

JUMP BACK: DOWN THE KENTUCKY RIVER and into the PAST

I WISH TO THANK: Mollie Watkins for bearing with my obsession with history and the Kentucky River for twenty plus years. My sister Terri Ryburn-Sanders for her insights into my writing this book: Priscilla Sims for editing and providing suggestions; Anna Gayle Vickers for sharing her love of Kentucky and family history; Rosemary and Ira Bruner Junior for sharing their stories; my daughter Sabrina Schnarrenberg for typing the book; and to all who have shared their knowledge and answered my questions.

Above all I want to dedicate this to Donald Vickers who shared his knowledge of life along the river and was always willing to listen to my stories. He is deeply missed.

Ray Ryburn

FORWARD

In September of 1999 I set off on a 22-day solo canoe trip on the Kentucky River from just above Beattyville on the North Fork of the Kentucky to Carrollton at the mouth of the Kentucky on the Ohio some 270 miles from my starting point. I have been interested in Kentucky's history beginning in the 1950's. By the 1990's, I learned about my family's role in settling the state and in particular the section of the state along the streams, creeks and runs that flow into the Kentucky River.

The history of the Kentucky River extends back one hundred and twenty-five million years to the Cretaceous Period when the head of the Kentucky lay in North Carolina. Over the millions of years, during the Pliocene and Pleistocene Epochs, the 125 mile long Pine Mountain rose up, cutting off the head of the Kentucky River. Over a period of a hundred million years rain fell on the western slopes of Pine Mountain, which divides today's Kentucky and Virginia, and cut a channel from the mountains to the Ohio River. Over the century's mammoth, mastodon and later buffalo beat out traces over the mountains through small gaps from Virginia to Kentucky, in search of mineral-laden springs.

Pre-historic people followed the animal traces to locate wild game, which comprised a large part of their diet. They had trails that ran from Florida to Maine and passed through the Cumberland Gap following traces up to the Great Lakes. These hunting routes in time became trading routes where seashells from Florida were exchanged for copper from Michigan. Indians called these traces "The Path of the Armed Ones." The early settlers called them war paths.

The Pound Gap led to the North Fork of the Kentucky, but the 450-mile trace down to the Ohio was so rough it never became a major route of travel. The Middle and South Forks of the Kentucky were accessed by tiny gaps that were seldom used. The main land route into Kentucky was through the Cumberland Gap, named for the English Duke of Cumberland. This Gap lay to the south of the Kentucky River. Dr. Thomas Walker, a member of the Loyal Land Company which included the Virginia families of the Madison's, Lee's and Washington's, led an exploratory expedition into Kentucky through the Cumberland Gap in 1750.

Dr. Walker's party struck the Kentucky River by accident after wandering for many days in what they thought was a wilderness. He named the river Louisa after the Duke of Cumberland's wife. Early maps labeled the river Miley, from the Miami Indian word "Millewakame". The river would have many names over the years. The Catawaba Indians called it Cuttawaba or Catawaba. It was also called Chenoka or Chenoa. In time it was named Kentucky for the state it ran through. There are a number of versions of what the word Kentucky meant in one Indian language or another. I have no preference of one version over another.

In the years after Walker's exploration of the state, European-African hunters came from Virginia and the Carolinas to harvest the deer herds for their valuable hides which were used for everything from gloves to book covers. Having been taught hunting techniques by the Indians, these men set up blinds near the mineral springs which they called 'licks' and shot the unwary deer. Because these men were gone from home for months at a time they were called "long hunters."

FORWARD

Daniel Boone was a long hunter in Kentucky. On his first trip into Kentucky trying to reach the Bluegrass, he failed to find Cumberland Gap and wintered in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky. On his next trip he found the Bluegrass, with the help of a guide, John Finley. His party gathered many hides which were then taken by the Shawnee. In 1773 Boone led a party of settlers and their families, in an attempt to settle Kentucky. This attempt failed when the Indians killed several people including Boone's sixteen year old son James.

In 1775, Boone, employed by Richard Henderson, led a trail-cutting party of men and one female slave, through the Cumberland Gap. They cut the famous Boone Trace, also called the Wilderness Trace, at Fort Boonesborough on the Kentucky River. During the Revolutionary War the Indians and the British launched raids against the handful of forts in Kentucky. Kentucky then was a part of Virginia and Virginia sent militia units to help defend these forts. Many of these militia men would come back and settle in the state after the war.

While my direct ancestor, James Ryburn, fought in the east during the Revolution, his brothers and cousins did come to Kentucky in the militia units. John Ryburn, "a noted hunter and a good man in the woods," was on at least one extended scout with Boone along the Ohio River. William and Ralph Ryburn may never have served directly with Boone, but their militia unit helped bury Boone's son Israel, killed at the battle of Blue Licks in 1782. (The Ryburns did not stay in Kentucky after the 'Indian Troubles.')

My mother's people came to Kentucky just after the Indian Troubles in 1794 and have remained there for over two hundred years. My mother was born Hazel Peel and her ancestors, the Peel family, settled on Elm Fork Creek in Jessamine County. One of mom's maternal lines, the Reynolds, settled about the same time on a ridge above Elm Fork. Another maternal line, the Preston's, settled on a ridge above Little Hickman Creek. Yet another maternal line settled on Reed Branch up in Clay County. The Reed's lived on the waters of the South Fork of the Kentucky River. My great-grandfather James Reed rode the raging river in the 1880s to deliver log rafts from the mountains to the sawmills that once lined the lower river.

The Kentucky River was central to everyone's life and well-being in the early years. There were no roads in the mountains until the 1920's. Any product sent out of the mountains came by horseback or on the waters of the streams and river. In the early 1820's men bored salt wells along the South Fork, packed the salt in barrels, and placed them in wooden "saltboats." On the North Fork some salt was made, but the main product shipped was coal. It was after the Civil War beginning in the 1870's and later, that vast flotillas of log rafts were brought out of the mountains.

The mountain streams were small and boats or rafts could run only when melting snow or heavy rains filled the streams. Floods in the mountains were called "tides." Bringing rafts or boats down the river was a dangerous task. The mountains are the most dangerous run on the river ended about where Irvine is now. It was near here that iron was manufactured and placed on wooden "Iron Boats." From here down to the mouth of the river, flatboats were built to haul the farm crops to market. The Deep South raised cotton and bought nearly everything to feed themselves and their slaves from Kentucky

FORWARD

and other states. Most flatboats sold their products along the Mississippi, but some ran all the way to New Orleans. The crew members walked back home over the famed Natchez Trace.

The main stem of the Kentucky River is where the North Fork and South Forks join. In the years before the completion of the 14 locks and dams on the river, steamboats could reach the forks of the Kentucky at Beattyville only on the highest of tides and then had to unload and reload in a hurry or risk being stranded with the falling waters leaving them stuck until the next tide. The first four locks were finished up to Frankfort before 1850. It was decades before the last ten locks were begun. The last of the locks, number 14 wasn't finished until 1918.

The Civil War (1861-1865) devastated Kentucky and set back the development of the state for nearly a generation. Only two major battles were fought near the Kentucky River, the Battle of Richmond and of Perryville. Throughout the war large numbers of soldiers of both armies crossed and recrossed the river. There were countless clashes between small groups of soldiers on and near the river. Soldiers of both the North and South deserted their units and roamed in small bands pillaging isolated farms and in some cases villages. These bands were called "Bushwackers." Home Guard units composed of old men and boys were formed by the state to combat the Bushwackers. At times the Home Guards were no better than the Bushwackers about pillaging.

As I read more and more about the Civil War in Kentucky, I began to realize this was no different than Vietnam where I served. For thirty odd years I had been unable to sort out my feelings about my service in Vietnam. By reading of the various men who fought along the Kentucky River, I began to recognize that sometimes good men find themselves in hard places and are forced to commit acts good men find repugnant. By reading of the actions of a number of men along the Kentucky, I began to understand my actions and that of the men with whom I served.

I will mention the Bushwacker Weed Gay, sometime Rebel soldier George Washington "Wash" Noble, and sometime Union soldier and Bushwacker, Captain William "Billy" Strong. I will mention three southern soldiers (Pete Everret, Dallas Mosgrove and Edward O. Guerrant) who fought along the river and elsewhere. These three men knew each other and Mosgrove and Guerrant wrote of their experiences in the War.

The more stories I heard, the more I read, the more I learned of the river, the more I felt a need to get out on the river. I traveled thousands of miles in a car along the river and its many branches seeking out old boat landings, sites of ferries, Indian fights, Civil War battles, shootouts from feuds, sawmills, "Treasure Caves," and the many Daniel Boone sites. Everywhere I went, I sought out local people from whom I could gather information. Everyone I met seemed eager to share what information they had, doing their best to help me locate what I sought.

I had a buddy, Don Vickers, who had an endless supply of stories about the river. He and I tried locating sites together. His wife, Anna Gayle Blakeman-Vickers, was my first cousin. Anna Gayle and I visited many libraries and graveyards seeking information. As Don was dying from cancer caused by his exposure to Agent Orange in Vietnam, the last thing he asked me was, "How is the book coming?" This book is dedicated to him.

FORWARD

I'm not sure when the idea of taking a canoe down the Kentucky occurred to me, but the idea began to haunt me. I had canoed before. In the 1980s and 1990s my girlfriend Mollie and I canoed the Okefenokee Swamp of Georgia and the Santa Fe River of Florida with friends Sherrie Bremer and Buck Fields. All of us and another long time friend, Priscilla Sims, have camped and hiked in mud, snow and heat in places from Kentucky to Canada. I enjoyed this, but I always had the nagging urge to be on the river.

I had a job as a janitor at an elementary school and had commitments. My son, Raymond, was out on his own, but I was still making child support payments on Sabrina and Amanda. I enjoyed working around the teachers and my co-workers. The children were delightful. Several times I'd be walking down the hallway and a child would wrap themselves around my leg and say "Mr Way, I wuv you." When I started the job, I was promised a low-rent house to live in as long as I worked for the school district. In 1998 the School Board decided to tear down the house. This ticked me off and I went out and bought a \$300 canoe. That would prove to be a mistake because I learned the cheaper a canoe is, the more it weighs. Carrying, called portaging, a 90- pound canoe around a lock is heavy work.

When my women friends learned I was planning to quit my job and canoe the river, they tried discouraging me from quitting and asked questions about the river. The foremost question was, "are their bathrooms on the river?" They might take an overnight trip on the river, but an extended trip is beyond what most would do. It is never a good idea to canoe by yourself, as too many bad things could happen. I would have liked a partner, but everyone I knew had commitments and jobs.

Steve Johnson, who had a good position in the school district and got me the job at the school, was very supportive of my taking the trip. He came by one night and suggested cutting stencils and putting them on the canoe. Steve left and came back with the head of a forward looking eagle which we put on the bow. On the stern in large letters we put the words "Jump Back." As my trip was a jump back in time, the name seemed to fit the canoe. I would cuss that canoe many a time. Steve would have loved the trip, but he had payments, children etc.

The children at the school wrote notes and drew pictures for my farewell and it was very touching. There was a goodbye party where I didn't know what to say. Several of the teachers were truly interested in the trip and I promised to write letters while I was on the river. The journal I kept and letters I sent them make up part of what I write about.

I was 58 years old, but I was still my mother's baby. Mom was extremely unhappy about my getting out on the water. Mom had a lifelong dread of the water, a dread which I inherited. During my trip she kept asking Mollie why I never called. Mollie seemed to accept my desire to canoe the river and supported the trip. I had my gear in the beat-up Ford van and the canoe lashed on top when Sherrie came over early Sunday morning the 13th of September to see me off on the trip. Sherrie came to help Mollie find her way home after dropping me off on the North Fork above Beattyville.

Sun 13 Sep, 1998. – “The long awaited day is here”

Turning my old Ford van off of County Road 2016 just before the Airdale Bridge, I bounced down a dusty rutted lane lined with stacks of recently cut sawlogs. Parking the van as close to the North Fork of the Kentucky River as I could get, I struggled to get the canoe off the top of the van and down to the river's edge, while Mollie and Sherrie carried my camping gear to the canoe. They would not be coming with me on the 270-mile float down to where the Kentucky River meets the Ohio River at Carrollton, this would be a solo trip.

After paddling out to midstream so Mollie could take a picture of me starting the trip, I came back to retrieve the camera and say goodbye. The old van churned up dust in the lane and sped out of sight on the blacktop. The tightness in my chest was replaced by a knot in my stomach. I had the sensation of being dumped in the middle of nowhere. I shook it off by beginning to paddle upstream. There was a rock called Tea Table that I wanted to see, just above where I'd launched the canoe.

From the mid 1880's until the late 1920's men brought log rafts down these flood-swollen waters in the springtime. Each raft had a steersman, who manned a long oar at the stern. These experienced hands knew every twist and turn of the river and where every dangerous shoal or giant rock lay. Every rock was given a name, often after a wreck or death occurred there. A few such shoals and rocks were; Tim's Shoals, Yellow Rock, Willow Shoals, Sherman's Rocks, Old Buck and Berry, Ball's Rock, The Devil's Backbone, the Devil's Last and Tea Table.

It was September, and hot, so I worked up a sweat quickly as I worked the canoe upstream. A nice young couple in a metal boat passed going downriver and told me Tea Table wasn't far. It had been a dry summer and the river was low. I soon encountered a shallow place, where I had to get out and pull the canoe to deeper water. I wanted to launch the canoe much higher on the river, but I would have had to drag the canoe much of the way if I had.

Tea Table didn't appear dangerous at all. I went above the rock to view it as approaching rafts might have years ago. Then slowly drifted down towards it. Raftsmen said that in the swift waters, rafts were swept along as fast as a racehorse could run. The floods they ran on were called “tides” and there was an old saying, “every tide cost a man's life.”

I put the canoe in position to run two to four feet from the rock, but when I drew even with the tea table, the canoe veered sharply and thudded against it. It's as if the rock had sucked the canoe against its rough side. That evening I pitched my tent next to two half-buried children's stuffed animals on a sandy beach. A hundred-yard long cliff rose twenty feet behind the tent. I sat on a log and watched the silent flowing river, as I at a cold supper of hard boiled eggs, sausage and biscuits.

Monday 14 Sep. “I had lunch at the mouth of Hell.”

I had a restless night as a coon shuffled around the tent sniffing at the food I had inside. I stuck my head outside several times to look at the bright moon. Dew dripping from the tall trees on the cliff woke me as it struck the tent. I sat up and couldn't believe how stiff and sore I was.

Thirty minutes later I'm back on the river. The canoe shot through the shallow place I'd had to drag the canoe the day before. I had no way of knowing this would be the last place on the river where I wouldn't have to paddle to move the canoe forward.

As I passed yesterday's launching site, two loggers were loading logs on their truck. One of them called out, asking how the fishing was going. I back-paddled to slow the canoe so I could talk to them. I explained about my efforts to retrace the route where the early rafters ran their rafts. One of the men, whose last name was Deaton, said his grandfather ran log rafts. I'd read of the Deaton's running rafts and would have liked to talk with the man, but I could see they were busy. I waved and started out. Both men called out, wished me luck, and stood watching me for a long time.

The North, Middle and South Forks of the Kentucky River form the Three Forks, which is an area of scenic tree-covered rugged hills. The banks of the forks are lined with river birch, water maples and

sycamore trees, while the hillsides are mostly poplar and oak. I passed two of the largest beech trees I have ever seen. Bright yellow flowers hung over the water, which reflected on the water in a yellowish burst of color. I passed two wooden rowboats projecting out of a high bank. When metal boats replaced wooden boats, men let the wooden boats loose. Floods would cover the boats in mud and receding floods would partially uncover them.

Woodpeckers pounded on trees in the background while colorful Wood Ducks swam just ahead of the canoe. A tiny hummingbird fluttered furiously at the bow, but dashed away before I could get my camera out of the case. I looked up to see where the bird flew and on my right saw Walker Creek. A water-powered sawmill ran here in 1830. There had been a ferry also. This was the first of many ferry sites I'd pass and most I won't write about.

Before publishing "Bluegrass and Rhododendrons" in 1901, John Fox Jr. traversed the upper North Fork on horseback and then rode a rowboat down to Walkers Creek. Here he got on a log raft he'd ride to Frankfort. His narrative of that trip is one of the best descriptions of what it was like to ride the rafts.

Edward O. "Ned" Guerrant was a Rebel soldier whose unit came down this creek in the Civil War. He wrote that the area was, "A most wild, deserted, desolate country, tall cliffs." His unit had been sent to "bag one Wm. Strong." Captain William Strong was a Union officer, whose men were said to have made a hundred widows. Guerrant's unit wouldn't bag Capt. Strong and, in fact, became lost and wound up down river at Hell's Creek.

The always hungry Rebel soldiers had been stripping the local farmers' smokehouses of meat. If the farmer objected, they burned the smokehouse and the farmer's barn and house. The local men responded by setting fire to the woods and the Rebels rode through clouds of smoke. Guerrant said of the fires, "they nearly smoked us all." Shots were fired at the Rebels, and Guerrant's friend, Dallas Musgrove, wrote, "We were much annoyed by the bushwackers, many of whom we captured and then shot, or in army phrase, we 'lost' them. No mercy was shown to these bloodthirsty, sulking land pirates." Musgrove said it didn't bother him to shoot these men.

Some of the bushwackers had been 'lost' just up from where I stopped on a sandbar at the mouth of Hell's Creek to eat lunch. I recalled being on a base in the Central Highlands of Vietnam when a buddy and I took off to avoid a work detail. We came to a pen of concertina wire holding five Vietnamese prisoners clad in black and wearing conical straw hats. They sat on their haunches in the hot sun, seemingly unaware of our presence. On search and destroy sweeps, suspicious men were brought in and interrogated by South Vietnamese interpreters. I asked the MP's guarding the pen what would be done to the prisoners. They turned away without answering.

Around dawn on many mornings, we heard a large deuce and a half truck roar up to the pen. Out of our sight, the prisoners were loaded on the truck and hauled just outside the base. The truck roared back and shortly afterwards, would come the rattle of shots. I would talk to the truck driver, whom I knew slightly and he said he'd leave the prisoners with South Vietnamese soldiers. We were always eating our breakfast out of tin cans when these men were shot. Years later, if I was out doing chores on my farm and I heard shots in the early morning, I found it hard to eat breakfast.

Guerrant was revolted by what he witnessed. He'd joined the Army to fight a noble cause, but found himself fighting civilians and taking food from women and children. He and his friend, Pete Everett, talked of quitting the Army and running off to Paris, France. They did not leave the Army but came to accept the killings. Pete ended the war after gaining fame as "That Bridge Burning Son-of-Bitch Everett." Guerrant became a doctor and then a minister, he labored among the people along the river. Musgrove ended life with a "drinking problem."

I sat on the sandbar a long time thinking. I went off to war in 1965 to fight a noble cause also, that of overthrowing Communism and wound up in a unit burning people's homes and leaving women and children without fathers, brothers and uncles.

As the sun beat down, it must have soared past ninety degrees. When I came to the huge stone piers, which once held the Kentucky Central Railroad Bridge, I pulled into the shade of one to escape the sun. In February of 1890, roaring floodwaters had ripped trees from the riverbanks and lodged them against the piers making a dam. A nine-mile lake backed up behind the dam and when it gave way a wall of foaming water rushed six miles down to Beattyville and flooded the town.

I was sick to my stomach from the heat when I reached the Middle Fork, so I pulled ashore and lay propped up against a sandy bank in the shade. I looked at the canoe for a long time wondering if I had bitten off more than I could chew. Lying there I watched leaves float down the Middle Fork's slow current, once caught by the North Fork's current, they were taken upstream and then brought back down in an endless circle. It was a slow-motion whirlpool.

Up on the Middle Fork, rafters had been caught in Judy's Whirlpool. The rafters often fought desperately with oars and long poles, called pikes, to free their rafts from the whirlpool. Many rafters were thrown into the cold water as their rafts were torn apart in the whirling waters.

Recovering slightly, I went up the Middle Fork, which reminded me of the Mackinaw River in Illinois. Both are slow moving and have fallen trees that make it difficult to canoe around. Corn and tobacco fields were on both sides and white-faced beef cows stood chest deep in the water. I had to stop twice so the cows could slowly turn and lumber out of the water and up steep banks. I thought of the cows I once owned and how my kids would go with me to check on them. My two daughters, Mollie, and I were canoeing the fast waters of the Jack's Fork in Missouri when Mollie and Sabrina's canoe flipped. Sabrina swam ashore and then took off in a panicked run. She had seen a snake on the bank.

I paddled up as far as the highway bridge and changed my mind about walking up to the village of St. Helens. *The village had been a wild and wooly place up to the end of the logging days in the 1920's. Small rafts of 65 logs and two men crews ended their run here, and the small rafts were made into large rafts. Those men not needed to run the large rafts were paid off here. Whiskey flowed freely, and boastful rafters claimed that when they drank from the river as a chaser to the firey whiskey, the river level dropped two feet. Stories are told of fistfights and even gunplay. Men's bodies were said to have been thrown in the river, but I have been unable to find any written evidence of this claim.*

Just before the Middle Fork reaches the North Fork, there is a long stretch of huge cut rocks piled atop each other. This had been the road bed of a railroad. I landed my canoe and walked a mile or so without reaching the piers I'd passed on the North Fork. Once trainloads of logs and cut lumber rumbled over this roadbed. Drunken rafters, riding the trains back home, blasted out train windows and wrecked the interior of the passenger cars.

I returned to where I'd landed and barely had time to set up my tent and fix supper before darkness fell on the silent river. I sat in the darkness and thought of my uncle, Nels Ryburn, who'd taken me fishing on the Mackinaw. We'd sit up all night so we could wade the river every few hours to remove fish and rebait the trout line we set out. Uncle Nels had hoboed around the country during the Depression and had learned to cook in a coffee can. We kept a fire going and watched the crayfish bubble in the can while Uncle Nels told his stories.

He had been a spotlight operator in the old vaudeville and burlesque shows and remembered every joke told there. At the time, these shows were considered indecent, and Nels had to slip my underage father in to see them. There was a red light on the stage that could be seen only by the performers. A man at the door could push a button causing the red light to come on if he spotted cops there to raid the show. Performers could then change their jokes and avoid arrest. Even the raunchiest of jokes back then would be considered mildly off-color today. Uncle Nels had a knack for telling the jokes. I slept well that night.

Tuesday 15 Sep. "Last night I set up the tent so I could see the North Star thru the open tent fly."

I was back on the river early. This is the best time to observe wildlife. My back, arms, legs and neck were stiff and I wondered again if it was really a good idea for a 58-year old man to try canoeing the river alone. Herons were sunning themselves or just perching on dead trees. As the canoe neared them they launched themselves over the river. Steam boatmen believed the herons had the souls of departed steamboaters and protected the steamboats. When the fog was heavy on the river and visibility was poor, the herons would rise up, fly downriver and land on snags the river men couldn't see. If the boats had stuck the snag, they may have sunk.

There were fewer river birches and more willows along the banks below the Middle Fork. Hemlocks and rhododendrons dotted the woods and bright red Indian Paintbrush grew along the river's edge. In the shallow water was a bush resembling a Rose of Sharon with red flowers with a pink center. The river was beginning to widen and I knew this was caused by the water backing up behind Lock and Dam 14 below Beattyville. There were a few vacation-type homes scattered here and there and a handful of dirt boat ramps leading down to the river. I was looking for Malhoney Shoals but never found it. The water had backed up behind the dam and formed a "pool" covering the shoals.

In 1864 Minerva Miller and her Union Army sweetheart stepped out of the Miller cabin onto the porch. Raiding Rebel soldiers shot and killed her sweetheart. Minerva picked up her sweethearts pistol and shot, killing one of the Rebel's horses. The Rebels then rode off with Minerva's favorite horse. Her uncle, Sgt Oakes came to the cabin and with others chased after the raiders. They emptied two Rebel saddles in the middle of the river at Malhoney Shoals. They brought Minerva's horse back to her.

I have long wondered what happened after that to the 16-year-old Minerva. In Vietnam we lost men who left sweethearts behind. A man I knew only as Bob, got married on a three-day pass. They had just one night together. Another time a sergeant tripped a mine. Several men asked me if I wanted to see his body as he was from my hometown. I said no. After I came home I found that the sergeants wife had been my cousin Alice's Best friend since high school. The sergeant had been buried in a closed casket and his widow never believed it was her husband. Alice asked me to talk with his widow, but I refused.

I couldn't deal with people from my war, but I could deal with people from the Civil War. My friend Don Vickers was a great-grandson of Minerva. Don's wife was Anna Gayle Blakeman-Vickers, my first cousin. The three of us pieced together Minerva's story. Anna Gayle found a picture of the fourteen year old Minerva. Minerva's granddaughters remembered her from the 1930's and recalled that she had a crippled hand. She'd been shot during the Civil War, but the granddaughters didn't know when or where.

Her sweetheart's name and the location of his grave was lost over the years. When someone told Don the sweetheart was killed at Christmas I was able to research old military records to learn Jacob Mullins was killed about that time. Don and I located an overgrown graveyard close to the Miller cabin. We think Mullins is buried there. Minerva married Samuel "Peahead" Gabbard and they had ten children. When Peahead died, he was buried in one graveyard and Minerva buried in another. Minerva lies beside neither her sweetheart nor her husband.

When the rafts were running the Tides any raft that struck a bank and became lodged posed a danger to the rafts running behind it. In swift water it could take a mile to stop a raft. On one occasion two rafts became entangled just above Beattyville and blocked rafts coming downriver. Alex Deaton, a strong swimmer, grabbed an axe and ran out on the rafts to chop them free. Something happened and when he went off the raft, he never came up. I wondered if he was related to the logger I'd met on Monday.

I came to Beattyville about noon time and from atop a high bluff I heard school children I couldn't see playing outside. I'd heard that joyful sound for nine years before quitting my job at the school to make this trip. The children's voices faded and I came to a concrete boat ramp where two pickups with empty boat trailers sat. I needed to stretch my cramped legs so I landed and walked around

