes the weird stories on to their children, never failing to garnish the old yarns with a few added touches to give them wider appeal. Different versions of the same old basic legend tends to crop out as times marches on. One of the most widely quoted stories is that concerning Van Bibber's Leap. They all originated with the fanciful narrative on that subject by Henry Harding whose fascinating thriller appeared in the December 6, 1883 issue of *The Youth's Companion*. Here it is as Harding wrote it:

### Van Bibber's Leap

Just below the Falls of Kanawha, in West Virginia, there is a lofty and overhanging rock of immense size, which to this day goes by the name of Van Bibber's Rock; and the incident which thus designated it is one of the wildest and most exciting to be found in the records of backwoods adventure.

The rock juts out about a hundred feet over the seething whirlpool at the foot of the falls, at a height of nearly a hundred feet above the water. The immediate surroundings are wild and picturesque in the extreme; though the opposite shore is comparatively level, being covered with pastures, meadows and timber, and having a gently shelving beach of sand sloping gradually out into the boiling waters, which continue their disturbed and riotous character for many rods below.

Hiram Van Bibber, an enterprising backwoodsman from the eastern part of Virginia, was the first to build a cabin upon this inviting bank of the Kanawha, in the latter part of the last century.

Having had much experience, and being a bold and independent character, he lost no time in bringing his young wife

and two children to the new home that he had provided for them.

Notwithstanding that the region round about swarmed with hostile Indians, he was unmolested for a year or more; and the land was so fertile that it was not long before a little settlement sprang up, which, with Van Bibber at its head, presented quite a village-like appearance, the settlers building their cabins near together as mutual protection against the savages.

A small Government supply station was also established, a few miles further down the stream, which added greatly to the general sense of security and repose. Still the wild and rocky region, which included the opposite bank, continued to be occupied by roving bands of red hunters, who, if not actually hostile, often cast glances of sullen discontent and jealousy upon the fairer portion of their ancient heritage, which the industry and enterprise of the pale-face intruders were swiftly causing to blossom like the rose.

Capt. Van Bibber was the soul and heart of the little settlement. His renown as a hunter and Indian fighter was only equalled by his reputation for fair-dealing and worldly prudence; and from the first he was looked upon by his neighbors as their natural leader.

Another child was born to him in the bosom of the wilderness. His wife was happy and contented, and his cabin was the abode of frugal thrift and hard-earned repose.

The only other member of his household, besides his wife and three children, was a great pet bear called Brownie, which he had captured when a cub, and so thoroughly tamed that it was accustomed to follow him, unmuzzled, among the cabins like a dog, apparently with no inclination to rejoin its kind among the neighboring hills.

Indeed, the brute displayed an exceptional affection for him and his family. The officers and soldiers of the little fort often came to witness its tricks and pranks; and "Van Bibber and his bear" was the expression most generally used by outsiders alluding to our hero.

Trouble with the Indians at length arose, which, so far as one tribe—the Shawnees—was concerned, soon broke out into



open war. The authorities were constantly on the alert, and it became a hazardous experiment for any settler to proceed alone through the rocky and thickly timbered region on the unfriendly side of the river.

This, however, did not prevent Capt. Van Bibber from setting out upon a lonely hunting expedition, one April day, in which the adventure befell him that was to give his name to the giant rock, which, until then, had been known by its Indian name, *wah-kun-gee-tah*, signifying the "Far-away lookout."

A great freshet had so flushed the Falls of the Kanawha that he did not venture to cross the river at the point directly below the rapids, and just between the settlement and the great rock. He passed down the stream for a mile or more to a lonely cabin, occupied by a hunter named Radcliff, where he borrowed a canoe, effected a crossing, and fearlessly plunged into the heart of the enemy's country.

He had capital sport, and shot a number of deer and wild turkeys, which he secreted to await a conveyance to his home, when the subsiding waters should enable him to make another trip, on horseback, for that purpose.

It was toward the middle of the afternoon when he started to return home, from which he then found himself about eight miles distant. Up to this time he had not encountered a single red man, or even any signs of their being in his vicinity.

But he had no sooner quitted the belt of timber in which he had been hunting, and begun to make his way across the broad, rolling and somewhat broken plateau, that lay between him and the precipitous river-bank, than a shot from a concealed foeman whistled through his squirrel-skin hunting-cap.

He at once crouched close to the ground and prepared for fighting. But another and yet another shot followed the first, in quick succession; and upon peeping up from his covert, he saw a score or more of savages cautiously but rapidly approaching from different points of the forest.

He knew them to be hostile Shawnees, from the peculiarity of their scanty costumes, and therefore understood that nothing but his scalp would satisfy their murderous intentions.



They had him almost surrounded; there was nothing to do but to run for life; so on bringing down the foremost by a well-directed shot, Van Bibber suddenly sprang to his feet and sped over the open plain, escaping the numerous shots that were sent after him, as if by a miracle, and with the entire band in yelling and blood-thirsty pursuit.

Van Bibber was a famous runner, however, and was under no apprehension of being overtaken by his enemies, swift of foot as they undoubtedly were. He had long been noted as the strongest, fleetest and most formidable hunter of the Kanawha Valley, and nobly did he vindicate his reputation on that eventful day!

He not only acquitted himself so creditably as to keep beyond the range of the poor rifles, with which his pursuers were armed, but was also enabled to load and fire as he ran, thus causing several of them to bite the dust before they finally drove him to bay, out upon the furthestmost point of Wah-kungee-tah, the great, jutting rock overlooking the terrible whirlpool at the foot of the falls, and his humble but smiling home on the far opposite bank.

Though unable to overtake their fugitive, the Indians had succeeded in baffling all his attempts to reach the river at the point at which he had effected a crossing in the morning. They had so managed to dictate the direction of his flight as to bring him at last to a final and apparently hopeless stand upon the very edge of this tremendous abyss with obviously no choice left but surrender, or death at their hands,—or an equally fatal plunge into the boiling, cauldron-like whirlpool far, far below.

But even in this desperate strait, Van Bibber did not lose a jot of his cool and collected daring. Sheltering himself behind a small group of stones and bushes, and loading and firing his trusty rifle with wonderful rapidity, he succeeded in keeping the enemy at bay for more than a quarter of an hour, in full view of his wife and friends on the opposite bank of the river.

The Indians, though not venturing out upon the open shelf within range of his terrible marksmanship, clustered along the bushy sides, and even crept down far below the very face of

the cliff, yelling like demons in the certainty of his speedy capture or death.

Captain Van Bibber suddenly stopped firing, and for the first time a feeling of despair must have come over him. He had used the last bullet in his pouch, and was no longer capable of defence!

The savages soon suspected as much, and began to swarm over the top of the rock in full view, with revengeful cries.

But at this instant, when he was about giving himself up for lost, a clear, encouraging cry came floating to him from far across the yawning abyss, making itself distinctly heard above the roaring of the waters. It was a woman's voice—his wife's.

"I'm coming under the rock in the canoe!" she cried. "Leap and meet me!"

He turned and looked in the direction from which the summons had come, dazed and bewildered—for such a leap had never been made, nor even contemplated before.

But the heroic woman was already in the canoe, paddle in hand, having laid her baby on the grassy bank and rushed to the rescue in spite of the opposition of her neighbors, who looked upon her husband as already doomed, and regarded her attempt to navigate the boiling waters of the whirlpool as simple madness.

But she pushed off, and just as she did so, Brownie, the pet bear, clambered into the stern of the canoe, and sat upright upon his haunches, keeping his balance perfectly, and really aiding not a little in "trimming boat" and ballasting it, as it were, throughout the wild voyage.

As Mrs. Van Bibber succeeded in reaching the center of the stream, directly under the ledge of the rock, her husband's foes were almost upon him.

"Wife, wife!" he shouted, "drop down a little lower. I'm coming!"

With this, and with the clutches of the Indians almost closing upon him, he sprang from the crag, and descended like a plummet into the water, feet foremost.

In an agony of suspense, his wife rested from her toil for a moment, watching for him to rise to the surface, the canoe bobbing about like a cockle-shell upon the angry flood, and the pet bear eying his mistress affectionately, as though fully sympathizing with her distress.

It was only a moment, but an awful one,—it seemed an age to her. Would her husband ever rise?

Her earnest gaze seemed to penetrate the very depths of the turbid water,—and then, with a joyous, thankful cry, she darted the canoe further down the stream.

He rose to the surface quite near to her, and was enabled to scramble into the little craft without assistance, amid a shower of bullets, that was poured after him by the baffled Indians,—not one of which, however, harmed either him or his wife.

Then, seizing the paddle from her hands, he swung the craft around, turning Brownie's back to the hostile bank, and paddled swiftly out of range of the shots that were still showered after him.

But it is more than likely that poor Brownie had much to do with the immunity with which his master and mistress were permitted to draw out of range. At any rate, when Van Bibber and his wife reached the shore, and were assisted to land by their rejoicing friends, Brownie remained seated motionless in the stern of the canoe, with his tongue hanging out and his eyes closed.

The bear was found to be stark dead. His back was fairly riddled with bullets, more than one of which must inevitably have reached the human occupants of the canoe but for the chance bulwark that had been presented by Brownie's tough and shaggy frame.

Captain Van Bibber experienced such a shock from his terrific leap that it was many days before he fully recovered. But he and his wife lived to a green old age, with their family around them, in the same fertile valley, and within the very shadow of the great overhanging shelf which has ever since borne their name, in deserved commemoration of Van Bibber's leap.

—Henry Harding in *Youth's Companion*, Dec. 6. 1883

### Legend of Lovers' Leap

In the year 1841 when cholera was scourging the population along the lower Ohio and Mississippi, numbers of people quit the afflicted areas and fled to the mountains. These people were boarded in the homes of the hill country settlers who were eager to help in the time of the noisome pestilence. That year two young journalists who were connected with a paper in New Orleans found their way to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Brown Hamilton<sup>1</sup> who had lived one-half mile from the towering cliff, now known as Lovers' Leap, for a decade. Mrs. Hamilton told the young men of the high rock and they spent a whole morning there one day. While lingering at the great scenic view the legend of the leap of two lovers was conceived in the minds of the two men. Though the entire story was a fabrication it pleased the creators of it who asked Mrs. Hamilton to call the cliff by the name of "Lovers' Leap." The yarn found its way back to Louisiana where it came out in the New Orleans paper. Since that year — 1841 — the mythical legend has enjoyed widespread popularity.

As concocted by the two deep-South writers the 'teen-age daughter of a local mountaineer fell in love with a nearby young Indian brave. In spite of the objections of the girl's father the lovers found time and opportunity for frequent tryst. Missing his daughter one day and suspecting she was out with the Indian, the father of the maiden took his gun and went in search of the girl. He came upon the couple on the edge of the tall wall of stone. Seeing the gun and thinking the father intended to shoot the native suitor, the couple embraced and leaped over the cliff to their death on the rocks hundreds of feet below.

Thus the legend of Lovers' Leap started. Since that day of over a century ago other versions of the tale have found their way into print. Though without an ounce of truth in them they make touching reading after the manner of much fiction. For those who like their legends with a dash of color the following version of Lovers' Leap is not without appeal:

<sup>1</sup> The late A. W. Hamilton, son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Brown Hamilton, is the authority for this article.

### The Legend

"Many years before the advent of the white man from beyond the mountains, there lived along one of the rushing streams now known as New River, an Indian poet, called Tame Eagle. There came a day when this dreamer and poet was sent by his father on an errand to Chief Thunder Cloud. Thunder Cloud had his lodge on one of the highest points, where, from a sharply projected rock, he could view the valleys and rivers far below. Coming upon the lodge of Chief Thunder Cloud, Tame Eagle caught sight of Amonita, the beautiful daughter of the old Chief. "Who might you be?" asked Amonita, the beautiful daughter of the old Chief. "I am Tame Eagle, the son the Arrow Maker," he replied, "Come to see Chief Thunder Cloud." "I am the daughter of Thunder Cloud," she offered. "Let me take your arrow as a token to my father." Tame Eagle showed embarrassment, for he carried no arrows. He was neither hunter nor warrior, but only a poet. He cared more for the beauty and mystery of the mountains and forests than for the excitement and heat of battle.

Amonita was attracted by the strange youth. He was so different from the many young braves who had sought her attention. He was gentle and a dreamer; yet his manliness attracted. He could tell so many wonderful stories of the hill wind singing through the dark pines, and the lover's flute calling across the dark valleys.

They met again, on that rock, and in enchantment they watched a happy moon. With the river far below murmuring a love song, they watched for hours the flaming of the lodge fires up and down the gorge.

Chief Thunder Cloud did not approve of these meetings, for neither Tame Eagle nor his father were warriors. Big Wolf alone, that mighty hunter and brave fighter, was worthy of the daughter of Chief Thunder Cloud. All of his appeals, promises, and even threats, however, could not lessen the love of his daughter for Tame Eagle.

They met again at dusk when the sad Moon of Falling Leaf was showing behind the mountains. Big Wolf, jealous and angered, spied them. Immediately he hurried the news to Chief



#### McKINLEY FACE ROCK PROFILE

This scenic curiosity is located on the perpendicular mountainside on the south side of New River at Thurmond, Fayette County, W. Va. Story is that this striking profile was made when the C & O was blasting out a road base for its spur track which extends from Thurmond to Minden, some four miles up the highlands on Arbuckle Creek. When the blast, which formed this face, was set off on September 6, 1901, a workman immediately saw the odd formation and remarked that it looked like President William McKinley! Another laborer who heard the remark said that "This is an ill omen." Less than an hour later the telegraph operator in the C & O station across the river at Thurmond received a message that the President had been assassinated at the Pan-American Exposition at Buffalo, New York. Ever since that time this

rock figure high on the mountain face has been known as "McKinley Rock." Its location can be reached in a ten minute walk on the railway spur track from the South Side Bridge at Thurmond. Anarchist who shot McKinley was Leon F. Czolgosz who lived and worked in a wire factory at Kanawha City across the river from Charleston. He was executed in Auburn prison in New York in expiation of his awful crime.

Thunder Cloud. Soon the war of drums resounded, as the roaring hoofs, when buffalo run. All the braves were gathering to seize the poet and idler and to burn him at stake.

Amonita heard the sound of drums and she knew their meaning but there was no escape. The warriors were already swarming down the narrow paths leading to the rock. Chief Thunder Cloud and Big Wolf at the lead, commanded her to leave Tame Eagle and come to safety. She was determined not to forsake her lover and as death for him was certain, she would die with him! Clasp hands, they stood, as if balanced, at the edge of the rock. Then, arm in arm, they leaped off into the deep gorge below. The rushing waters were kind. They covered the bodies of the lovers forever from view. And their love song is now but the sound of weeping waters!"

—Author Unknown

For the story of the start of this celebrated legend, as one who had deep interest in local history, Mr. Hamilton—a man with a fine trained mind—took pains to narrate and write out much of the early history of Fayette County. From the lips of his mother, who died in 1893 at the great age of 84 years, A. W. Hamilton obtained the information concerning the source of the legend of Lovers' Leap.

When George W. Atkinson published his *History of Kanawha County, W. Va.*, in 1876 he edged over into Fayette County to pick up a tradition or two centering about our picturesque overhanging precipice. However, everything that has been printed about Lovers' Leap has come out subsequent to the Hamilton house visitors of 1841.



### Chapter Three

## FACTS OF FAYETTE COUNTY

Created in 1831 from parts of Greenbrier, Nicholas, Kanawha, and Logan Counties.

Named for Marquis de La Fayette, French nobleman and General who helped the thirteen original colonies win their independence from Great Britain.

Area of county is 666.50 square miles.

Population in 1950 was 82,443.

100 voting precincts in Fayette County.

County has 76 post offices.

County has the following incorporated municipalities: Ansted, Fayetteville, Meadow Bridge, Mount Hope, Montgomery, Oak Hill, Pax, Smithers, and Thurmond.

Seat of Justice is Fayetteville.

Seven Magisterial Districts in Fayette County are Falls, Fayetteville, Kanawha, Mountain Cove, Nuttall, Quinnimont, and Sewell Mountain.

Chief product is coal.

Big Sewell Mountain is highest point on Midland Trail. There when Gen. Robert E. Lee was encamped in 1861 he received "Traveller," his famous Civil War horse, from the Andrew Johnston farm in Greenbrier County.

Connecting rail of the C & O Railway, connecting the east-west construction segments of this line, was laid on January 29, 1873, some three-fourths of a mile east of New River Bridge as seen from Hawks Nest overlook.

Explorers, Fallam and Batts, are said to have reached Kanawha Falls in 1671. These claimed Mississippi Valley for Great Britain as over against the claims of France.

Lowest point in Fayette County is at Dam No. 2 in Kanawha River near Montgomery. There the elevation is 597.7 feet at pool level.





Iron Furnace at Quinnimont.

Scenery, a mountain promontory, affords one of the finest views. Timber and agriculture are abundant. Tobacco is cultivated. Quinnimont has a large iron bridge. Fayette Co. is the county seat.

**Fayette.**—Lies southeast of Kanawha County, and is crossed by New River, which unites with the Guyley River in the western part, forming the Great Kanawha. The Falls of the Kanawha are a short distance below this junction. Several mountain ranges traverse the county. The scenery along the river cañons and on the heights is grand and imposing. Hawk's

Item from West Virginia Edition of *An Intermediate Geography* published in 1876 by Wilson, Hinkle & Co., Cincinnati, Ohio. Drawing shows Iron Furnace at old Quinnimont on New River.

Highest altitude in Fayette County is in the south-east section of Sewell Mountain Magisterial District where Walnut, Ford, and Myles knobs attain elevations of approximately 3,375 feet.

### FORMATION OF FAYETTE COUNTY

In 1831 the counties of Greenbrier, Kanawha, Logan, and Nicholas had very extensive areas. Citizens who lived in what is now Fayette and Raleigh Counties found it very inconvenient to travel the great distances to such county seats as Summersville, Lewisburg, Charleston, and Madison. As a result of the inconvenience they experienced in going to and from their respective court house towns some of them begin to dream of a new county with the temple of justice more at hand. When Fayette was formed in 1831 it comprised present day Raleigh County and had an area close on to 1,300 square miles. This widespread region was sparsely settled because the Federal Census of 1840—nine years after the creation of the county—showed a population of only 3,924 souls residing in Fayette County. Agitation for a new county arose and on February 28, 1831, the following Act was passed by the General Assembly of Virginia:

#### ACT GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA 1830 - 31

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**AN ACT forming a new county out of parts of the counties of Logan, Greenbrier, Nicholas and Kanawha.**

**(Passed February 28, 1831).**

1. Be it enacted by the general assembly, That all that part of the counties of Logan, Greenbrier, Nicholas and Kanawha, contained within the following boundaries, to wit: Beginning on New river, where the lines of Giles and Logan counties strike the same; thence, down said river to the mouth of Lick creek thence, a straight line to the top of Little Sewell mountain, where the Kanawha turnpike crosses the same, so as to embrace the dwelling-house of J. P. Thomasson; thence, a straight line to Meadow river; at the mouth of Mill creek; thence, down said river to its mouth; thence, down Gauley river to the mouth of Twenty Mile creek; thence, up Twenty Mile creek to the mouth of Bell creek; thence, up Bell creek to James Nicholas's; thence, a straight line to Rock camp, on the present line of Nicholas and Kanawha counties; thence, a straight line to Kanawha river, at the mouth of Smither's

creek; thence, a straight line crossing Kanawha river, and some of the waters of Paint creek, Cabin creek, and North-east fork of Cole river, and the West fork of same, to the intersection of the lines of Kanawha and Logan counties, at the end of the Great Cherry Pond mountain; thence, with the dividing ground, dividing the waters that flow into the Marsh fork of Cole and New rivers, on the one side, and Little Cole river, and the waters of Guyandotte river, on the other side, to the present line of Logan and Giles counties; thence, with said line, to New river, the beginning shall form one district and new county, and be called and known by the name of Fayette county.

2. The governor, with the advice of the council of state, shall commission ten persons as justices of the peace in and for the county of Fayette, who shall, before entering upon and executing the said office, take the several oaths now required by law, of persons commissioned as justices of the peace; which oaths may be administered by any justice of the peace now in commission for the county of Logan, Greenbrier, Nicholas or Kanawha.

3. A court for the said county of Fayette, shall be held by the justices thereof, on the third Monday in every month, after the same shall have been organized, in like manner as is prescribed by law for other counties, and shall be by their commissions directed.

4. And in order the more impartially and correctly to ascertain the most proper place for holding courts, and erecting the public buildings for the said county of Fayette, Peter H. Steinbergen of Mason, William Buffington of Cabell, Andrew Johnson of Giles, Henry Alexander of Monroe, and George I. Williams of Harrison, gentlemen, shall be, and they are hereby appointed commissioners, a majority of whom may act, for the purpose aforesaid, whose duty it shall be, after having performed the services hereby required, to make report thereof in writing, to the court of said county of Fayette; whereupon, they, the said court, shall proceed to erect the necessary public buildings at the place so fixed upon by the said commissioners, or a majority of them, which, when completed, shall be the permanent place for holding courts for the said county of Fayette.

5. The justices of the peace so commissioned and qualified for the said county of Fayette, shall meet at the residence of Miles Manser, in said county, on the third Monday in May next; and a majority of them being present, shall proceed to the appointment of a clerk of the said court; shall nominate to the governor suitable persons to be commissioned as sheriff and coroner of the said county and fix a place for holding the courts of said county, until the necessary buildings shall be constructed at the place designed by the said commissioners.

6. It shall be lawful for the sheriffs of the counties of Logan, Greenbrier, Nicholas and Kanawha, to collect and make distress for any public dues or officers' fees, which shall remain unpaid by the inhabitants of the county of Fayette, at the time this act shall go into effect, and shall

be accountable for the same, in the like manner as if this act had never been made.

7. The courts of the counties of Logan, Greenbrier, Nicholas and Kanawha, shall have jurisdiction of all actions and suits depending before them on the first day of March next, and shall try and determine the same, and award execution thereon.

8. The said county of Fayette shall be in, and attached to, the same judicial circuit with the county of Greenbrier, and the circuit courts thereof shall be holden on the third Monday after the fourth Monday in April and September in every year, and be of the same brigade district with the county of Kanawha. One delegate shall be elected for and by the said counties of Nicholas and Fayette, to represent the same in the general assembly; and the said county of Fayette shall be attached to the senatorial district composed of the counties of Kanawha, Cabell, Logan, Mason and Nicholas; and it shall be attached to the same district with Logan, for the choice of electors of president and vice-president of the United States, and to the same district of which the county of Kanawha now forms a part, for the election of a representative in the congress of the United States.

9. And be it further enacted, That the courts of quarterly sessions for the said county of Fayette, shall be holden in the months of March, June, August and November, in every year; and the said county of Fayette shall belong to the same chancery district, for which a court is by law directed to be holden at Greenbrier courthouse.

10. It shall be lawful for the county courts of Logan, Greenbrier, Nicholas, Kanawha and Fayette counties, and they are hereby required to appoint commissioners to run and mark the lines (or such part thereof as may be thought necessary by the respective county courts,) between the said counties, as designated by this act; which, when run and marked, shall be taken and considered as the dividing lines between the said counties. The commissioners are hereby required to make report of their proceedings to the county courts of said counties respectively; which reports shall be recorded in the clerk's office of each of said counties, and in all controversies which may hereafter arise touching said line, shall be conclusive evidence. The county courts of each of said counties, shall allow the said commissioners a reasonable compensation for their services, to be paid out of the levy of each county in just proportions, according to work required in each county.

11. This act shall commence and be in force from and after the passage thereof.

**AN ACT to change the lines between the counties of Greenbrier and Fayette.**

(Passed April 4, 1831).

1. Be it enacted by the general assembly, That so much of the act entitled "an act forming a new county out of parts of the counties of

Logan, Greenbrier, Nicholas and Kanawha," passed February 28th, 1831, as relates to the boundary line between the counties of Greenbrier and Fayette, shall be and the same is hereby repealed, and in future the said line shall be and run as follows: Beginning at the end of the Hump mountain, near Robert Bennet's on New river, thence running (so as to leave said Bennet in Greenbrier county,) with said mountain, and between the waters flowing into Lick creek on one side, and Little Meadow river on the other, to the head of Raccoon creek, thence along between the Wallow Hole ridge and Inghram's Knob to the head of Morris's fork, thence a direct line to the old Kanawha road, so as to include within the county of Fayette, George Alderson's old place, known by the name of Meadow Dale, thence to the Little Tumphole Knob, and with the mountain known by the name of Little Sewell, to the lands of John P. Thomasson, so as to strike the turnpike road two hundred yards east of the said Thomasson's dwelling-house, thence a straight line to Meadow river at the mouth of Mill creek, thence with the lines as described in the act aforesaid, passed February the twenty-eighth, eighteen hundred and thirty-one.

2. This act shall be in force from its passing.

### FAYETTE COUNTY POST OFFICES

When Fayette County, West Virginia, was formed in 1831 from parts of Kanawha, Greenbrier, Nicholas, and Logan, its widespread area comprised only four post offices. Those four post offices and their postmasters were:

1. Coal River Marshes ..... Henry S. Hopkins
2. Gauley Bridge..... John Carlon
3. Mountain Cove ..... George Hunter
4. Sewell Mountain ..... Seth Huse

Fifteen years later—1846—when the population of Fayette County was less than 4,000 souls in its large area the county had only seven offices. Together with their postmasters those post offices were:

1. Beckley..... Alfred Beckley
2. Coal River Marshes ..... Daniel Shumate, Jr.
3. Fayetteville (C.H.) ..... Peyton Moten
4. Gauley Bridge ..... James H. Miller
5. Locust Lane (Lookout) ..... George H. Patrick
6. Mountain Cove ..... Clement Vaughan
7. Sewell Mountain ..... George Dickson

In 1955 Fayette County had the following seventy-six post offices:

Alloy	Laurel Creek
Alta	Lawton
Ansted	Layland
Beards Fork	Loehgelly
Beckwith	Longacre
Bellwood	Long Branch
Boomer	Lookout
Brooklyn	Mahan
Cannelton	Maplewood
Carbondale	Marting
Carlisle	McKendree
Charlton Heights	Meadow Bridge
Clifftop	Milburn
Corliss	Minden
Crickmer	Montgomery
Cunard	Mount Carbon
Danese	Mount Hope
Deep Water	Nallen
Dothan	Nuttallburg
Edmond	Oak Hill
Fayette	Page
Fayetteville	Pax
Garten	Powellton
Gauley Bridge	Prince
Glen Ferris	Quinnimont
Glen Jean	Ramsey
Graydon	Red Star
Harvey	Robson
Hico	Scarbro
Hilltop	Sewell
Jodie	Smithers
Kanawha Falls	Spring Dale
Kilsyth	Summerlee
Kimberly	Thayer
Kincaid	Thurmond
Kingston	Victor
Landisburg	Willis Branch
Lansing	Winona

## FAYETTE COUNTY'S FIVE COURTHOUSES

Since Fayette County was organized in 1831, it has had five Courthouses. First of the five structures which housed the county government was the Miles Manser general store building which stood ~~near~~ Ansted. By reason of the courts being held ~~there~~ in the Mt. Cove district at New Haven for a few years this was the county seat.

After the village of Vandalia—name later changed to Fayetteville—was voted to be the county seat, the second of the county courthouses was erected. This building was the one that was destroyed by Federal troops in the 1861-65 strife.

Fayette's third courthouse was built after the Civil War had ended. It stood some ten feet east of the present courthouse, and near the street, the north corner being about ten feet from the structure of today, and to the front. This building was torn down and the brick from it was used to build a house for the jailer.

During 1891, the fourth courthouse was completed. Frank E. Davis, Baltimore, Maryland, was the architect who drew the plans for this building. On April 19, 1893, the two-year old temple of justice was accidentally burned to the ground. Thanks to Davis, the architect, the county records were saved. He had put fire-proof vaults in his plans and because of their construction the records were untouched by the flames. Only one of the criminal court books and a few indictments were burned—a loss that was not very serious.

There followed the erection of the fifth and present courthouse. It was completed in 1895 and is still in use. In 1957 an addition was built to it.



## Chapter Four

# TWO CELEBRATED EARLY TAVERNS

## OLD STONE HOUSE

On the western foot of Big Sewell Mountain, on the historic James River and Kanawha Turnpike, stands the famous Old Stone House of stage-coach days.



**HISTORIC WILLIAM TYREE TAVERN**

—Photo by Homer Wells, (ca) 1933.

Famous as a tavern and stage coach stop, Tyree Tavern is one of the most noted landmarks in Fayette County. It is situated in Ansted on the side of the ancient James River and Kanawha Turnpike. This was first the home of Joseph Skaggs, son of Ansted's first settler. George Hunter lived there from 1827 till 1834 at which time the property passed into the hands of William Tyree who was High Sheriff of Fayette County from 1877 to 1881. After death of Sheriff Tyree his son Joseph Tyree occupied the place. During the Civil War a Company of Dragoons of the Federal Army used the tavern as headquarters. Here H. E. Danford centered the plot of his novel, **THE TRAIL OF THE GRAY DRAGON**, which was published in 1928. It is a beautiful love story of a Dragoon and a local girl who was a Southern sympathizer. Tavern is perhaps the best known of the celebrated places in Fayette County.





**OLD STONE HOUSE, ERECTED IN 1824**

—Photo by Homer Wells, (circa) 1927

This historic structure was built by Samuel Tyree in 1824 and continued in the Tyree family until 1884 when the property was purchased by the Longdale Iron Company, which had begun to develop its property at Clifftop, two miles distant from the Tyree road house.

Babcock Coal and Coke Company next secured the property from Longdale Iron Company. At the instigation of ex-Governor William A. MacCorkle the new owners spent several thousand dollars in restoring the old stone tavern to something of its former glory. E. V. Babcock and his brother, Fred Babcock, owners of the house and surrounding countryside, were interested in historic matters and carried out the suggestions of the history-loving former chief executive of West Virginia.

This two-story building is constructed of native stone and has spacious wooden porches. The lumber in the house was whipsawed and dressed by hand. Rafters were made of un-

hewn poles, with laps and splices being held together with wooden pins. Made by hand, the wainscoating in the rooms came direct from the trees to the walls. Oak was used to make laths which were rived by hand and smoothed off with a drawing knife. Nails used in putting on the laths were made by hand in the local blacksmith shop.

A short distance from the noted house stood the log barn where the horses which pulled the stage coaches were fed and stabled. Hewn logs were used in the building of this barn, which structure was fifty feet long by thirty feet wide, and thirty feet high.

Famous as a stagecoach stop, the halls and rooms of the Old Stone House echoed the voices of such celebrated leaders as Henry Clay and others whose names were in the news of their day and generation. During the Civil War the house was frequently used as headquarters for the various commanders whose armies were operating in that section. Daniel Webster spent a month here while on a hunting trip in the area. Andrew Jackson, Thomas Benton, John Breckinridge, like Henry Clay, were guests at one time or another. While Matthew F. Maury, "the Pathfinder of the Seas", was recuperating from a fracture of his collar bone which he sustained when the stage coach in which he was a passenger turned over near Old Stone House, he wrote on his famous work on the charts of the sea winds and currents.

## Chapter Five

# SOME FAYETTE COUNTY PLACES AND ORIGIN OF THEIR NAMES

West Virginia Counties abound in places with interesting names. Fayette County with its many picturesque names is no exception to this general rule. In a book of this compass it is not possible to deal with every name that echoes large in this county. Names of early settlers still reverberate in the names of our streams, hamlets, villages, and towns. Quite often whole settlements such as mining camps have disappeared from view following the closing of coal operations there. Then it is that the name of the place becomes but a memory. At other times the place has experienced a change, or even more than one change, in its original name. Putting together bits of information concerning how some county places were named, the following data is submitted. There is never such a thing as originality in a study like this, it should be frankly observed. Often there is a difference of opinion over the way some names were derived but in the main the following list is believed to be correct.

**Alloy**—A small place in lower end of county where huge Electro Metallurgical Company plant manufactures alloys,—the things that put muscles in steel. Place is named "Alloy" from EMCO's chief article of manufacture.

**Ansted**—Municipality in Mountain Cove Magisterial District on Midland Trail. Named for British geologist by the name of David T. Ansted who bought the land whereon the town of Ansted now is located. Ansted, through Colonel George W. Imboden, bought 200 acres there from James V. Westlake in 1872.

**Arbuckle Creek**—This is a small tributary of New River. It rises in Oak Hill and Summerlee and flows through Minden. When the Philip Thurmond family moved from Amherst Co., Va., in 1844 they found two Arbuckle brothers living in a log cabin on the bank of this mountain stream. Since then it has been called Arbuckle Creek.

**Batoff Mountain**—This is the mountain one climbs when he leaves Prince on his way to Beckley. It is variously called Badoff and Bat-off Mountain, albeit it was called Bateau Mountain at the first. Before the coming of the C & O in 1872, New River was travelled in a long boat called a "bateau." Just below McCreery, at the base

of this mountain, New River is the fastest flowing stream in the world. At the foot of the mountain the bateaux were tied up to trees as the journey's end for them. Thus the eminence came to be called "Bateau" Mountain. In time the spelling of the word "bateau" was corrupted into Badoff and Batoff.

**Beards Fork**—A stream that empties into Loup Creek near Robson in Fayette County. Name of creek was derived from a woodsman prospector who camped under a cliff there while he roved the forests in search of ginseng. His name was Beard. Stream known as Beard's Fork as early as 1820, state some authorities.

**Beckwith**—Small settlement on Laurel Creek a mile from Cotton Hill station on C & O. Place echoes surname of P. D. Beckwith who lived there.

**Boomer**—Sizeable town on Route No. 60 in Falls District. It got its name from Boomer Huddleston, pioneer settler in those parts.

**Cannellton**—Town across Kanawha River from Montgomery which got its name from deposits of cannel coal. Oil was manufactured out of this cannel coal in early days of mineral developments in this region.

**Carbondale**—Designation given mining operation and camp about it. Deposits of soft coal is often referred to as carbon fuel.

**Carlisle**—Site of one of the New River Company coal operations, Carlisle, some three miles from Oak Hill, was named by Sam Dixon in commemoration of a place in England by that name. On Feb., 6, 1915, an explosion in Carlisle mine snuffed out 22 lives.

**Chimney Corner**—About 1930 Ed and Jack Diamond built a road house and restaurant at the intersection of The Midland Trail and Route No. 19 which there branches off to go to Fayetteville, Oak Hill, etc. Since their log house place of business was located on a sharp corner of the two broad highways they called it "Chimney Corner," the allusion being to such chimney corners in the log cabins of early settlers.

**Clifftop**—Longdale Iron Company, Longdale, Va., had a mining operation at Sewell, W. Va., as early as 1874. When the mine lease there was worked out they opened another place on the headwaters of Mann's Creek. Sewell houses were town down and rebuilt at the new coal camp. One day Mr. Firmstone of Firmstone and Johnson, who owned the iron works in Virginia, paid a supervisory visit to the new camp and found it nameless. After walking about the area he came to the edge of the cliffs near the place and remarked, "Why, this is a cliff top!" From that remark the coal camp got its name of "Clifftop."

**Concho**—This unusual name was given the mining camp on the waters of Arbuckle Creek a short distance below Minden by a man by the name of A. E. Miller who had a sentimental attachment for his father's ranch at Concho, Texas. Thurmond Coal Co., started mining

there around 1890 or shortly thereafter. Miller property in Texas was the Kickapoo Ranch.

**Cotton Hill**—Name of mountain that stands between Beckwith and Kanawha Falls. When early turnpike crossed this huge eminence the stage coaches stopped near Beckwith for travellers to rest and stretch. One man once remarked that he would not mind making this trip if he did not have to cross that awful mountain. This was said in the hearing of a woman passenger who hailed from the deep South. The Southern woman derided the complaining stage rider and asked, "Do you call that a mountain? Why, man, that's nothing more than a cotton hill!" It was out of this bantering conversation that the mountain got its name which it bears to this day, viz, "Cotton hill."

**Crickmer**—This small place is in Quinnimont District and was so named in honor of Edward Crickmer, a man of influence and standing in that community.

**Cunard**—This worked out coal mine camp used to be called Coal Run. Here in the hills old time people used to call a small creek a "run." Because coal was found in this creek region the camp had the name of "Coal Run." It has been said by some that one of the early coal operators there was a man by the name of Cunard. Little trace of him is to be found today.

**Danese**—Small country hamlet in the Sewell Mountain District. In 1903 a post office was established there and was named Noel. After the manner of influential people in remote sections getting such names changed, Noel was changed to that of "Danese" in 1905, in honor of a favorite daughter of Sherman G. Bowyer.

**Deep Water**—A river town on the south bank of the Kanawha River at mouth of Lower Loup Creek. To end confusion that resulted from a Loup Creek post office farther up this stream it was decided to get new name for the office at the mouth of the Kanawha tributary. This was around 1880 and when the committee, who was working on the matter, met, there was high water in the river. This caused a great deal of water to back up into the precincts of the place, so, someone in a facetious remark said, "It ought to be called deep water from the looks of things here now." Others allowed that "Deep Water" would be as good name as any so they called their post office just that. Squire James G. Kincaid suggested the name, "Deep Water" and the entire committee voted for it.

**Dothan**—This is a village on the waters of Mossy Creek a few miles from the toll gate of the West Virginia Turnpike where travellers enter the Turnpike going North. Biblical minded early residents of the Mossy Creek settlement thought they saw a similarity between their community and that of Dothan close to where Jacob's well is located, so they dubbed their home place "Dothan."

**Dunedin**—Mining camp near Minden that was named after Dunedin, New Zealand, by John Stott who had worked for Erskine Coal Co.,

Ltd., for 43 years. Dunedin, New Zealand, was a prosperous place, so Stott suggested the Fayette operation be named after the "down under" town in the belief it would bring good luck to the local operators. Gilbert Smith, one of the owners of this Fayette County mine, said it did.

**Dun Glen**—When Thomas McKell built this noted hotel at Thurmond on a little patch of level land which might be called a "glen" he named it "Dunn Glen" from the fact his wife, Jean McKell, was a Dunn before he married her. Built in 1901-2, the Dun Glen Hotel was destroyed by fire Tuesday night, July 22, 1930.

**Edmond**—This is a rural community where a post office was established about 1890. There the first post master was one J. L. Ryan. He had a boy named Edmond whom they called "Eddie" for short. This post office was given his name of Edmond.

**Fayetteville**—"Ville" is short for village; hence the village where the seat of justice of Fayette County was finally located was called Fayette-ville.

**Gatewood**—When Charles Bibb bought 300 acres of land in this rural village area in 1838 he gave it the name of Gatewood out of sentiment for the maiden name of his wife, Mrs. Elizabeth Gatewood-Bibb. Gatewood is in Fayetteville District on the plateau above Cunard.

**Gauley Bridge**—This town at the confluence of Gauley and New Rivers became known as such by reason of the original bridge and its several successors over the Gauley River. Early James River and Kanawha Turnpike crossed this stream and had to be bridged. Settlement that sprung up there derived its name from the Gauley bridge.

**Glen Ferris**—In West Virginia "glen" signifies an open place in the mountains where there is some level land. Ferris comes from the manufacture at Glen Ferris of ferro chrome, an alloy. One of the earliest plants in Fayette County was located there where water power from the famous falls was used in the production of the "ferro chrome," an alloy used to make steel harder. Glen Ferris is at the falls of Kanawha.

**Glen Jean**—This town at the point where White Oak Creek empties into Loup Creek has had several names in its time. When this location and much of the surrounding country passed into the hands of Thomas G. McKell and, later, his son, William McKell, this extensive "glen" was named "Jean" for the wife of Thomas McKell who was at the same time the mother of William McKell.

**Hico**—Name of this post office on Midland Trail came from tobacco that was being raised by J. A. Sandige, first post master at the place. It seems to have been a sort of trade name for the weed produced there. Others hold Sandige got his tobacco seed from Hyco, Va.,

and would make his farm another place by the same designation. This is probably the truth of the matter. If so, spelling of the name was simplified to Hico.

**Hill Top**—After the turn of the century this scattered place was an incorporated town. Its name signifies its location,—on the top of the hill which towers above Red Star and Glen Jean.

**Jodie**—On the west bank of the Gauley River, a few miles above Gauley Bridge, this mining place is built. "Jodie" was the nickname of Joseph Holt Gaines, once a resident of Fayette County who represented his district in Congress. In 1910 when Gaines was a popular figure in politics his nickname was given the post office there, albeit its name was Imboden when the office was established in 1894.

**Landisburg**—Rural community and post office in Sewell Mountain District that was named after H. M. Landis, who was an officer in the Sewell Lumber Company when this post office was opened in 1908. Name given office as compliment to the Pittsburgh, Pa., man.

**Lochgelly**—Like several other places in Fayette County Lochgelly has had a previous name. First it was Stuart, and so named by Samuel Dixon out of sentiment for the House of Stuart of royal distinction in Scotland. Eighty-five men lost their lives as a result of a horrible explosion in this deep shaft mine on Jan. 29, 1907. To help people forget this disaster the name of the place was changed to Lochgelly by Mr. Dixon. In Scotland is a mining establishment by that name, the Lochgelly Coal and Iron Company. Lochgelly is a mile or so from Summerlee.

**Lookout**—There at Lookout on Midland Trail in Nuttall District is the celebrated Spy Rock from which Indians were reputed to look out for foes. From this same vantage points sentinels in both blue and grey watched for the approach of the other in early Civil War years. Thus this look out station supplied the name of the near by town. One authority claims Rev. Charles Hughart suggested that the place and post office there be listed as Lookout.

**Loup Creek**—There are two Loup Creeks in Fayette County. Generally the upper water course which pours its flood into New River at Thurmond is known as Dunloup Creek because it traverses the section covered by the extensive Dunn Survey of the past century. John Dunn of Chillicothe, Ohio, was the grandfather of William McKell, and the one who owned the Dunn survey. To distinguish this Loup Creek from the Loup Creek which empties into Kanawha River at Deepwater, it was named Dunloup Creek. The Loup Creek which ends at Deepwater is some times referred to as Lower Loup Creek as over against Dunloup Creek which at times has been known as Upper Loup Creek to distinguish it. One has but to see the way these turgid mountain streams loup about to learn how they might both be named. As for the spelling, "Loup" or "Loop," either or both are correct as far as the matter is concerned. The



serpentine course of these streams was more pronounced a generation or two ago, when they were named, than they are now.

**Meadow Bridge**—This small place in Quinnimont District is located in a flat territory which people there called a meadow. A bridge that was built across a small water which meandered through the grassy meadow led to the settlement being called Meadow Bridge.

**Minden**—Once a very extensive mining operation, this once populous town on Arbuckle Creek in the valley below Oak Hill was known as Rend from W. P. Rend who sold his rich holdings to the Berwind-White combine in 1905. After their acquisition of the large lease there at Rend the Pennsylvania owners changed the name of the town to that of Minden in honor of a noted place in Germany by that name.

**Montgomery**—James Montgomery was a pioneer settler where the town on Kanawha River which bears his name is built. It has been known as Montgomery since 1890. Prior to that time the location was first called Montgomery's Landing and later as Coal Valley. During early part of the last quarter of past century the mines there were worked by Coal Valley Mining Company. This important town is seat of West Virginia Institute of Technology and the famed Laird Clinic which is headed up by Dr. William R. Laird, M.D., noted physician and surgeon.

**Mount Carbon**—This beautiful name was applied to the mining camp on Kanawha River in Kanawha District as descriptive of the carbon (coal) in the high hill there. This work was a unit in the Mt. Carbon Co., Ltd. An old place, the name goes back to 1882.

**Mt. Hope**—This is perhaps the most widely known spot in Fayette County. When a public school was opened there some eight or ten years after the Civil War the trustees sought a name for it. One of the early settlers was J. H. ("Fud") McGinnis, the first lawyer to open an office at Fayetteville after the close of the Civil War. He was one of the Trustees of this school and suggested its name. In the valley where Mt. Hope is built there was a luxurious growth of wild pea vines. In early spring these nourishing vines grew so abundantly that people brought their cattle from a distance to feed upon the tender plants. Some one had nicknamed the valley Egypt, alluding to how the patriarch Jacob's sons resorted to Egypt for grain when Canaan was afflicted with famine. This school was located in the upper reaches of the Egypt Valley. McGinnis opined it should be called Mount Hope. Egypt had meant hope to Jacob's people even as this school in Egypt Valley meant hope for the people whose children would attend it, so Mt. Hope it became. Fire destroyed Mt. Hope on March 24, 1910, and the present city sprang, Phoenix like, from its ashes.

**MacDonald**—This town is now a part of Mt. Hope and got its name from Symington MacDonald, a wealthy man who was a native of Scot-



land. His money purchased mineral leases on Loup Creek from Thomas McKell and started developments that finally resulted in organization of the New River Company. Associated with MacDonald was Samuel Dixon. Symington MacDonald returned to Scotland after increasing his fortune here in the coal business.

**Oak Hill**—Oak Hill is the largest town in Fayette County. Its name comes from the post office by that name which originally was established at Hill Top. Since the office was located by a spreading oak at Hill top it was given the name of Oak Hill. Three miles away a thriving settlement was building up and the post office was transferred there. This community took the name of Oak Hill from that of the post office. This was about the time of the Civil War or shortly afterwards.

**Page**—Page is a town on Loup Creek between Oak Hill and Deepwater. It was named for Captain W. N. Page, pioneer coal man in Fayette County.

**Paint Creek**—Here is a sizeable stream which flows into the Kanawha River at Pratt. Up and down this creek ran an Indian trail in the early times. From the circumstance that the Indians blazed the trees along the trail with their tomahawks and smeared those markings with the ochreous clay that is found in the region the stream got the name of "Paint" Creek. From this painting of the trees the first settlers called the stream which flowed by this trail "Paint Creek."

**Pax**—Where Pack's Branch empties into Paint Creek stands the incorporated town of Pax. This name is an apparent simplification of the spelling of Pack's. Streams derived their names from the first settlers on their banks, hence Pack's Branch. Often a small stream is called a "branch." What the name of the first Pack there was has been lost to history.

**Powellton**—On Armstrong Creek in Kanawha District the sprawling coal town of Powellton is built. It was named in honor of G. H. Powell, English coal operator, who headed the Mt. Carbon Company, Ltd. In 1888 the Powellton mine was placed in operation.

**Prince**—Important stop on the C & O Railroad, Prince bears the name of the founder of the village there on New River. He was William Prince who owned the site at the time the C & O was being built through there. Land was transferred to C & O for right-of-way, a condition being that the place must be made a train stop for all trains, it is said. William Prince was there as early as 1870.

**Quinnimont**—Quinnimont is a town and stop on the C & O at the mouth of Laurel Creek. Towering about the place are five mountain peaks. From this fact the name of the place was coined from the Latin language. "Quinque," meaning five, and "mons" meaning mountain, were joined together in the plural and with some poetic license, to spell out the designation: Quinnimont.

**Ramsey**—This post office and community set up was named after W. H. Ramsey who served the county in many positions such as High Sheriff and County Commissioner. Ramsey is in Mt. Cove District. Establishment of this post office was largely due to the man whose name was given the office.

**Ravenseye**—Judge Harrison, a Kentucky Federal Judge, was instrumental in securing the establishment of this old post office. James Rhodes was the first post master. Fascinated by the eyes of Mrs. Rhodes, which were black as a raven's wing, Judge Harrison suggested the office be named Ravenseye in honor of the beautiful eyes of the wife of James Rhodes. Judge Harrison was marooned at the Old Stone House Tavern during the four-foot deep snow in Fayette County in April, 1870. He went through this area by stage coach over the James River and Kanawha Turnpike.

**Red Star**—When Charles T. Jones and George W. Jones, his brother, began coal operations on the thousand acres lease they had here on Loup Creek a mile below Glen Jean, they named the town Red Star which was the trade name for the coal they produced. This mine, now worked out, was opened in 1893.

**Sanger**—This is one of the oldest settlements in Fayette County. There Henry Sanger settled on the lands drained by Meadow Fork Creek in 1849. Because of this Sanger's name was appended to the strung out settlement in this narrow valley. It is about three miles from Oak Hill. Here L. W. Jones settled and raised his influential family. One of his grandsons is Herbert E. Jones, a noted coal producer in West Virginia.

**Scarbro**—Scarbro, like many Fayette County towns in the coal fields, has an Old World connection. Samuel Dixon named this place on White Oak Creek after Scarborough in England. Dixon was a native of England and the name of Scarborough being rather numerous there in the White Oak valley served to remind coal man Dixon of the old Yorkshire town by that name, so the name Scarborough was tacked on to it. Desire of mountain people to abbreviate names led to the corruption of its spelling to plain Scarbro.

**Saturday Road and Sunday Road**: Henderson Clark Dietz, who was born and raised on the Saturday Road and lived his married life to a ripe old age on the Sunday Road told the story of the naming of these two roads in Nuttall District to H. W. McClung, Hico, W. Va. Surveyors started, as they thought, on Friday, at the James River and Kanawha Turnpike, now U. S. Route 60, and surveyed the Saturday Road to the Summersville Road where they camped that night. Next day they surveyed the Sunday Road. However, when they got to the turnpike, where Hico now is, they learned they had been working on Saturday and Sunday instead of Friday and Saturday, as they supposed. Accordingly they decided to name one the Saturday Road and the other the Sunday Road. Sunday Road Baptist Church, located on Sunday Road, took its name from the road by the side of which the meeting house stands.

**Sewell**—Sewell is a river town on the C & O that echoes the name of Sewell Mountain which was named in honor of Stephen Sewell one of the first pioneers to venture into this section of West Virginia. Sewell was the site of Bowyer's Ferry, an important river crossing on New River. As early as 1798 Peter Bowyer was operating this ferry. There is a post office there now.

**Smithers**—Across Kanawha River from Montgomery stands Smithers, a fairly good sized town. Early settlers had the fixed habit of locating their homes at the mouth of streams and giving the streams their name. Although who settled here is not known now it is believed that a Smith was the man. In time the creek was given his name and that strung out into Smithers, is the theory of how this place got its name.

**Spring Dale**—Dale is an old poetic name for a valley. Here at this location in Quinnimont Magisterial District is abundant spring water supply, hence the calling of the section as Spring Dale. Its name suggests just what the region is.

**Summerlee**—Name of Summerlee was Parral at the first. Again it was Samuel Dixon who gave this important mining town near Oak Hill both of its names. First he called it Parral, a mining town he once visited in Mexico. On Feb. 8, 1906, the Parral mine exploded and killed twenty-three men. After the mine was placed back in operation, Mr. Dixon gave it its present beautiful name of Summerlee in memory of a mining town in Scotland where the Summerlee Coal and Iron Co., operated.

**Thurmond**—After the Civil War a great deal of land in Fayette County passed into the hands of Morris Harvey. He got Capt. William D. Thurmond, a self-taught surveyor, to make some surveys of his extensive holdings. Money was scarce then and Thurmond had to take his pay in land of his own selection. Divining that the land on which Thurmond is built would become the great port of commercial entry into the Fayette County coal fields, Thurmond asked for that location. When the C & O built its line through there the place took on great importance as a depot, post office, and business site. Thurmond gave the town his own name. At one time more freight was handled there from the C & O than any depot between Richmond and Cincinnati.

**Winona**—Winona is a remote little town on the headwaters of Keeney's Creek in mountainous Nuttall District. William Gwinn, an early settler of great influence in that area, had a daughter by the name of Winona. For Winona Gwinn the picturesque location was named. There is a banking establishment there which has been robbed a number of times. Winona is the home of Mrs. Nell Walker, veteran legislator and former State Banking Commissioner of West Virginia.

## Chapter Six

# MOTHER OF "STONEWALL" JACKSON BURIED AT ANSTED

Following the marriage of Julia Beckwith Neale to Jonathan Jackson on Sept., 28, 1817, he died on March 26, 1826. These were the parents of Thomas Jonathan ("Stonewall") Jackson of Civil War distinction. After the death of Jonathan Jackson, his widow married Blake B. Woodson, a widower attorney of Clarksburg, on Nov. 30, 1830. After the formation of Fayette County in 1831, Blake was appointed clerk of the newly organized county and moved his family here. They occupied a modest place known as the Metz house and which stood back near the edge of the cliffs on the right hand side of the road as one enters Ansted from the Lovers Leap side of the town. This house was about 100 yards off present Midland Trail, or Route 60. At that time the county seat was at New Haven a few miles away.

There on Friday, Oct., 7, 1831, Mrs. Woodson was delivered of a son. They named the child Wirt Woodson. Complications resulted from the birth of the baby. Mrs. Woodson's condition became grave and death relieved her sufferings. A letter written by Blake B. Woodson, under date of Dec. 6, 1831, and addressed to "Dear William," Mr. Blake states "On Saturday evening last, between eight and nine o'clock, your mother breathed her last." According to this letter then, Mrs. Woodson's death occurred on Saturday, Dec. 3, 1831. Another sentence in the Woodson letter goes on to say, "She was buried the day before yesterday," which, with the letter dated Dec. 6, would make Sunday, Dec. 4th., the day of her burial. Mrs. Woodson was laid to rest in Westlake Cemetery\* at Ansted, with the Rev. John McElhenney, Pastor of Old Stone Presbyterian Church, Lewisburg, officiating.

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\*This burial ground is still known as Westlake Cemetery from the fact that James Westlake once owned the farm out of which a seven acre tract was set aside as a grave yard. When Mrs. Woodson was interred there on Dec. 4, 1831, the land on which this burial ground was located was then the property of George Hunter who subsequently disposed of it to William Tyree in 1834. Subsequently Tyree transferred the property to James Westlake by whose name this hillside place of burial has since been known.



#### GRAVE OF STONEWALL JACKSON'S MOTHER

From an old photograph by Homer Wells. Date of death as shown on marker is an error, being Saturday, Dec., 3, 1831, instead of Sept., 1831 as stated on the stone.

During the terminal illness of Mrs. Woodson she was attended by her near neighbor, Mrs. Thomas B. Hamilton. In the summer of 1855, Thomas Jonathan Jackson, destined to be known as "Stonewall" Jackson paid a visit to Fayette County with a view of locating his mother's tomb. Writing from Lexington, Va., on Sept. 4, 1855, the son stated to his aunt, Mrs. Alfred Neale, Parkersburg, (W) Virginia,

"I stopped to see Hawks Nest, and the gentleman with whom I put up was at my mother's burial, and accompanied me to the cemetery for the purpose of pointing out her grave to me; but I am not certain that he found it. There was no stone to mark the spot. Another gentleman, who had the kindness to go with us, stated that the wooden head or foot board with her name on it had been put up but was no longer there. A depression in the earth only marked her last resting place. When standing by her grave, I experienced feelings to which I was until then a stranger. I was seeking the spot partly for the purpose of erecting something to her precious memory."

Thus it was that the grave of the mother of the great Confederate General went unmarked for years. After Capt. Thomas D. Ranson, a soldier of "Stonewall" Jackson's Brigade, became the attorney for Hawks Nest Coal Company, predecessor of the Gauley Mountain Coal Co., he made a trip to Ansted. While there this Confederate veteran sought out Mrs. Thomas B. Hamilton and a member of the Job Martin family of that community to have them locate Mrs. Woodson's grave. These people concurred in the grave's location to the satisfaction of Captain Ranson's mind. Then, at his own expense, Ranson caused the erection of a grave marker with this inscription on it:

"Here lies Julia Beckwith Neale,  
Born February 28, 1798, in Loudoun Co., Va.  
Married, first, Jonathan Jackson.  
Second, Blake B. Woodson.  
Died Sept., 1831  
To the mother of "Stonewall" Jackson  
This tribute from one of his old Brigade."

As the newly discovered letter of Blake W. Woodson clearly shows, the date of death of Jackson's mother was not in Sep-

tember, 1831, as the inscription on her marker erroneously states, but was on Saturday Dec. 3rd of that year.

In order to set apart the grave of Mrs. Woodson, an iron fence was built about it in 1916 under the sponsorship of the late Ex-Congressman, J. Alfred Taylor, Sr., Fayetteville, W. Va. At the approach to the steep hillside grave yard stands a West Virginia Historic Marker which mournfully recites the following:

#### **"Jackson's Mother**

In Westlake Cemetery is the grave of the mother of General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson. The monument at the grave was placed by Captain Thomas Ranson, who fought in Jackson's old Brigade in the War between the States."



## Chapter Seven

# FAYETTE COUNTY IN THE CIVIL WAR

Herewith is presented the story of Fayette County in the Civil War of 1861-65. It is a "borrowed axe." At the insistence of the late Charles A. Goddard and upon the urging of a certain other person who wrote for The Fayette Tribune, the noted Confederate veteran, Milton W. Humphreys of Bryan's Battery, King's Artillery, C.S.A., committed to writing the story of Military Operations in Fayette County in 1861-63. Those writings first appeared in the Fayette Tribune of which C. A. Goddard was then the owner and editor. Saving the type of the articles, a few small pamphlets containing Humphrey's accounts were issued by Mr. Goddard to a few of his friends.

Since the following chapters were written by an eye witness and a participant in the stirring events in some instances, they are submitted as expert testimony. Few men could write more fully and feelingly of the fratricidal strife of the early 'sixties than Milton W. Humphreys who spent considerable time in Oak Hill near the close of his useful and learned life. There the publisher of this book came to know him quite well and learned from him first-hand the story of the struggle here in the county in 1861-63.

Our Civil War was the most popular war this country has ever fought. Its popularity is almost as great today as it ever was. Certainly the cult who follow today the fortunes of the mighty armies under Lee and Grant and Grant's predecessors is the largest cult of its kind in all the earth.

There follows here the story of one who was the last of General Robert E. Lee's faculty at Washington College, now Washington and Lee University, at Lexington, Va., whither Lee went after Appomattox.



# MILITARY OPERATIONS IN FAYETTE COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA 1861-63

by MILTON W. HUMPHREYS

1861

## STRATEGIC MANEUVERING

Facts from Official Records—Federal advance on four lines—Wise's Legion. Col. Tompkins' 22nd Va.—McCausland's 36th Va.—Scarey—Wise's retreat from Gauley Bridge—Returns with Floyd—Conflict of authority—Big Creek—Cotton Hill—Carnifex Ferry—Sewell Mountain—Lee arrives at Meadow Bluff—Wise recalled to Richmond—Rosecrans falls back to Gauley Bridge—Cox Advances against Floyd on Cotton Hill—Benham on Laurel Creek—Col. Croghan killed at Glen Jean—Floyd retreats to Raleigh—Fayetteville fortified by Federals as important strategic point.

The object of this narrative is to give an account of such military operations of 1861-63 as occurred in Fayette County, with a concise statement of the more general events with which they were connected. Most of the facts were obtained from "Official Records of the War of the Rebellion"; but some statements are based on personal observation. Many unimportant details are omitted. The narrative will not be encumbered with references to the Official Records, as this collection of volumes is provided with a general index and each volume with a special index and anyone wishing to examine into a particular subject will easily find where it is mentioned in the Records. A single record of an event should never be accepted as true until a careful study has been made of all the reports and correspondence relating to the event in question, and even then it will often be difficult, sometimes impossible, to elicit the truth.

West Virginia did not become a state until June 20, 1863, but Federal troops from West Virginia will be called West Virginians from the beginning.

As soon as a state of war was universally recognized as existing, the Federals invaded Virginia on four different lines: From Washington City directly "on to Richmond"; from Harper's Ferry into the Shenandoah Valley; from the northwest on the Staunton and Parkersburg turnpike, and from the west up the Kanawha River, this line receiving troops also by

the Weston, Sutton and Summersville road. This narrative deals only with the operations in the fourth region named.

Henry A. Wise, who had just been succeeded by John Letcher as Governor of Virginia, was commissioned as brigadier-general, and authorized to raise, in Kanawha Valley and adjacent region, an independent force of volunteers, comprising all arms of the service, to be known as Wise's Legion. Two other men, Colonel C. Q. Tompkins and Colonel John McCausland, were also commissioned to raise troops independent of, but cooperating with, the Legion. All three succeeded in raising considerable forces, that of Colonel Tompkins afterward becoming the Twenty-second, and that, of Colonel McCausland Thirty-sixth Regiment Virginia Volunteers, respectively commanded by Colonel George S. Patton and Colonel John McCausland. The Legion was raised to 2800.

On July 17, 1861, at Scarey Creek, twelve miles below Charleston, a force of infantry under Colonel Patton and cavalry under Colonel A. G. Jenkins and two cannons, numbering in all 800, according to Wise, after a doubtful contest succeeded in defeating a force of 1200, with very slight loss. Details do not belong here. After some maneuvering and skirmishing, Wise learned of the approach of strong forces, one column moving towards Gauley Bridge, and decided that it was necessary, especially as he was almost out of ammunition, to abandon the Kanawha Valley, which he proceeded to do, burning bridges, including that at Gauley, behind him. His orders from the war department, received during his retreat, were to fall back as far as Covington, but being allowed some discretion, he encamped at the White Sulphur.

While he was there, John B. Floyd, who also had been Governor of Virginia, (1850-53), and United States Secretary of War under President Buchanan, having been appointed brigadier-general, came with a small brigade, (Wise says about 1200 men), which he raised in Southwest Virginia, to the neighborhood of the Sweet Springs. He had been assigned to the same general region to which Wise had been assigned. The two generals were under instructions to cooperate in expelling the Federal invaders. This was a fatal mistake. If it is true, as has been said, that one bad general is better than two good



#### LEE'S TREE ATOP BIG SEWELL MOUNTAIN

Homer Wells, photographer, took this picture of Lee's Tree in June, 1929. Under this tree General Robert E. Lee had his camp during the Sewell Mountain Campaign in Fayette County in fall of 1861. Here was where Lee first saw "Traveller," his famous war horse. Tree was a sugar maple and was cut down by the C.C.C. for Daughters of the Confederacy about 1936. Materials from it were made into souvenirs.

ones, nothing could be much worse than two bad generals, though we can hardly assert that Wise can justly be called a bad general.

Floyd's commission antedated that of Wise, and on August 12, he assumed command of the army of the Kanawha and the country adjacent thereto—another name for the region assigned to Wise—the Middle Department of the West.

The two forces moved slowly westward, Wise on the James River and Kanawha pike; Floyd on roads leading to Summersville. From the start there was serious trouble between the two commanders, growing partly out of the fact that Floyd was departing radically from a plan of campaign which Wise had submitted to General Lee, who had fully approved it. This trouble became acute on the occasion of the very first fighting that occurred, which was in Fayette County, just west of Big Sewell Mountain, August 25. Wise had posted a strong picket at Piggot's Mill, some distance from his main force. Floyd sent across from his command about 175 cavalymen under acting Colonel Jenkins who, by Floyd's order, relieved Wise's picket and occupied the post themselves. A body of Federals surprised and completely routed them, and when Wise's troops came to their rescue, they flatly refused to obey Wise's orders. He made bitter complaint to Floyd on account of this interference.

Later Wise moved to Dogwood Gap and Floyd to Carnifex Ferry, (called also Carnifix and Carnifax) in Nicholas County, and crossed Gauley River. Here he constructed fortifications which Wise ridicules in his account of his troubles with Floyd.

Soon afterward at Cross Lanes, Floyd surprised and completely scattered a regiment of "lubberly Dutchmen" (he calls them) commanded by Colonel E. B. Tyler.

On September 2 and 3, 1861, Wise, moving towards Gauley from Hawks Nest with about 1250 men and 2 pieces of artillery, attacked and finally drove away an equal force of Federals from their position just west of a hill around which the pike makes a bend after crossing Big Creek westward. He thereby gained control of Miller's Ferry and Likien's Mill. On September 1, Brigadier Generals A. A. Chapman and Alfred Beckley, commanding militia, drove a small Federal force from Cotton Hill,

but it had been found that efficient service for any great length of time could not be expected of the militia, and Wise did not press his advantage, but fell back to his position near Hawks Nest, and the Federals, in larger numbers than before, reoccupied the position from which they had been driven, but Wise's account implies that he still maintained control of Miller's Ferry.

So far the Federals against whom Wise and Floyd had been operating, were under the command of Brigadier-General J. D. Cox; but soon after the events just narrated, W. S. Rosecrans, West Point graduate of 1842, who had been made a brigadier-general in the regular army and had already rendered very efficient service, was found to be approaching from the north by way of Sutton. On September 10, having on that day made more than a usual day's march, he appeared in front of Floyd's position at Carnifex Ferry at 3 p.m., with 10 regiments of infantry and a proportionate supply of artillery. This was no intrusion into the territory of Cox, for Rosecrans had been given charge of a very extensive department, which included the whole of West Virginia. He spent four hours trying to locate Floyd's trenches which were much concealed by dense woods. In doing this the Federals necessarily exposed themselves in places to the Confederate fire. Artillery also was used by both sides. At 7 p.m., the Federals rested on their arms, and during the night Floyd, knowing the superior strength of his assailants, quietly withdrew and crossed the river. Strange to say, Floyd permitted very important papers to fall into Rosecrans' hands, revealing the fact (according to Rosecrans) that Floyd had 5 regiments and 2 batteries, and a battalion of cavalry, and that considerable reinforcements were approaching. The losses were: Federals killed, 17; wounded, 141; Confederates killed 0; wounded 20. Floyd himself was wounded in the right hand.

Such was what is called the "Battle of Carnifex Ferry." It really was more like a battle than was anything that had occurred in that region; but Floyd seems to exaggerate when he reports as follows: "The attack was made with spirit and determination, with small arms, grape and round shot from howitzers and rifled cannon. There was scarcely an intermission in the conflict until night put an end to the firing." Among the pri-

vate soldiers and the citizens it was asserted that 1500 Federals were killed, and one prominent citizen of Lewisburg wrote to President Davis that it was reported that the killed "amounted to thousands." The affair gave Floyd great prestige, and his attitude towards Wise seemed to the latter no longer endurable, so that he wrote to General Lee asking him to separate the two commands completely by sending himself and his Legion east, and replacing them with other troops, and added: "I feel that, if we remain together, we will unite in more wars than one."

After Floyd crossed the Gauley, Rosecrans did not follow him, and Floyd moved his troops to the James River and Kanawha pike, and about September 13 he and Wise fell back with all their forces to the top of Big Sewell Mountain. Floyd encamped on the main top where Smailes' tavern used to be, and Wise moved three or four miles farther east, and occupied what he considered an almost impregnable position.

According to Wise's account, Floyd on the 16th called a council of war which assembled at 5 p.m. After hearing Wise's arguments in favor of all occupying the position he held, Floyd decided to make an examination before coming to a final decision, and on the same afternoon within half an hour after the adjournment of the council, Floyd, without further consultation, notified Wise that he had decided to fall back to the most defensible point between Meadow Bluff and Lewisburg, and that he himself would move with his force at once, and Wise was immediately to get ready to follow. On the 18th Floyd inquired by dispatch why Wise had not obeyed his order to move promptly, and Wise replied that he had not been ordered to move, but only to get ready to move. He added a hope that Floyd would not require him to move at all, assigning reasons for the request. Floyd made no immediate reply and Wise remained where he was. On the 19th the Federals were reported advancing on the turnpike. Such was the state of affairs when, on the 21st General Robert E. Lee arrived in person at Meadow Bluff, having come from the Cheat Mountain region.

General Lee appears not to have assumed immediate command of either Wise's or Floyd's troops, but to have undertaken the general control of both. He and Wise exchanged notes several times, Lee seemingly regarding Wise's position

as the stronger, but Floyd's as the safer because it provided for an approach of the Federals through Nicholas county, and Wise maintaining that to his certain knowledge the entire Federal force was advancing on the turnpike. On the 25th Lee came to Wise's post, bringing four regiments, and skirmishing began at once.

Rosecrans had moved his immediate command to the turnpike and united it with that of Cox who had been operating on this road, and the combined force, 5200 strong, had advanced to the summit of Big Sewell. This force, according to Wise, was soon increased to 6000.

On the 25th the Federals advanced in force to ascertain the probable strength of the Confederates and reconnoitre their position. A strong body of skirmishers, accompanied by Wise himself, advanced and met those of the Federals, and the skirmishing mentioned above commenced, the Confederates all believing that a powerful assault was about to be made upon them. At this juncture, about 4:30 p.m., there was handed to Wise, under fire, the following amazing and strangely delayed letter:

Richmond, Va., Sept. 20, 1861.

Sir: You are instructed to turn over all the troops heretofore immediately under your command to General Floyd, and report yourself in person to the Adjutant General in this city, with the least delay. In making the transfer to General Floyd you will include everything under your command.

By Order of the President,

J. P. BENJAMIN,

Acting Secretary of War.

General H. A. Wise.

Wise immediately wrote a note to Lee asking him for advice as to what he ought to do under the unique circumstances and Lee replied advising him to "obey the President."

No battle was fought. Rosecrans was too able a general to risk an assault on the Confederate entrenchments. The Federals fell back to the main top and encamped for some time and then gradually withdrew and occupied several points along the road including Gauley Bridge.



# SOLDIER'S DISCHARGE

TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

Know Ye, That Private Charles A. Dequasie of  
 Captain Samuel S. Dews Company, 60th Regiment of  
 Virginia Vols, who was enlisted the twenty sixth day of June  
 one thousand eight hundred and sixty one to serve one year is hereby  
 honorably discharged from the Army of the Confederate States  
 of disability. General disability.

Said Charles A. Dequasie was born in Greenbrier County  
 in the State of Virginia is thirty three years of age five feet  
 eight inches high, fair complexion, grey eyes, brown hair,  
 and by occupation when enlisted, a Farmer

Given at Camp near Richmond this 30th day of May  
 1862.

Witness  
 S. Dequasie  
 2nd Lt. Company K  
 60th Regt Va Vols

Samuel S. Dews  
 Capt Co A 60th  
 Regt Va Vols

Army of the Confederate States Discharge shows Private Charles A. Dequasie was discharged from military service on surgeon's certificate of general disability. Private Dequasie was the father of the late Edward L. Dequasie of near Fayetteville. Oak Hill Post Master in 1958, Herbert B. Dews, is great grandson of Pvt. Dequasie's Confederate Company Commander, Capt. Samuel S. Dews, as shown on the above discharge. From the original in the Shirley Donnelly Library, Oak Hill, W. Va.



It seems proper here to make a digression. That letter to Wise was a most unfortunate thing for Floyd. Wise instantly left what he believed to be a battle-field on which he was to win glory and fame, and hastened to Richmond and, as soon as he could, prepared an elaborate account of all that had occurred between himself and Floyd. The result was that the request that he had previously submitted to General Lee, that he and his Legion be sent east, and some other commander and troops be sent to take their place, was virtually granted, and he retained his rank to the end of the war, and was with Lee at Appomatox.

To replace Wise and his Legion, Brigadier-General W. W. Loring was sent with a considerable force, and General Lee formed the purpose of driving the Federals from the Kanawha Valley. With this in view, but without explicitly promising cooperation, he sent General Floyd and his command, estimated at 4000 infantry (8 regiments) and 700 cavalry by Rosecrans, to the south side of New River, intending to send General Loring down the James River and Kanawha pike; but appeals for reinforcements made by the commanders in the Cheat Mountain region, and the Shenandoah Valley were so urgent that he sent Loring there. It is not clear why Lee permitted Floyd to proceed, unsupported on the north side, to carry out or try to carry out his part of the undertaking.

To comprehend fully the ensuing events it is necessary to bear in mind that for several weeks Rosecrans, with good reason, confidently expected Loring, under Lee's supervision, to advance on Gauley Bridge. He had not only other cause for this belief, but it had been reported to him by some one who had been present that Lee, being told that Rosecrans had said he was going to occupy the Kanawha Valley, had added very significantly "if he can."

About October 15 Rosecrans having heard that there was a force of Virginia militia between Fayetteville and Cotton Hill, sent Colonel R. L. McCook with an adequate force across at Miller's Ferry. He had a skirmish with and dispersed a small body of men, and learning that there was no strong hostile force over there, he re-crossed the river, neglecting to leave a guard on the south side. Rosecrans, much displeased, ordered him on

October 25 to send a strong guard over, but the attempt to do so was thwarted by sharp-shooters, concealed and of unknown number.

About October 27 Rosecrans learned that Floyd was advancing from Raleigh towards Cotton Hill. On the 29th Floyd drove some Federal outposts down near the mouth of Great Falls Creek, and on November 1 he occupied Cotton Hill. By means of artillery he made it impossible in the day time for ferry boats to run at the mouth of Gauley or wagons to pass along the road. Floyd claims to have destroyed one ferry boat. This state of affairs with constant skirmishing continued for some time, Floyd says three weeks, but his own account makes it not more than ten days. The cause of Rosecrans' failure to dislodge Floyd earlier has been explained, but as soon as he learned that there was no danger of a Confederate advance from the direction of Lewisburg, he took steps to end the situation. Already on November 4 he had posted Brigadier-General H. W. Benham (first honor West Point graduate of 1837) with 3000 men opposite the mouth of lower Loup Creek to prevent Floyd from getting in his rear if he were attacked by Loring. Now that this danger no longer existed, he formed a plan by which he hoped and reasonably expected to capture or disperse Floyd's entire force. Brigadier-General R. C. Schenck was posted with an adequate force far enough up New River for him to get in Floyd's rear, and complete preparations were made for rapidly crossing, while Benham, also well prepared for crossing the Kanawha, was to press the Confederates in front. Fortunately for Floyd, just as this plan was about to be put in operation, New River rose to such a height that it was impossible for Schenck to cross. Those acquainted with that region and the character of that river will readily understand the situation. The plan was then changed, and Benham was to cross the smoother Kanawha and to pass to his right around to the rear of Floyd, and Schenck was to come down, cross at the same place, and press him in front. Benham's operations seem to indicate that he never understood the change in the plan, and although he efficiently did nearly all the important work that was done, Rosecrans severely criticized him and charges to his disobedience of orders the escape of Floyd's army.

The operations that now occurred are beclouded with all sorts of contradictions in the Official Records. The Confederate and the Federal reports naturally contradict each other, but some of the Federal reports contradict other Federal reports; so only a vague approximation to what actually happened will be attempted. The result, however, was that Floyd fell back until pursuit ceased entirely. The details will now be briefly stated:

On November 10, under the supervision of General Cox, Colonel C. A. DeVilliers and Lieutenant-Colonel D. A. Enyart crossed the river, each with 200 men, and somehow caused the Confederate artillery to withdraw. Floyd makes the Federals fewer and says they were driven away, but he had learned on that day that a Federal re-enforcement of 5000 men had "landed at the mouth of Loup Creek." He appears to have acted under the belief that this was true in all his movements. He fell back before this small force, which was re-enforced by 6 companies after dark, and skirmishing continued until midnight, the Federals having gained possession of the mountain as far as Blake's farm. On the 11th at day-break the advance was resumed, the Confederates skirmishing as they retired, but making no determined stand. When the Federals reached the edge of Cotton Hill proper, Floyd's wagontrain was seen moving on the road towards Fayetteville. Cox then caused his troops to halt so as not to show how few they were, as Floyd was evidently under the impression that a large force was advancing upon him. Rosecrans, however, speaks of a Federal repulse, which seems to have been at this place. In the afternoon a body of 150 men under Major B. G. Lieper, followed the Confederates up the Fayetteville turnpike, crossed Cotton Hill, remained till evening, and fell back half a mile.

The Federal loss in all these operations up to this time was 2 killed, 1 wounded and 6 missing—sufficient evidence that the resistance to the Federal advance must have been exceedingly slight. The 6 missing were seemingly captured when the first attack on the artillery was made.

On the 12th at 3 p.m., Benham arrived with 3 regiments, amounting to 1500 men and some artillery. He had sent three detached forces to as many different points, but instead of passing around on his right to Floyd's rear he had gone up to the

Falls and ascended the mountain directly to Cotton Hill. He at once advanced with a total of 1640 men, and, finding the Confederates strongly posted, at Laurel Creek, he skirmished till dark, losing 1 killed and 4 wounded. Floyd says that the Federals on this occasion, with superior forces, declined battle and "disgracefully retreated." On that night at 2:30 a.m., (13th) Floyd began to fall back, always fearing that those 5000 men from Ohio would get in his rear. Early on the 13th, Benham followed beyond Fayetteville, finding, he says, evidence of a hasty retreat. Now having 2700 men, some of the detached men having arrived, Benham pressed forward, arriving at Hawkins' farm, 5 miles beyond Fayetteville. He claims to have found abandoned tents, wagons, and ammunition along the road. A little less than 10 miles from Fayetteville, he encountered an advanced outpost not far from McCoy's Mill, (Glen Jean) and there followed a sharp skirmish which lasted half an hour. Here Lieutenant-Colonel St. George Croghan, Floyd's cavalry commander, was killed. The Federals lost none.

Floyd occupied the ridge just beyond Loop Creek as one goes to Beckley. This hill he calls "Loop Mountain,"—a name apparently unknown in that region—and makes this remarkable statement: "In my position on Loop Mountain the enemy declined attacking me, but retreated from that to Gauley in a very disorderly manner." He says that this position, not having any strategic advantage, he went on to Piney Creek in Raleigh County. Benham, however, says that finding the man Confederate force apparently prepared for a general action, he began an attack in front and used artillery with effect and sent a force of 750 men to attack the Confederates on their left flank, and when this attack was made their whole force retreated precipitately, abandoning blankets, clothing, camp equipage, etc., and that he pursued, after resting his men for a while, but was recalled by General Schenck to whom Rosecrans had given command over everything on the south side of the river. The two accounts are absolutely irreconcilable. Benham's account cannot all be fiction, as anyone will readily see on a careful perusal.

Floyd's report of these operations was evidently unsatisfactory to the authorities at Richmond, and their polite comments really meant that Floyd had shown the Federals the great im-

portance of Cotton Hill, and then had turned it over to them to fortify. He and his army were not very long afterwards called away from West Virginia, and General Lee was notified of that fact.

The Federals utilized the lesson taught them by Floyd and in preparation for the next campaign strongly fortified, not Cotton Hill proper, but Fayetteville, as being for various reasons a better strategic place. The fortifications were prepared against attack from both directions.

Here a question arises: Can any one tell when and by what command the fort at Fayetteville was built which is today believed to be a Confederate work?

The Federal soldiers used to sing to the tune of "Jordan" a badly riming parody of that song, of which parody two stanzas, considered libelous by the Confederates, celebrated the two principal events of this campaign:

"Old Gov'nor Floyd became very much annoyed

At the cannon-balls a-whizzing all around him;

So he took a sudden flight in the dark of the night,

And he landed on the other side of Gauley."

"Old Gov'nor Floyd marched his troops on Cotton Hill

For to cannonade the Yankee camp at Gauley;

But Rosecrans and Cox were as cunning as a fox

And sent him a-running back to Raleigh."

## 1862

### ACTION AT FAYETTEVILLE, SEPT. 10

**Loring Commands Confederate Army of 5000 at Giles C. H.—Lightburn succeeds Cox as head of Federal forces in Kanawha—Battle of Fayetteville, Sept. 10—Federals outnumbered, retreat in night through road mysteriously left open for them to Kanawha—Loring misinterprets orders and leaves Kanawha for Lewisburg—Army ordered to return—Fruits of Confederate Campaign lost—Interesting episode at Hawks Nest Cliff.**

At the opening of the campaign of 1862 the Federals occupied Princeton in Mercer County, and when Henry Heth, who had been Floyd's inspector with the rank of Colonel, and had been made brigadier-general, left Lewisburg to help to drive the Federals from Princeton (which was done before he got there), Colonel George Crook occupied Lewisburg with 2 regiments, a

Head Quarters First Separate Brigade, Dept. West Virginia,

Charleston, West Va., May 26<sup>th</sup> 1865.

Charles A. Dequasie B. Capt ~~Thurmond's~~<sup>Co</sup> Regiment, C. S. Army,  
has given his Parole of Honor not to take up arms against the United States Government, until regularly  
exchanged; and if permitted to remain at his home, he will conduct himself as a good and peaceable  
citizen, respect the laws in force where he may reside, and do nothing to the detriment of, or in opposition  
to, the United States Government.

Major & Provost Marshal.

First Separate Brigade, Dept. West Va.

During the Civil War and after a Confederate soldier's surrender he was granted a Parole of Honor. Parole shown here was issued to a Fayette County soldier who had seen service under the Stars and Bars of the Confederacy. This man, Pvt. Charles A. Dequasie was one of the men who had enlisted in a Company of Partisan Rangers which Captain William D. Thurmond had enlisted in Fayette and adjoining counties. Dequasie's physical constitution was not able to withstand the life of a soldier in the field in a saddle, so was given a disability discharge such as is shown elsewhere herein. From the original in the Dequasie Papers in the Shirley Donnelly Library, Oak Hill, W. Va.

battery of mountain howitzers, and a small body of cavalry. Heth, returning from Princeton, managed to surprise Crook's force on the morning of May 23, and although his infantry was fully as strong as Crook's and his artillery greatly superior, through a strange blunder he suffered a crushing defeat and lost most of his artillery. This disaster, followed by other evidences of incompetence, made him intensely unpopular. So he was called away (and made a major-general in the Army of Northern Virginia), and Brigadier-General John S. Williams was sent to take his place. Not long afterwards, W. W. Loring, who had been created major-general on February 15, was placed in command of all the forces in the middle region of West Virginia. In the mean time these forces had been increased until they comprised the Twenty-second, Thirty-sixth, Forty-fifth, Fiftieth, Fifty-third and Sixtieth Regiments, and the Twenty-sixth and Thirtieth Battalions Virginia Infantry, and Bryan's, Chapman's, Lowry's, Otey's and Stamps' Batteries. General A. G. Jenkins' cavalry force of less than 1000 should also be added, but this force did not operate with the main body during the campaign. Bryan had only two pieces, and the men, about 80, who had no guns, served as infantry with the Twenty-sixth Battalion. These forces were organized into brigades, commanded respectively by Brigadier-General John Echols, Brigadier-General J. S. Williams and Colonel G. C. Wharton. What units made up each brigade is not stated in the records, and there seems, at times, to have been a fourth brigade.

Loring had distinguished himself as major in a regiment of mounted riflemen in the Mexican war; had lost his left arm at Chapultepec, and had been promoted for bravery. A man thus distinguished as a major in a war in which Robert E. Lee served as a captain, and Thomas J. Jackson as a lieutenant, naturally enjoyed great prestige, and the army was elated at his assignment to that department. He kept his forces for a considerable time in camp in the neighborhood of Union in Monroe County. This delay he afterwards ascribed to the necessity of making vast preparations for the coming campaign.

On August 29 the Secretary of War wired Loring that Pope's letter-book, captured, revealed the fact that Cox had orders to retain 5000 men in West Virginia, and to send the rest to



Pope, and added: "Clear the Valley of the Kanawha and operate northwardly to a junction with our army in the Valley." Loring sent Jenkins on a raid through the region lying north of the Kanawha Valley and concentrated the main force or the greater part of it near Giles Court House (Pearisburg) just above the narrows of New River. On September 6 he marched down on the south side of the river with all the infantry except Echols' brigade, and all the artillery, about 16 pieces. He says he marched with 5000 men, but it is not clear whether this number includes Echols' brigade which he says pursued a much longer route.

On the Federal side, no longer Cox, but Colonel J. A. J. Lightburn was in command of the Department of the Kanawha. His forces consisted of 7 regiments of infantry, 1 regiment of cavalry, and 14 pieces of artillery, (8 mountain howitzers, three 3-inch rifles, and three 6-pounder smoothbores), disposed as follows: At Raleigh Court House, the Thirty-fourth and Thirty-seventh Ohio, 4 mountain howitzers, and 2 smoothbores, Colonel Edward Siber commanding (2 of his companies being at Fayetteville); at Camp Ewing, ten miles from Gauley Bridge towards Lewisburg, the Forty-fourth and Forty-seventh Ohio, 2 companies of the Second West Virginia Cavalry, and some of the artillery, Colonel S. A. Gilbert commanding; and the rest of the forces—the Fourth, Eighth and Ninth West Virginia, and part of the Second West Virginia Cavalry, distributed at Summersville and several places along the Kanawha River. Headquarters were at Gauley Bridge.

The campaign now beginning was of very great importance since in Virginia and North Carolina the want of salt was acutely felt, many families being entirely without it, as the King Saltworks in southwest Virginia were their only source of supply, and the Confederate Government hoped to take and hold the Kanawha Valley with its vast salt works extending up the river from Charleston.

Colonel Lightburn, on hearing of Loring's advance, seems never for a moment to have thought of uniting his forces for a general battle, but directed his efforts to saving his supplies. This, however, could not be done without some fighting. The supply trains were ordered to go to Charleston and cross Elk



River, and he afterwards complained that they did not cross it until his army arrived there. No attempts to save the contents of the magazines are mentioned in the reports; they were simply burned. One might wonder for what purpose they were there.

Colonel Siber, learning of Loring's near approach, withdrew his force from Raleigh Court House to Fayetteville which place the Federals, taught by Floyd in the previous campaign had strongly fortified with forts and trenches as already stated. On September 9 he learned that a strong secessionist named Tetam, had said he would need his rifle the next morning; so he sent the 7 mounted men he had to take Tetam, and just as these men reached the house about 30 Confederate cavalymen appeared and chased them down Laurel Creek. Thus warned of the approaching attack, at 11 a.m., on the 10th, Siber sent 4 companies of the Thirty-fourth Ohio under Lieutenant-Colonel F. E. Franklin to Cassidy's Mill on Laurel Creek to cover the right flank as a reconnoitering party, and at noon he sent Captain Carl Moritz with 2 companies of the Thirty-seventh Ohio out on the Raleigh road. About two miles out these met the van-guard of Loring's army. Before the Confederates reached this point, Colonel Wharton with the Twenty-second Virginia under Colonel G. S. Patton, the Fifty-first under Lieutenant-Colonel August Forsberg, and the Thirtieth Battalion Virginia Sharpshooters under Lieutenant-Colonel J. L. Clarke, was sent by a road leading to the left in order to pass around and get in the rear of the Federal position. This force was guided by Mr. Benjamin Jones, the father of Beuhring H. Jones, Colonel of the Sixtieth Virginia Infantry. The distance around and the obstacles to rapid movement were so great that it was about 2:15 p.m., when Wharton took position near, but not extending across, the road to Cotton Hill, and about 1000 yards from the Federal works fronting on that side. While the Confederates were taking position to begin action, the Federals made a vigorous attack upon them with 6 companies of the Thirty-fourth Ohio, 4 of which were led personally by Colonel J. T. Toland and 2 by Captain H. C. Hatfield on the Cotton Hill road on Toland's right. They made three attacks, but were repulsed each time and retired to their works. Similar attacks of the Confederates upon the Federal works were likewise repulsed.

In this fight both sides used artillery, the guns of the Confederates being rifled, but how many and of what battery is not stated in the reports. The Federals used 4 mountain howitzers under Lieutenant H. H. Anderson at the main redoubt. At length both sides became inactive.

It had been agreed that the force on the Raleigh road should refrain from a serious attack on the Federal front until Wharton engaged them in the rear. This force, under Williams and accompanied by Loring, as stated above, met Capt. Moritz with his 2 companies about two miles from the stronghold. This small force offered resistance so stubborn that Loring, who admits mention of their number, says that they contested every inch of the way. As soon as the conflict in the rear of the Federals was heard, Williams attacked the front and right flank of the entrenchments and the redoubt on that side of the Federal position. The reports indicate that the infantry and artillery operated together on a low hill 500 or 600 yards from the fort and the distance being found too great (evidently so for musketry but very small for artillery), it was decided to move nearer to another hill, which movement is thus described by Williams: "Edgar's battalion, under Major Davis, cleared the front of sharpshooters and drove them in gallant style, and the whole of the artillery—Otey's, Stamps', Chapman's, Bryan's, and Lowry's batteries—dashed in magnificent style over the ridge, down the slope and up to the top of the next hill, where they unlimbered within 300 yards of the enemy's fort, and opened a terrible cannonade upon it." All this artillery was arrayed against two 6-pound smoothbores in the fort, commanded by Lieutenant William West.

When the Confederates reached this position, Williams discovered that the position was stronger than had been supposed, and adds: "Besides the square redoubt in front, there was one to the left and rear of the court-house, which was at that moment engaged by Colonel Wharton, and to the right and rear another strong fortress upon a high hill, which commanded both the other forts."

To understand fully what follows, it is necessary to go back a little.

When Colonel Lightburn learned that Jenkins had left Union, he caused Colonel Gilbert to send Colonel L. S. Elliott with 6 companies of the Forty-seventh Ohio to re-enforce the troops at Summersville, and sent Colonel J. E. Paxton with 6 companies of the Second West Virginia Cavalry to look after Jenkins; and learning that Fayetteville was being assailed, he sent 3 companies of the Fourth West Virginia Infantry to re-enforce Siber! He also sent Lieutenant-Colonel A. C. Parry to Cotton Hill "to meet the retreating force." He says Parry had 5 companies of the Forty-seventh Ohio; but he had caused Gilbert to send 6 companies of this regiment to Summersville. Could it have had a "Company L?"

At Fayetteville the fighting at the front was kept up till some time after sunset, but the Confederates failed to make any progress. When it was still not too dark to see, the 4 companies that had been detached under Lieutenant-Colonel Franklin and also the 3 companies sent as re-enforcements by Lightburn accompanied by 25 cavalrymen, came in by the Cotton Hill road. These 7 companies were mistaken by Loring for 3 regiments. On the next day he sent a dispatch to the Secretary of War stating that 3 regiments of re-enforcements had come, but that Echols had arrived with his brigade and the Federals, learning of this re-enforcement, had withdrawn in the night. They did withdraw and did it unobstructed and almost entirely unmolested. Between 1 and 2 a.m., Siber first sent the 80 wounded and then the most important trains and finally withdrew the men, all unperceived by the Confederates.

The half-day's fighting of this small force—1 regiment and 6 companies of another with 4 mountain howitzers and two 6-pounder smoothbores—against 2 brigades and 16 pieces of artillery, some of them heavy calibre, constitutes either one of the most brilliant feats of the war or one of the most dismal failures and instances of inefficiency on the part of the Confederates. In any case Colonel Siber merits the highest praise. There was a report current in the Confederate army that Loring ordered Wharton to leave the way open for the Federals to escape, but there is no hint of this in the Official Records. Loring says there were so many roads leading from Fayetteville that it was not possible with his force to guard all of them; but he left unguarded the very one the Federals were sure to take.

Siber speaks of it simply as his line of retreat and ascribes its being left open to the "considerable loss" (which was really very light) that Wharton had sustained in trying to block it. It looks very much as if Loring thought it best to get what he then supposed to be 5 regiments out of their stronghold by any means that might offer, and so disposed his forces that the Federals could march out; but whether intentionally or not, he let them escape.

It is a remarkable fact that in this campaign the heavy ordnance of the Federals was served by officers and men detailed from the infantry, there being no trained artillery organizations.

The losses here and elsewhere in this campaign were amazingly light on both sides. They will be summed up at the end.

On the morning of the 11th it was discovered that the Federals were gone. General Williams pursued instantly and reports having found the road "strewn with guns, knapsacks, blankets, overcoats, wagons, hospital and suttlers' stores, horses and men." Whether these men, strewn on the road, were dead, wounded or asleep, he does not say. Wharton and Echols immediately followed Williams. At Cotton Hill Siber made a brief stand. Williams attacked in front, while Wharton and Echols moved to turn the right flank, whereupon Siber retreated to the Kanawha River and moved down on the left side, burning magazines as he went.

On the 10th at 3 p.m., when Lightburn heard of the battle going on in Fayetteville, he ordered Gilbert to bring his force, stationed on the Lewisburg pike, down to Gauley, which he promptly did, reporting in person to Lightburn near the falls at 8 p.m. On the 11th, when the Confederates pursuing Siber descended the mountain, some sharp fighting took place between them and Gilbert with the river between the opposing forces. Soon Gilbert, having burned such stores as had not been removed and having blown up a large magazine in the mouth of a hollow near the falls, retreated down the pike on the right side of the river. It has been pointed out that Loring's report is ambiguous as to whether Federals or Confederates blew up this magazine, but the ambiguity is only grammatical, and besides there is no conceivable reason why the Confederates

Commonwealth of Virginia;



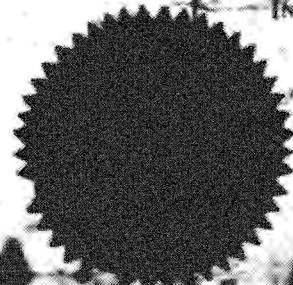
To Robert A. Bailey, Greeting:

Know You, That from special trust and confidence reposed in your fidelity, courage and good conduct, our GOVERNOR, in pursuance of the authority vested in him by the Constitution and Laws of this Commonwealth, doth commission you a Captain of Riflemen in the 142<sup>d</sup> ——— Regiment of the 27<sup>th</sup> Brigade and 5<sup>th</sup> Division of the VIRGINIA MILITIA,

to rank as such from the 6<sup>th</sup> day of June 1861

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto signed my name as Governor, and caused the Seal of the Commonwealth to be affixed, this 6<sup>th</sup> day of June - 1861

John Letcher



Kanawha County to wit - June 1861.  
Robert A. Bailey this day came before me a justice of said county & took the Oath of Office to the above named position in the 14<sup>th</sup> Chapter of the Grand Order of the United Confederate Veterans.

State Commission of Commonwealth of Virginia issued by Hon. John Letcher, War Governor of Virginia, to Capt. (later Major) Robert A. Bailey, and dated June 6, 1861. Major Bailey was mortally wounded at Battle of Droop Mountain, Nov. 6, 1863. Original Commission hangs in the Shirley Donnelly Library, Oak Hill, W. Va., the gift of Samuel F. Pryor, Jr., Vice-President and Assistant to the President of Pan American World Airways System, New York, N. Y. Commission, folded and worn, was found in pocketbook of Major Bailey's sister who was the grandmother of the Airways executive. Major Bailey's sister was Frances Bailey who married and settled in Palmyra just before the 1861-65 war broke out. A daughter of Mr. Pryor was named Frances Bailey Pryor in honor of her great-grandmother.

should have destroyed ammunition virtually in their grasp. As to the destruction of the bridge over Gauley River, about which there has been much discussion, it would be useless to add anything to what others have written except perhaps that it may be worth while to give assurance that the Sixtieth Virginia Regiment was certainly with Loring and there was a Sergeant in it named Andrew Summers. Those interested in the discussion will see why this statement is made.

Lightburn had ordered Elliott on the 10th to bring his command from Summersville to Gauley, but when he came he found Gauley already taken; so he burned his wagons and went through the hills and joined Gilbert at Cannelton.

The pursuit to Charleston with its frequent skirmishes followed. At Charleston September 12 Lightburn made a stand, but after slight resistance crossed Elk River by the suspension bridge, which he then cut down. The Elk is very deep for some distance from its mouth and there were no means of crossing left for Loring. The reports give minute details of the action here, but they are of no interest. Lightburn, unpursued, retreating by a circuitous route to Point Pleasant, and Loring occupied Charleston until October 8.

In Lightburn's behalf it should be noted that he through misinformation believed Jenkins' force to be twice as great as it was, and was always imagining that a large force of hostile cavalry was hovering in his rear, while in fact Jenkins was making a very distant circuit through the region north of the Kanawha Valley and even beyond the Ohio River.

The Confederate losses from September 6 to 16 were 18 killed, 89 wounded. The Federal losses were 25 killed, 95 wounded, 190 missing. These remarkably small figures indicate that no determined assaults could have been made on the Federal works at Fayetteville.

For many days after the occupation of Charleston there was a constant train of wagons hauling salt away from the Kanawha Valley on roads leading eastward. The Federals were too hard pressed to destroy either the salt-furnaces or the great accumulation of salt. With the exception of this temporary gain, all the advantages of Loring's conquest were soon to be simply thrown away.



The Secretary of War, as already stated, had instructed Loring to "clear the Valley of the Kanawha and operate northwardly to a junction with our army in the Valley," but this was eighteen days before the Battle of Sharpsburg. General Lee had also proposed or suggested that Loring should move northward, destroying the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, and passing down Cheat River join the forces in Maryland. But neither the Secretary of War nor General Lee intended that the Kanawha Valley, when cleared of Federals, should be left for them, unopposed, to reoccupy. Lee's language is clear as to that; but when he wrote suggesting the route northward, Loring wrote to Lee, suggesting that the route by way of Lewisburg and Monterey would be better, and without awaiting a reply or receiving any instructions, not more than forty-eight hours after he had written, he began to move on the route he had proposed, leaving the Kanawha Valley totally unprotected. His trains were started on the 8th of October.

A small force, including Bryan's Battery, had been posted at Gauley Bridge. Some Federals, 2 officers and 30 men, had recently been captured not far from Sutton and had been brought to Gauley Bridge. The officers, on their word of honor not to leave, enjoyed freedom, but the enlisted men were kept under guard. An order came for those of Bryan's men who were armed with muskets to guard the prisoners and the ordnance train to Lewisburg and there "await the head of the column." This order amazed everybody. On the 10th the ordnance train arrived and on the next day a lieutenant with most of the men took charge of it, while a corporal with a guard of about 12 men was placed in charge of the prisoners, and the train and prisoners, the latter in front, started for Lewisburg on the 11th.

On the march the prisoners got considerably ahead of the train, there being no order to keep them near each other. This led to a little episode which it seems admissible to narrate as it occurred at the best known spot in Fayette County. Early on the morning of the 12th when the prisoners and their escort approached the place where a path leads a short distance out to Hawks Nest, the prisoners begged earnestly to be conducted out to look down from the crest of that famous vertical solid rock cliff 650 feet high. The corporal in charge very reluctantly

granted the request, and the prisoners were required to go in front of the whole guard. When the former reached the crest, the latter were formed into a curved line behind them. When the prisoners were huddled together on the brink and conversing in a low tone, it occurred to the corporal, especially since the prisoners had been so insistent, that they, outnumbering the guard nearly or quite three to one, might have formed a plot to seize the guard suddenly and hurl them over. So to be ready for such an attempt, he very imprudently, in the usual sharp military tone, gave the command: "Fix bayonets!" The effect on the prisoners was like an electric shock. Certainly some, possibly all of them for a moment expected instantly to be shoved over. Of course it quickly occurred to most of them that such an act on the part of the guard was out of the question, but action on the first impulse might have precipitated a horrible tragedy, and certainly all, guards and prisoners alike, breathed easier when they got away from that place. Especially was this true of the corporal, who is today the writer of this narrative.

The prisoners arrived at Lewisburg in the afternoon of the 15th. On the 17th about 9 a.m., they were marched out into Main Street and "the head of the column" which they were to await arrived at that moment, and then and there, just one hundred miles from Charleston, it counter-marched and began to retrace its steps to that place. The Adjutant General, S. Cooper, had sent, on the 15th, a dispatch to Loring, ordering him to turn over the command to General Echols, and himself to report in person with as little delay as practicable at the Adjutant General's office in Richmond, and at the same time the Secretary of War, G. W. Randolph, sent a dispatch to Echols, ordering him to take command with General Williams as his second and at once to march the army back to the Kanawha Valley and make its defense his first object. On the next day (16th) the Secretary of War had written to General Lee, who was at the head of the army in the field, informing him of what had been done and asking him if he could give Loring employment. Lee did not yet know even that Loring had left Charleston, and had written to the Secretary of War on the 15th: "Loring must protect the Kanawha Valley. He must take position as he may think best for this purpose," and had



written to Loring saying "If you can retain possession of the saltworks at Charleston and keep the enemy out of that country, I think it probable (probably?) the best service your army can perform; but I shall have to leave this matter to your better judgment." Of course Loring knew nothing of all this when he started from Charleston.

What could have induced Loring to throw away the fruits of the campaign is an unexplained mystery. The current report, seemingly believed by all, was that Loring, being summoned to Richmond, supposed that he was to bring his army; but this story as erroneous; Loring was conducting his army by way of Lewisburg and Monterey to the Shenandoah Valley.

The weary march back to Charleston and the failure to take the place, followed by the retreat up the valley and the march back through Fayette county during the last days of October, need not be narrated in detail. The Kanawha Valley was permanently given up to the Federals, who resumed, under new commanders, the positions they had occupied when the campaign begun.

### 1863

#### DIARY RECORDS, FAYETTEVILLE, MAY 18 AND 19

**Confederate plan to recover Kanawha Valley abandoned—McCausland makes sham attack with artillery on Fayetteville to protect Imboden's raiders—Diary entries of author, aged 18, sergeant, Bryan's Battery—First instance of employment of "indirect firing," Fayetteville, May 19—Confederate retreat to Raleigh—End of McCausland's raid—Incident of Beckley cannonade.**

One of the most important things for the army and people in Virginia and North Carolina, was to secure and maintain a supply of salt, and one of the most serious injuries that could be inflicted on the Federals would have been to destroy the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Accordingly, even before military operations had begun in 1863, a plan was formed to attain both these ends through the same operations. A large force was to move into the region through which the railroad passed, destroy it, and move southward to the Kanawha Valley, while a smaller force was to move down New River on the left side and by threatening to occupy Gauley Bridge, force the Federals to draw off troops that might otherwise re-enforce those defending the railroad. There was much correspondence between

the commanders of different forces in regard to the execution of this plan. Without going into details it must suffice to say here that the plan to re-conquer the Kanawha Valley was abandoned in the course of the campaign, but General Wm. E. Jones was sent with a force of cavalry and Gen. J. D. Imboden, though a cavalry officer, with a force of infantry, to destroy the railroad and accomplish whatever else might be practicable. The history of the operations of Jones and Imboden (often called "Imboden's Raid," but officially and more correctly "Jones' Raid") does not belong here. The sending of a small force towards Gauley to divert the attention of the Federals was still, under the changed plan, considered desirable. Accordingly Colonel John McCausland with the Thirty-sixth and 6 companies of the Sixtieth Virginia, and 4 pieces (two 3-inch rifles and two 12-pound howitzers) of Bryan's Battery, and a company of cavalry, marched for Fayetteville from Princeton on the 16th of May.

At that time Brigadier-General E. P. Scammon was in command of all the Federals in that department. Brigade-commander Colonel C. R. White was stationed at Fayetteville with the Twelfth Ohio under Colonel J. D. Hines, and 2 companies of the Second West Virginia Cavalry, and 2 sections (4 pieces) of McMullin's Battery of six 3-inch rifles. McCausland probably had only vague and uncertain information concerning the Federal strength, but at least a sham attack was to be made in any case. Scammon in his report says that McCausland had 3 regiments, a battalion of cavalry, and a 6-piece battery, and even a Confederate writer, has erroneously added the Twenty-second Virginia to the forces enumerated above.

As the writer will have to mention himself more than once, and such testimony is justly considered dubious, it has been thought best to narrate the incidents of the campaign or raid by copying verbatim the appropriate part of a diary kept by him solely for his own future information. All additions are enclosed in square brackets, and omissions of irrelevant matters are indicated by dots. Occasionally a dash represents a proper name omitted for reasons that will be obvious to the reader.

The writer, aged 18, was sergeant of the second piece, a 12-pound howitzer, of Bryan's Battery and always exercised his right to point (aim) his piece himself. Captain Thomas A. Bryan was under arrest, but accompanied the battery which was commanded by a lieutenant, another lieutenant commanding the third and fourth pieces. The first piece was under Sergeant A. N. Campbell, afterwards well-known in West Virginia as Judge Campbell. The diary will now be quoted.

"May 16. We marched fifteen miles and bivouacked. Next day we again marched fifteen miles and bivouacked at Shady Springs. Skirmishing in front. On the 18th skirmishing with the enemy continued. Next day (19th) there was considerable skirmishing between some of the enemy and a cavalry company attached as scouts to our brigade. . . . Several Yankees were captured and some killed and wounded. One or two Confederates were wounded. At 1 p.m., we met the cavalry moving to the rear, saying that the Yankees were in line of battle. We marched on about a mile, which brought us to within two miles of the stronghold of Fayetteville. Here we found a small force of Federal cavalry, and a few rounds from our guns made them retire, which they did without replying, as they had no artillery there. My piece, a 12-pound howitzer, fired five shots which were very good except that one struck a tree limb near the piece and was deflected. McCausland pronounced them 'beautiful shots'. . . . The steel rifle, 'Maggie,' jumped out of her bronze trunnion-band at the first round, breaking the front sight off as she went. We then advanced and at 2 o'clock we arrived in front of Fayetteville. The infantry went down into the woods towards the Yankee works. [The road to Raleigh, after running in a straight line nearly three-fourths of a mile from Fayetteville, turns square to the left, and ascends to a small cleared plateau. Just where it turns there is a partly cleared ridge connecting the plateau with a hill on the right. On this ridge were posted Bryan's third and fourth pieces. The second piece (mine) was posted on the plateau at the end of a straight opening which had been cut in the woods and ran directly toward the Federal fort.] My piece opened first and was immediately answered, and my third or fourth round cutting away the Yankee colors, they shelled us so vigorously [and accurately] with several guns that we were compelled

to move to a place nearby where we could not be seen for the timber in front of us, and the smoke behind us rising from the woods [beyond the road] which were on fire. [This is believed to be the first instance of the employment of 'indirect fire' now universally used when it is possible.] . . . I was in sole command of this piece, the lieutenant having disappeared without explanation. He may have been supervising the repair of 'Maggie.' [We fired, slowly as ordered, until night]. The skirmishers reported the forts vacant the next morning before day, but at daylight after about ten rounds had been fired at them, they replied. These rounds were fired by the other guns, posted behind the crest of a ridge some 300 yards to the left of my piece. During the night a movement, especially of artillery, had been heard in Fayetteville, but it was the arrival of a force from Gauley Bridge, said to have been two [really three] regiments and perhaps a battery. The object of our attack was (as we soon learned) to cause this very movement. . . . We remained in front of Fayetteville until 2 p.m., or later, and withdrew. 'Maggie,' repaired during the evening and night, resumed firing [on the morning of the 20th] and at the twenty-second round again dismounted herself. I fired only sixty-five rounds, the orders being to fire very slowly. Having retired twelve miles we bivouacked for the night.

"Early the next morning, as we were just resuming the march, the enemy appeared in our rear. A few shells from the bronze rifle caused their van to retire. We then marched all day unmolested till late in the afternoon. We halted at Raleigh C. H. [now Beckley] and Lieutenant . . . having mysteriously disappeared, and Lieutenant Jennings having been wounded, McCausland placed me in command of the battery, though I was in both senses the youngest sergeant, and ordered me to conduct it about three-fourths of a mile farther and park it. Sergeant A. N. Campbell was sent on with 'Maggie' to convey her to the railroad and have her thoroughly repaired. The infantry soon was there. Presently scouts came and reported the enemy approaching. McCausland took back 3 companies of infantry and our cavalry company, ordering me to send a howitzer along. I took my own piece, putting another sergeant in charge of the rest of the guns. When we reached Raleigh C. H., [then a small hamlet], McCausland

posted my piece in front of a hotel in the south-west angle between the main and the Logan roads. . . . [The enemy] planted a battery on a mountain-top a mile away, where they already had a fortification, and opened on us, their first projectile (seemingly a percussion shell) striking and exploding within ten feet of my piece [and mortally wounding a little girl who was playing around a nearby well]. McCausland came galloping and asked me if I could reach them. Being told that I could do so only with shells used as solid shot, as my fuses were for only five seconds, he told me to limber up and gallop off, which we did ignominiously, while the enemy threw shells after us with remarkable precision. . . . When we reached the Beckley place the other pieces and the infantry had gone. We waited till McCausland and the small force that had been sent back came up, and then we marched a few miles and found the army at what we called 'Camp Piney.'"

Here the quotation from the diary ceases, and "McCausland's Raid" ends.

General Scammon, on the 19th, sent 3 regiments and some artillery, probably the rest of McMullin's Battery, to re-enforce White. The report of White and Hines indicate that at first the Confederates were supposed to have only three pieces of artillery, then it was ascertained that they had four. Their fire is reported as being accurate, but doing little damage. Early on the 20th the fire is reported as being rapid for a while and then becoming slower. Some of these statements result from the fact that the Federals were ignorant of "Maggie's" behavior. Colonel White describes his pursuit as being attended by continued skirmishing, which must have been a considerable distance in the rear at least of the artillery, as no firing was heard by those in front.

There was no infantry fighting in front of Fayetteville, and hence scarcely any casualties. White reports 2 killed, 7 wounded, and 9 missing. This evidently refers to the whole "raid." There were 2 wounded in Bryan's Battery. Further information as to Confederate losses was not obtainable.

To make the narrative complete one more incident, though not strictly belonging here, will be narrated. About 2 miles from Raleigh C. H., where the town of Raleigh now stands,

the Confederates made trenches for infantry along the base of the bluff, and fortifications for artillery on a hill on the right of the road as one faces Beckley, and redoubts for two single guns on the brow of the bluff at the edge of a small plateau on the left of the road, making a (still extant) road for the guns to get to this position. The part of the command originally left at Princeton had come to Camp Piney, but "Maggie" was still absent. The diary will now be quoted again.

"Early the next day [July 14] we moved toward the enemy and occupied fortifications that had been made, only two or three miles from Raleigh C. H. My piece (No. 2) and No. 4 (iron howitzers), supported by the Sixtieth Regiment under Colonel B. H. Jones, were placed in positions on the bluff to the left of the road, while all the rest were placed with the Thirty-sixth on a kind of peak on the right. At 2 p.m., my piece fired at about three Federal officers who had come to the foot of the bluff opposite us about 300 yards away. The fuse had been cut for a greater distance and the shell passed among or close over them and struck a bank. The men were dazed for an instant, and then ran back up the road out of sight, holding their swords from dangling. These swords showed that they were officers. When they passed in view of the rest of the battery, a shell was thrown at them from No 5 ('Nannie'). McCausland would not let any small arms be fired, as our whole position was masked. . . . Then Colonel Jones gave me an order as coming from McCausland to throw some 'ricochet' shots into the woods on the hill in front of us. This was a place as impossible as I ever saw for a projectile to ricochet on it; so I assumed that shrapnel was meant and threw a considerable number into the woods. . . . One cut the top off a pine tree that stood near the base of the steep hill. [Several years ago that tree was still preserved as a sort of a monument.] My piece was the only one that did any firing here except the one shot fired by 'Nannie.'

"At the proper hours the Yankee drum beat for 'dress parade', then 'evening roll-call,' then 'lights out' (taps)! At midnight a call, 'Sergeant Humphreys,' almost in a whisper, aroused me. I answered. 'Come here quick,' said the voice of Lieutenant \_\_\_\_\_ . I obeyed the summons and received orders in a whisper to have my piece and No. 4 with the caissons, moved down to the road as quickly as possible. Just then Colonel

Jones gave me secret information that the Yankees [in greatly superior numbers] were flanking us around the left and had gotten their artillery in position in our front [probably a mistake]. After an hour's hard work we got everything down into the road through rain, mud and total darkness. . . . We then commenced a retreat and lost some ordnance and quartermaster's stores and the tents of the Sixtieth Regiment."

During that campaign McCausland's command had no further contact with the enemy.

The Official Records mention a skirmish near Fayetteville on the 5th of June, but no report of it had been found when the records were published.

—End of Humphreys' Narrative.

### **Story of Major Robert Augustus ("Gus") Bailey, Confederate Hero**

Fayette Countians of ante-bellum days and Civil War times never knew a more beloved character than Robert A. ("Gus") Bailey. He was the son of Circuit Judge Edward Bailey of Lewisburg. At outbreak of the war young Bailey set about raising a company of volunteers and was elected Captain of the unit. On June 6, 1861, Governor John Letcher of Commonwealth of Virginia issued his State's Commission to the beloved Captain. Later in the struggle the company commanded by Captain Bailey was made one of the units in the 22nd Regiment, Virginia Volunteers. During the six-hour battle of Droop Mountain on Nov. 6, 1863, Bailey, then a Major, fell mortally wounded. His body was brought to Lewisburg where it was buried thirty steps east of Old Stone Church in the historic cemetery there. Though its location was known, the grave of Major "Gus" Bailey was unmarked for 63 long years.

Knowledge of the long neglected grave of the Droop Mountain hero bore heavily on the mind of one who knew him in the days of their youth. That one was Mrs. William Masters, nee Miss Martha Jones, daughter of Llewellyn Jones of Sanger section of Oak Hill, but whose last years were spent in Miami, Florida. Mrs. Masters, when she was 82, set about raising a fund to purchase a suitable marker to place over the valorous young officer's grave. This was done in 1926. Most of the money



was raised among Mrs. Master's friends in the Oak Hill area. Cyrus Creigh of Lewisburg served as agent of the project and after buying the monument looked after its erection. Placed on the face of the granite marker is the following legend:

"This stone was placed here, Nov., 1926 by a few devoted friends in memory of Major Robert Augustus Bailey of Fayette County, a gallant officer of the 22nd Regiment, Virginia Volunteers, C.S.A., who was killed in the Battle of Droop Mountain on the 6th. day of November, 1863, and buried here. A noble man, a patriotic citizen, and a Christian gentleman, his comrades who loved him and admired the man, also acclaimed him a soldier *sans leur et sans reproche*.

Stoop, angels, hither from the skies;  
There is no holier spot of ground  
Than where defeated valor lies  
By mourning beauty crowned."

### Indirect Artillery Fire

First use of indirect artillery fire in the history of warfare was made near Fayetteville, W. Va., on May 19 and 20, 1863. Behind a growth of pine trees which stands at Nicholville 1.3 miles from the Fayette Court House is the place it was first employed. This location is on the old black top road which is a switch off Highway 21 between the county seat and Oak Hill. The site is about 100 yards at the rear of the J. L. Nichols store of 1958. On this spot Corporal Milton W. Humphreys, Bryan's Battery, King's Artillery, C.S.A., successfully fired his rifled cannon with devastating effect upon the Federal fort at Fayetteville a mile away. Humphreys, then but 19, elevated the barrel of the gun so that the trajectory, or path of the cannon shell, would pass above the top of the mask of trees. He knew the approximate range of the piece and the probable distance of the target. Distance of the target from the location of the gun was the base of the triangle while the range of the projectile was its hypotenuse. In this case the altitude of the triangle did not matter because when the shell had spent its force it dropped directly on the Federal fort target. It took the better part of two days for the Yankee commander to figure out where the shells were coming from. Only when an armed patrol was sent out on reconnaissance to locate the source of the shelling was the gun found and those manning it driven off. Indirect

fire, now spoken of as enfilade, is used by all artillerists. Place where this device was first used in the world is as yet unmarked.

### FAYETTE COUNTY RECORDS SAVED DURING CIVIL WAR

Although only thirty years old at the time of the outbreak of the War between the States, Fayette County had considerable records. Realizing that the county in general and Fayetteville in particular would be in the path of the contending armies, fear was felt for the safety of this legal material. This feeling was heightened when the Confederate forces evacuated our county seat.

At that time Thomas S. Robson, the county surveyor, tried to prevail upon John B. Jones, clerk of the circuit court, who had custody of the records, to remove them to a place where they might not be destroyed. Jones, a timid soul, objected to doing this without a court order. To get such an order was difficult because the court had all but ceased to function after June, 1861. Robson, who realized the danger to which the records were exposed daily took upon himself the responsibility of doing something about the situation. Accordingly, through the good offices of his brother-in-law, Capt. Joel H. Abbott, of the command of General John B. Floyd, Robson made arrangements to transport the records in army wagons over the mountains to Montgomery County, Virginia. Robson, Jones, Capt. Abbott, and a detail of soldiers took the records to Montgomery County where a farmer, whose house was off the travelled road, was induced to store the records in a room in his house. A man was employed to guard the records.

With the records safely out of the theatre of war, Thomas Robson moved his family to Christianburg, Virginia, and from that place occasionally checked to see that the records remained intact. Robson, who lived in Fayetteville on the present site of the W. R. Dickerson home, came back to Fayetteville after the war had ended. Upon the reorganization of the county government and its beginning to function in the new State of West Virginia, the records were returned and delivered to the proper county officials. Robson himself had to go after the records

because the farmer, in whose care the records had remained for over four years, refused to deliver them to anyone but the erstwhile Fayette County surveyor.

All the expenses connected with the removal of the records from Fayetteville and their return were paid by Robson out of his own pocket. When Robson appealed to the county officials for reimbursement for his outlays he was coldly rebuffed. The authorities, who had been Union men, told him, "You should have taken the records North, not South."<sup>1</sup>

However, Robson had saved the records and had some satisfaction from his generous act. At the time, in the autumn of 1861, when the records were rounded up for removal they were scattered "knee deep", according to Robson, in the clerk's office and elsewhere in the old Court House. Files had been torn apart and thrown on the floor. Every record book except one was obtained by Robson and readied for transfer to safety.

The book that was missing was the one which contained the records of the commissioner of school lands. This book had in it quite a number of maps and survey plots. More than likely it had been taken by someone to be used for reference. On the whole the records had been badly misused by the Soldiers. During the war the Court House was destroyed by the Federal troops. Had Robson not seen fit to preserve the records these, too, would have fallen prey to the flames. So badly handled was the village of Fayetteville during the Civil War that only six houses were left standing at the close of the struggle.

Robson brought his family back to Fayette County and located near Beckwith on Laurel Creek where he died toward the close of the 1880's. Fearing that he might be prosecuted for allowing the records to be taken without an order from the Court, John B. Jones never returned to his home in Fayette County but migrated to Tennessee instead.

### **Civil War Engagements Fought in Fayette**

There were no major battles fought in Fayette County during the Civil War. However, many skirmishes and minor engagements marked the struggle between the contending forces here

<sup>1</sup> As told by Thomas Robson to the late A. W. Hamilton.

during the first three years of the conflict. Among those contests were the following, together with dates of occurrence:

Hawks Nest, Aug. 20, 1861.	Cassady's Mill, Nov. 12, 1861.
Laurel Fork, Aug. 20, 1861.	McCoy's Mill, Nov. 14, 1861.
Piggott's Mill, Aug. 25, 1861.	Fayetteville, Nov. 12, 1862.
Cotton Hill, Oct. 13, 1861.	Fayetteville, Sept. 10, 1862.
Gauley Bridge, Oct. 23, 1861.	Cotton Hill, Sept. 11, 1862.
Montgomery's Ferry, Oct. 29, 1861.	Kanawha Falls, Oct. 13, 1862.
	Cove Gap, Nov. 15, 1862.
Miller's Ferry, Nov. 10, 1861.	Fayetteville, May 17, 1863.
Blake's Farm, Nov. 10, 1861.	Fayetteville, Nov. 15, 1862.
Cotton Hill, Nov. 11, 1861.	Big Sewell, Dec. 12, 1863.
Laurel Creek, Nov. 12, 1861.	

After the close of 1863 the Confederates made no serious effort to re-occupy the Kanawha Valley and as a result action in Fayette County came to an end.

## Chapter Eight

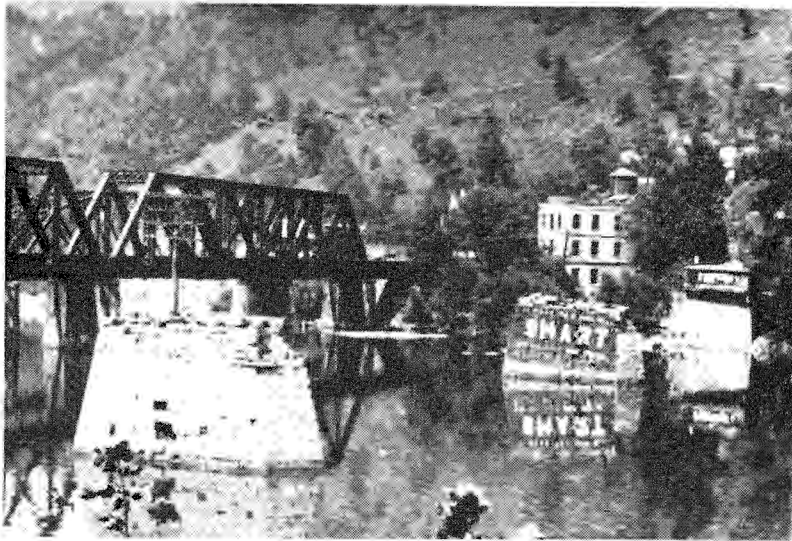
# NOTED BRIDGES OVER FAYETTE RIVERS

### Six Bridges Have Spanned the Mouth of Gauley

Best known of all the river crossings in Fayette County is Gauley Bridge. There the laughing Gauley pours its flood into the swirling waters of New River and both rush on a mile to leap over the 21-foot precipice known as the Falls of Kanawha. After the united waters of Gauley and New River are churned together in the whirlpool at the bottom of the historic falls they emerge to be known as the Great Kanawha River.

Six different bridges have spanned the mouth of Gauley River since the coming of the white man to this romantic spot. Originally this crossing of the Gauley was known as Kincaid's Ferry. Matthew Kincaid, a red-headed and high-tempered man, operated the ferry that bore his name for no little time. During the year 1821 some interested parties built a wooden bridge over the river at Kincaid's Ferry and it infuriated Kincaid who saw the means of his living ruined. He wished the bridge would catch on fire and be burned down, he said! Cost of this bridge was \$1,800.00. On the night of Tuesday, July 11, 1826, the wish of Matthew Kincaid was gratified when the bridge went up in flames. It was plain to be seen that the fire was the work of an incendiary. At once the accusing finger was pointed at Kincaid who was indicted for arson and haled before a court of justice. Circumstantial evidence was all that the prosecution could offer but the jury that sat on the case convicted the erstwhile ferry operator. Following Kincaid's conviction he was sentenced to the Virginia State Penitentiary at Richmond to do time for the crime.

For a couple of years after the burning of the first bridge there was no bridge over the Gauley at this point. This situation was remedied by the construction of another one in 1828. Though it was thought to be none too strong for the traffic it had to bear this second span was used until 1849 when it was condemned and torn away.



Picture shows piers of bridge destroyed during the Civil War

—Photo by Homer Wells. Picture taken about 1929.  
One pier has advertisement of clothing store on it.

So important a crossing and terminal point as Gauley Bridge required a bridge, it was opined. There in 1850 a third bridge was erected. This was a rather impressive one. It was a huge wooden affair resting on three piers of native stone which was all hand dressed. Timber used in building this bridge was hand hewn and as sturdy as the hands that hewed it. Both sides of this bridge were weather boarded and it was roofed with shingles rived from strong oaks taken from the forests that clothed the hills there at the junction of the two rivers. Four windows were placed on each side of the bridge so as to afford light for traffic in crossing. That it might withstand the onslaughts of the elements this picturesque covered bridge was painted a gleaming white. A toll bridge, of course, this was one of the best in all Western Virginia. Collector of tolls there was J. H. Miller, Sr., gentleman merchant and man of affairs who was known to all the region. This was the bridge that was in use when the Civil War broke out.

Soon after the outbreak of hostilities between the states there was a small scale action at Scary in Putnam County on Wednesday, July 17, 1861, between Federal forces and a contingent of Confederates. Following that engagement the Confederate

forces under Brig.-Gen'l Henry A. Wise in the Kanawha Valley withdrew across the Gauley. On the night of Saturday, July 27, 1861 General Wise had the bridge over Gauley burned. Light of the flaming bridge illuminated the sky in such a manner that residents as far away as Ansted saw the sight.

With Gauley Bridge an important base for supplies for the Union army which now had control of the Kanawha valley it was necessary that a bridge there be built at once. General Jacob D. Cox, commander of the Federal forces at this point, ordered Capt. E. P. Fitch, Brigade Quartermaster on his staff, to build such bridge. A bridge building firm by the name of Stone, Quigley, and Burton of Philadelphia placed their professional service at the command of Captain Fitch and the bridge was built in record time. This was a wire suspension bridge that was 585 feet long, ten feet wide, and contained three spans. Wire cables used to hold up the bridge were an inch and a quarter in diameter. Heavy boards were used to floor it. Work was begun on the bridge in January, 1862, and at the end of 23 working days the job was finished and ready for use. Military authorities ordered a test to determine if the bridge would stand the weight of war traffic. For this purpose the 28th Ohio Volunteer Regiment was detailed to make the test. They were marched back and forth across it. Then a unit of cavalry were raced across the bridge at a gallop. One day the entire 28th Ohio Regiment was massed on the longest of the three spans, along with the half of another regiment. On the remaining two spans a battery of artillery jam packed itself. All this weight was borne without the slightest difficulty, or give. To top off the tests the Regimental band played while the men of the outfit marched across in cadence. Every test was more than met and the bridge proved vibrationless beyond belief.

All went well until September of that year 1862, and the time of Lightburn's Retreat. People are still puzzled by the famous long retreat of Union General J. A. L. Lightburn, just as they are still puzzled about who destroyed the strong bridge over Gauley after Lightburn's force had crossed it on its way down the valley. Federals said they destroyed it to prevent its use by the Confederate units but their claim was offset by that of the Confederates who said they did the destruction. One fact



of history stands out like the blackened old piers in the Gauley, and that was that the bridge was burned!

For the next 64 years there was no bridge across the mouth of Gauley. Increasing travel made the ferry there a money maker for its owners. However, the bridge deficiency there was remedied in 1926 when another bridge was built there by the state. With the coming of the automobile to stay and the declaration of U. S. Route 60—The Midland Trail—as the great East-West Highway, travel increased enormously through Gauley Bridge. This mass of traffic encountered a bottleneck difficulty in wending its way through the narrow, pencil-mark street which ran clear through the little town before the bridge was reached. Taking note of this situation, the West Virginia State Road Commission planned a by-pass back of Gauley Bridge on the Kanawha River side of the settlement. State plans called for a spacious bridge of concrete, one of the finest and best in West Virginia. This was constructed and by the year 1952 traffic was using the new bridge and its predecessor was closed to the public. Thus it has been that six bridges have been built across the Gauley at the point of its confluence with New River,—the oldest river in the world!

### **Kanawha River Bridges at Montgomery**

First of the two notable bridges to span the Kanawha River at Montgomery was the old Montgomery and Cannelton bridge which was opened to public patronage on Friday, June 10, 1910. In the effort to bring the trade of the mining towns on the north side of the river into Montgomery a number of enterprising business men organized the Montgomery and Cannelton Bridge Company about 1908. President of the toll bridge concern was M. J. Simms, with F. E. Smart as Vice President. O. J. Henderson was the Secretary and Treasurer. During April, 1909, work was begun on the structure that was designed to take the place of the old ferry boat that had been in operation for well over a generation. By June 10, 1910, the bridge was in use. Cost of it was \$90,000. It was built by the Oswego Bridge Company, Oswego, N. Y. Entire length of the project was 850 feet. Center span of the bridge was 450 feet long. Thirty tone was supposed to be the capacity the bridge would carry. Floor of the bridge was 62 feet above water level. A heavy volume of trade was

channeled into Montgomery after the big bridge was put in operation.

With the growth of Montgomery in particular and Fayette County in general, the first Montgomery bridge, narrow as it was, proved totally inadequate. During the time Okey Patteson was Governor of West Virginia steps were taken to build another bridge at Montgomery to replace the one that had been in use since 1910. After securing the necessary right-of-way properties for use in building the bridge the work was inaugurated. On March 14, 1957, the new \$4,875,000 job was formally opened with great fanfare. This modern bridge is 1,260 feet long. At 2:12 P.M., Thursday, March 14, 1957, Leon Avery crossed the bridge with a dry cleaning truck and was the first driver to use the bridge in business. With Avery were his children, David and Carol LaVerne. State officials had crossed ahead of Avery in the big dedication parade. As soon as the immense new structure was declared officially opened, William McNeely and Robert Saunders of the State Road Commission closed the old bridge by putting up a sign at each approach notifying the public that it was to be no longer used. Governor Patteson credited the realization of the expansive bridge, with its 28 foot roadway, to the civic minded citizens of Montgomery who had persisted in the efforts to have the bridge built. Connecting Montgomery with U. S. State Route 60, the bridge finished in 1957 is one of the most imposing spans in West Virginia. Built at state expense, of course, the latter day bridge cost 54 times that of the first bridge which was erected with private capital.

## Chapter Nine

# JOURNALISM AT FAYETTEVILLE

Fayette County, West Virginia, is the graveyard of newspapers. For over a century the people in this hill-country county have been served the news of this world and the promise of the better land in journals of one sort or another. In the main these sheets have been weekly publications and in a lot of instances the weeklies have been weekly in more ways than one. However, in the field of newspaperdom here there have been honest efforts and a lot of them, too. Others might have turned out better publications but they didn't and thereby hangs a tale. It is the old, old story of how we can not all be brilliant; someone's got to do the work, you know.

Herewith are the running facts—all obtained from sources thought to be reliable, albeit foot-notes are not appended in this article—regarding the papers in our great empire county which have come and gone. Only three are still with us. Big city daily publications in our fast transportation age are placed on our door steps at crack of dawn and before sunset that those of us who run may read the news of the earth. These big dailies have done away with the need for the county-seat weeklies and ambitious town papers. The county papers carry a good deal of local history in their columns and that has some reader appeal to those who live in our mountains.

## THE FIRST FAYETTE COUNTY JOURNAL

Journalism in Fayette County, West Virginia, had its inception on "yon side" of New River in the Mountain Cove area on August 1, 1852. James L. Scott and Thomas L. Harris, two of a group of New Englanders who had settled here long before Virginia was rent in twain by the War Between the States began the publication of *The Mountain Cove Journal and Spiritual Harbinger*. What was in the mind of the editors was duly set forth at the masthead of the publication in the following lengthy statement:



**"The Mountain Cove Journal  
and  
Spiritual Harbinger  
— a weekly periodical —**

"Devoted to the publication, discussion and elucidation of Theories, Principles, Facts, Legends, and Traditions—Historical, Social, Political, Industrial, Scriptural, Ethical, Metaphysical and Cosmical—connected with Man, with his Genesis, and prospective and anticipated Exodus from Moral, Mental and Material Darkness; and as pertaining to the Origin, Unfolding and Consummation of the Material and Spiritual Universe.

"Being devoted to the temporal and spiritual well-being of the human race, this Journal will treat of all branches of human Unfolding; and, while a portion of its columns will embrace Miscellanies of an interesting and instructive character, and the general News of the day, it will aim to throw special light upon those subjects which relate to the religious nature and tendency of Man.

"It will therefore treat of the multiform Religions and modes of Worship that characterize Mankind; of their Complexity and Diversity; of their varied Causes and Usages; of their Emptiness or Utility; of the evidences of False and True; or Hopes and Professions based upon them, both genuine and fictitious; of Religious Theories, Creeds, Prejudices, Love and Hate;—thus determining, by their elements, that which is from the Imagination, from inspiration of Good, or from inspiration of Evil.

"The World, being burdened with unavailing rituals and systems, religious and philosophical, requires discernment and understanding to comprehend Light revealed from Heaven, to direct the struggling intellect in its inquiries after Truth, its Cause, Source, Media and Modes of manifestation; its varied effects upon the human mind; the elements of religious loss and gain, and their divergent ultimatum; to determine the Being of God, the nature of His dealings with man, and the evidence in confirmation.

"While paying due deference to the varied schools of Opinion, this Journal will seek to discover the Landmarks of an unbroken current of Spiritual Unfolding, conducted through special interposition of the Supreme Being, from the earliest period to the present time; thus vindicating the Holy Scriptures as Divine Revelation, the basis of the true hope of Man's redemption, and hence affording full, explicit and irrefutable demonstration of Truth concerning the beginning, manifestation and end of all things created.

"While devoted to these topics, it will be the especial organ of the interests concentrated at its place of publication; stating the motives and reasons which induce removal to the locality; the

history, progress and prospects of the enterprise; and also, whatever pertains to the condition, resources and advantages of Western Virginia.

"It will, furthermore, be a faithful record of Spiritual Manifestations; giving publicity to their complete history; stating what they are and profess to be as now unveiled; and the methods by which they propose to benefit the human race; thus proclaiming the origin and nature of the great Interior Unfolding which now interests the civilized world.

"The Mountain Cove Journal and Spiritual Harbinger will be issued at Mountain Cove, Fayette County, Virginia, in folio form, on a sheet 22 by 23 inches, on Thursday of each week, commencing on the 1th of August.

"Its terms of subscription will be

ONE DOLLAR AND FIFTY CENTS

per annum, payable in advance.

"Persons intending to subscribe, should do so at once, as it is not designed to print a larger number than is required for actual subscribers. The peculiar character of the Journal will naturally induce a desire to possess all the numbers. Every friend of the cause is requested to become an active agent for this paper.

"Advertisements inserted on reasonable terms.

Published by JAMES L. SCOTT and THOMAS L. HARRIS.

E. WINCHESTER, Publishing Agent

Mountain Cove, Va., June, 1852."

### Journalism at Fayetteville

In 1878 when the population of Fayette County was approximately 11,000, the first newspaper was started at the county seat. That year J. W. St. Clair brought out a paper called *The Fayette Enterprise*. The control of this paper passed to H. W. Brazie who changed its name to *The Industrial World*. The *World* was moved to Hinton where it did not do so well. When the *World* was returned to Fayetteville, its name was again changed to that of *The Fayette Free Press*, with 20-year old W. A. Brazie at the editorial helm.

Trimming its sails so as to catch the current political breeze, *The Fayette Free Press*, in a few years, became a Republican paper by the name of *The Fayette Journal*. Of this newly named publication the most noted editor was George C. McIntosh. Thus the first paper at Fayetteville bore four different names by the turn of the present century.

When Republican claims were being pressed by early Fayetteville editors, the Democrats began to react vigorously. In 1883, Charles E. Mahan, Sr., launched *The Fayette Democrat*. After being published in Fayetteville for a number of years, the *Democrat* was moved to Montgomery where it soon ceased publication.

During the 1880-1890 decade, two other papers sprang up and quickly withered away. One was known as *The Coal Journal*, while the other was designated *The West Virginia Republican*.

After the year 1894, *The Fayette Republican* was begun. It flourished for a brief spell but died out in a few years.

When *The Fayette Republican* gave up the ghost the field of newspaperdom at the County Capital was again ready for occupancy. This time Joseph E. Phillips picked up the form of *The Fayette Free Press* and breathed into its nostrils the breath of editorial life. In 1908 ownership of *The Fayette Free Press* passed into the hands of George C. McIntosh, who had just left the editorial chair of the old *Fayette Journal*, then owned by Samuel Dixon.

When McIntosh bought *The Fayette Free Press* in 1908, he made it an independent Republican paper. At the same time he changed the name of his publication to that of *The Fayette Tribune and Free Press*.

*The Fayette Democrat*, long since dead, was resurrected in July, 1914, and again took up the chore of carrying the editorial banner for the Democrat cause.

In 1915, Charles A. Goddard acquired *The Fayette Tribune and Free Press* and started on a notable career as publisher of a weekly newspaper. In 1924, Mr. Goddard obtained *The Fayette Journal* and kept it going as a contemporary of the *Tribune*. At that time the *Journal* was the oldest paper being published in Fayette County.

In 1930, Mr. Goddard sold both *Tribune* and *Journal* to Woodyard Brothers of Spencer, West Virginia, who owned a chain of county papers in this state. The Woodyards, in turn, bought *The Fayette Democrat* from the Phillips family.



In 1912, *The Searchlight*, a Republican paper, was published at Fayetteville during the election period. E. W. Maddy was the publisher. When the election was over *The Searchlight* became history.

In 1920, J. Alfred Taylor, Sr., started a new paper at Fayetteville. He called it *The Pick and Shovel*. The name was subsequently changed to *The State Sentinel*. This sprightly paper is Democratic in politics and is ably edited. It is the only newspaper now being published at the county seat. Following the death of its founder on June 9, 1956, *The Sentinel* has continued under direction of the Taylor family. At the start of 1958 it was edited by J. Alfred Taylor, Jr.

### Newspapering at Montgomery

As early as January 1886, Montgomery—then the leading town in Fayette County—had a newspaper. P. M. Hayes edited this paper with the late J. C. Chapman being the inspiration. When this pioneer publication at Montgomery went the way of so many similar efforts, its place was filled for a time by P. M. Hayes' *Plain Dealer*. It was not long until this second paper suspended publication.

The successor to *The Plain Dealer* was one known as *The Courier*. However, *The Courier*—after a very good showing—joined the ones which went before it.

A miniature paper, designated *The Call*, was offered to Montgomery citizens in 1900. Soon *The Call* was over. Two years after *The Call* was first issued, Montgomery's fifth response to a desire for a town paper was *The Messenger*,—a paper published by J. C. Powers. *The Messenger's* day was short.

The Negroes had two papers at Montgomery but they quickly became casualties. Those papers were *The Pioneer* and *The Mountain Eagle*.

In 1896, *The Valley Vindicator* was started by Ernest Montgomery. This paper did fairly well. In 1903 it was consolidated with *The Montgomery Daily News*.

In 1907 *The News* was disposed of by Luther Montgomery to the United Mine Workers. Under its new owners *The News*

was given another name. The paper, as the organ of the Mine Workers, quickly failed.

The former owner of *The Montgomery News*, Luther Montgomery, again took over the paper. This paper was destined to be acquired by the Woodyard interests. The new owners allowed the paper to die. Its subscribers were taken over by *The Fayette Tribune*.

During the closing period of the life of *The Montgomery News* another paper was brought into being by Luther S. Montgomery. This paper was named *The Montgomery Herald*. *The Herald* was bought by Kel Holliday. Mr. Holliday died some time after purchasing the *Herald* but his associates took up the task of publishing it after his passing.

### Mount Hope's Newspaper Experiences

Mount Hope has had a series of small papers as well as a larger effort. About 1901 *The Mount Hope Independent* was printed. It had a life span of a year or so. It was not until sixteen years later that another paper appeared in the little city. The city's second paper was called *The Mount Hope Leader*. In June, 1917, the paper was first brought out, with J. Alfred Taylor, as editor. The paper was sold during the second year of its publication to H. T. Hogg, who carried on the paper for over two years.

In 1922 M. W. Carrel's effort at Mount Hope ceased after a few issues.

About 1925, C. A. Pickett tried his hand at running a Mount Hope paper. Pickett called his paper *The Times*. In less than a year this paper had finished its course.

In 1927, *The Mount Hope Daily News* was begun under the popularity of the fall ceremonial of the Beni-Kedem Shrine which was being staged at Mount Hope. This paper was the work of J. Alfred Taylor and was successfully operated until January, 1928. This was the second daily paper to be printed in the county, the first being *The Montgomery Daily News* of 1903.

In 1928 *The Fayette Republican* was moved from Oak Hill to Mount Hope and there closed down soon on account of financial difficulties.

### Papers Published at Oak Hill

1. *The Fayette Sun*, published elsewhere in the county, since 1906, was moved to Oak Hill in May, 1913. This paper was Oak Hill's first newspaper and was owned by C. T. and George W. Jones. In 1914, *The Fayette Sun* set. The plant was located in the building west of present Kelly Drug Store on Main Street.
2. *Oak Hill Advocate*, was first issued in 1917 by George B. Terrell, Editor. Its existence ended in a couple of years.
3. *The Oak Hill Enterprise* was the third newspaper to be operated at Oak Hill. The paper was a stock company publication. The first editor was O. J. Barrows. It was in 1923 that the *Enterprise* was established. Like its two predecessors this paper's life was of short duration, lasting a little over three years.
4. *The Church Messenger*, a religious periodical published in the interest of the Oak Hill Baptist Church and the religious life of the entire community, was started in June, 1924. This paper grew to be of considerable size and was published monthly by Rev. C. S. Donnelly until July, 1943.
5. In 1927, *The Fayette Republican* was brought into existence under the aegis of J. W. Roland and others. This promising journal was lured to Mt. Hope the following year. It died shortly after its removal. The financial problems of the management of the paper contributed to its early demise.
6. Oak Hill's sixth newspaper was *The Oak Hill News*. Its first number was issued Friday, August 3, 1928. In November of that year this weekly paper was sold by C. S. Donnelly to J. W. Roland who merged it with the *Fayette Republican*. When *The Fayette Republican* folded up, the *Oak Hill News* died with it.
7. In January, 1929, J. W. Thompson began *The Fayette News*, a weekly paper of a fine character. The life of this paper

was fourteen years, after which time the publication rights were sold to *The Fayette Tribune*.

8. A contemporary of *The Fayette News* was the *Oak Hill Times*, a weekly published by Frank Butler. The bizarre *Times* was entered as second class matter at Oak Hill post office on March 6, 1929. It ran its course in a few years and was no more.
9. On November 23, 1929, Frank Butler entered as second class matter at Oak Hill post office another sheet known as *The Midnite Sun*, "The only Sunday newspaper in Fayette County." This Tabloid publication succumbed as a victim of The Great Depression in the early 1930's.
10. When fire destroyed *The Fayette Tribune* plant at Fayetteville in March, 1943, the place of publication was moved to Oak Hill. Under the able editorial leadership of the late Roy H. ("Jack") Johnson, the *Tribune* became solidly established here. For a year or two the paper was issued five days a week. Due to several reasons, chief of which was financial, the paper resumed its previous status as a semi-weekly publication. This paper was bought by Kel Holliday. After his death the paper was bought out by different editors. Bob Holliday is Editor at this time, 1958. In January, 1958 the *Tribune* moved into its new plant on Main Street, Oak Hill, opposite Oak Hill Hospital. Since the latter part of the month of the *Tribune's* removal, the paper has been issued from its new home.

### Other Publications in Fayette County

Ansted has seen a few local papers come and go. F. M. Starbuck issued *The Ansted West Virginian* for a brief period in the 1880's.

Next at Ansted was *The Ansted News*, a paper owned and published by W. L. Starbuck. It lived only a short time.

While *The Ansted News* was alive it had a contemporary which was likewise the brain child of W. L. Starbuck. This paper was *The Gauley News*. In 1890 *The Gauley News* was born and died.

From 1898 to 1902 there was a paper at Thurmond known as *The West Virginia Herald*. This paper was financed from the fortune of T. G. McKell.

In 1898, C. A. Hill got out a breezy little publication at Sewell. He called it *The New River News*. Its span of life was short.

## Chapter Ten

# EARLY MANUFACTURING IN FAYETTE COUNTY

### Beckwith Basket Factory

One of the earliest manufacturing efforts in Fayette County centered on Laurel Creek two miles from Beckwith. There Isaac Abbott, a native of Andover, Massachusetts, who migrated here during the second decade of the nineteenth century, set about weaving baskets from the willow withes which grew in abundance along the winding stream in front of his dwelling. In this basket factory he employed a number of young women.

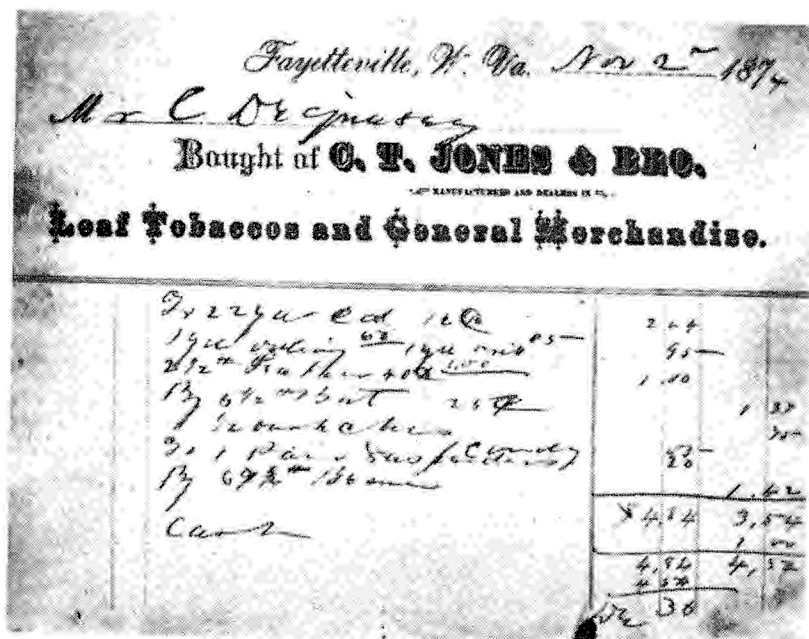
### Deepwater Blacksmith Made Buttons

At Deepwater, the village blacksmith, Isaac Jenkins, made buttons during the early years of the past century before the formation of Fayette County. Jenkins' shop was made of whip-sawed logs which were dove-tailed together at the corners. Clapboards, which made the roof, were held in place by the weight of huge hickory poles. In this shop, which stood on the old Jenkins' farm at Deepwater, Isaac Jenkins made copper buttons. These buttons were made out of sheet copper by being stamped out with a hollow circular punch. Buttons were made in three sizes—for coats, pants, and shirts. Disc-shaped, these buttons were flat like a penny and had two eyes made in them by piercing the copper with a sharp instrument. Once the buttons were made they were strung on thin copper wire and sold singly or by the dozen. Rustproof and practically indestructible, the Jenkins buttons were widely used in Fayette County over a hundred years ago.

### Hat Factory on the Garden Grounds

From 1850 to 1865, Benjamin F. Taylor operated a hat factory<sup>1</sup>—the only such factory ever operated in Fayette County—

<sup>1</sup> Probably the earliest hat manufacturing establishment in what is now West Virginia was the one maintained at Lewisburg by a man named Jamison some 25 or 30 years before Ben Taylor began to turn out his durable headgear.



#### OLD LETTERHEAD OF EARLY FAYETTE COUNTY BUSINESS CONCERN

This store was operated by Charles T. Jones and George W. Jones, his brother, both sons of L. W. Jones, pioneer settler of Sanger section of the county. In business in Fayette County when raising of tobacco was the chief industry much barter and trade was carried on as statement shows. Note that fifth line from top on statement shows that half-a-bushel of chestnuts were accepted on account by the merchants.

at his place on the Garden Grounds. In the manufacture of men's hats, Taylor—a relative of General Zachary Taylor who was elected President in 1848—used wool. A piece of pumice stone was used to smooth off the hats. Once the hats were shaped they were further pressed with a huge hand iron.<sup>2</sup> Other materials such as the pelts of fur-bearing animals were brought into play in making the Taylor hats. Taylor aimed to have a batch of hats ready for sale by the time court was in session at Fayetteville. Then he would come to the county seat and sell the hats to the people who came to court. It is said that these hats were in such demand that the manufacturer readily disposed of all he could make. With the breaking out of the War Between the States in 1861, Taylor suffered the loss of his

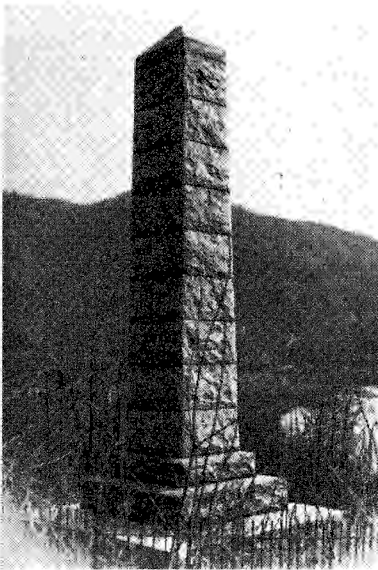
<sup>2</sup>This iron is now in the possession of J. Wysor Painter, South Charleston, W. Va., a descendant of the old hat maker.



market and never regained it. Following the war the influx of cheaper hats from up north put Taylor out of business.

Not only did Taylor turn out hats for many years but his family—he had an even dozen children—were master weavers. Mrs. Taylor and her daughters carded wool, spun yarn, and dyed it, using dyes made of native barks for different colors. All the colors were said to have been “fast”. From the yarn the Taylor women spun they wove blankets, coverlets, jeans, and linsey, selling them to their mountaineer friends and neighbors. They also wove willow baskets.

Taylor's place of business was constructed of logs and was located on the plateau of Garden Grounds opposite Red Star on the Thurmond road.



#### JOSEPH L. BEURY MEMORIAL AT QUINNIMONT, W. VA.

This memorial stands at Quinnimont, W. Va., and bears bronze plaque with inscription shown in picture. On the north bank of the New River, the site where this memorial is located has long since been neglected. Cost of marker and its plaque ran high into thousands of dollars. Plaque has been defaced by juvenile markings. Marker can be seen from Route 19 if the traveller knows where to look for it.

—Photo by Homer Wells,  
Beckley, W. Va. Photographer

#### ANSTED MAN CREDITED WITH INVENTING MACHINE GUN

It was always claimed by the late A. W. Hamilton, an authority on early Fayette County history, that John Nickel Wood, Ansted, West Virginia, was the real inventor of the army machine gun. In 1940 when Hamilton was 84 years old, he narrated the following story: “John and Marshall Wood joined

the Confederate Army at the start of the Civil War and were stationed at Camp Piatt on the Kanawha River above Charleston. Marshall Wood, a wheelwright, helped John perfect a model of the rapid-fire gun and they showed it to the commanding officer, who gave them tools and equipment. The gun was mounted and tested. When Union forces compelled the Confederates to evacuate the camp, the officer ordered the gun sunk in the Kanawha to escape capture. The two Woods men were then sent to Roanoke, Virginia. Again they worked on the model of the gun and an officer introduced them to Gatling,<sup>1</sup> as a man with money and influence. Gatling offered to take the gun to France and have it patented in exchange for a half-interest. In the meantime, John Wood died, and when Gatling returned, he told Marshall Wood he had no interest in the gun."

Hamilton, who knew the Wood family well when he was a boy, said Marshall Wood, the uncle of John Wood, told him of the gun many times after the close of the war. According to Hamilton, Marshall Wood went back to the place where the original gun was sunk in the Kanawha but was never able to locate the exact spot nor the gun.

<sup>1</sup> Richard Jordan Gatling, (1818-1903), an American inventor, was a native of North Carolina. After suffering an attack of smallpox, Gatling became interested in Medicine. He completed a course at Ohio Medical College, taking an M. D. degree in 1850. When the Civil War broke out he was living in Indianapolis where he devoted attention to perfecting fire-arms. He is credited with conceiving the idea of the rapid-fire machine gun in 1861—the year John Nickel Wood, the Ansted gunsmith, was working on the same invention. By 1862 this army medical officer's work on the gun had reached a point where it would fire 350 shots per minute but the war had practically ended before the army officially adopted the weapon. In another decade the gun was in use in the armies of the world's leading countries. History has credited Gatling with inventing the lethal machine gun but there is a strong claim to the invention of this deadly weapon on the part of the obscure Fayette County gunsmith of the long ago.

## Chapter Eleven

# COAL MINING IN FAYETTE COUNTY

West Virginia is the greatest coal bearing state of this nation. Of the fifty-five counties in the state coal is found in all of them with the exception of less than half a dozen. Among the latter counties are Jefferson, Berkeley, Morgan, and Monroe. Though of absorbing interest, the story of the formation of our vast coal fields during the carboniferous era of time can not be related here. Fayette County is particularly rich in coal, best and most reliable of all the world's fuels. Here the plethora of her coal deposits in the land's upper reaches, such as mountain and hill, have caused those fields to become exhausted while the lower seams on deeper levels have barely been touched. Up and down the deep canyon of the New River—probably the world's oldest river—both sides of the great gorge are pocked with coal banks out of which have come millions of tons of the rich coal seams known popularly as the Sewell, the Fire Creek, the Quinnimont, the Pocahontas, and others during the last century. Fayette County lies within the so-called New River Coal District. Fayette's fame as a coal producing county was set off by the workings that were first carried on here in the Nuttallburgh, or Sewell seams; the Fire Creek, or Quinnimont seams; and the Meadow Creek deposits. These three great workable seams of coal in Fayette County brought the county to the attention of operators shortly after Appomattox.

Coal was first used as a fuel in the Kanawha Valley long before 1840. There at Kanawha Salines—Malden, of our day—the salt makers dug it from the outcroppings along the hills and used it for fuel in boiling brine in producing salt. Blacksmiths had long since known that coal was the best fuel for their trade. Old Aaron Stockton, of Kanawha Falls distinction, found cannel coal in 1848 in the area of Smither's Creek along Kanawha River across from present day Montgomery. In 1850 the Paint Creek region was tested and there was found the rich bed known to coal men as the Lower Freeport seam. Alvah Hansford discovered cannel coal on Paint Creek in the year 1854. Three years later mines were opened in the hill sides

along this picturesque mountain stream. Cannel coal mined there was used for extracting oil and paraffine. But prior to the Paint Creek venture this had been carried on in a limited way at Cannelton, thus giving that place its name. Much of the coal mined there before the Civil War was taken from the Aaron Stockton bed of cannel coal in the Upper Freeport seam. Coal was mined around Winifred as early as 1853. At Coalburgh in 1857 the Edwards interests began to mine coal commercially. After the Civil War had ended another mine or "coal bank," as mines were then called, was opened a few miles east of the diggings at Coalburg. Since the new operation was called the "east bank," the settlement that grew up there in subsequent years retained the old name,—East Bank, as its geographical designation.

When the Chesapeake and Ohio Rail Road was completed in 1873 the development of the coal trade in the New River District got underway. That very year, in the month of September, Joseph L. Beury, one of Fayette County's legendary figures shipped the first rail road car loads from his mines in the historic Quinnimont—Five Mountains—at Quinnimont, Fayette County, W. Va.

Stimulated by Beury's enterprise, John Nuttall, whose name and fame are echoed even now in Nuttallburgh, began mining there in 1873. At Sewell the Long Dale Iron Co., opened mines. These last two mining operations were in the celebrated Sewell seam of coal. These seams of coal up and down New River are at varying heights. Echo Mine, a couple of miles above Fire Creek, was 550 feet above the waters of New River. South of Quinnimont, coal has been found at altitudes of 2,200 feet and more above sea level.

Following J. L. Beury's pioneering in picking coal there followed a number of other coal men who began to open mines all over Fayette County. They used mules—"bank mules"—to haul the coal from the mines. Years later when they learned how to make electric power to do the job the "bank mules" were replaced with motors. Here in Fayette County the first electric motor to be used in the coal mines was at Concho, below Minden. That was in 1896. This motor was used in the main line haul but "bank mules" were still used to pull the cars

out of the rooms to the main line. Use of the electric motor at Concho mine in 1896 marked the first use of such power in all the New River field.

There at Quinimont stands an imposing granite monument to the memory of Joseph L. Beury. It was purchased and placed there by New River coal operators as an expression of gratitude for Beury's energy and foresight in development of Fayette County's greatest industry. Beury had brought his bride to the wilds of Fayette County shortly after the close of the Civil War. At Quinimont they lived in a rude log cabin for something like five years. Beury was a Captain in the Union army and was born in Schuylkill Co., Pa., August 15, 1842. He died at Beury on June 2, 1903.

Mines were first ventilated by a furnace built atop the ground. By suction the foul air was drawn from the mine below pretty much as a chimney ventilates a room. Now more modern methods are employed by which pure air is supplied in immense quantities to the men in the mines.

Largest producers of coal in Fayette County is the New River Company. Story of this big concern is a saga all by itself and deserves to be published in a book exclusively its own. Some of the greatest names in the history of coal mining are those associated with the New River Company and the organizations out of which this combine was formed. Notably among these have been Samuel Dixon and S. A. Scott. High among the coal producers in Fayette County was William McKell. Working with such titans of the coal industry as Dixon, McKell, and Scott have been hundreds of others who were both able and capable in their fields. Coal has been king in Fayette County for almost a hundred years and it was men like Beury, Nuttall, Dixon, Scott, and McKell who put legendary "King Coal" on his economic throne here and kept him there.

As might be expected in any infant industry it was a foregone conclusion that much of the knowledge of the business would have to be learned the hard way in the school of experience. Trial and error methods often proved costly while taking chances led to results equally dear. More men have been killed in the coal mines of Fayette County than were produced as casualties among the soldiers of Fayette County origin in

all the country's wars. Although modern methods and latter day legislation have tended to reduce mine fatalities it still remains that coal mining is one of earth's most hazardous occupations. In the earlier period of coal production in this county there were many notable mine disasters with the attendant loss of lives. Although the loss of a single life is to be deplored, major mine disasters are listed as those where at least five lives are snuffed out. Here is a list of the major disasters in Fayette County and the number of men who died as a result, along with the date of the explosions:

March 6, 1900	Red Ash	46 killed
March 19, 1905	Rush Run-Red Ash	24 killed
February 8, 1906	Parral (now Summerlee)	23 killed
January 29, 1907	Stuart (now Lochgelly)	85 killed
May 1, 1907	Whipple	16 killed
January 30, 1908	Bachmann's (Hawks Nest)	16 killed
March 31, 1909	Echo Mine at Beury	6 killed
February 6, 1915	Carlisle	22 killed
March 2, 1915	Layland, Mine No. 3	112 killed
November 30, 1915	Boomer, Mine No. 2	23 killed
August 6, 1919	Weirwood	7 killed
January 26, 1929	Kingston, Mine No. 5	14 killed

While the colliery business, in all its ramifications, including the manufacturing of coke, has made many wealthy it is an industry that tends to exhaust itself. However, it should be observed that only the coal that has been easily obtainable is the coal that has been taken from the earth. Deep in the bowels of the earth are still other seams of mineable coal and, in time to come, this coal will be mined. Within the last quarter of a century the more novel way of "coal stripping" has come into vogue. This is the system of taking from the earth the coal as its seam feather-edges out on the brow of hills or even in bottoms where the coal is within comparatively few feet of the surface. In this business of coal stripping the sides of our mountain domain have been badly scarred and illy changed. Here the bulldozer, the power shovel, and the mighty explosives have left marks which mar the scenic wonders of the land. At times these works of destruction are set with trees to prevent erosion. Here and there an effort has been made to sow the ruptured places in grass seed. Because of the widespread work of demolishing the land in order to get at the coal, West Virginians can no longer sing that "No changes can be



# OLD STATEMENT OF ANALYSIS OF COAL AND COKE PRODUCED AT QUINNIMONT

Coal was first shipped commercially from Fayette County at Quinnimont by J. L. Beury. There at this point an early iron furnace was likewise operated. Self-explanatory statement was issued before typewriters were in common use and when people were skilled in use of the pen. Fine, high grade coal has been mined on New River and its tributaries since 1873.

<p>PLUMER &amp; GRAY ANALYSTS WHEELING, W. VA.</p>			<p>Quinnimont Furnace,</p>		
			<p>J. H. GRAMWELL, Lessee &amp; Manager.</p>		
			<p>Quinnimont, W. Va. August 15, 1879</p>		
			<p>Analysis of Quinnimont Coal &amp; Coke</p>		
			<p>by</p>		
			<p>Prof. S. H. Caldwell, Professor Philadelphia, Pa.</p>		
			<p>Coal      Coke</p>		
<p>Water evaporated at 212° C.</p>			<p>74</p>	<p>22</p>	
<p>Carbon</p>			<p>75.89</p>	<p>91.37</p>	
<p>Vol. matter</p>			<p>13.49</p>	<p>3.64</p>	
<p>Hydrogen</p>			<p>4.95</p>	<p>5.55</p>	
<p>Oxygen</p>				<p>4.9</p>	



noticed on those West Virginia hills." What is called "the top burden" has to be shoved away in order to reach the coal. That "top burden" consists of forests and rich soil as well as the ever present rocks in which Fayette County abounds. In this section coal seams are of varying thickness, from merely a few inches up to six to eight feet. Most of the best seams range around four feet and upward.

One of the by-products of coal mining is reddog, which burned out slag piles produce. When slate and rock and the certain amount of good coal, which can not be profitably removed from the waste from the mines, are all piled in a mountainous heap it commonly becomes ignited by spontaneous combustion. When the so called "slate pile" has been burned out the refuse remaining is called "reddog." This is used for making road beds and making fills. It is in general use for side road building in this age of the auto.

No effort is made here to tell the separate story of the various operations in the county. That would require a volume alone to tell even a part of the story. Such would range from the big companies and all the way down to the ever present "little fellow" who has opened a "punch mine" where he and a hand full of others can get out the coal and haul it in trucks to dumping tipples where dealers buy it. Our coal industry is under the constant surveillance of both Federal and State Mine Inspectors. Mines are rock dusted to prevent explosions. Coal production statistics can be obtained from such agencies as the State Bureau or Department of Mines.

Gutting the county of its coal has resulted in quick water seepage from the land. Mine cracks in the earth quickly drain away the rainfall. All this has been damaging to farming because the tilled land and the fields soon get dried out. On the other hand the marketing of coal has provided work and wealth to tens upon tens of thousands of persons who are thus enabled to purchase life's necessities from other places where they are easily produced.

Statistics tend to show that there still remains unmined in Fayette County enough coal to last between a hundred and two hundred years yet. This, the average citizen of today figures, will last as long as he is going to last. There the matter rests right now.

## Chapter Twelve

# BANKING IN FAYETTE COUNTY

Until banks were organized in Fayette County, the people here did their banking in Charleston. Since 1873 the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad carried passengers and trade to the state's capital city. In 1893 the Kanawha and Michigan Railway connected Gauley Bridge with Charleston and thus brought people there on the north side of the Great Kanawha River. It was in 1867 that the Kanawha Valley Bank was organized and it was followed by the Charleston National Bank—the oldest national bank in the Kanawha metropolis—in 1884.

Fayette County's first bank did not turn out very well. It was in 1899 that the first banking venture was embarked upon. That year the Montgomery Banking and Trust Company began its brief existence. About two years later the bank folded as the result of an ill-fated effort on the part of the bank's cashier who employed bank funds to build and operate a streetcar line between Montgomery and Mount Carbon on one side and Handley on the other side. The turn of the twentieth century found Fayette County, with a population of 31,987, without a banking house.

Montgomery's enterprise in starting a bank in 1899 had served the purpose of provoking the citizens of Fayetteville to similar good works in the financial field. Led by Morris Harvey and some of his associates, the Fayetteville National Bank was organized. By August 6, 1900 this bank opened its doors for business. Realizing that its name localized it, the officials of this institution decided to give their bank more of a whole-county appeal. Accordingly the name was broadened to that of the Fayette County National Bank in 1906. This strong bank today enjoys the enviable distinction of being the oldest successful bank in the county.

Seeing Fayetteville off to a good start and perhaps nettled by the failure of the first banking effort in its town, Montgomery embarked again on a banking course. S. H. Montgomery and others formed the Montgomery National Bank in

1901, with Mr. Montgomery as its president. Operating now under Charter No. 5691, the Montgomery National Bank ranks as the largest bank in the county from the standpoint of resources.

Following Fayetteville and Montgomery came Mount Hope with the county's third successful banking business. On March 17, 1902, the Bank of Mount Hope, always ably managed and conservatively handled, began its notable career. It is one of the two banks in Fayette County, West Virginia, today which are not national banks.

During the five year period following the entrance of Mount Hope into the field of banking, no less than half-a-dozen banks came into being in Fayette County. Thomas G. McKell had long toyed with the idea of a bank of his own in the Dun Glen Hotel, at southside Thurmond. He had gone as far as to outfit a room along banking lines, but that was the extent of his plans. When Mr. McKell finally decided not to open the bank, the room was taken over by others who founded there the New River Banking and Trust Company. It was on August 11, 1904 that this bank started on its way. When the fortunes of Thurmond declined, following the building of hard roads all over the county, this bank moved to Oak Hill where it opened for business on Monday, September 23, 1935.

The year 1904 marked the incorporation of another bank at the county seat. That year saw the Bank of Fayette competing for business in the realm of finance. This bank did not prove as much of a success as its sister institution at Fayetteville, and on January 26, 1931 it suspended business.

Next came the Bank of Gauley Bridge. It was chartered in 1905 and began its public service on April 15 of that year. James Henry Miller, long a prominent resident of that town, was president and F. H. Miller was the first cashier. Never a large bank, the fortunes of the Bank of Gauley Bridge went into eclipse during the middle of the 1930-'40 decade. At the close of business on December 31, 1932, the resources of the bank were shown as only \$218,084.78. Its last cashier was O. V. Wilson. The Bank of Gauley Bridge was the successor to the Bank of Gauley, it should be noted.

Far removed from the banks of the county. Winona felt the need of more convenient banking facilities. To remedy the situation the Winona National Bank was organized on September 17, 1905, with Lee Long as president and W. W. Michael as cashier. This bank has the unenviable record of being the most-often-robbed bank in this section of the state. Today its Charter is No. 9850.

Though organized during the year 1905, the Merchants and Miners Bank did not receive its first public deposits until its opening day on January 1, 1906. Opening as it did on a legal holiday—New Year's Day, 1906—this was Oak Hill's first entry into the banking race that appeared to be on in the up-and-coming empire county of Fayette. Charles T. Jones was chosen as president of the bank and served as such until his death in 1911. Following the national banking holiday during the first term of President Franklin D. Roosevelt this bank was made a national institution, becoming the Merchants and Miners National Bank on December 21, 1933, under Charter No. 13885. C. R. Hill is now its president.

Because Thurmond was a prosperous place in 1906, some saw the possibility of another bank in the celebrated railroad town on New River. Led by Captain W. D. Thurmond, famous Partisan Ranger leader of Civil War days, a new bank was started in the town which was named for the noted soldier. December 1, 1906, the Thurmond Bank was ready for the deposits of the railroad employees, miners, merchants, and others. Captain Thurmond was the bank's president and J. Hugh Miller was the cashier. Thinking to give added prestige to the institution by changing it from a private to a national bank, the change was made to that of the National Bank of Thurmond in January, 1908. Plagued by the falling off of business along the river and in the region served by this bank, the National Bank of Thurmond had its doors to public patronage closed on February 13, 1931, another victim of the Great Depression years of the early 1930's.

Before the days of the hard surfaced highway, the business people of Ansted and surrounding countryside found banking to be very unhandy for them. To have a bank at hand, Captain W. N. Page and some of his associates organized the Ansted

National Bank and placed William L. Burruss in the position of cashier. This bank was located in the office of the Gauley Mountain Coal Company, from the date of its opening on November 19, 1907, until January, 1908, when it occupied its own banking house, which had just been completed. The charter of this bank is No. 14,318.

For the first time in their history the banks of Fayette County had combined resources of over a million dollars by April, 1906. In that month the total resources of the county's several banks stood at \$1,027,581.10.

Catching the banking fever that raged in the county at the time, William McKell set about the organization of the Bank of Glen Jean. August 11, 1909, this bank was ready for business. It continued to serve Glen Jean and the people along Loup Creek until 1939. At a meeting of the stockholders on January 10, 1939, it was voted to voluntarily liquidate the bank. Feeling that the day of need for this bank had passed, it was closed, each depositor being paid in full. At that time William McKell was president; C. P. Calloway was vice president; and Charles Wilburn was cashier.

Following the organizing of the Bank of Glen Jean, the growth and development of Montgomery and adjacent territory seemed to warrant the need of another bank at Montgomery, then the largest town in the county. On May 10, 1910, the Merchants National Bank was set going under capable leadership. Today this bank, with Charter No. 9740, rates as one of the best-known financial houses this side of Charleston.

By 1915 the hard roads had not been built in Fayette County. Isolated by the lack of good roads, Pax opined that the Paint Creek section of Fayette County needed a bank. This resulted in organizing the Bank of Pax for business on October 1, 1915. Misfortune dogged the advance of this little bank and by September 4, 1931, its officers were ready to call it quits. Number thirteen among the operating banks in Fayette County proved to be proverbial bad luck for the Bank of Pax, and following its business suspension at the close of its sixteenth year of operation, it never again opened its doors for deposits.

After the Bank of Pax came the First National Bank of Mount Hope. Opening date of this bank was August 15, 1917.

Depositors on this bank's first day of business numbered 154 and they entrusted \$21,827.00 to the bank of their choice. Starting out well this bank made splendid progress. During the summer of 1940 it liquidated and left the trying business of loans and investments to others. The closing out of this bank left Mount Hope with the Bank of Mount Hope, now one of the county's state banks.

With fourteen banks doing business in Fayette County—and those banks widely distributed—it would have seemed that the county's population of 60,377 in 1920 was amply stocked with banks. However, probably subscribing to the old adage that "There's always room for one more," a number of Fayette County people decided to bring one more bank into the picture. On Friday, November 25, 1921, the Oak Hill National Bank was organized. C. E. Mahan was president and L. W. Boley was the cashier. Purchasing a lot in Oak Hill at the corner of Main Street and Central Avenue for \$10,000—the highest price ever paid for a single lot in Oak Hill up to that time—the group of associates erected a modern banking house. After prospering moderately for a few years, the bank fell on evil times. It was reorganized in 1933 and the name changed to the First National Bank of Oak Hill. This did not help matters much, and the next thing the stockholders knew the bank was being operated under a conservator. Realizing that it doesn't do a town any good to have a bank failure in it, the Merchants and Miners National Bank took over the property and resources of the First National Bank, and set about settling the affairs of the once prosperous concern.

This left Oak Hill with but one bank until the bank building formerly occupied by the Oak Hill National Bank and its successor—The First National Bank of Oak Hill—was sold to the New River Banking and Trust Company, of Thurmond. As previously stated, the latter bank transferred its place of business to Oak Hill, opening there on September 23, 1935.

Each section of this great county today has its own bank, thereby giving the county the best distribution of financial institutions of any of the state's fifty-five counties.

## **Chapter Thirteen**

# **FAYETTE COUNTY EFFORTS AT HIGHER EDUCATION**

### **Fayetteville Academy**

Fayette County's first effort in the field of higher education seems to have been the Fayetteville Academy. Its founder was H. C. Robertson, known to many as Professor Robertson. This school was started about 1895 and lasted only a few years. It was supported only by tuition. One of the teachers was the late Rev. A. B. Withers, a man who became quite a leader in Christian education among West Virginia Baptists. Robertson, founder of the old Academy, went to Charleston after his school folded up and there became Principal of Tiskelwah School, serving in that capacity until the time of his death. Fayetteville Academy was housed in a large frame structure which has since been transformed into an apartment house. It stands hard by the large cemetery at the county seat. Courses offered in the Academy were pretty much like those in the curriculum of the modern high school.

### **History of West Virginia Tech**

West Virginia Institute of Technology at Montgomery had its inception in the passage of an Act of the Legislature on February 16, 1895, which created a Preparatory School of West Virginia University at Morgantown. The Montgomery heirs donated two acres of land near the C & O Railroad and fronting on the "Old Giles, Fayette, and Kanawha Turnpike." This school was known as "The Preparatory Branch of the University at Montgomery, Fayette County." William A. MacCorkle was then the Governor of the state. He did not approve the Act but, on the other hand, did not veto it, and permitted it to become a law without his signature.

This original school opened in January, 1897, under the Principalship of E. C. Bennett. He had only one assistant, Ruby Ray Knight. By 1905 the enrollment reached the hundred mark. East Wing was added to Old Main Hall in 1899, with



West Wing coming five years later. It was under the aegis of Josiah Keely that this school had 150 students when he resigned in 1907.

After Keely left the school it had its ups and downs for a good many years. High Schools were being established in the area and these were doing away with the need of the Preparatory School. An effort was made to give this school a distinct field in education. In 1917 the State Legislature changed the name of the problem institution to that of West Virginia Trade School, but did not vote funds to make it that. When Montgomery High School was established in 1919 it looked like the state school was no longer needed. In 1920 only thirty-two students were in attendance. At that time C. H. Martin was head of the school. By pulling political wires and obtaining additional state revenue for the institution Martin kept his school in the picture. When the enrollment picked up to 125 in 1921, the Legislature gave the Trades School \$44,500 and changed its name to New River State School. Two years of college work was to be offered and the title of the school head was changed from Principal to President. By adding some teacher-training courses the school grew. A summer school was added and the school greatly publicized. President Martin was a brother-in-law to William G. Conley who became Governor of the state, a situation that led to the school's getting just about everything its President requested. The Preparatory Department was dropped and correspondence courses discontinued. By 1927 a third year of college work was added and the correspondence courses restored. By obtaining an appropriation of a quarter of a million dollars in 1923, the Main Building was changed and enlarged. Besides this the Physical Education Building was added by 1925. Other units followed and by 1932 there was Conley Hall, named in honor of the President's favorite brother-in-law! At this time the campus comprised 100 acres even if a lot of it was steep!

In 1928 this child of state politics became a four year college with authority to grant the A. B. Degree. Next year, 1929, sixteen such degrees were conferred on graduates. No longer was the school to be known as New River State School but New River State College instead. More state money was funnelled into the school, now that it was a full fledged college. There

was much manipulation in attaining this position, some of it illegal, but it was given state standing nevertheless.

It was President C. H. Martin who breathed into the nostrils of this school the breath of lives and kept it going when it appeared at times to be on its way out. Improved physical properties was followed by a qualified faculty. By the start of the 1930-40 decade the region drained by the Kanawha River was becoming such a manufacturing center that it came to be looked upon as The Magic Valley, a sort of an American Ruhr! By degrees, under direction of Edward S. Maclin, the school forged forward after President Martin died in June, 1933. Federal funds were secured and used to build up the physical lay out of the institution. One of the moving spirits in making the school at this time was Dean D. B. Kraybill, a school man of high attainments. Pressure was put on the Legislature for one thing and another, including a change in the school's name. Accordingly it was named West Virginia Institute of Technology in 1941, the name it bears today. Able leaders and a strong faculty have brought the Institute to the front. Today it is looked upon as "the M.I.T. of the Mountains." On May 10-11, 1946, its Golden Anniversary was appropriately celebrated. Notables attended and three Honorary Degrees were conferred on a number of alumni who had made names for themselves in the world of affairs. President M. J. Horsch succeeded President Maclin as head of the school on Sept. 1, 1945. He, in turn, and following Horsch's resignation, was succeeded by William B. Axtell who is currently the guiding genius of Fayette County's only institution of higher learning. With an ever increasing enrollment the crying need of "Tech" is more money for operation. In an age that is crying for scientists the place of this school seems to be assured.

### **Negro Institution at Hill Top**

At Hill Top, a few miles from Oak Hill, leaders of the Colored race established a school for the education of their people. This school had its beginning during the middle of the first decade of this century as a private school under the direction of the Rev. Dr. Perkins, a notable Negro minister of that period. Later on the school was taken over by the West Virginia Baptist State Convention, (Negro), and operated as a denomi-

national project. From Sept. 1, 1908 until June 15, 1915, the guiding genius of this school was the Rev. Jared M. Arter, D.D., a well prepared man who had formerly been a slave. During the morning of Dec. 8, 1908, what property the school had was destroyed by fire.

To encourage the well meaning work at Hill Top, fifty acres of land were deeded outright to the West Virginia Baptist State Convention by Charles T. Jones and his brother George W. Jones, prominent coal operators at that time. This offer was accepted and a large brick structure was erected. Meanwhile the institution was given the long name of West Virginia Industrial School, Theological Seminary, and College.

Plagued by inadequate financial support and other factors the school never amounted to much. Toward the close of the 1920-30 decade it burned to the ground. It was never rebuilt although the land still remains the property of the Baptist State Convention. A small building stands there on the property today and is used in season by the denomination for denominational leadership courses.

## **Chapter Fourteen**

# **CATALOGUE OF FAYETTE COUNTY'S CAPITAL CRIMES**

Like other counties in the vast coal field area of West Virginia, Fayette County has had her share of major crimes. In a county the size and population of Fayette the murders committed there during the development of the coal industry would make a sizeable book if they were written up in detail. In the wild and woolly days justice was swift and summary at times as the stories of the different lynchings here tend to show. Before the coming of the hard roads and automobile travel miners were thrown together a great deal on pay days in the camps where the open saloon flourished like the proverbial green bay tree mentioned in the Bible. Net result of this was that the ones who lacked self control got on the nerves of the others and they frequently shot it out. Herewith in this lurid chapter are a few selected highlights on the subject of capital crimes during the last three-quarters of a century.

### **Mart Lee Lynched**

The first hanging—legal or otherwise—to occur in Fayette County was that of Mart Lee, in 1876. Lee outraged a Mrs. Settle here and escaped to Ohio. Following his capture in Ohio, the authorities brought him to Huntington where he was turned over to the Fayette County Sheriff. Upon receipt of the news that the Sheriff was returning the Negro to Fayetteville a mob formed at Montgomery and took the prisoner off the train and hanged him.

### **Crime and Execution of Henry Jenkins**

Henry Jenkins was the first man to be legally hanged in Fayette County. He was a black man who killed another Negro at Nuttallburg on Monday, May 16, 1881. Jenkins heavily weighted his victim's body and threw it into New River. After his apprehension Jenkins was indicted at the May term of court that year and brought to trial in the following September.

According to the evidence, Jenkins killed Winkfield Saunders with a rock, pounding the man's head until he died. Saunders worked for the Nuttallburg Coal Company and was paid off the day he was killed. Jenkins saw Saunders with considerable money that day and planned to waylay him. Saunders was accosted by Jenkins on the railroad track some two hundred yards west of the tipple, about an hour before midnight of that pay day, and killed. Fearing he might be robbed, Saunders had entrusted his money to the care of a friend. When he was slain, the pockets of Saunders yielded Jenkins only a dime.

Colonel J. W. St. Clair prosecuted Jenkins before Judge H. A. Holt. At that time William M. Tyree was high sheriff of this county. Captain W. D. Thurmond, of Civil War distinction, was foreman of the Grand Jury that indicted Jenkins. The indicted man was found guilty and sentenced to hang. His execution took place November 11, 1881. The scaffold on which Jenkins died was built outside of the fort north of Fayetteville and just back of the home of James Daniels, a Deputy Sheriff at that time. The hanging of Jenkins, the first to occur in the county, attracted a large crowd of spectators.

### **The Lynching of John Turner**

On July 4, 1890, John Turner, a Negro shot and killed Sol Walker. The crime was committed in a saloon at Rush Run. In those days Fayette County was a wild and woolly place. Men carried concealed weapons which were always loaded with live ball ammunition. What was more, the saloon of that period was a place where it was easy for crime to breed. After Turner slew Walker he fled the area and reached Ohio. There he was arrested and returned to the Fayetteville jail.

Feeling ran high against Turner. Before he could be brought to trial for his offense a mob stormed the county jail and seized its victim. Before Turner was taken from the jail one of the mob fired a shot at him. Turner was dragged through the streets of the county seat town, with his face downward, to the place of the hanging. After reaching a site near Van Bowyer's mill, the mob hung Turner from the limb of a small white oak tree. The body of the mobbed man was fairly riddled with bullets. More than thirty bullets tore through John

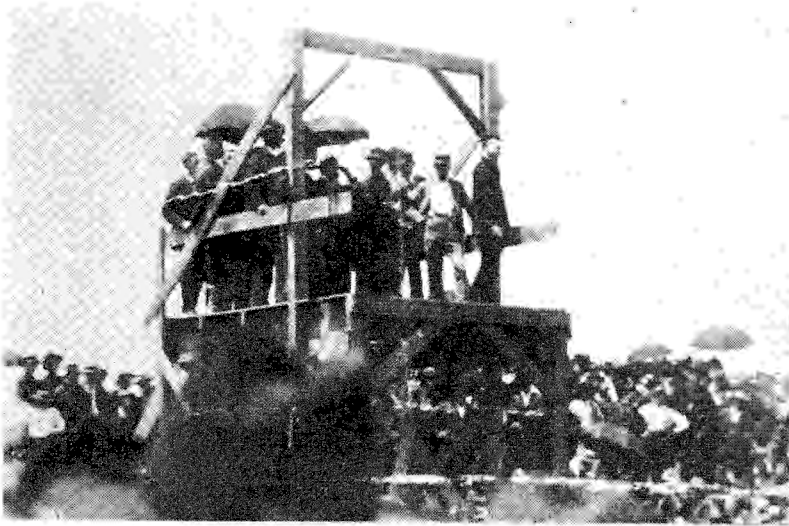
Turner's body as he hung there between heaven and earth. Sol Walker, Turner's victim, was a white man.

### **Wash Adkins Murders Isaac Radford**

Between six and seven o'clock on the evening of November 11, 1893, Wash Adkins, William A. Burwell, and Charles Bays went to the home of Isaac Radford, a butcher, at Deepwater. The three men wore masks and were bent on robbing Radford. Adkins shot the butcher with a .32 calibre, Smith and Wesson pistol, killing him. After killing Radford the three assailants fled but were captured after some days. When Burwell was brought to trial, Milton C. Bibb of Oak Hill was foreman of the jury which tried him. Life in the penitentiary was accorded Burwell. At that time C. W. Dillon was the Prosecuting Attorney. Charles Bays, an illiterate man, likewise was given life at Moundsville. Wash Adkins was found guilty and sentenced to death. Honorable H. W. Brazie was the presiding Judge who sentenced the three men. The attorney who defended the trio was L. G. Gaines. The trial of Adkins opened on January 19, 1894 and he was sentenced on January 22, to die on the gallows. To avoid possible death at the hands of a mob, Adkins and Bays had been confined in the Kanawha County Jail since November 20, 1893. After the sentencing of Adkins a writ of error was granted the condemned man. He was accorded a new trial but a new jury returned another death verdict. Adkins was hanged on Friday, July 20, 1894 at Fayetteville before a crowd estimated at three thousand persons.

Sheriff Hinman served as the executioner and was very nervous. Noting the sheriff's trembling hands, Milton Koontz grabbed the sharp hatchet from the Sheriff and cut the rope which dropped the trap from beneath the feet of the condemned Adkins. The rope securing the trap was tightly stretched over a beam. To drop the trap the rope had to be severed with a blow of the hatchet.

Sam Short sawed and supplied the lumber to build the scaffold on which Adkins and Jim Nichols were hung. The scaffold was a twelve foot square frame affair. The platform atop the scaffold was sixteen feet square. The drop was arranged to be five feet. It was his knowledge of how to build



#### EXECUTION OF WASH ADKINS

—From photograph in Shirley Donnelly Library, Oak Hill, W. Va.

Standing on the forefront of the scaffold that was shortly to claim his life, Wash Adkins is seen addressing the crowd of some 3,000 persons who had come to see him put to death at Fayetteville, W. Va., on Friday, July 20, 1894. After the condemned man had finished what he had to say he calmly stepped on to the death trap where the Sheriff placed the hangman's noose about its victim's neck, taking care to see that the lethal knot was adjusted at the butt of the man's left ear. Quickly the trap was sprung and in a few minutes the murderer of Isaac Radford was dead.

a scaffold that led the State of West Virginia to employ Koontz to go to Moundsville and there erect the gallows which served to execute condemned felons until the stated changed its method of execution from hanging to that of electrocution. The day Wash Adkins was hanged he made a touching address to the gaping crowd just before he swung into eternity.

What Adkins said is as follows: "I don't know what to say, but suppose you all come here for a warning to see me die. This ought to be a warning to all here if they came for that purpose. It ought to be that. I want to tell you nothing but the truth and to speak truthfully about it. I know I have to die. I know that Jesus has forgiven my sins, and I know He is able to save me. I want all here to take warning and not get into the shape I am in. I do not fear to go. I do not fear to die. I do not fear this (Ed. note: Here Adkins pointed to the scaffold) and



this (Ed. note: Here Adkins held the rope in his right hand) has no dread for me. It is a pretty hard way to die, but I am going to meet my God, and I know He has forgiven me. I have trusted in Him and prayed that He would save me. Some people have said that if I had a chance and could get out I would go and do Mrs. Radford like her husband, and take her life and the children's life, and if I could I would be satisfied. I never said anything like it. All I said was when I said my prayers at night and knelt down to pray, was that God would protect her and the children. Today I wish that I could bring Mr. Radford back to them, but I can't and I hope to meet him in heaven, as he was a Christian man. If he could come down from heaven and stand here he would take me by the hand and tell you that I am speaking the truth and hope to meet him in heaven and shake hands with him there. I have no malice for anybody and hope you will forgive me. I have no malice and hope to be forgiven."

#### **The Slaying of Henry Carr by "Ear Ring" Jim Nichols**

"Ear Ring" Jim Nichols was a Virginia Negro who hailed from Buckingham County. When but a boy, Nichols felt a hankering to see the world. Because of this inner urge, his travels carried him over much of the eastern section of the United States. Finally, he landed at Fire Creek in Fayette County. Nichols worked at Fire Creek, then at St. Clair, and next at Powellton. When "Ear Ring" Jim left Powellton he had \$71 which he had accumulated by gambling and working. Three of his weaknesses were gambling, whiskey, and bad women. On one of his forays at St. Clair, Nichols lost or spent all his money. In a house of bad repute he was asleep with his head on the lap of one Kate Armstrong when a big, bad Negro by the name of Henry Carr came in. A quarrel ensued and Henry Carr, according to Nichols, reached toward his hip pocket. This threatening gesture on the part of Carr caused "Ear Ring" Jim to shoot him. Carr was shot a number of times and died with curses on his lips, cursing his killer—"Ear Ring" Jim. The murderer escaped to Charleston where he was arrested and brought back to Fayette County for trial.

The Rev. Henry Light, a Methodist minister, was foreman of the Grand Jury which returned the indictment against Nichols.

The foreman of the Petit Jury which found the accused man guilty of murder in the first degree was John Holly. The testimony which sent Nichols to the scaffold was supplied by Bird Minfree, Lee Allen, and Albert Taylor. At that time the Fayette County Prosecuting Attorney was C. W. Dillon.

On Friday, 13th of December, 1895, "Ear Ring" Jim Nichols was hanged at Fayetteville. His worldly meanderings ceased when he reached the end of the rope on that fatal "bad luck" day.

### **Clark Lewis Hanged for Murder**

Clark Lewis, an ill-fated Negro, was involved in the midnight murder of Charles Gibson on April 22, 1896, at Montgomery. It was alleged that Gibson's death was plotted jointly by Clark Lewis, Wilbur Slaughter, and Albert Viars. Slaughter was a colored fellow and Viars a white man. Mrs. Virgie Gibson, wife of the murdered man, was in on the deal because, as it was said, she wanted to get rid of her husband—Charley Gibson, as he was called. The Gibson house at Montgomery was a place of low repute where white and colored alike were credited with keeping lustful tryst. Gibson's murder was accomplished in this house of clandestine rendezvous. The night of the crime, Viars, Slaughter, and Lewis were out until midnight. Viars entered the Gibson house first. When Slaughter and Lewis came in, Viars got up and blew out the light. Slaughter then grabbed Gibson by the feet and Lewis got the victim by the throat. In the struggle to free himself from his assailants, Gibson managed to get the "ups" on the two Negroes. It was at this point that Viars was brought into the death picture again. Gibson was then slowly choked to death.

Gibson's body was concealed in an old abandoned mine where it was covered over with slate. The crime was finally ferreted out by Harrison Ash, a mountain detective, who was a terror to evil doers in his day. Ash discovered Gibson's clothes and then came upon his skeleton. The arrest of Viars, Lewis, Slaughter, and Mrs. Gibson followed immediately. In the course of the trials, Wilbur Slaughter turned state's evidence and was rewarded by a life sentence in the state penitentiary. Mrs. Gibson, a native of George's Creek in Kanawha County, was given eighteen years in the same institution. Clark

Lewis and Albert Viars drew the death penalty and were hanged at Fayetteville in 1897 under the supervision of Sheriff George McVey, then serving his second term as the County's chief executive. The execution of Clark Lewis was in the month of June, 1897.

In 1897 a triple hanging at Fayetteville was scheduled for a set day. Clark Lewis, Jerry Brown, and Albert Viars were to die on the gallows between sunrise and sunset of the same day in expiation of their crimes. Governor George W. Atkinson interrupted the high carnival of death by granting Jerry Brown a thirty day reprieve. Albert Viars was given a sixty day extension on life, but Clark Lewis died on schedule.

George McVey, who was born in Greenbrier County on May 21, 1844, was the first Republican to be elected Sheriff of Fayette County. He was first elected in 1884. With the hanging of Clark Lewis, Albert Viars, and Jerry Brown set for the same day in June, 1897, Sheriff McVey went to Cincinnati, Ohio, a week before the scheduled triple executions to buy the ropes. McVey bought three ropes, each one being thirty feet long. The ropes were of silken hemp. They were manufactured by E. Vonderhide of Cincinnati, the same rope man who had fashioned the rope with which Scott Jackson and Alonzo Walling were hanged for the celebrated murder of the lamented Pearl Bryan. The ropes were guaranteed to stand a strain of two thousand pounds. The black caps which were placed over the heads of the condemned men in preparation for their death were made by Charles Mauget, a merchant tailor, of Newport, Kentucky. The caps were made of a fabric known as farmer's silk and cost a dollar each.

Public feeling at Fayetteville was beginning to show revulsion against open executions at the county seat. Large crowds of the morbidly curious thronged the town on such occasions and their influence was not good. When time came to build the scaffold the county authorities sought to erect it on the spot at the old fort where previous hangings had been carried out. This ground belonged to Mr. Wiseman who refused his land for the place of execution. Other property owners followed Mr. Wiseman's example. When the lumber for building the death device was delivered on the court house grounds there was open objections on the part of leading citizens to building the

scaffold there. Then it was that Dr. Malcolm and Mr. Hinman offered a site on the south side of the town. This site was chosen and the scaffold built thereon. It was built in a chestnut grove and out of sight of any house. A fence was to surround the scaffold and only those permitted by the high sheriff were admitted to the enclosure. Guards were posted to see that this rule was carried out. Promptly at 2:00 p. m. that June in 1897, Clark Lewis mounted the gallows and was immediately hanged.

### **A Fayette County Execution for Crime of Rape**

Jerry Brown, a thirty-five year old Negro of Richmond, Virginia, went to the home of Mrs. Arminta J. Radford at Deepwater, the little river town in the lower end of Fayette County, on the night of February 15, 1897. The Negro entered the house of the widow Radford with an axe in his hand. After compelling Mrs. Radford to leave the house, and terrifying her with every step, Brown raped the unfortunate woman. After committing this outrage the man left the scene of his crime and made his way to Charleston. Mrs. Radford knew only that the man who raped her was a Negro but felt she could identify him if she ever saw him again. Some weeks passed and it happened that a colored fellow was arrested and jailed in Fayetteville on a misdemeanor charge of some kind. To this man belongs the credit of pinning the Deepwater crime on Jerry Brown. He had seen Brown in Charleston unloading freight and asked how come he was working there. Brown replied that he left Deepwater on account of his having got into "some trouble with a woman up there." As the result of a reward being offered for the arrest of the rapist, Brown was picked up in Huntington. Sheriff George McVey and Harrison Ash brought Brown to Fayetteville and placed him in jail. Mrs. Radford identified the assailant who then was removed to the Kanawha County jail to forestall mob violence.

When Brown was arraigned for trial his attorney was M. L. Ryan. The accused pled guilty to the charge against him in the effort to get a life sentence for his crime. This, however, was unavailing. Brown was sentenced to hang on June 25, 1897. He was granted a 30 day reprieve by Governor George W. Atkinson but that was all. At the expiration of the reprieve the rope claimed its victim, in July, 1897.

The judge who sentenced Jerry Brown to death was H. W. Brazie, a colorful jurist. In the course of his time on the bench Judge Brazie sentenced five men to death. While serving as Judge Advocate on the Staff of General Frank Wheaton, in the Northern District of Platte, Brazie sentenced a soldier, who had killed a comrade, to be shot.

Mrs. Radford was the widow of Isaac Radford, Loup Creek butcher, who was murdered by Wash Adkins on the night of November 11, 1893. For this crime, Adkins was hanged at Fayetteville on July 20, 1894. The Negro who raped Mrs. Radford was executed for his offense. It is doubtful if any other woman who ever lived in Fayette County has been so closely identified with the severest penalty prescribed by our law.

The five men sentenced to death by Judge H. W. Brazie at Fayetteville were as follows:

- 1 Wash Adkins, for murder; hanged July 20, 1894
- 2 "Ear Ring" Jim Nichols, for murder; hanged December 13, 1895
- 3 Clark Lewis, for murder; hanged June, 1897
- 4 Jerry Brown, for rape; hanged July, 1897
- 5 Albert Viars, for murder; hanged November 11, 1897

#### **Albert Viars, Convicted Murderer, Pays Supreme Penalty**

In the palmy days of Cunard mining town, near Fayetteville, one of its residents was Albert Viars. After a time Viars went down to Montgomery where he got into serious trouble. For his part in the death of Charley Gibson the death sentence was meted out to the erstwhile Cunard man. The crime for which Viars was held and convicted is outlined in the story of Clark Lewis in this book. Viars was hanged at Fayetteville November 11, 1897, for the crime in which he participated on April 22, 1896. The hanging of Clark Lewis in June, Jerry Brown in July, and Albert Viars in August—Three executions in a row—gave spectators their fill of the sight of death at legal hands.

Public legal executions in West Virginia ended with the hanging of John F. Morgan, (May 21, 1875—Dec. 16, 1897),

one half mile south of Ripley, Jackson County, West Virginia, on December 16, 1897, for the slaughter of the Pfost-Green family on the morning of Wednesday, November 3, 1897. Because of the widespread publicity accorded this gruesome event the law of the State of West Virginia was changed so as to require future executions to take place within the walls of the state penitentiary at Moundsville. The first person claimed by the noose at Moundsville was Shep Caldwell, a McDowell County Negro, who was executed in October, 1899, for the crime of murder. As stated elsewhere in this volume the scaffold at Moundsville was constructed by Milton Koontz, Fayetteville carpenter, who had previous experience here when executions were carried out by the Sheriff of Fayette County.

#### **First Fayette County Man to Die on Moundsville Gallows**

Frank Walker, a black man, from Fayette County was hanged in December, 1899. He was the first Fayette County man to be executed at Moundsville. Murder was the crime that decreed he should hang by the neck until he was dead. He was the third man to die on the penitentiary scaffold. The first two to meet death there were Shep Caldwell and Frank Broadenax, two Negro murderers from McDowell County. The first three victims claimed by the noose at Moundsville were hanged in October, November, and December, 1899. As a matter of fact, the first five men to be hanged there were Negroes. Three were from McDowell County, one from Fayette, and one from Kanawha.

Frank Walker killed Thomas Saunders in March, 1899. He was indicted in July, 1899, upon the testimony of Otho McGee, Tom Gray, and Shed Saunders. Henry Light was foreman of the Grand Jury which returned this indictment. At the time C. W. Dillon was Prosecuting Attorney. When the case was tried in the Criminal Court of Fayette County the foreman of the Petit Jury which heard the case was G. W. Watkinson. That Jury returned a verdict of murder in the first degree and made no recommendation for mercy. On Oct. 26, 1899, Frank Walker was sentenced to be hanged. He was removed to the State Penitentiary at Moundsville, W. Va., to await execution. There on Friday—tradition day of legal executions in West Virginia—Dec. 15, 1899, Frank Walker was put to death.

On Page 209 of old Criminal Book No. 3, in the Office of Circuit Clerk of Fayette County is this doleful entry:

"State Penitentiary, Moundsville, W. Va. I, S. A. Hawk, Warden of West Virginia Penitentiary, do certify that on the 15th day of December, in the Year, 1899, in accordance with the sentence of the Criminal Court of Fayette County imposed on Frank Walker on October 26, 1899, that he be hanged by the neck until dead, I did duly execute said Frank Walker in the manner and form prescribed by law.

(Signed) S. A. Hawk."

One reading that death certificate notes the definiteness and finality of its melancholy message.

### **Thomas (Tom) Wayne Put to Death in 1910**

Prior to the execution of Lemuel Steed on October 15, 1948, Fayette County had not had a resident legally executed for well over a generation—since 1910. Thomas Wayne, a 45-year old Negro of the Laurel Creek section was convicted at the October, 1910, term of court in Fayette County for the raping and killing of Lottie Aliff, a white woman, on the lonely mountain road between Layland and Quinnimont in August of that year. George Love prosecuted Wayne and M. W. Summerfield was foreman of the jury that found Tom guilty. He was sentenced to be hung by the neck on December 23, 1910, until he was dead, dead, dead! That day the Moundsville noose claimed Tom Wayne, who was the thirteenth man to die on the grim gallows within the big penal institution's walls of stone.

Tom Wayne was defended by the late James M. Ellis, (May 16, 1870-Nov. 19, 1957), Negro lawyer of Greentown at Oak Hill. Ellis always believed his client was innocent and that his conviction and execution were a miscarriage of justice.

### **Last Lynching in Fayette County**

Sometime Thursday afternoon, June 17, 1920, Mrs. Della Taylor-Bennett, wife of 22-year old William ("Bill") Bennett was slain in the Bennett home near Fayetteville. This couple had eloped in June of the previous year and were married at Catlettsburg, Kentucky. News of the killing shocked the community and the young husband was held for the crime. Acting on circumstantial evidence, a Grand Jury consisting of George W. Bright, Foreman, M. C. Bibb, P. H. Kelly, Charles Wilburn, I. W. Hawkins, R. W. Coleman, J. W. Eskew, E. M. Cole, B. H.



Crist, William Reynolds, Tilden Davis, J. M. Fleshman, William Arthur, William Hundley, and Rufus Eagan returned an indictment against Bennett for murdering his wife. At that time Judge J. W. Eary was the Circuit Court Judge and Henry McGraw was the High Sheriff. Magee McClung was the County Prosecuting Attorney. Held in jail at Fayetteville from the time of his arrest, Bennett's trial was set for Thursday, July 22. His family had retained Charles W. Osenton, celebrated Fayette County lawyer, to defend Bennett, the accused. To assist in the prosecution of the case, Magee McClung had secured the services of S. B. Avis of the Kanawha County bar at Charleston.

When Bennett was arraigned in court, upon the advice of his chief counsel, he pleaded guilty to the charge against him. Immediately, Judge Eary sentenced him to life imprisonment. He was remanded to jail.

Because of the prominence of the families of the Bennett couple the murder had created quite a bit of excitement throughout the county and the outcome of the case was tensely awaited. When word got out that the self-confessed murderer got off with life imprisonment there resulted the rapid crystallization of the mob spirit among groups of men here and there in the county. So rapid was the formation of the mob that some time around midnight on Saturday, July 24, 1920, the ill fated man was forcibly taken from the jail and hanged. According to reports the main force of the mob had assembled on the brow of the little hill overlooking the Old Poor Farm bottom about three miles out of Fayetteville as one goes toward Oak Hill. At the top of this eminence there branched off from the macadamized highway a dirt road that extended back in the direction of Summerlee and Lochgelly. In the angle formed by the junction of these two thoroughfares was a ploughed field. Something like a hundred yards from the point where these two roads join, the men who had been chosen to go on to Fayetteville and take Bennett from the jail stopped their cars and led their victim across the ploughed ground to a group of three small white oak saplings. There they strung the confessed wife-murderer to a small limb and left him hanging.

After the mob had done its work the masked crowd quietly dispersed without mutilating the body. There was a faint

moonlight that night but the sky was very cloudy. Toward daylight on Sunday morning a light rain fell. When news of the lynching got around, people came from everywhere to visit the spot where the job of the mob was completed. Straightway the authorities went through the motion of trying to bring the perpetrators of the crime to justice but nothing ever came of it. This was the last time the lawless element in the county ever took the law in their own hands to mete out what they thought to be stern justice.

### **Lemuel Steed Ends Fayette's Procession to the Gallows**

Lemuel Steed, Negro, murdered Loren R. McClung, 50-year old Smithers druggist on July 1, 1948. McClung, who was acquainted with Steed, gave the Negro a ride in his car as the druggist was returning from the bank at Montgomery. Steed then forced McClung to drive up Cannerton hollow where the Boomer Negro shot him. Steed was arrested shortly before midnight of the day of his crime. He was placed on trial in Fayette County Circuit Court on August 4 after 189 jurors were eliminated before twelve acceptable men were seated in the jury box. Carl B. Vickers, the Prosecuting Attorney, demanded the death penalty in the case. William Laird, III, and Frank Love conducted a masterful case for the defense, having been appointed by Judge R. J. Thrift, Jr., as defense counsel. On August 6, after deliberating only nineteen minutes, the jury returned a verdict of murder in the first degree, without a recommendation for mercy. The jury was composed of Lee Massey, Victor, foreman; Price Brock, Pax; E. R. Bragg, Ansted; Pearl Diamond, (Negro), Mt. Hope; H. E. Ingles, Oak Hill; Sherman Williams, Long Branch; J. R. McLain, Concho; C. H. McCoy, Pax; W. E. Bass, Kimberly; London Marshall, Meadow Bridge; Homer C. Gravely, Oak Hill; and John Bragg, Ansted.

On Monday, August 9, 1948, at 1:45 p. m., Judge Thrift pronounced the death sentence on the 28-year old Negro, a veteran of World War II. Steed was the first man to receive the death sentence in Fayette County since 1910 when Thomas Wayne was similarly sentenced.

Steed was taken to Moundsville where he was dropped through the gallows at the state penitentiary at 8:59 p. m., Friday, October 15, 1948. Sixteen minutes later Dr. S. F. Yoho, the prison physician, pronounced Steed dead. For his final meal,

Steed chose a dinner of pork chops, mashed potatoes, creamed peas, biscuits, Waldorf salad, coffee, and milk.

In *The Charleston Gazette* of Sunday, October 17, 1948 there appeared the following notice in the Obituary Column:

"Steed, Lemuel Thomas—Service will be at 2 p. m. today at Cannelton Baptist Church with Rev. Frank Dillard officiating. Burial will be in Boomer Cemetery with Washington and Coleman Mortuary of Montgomery in charge."

The death of Steed by hanging ended the procession of Fayette County's condemned men to the gallows, as the State Legislature in 1949 voted to change the method of executing people from hanging to electrocution.

### **First Fayette County Man to Die in West Virginia's Electric Chair**

James W. Hewlett, Jr., veteran of both the Air Force and Marine Corps at the age of 21, was convicted December 14, 1950, of first degree murder in the slaying of a Huntington taxicab driver. A Cabell County jury which returned the verdict after one hour and 43 minutes' deliberation did not recommend mercy.

Hewlett, 21, of Mt. Hope, was the First Fayette County person to die in the state's new electric chair. After embracing the Roman Catholic faith, Hewlett died in the chair at 9:00 p.m. on April 10, 1951. His body was returned to his Fayette County home and interred in beautiful High Lawn Memorial Park at Oak Hill—the only executed person whose remains rest there—on Friday, April 13, 1951.

It should be noted that Hewlett's crime was not committed in Fayette County but that Fayette County was the place of his residence when he killed the taxicab driver.

### **Assassination of Sheriff Nehemiah Daniel**

High Sheriff Nehemiah Daniel is the only Fayette County chief executive to die while holding office. On November 10, 1904, Sheriff Daniel was shot and killed by Ed Jackson at Montgomery.

Considerable trouble resulted at Montgomery when Constable Walla Jackson was murdered by Policeman Elliott the

day before Daniel was slain. Five of Constable Jackson's brothers were so outraged over their brother's killing that they began to run amuck. When the situation seemed to be getting out of hand, the Mayor of Montgomery appealed to the sheriff's office for help. Sheriff Daniel, 58, and nearing the end of his term of office, went immediately to the scene of the trouble. At 10:30 on the morning of November 10, 1904, the popular sheriff was shot three times by Ed Jackson whom he was trying to arrest. Daniel never regained consciousness and by one o'clock in the afternoon he was dead.

C. L. Phipps was appointed to fill out the unexpired period of Sheriff Daniel's term.

### **Triple Slaying at Boomer**

Three killings that did not require a court trial occurred in the lower end of the County.

Tuesday, October 17, 1911, was a day of excitement at Boomer, the Fayette County river town which was named for Boomer Huddleston. About noon that day Elias and Troy Hatfield shot it out with Octavia Gerone, an Italian. The marksmanship of the three men was of such high order that in half an hour all three were dead.

The trouble at Boomer arose over competition in the saloon business. Elias Hatfield owned a fourth interest in the only saloon permitted between Cannelton and Gauley Bridge. M. J. Simms, one of the members of the Fayette County Court, owned the other three-fourths of this saloon. The place of business was yielding its owners a monthly profit of a thousand dollars each per month, according to reports. A competitor opened a saloon on the south side of the Kanawha River at Eagle. Then someone else started another liquor establishment just over the Kanawha County line near Cannelton. While the "Black Diamond" Saloon at Eagle, by means of the free ferry it was operating, was cutting in on the Simms-Hatfield business, it was Carl Hanson's saloon hard by Cannelton, in Kanawha County, that was really hurting Hatfield's trade.

Hanson hired Octavia Gerone to solicit beer orders and make free deliveries. The price of beer was cut from \$3 per case of three dozen bottles, to \$2.25. Since there was a large Italian population at Boomer and Gerone was popular with



**Posed Photograph of "Devil Anse" Hatfield and some of his family together with some friends. (Circa, 1897 or 8). Original photograph in Shirley Donnelly Library, Oak Hill, W. Va.**

Left to right in back row: Detroit ("Troy") Hatfield; Elias Hatfield (with single action Colt revolver across chest; lad with slouch hat by door facing is Joe Hatfield, seventh child of "Devil Anse.")

Front row: "Devil Anse," holding rifle between knees; Mrs. Hatfield, his wife; two boys sitting on ground in front are Tennyson ("Tennis") and Willis Hatfield. Others in picture are not identified. "Troy" and Elias were slain at Boomer, Fayette Co., W. Va., Tuesday, Oct. 17, 1911.

his countrymen, he was successful in selling. Hatfield resented this encroachment on what he considered his territory. Several times Hatfield put the Italian beer salesman to rout by forcible means and this added to the bad feeling between them.

The day of the triple slaying Elias Hatfield and his brother, Troy Hatfield, learned that Gerone had gone to the home of Anglo Valenzalo, Italian miner, to deliver an order of beer. The Hatfield brothers went to this cabin to see Gerone whom they had whipped earlier in the day. Elias Hatfield went through the front door and Troy Hatfield sought to go through the back entrance. Gerone shot Elias three times with a .32 Colts pistol, then whirled and opened fire on Troy Hatfield, both shots striking their target. Though mortally wounded, Troy Hatfield drew his automatic pistol and pumped three bullets into the Italian. Gerone stumbled out the kitchen door and fell on his face in the backyard. As Gerone fell to the ground, Elias Hatfield came up and fired a shot through the man's brain. Within half-an-hour all three men were dead. A crowd quickly assembled and among them was Joe Hatfield, seventh son of "Devil Anse" Hatfield, and a brother of Elias and Troy. Joe had come upon the scene, it was said, to take care of Anglo Valenzalo who he thought was implicated. Troy, in his expiring moments told Joe, "There's no use looking for anybody. The man who killed us is dead." This affair attracted widespread attention because of the celebrity of the Hatfield men.

Elias and Troy Hatfield were the fifth and sixth sons of "Devil Anse" Hatfield, celebrated leader in the noted Hatfield-McCoy feud. Troy's real name was "Detroit," but was shortened to that of "Troy," after the manner of mountain people in abbreviating names.

The late Sheriff W. H. Ramsey of Fayette County is authority for the statement that the code of the Hatfields forbade their carrying a gun of less than a .38 calibre. The Hatfields reasoned, so Ramsey said Elias Hatfield told him, that while a .32 calibre gun would kill a man, the man could kill you before he died. This reasoning was borne out in the lurid affair at Boomer on the fateful 17th day of October, 1911.

The real name of the Italian whom Troy and Elias Hatfield killed was Ottavio Vagliozzo. The name used and which was given to the press that day of the trouble was Octavia Gerone.



## Chapter Fifteen

# FAYETTE COUNTIANS WHO HAVE HELD HIGH ELECTIVE AND APPOINTIVE OFFICES

In all the years since Fayette County was formed in 1831 there has not been a person elected to the United States Senate from this county. Nearest approach to it, however, was when Governor William C. Marland appointed William R. Laird, III, Fayetteville attorney, to the seat in the Senate that was vacated by the death of Senator Harley M. Kilgore on Feb. 28, 1956. On March 13, 1956, Governor Marland announced that he had appointed Laird to the Kilgore seat until it was filled at the November general election that year. Laird was sworn in while the Senate was in session in March, 1956, and occupied the office the remainder of the year, relinquishing it to Chapman Revercomb who had been elected in November to fill out the remainder of the Kilgore term. Senator Laird is not a native born Fayette Countian, having been born on June 2, 1916, in Keswick, Shasta County, California. In February, 1955, the Governor of West Virginia appointed Laird to the State Board of Education. After serving the state in that capacity for six months he was appointed by Governor Marland to the position of State Tax Commissioner. There he served until his appointment to the seat in the United States Senate was made on March 13, 1956.

### **J. Alfred Taylor, Sr., Elected to Congress**

Highest national office to which a Fayette County resident has ever been elected is that of House of Representatives in the Congress of United States. Elected to the 68th and 69th Congresses was Hon. J. Alfred Taylor, Sr., Fayetteville publisher. He served in Congress from March 4, 1923 until his second term there expired on March 4, 1927. In 1928, Ex-Congressman Taylor was the Democratic nominee for Governor of West Virginia but was defeated in the fall election that year. He served in the House of Delegates in the West Virginia Legislature in the sessions of 1917 and 1921. Again was he elected to the Legislature in 1930. When the 1931 session of the Legis-



lature was held in the Kanawha County Court House while the present State Capitol was under construction, Delegate Taylor was chosen as Speaker of the House of Delegates. That was the highest state position he ever occupied in West Virginia. Had the governor and the President of the State Senate died while Mr. Taylor was Speaker of the House he would have succeeded to the Governorship. This influential man was born in Lawrence County, Ohio, on Sept. 25, 1878. His public schooling extended only through the Fifth Grade but by self-education he became a rather learned man. Death removed him on June 9, 1956, from a long life of faithful public service.

### **Homer A. Holt Elected Governor of the State**

Fayette County's first citizen to be elected Chief Executive of the State was Hon. Homer A. Holt. Coming to Fayetteville from the Professorship of Law in Washington and Lee University in 1925, Holt entered actively into the practice of his profession. Soon the field of politics lured him to seek public office. West Virginia voters elected him to office of Attorney General in 1932. During the four years of his incumbency of that position Holt came into great public favor by reason of his brilliant record. This brought him to attention of the entire state and in the General Election in 1936 the electorate elevated him to the office of Governor of West Virginia. Not a native of Fayette County, Homer A. Holt was born at Lewisburg, W. Va., on March 1, 1898. He has always been a Democrat.

### **Okey L. Patteson Chosen West Virginia Governor**

Okey L. Patteson, about the most practical politician the county has ever known, was born in Mingo County, W. Va., Sept. 14, 1898. After locating at Mt. Hope in Fayette County, Patteson became a successful business man. Popular as a person, Okey Patteson capitalized on this asset and was elected twice to membership on the Fayette County Court. There his popularity resulted in his being chosen President of the Court. When his last term on the County Court expired, his fellow Fayette Countians elected him their High Sheriff. His term as Sheriff was the term of 1941-45. From January 15, 1945, Patteson served as Executive Assistant to Governor Clarence W. Meadows until the first of January, 1948, when he gave up

this important appointment to run for Governor of the state on the Democratic ticket. In the primary Patteson won easily. Then when the voters turned out at the November election in 1948 they put Patteson in the Governorship by a landslide. There he served so acceptably that he is generally looked upon as the most popular Governor West Virginia has ever had.

### **First Fayette Countian Elected to High State Office**

First of the Fayette Countians to be elected to high state office was William S. ("Pistol Bill") Johnson. Native born son of Fayette County, William S. Johnson was born at Kincaid, W. Va., on Nov. 3, 1870. Here this well known figure was elected to the State Senate where he served three consecutive terms, from 1905 until 1911. One of the stalwarts of the Republican party which was then in power in the state, Johnson aspired to the State Treasurer position. Four times he was a candidate for the office and each time his bid was successful. Sixteen years—from 1916 until 1931—Johnson was "the watch dog of the treasury," as his party leaders called him. However it was as "Pistol Bill" that Johnson was most widely known. While a member of the State Senate he secured the passage of the Pistol Bill which makes it unlawful to carry concealed weapons. Because they called him "Bill" Johnson the people gave him the sobriquet of "Pistol Bill" because he so strongly advocated his bill against carrying a pistol. Reason for Johnson's opposition to toting guns was this. When he was a public school teacher a boy brought a revolver to school one day and accidentally shot another pupil. That unfortunate student died in Johnson's arms. This experience led him to vow that if he ever got into position where he could do it, he would do his best to outlaw the carrying of concealed weapons of all kinds, particularly pistols. That bill is still on the law books of this state and is one of the best acts ever passed by the West Virginia Legislature.

### **John Fox of Ansted, Attorney General**

Born at Ansted, May 27, 1923, John Fox studied law at Washington and Lee University like Homer A. Holt and William R. Laird, III. After his election to the House of Delegates he came into prominence as a possible candidate for the office of

Attorney General. At the general election in the state of Nov. 4, 1952, he was elected to the full term beginning with January 19, 1953. When serving as Attorney General this very able young man made a notable record. Following the death of U. S. Senator Harley M. Kilgore on Feb. 28, 1956, Fox contested unsuccessfully for the nomination in the race to win the unexpired term of the deceased Senator, losing to William C. Marland who, in the November election, was defeated by Chapman Revercomb. Fox was the second Fayette Countian within twenty years to be elected Attorney General of West Virginia.

### **State Senators Elected from Fayette County**

After West Virginia was admitted to the Union on June 20, 1863, Fayette County has been in variously numbered State Senatorial Districts. Currently this county is joined with Greenbrier to make the Eleventh District. Senators elected from Fayette County to represent the District of which the county has been a part since West Virginia became a separate state are as follows, together with the period of office:

Abbott, A. B., 1927-1933	Osenton, Charles W., 1899-1901
Boley, H. O., 1923-1925	St. Clair, John W., 1891-1893
Carson, Howard, 1956-19—	Taylor, Jr., J. Alfred, 1948-1956
Davies, Thomas P., 1895-1897	Van Pelt, Mexico, 1887-1889
Dickinson, Hudson M., 1872-1875	Wiseman, Emmett O., 1937-1939
Hogg, Dr. Gory, 1915-1917	Vickers, Arnold M., 1941-1948.
Johnson, William S., 1905-1911	
Lewis, Joseph S., 1919-1921	

During the regular session of the State Senate in 1945, Arnold M. Vickers was chosen President of the body. Again in 1947 he was made the Senate's presiding officer. Had the Governor of the state died during the time Vickers was President of the Senate the Montgomery-born attorney would have become his successor as the State's Chief Executive.

### **Other High Appointive Offices Filled by Fayette People**

Bland County, Va., was the birthplace of Charles W. Dillon. There he was born on Feb. 8, 1865. After studying law and being admitted to the bar of West Virginia, the Bland County native gave considerable study to the subject of taxation in our

state. His law office was at the county seat of Fayette County where he carried on his practice. Came 1904 and Governor Albert B. White asked Republican Dillon to become the first State Tax Commissioner of West Virginia and organize the newly instituted office. Feeling he could render a service to the people of the entire state, Dillon accepted the position. Three years he worked hard at his appointment and then in 1907 he resigned his commission to renew his Fayette County law practice. When the first state-wide Primary election was staged in 1912, Dillon ran for the nomination for Governor of his adopted state. However, he was up against stiff opposition and went down to defeat at the hands of Dr. Henry D. Hatfield, M. D.

### **Other State Appointments**

Office of Chief of Department of Mines was held down by Robert M. Lambie of Mt. Hope from Feb. 14, 1920 until March 7, 1933.

N. P. Rhinehart was named to the office vacated by R. M. Lambie. Tenure of Rhinehart's occupancy of the Mine Chief's office extended from August 1, 1933 until August 31, 1942.

Robert E. Kelly of Oak Hill held high office with the State Liquor Control Commission from March 4, 1937 to Feb. 28, 1941. Prior to that time he was Director in the Division of Finance and Stock Control in the same Commission. Kelly did a good job on a difficult assignment.

When Cecil H. Underwood succeeded William C. Marland as Governor, two of his State Position appointments went to Fayette County men. First of these was P. C. Graney who was named State Road Commissioner. Next was the appointment of Myron R. ("Rusty") Renick to be head of the Public Service Commission. Those who knew Graney and Renick felt the Governor made two very wise choices when he called the Mt. Hope man and the Fayetteville lawyer to their respective positions.

Another Fayette Countian of note who received an appointment on the state level was Mrs. Nell Walker of Winona. Governor Marland appointed this ten-term State Legislator to be State Banking Commissioner as of July 15, 1955. She served until the Underwood Administration went into power.

## Chapter Sixteen

# STORY OF EMCO

## Electro Metallurgical Company

### Alloy, West Virginia

Located at Alloy on U. S. Route 60, Emco is a Division of Union Carbide and Chemical Corporation. This huge plant is the largest single employer and operator of the largest industry in Fayette County with the exception of the coal business.

EMCO had its beginnings at Kanawha Falls, or Glen Ferris. Work on the old plant at that place was begun in 1898 by the Willson Aluminum Company of Spray, North Carolina. An engineer by the name of Hayes began to tear away the old water-powered saw mill which stood on the site of the Glen Ferris plant that year. During the spring of 1899 work was started on the dam across the river at this point. By the fall of 1900 the power house was finished. With the dam completed, the furnace house finished, and seven furnaces ready for use by the end of January, 1901, the Glen Ferris plant was placed in operation. During January, 1901, this plant turned out the first high carbon ferrochrome. Then, even as now, no finished products were manufactured by the EMCO concern.

In February, 1907, the plant at the Falls which had been operated by the Willson Aluminum Company was sold to EMCO. Expansion was ordered and by November of that year two ferrosilicon furnaces were started. In 1908 the village post office at this point was changed from Ferris to Glen Ferris. That change became effective in April, 1908. Following usual fluctuations in such a business as this in its early operating days, disaster hit the plant. Shortly after midnight on the morning of March 31, 1911, the works were destroyed by fire. Only the furnace room was left standing. But the plant was rebuilt and work started anew.

As far back as 1907 Major J. T. Morehead was planning the Hawk's Nest development plan to generate electric power for use at Glen Ferris. Plans were made during 1912 and 1913 for

construction of the Hawks Nest dam, tunnel, and hydro-electric station. A flood in 1913 and low water in the river in 1914 brought this company certain troubles. But these passed away and by 1915 the word ELECTROMET was used for the first time on its shipment barrels. That was in Dec., 1915. That word was then trademarked and today stands for highest quality production of ferro-alloys.

California chrome was shipped to Glen Ferris by Sept., 1916 and its use begun there. It required 21 days to get a shipment of this ore from California to Glen Ferris that year. There was a war time shortage of labor in 1917 and the company was up against it in reality when the entire force of Italian laborers left the town to return to Italy to serve in the Italian army.

Chrome from Brazil was first received at Glen Ferris in March, 1918. Floods shut down the plant again that year for a time. In March, 1919 W. W. Jennings was ordered to the plant from Anniston, Alabama, where the company operated a plant during World War I. He became the assistant to George T. Lancaster, who had been Superintendent of the plant since 1905. Business increased in the early 1920's and it was seen larger facilities must be provided. With this in mind, the company representatives made a thorough study of possible plant locations in 1925. They came up with the finding that Boncar—syllables of CARBON in reverse, to distinguish the village there from Mt. Carbon across the river at this point—was the best location for an expanded plant. That location was fixed upon because of proximity to Hawks Nest, the matter of available level land, nearness to coal supply, accessibility to three rail roads, and a navigable river. By the close of 1926 the purchase of the land at Boncar was nearly finished. It was the company's original notion to build a plant to use the power that would be made by the hydro-electric development. This had its problems and they decided to build a supplementary steam plant to be located at the plant and close to the coal mines.

Plans for building the new plant at Boncar began on July 28, 1928. Application was made before the Public Service Commission of West Virginia for a permit to build two power dams on the New River. Years before the application was made the



property at the two proposed power dam sites had been bought by the company. Next, in 1929, the mines owned by the West Virginia Eagle Coal Company were purchased by EMCO, thus assuring the company an abundant and near by supply of high grade coal. This mine was in gunshot of the plant. On Oct. 29, 1929 the West Virginia Public Service Commission granted the company the permit they sought for the proposed power developments on New River. Then it was the new Alloy plant was started on its way.

That their employees might be adequately and pleasantly housed the company acquired a large acreage of land which was owned by the Boomer Coal and Coke Co. That land comprised the town of Boomer and a tract which was the property of the Kanawha and Hocking Coal and Coke Co., at Glen Ferris.

It was in 1930 that contracts were let for the construction of Hawk's Nest Tunnel, the dam at that point, the steam power plant, and the manufacturing plant. That year there was begun the work on what was destined to become the world's largest ferro-alloy establishment. On March 30, 1930, the first shovel of dirt was removed on the New River power project by O. M. Jones, Chief Engineer of the New Kanawha Power Co. Ground was broken at the Boncar operation on Nov. 22, 1929, when the grading and laying of rail road tracks, numbers one and five, was placed underway. Nov. 1, 1930 saw the start of the construction of the village of Falls View. In Jan., 1931 carpenters were at work constructing the houses there for EMCO employees. Physical consolidation of the three local units, Glen Ferris, Boncar, and the Coal Mine became effective March 1, 1931, when the manufacturing office was moved to Boncar. B. G. Doom and C. B. Coleman were left at the Glen Ferris offices to supervise operations and maintenance.

Name of Boncar was officially changed to Alloy on March 1, 1931. Alloy, the name, was selected by a vote taken throughout the various units of the Corporation. April 26, 1931, was when work on number one furnace at Alloy was started. There the first car load of raw material, scrap steel, was received on May 9, same year. That was the day the two headings of the Hawks Nest tunnel met just as the engineers expected. That famous tunnel was to carry the waters of New River from the dam at



Hawks Nest to the Hydro Station. There the hitherto unharnessed energy of New River was to be turned into electric power. At Alloy the aerial tramway started operating on Feb. 3, 1932. With the big plant to be ready for operation by Feb. 15, 1934, it was nearing completion as the due date arrived. March 8, 1934, the plant began the first smelting of ferro-alloys. That day at 3:20 in the afternoon Number six furnace began "arcing" on coke. Soon other furnaces were in operation and EMCO was in business!

In 1935 Number three furnace at Alloy started operating on ferro-manganese. By 1936 EMCO had six furnaces going full blast. On July 9, 1936, the first power from the Hydro Station was received at Alloy. That the officials and others might have recreation facilities, there was developed a beautiful golf course on the historic "Gauley Mount" property, once the home of Colonel C. Q. Tompkins of Civil War note. There the Hawks Nest Golf Club was opened on Sept. 18, 1937. It was in Jan., 1941 that Geo. T. Lancaster retired from his labours with EMCO after having given the concern 47½ years of conscientious service.

During World War II, EMCO rendered valiant service to the nation. From Sept., 1942, and on to the end of the war the gigantic enterprise was under Army supervision, so vital was its product output to the war effort. EMCO employees, both men and women, who served with the colors in World War II, numbered just seven over an even one thousand persons. Following the end of the war the employees began returning to their jobs at the plant by the hundreds.

In commemoration of its first fifty years of service, EMCO celebrated with "Open House" at its Alloy plant on May 11, 12, 13, and 19, 1951. EMCO employees and their families were invited to attend the "Open House" and see in operation the world's largest ferro-alloy plant.

In June, 1956, the original Glen Ferris plant was dismantled, except for power facilities and a concentrator building where small pieces of metal are recovered from slag—the residue of impurities in the ore. Furnace operations were stopped at Glen Ferris in 1955.

A full story of EMCO would fill a book much larger than this one. Suffice it to say that this plant which frequently employs as many as 2,500 people, manufactures only basic products. Several grades and combinations of those basic products comprise silicon which is used in most types of steel. Raw materials out of which this is produced come from Ohio and Virginia. It is called quartzite. Manganese is another product of Alloy. It is used to toughen many types of steel. To get manganese, raw materials are obtained from Chana in Africa and from India.

Then, too, there is chromium. This is used in making stainless steel. Raw materials out of which chromium is made comes from Rhodesia and the Transvaal in Africa.

Vanadium, which is employed in special grades of high strength steel, is turned out here. Raw materials for this is shipped from Colorado.

Alloy plant makes no finished products but produces the ferro-alloys and metals which are required to give special qualities to steel. In a word, EMCO at Alloy produces what it takes to put strong muscles in steel!

## Chapter Seventeen

# FAYETTE COUNTY'S "PIKE'S PEAK" PEOPLE

Fayette County has long since abounded in persons of prominence. Among these have been women of note and men of renown. Presented in this chapter are a number of men who have towered above the rest like Pike's Peak rises above the surrounding elevations.

Since 1873 coal has been king in Fayette County, W. Va. It was in that year Joseph L. Beury shipped the first car load of coal from his operations at Quinnimont. There today stands an imposing granite monument to the pioneer coal operator who spearheaded the development of the coal industry in this county.

Joseph L. Beury was born in Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania, on Monday, August 15, 1842. He had not finished his common school education when the Civil War broke out. When Lincoln called for volunteers to save the Union, Beury joined the Federal force as a private in one of the regiments being formed in his native state. During the course of his tour of service the young Pennsylvanian advanced to rank of Captain in the Quartermaster section of the army. After Appomattox, Beury went to Virginia where he remained until 1872. Then it was he moved over to West Virginia where he opened mines at Quinnimont. In September, 1873, Beury and his associates shipped the first coal over the newly finished C. & O.

After locating at Quinnimont, Beury opened and operated other coal works all up and down the gorge of the New River. He was a colorful character and stories about this pioneer are legion. His name has been a legend in Southern West Virginia since he came here seven years after the War between the States had ended.

Recognizing Beury as being a leader of men in this area, Governor George W. Atkinson made him a Colonel on his staff during his administration of 1897-1901. When death removed



**COLONEL JOSEPH L. BEURY**

Fayette County's Premier Coal Operator who spear-headed development of this county's leading industry. Shipped first car of coal from his mine at Quinnimont in September, 1873, on newly completed C. & O. Rail Road.

Beury from the world of affairs on Friday, June 2, 1903, *The Fayette Free Press* editor, W. S. Downtain, said of him: "With the death of Col. J. L. Beury passes one who has been one of the prime movers in the material development of this county. Possessing a courage and energy which regarded no obstacle, he encountered and overcame difficulties here that millions have deemed unsurmountable, and yet withal beneath a stern demeanor he had a kindly heart, was a true friend, and a gener-

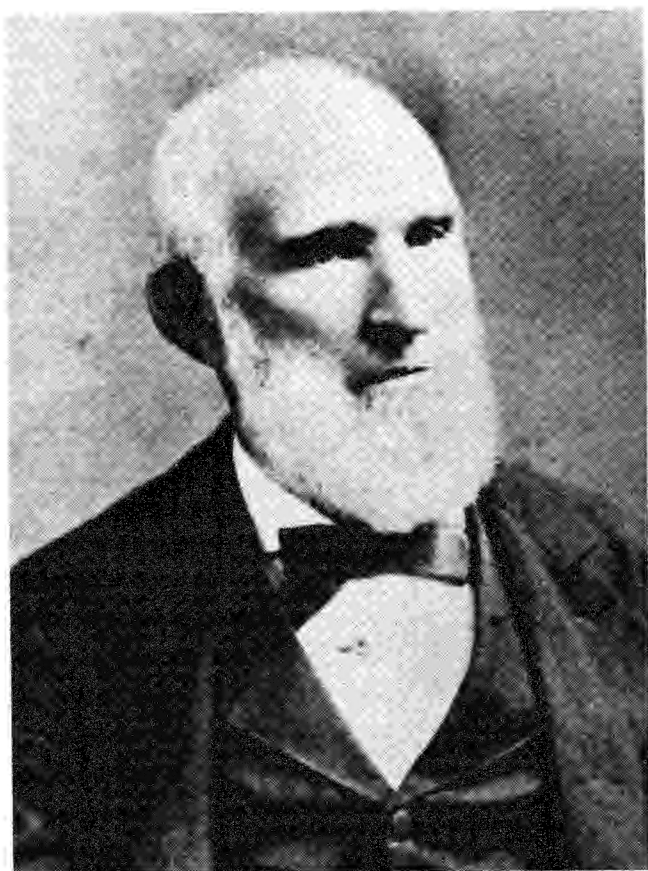
ous and sympathetic neighbor. He has gone the way of all flesh and Fayette County mourns his departure." Truer words were never spoken.



**HOMER ADAMS HOLT, WEST VIRGINIA'S  
TWENTIETH GOVERNOR**

Homer Adams Holt, of Fayetteville, was the twentieth Governor of West Virginia. He was born at Lewisburg, March 1, 1898. Holt was educated at Greenbrier Military School and Washington & Lee University. During World War I, young Holt served as a Second Lieutenant in the Coast Artillery. After the war and his graduation in law from the Lexington institution in 1923, Holt served his Washington & Lee alma mater as Professor of Law, 1923-25. At close of the Univer-

sity year in 1925, twenty-seven year old Homer Holt came to Fayetteville where he engaged in the practice of his profession as a member of the noted law firm of Dillon, Mahan & Holt. While engaged in practice at the county seat, attorney Holt served as a member of the Board of Education of Fayetteville District. At the general election in 1932 he was elected Attorney General of West Virginia. His enviable record as Attorney General brought him to the favorable attention of the



**MORRIS HARVEY, THE FAYETTE COUNTIAN WHOSE NAME  
WILL BE LONGEST REMEMBERED. . .**

Confederate veteran, High Sheriff of Fayette County, coal operator, banker, philanthropist, and noted churchman. A measure of immortality has been achieved by this beloved leader through his gifts to the college at Charleston, W. Va., which bears his name.

state electorate who elevated him to position of Governor in 1936. First man to be elected Governor from Fayette County, Homer A. Holt was one of the most scholarly men to ever occupy the chair as the state's Chief Executive.

### **Morris Harvey, a Name that Will Long Be Remembered**

Father of Morris Harvey was John Harvey who married Celia Morris, daughter of Benjamin Morris, son of William Morris, Sr., the first permanent settler in the Great Kanawha Valley. Morris Harvey was born in a log cabin on the 100-acre tract of land owned by his father at Cranberry in present Raleigh County. That cabin stood across the road from Cranberry School on Route 21 and opposite the cut off road that leads to the mining town of Cranberry. Time of Morris Harvey's birth was Friday, February 16, 1821. His sister, Selina Harvey, became the wife of Hiram Hill early Fayette County legislator and citizen of considerable renown.

During the Civil War, Morris Harvey rode with the Partisan Ranger command of Captain Philip J. Thurmond which was organized in Monroe County on Friday, May 2, 1862.

As a lad, Morris Harvey worked in the store of his uncle, Miles Manser, who had married Elizabeth Morris, one of the two daughters of William Morris, Sr. There in the Manser store where men of the countryside gathered and discussed political matters, the youth got practical training in local governmental affairs. This helped to elect him High Sheriff of Fayette County in 1859 and again for the term of 1865-69.

While employed in the store of his uncle, Morris Harvey learned the art of saving money, always a good test of one's character. Some of his savings Morris Harvey later invested in land which frequently cost him less than three cents an acre, land which he bought in fee. This was the start of the foundation of his fortune. With the development of the coal industry in Fayette County the extensive holdings of this man made him a wealthy person. He was a churchman of the Methodist persuasion and gave largely of his means to the causes of that denomination. Out of gratitude for his generous gifts and those of his wife, Rosa Harvey, the Methodist school at Barboursville changed its name to Morris Harvey College. It was later moved





**OKEY L. PATTESON, W. VA.'s TWENTY-THIRD CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

Within the sixteen-year period of 1932-1948, two Fayette County men were elected Governor of West Virginia. First of these was Homer A. Holt, elected in 1932, while the second was Okey L. Patteson of Mt. Hope, who was chosen in 1948.

A graduate of West Virginia Wesleyan College, Patteson was a member of the West Virginia National Guard for three years. From 1935 to 1941 he was President of Fayette County Court. Then he was Sheriff of the county for the term of 1941-44. In 1944 he was Presidential Elector from West Virginia. After serving as Campaign Manager of the Democratic party in the 1944 state election, Patteson was named as Assistant to Governor Clarence W. Meadows. Came election of 1948 when Patteson campaigned for the Governorship of the state and defeated his opponent by the resounding majority of 110,000 votes. He was the state's 23rd Governor and generally acclaimed as the most popular Chief Executive West Virginia has ever had. Like Homer A. Holt, Patteson was born in 1898.

to Charleston and now is located across Kanawha River from the State Capitol. In that institution the name of the generous gentleman from Fayette County is immortalized. Morris Harvey died at Fayetteville on Sunday, April 2, 1908, after having lived well over 87 years. He was laid to rest in the family plot there at the county seat and was mourned by all who knew him.

### **Dr. William R. Laird, M.D., Fayette's Great Name in Medicine**

Dr. Laird is a son of the manse. For many years his father was the distinguished minister of the First Presbyterian Church, Danville, Va. His mother was the daughter and grand daughter of Presbyterian ministers.

He was educated at Washington & Lee University and the Medical College of Virginia, from which institution he received the M.D. degree. After graduation from medical school Dr. Laird was resident in Surgery at the Sheltering Arms Hospital in Hansford, W. Va., an institution that no longer exists. Later he was chief surgeon at this same hospital.

In 1920 Dr. Laird established the Coal Valley Hospital at Montgomery, W. Va., and in 1938 the Laird Memorial Hospital as a successor to the Coal Valley Hospital. In 1940 he established the Laird Foundation, a non-profit organization devoted to the relief of suffering and medical education and research. Among the Members and Trustees of the Foundation are some of the best known and loved figures in this state.

Dr. Laird not only established the Laird Foundation of which the Laird Memorial Hospital and the Summersville Clinic Hospital are divisions, but endowed it. He is a Diplomat of the American Board of Surgery, a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons, and was for many years a member of the Board of Governors of the American College of Surgeons. For many years Dr. Laird was a Trustee at Centre College and at Salem College. He is a member of the Board of Governors of the Medical College of Virginia Foundation. Besides these positions, Dr. Laird is Chairman of the Board of Visitors of the Medical School of West Virginia University.



**DR. WILLIAM R. LAIRD, M.D., FAYETTE'S GREAT NAME  
IN MEDICINE**

—Photo by Glenn Studio, Montgomery, W. Va.

In recognition of his outstanding leadership in the field of medicine, the following Honorary Degrees have been conferred upon this No. 1 citizen of Fayette County:

1. Doctor of Laws, Hampden-Sydney College
2. Doctor of Science, West Virginia Institute of Technology
3. Doctor of Humane Letters, West Virginia Wesleyan College
4. Doctor of Humane Letters, Salem College
5. Doctor of Letters, Medical College of Virginia.

Dr. Laird married Frances Bromberg who has been a most useful person and has been a full partner in her famous hus-

band's philanthropies. He has one son, William R. Laird, former State Tax Commissioner of West Virginia and United States Senator as well.

Residence of Dr. Laird is at Kanawha Falls where his home, Tweedsmuir, is well known for its charming hospitality and the many illustrious guests who have been entertained there. Both the home and Laird Memorial Hospital are adorned by a collection of paintings and objects of art. Every year for the past decade this beloved physician has travelled extensively on the continent of Europe. Dr. Laird is the most widely known and highly esteemed citizen of Fayette County.

### **Honorable Hiram Hill and His Descendants**

Hiram Hill, father of Fayetteville, seat of justice of Fayette County, W. Va., was a native of Rockbridge Co., Va., where he was born in the year 1799. Spencer Hill and Mary Rutherford-Hill, his wife were the parents of this worthy. His mother was of Rockingham Co., Virginia. During the Revolutionary War Spencer Hill served in the Colonial forces of his native commonwealth, being a soldier in the 5th Virginia Company, according to inscription on his grave stone in the cemetery at Belva, W. Va., where he is buried.

Hiram Hill and Miss Selina Harvey, sister of Morris Harvey of Morris Harvey College note, were married in Kanawha County on July 20, 1828. They had the following children: Mary, who married James Phillips; Caroline, who married James Burgess; Joe Hill, who died unmarried at age of 21; Eunice; Frances ("Aunt Fan"), died in Nov., 1926, unmarried; and Edward L. Hill, born near Beckwith, April 13, 1851, and died at Oak Hill, June 29, 1937; married Miss Margaret Duncan in 1885.

Hiram Hill died in Nov., 1879 at the age of 79 years, 6 months, and 13 days. He is buried in the Poteet cemetery on the eastern outskirts of the village of Hill Top a few miles south of Oak Hill.

Before the formation of West Virginia and its admission into the Union on June 20, 1863, Hiram Hill represented Fayette County in the General Assembly of Virginia from 1846 to 1848



**THE HONORABLE HIRAM HILL, FATHER OF FAYETTEVILLE**

—from an old painted portrait in the possession of his grandson, Claude R. Hill, Sr., Oak Hill, W. Va.

and again from 1849 to 1850. Fayette County during those years comprised present day Raleigh County. It was largely through the efforts of Hiram Hill that Raleigh County was created in 1850. Hiram Hill was the first Clerk of the County Court of Fayette, serving from 1831 till 1845, serving as such longer than any other incumbent in the history of the county.

When the election was on in 1837 to select a suitable county seat for Fayette County it was Hiram Hill who secured enough votes of qualified freeholders to swing the election for Vandalia, later named Fayetteville. Hill deeded acre tracts to those who would vote for Vandalia as the site of the seat of justice. Those deeds had no calls in them, hence no land was really

given. However, the strategy worked and Hiram Hill became the Father of Fayetteville.

Grandchildren of Hiram Hill, by Edward L. Hill, his son, have achieved distinction in this area. Oldest of the three sons was Dr. Dennis L. Hill, M.D., (July 18, 1890-Sept. 19, 1937); William H. Hill, (Feb. 10, 1893-Nov. 13, 1941); and C. R. Hill, Sr. Children of C. R. Hill, Sr., and Mildred Haptonstall Hill, his wife, are C. R. Hill, Jr., John Hill, both graduates of Yale University; Millicent, graduate of Vassar, and wife of John G. Fox, former Attorney General of State of West Virginia and now Counsel of C. & P. Telephone Co., of this state; Carolyn, graduate of Smith College and University of Iowa, who is married to Juan A. Faria, Jr., and lives in Puerto Rico.

No man left a larger or more lasting influence on the early history of Fayette County than Hiram Hill. His wife died in 1851 shortly after the birth of her last child, Edward L. Hill. She was buried in a private cemetery between Glen Jean and Hill Top.

### **Herbert E. Jones, Sr., Fayette's Largest Coal Producer**

Lundale Farm at Oak Hill, with its thousand rolling acres, is one of Fayette's oldest and finest estates. It is the home of Herbert E. Jones, Sr., and it was there he was born and raised. He is the son of Charles Tandy Jones, (1849-1911), who was associated with his brother, the late George W. Jones, (1857-1937), in opening the Red Star Mine in 1893.

Following his graduation from the University of Virginia, Herbert E. Jones, Sr., followed his father by going into the coal business. Today he is President of the Amherst Coal Company and its subsidiaries which have produced more than one hundred million tons of coal. Mr. Jones is, therefore, the largest coal producer and one of the most successful operators to come from Fayette County.

In addition to his widespread business interests, Mr. Jones is greatly interested in the work and maintenance of Oak Hill Baptist Church in which he has long been a leader. His grandfather, Llewellen W. Jones, (1815-1870), was one of the organizers of the mother church, organized 1843, out of which Oak





Hill Baptist Church was formed in 1892. It was very largely through the leadership and munificence of the families of C. T. Jones and George W. Jones that the present house of worship of this congregation was erected in 1925-26. Today that church has the largest membership of any church in any denomination in the county. In his ancestral church, Herbert E. Jones, Sr., carries on in the manner of his worthy forbears.

### **Charles E. Mahan, Fayette's Great Name in Law**

Fayette County's great name in law is that of Charles E. Mahan. Born at Belva, W. Va., on Monday, April 22, 1895, this son of Charles E. Mahan and Annie Morris Mahan, is a direct descendant of William Morris, first permanent settler in the





Great Kanawha Valley, and of Spencer Hill, Revolutionary War soldier who is buried at Belva. When but 20 years of age Mr. Mahan was graduated from West Virginia University with the degree of LL.B. From 1915 until 1917, when he entered the military service in World War I, he practiced law at Wheeling. During World War I he soldiered in the famous Third Infantry Division in France where he was awarded a wound stripe for being gassed in the Meuse-Argonne offensive in 1918. His military service extended from May 1, 1917 until July 28, 1919, when he was discharged from the army with the rank of First Lieutenant. After his return from Europe the able young man held public office in Fayette County where he was County Clerk in 1919-1920.

Since Jan. 1, 1921, Mr. Mahan has been actively engaged in the practice of his profession at Fayetteville. In the field of law Fayette Countians recognize no greater name in that profession in West Virginia than that of the man born at Belva. Recognition of Mr. Mahan's standing among the state's attorneys was noted when he was elected by them to be President of the West Virginia Bar Association for the year 1949-50. High positions held by Mr. Mahan include that of Vice-President and General Counsel of New River Company since 1942, and Vice-President and General Counsel of Winding Gulf Coals, Inc., from 1955 to the present time.

In recognition of the renown of this alumnus of West Virginia Institute of Technology, that institution conferred upon Mr. Mahan the Honorary LL.D. Degree in 1946 when that school noted the Golden Jubilee year of its existence, counting the earlier schools out of which the Montgomery institution has developed.

It is not only in the practice of law that Mr. Mahan has excelled. A man of his ability finds other lines in which to employ his talents. Banking appealed to Mr. Mahan and he entered upon that business with the same zest with which he tackled the practice of law. It has been in the business of banking that he has been singularly successful. From 1922 to 1933 he was President of the Bank of Gauley Bridge. In 1953 the Board of Directors elevated Mr. Mahan to the Presidency of The Fayette County National Bank, Fayetteville, W. Va., the oldest of the county's successful ventures in banking. His wise counsel to his fellow banking officers has resulted in the strength his banking connections enjoy today.

In religion Mr. Mahan is a Presbyterian. In the fashionable Fayetteville Presbyterian Church at the county seat, Mr. Mahan has served that congregation as an Elder since 1952. He has been a member of the American Legion since the end of his tour of duty with the Third Infantry Division in Europe in World War I. Long a member of the Masonic fraternity, Mr. Mahan enjoys also the distinction of being a Shriner. Although a leader in different capacities it is as Fayette County's leading legal eagle that Charles E. Mahan, one of the Sons of the American Revolution, is most widely known and acclaimed.

## Chapter Eighteen

# FAYETTE COUNTY MISCELLANY

### First Law Office Opened

Immediately after the close of the Civil War in 1865, Attorney J. H. ("Fud")<sup>1</sup> McGinnis opened a law office at Fayetteville. This was the first law office at the county seat after the war. McGinnis lived near what is now Mount Hope. His Fayetteville office was in a log structure which stood at the rear of the Methodist Church and on the spot now occupied by the filling station at the left of the traffic light as one leaves Fayetteville going toward Beckwith. From 1865 to 1885 the Fayetteville bar was composed of Major H. W. Brazie, Major Theophilus Gaines, Colonel J. W. St. Clair, Mexico Van Pelt, L. D. Isabel, George W. Imboden, Jacob Isabel, and George D. Thompson. By 1885 the population of Fayetteville was approximately 125.

### The Big Snow of 1870

A rain that started on Easter Sunday, April 17, 1870 turned to snow which continued to fall that week for seventy-two hours without stopping. This was the celebrated deep snow of the past century. April that year had been a mild month and many Fayette County persons had made gardens before Easter. Although the snow attained a depth of about five feet on Sewell Mountain, the average depth throughout the county was approximately forty-two inches. It was a wet snow else the depth of it might have been greater. When the fall ceased around noon on Wednesday it began to melt immediately. By the following Sunday the snow was all gone except in the deep woods. Because of the melting snow the streams were soon out of their banks. On Dec. 18, 1890, another snow fell to a depth of close to that of the great fall of some twenty years earlier. It was a general snow and lasted many days.

<sup>1</sup>This nickname was applied to James Hereford McGinnis by his father, Pyrrus McGinnis, an Irish settler in Virginia. Having acquired an East Virginia accent, the father abbreviated the son's popular name of "Hereford" to its last syllable "ford", and, after the manner of some Virginians, left the "r" out of the word, thereby making it "Fud".

### **Sheltering Arms Hospital**

Though not located in Fayette County, the Sheltering Arms Hospital, an Episcopal Church project, at Hansford, West Virginia, played an important role in the lives of many people within the county of Fayette. Established in 1890 under the direction of Bishop George W. Peterkin, the first Episcopal Bishop of the Diocese of West Virginia, the Sheltering Arms Hospital was the only hospital between Richmond and Cincinnati at that time. It had a bed capacity of 116 and maintained a training school for nurses in connection with its hospital service.

With the growth of the population in the Kanawha Valley and the springing up of private institutions to supply the needs of the sick and injured, it was felt that the necessity for the church hospital was relieved. Accordingly, in 1923, Bishop W. L. Gravatt led in the merging of the Sheltering Arms Hospital with the Charleston General. Built at an original cost of something like \$80,000, the Hansford house of mercy performed an outstanding service for a third of a century.

### **Fayette's First Paved Roads**

Fayette County's first paved roads were built during the period of 1916-1919 when J. K. McGrath was county engineer. Limestone used in paving the highways came from J. A. Rigg's Snowflake Quarry on the Greenbrier River above Alderson.

### **Fayette Lumber in "Old Ironsides"**

Probably the most popular warship the U. S. Navy has ever had was the U. S. Frigate "Constitution", popularly known to the American people as "Old Ironsides". This was the first really great vessel to grace the American navy. Launched in 1797, the ship came into great prominence as a result of victories won in the War of 1812.

When it was proposed to do away with the ship after its days of usefulness had passed, interest in saving the ship was aroused by a poem written by Oliver Wendell Holmes. Since then the ship has been almost a shrine to patriotic Americans.

In 1927 when it became necessary to almost rebuild the

famous frigate the oak lumber for the purpose was obtained from the Wilderness Lumber Company, of local note. White Oak boat stock was made from trees carefully selected to insure timber with clear heart. This lumber was used for breast hooks, stern knees, and other portions requiring durable material.

### **1932 Flood on Paint Creek**

Torrential rains fell in Fayette County on July 10, 1932. These brought on a flood which caused considerable loss of life and great property damage on Paint Creek. There the swollen stream rampaged down the narrow valley in widespread destruction.

Listed among the dead in this hard hit area were Mrs. Lury Perry, 87, Morton; Mrs. James Starr, 60, Mahan; Mrs. Ernabelle Lindsey, 36, Whittaker; Jack Cline, 70, Nuckols; Joe Posewich, 35, Powellton; three members of the Harrison Kincaid family, —a father and two children, Glen Huddy; Mrs. Violet Mitchell and her three children; and Lawrence Perry of Mahan. Armstrong Creek was likewise at flood tide at the same time. This was the largest loss of life ever suffered by flood in this county.

### **Father of 42 Children**

Napoleon Morris, a man of colour, was the father of forty-two children. He resided in the Sanger section and the Red Star community during the past century. This man was an attache or employee of the Jones family of the area where he lived. According to the reports of people who knew Morris, he had five wives and a number of children by each woman. As far as is known, Napoleon Morris was the father of the largest number of children ever sired by a resident of Fayette County, West Virginia.

### **Sizeable Family Born in One Year**

When triplets were born to Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Holbrook of Elkridge, Fayette County, West Virginia, on Thursday, June 17, 1954, the children made five additions to this Holbrook family within a year. Eleven months previously Mrs. Holbrook presented her miner husband with a set of twins. Birth of the triplets by Caesarian operation was at Laird Memorial Hos-

pital, Montgomery, West Virginia, and marked the first set of triplets ever to be delivered at the Montgomery institution. All three were delivered at once and were named Diana Jean, Donald Gene, and Donna Jane. With the birth of her triplets, the twenty-nine year old woman was the mother of eleven children.

### **Fayette County's Largest Person**

Weighing between five and six hundred pounds, the body of Mrs. Hattie Shockey, Prudence, W. Va., was so heavy that six men could hardly lift it from the bed where she died the week of February 1, 1926. Forty-five years of age, this colored woman was the wife of Isaac Shockey. It was necessary to construct a special casket for the remains. Rodgers Construction Company prepared the coffin which was 38 inches wide, six and one-half feet long, and two feet in depth. Mrs. Shockey is said to have been the largest person ever to live in Fayette County.

### **Longevity in Fayette County**

Oldest person in Fayette County who was known by the author was Wyatt Sumner. He was a Confederate veteran who died on Feb. 11, 1937, at the great age of 105 years and 22 days. His wife was born on Nov. 9, 1833 and died in her 99th year on June 30, 1932. Both were buried in the hillside cemetery on the edge of Mt. Hope.

Another instance of longevity in Fayette County is that of the remarkable Warner family of Beckwith. This family settled at Beckwith after migrating from Massachusetts. Attracted by the possibilities of water power on Laurel Creek, Luther Warner, head of the family by that name, came there before the Civil War. There Mr. Warner built and operated a water-powered grist mill and ground grain for settlers from all over the countryside.

As the members of the Warner family began to die off they were buried in what is now known as Huse Memorial Park at Fayetteville. Grave markers there contain the following names and dates: Luther Warner, 1790-1882; Electra Sanderson Warner, 1790-1874. *Note:* This was the wife of Luther Warner; Susan Warner, 1820, died Oct. 23, 1924; Calvin Sanderson



Warner, 1816-1903; Jane Dickinson Warner, 1833-1923. Oldest of the Warner group was Miss Susan Warner who attained the age of 104 years. Average age of those listed was over 91 years and four months. As this is written in the spring of 1958 there are three surviving members of the Calvin Warner family, Elizabeth, Susie, and W. Clyde Warner, whose ages average that of the others in the same family group. Miss Susan Warner, who was born at Whatley, Mass., August 4, 1820, and died at Beckwith on Oct. 23, 1924, cast the first Republican woman's vote ever cast in Fayette County, W. Va. She was a life-long Presbyterian.

### **Horrible Engine Explosion on Armstrong Creek**

McDunn on Armstrong Creek, 2¼ miles from Powellton, was the scene of a locomotive explosion at 6:21 on Thursday morning, December 27, 1934 which claimed the lives of seventeen men and painfully injured forty-six others.

The engine which exploded on the railroad line owned by the Elkhorn-Piney Company was pulling a train of four wooden coaches in which Powellton miners were riding to work. Cause of the blow-up was said to have been an overheated crown sheet which resulted from water getting low in the engine. So terrific was the force of the explosion that the boiler of the locomotive was blown backward over the tender and landed on top of the front coach, practically demolishing it.

This was West Virginia's most tragic accident during that year and the worst of its kind to ever occur in Fayette County.

Dead as a result of the fatal accident were: William Blankenship, 55, engineer; Homer Cart, 38; Thomas W. Craft, 21; James Hunter, 34; Eddie Huelett, 23; Steve Kozma, 51; Everett Leach, 42; John Long, 39; William J. Maynus, 38; Henry McMillian, 50; J. L. ("Pat") Murphy, 49; Delmar Oxley, 37, the fireman; Jesse Persinger, 42; S. L. Runyon, 55; Ray Tartar, 18; William Turner, 40; and Jerome Walters, 38.

### **Two Naval Admirals from Fayette County**

Though mountainous and land-locked, Fayette County has produced two men who rose to high rank in the United States Navy. First of these was Claud A. Jones who was born at Fire



Creek on the banks of New River in 1885. In June, 1903, Jones received an appointment to the Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland. There he was graduated in the Class of 1907. Nine years after his graduation, Jones — then a Lieutenant — was awarded the nation's highest decoration, the Congressional Medal of Honor. This award was for heroism while the recipient was serving on the USS Memphis. On August 29, 1916, this ship was struck by a tidal wave at San Domingo. Then it was that the 31-year old Naval Lieutenant was credited with doing everything possible to get the ship's engines and boilers ready to get underway. When the attempt failed he directed the rescue of several crewmen from amidst bursting boilers and steam lines. This act of heroism, in line of duty, brought him the coveted award. Later on he was decorated with the Legion of Merit Medal, then the nation's fourth highest ranking award. He attained the rank of Rear Admiral in the service and retired in January, 1946. Returning to West Virginia to rest from his labors, Admiral Jones died at Charleston on August 8, 1948. His body was taken to Arlington Cemetery at Washington, D. C., where it was laid to rest with highest honors on Thursday, August 10th. He was the first Fayette Countian to attain such high rank in the service of his country. Out of honor to his memory, the Naval Department designated that one of its new Destroyers would be named after Admiral Jones in 1958.

Second of the sons of Fayette County to reach Rear Admiral rank in the U. S. Navy is Rear Admiral Burton B. Biggs. He was born at remote Elliott, W. Va., near Ansted on July 3, 1898. Following his graduation from the Naval Academy with the Class of 1921 and having been made an Ensign on June 3, 1920, Biggs began climbing upward in rank. He was a Commander by 1940 and in 1942 he was a Four-Striper, or Captain. By 1948 he was made a Rear Admiral. His was the good fortune to see duty at sea in World War II where he acquitted himself with great distinction. Proudly, Admiral Biggs wears the Legion of Merit Medal, with two Gold Stars, and the Combat "V" for exceptionally meritorious conduct while on duty with the Fifth Fleet in action against the Japanese forces in the Pacific area during August, 1945. Admiral Biggs wears many other decorations and service medals. He is yet on active duty.

### Famous Fayette Fighter

Although Fayette County has produced many outstanding service men one of her famous heroes is Stanley Bender of the Scarbro section. By 1944 young Bender had attained a Staff Sergeant rating in the Seventh Infantry and was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for heroism. Here is the Citation that accompanied the nation's highest award for gallantry:

"Stanley Bender, 6 920 404, Staff Sergeant, Company "E," Seventh Infantry, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at risk of life, above and beyond the call of duty, in action involving actual conflict.

On August 17, 1944, near La Londe, France, S/Sgt. Bender climbed on top of a knocked out tank, in the face of withering machine gun fire which had halted the advance of his Company, in an effort to locate the source of this fire. Although bullets ricocheted off the turret at his feet, S/Sgt. Bender nevertheless remained standing bolt upright in full view of the enemy for over two minutes. Locating the enemy machine gun on a knoll 200 yards away, he ordered two squads to cover him and led his men down an irrigation ditch, running a gauntlet of intense machine gun fire, which completely blanketed 50 yards of his advance and wounded four of his men. While Germans hurled hand grenades at the ditch, S/Sgt. Bender stood his ground until his squad caught up with him; then advanced alone in a wide, flanking approach, to the rear of the knoll. He walked deliberately a distance of 40 yards without cover in full view of the Germans and under a hail of both enemy and friendly fire, to the first machine gun and knocked it out with a single burst. Then he made his way through a strong point, despite bursting hand grenades, toward the second machine gun, 25 yards distant. As he neared it, its two-men crew swung the machine gun and fired two bursts at him, but S/Sgt. Bender walked calmly through fire, and reaching the edge of the replacement, dispatched the crew. Signalling his men to rush the rifle pits, he then walked 35 yards further to kill an enemy rifleman and returned to lead his squad in the destruction of the eight remaining Germans in the strong point. His audacity so inspired the remainder of the assault company that the men charged out of their positions, shouting and yelling, to overpower the enemy road-block and sweep into town, knocking out two anti-tank guns, killing 37 Germans and capturing 26 others.

S/Sgt. Bender had sparked and led the assault company in an attack which overwhelmed the enemy, destroying a road block, taking a town, seizing intact three bridges over the Maravenne River, and, finally capturing the commanding terrain which dominated the area."

To further honor the famous Fayette County hero, when the West Virginia Turnpike was completed in November, 1954, the 284 feet high bridge over Four Mile Fork at the southern end of the half-mile long Memorial Tunnel was named the Bender Bridge. That bridge is 1230 feet long and is one of the three major bridges on the 88-mile express highway. Bender Bridge, at end of the almost five million dollar tunnel, cost over one and one-half million dollars. It is the highest of the 76 bridges on the \$133,000,000 turnpike, of which approximately 25 miles lies in Fayette County.

### Hawks Nest

On The Midland Trail—U. S. Route 60—between Ansted and Chimney Corner is located Fayette County's best known landmark. This is Hawks Nest, a towering cliff which rises 585 feet above the swirling waters of New River at its base. It is called Hawks Nest because fish hawks by the hundreds used to nest and raise their brood in the fissures and potholes of this immense rock mountain. According to old settlers of that section these hawks were big handsome birds, a silver gray in color with some white on their breast and underbody. Mrs. Thomas Brown Hamilton lived in that vicinity as early as 1831 and was fascinated at the sight of the hawks. Her son, the late A. W. Hamilton, told of seeing the hawks sail over the bosom of New River to locate fish. Once the hawk sighted a fish it dived, came up with the fish in its talons, and made off to its nest. These hawks remained there until the C. & O. Railway started construction of its road bed through this deep gorge in 1872. Blasting frightened the hawks away and they never returned to their habitat in the lofty cliff.

Hawks Nest Rock was first known as Marshall's Pillar from the circumstance that Chief Justice John Marshall visited the spot in 1812 and took measurements of its height. However, this designation never had popular appeal and the place came

to be popularly known as Hawks Nest because the name captured the public's fancy. Elevation above sea level here is 1,760 feet.

Until 1935 this was privately owned. However, on April 29, 1935, the State of West Virginia, out of its General Fund, bought the 37½ acres on which this scenic wonder is located. Price paid in the purchase was \$20,000. This acreage was turned into a State Park development and annually attracts more visitors than any of the other West Virginia attractions. The extending shelf of rock at the top of the mighty cliff is now fenced about with a high iron fence. From this protected vantage point tourists by the tens of thousands annually pause to view the unequalled scenery in the deep New River canyon.

This spot was the scene of a tragedy on the night of Friday, May 15, 1925. That evening a group of some twenty New River State College students went there from Montgomery for an evening outing. About 9 p. m., Robert Dudley Caldwell, 18, ventured too near the edge of the dangerous precipice, presumably in search of wood for their fires, and fell to his death hundreds of feet below. Measurements from the spot where he fell from the protruding ledge to the rock shelf where he was found was 405 feet. Practically every bone in his body was broken by the impact of the fatal plunge.

### **Hawks Nest Tunnel**

One of the most widely known engineering projects in the United States is the famous Hawks Nest Tunnel. This colossal engineering accomplishment diverts the turbulent current of New River from its rocky channel straight through the mountain to the power house instead of allowing it to meander the six and one-half miles journey around the bend on an indirect and unconfined route.

Completed in 1933, this noted tunnel was constructed under the supervision of the Rhinehart & Dennis Company. In March, 1930, this firm started work on this job. After erecting their work camps and doing other preliminary tasks the business of punching a hole through the solid rock—making the actual tunnel—was begun on June 15, 1930. More than a year later, on August 7, 1931, the crews holed the first heading, meaning

that a crew which started in the middle of the tunnel "met" a crew which started at Hawks Nest end. Slightly more than a month later, on September 19, 1931, crews met at the other end of the tunnel.

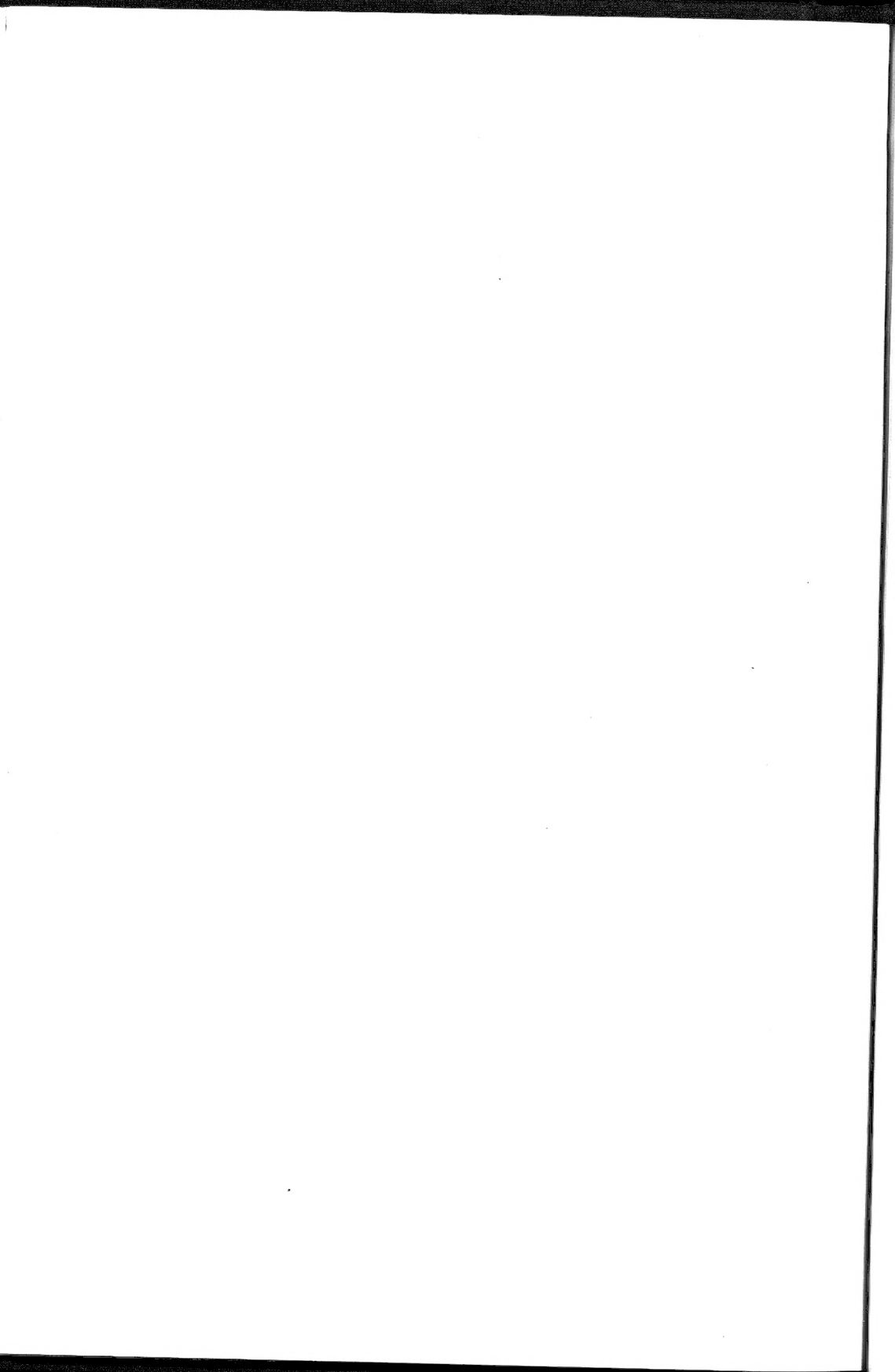
Hawks Nest tunnel is 16,252 feet long and cost about ten million dollars. Standing on the projecting ledge at the top of the 585 foot tall cliff known as Hawks Nest, a comprehensive view of the concrete dam across New River may be seen. By means of this dam across the river at the intake end of the tunnel, the stream is forced into its portals for the underground short-cut. Diameter of the tunnel varies from 31 to 46 feet. Some 10,200 feet of the bore is lined with concrete but the remainder is unlined. The solid rock through which the tunnel is built is sufficient in texture to confine the water. Of the 6,052 feet of the bore that is not lined with concrete, a thousand feet of it is 42 feet in diameter, while the remaining 5,052 feet is 46 feet. This variation in diameter compensates for variations in stream velocity in various sections of the job. In the unlined portions the rough stone surface heightens the friction, while in the 10,200 feet that is concrete lined the velocity is greatly increased by the perfectly smooth walls.

Intensified by its confinement the mighty force of the river is taken at the mouth of the tunnel and split into four separate streams and led under terrific pressure into four turbines, each of them being attached to a generator that produces 30,000 horsepower. The steel shaft which connects the turbine to generator is 30 inches in diameter and 30 feet in length. Each turbine is suspended from a bearing that is capable of withstanding a 200-ton strain. Power from this plant is taken over a line to Alloy which is eight miles away. There it is used entirely in the manufacturing enterprises of Union Carbide of which the New River Power Company is a subsidiary. It is there used in manufacturing alloys, ferro silica, and manganese.

It has been explained that the effect of this tunnel is the same as would be obtained if New River were poured into a perpendicular shaft 162 feet deep, with turbines at the base of that shaft, except for a slight difference in velocity due to greater friction imposed upon the stream by the walls of the

tunnel. Thus the tunnel gives a 162-foot head at the turbine wheels in the powerhouse.

A great number of lawsuits were brought against the firm of Rhinehart & Dennis Co., by the relatives of the tunnel employees who died from silicosis. After long and wearisome legal action the suits were compromised for a fraction of the amounts sought as damages. Nation-wide publicity resulted from stories emanating from this matter. Hubert Skidmore wrote a novel on the subject and called it "Hawks Nest." This epic story deals with what were called the "defenceless and deceived" men who died from silicosis during the tunnel's construction. It was published by Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc., New York, N. Y., in 1941 and has long since been out of print.





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