

The Rockhouse Creek is a sizeable stream and after the Civil War Wilburn Hampton had a saw mill up on Doty Creek which flows into Rockhouse Creek. Men would haul logs to Hampton's Mill from as far away as Blair Creek. Men logged along the Rockhouse. Custer Back would write of his grandfather, Alamander Whitaker, who was tall for a logger; just under six feet. He had wide shoulders, muscular arms, chest and waist and a thin waist.

"In his early manhood, he was working in the forest cutting timber and sawing logs for rafting down the river. The logs had to be rolled down the steep hillsides to the rivers edge where they were built into rafts. A broad swath of trees and undergrowth was cleared so the logs could roll all the way after they were positioned and started to roll. Grandpa was helping to position the logs. One large log with a bend in it had been worked into position and was starting to roll when Grandpa saw his oldest son Willie directly in the path of the log a little further down the hill, trying to work another log from where it had hung up."

To save his son, "Grandpa jumped right on front of that log and jammed his handspike pole into the ground with the end resting on his thigh. As it rolled over, the bend in the log hit the handspike when it whipped down, which threw the whole weight of the log on the handspike, breaking Grandpa's leg below the knee and riving the stub of his leg into the ground. Fortunately, the other men were able to stop the log before it rolled over him. He was carried to the camp, and the men done their best they could in cleaning the break and putting the leg in a splint."

Some of the men rushed for a doctor but he was fifty miles away and the leg had set by the time he reached the camp. The doctor thought rebreaking the leg might cost Whitaker his leg so nothing was done. Custer says, "Grandpa had one leg two inches shorter than the other the rest of his life." This disability did not prevent Whitaker from farming and working just as hard and capably as any other man.

Loggers were injured and killed by rolling logs and the newspapers of the time reported the death of loggers with flowery illusions. One death was reported: "His soul took flight from earth and left the mortal tenement for which but a few days before he had been a model of manly vigor."

The Line Fork Creek's head lies under the towering limestone cliffs of Pine Mountain. Pre-historic peoples painted figures on the cliffs and the Long Hunters named one of the tributary creeks Painted Branch. Gideon Ingram and William Cornett came to the Line Fork as hunters but were frightened off by Indians. On their second visit they and three other men were ambushed by "the wiley Cherokees." Two men were 'butchered and scalped'. One old man related what he had been told of this fight. "Anyway, that is where our

forefathers was defeated (and) run away, and it has been called Defeated Creek every since."

The men of the mountains have fought in all of our nation's wars. Lily Cornett was severely wounded in World War I and after recovering worked in a coal mine before he began logging. I have talked with his grandson Jimmy Cornett who told me of that men down at Frankfort told Lily he should not cut the logs from his land as it would become valuable as the woods were logged off. Lily began a lifelong campaign to save his woods. He would face down large logging companies and equally large coal companies, both on his land and in the courts. His sons moved back from the outside to help their father defend the woods; once they did so with a gun.

I knew, but didn't bring up the fact the Lily had more than one family. Jimmy told me that his grandfather would walk home from Frankfort after delivering rafts there. Years later, one of Lily's sons walked home over the same route and encountered his half-brothers and half-sisters. Lily had a second family. Jimmy said the first family accepted the second family and exchanged visits with them.

Today the Lily Cornett Preserve sits along the Line Fork Creek and has some of the last remaining trees of the time before the mountains were stripped of its once vast forest. A buddy of mine, Buck Fields, was a guide there and he gave four of us a tour of the Preserve. I have never seen hardwood trees as huge of those on the Preserve.

There were those landowners who did not protect their land and trees. Around 1900 Jessie Holcomb became one of the richest men in the county when he sold his land and timber to a Northern Timber Firm. His family later said that through bad business ventures and Jessie's fondness for Peach Brandy the money was soon gone.

The Hargis Isom family; lived on the Big Branch of the Line Fork; but it isn't a very big branch. Hargis's father "had been a teacher, merchant, Baptist preacher and country gentleman farmer---but he did very little farming with his own hands. He was a Delegator. As his oldest boy, I was often on the receiving end of his orders. He sent me out to grub, hoe, plow or cut timber. I usually took 4 or 5 men with me and acted as their boss even though I was barely in my teens. Whatever the men did I did, whether it was on a crosscut saw or felling a tree. Dad was doing his own sales, contracting with lumber purchasers, sometimes before the lumber was cut, sometimes after."

"We sawed railroad ties for the L&N railroad. If the timber was good, without knots, we could always sell we hauled to Roxana, a good distance of 5 or 6 miles, and we would stack our ties in the Tie yard, as it was called, 10 or 12 feet high in squares, and would tack our name on it. Periodically a grader from L&N came through and branded the ties "L&N #1, #2, #3" with an iron hammer. He would issue a receipt, mail it to us stating their intention to

buy. A check would be issued later on the basis of his grading. If we disagreed, we were to notify them in writing that in our judgment he had graded our ties too low."

My father said that tie graders in Missouri would put a lower grade on ties which meant that the men who cut the ties received a lower price for their ties. One grader done that so often a folk song was written about him and it wasn't kind to him. I have been unable to find a trace of this song.

"Occasionally thieves would saw the owners name off the ends of the ties and it would bear no brand at all. At the next branding period they would put their name on them and thereby steal ties. It was kind of like cattle rustling." Hargis said.

"We sold our timber to Ritter Lumber usually. About every twenty years a stand of timber would have grown until there was another crop to sell. A lumber representative would come to the farm and offer, "I would like to buy all your white oak timber 15" (inches) and up." We would go to the woods, count the white oak, brand them with a "V" or "triangle" mark in whatever color of paint his marking was. He did this over the entire area. Folks got a better price if the mill was already in the area."

"Walnut was always in demand because it could be used for hundreds of purposes even in a smaller diameter: gun stocks, small furniture, etc."

"Lumber companies would bring a team and a man to supervise the cutting and hire local men doing the sawing, local teams to do the pulling. Often men doing the cutting had little regard for undergrowth and it took many years for recovery. Now you can go back in Kentucky hills and find deep ravines which were made because of rains, winds, and snows coming down the paths where the logs used to be pulled created a trench or gully, washing away a lot of the hillside land that trees would have held back."

"After all the timber was cut there were floods-those small streams would overflow with the rains coming off the hills and the trenches were are flashways. Trees, which had been there were nature's flood control-the leaves catching the rain and preventing erosion of the soil."

"Previous to this time the timber was cut by owners, the logs floated down the river, when the waters were up in the Spring or Fall. Neither my father nor I did any "rafting" but my grandfather did. A lot of the rafting men found women of easy virtue and lots of liquor awaiting them at the river ports."

"The lumber business helped our country store. We sold canned goods and other products to persons doing the cutting. When the mill was removed, people who had been receiving cash for labor from the lumber companies were left in a state of desolation. They had become accustomed to having a little money and their lifestyle had changed with the

flow of money. They would have to wait another few years when the timber would grow again."

"A barrel stave company, Maglone Bros., with Seagram Distilleries, set up a mill at the mouth of Tolson Creek, then moved it to Line Fork to the Alex Stamper property, across the branch from the present Reception Area for Lily Cornett Woods."

Whiskey barrels staves are made from white oak. The staves for these barrels had been "rived" by hand until machines were invented to turn out the staves. Two men would enter the woods and after falling a tree cut it into blocks. Each block delivered to a stave company brought 45 cents. A good team of men could cut seventy blocks a day.

All the time the mountains were being logged agents for the coal companies came and purchased mineral rights from land owners. These people were cheated. Hargis Ison wrote in 'The Appalachian Peddler', "My parents and grandparents practically gave away mineral rights (50 cents or \$1.00 an acre). In their defense it could be said that they did not anticipate any coal development for years and even their lifetime and, too, a lot of coercion was put on the land owners."

He said that, "Timber on the other hand, was a tangible product, bringing perhaps \$2 or more a tree. Although contracts would stipulate size of the timber covered under the contract (e. g. 15" up) within the 5 or 10 year contract period the smaller timber would have grown. Dad would argue that they had not paid for these smaller trees. Sometimes the lumber company would "compromise" in the face of a lawsuit. But the landowners were "fleeced" by city slickers on almost every turn."

The river enters Perry County below the Line Fork Creek and Richard Collins says, "Perry County is drained by the North Fork and Middle Forks of the Kentucky River, which is navigable for descending boats a considerable portion of the year. The surface of the county is hilly and mountainous, and a large portion unsuitable for cultivation but well adopted for sheep and wool-growing. The valleys are fertile and productive. The principal articles of export are- horses, cattle, hogs, salt, coal, ginseng and wool." Logging wasn't a real factor in the county's economy in 1878 when Collins wrote his book but two years after that logging began to play a major role.

The Big Leatherwood Creek was often called Courthouse Creek as the first court in Perry County was held there under a cliff. It was also called Salt Creek for the salt works there run by "Old Bob" Brashear. The Union Home Guard was displeased with Old Bob who had two sons in the Rebel army and Old Bob planned to move to Tennessee to escape their wrath. His slaves told that one night Old Bob slipped out of his house carrying a bag of gold so heavy it would tax the strength of a strong man to lift it. He disappeared in the woods and returned without the bag. He never returned from

