

GOOSE CREEK

CHAPTER ONE

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The eastern slopes of the Appalachian Mountains had been one vast hunting grounds teeming with buffalo, elk, bear and deer when the Indians had the area to themselves. Then the Europeans and their black slaves began edging towards the mountains. In times of peace, and there were many such times, the Indians shared their knowledge of the animals and the skills needed to hunt them. There was a market for deer hides on the sea coast and soon there was a professional class of hunters who went to the mountains and were absent from their homes for extended periods of time. These men became the famed Long Hunters who were described by Lewis Preston Summers in his "Annals of Southwest Virginia."

"The hunters usually went to the mountains in companies of eight to ten, having packhorses, with which they brought back their peltry. The equipment, for a trip of this kind, consisted of a rifle, powder, ball, a hatchet or tomahawk, knife and blanket. They also carried salt and provisions for two days---from which time the forest yielded a plentiful supply." They also "took tobacco and a clean shirt a-piece---which were to last them for months in the western wilds."

"I know of no more formidable personage than a backwoodsman" said Summers "especially if you reflect upon the precision with which he deals the missiles of death from his long black rifle." Formidable or not there were Long Hunters who fell by the Indians bow and arrows or rifles. As the vast herds of animals were thinned out the Long Hunters saw that the Indians were bringing deer hides from beyond the mountains. For one hundred and fifty years after the first European settlement the impenetrable Appalachians had kept the settlers from finding their way into the wildlife paradise that was Kentucky.

Then in 1750 Dr. Walker's expedition party stumbled onto the Athawominee, the Indians 'Path of the Armed Ones', which the Long Hunters would call the 'Warrior's Path.' In 1766 a hunting party under Henry Scaggs left southwest Virginia and went through the Cumberland Gap into Kentucky. A Colonel Knox went through in 1768 and was followed by Daniel Boone's party in 1769.

These Long Hunters forded the Cumberland River at today's Pineville and then came to a spot called Flat Lick. Licks occurred in many locations in Kentucky and were where minerals from deep underground had filtered up through rock and soil to form pools of mineral water. Most of these pools contained NC Cl or common salt. Wild animals came here to 'lick' the salt and hunters built 'blinds' of brush behind which they hid and shot the unwary animals.

The buffalo migrated from lick to lick creating wide interlocking paths which extended throughout Kentucky. There were three such paths leading out of Flat Lick. The one to the left was chosen by Daniel Boone when he established Fort Boonesborough in 1775. The one to the right led to an excellent hunting area but the area beyond that was so rough it became a dead end. The middle

path went up over a high ridge that separated the waters of the Cumberland River from that of the waters of the Upper Kentucky River.

The middle path was taken by an unnamed hunting party told of in Darrell C. Richardson's 'Mountain Rising.' "It was the fall of the year when some early Long Hunters first arrived in what is now Clay County. Just as they reached a rushing little mountain creek a flock of wild geese winged their way over high above in the blue sky. One of the Long Hunters is reported to have said, 'I use to live on Gander Creek, and so we'll name this stream Goose Creek.'"

These men must have found a salt lick on Goose Creek and told others about its location for those living at Fort Boonesborough in knew of the salt lick. The Indians had prevented the growing of crops and those in the fort were living on meat brought in by hunters and they had no salt to put on their meat.

In his 'Sketch of Boone' Peter Houston said, "The fort still suffering for want of salt, Daniel (Boone) concluded to go to Goose Creek salt springs, take his kettles and make some salt. Accordingly, on October 29, Daniel hitched a horse to his 'truckle' (packsaddle ?) tied his two kettles on it that he had brought from North Carolina, took Isaiah Boone-Squire (Boone's) son—Levy Dickey, James Blue and myself and started for the Springs; Isaiah driving the horse and truckle. I and Daniel on a second horse, and Dickey and Blue on a third horse."

"The course was southeast of Boonesborough and the distance three days travel. We arrived at the springs the night of November 1, lit our tinder (burnt rags in a close fitting tin box which was ignited by a piece of steel and flint) made a fire and ate our suppers and slept until the next morning.

"The 2nd of November was spent in boiling salt water and on the 3rd ---Blue (who was well acquainted with the route) rode back to the fort with a small wallet of salt for the inhabitants. The balance of us remained until the 7th, boiling salt all the time through the day but always extinguishing our fire before dark lest it might be discovered by the Indians and they might come upon us---in the night."

"In the evening of the of the 7th, we had made over a bushel of salt and having left Ned's (Boone) wife and child sick, Daniel was uneasy and had intended to start for the fort the next morning, and had taken the kettles from the fire and fastened them securely on the truckle and we were sitting on a log discussing whether or not to travel a part of the way that night. The sun was about an hour high and whilst we were discussing, one of our horses lifted his head and looking up the creek, snorted fearfully."

"There are Indians near!" whispered Boone.

We all sprang to our feet and seized our rifles and got ready for the worst. But Boone told us all to be silent, and kept a sharp lookout. We could see from our hiding place about 120 yards up the

creek to a turn it made where the horses kept looking, with every few minutes a snort. Finally we saw three Indians come in sight from around the bend. Again Boone gave us orders to keep silent until he gave the word."

"The Indians continued to approach us evidently knowing nothing of our presence. But having approached within eighty yards of us they discovered the smoke from our fire and halted, all three of them got behind a large tree and began to peer out from behind it."

"Be silent", said Boone "until we see whether there are more behind." Ten minutes elapsed, I suppose, when the Indians, still peeping from their cover, two on one side and one on the other, when Boone ordered Dodson to draw a bead on the single Indian and for Dickey and I to both aim at 'the tall Indian' and he would take the other. We all fired at the word 'fire' from Boone. Boone's Indian and ours fell but Dodson's gun failed to go off and his Indian, with a terrific yell took to the brush."

"We did not go to the dead Indians. They were shot through the head for we could see no other part of them and they pitched forward and fell in full view."

"Boone, fearing the escaped Indian might return with an overpowering force ordered us to 'be quick and strap the kettles together,' which we did by taking the bark they were tied to the truckle with by taking the bark through the eyes of the kettles. Meantime, Boone had the horses in readiness with the sack of salt across one of their backs. And across his 'packsaddle' the kettles were slung and two and two we mounted and off we started for the fort, traveled all night, changing as we went, the kettles from one horse to the other as they were tired. And frequently we all walked to rest the horses. We reached the fort on the night of November 9. We never visited the Goose Creek Springs again from the fort."

The Irish born Long Hunter James Collins may not have known of Boone's presence on Goose Creek earlier when he tracked buffalo from Flat Lick to the waters of Goose Creek on trails that were six and eight feet wide in 1798. Early histories of Clay County credit Collins with being the first man on the creek. The histories say Collins tied his horse near a spring and went on foot to hunt. He came upon a set of stone steps leading to higher ground leading to a trash heap, called a Midden, of an ancient village. Here pre-historic people had lived while they boiled salt. Collins puzzled over mussel shells, bones of animals they'd eaten, broken clay pots and other camp debris thrown there by the villagers.

Returning to his horse he saw the animal licking a white stone. The stone had been covered with salt. Collins had been making his living by hunting for deer hides but what he saw at that white stone could make him far more money than hides ever would. Salt was like White Gold west of the mountains. Men paid eight dollars a bushel for salt carried across the mountains. That was the equivalent of eight deer hides.

At any gathering on the frontier three of the most asked questions were: "Do you have any salt?" Where can I get some salt? What will it cost?" Each family needed three bushels of salt per year for the preservation of meat they salted down to last the winter. Hickory ashes were sprinkled on food as a salt substitute but the people craved salt. An old Indian was once asked why the plants used by the Indians for medicine worked so well for the Indians but less so by the white men. He replied, "White's eat too much salt."

Adults have an average of about 1.1 pounds of salt in their bodies and require 15 to 18 pounds of salt per year to maintain their health. The gastric juice in the human stomach contains about 0.2% of hydrochloric acid, derived from the salt consumed with food they eat in the process of digestion. Without this the digestive system could not function.

The first direct reference to salt is in the Book of Job written 2250 years before the birth of Christ. "Can nothing which is unsavory be eaten without salt?" Other Bible references were: Ezekial 16.4 where salt is used as an antiseptic and rubbed on a newborn baby. Zeph. 2.9 and Mac. 11.35 (in the Catholic Bible) tells of salt being used in sacrifices. Salt was a cure for headaches. Salt was gathered from salt pits by lowering a bucket into the brine and drawing it out and letting the bucket set in the hot sun till salt crystals formed.

The Greek Poet Homer called salt a divine substance and Plato said salt was especially dear to the gods. Gold was traded for salt in Europe where it was said, "Man could live without gold but not salt." Men asked "Wasn't salt found in tears, saliva, sweat, urine and even breast milk?" Salt was so needed and sought after that the English put a salt tax on it. Some three hundred men who smuggled in salt to avoid the tax were hung. John Wesley, the co-founder of Methodism, wrote a fiery speech against the hated Salt Tax.

In 1752 the Moravian Bishop Spangenberg wrote that the people in the mountains of North Carolina had to go 300 miles to Charleston, South Carolina to buy their salt. He said that the "distance is not the only objection (in going) ---on the road they have mostly stinking water to drink; and are in danger on account of robbers." They also had bad roads over steep hills and often flooded streams to cross.

Each family saved the hides and furs they had collected to trade for salt and "In the fall of the year----every family formed an association with some of their neighbors for starting the little caravan. A master driver was selected from among them who was assisted by one or more young men and sometimes a boy or two. The horses were fitted with packsaddles, to the hinder part of which was fastened a pair of hobbles made of hickory withes; a bell and collar ornamented the neck. The bags provided for the conveyance of the salt were filled with feed for the horses; on this journey a part of the feed was left at convenient stages on the way down, to support the return of the caravan; large wallets were filled with bread, jerk(y), boiled ham and cheese furnished provisions for the drivers. At night after feeding the horses, whether put to pasture or turned out in the woods, were hobbled and the bells were opened."

"The common price of a bushel of salt---was a good cow and calf; and until weights were introduced, the salt was measured by the half bushel, by hand, as lightly as possible. No one was permitted to walk heavily over the floor while the operation was going on."

"Each horse carried two bushels of alum salt weighing eighty four pounds to the bushel. This was to be sure was not a heavy load for the horses but it was enough, considering the scanty subsistence allowed them on the journey."

During the Revolutionary War (1775-1783) the British burned many of the salt drying vats along the Atlantic Coast which reduced the amount of salt available to purchase. Still people feared to cross the mountains where it was thought there was no supply of salt until it was carried over the mountains. Thomas Jefferson, who was widely admired for his writing of the Declaration of Independence, wrote trying to encourage the settlement west of the mountains:

"That country over yonder abounds with springs of common salt---yes, there is plenty of places beyond the mountains, far from the seacoast, where settlers will find all the salt they need."

Many doubted Jefferson's motives in claiming there were salt springs over the mountains. Like many of his class Jefferson had vast tracts of land west of the mountains that he wanted to sell. Land promoters like Jefferson were known to promise anything to get settlers to buy their land. In the long run salt springs were discovered over the mountains.

The stories told of Collin's finding a salt lick (on the Collin's Branch of Goose Creek) vary as to what he done with his find. Some say Collins merely used the salt he made for his personal use. Other stories say he rode back over the mountains and traded his horse for a large kettle which he carried on his back to a simple cabin he built beside the salt spring. After making salt he carried it on his back over the mountains.

"The first attempts to produce salt were characterized by the rudest simplicity. The ordinary pots and kettles used in the cabins were hung over an open fire to which was" brought "brine laborisly (sp) dipped from the spring" Mary Verhoff said. This was how Boone's party made salt. Later men sought to produce salt commercially. There are many claims as to who the first man was to make commercial salt on Goose Creek. It might have been a Barton, Langford, Lyons or a Alexander Outlaw.

The story of the salt works at Goose Creek is composed from many sources and involves the tales of many colorful men. Leonidas Baker Nicholson told that "When my father came here, (in 1801) the people cut down the cane and planted corn without fencing. They would break off the young cane as it would come. There were plenty of buffalo and elk when my father came. The bears would eat the corn, so it was with great difficulty they raised corn"

"I think Barton made the first salt on Goose Creek." Nicholson said "I have had Jake

Phipps and Joseph Cox, salt makers, talk of it. Cox was full of fun. A proud man came along when he worked at Barton's saltworks. He wanted to get across the creek. He would give so much money if he were on the other side. Joe said he would carry him over on his back for that amount. In the middle of the stream, Cox declared they must swim as the water was too deep to ford. He sunk into the water and this proud man got thoroughly wet."

Nicholson then told of "Alexander Outlaw, who made salt on Goose Creek, was from the head of Nolichucky (Nolichucky) River, Tennessee, called Outlaw bend," In 1786 the State of Franklin, a short lived state in Tennessee selected Commissioners to make a treaty with the Cherokee. Alexander Outlaw was Commissioner who was much feared by the Cherokee. The Treaty had the Cherokee surrender much of their land. Ben Ryburn received some of the land. Shortly after the treaty two white men were killed and two horses were stole from men on Collins Fork. The two men killed were among the last killed by Indians in Kentucky.

Gathering 250 men Outlaw went to the Cherokee village where he met Chiefs Old Tassel and Hanging Maw. Outlaw gave a threatening speech saying, "You have murdered our men in Kentucky, and on the Kentucky Road and on the Cumberland (River)." He told them he would sign another Peace Treaty with them but if any more raiding and killing occurred, "We will come down and destroy the (Cherokee) town that done the mischief."

The Cherokee believed him for in 1795 Outlaw had led a party that struck the Cherokee town of Citico killing women and children, "Exposing their private parts in the most shameful manner, having a young child, with both its arms broken, alive at the breast of its dead mother." To protect his people from men like Outlaw Hanging Maw gave land to the Federal government to build a blockhouse at Tellico, Tennessee so that Federal troops could protect them.

"James White, Senior, of Abington, Va., was the quartermaster of Gen. Cox of Tennessee, whose duty was the protection of the white settlers of this frontier. White was at Lexington purchasing supplies for the army, he heard of the salt spring and hastened to buy the land that embraced it, a purchase which proved a source of great wealth to his family." Mary Verhoff also said, "A deed "in 1804 "transferred to James White one-fourth of 400 acres" on Collins Fork. The purchase of the saltworks was from Alexander Outlaw and John Ballenger, "and the appurtenances thereof namely, "kittles, buckets, troughs, oxen carts." White paid \$1,100 in merchandise at his store in Abington for the saltworks.

James White had sent his son Hugh to manufacture salt and at first salt brine was dipped from the spring but this was slow as the spring had to be refilled after being dipped dry. Hugh White had workmen build a dam across the small branch. If this dam was made of wood that might explain why an old man told that "Hugh White came here as a woodchopper." Workmen with wooden buckets dipped water from behind the dam and poured it into iron kettles. Verhoff said these kettles, " were of yellow copper, had a capacity of two hundred pints."

Eight hundred gallons of brine-water had to be dipped to make one bushel of salt. To save labor the workmen at the White salt works bore out red cedar logs and joined them together to make a pipeline to funnel the water to the kettles. Mary Verhoff wrote, "Ten or twelve of these kettles were arranged in row upon a trench four feet deep and a breath suitable to afford a support for them. The interstices between the kettles were stopped by clay forming a rude sort of furnace."

"In each end of the trench a wood fire was maintained day and night but the cutting and transporting the fuel and the weakness of the brine made the cost of the manufactured article reach four dollars a hundredweight at the furnace, which proved a fatal obstacle to its exportation."

The lack of or weakness of the brine came about in two ways; in the dry summer months the creek flowing into the dam would go dry. When heavy rains fell the brine would be diluted by the fresh water pouring into the creek. When brine fell below a 5% salt content it was considered to "weak" to make salt as it cost too much to boil it down. On the other hand anything over 12% made the salt produced too bitter to consume. Brine at 9% is the best for making salt and this brine is best found underground.

When his creek ran dry one summer Hugh White had his men dig pits in the creek bed and when the pits were filled with brine they dipped it out. These pits were hand dug and they were dangerous as the banks were prone to collapse. James Bowling drowned in a deep well up at McCone's Hole on Tanyard Branch. Over time the pits had to be dug deeper and deeper to reach the brine. One crew uncovered a old large pine log some twenty-five feet below the surface. When they dug deep enough to come to bedrock the men lined the eight foot square pits with logs to prevent cave-ins.

On the 20th of August, 1805 Alexander Outlaw referred to a salt well "which had been sunk." To drill a well a tall 'Spring Pole' was set in the ground at one side of the pit. A second pole was hung from the spring pole by a rope. This pole was always smaller than the spring pole and the hole the men were going to bore in the rock. The second pole hung down and was tipped with an iron socket. A five inch auger of iron was screwed into the socket. A legend says the first auger used was carried across the mountains on the back of a man.

In 1807 a Thomas Johnson lived, "first at the 'Old Lick' on Goose Creek where salt was first made. He was an expert blacksmith. He made the chains that fastened Joel Elkins the murderer of John Amos (Amis) at the first court held in Clay County in 1807. He also made the first auger used in Boring salt wells. The first one was bored at Mike Horton's at the Forks of Goose Creek."

There were many men who operated salt wells for at least a short time. The White family and the Garrard family would become the biggest salt makers. The second governor of Kentucky, James Garrard, sent his son Daniel to establish salt wells.

A salt well was bored by having two men pull the spring pole down while a man in the pit turned the bit a half turn each time the pole came down. The weight of the auger and the pole drove the bit into the dirt or rock and when the pole was released a auger full of dirt was brought up. This went on continually and as the hole deepened more poles were attached above the auger. This helped keep the hole being bored straight and the added weight pushed the auger through the dirt and rocks. The bit was kept sharp by a blacksmith who kept a fire of chestnut wood charcoal burning by the pit.

Wells along Goose Creek were drilled at a rate of about four feet a day to depths of 200 to 300 feet. There are stories of crews striking oil or gas on Collin's Fork and Richland Creek and then abandoning the wells in disgust as the oil tainted the salt. No thought seems to have been given of trying to sell the oil which was bottled and sold in other areas as medicine.

At first the brine from the deep wells was pumped by hand. Huge wooden pumps made of soft wood, often of gum trees which had been bored out, had a plunger wrapped with string to make them tight fitting, were worked up and down by a long lever worked by workmen which were often slaves. Then craftsmen engineered wooden wheels and transmission connections to a tiny mule which was hitched to pole that turned the wheel.

Born a slave on Yellow Creek in Bell County the 102 year old Aunt Jemina Gilbert told of seeing the wells in operation when she was young. "As she recalled the wells were mighty deep and the water was either pumped by hand or with the use of a mule. When a mule was used, a sock was tied over his eyes to keep him from getting dizzy as he had to go round and round." There are many stories of those who saw these diminutive mules walking endless circles.

"She said that the water was pumped into trough made of yellow poplar logs cut in half and hollowed out. The water was carried into a kind of cistern through the pipes."

"When the water was first drawn from the well, it didn't taste a bit salty but sometimes a rock was brought out and if it was placed against the tongue, one would readily discover it was salt. When it reached this cistern, it was mixed with lime and blood. Farmers would sometimes swap a hog or cow for salt. These animals supplied the blood for the making of the salt, the water in the cistern was bitter water. It was placed in kettles which were set over a trench furnace with a fire built at one end and a chimney at the other."

The water was boiled, and boiled until a grease-like scum formed and had to skimmed off the top. Beneath the scum Aunt Jemina said there was something sparklingly in the water "like dancing diamonds. The salt crystals were very pretty recalled Aunt Jemina. They shined like stars when dipped from the water."

The wells poured forth an increased volume of brine and the furnaces were enlarged. The

pumped brine was fed into a pipeline of red cedar poles that were 10 to 15 feet long. They were trimmed smooth and then lain in a rack and secured. Workmen bored the pole lengthwise by hand with a long-stemmed auger. Strung together into a pipeline the brine ran into the troughs and then fed as needed into huge brass kettles five feet in diameter and two feet deep. These kettles, each holding twenty gallons, were set in double rows over a trench dug into the ground or on top a double brick wall of brick or stone. Clay was packed between the kettles to keep the heat from escaping. A continuous fire was kept going under the kettles until the salt was formed.

As the brine was evaporated the contents of the nearly empty kettles were ladled into just a few kettles to finish crystallizing while the empty kettles were refilled. Additives were then put in the crystallizing salt. Packhorse men brought lime, the dried blood of cows and pigs, and cornmeal to the salt furnaces. Workmen dipped tallow, blood, lime and cornmeal from bags or small barrels to hasten the crystallizing process. These additives in the right measures dumped into the bubbling pots gave the salt its texture and whiteness. The finished salt was the size of small pebbles and not the fine salt that could be gotten from a salt shaker.

The Methodist Rev. Dickey, who will be quoted often, said that the white workers lived in cabins "as they do about iron furnaces" but he didn't mention where the black slaves lived.

There were many men who came to the salt works; one was Fredrick Lincks whose son Robert Lincks told. "He was born in Germany" but "ran away from home and joined the army of Napoleon Bonaparte. He was a wild boy. I have seen his body, and it was all covered with scars, showing he had many conflicts in his young days." Leaving the army he bought passage to America and many of the passengers died on the voyage. "When they landed in America, the ship's captain sold them for their passage, denying they had paid him."

"James Garrard, Governor of Kentucky bought my father. For a year he did not know he was sold. He could not talk English. He somehow learned he was a slave, and he made his case known to a lawyer who could speak German. He looked in his trunk and found his free papers. He was about to leave the Governor, but the Governor hired him for a year, and Daniel Garrard brought him to Clay County to oversee negroes at the saltworks. He promised the Governor to return, but he never did. He worked for the Garrards whom he greatly loved."

Daniel Garrard had established a saltworks at Buffalo Salt Lick in 1806. This was located where the present-day bridge crosses Goose Creek on U.S. Highway 80. Fredrick Lincks was a strong, muscular man whose English wasn't very good according to his great-granddaughter Mrs. Minnie Black who told the following story:

"As he was a stranger and a rather muscular man, it was only a natural course of events that he was challenged by the Clay County bully of the day to a wrestling match. After wrestling for some time, Fredrick shouted, 'Chug a lug' (or a similar word.) Several times he repeated the

word.”

“Finally the bully shouted ‘Enough’. With a sigh of relief, Fredrick stammered in his broken English, ‘That’s the word I was trying to think of.’”

In his ‘Appalachia, A History’ John Alexander Williams said that the early life in Clay County, “revolved around two very different systems of production. , the subsistence-oriented system of forest farming, based predominantly on family labor, that was practiced by the vast majority of the population and a smaller, slave-based (salt) manufacturing and mercantile economy controlled by a few wealthy families.”

By 1829 “The expense of establishing a salt work is about 3,000 dollars. They are profitable.”

A salt works was described by Anne Royal. “These salt-works are dismal looking places; the sameness of the low sheds; smoking boilers, men, the roughest that can be seen, half naked; hundreds of boatmen; horses, oxen, ill-used and beat by their drivers; the mournful creaking of the machinery, day and night; the bare, rugged, inhospitable looking mountain, from which all the timber has been cut, gives it a gloomy appearance.”

There were at least 15 salt works operating at one time in Clay County and some of them will be told of later. Some say slaves had been brought to Goose Creek after all the trees had been cut down and coal found near the salt works had to be mined. About once a week the fires were allowed to go out as the entire furnace needed to be cleaned because of the buildup of ashes under the kettles.

It was necessary for a man to crawl the entire length of the tunnel between the kettles with a shovel and a scrapper and often a burning torch so he could see. The whole area was still hot as there was no time for the ashes to cool as they needed to get the furnace back into operation as soon as possible. So the man working in the heat and semi-darkness worked as fast as was possible to finish this hard, difficult task.

Not surprisingly this job usually fell to a slave. The story is told of an Old Black Man, slaves names were often never mentioned as it was unimportant to whites, who told of having gone into the furnaces when he was young. He told of the darkness, the cramped working space, the constant fear that he might get hung up in a tight place. He told of wild rabbits seeking the warmth of the furnace in the winter being caught and ending up in a pot of hot soup for the workers.

Working near the boiling kettles could be dangerous. Charles House told of this in his book, ‘Blame It On The Salt.’ A slave named Tom had been leased to “John Bates to work at his salt furnace on Goose Creek.” Tom “fell in a salt kettle and was scalded from head to knees.” Tom must have started screaming from the burns for “Cuffee, a Negro belonging to John Bates, was asleep nearby but was awakened by the noise. He said he ran and pulled Tom out of the kettle

and that Tom ran towards the creek about forty five yards and cut his throat with a pocket knife and instantly died.

Slavery was never a major factor in the mountains as it was in the Bluegrass of Kentucky with just 5 to 6 percent of the population in the mountains being slaves; and they were at the salt works and a handful of large farms. James White's slaves were said to have liked him. Daugherty White would get up on a log or stump when he whipped a slave so that the added height increased the force of a blow. The slave Sophia Word told that Hugh White, the son of General White, "was so mean to his slaves that I know of two of his gals that killed themselves."

"One" Sophia said "n----- gal Sudie wuz found across the bed with a penknife in her hand. He whupped another n----- gal almost to death fer forgetting to put onions in the stew. The next day they went down to the river and fer nine days they searched for her and her body finally washed ashore."

I searched the Death Records for Clay County and under the year 1857 found, "Mary White, slave, drowned." A second record showed, "Armetta White. 14 years old. Female black servant. Cause of Death. Self drowning."

The White family records that Hugh died from natural causes but Sophia felt differently and said: "The master could never live in that house again as when he went to sleep he would see the n----- standing over his bed. Then he moved to Richmond and there he stayed until a little later he hung himself."

The sale of slaves was never a happy event and the selling of slave children was even less so. When a slave owner wished to sell a child he would send the mother to work in the fields. Small children were left in the slave quarters and watched over by older slave women. When the mother returned her child would be gone and she' never see the child again.

I found a list of children being sold in Clay County. The list gives the child's name first, then the mother's name; the age of the child and the purchase price of the child:

Ellen	Elizabeths	2	\$150
Melba	Delia's	4	\$100
Susan	Delia's	2	\$100
Edna	Polly's	3	\$175

Then there is the horrifying story of a white man coming into Manchester, the Clay County Seat, to attend to some business. It was very cold when he mounted his horse and headed home. While passing close to the mansion of a wealthy slave owner he heard a child crying and stopped. He found a naked black child and wrapped her in a blanket. He took the child up to the

mansion and the white family said they had no use for the black baby. The man took the baby home and she spent the rest of her long life with the man's family.

There was a jumble of slave sales I found in Clay County records. John, seven months old brought \$100. 'Happy', a woman brought just \$5.75, while slaves named 'Kizzy, Cuffey, Big Isaac, Little Isaac, Yellow George and Little Green' were sold but no price was given as to what they brought. Women with unnamed children were sold. "Harriet & child, Henny & child." All these were noted as being "Black or Mulatto", just like the description of color given on a sales bill when a horse or cow was sold.

The sale of adult slaves was often used as a tool to keep the remaining slaves in line by threatening to sell them to crueler masters. Amelia Jones, who had a sister sold for 1,200 dollars, said her master kept his slaves docile by saying, "You all belong to me & and if you don't like it, I'll put you in my pocket." This was an expression slave owners used after pocketing the money they made by selling a slave.

The master of Amelia used the old trick of sending a male slave off to work the field and then selling his wife. When the grieving husband asked him about his missing wife the master would say, "Don't worry you can get another one." Amelia's father was sold on the auction block in Manchester and then led away in handcuffs. Amelia never saw him again.

The auction block stood in an open space in Manchester and slaves walked up the steps to stand on the rough lumber where buyers could see them better. In 1837 Ben Reed stood there. Ben was described as being "5 ft 7 in. tall, long black hair (resembles that of an Indian), and piece of one ear cut off---and was copper color" Ben would later escape and claim that his Indian mother, 'Morning Star' was a free woman and he was not born a slave.

Ben was from Virginia and might well have been an Indian. In 1817 the State of Virginia, as would most Southern States, passed a law stating that any Black man or Indian found without legal papers stating they were free could be sold as slaves. For this reasons for several generations families in the mountains never admitted having an Indian ancestor.

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There were Black people that were not slaves. In the Clay County's 1840 census a family of seven "Free Colored Person" headed by Elizabeth Drew were listed. Elizabeth's son Charles would marry Elizabeth Reed. The Reed family, through which I am descended, came to Clay County and was listed as "Free persons of Color", more on the Reed family later.

CHAPTER TWO

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Among the early settlers was Thomas Philpot who came from South Carolina in 1802. He told his son Anderson, "he made the boards to cover the first salt shed put up on Goose Creek. It was made at the mouth of Tanyard Branch one half mile above the town. He gave me the frow he used, and I have it yet. When the wood gave out then they moved the furnace to where Manchester now stands, one can see the ashes near Dough White's stable now. Next they moved the furnaces to Dr. Burchell's gate and pumped the water from the same well above the town. This well was ran by Abner Baker. I have seen the furnace in operation above town by coal and wood. It seems they put the furnace back near the water after coal was used"

The first workers at the furnaces; at least while wood was burned seemed to have been white men. John McCarty said, My great-grandfather was Jacob Seaborn" who was too young to enlist in the Revolutionary Army. "He enlisted in the name of Alex Seaborn. His father came camp to camp, but could not find his name on the rolls. He was hidden until his father left. He came to Kentucky on a flatboat. He came to Clay County to operate salt furnaces. My great-grandfather was so small---yet he was a woodchopper before coal was mined."

One by one the small operators were bought out. Daniel White bought out Collins, then Samuel Langford, Alexander Outlaw and John Ballinger. In 1806 the Whites bought one-fourth interest in John Amis's Lower Goose Creek Salt Works. This interest entitled them to go into the 375 acres of woods where they could get enough firewood and brine-water to power one furnace. Two acres of the 375 acres; "The most eligible & advantages land" was set aside for the building of "mansion houses"

General Hugh White, the self-proclaimed "King of the Salt Makers" lived in this 'mansion house' which was a two story frame that had plaster applied on hand riven lathes to make the walls. When General White died in 1856 the 'other' Salt King, Captain Daniel Garrard bought the 'mansion house'. Daniel's son, General T.T. Garrard would later live in this house.

"Enmity and jealously developed between the Whites and Garrards because of business rivalry" says Darrel Richardson. "The Whites cut their price of salt five cents on the bushel and began to sell more salt than their competitors. This forced the Garrards to come down too, so they proceeded to under sell them. When they Whites learned of this they lowered the price five cents below the Garrards. This kept on until the Whites were selling at 15 cents a bushel. The Whites always maintained that they could produce salt more cheaply than the Garrards and usually did. The Garrards were forced out of the salt business by this means or more than one occasion." The enmity and bitter feelings between the families didn't surface until 1844.

The White's and Garrard's were big salt makers but there were many other smaller producers. William Washington White, son of Hugh White said "My father was poor when he began life. John Gilbert said he loaned my father \$360 dollars when he was starting in business

not knowing whether or not he would ever get it back."

Early salt wells were scattered along the course of Goose Creek and its tributaries. Little Goose Creek was said to have been the boundary between the settlers and the Cherokee before the Tellico Treaty was signed in the early 1800's.

Some of the salt makers were told of by John McDaniel who worked for Hugh White in 1843, "There were 12 furnaces in operation of Goose Creek and salt was selling for 12 cents a bushel. The following persons owned or operated furnaces at that time: Alex White above the mouth of Buzzard (Creek); Daniel Bates above Horton's on the west side of the creek; Gen. White at the forks of Goose Creek. T.T. Garrard where it stands now (1898), built in 1832; Daugherty and James White on the same fork; Racner at D.Y. Lytte's ford below Manchester---Frank Clark at the mouth of Red Bird; Adam White of Abingdon (Va.) at the mouth of Buzzard."

Between 1827 and 1830 Hugh and James White divided their property. James took the Collins Fork and Hugh the East Fork. Hugh moved one of his steam engines (which ran the pumps) from Furnace Branch and used it to pump water to both his and James salt works. James White was said to be worth a million dollars but this might have been exaggerated as a million dollars was a lot of money back then. However many of the salt makers were wealthy men.

"By 1802" Verhoff said "two establishments had become sufficiently important to warrant the improvement by the state of the roads." Those needing salt started coming to the salt works while there was still a danger from raiding Indians. William Woods and his 12 year old brother came from Crab Orchard for salt and camped for the night on their return trip. The old dog that had come with the boys looked back the way they had come and growled without barking. Once before this dog had growled without barking and Indians had later struck. The boys reached home safely and learned a day later several men had been killed by Indians in the same place they had camped.

When the Indian danger had passed entire families came to the salt works for their year's supply of salt. Some came from as far away as the Big Sandy Valley. There could be long waits for the salt to be boiled so people came prepared to camp under their wagons or two wheeled carts and in some cases under pieces of canvas stretched over tree limbs. Here they met old friends and children played with new playmates. These children played "All Chaw hay in the Corner, Chase The Squirrel, farmer in the Well, Getting married, here we go around the Mulberry Bush, London Bridge, Marching to Quebec, Miller Boy, Pig in the Pallor, Thus the Farmer Sows His Seeds, Pussy Wants A Corner, Drop the handkerchief, Hiding the Thimble, Down to New Orleans and many other games.

Adults were likely to listen to leather lunged preachers roaring out a Hellfire and Damnation sermon. At night around the flickering campfires screeching fiddles rang out as preachers that warned of Burning Hellfire's during the day became square dance callers. The young and the

and the old loved to dance and they bounced around as calls like, "Old Crows in, Old Crow out. Birdies in, Birdies out," filled the night air.

These days and nights were enjoyed by all as for most of the year the families had lived in isolation amidst the hills, hollows and ridges. While men might meet other men while hunting in the vast forest most women seldom left her cabin and they dearly missed the companionship of another woman. It must have been a time of sadness as those gathered there went their lonely way back into the forest.

A lucky few had wagons or carts to haul their salt but many had a packhorse or ox to bear a load. Some had brought a milk cow to supply milk during their stay and poor 'Bossie' often carried salt on her thin back. Those who were truly poor had no option but to throw the sack of salt on their shoulder or the shoulders of their wife and children for their long walk home. Because of the wonderful time they'd enjoyed at the salt works few complained.

Over in Harlan County women prepared to come to the salt works by sewing sacks to hold the salt. Men took the hides they'd gathered to cover the sacks to keep them dry on the way home. Each man carried a hunting rifle and powder because they had to hunt for food on the trip. The loaded salt bags were slung on long poles with a man on each end carrying the pole on his shoulder. Two men could carry six bushel bags in this manner. A man could carry just one bushel of salt on his back.

These men left the salt works on the 'Salt Trace' which went up Goose Creek and then Greasy Creek to the Red Bird River. It then crossed over the hill to the Middle Fork of the Kentucky River to Leatherwood Creek which it went up and over the mountain to the Cumberland River at Harlan. In 1840 John Holton told of a salt train on the Salt Trace. "I saw a train of nine Jacks and Jennies owned by George Britton of Harlan, three miles from the Harlan Courthouse. Just two drivers, some mules so small they could just carry one bushel of salt." This Salt Trace, fell out of favor about the time of the Civil War.

Salt Caravans began coming to the salt works from east of the mountains. A Master Driver with, several young helpers brought packhorses and stashed grain along the way for their return trip. At the salt works the Master Driver bought what were called 'large wallets' of bread, jerked meat, boiled ham and cheese to feed him and the boys on the return trip. Two bushels of salt weighing a total of 168 pounds was put on each horse. This load was 32 pounds below the normal load for a horse (200 pounds) but horses in the mountains were never well fed as the grazing along the road back was poor as other animals had picked it bare.

There were heartless men who made their horses carry double loads but this led to broken down horses. Men without feeling knew horses were cheap and they accepted broken down horses as being part of doing business. Good, caring men would load the salt on their own backs when crossing over dangerous parts of the rocky trails or up steep hill to keep from breaking

By the 1830s John McDaniel said, "There were many six-horse wagons that came to Goose Creek when I was a boy from Louisville, loaded with goods and went back with salt. Robin Cornett would buy things from these waggoneers for people who would leave money for him for that purpose. One (wagon) was hardly out of sight in those days."

John Holton told of seeing wagon trains of "100 wagons in a train, teams of six horses or three yoke of oxen" coming through the Cumberland Gap to the salt works. Slave owners in Virginia hired their slaves out as wagon drivers to merchants taking goods to the salt works. These wagons would be crammed with apples, flour, jeans, cornmeal, linsey (cloth) fresh fish and all manner of manufacture goods. Cooper shops lined the roads to the salt works and the merchants traded the goods they hauled for the barrels they needed to haul the salt.

The making of barrels was a many stepped process. Men entered the woods and felled trees. Verhoff says the fallen log was "sawed across into stave lengths, and the circular faces marked off. The logs are then split into billets, which by such means of the heartening-ax are chopped out from the sap wood which is left as a round block. Billets are split from the bolts by means of the wedge or frow and mall (maul), and dressed, that is hollowed out and trimmed into shape, by means of the draw-knife." These were handmade but in later years "The bucker, a machine run by horse power or steam" made the staves. The staves were stacked in piles and left to dry for three months.

Coopers specialized in the types of barrels they made. Wet Coopers worked with oak to form watertight barrels to hold whiskey, cider or brandy. Dry Coopers, or Slack Coopers, made barrels from maple, elm or chestnut to store flour, meal and salt. White Coopers made small tubs, butter churns, bowls, plates and boxes from pine, birch, beech and maple; Cedar Coopers fashioned cedar into tubs and pails.

Anderson Philpot told that Henry Rader, a German or Dutchman "use to shave barrel timber for my father. My father made salt barrels." I won't always correct what a man said about his ancestor but I will here. Anderson said "My father was in the Revolutionary War; he fought under Lafayette. He said the Tuscaloosa River was red with blood during an engagement." His father may have fought in the Revolution but Tuscaloosa is a Creek Indian word for the Black Warrior River in Alabama. General Andrew Jackson fought at the Tuscaloosa in the War of 1812.

Metal cost too much to use as bands to hold barrels together so coopers used hoops of wood. Men entered the woods and cut, trimmed, piled and tied into bundles long slim hickory or elm 'withes' for use in the cooper shops. These withes were never over 12 feet long and were split in half making two hoops just long enough to go around the barrel. Enoch Abner came to the salt works about 1830 and made his barrels without the use of metal or nails. Abner's barrels were so tight the top of the barrel could be played like a drum. Abner sold his barrels for fifty cents apiece to the White's chief competitor, the Garrards.

As production of salt reached 6,000 tons per year it was found that only two thousand tons of it could be sent out by packhorses and wagons. Something had to be done to move the 4,000 tons of surplus salt. A few canoe loads of salt, one man mentioned crude barge loads, had gone down Goose Creek, then the South Fork Kentucky River to the main Kentucky River where it was delivered to the Blue Grass.

A State Act of 1810 authorized the clearing of Goose Creek. Daniel Garrard, John Bates and Beverly Broadus were appointed commissioners to raise subscriptions in, "money, labor and property for clearing and keeping in repair the navigation of South Fork and Goose Creek to the salt-works of James Garrard and Sons." A fine of five dollars for each twenty-four hour offense was the penalty for further obstruction of the stream.

Goose Creek is 85 feet wide at Collins Fork and runs some 30 miles to the junction with the Red Bird River. In places dams, were constructed of rocks, brush and logs. This narrowed the channel and caused the water to run faster and deeper enabling a salt boat to run in times of low water. Low hanging limbs were removed as many a man had been knocked from atop a boat by the limbs.

The largest number of obstructions in the creek had been the 25 'Fish Traps.' Men looked for a 'Fall' or low waterfall in the creek where fish could not swim upstream and jump over it. Men and boys would go below the fall and drive stakes clear across the creek so the fish could not escape. In some cases rocks were piled across the stream so fish couldn't jump over them. Men and boys entered the water above the fall and walked downstream towards the dam driving the fish before them. Once the fish went over the fall they were trapped. Using nets men seined wagon loads of fish from the trap. There were laws against building fish traps on navigable streams but they had seldom been enforced.

The American Indian and men from Africa had taught the white man a second way of gathering fish. By pounding the green hulls of walnuts or shoots of the Ohio Buckeye tree with a club against a rock a poison would enter the water. This poison stunned the fish which floated to the top of the water and they could be easily gathered by hand. This poison did not harm the fish or those who ate the fish.

Far down Goose Creek was Laurel Creek where a Boat yard had been constructed. The lumber to build these boats was cut by hand. In Europe men had dug a hole or pit and rolled a log over it to cut. In America a scaffold of wooden beams was erected and the log was rolled up on it. One man, the Sawyer, stayed on top and a second man, the Pit man, stood below the log. A line of string was soaked in pokeberry juice or charcoal, and then snapped to form the line to cut. A 'Whipsaw' with teeth facing one direction had a handle on each end to make the cut. The Sawyer pulled the saw up and the Pit man down. The Pit Man's sweaty body caught much of the falling sawdust and soon his clothes, face, hands and arms became caked with itchy sawdust. As the sawdust filled his ears and eyes he began to spit sawdust from his mouth. The Pit Man

sometimes directed abuse and curses towards the sawyer. Many a fistfight occurred between the sawyer and the pitman.

The salt boats were merely a smaller version of the flatboats that had brought many of the Clay County citizen's ancestors down the Ohio River to Kentucky. Since Goose Creek was so small Verhoff said "The flatboats were of necessity small with a capacity of no more than fifty or sixty tons. They were always subject to delay and often total destruction."

As there were no pesky Government Regulations on how to build a boat each boat builder constructed his boat how he saw fit. Most boats however were built in basically the same way, using beams and lumber created from trees felled in the local area. Men went into the woods and selected a tall, straight poplar tree free of all knots to bring to the ground. The fallen tree was then hewn into a 24 inch square beam up to sixty feet long. This was split into two gunwales (called runners) and oxen drew the runners to the boatyard where they were put on log rollers 12 feet apart. Each end of the boat had beams six to eight feet long joined to the runners so that they sloped upwards so that the boat did not have a blunt front (bow) or end (stern). This enabled the boat to run faster in the water.

Strong sills or upright beams were notched into the runners and fastened in place by wooden pins every eight to ten feet along the runners. Smaller beams, called sleepers, were pinned to the sill every eighteen inches even with the bottom of the sleepers and rising about two feet. Boards were attached to the bottom of this framework with pins of wood. Boards used in the construction of flatboats were 1 1/2 inches thick but the rocky streams the salt boats ran required a much thicker board of 3 inches thick on the bottom of the boat to resist puncture. Once the boards were put on the seams were caulked with hemp cords using a caulking chisel and a wooden mallet.

A layer of 'tow' which was a canvas like covering, was lain over the bottom to help water-proof the boat. A layer on one inch lumber was then put over the tow and caulked. To this point the boat was being built upside down and now was turned right side-up. The upper part of the boats varied considerable and depended upon the cargo to be hauled or the whim of the builder. Salt and coal boats were left open and not covered with a deck. The sides of a salt boat rose only two feet while those of a flatboat might rise four or five feet. Stout 'joists were set upright, fastened with pins and then covered with boards.

In flatboats a third row of joists ran down the middle of the boat. This row was higher than the side joists so that when the boards were put on the deck sloped outwards in two directions allowing rain water to run off. An oar, called a 'gouger', was put on the front (bow) of the boat and a steering oar was fastened in an upright post at the stern. Most boats had oars, called 'sweeps', on each side which were used to keep the boat from smashing into the riverbanks in swift waters. By pulling on the oar closest to the bank the boat would move away from the bank. In shallow water, slow moving water, both oars were pulled, often two men at an oar, to

pull the boat forward.

Boats leaving the Laurel Creek boatyard departed empty and headed up toward the salt works. They could not leave in high water as the boats couldn't be worked up the stream. In lower water crewmen stood on the sides of the boat and with iron-tipped poles slowly pushed the boat up the long deep pools in the stream. Shallow water or shoals would stop the progress of the boat, and then teams of oxen, which were carried on the boat, were off loaded and hitched to the bow of the boat. Whips cracked and teamsters roared out commands and curses as the ox teams strained against the yoke. Once deeper water was reached the oxen were unhitched and without command the well trained animals plodded to the rear of the boat and clambered back aboard.

Once at the various salt works slaves rolled salt barrels up planks and tightly packed up to 400 barrels on a boat, so they would not shift in the rough waters below. Goose Creek was plenty wide at the salt works but it wasn't very deep and once the boat was loaded the bottom sat in the mud and couldn't be floated until flood waters, called a Tide, came. Everyone waited and watched the sky for storm clouds. The amount of rain that fell would determine the depth of the tide to come. There were Big Tides, Little Tides, Flood Tides, Raft Tides and Salt Tides. It took a larger tide to float log rafts than it did salt boats.

Every stream, creek and water-course deposited a pile of rocks, mud and gravel that extended out into Goose Creek. These were a hazard to navigating the creek if the water was not high enough. In normal times these gravel bars were used as fords where people could walk, wade or drive a wagon across the creek.

The old adage, "Time and Tide Wait For No Man" was widely accepted by the men of the mountains and when the heavy rain came men rushed to their boats. A Report by the State said, "It is necessary to navigate Goose Creek by day on account of the short bends and other obstacles to be avoided so that boats that leave the saltworks above Manchester arrive at the mouth of Red Bird (River) in the evening, and are obliged to remain overnight: but on the following morning there is seldom water sufficient to pass the narrows and they are compelled to await another tide."

Many salt boats did not make it as far as the Red Bird before the water level dropped stranding the boats. Allen E. Robertson said, "I have seen 40 boatloads of salt; 2,500 bushels tied up at my father's place at the mouth of Beech Creek from 1837 to 1844. There were 18 furnaces in blast above Manchester, besides Frank Clark's two furnaces (at the mouth of Red Bird) one coal and the other wood." Robertson said, "Salt was worth 75 cents (a bushel). The Goose Creek furnaces made about 80 bushels a day and the Bullskin (furnace), about 60 bushels and they would average 200 days a year."

In 1836 Verhoff said 15 wells had been bored to depths of 230 to 430 feet but only ten were

in production. "The greater part of the annual product was manufactured from seven or eight wells a 'little above Manchester of the East Fork of Collins' where the brine was sufficient for 200 bushels of salt daily."

Boats could spend weeks waiting for another Tide and in some years there was never a second Tide. When the next Tide did come the man at the gouger set himself in the bow. The steersman took his place in the stern. Steersmen like Perce Cottingin, were men of long experience on the river but still he must have drawn a long breath to prepare for what awaited them downriver. The steersman had a mental map of every twist and turn, every rocky shoal and every cliff to be faced. He had to know the upcoming danger points so he could place his pike men, with their long iron-tipped pikes on the correct side of the boat so that they could push the boat away from a possible crash.

In calmer waters the pikes were replaced by oars which were plied to put the boat in position to get around a bend without grounding, slamming into a cliff, or having the bottom of the boat ripped out by a barely concealed rock jutting up out of the water. It is thought that one-fourth of all salt boats were lost on the river; many of those at the dreaded 'Narrows' down on the South Fork of the Kentucky River. The loss of life was not uncommon. Benjamin White was 37 years old when he lost his life and a salt boat in 1854. Local people with a turn for music were said to have composed mournful songs honoring the men who died running the river but as the songs were never written down they became lost over time.

After years of cutting wood for the salt furnaces the hills had been stripped bare and only the discovery of a coal seam four foot thick at the Cherry Tree Corner near the Garrard's salt works enabled the furnaces to keep running. Coal not needed for the furnaces were put on boats and shipped down to the Blue Grass. The high profits made shipping salt covered the cost of losing a boat now and then. The low profits made on shipping coal meant ruin to shippers who lost too many coal boats. After the loss of several coal boats coal was no longer shipped.

Shippers did not wish to assume their losses and went to court to have the steersmen, who they blamed for the loss of their boats, assume the cost of the loss of the coal and salt boats. An example of this was a suit filed in court by T.T. And Daniel Garrard against Joseph Rasner who they had hired to steer two boats down to Boonesborough. The boats carried 3,600 bushels of salt worth about 1,600 dollars. They claimed Rasner, "The defendant undertook and promised to steer said boats with caution and prudence as he would his own boats. But the defendant got drunk and, by his negligence in steering, stove the boat and lost all the salt."

Suspiciously the Garrards had only filed their law suit after Rasner had filed a suit against them. Rasner was a cooper who made barrels for the Garrards. He said the Garrards owed him, "286.00 for work & labor & also \$15,000 for tools and labor." Both suits lingered on and the Garrards filed a second suit claiming the loss of salt had been "510.00 (dollars)" and not the \$1,600 dollars they had first claimed. The outcome of these lawsuits was lost in the

