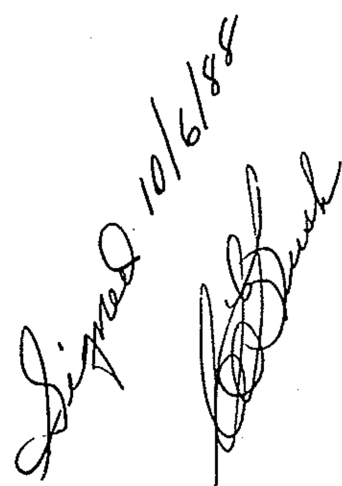
TOWNSEND MOUNTAIN

by:

Claude Everett Bush

September, 1988

Leeco, Kentucky



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PREFACE

So the family tree grows as life goes on. With each new generation the branches reach farther out and the roots grow deeper in Kentucky soil. Many descendants of Garrett Townsend are still in central Kentucky while others are scattered across the United States.

Many years have come and gone since the first Townsends settled in a land that was to become the state of Kentucky. These descendants have found themselves in all walks of life. Some have died young, and others have lived many years. There have been those that lost their lives in war. Others have known sorrow and hardship while others have prospered. One characteristic that has always been evident is a strong sense of family. This kinship is the fiber that bonds us together as a family.

It has been said that we spend the first half of our life getting away from our roots and the second half trying to get back to them. In order to preserve this heritage for future generations, the author has made a great effort to collect and assemble these stories that have been passed through generations of time. While other versions and stories may exist in the Townsend family, these were chosen because they were handed down through the family and indicative of their life in early Kentucky as they saw it and lived it.

7/98

In days past, our childhoods and adulthoods were spent at various family gatherings at holidays, birthdays, reunions and just about any reason for the family to be together. An abundance of all kinds of good food was always served at these gatherings. These times were filled with stories, favorite dishes, good times and laughter. Looking back over these times, we remember the voices and laughter of all our loved ones gone. It is for these generations past that this book is written in rememberance of them.

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FRONT COVER-Old log house rebuilt on same location as original James Townsend cabin that burned circa 1900.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

by Claude Everett Bush

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I have been an oil producer, and owner of various oil and gas leases in four corners adjoining the area of Estill, Lee, Powell and Wolfe counties. This area adjoined the old Townsend homestead. I was always plagued with a gnawing curiosity about the circumstances surrounding the family loss of such valuable property. I had been too involved with my business demands to seek the answer.

After my mother's death and my retirement, my sister, Edythe, brought me some old papers and family history that started me searching. This book is the end result. If this answers any questions for the remaining heirs of James and Susan Townsend, I will feel my work has not been in vain.

Grateful acknowledgement is hereby given to all who have encouraged me to write this epoch: Edythe Bush Wilkinson, Carol Townsend Higgins, Dr. Dennis Brewer, Adelene Davis, Dr. Roderich L. Murray, Jr., and a special gratitude to Dottie Townsend Gatewood, without whose skill, patience and expertise, this book would never have been published and to Calvin "Mike" Townsend for assisting with the genealogy. Also, my appreciation to my wife, Edna, and my family, as they patiently encouraged me as I plodded through a lot of research.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction, Tales From the Wayside.......................................1

Chapter 1 Our Beginnings 4

Chapter 2 Building a Homestead.......................................8

Chapter 3 A Funeral of Early Days...A Reminiscence.............. 11

Chapter 4 The Boom Years 15

Chapter 5 Civil War Years.......................................17

Chapter 6 Guerrillas--Pillage and Murder 19

Chapter 7 "Bad Bill's" Revenge 21

Chapter 8 A Civil War Romance 23

Chapter 9 Timbering-Ridgewood and the Marshalls 25

Chapter 10 Indians and Muskogee 29

Chapter 11 Homestead Abandoned.......................................32

Chapter 12 Shug and Wick.......................................34

Chatper 13 An Out of Court Settlement.......................................35

Chapter 14 Henry Townsend Story.......................................37

Chapter 15 Susan Robinson, Tradition and Fact.....................38

Attachments:

Marriage Application of James and Susan Townsend 41

Pension Record of Lewis Robinson 42

Article about Jesse Robinson.......................................43

Sworn Record for Application as Choctaw Indian for Lane Under the Treaty of 1830 by Willie Puckett 44

Genealogy.......................................48

INTRODUCTION

J.W.F. Williams, who used the pen name of "The Peavine," was a very colorful and descriptive writer. Many of his articles and stories that were written around the turn of the century, can be found in the Lee County, Kentucky library. I have chosen one of his stories, "Tales From The Wayside" as an introduction to my book because it describes so well the area, the times and the people of those long ago days. His subtle allusion of the demise of the Indian and the eagle, and the plunder of our timberlands has been an insight to what we call ecology today.

TALES FROM THE WAYSIDE
by
The Peavine

Sometime last fall, I was over on the waters of Red River hunting for some prickly ash bushes. I wanted the roots to make some rheumatism medicine, preparing in time for an emergency that might arise even in the hie of a careful, well regulated catawaller.

It is not pertinent to this reminiscence to say that the day was warm and that a demonstrable storm cloud was hanging in the west with muttered threats and grumbling thunder, and a smart indication of rain and wind, so I shall not say it.

When I had found and dug what I wanted of the ash roots, I went out to a high point of the ridge to look one more time over the landscape as I had, long ago, and to muse over the days that are gone.

I was on the long ridge that runs from Standing Rock corner to three counties (Powell, Wolfe, and Lee) straight away toward the north, the backbone of one form of which passes over the famous Natural Bridge on the L and E Railroad. To the east, west and north, winding around the hollows and bending far away, were the wild cliffs that form the beauty and grandeur of that silent land. Belso's Park stood just to the north, off west of Natural Bridge. Chimney Top was visible and in the dim distance stood the furthermost sentinel of the Cumberland Pilot Knob as it stood when Daniel Boone looked from its silent watch tower over the "Kain-tuckee." There were pinnacles and pillars and piles of cliffs, high walls of cliffs, stained purple and yellow and green, long sloping and frowning cliffs. Cliffs that the eagle built, cliffs where the Indian lived-solid eternal cliffs.

These are there today-those cliffs, now as they were in the ancient days, but the eagle and the Indian both are gone, and for reasons that apply to both.

They are gone for reasons of self preservation you will say. When I ask you, "Preservation from what?" Will you blush when you answer-"From civilization?"

And over the hills and under the cliffs once flourished the splendid pines, white and yellow, and the oaks and massive poplars. It was a beautiful sight that glorious forest, waving defiant of heavy snow and sleet and tempest.

But the beginning of the end was near when a railroad wound slowly up the valley of the Graining Block. And the day of the destruction dawned when commercialism looked out and saw the forest and that it was good. And then Wythe Chesterm enroute to Sturgeon, tarried a bit in the midst while his saw sang the requiem mass of the woods that vanished before they quit singing.

No more may the wind-spirit sigh through the November pines covering the unreturning wolf and stag in the soft night where the hunter's moon looks in vain for the fire at the camp now still.

"O'er moistended dews,
In vestments for the chase, arrayed,
The hunter still the deer pursues-
The hunter and the deer a shade"

Ah, pleasant days of the once, days of the deer and the bear, days of the wolf and the panther, days of the hound and hunter-days that can never return.

Days of the hound and hunter! Days when the Goffs, Andersons, Chenaults, Prewitts, Martins, Grigsbys, Quisenberrys, Harts, and other great hunters of Clark, Montgomery, and adjoining Bluegrass counties came in semi-royal state, armed with the splendid homemade rifles of their time, togged up to the woods, ready for the chase with its haps and mishaps. Provisions were abundant and some accessories were labeled, "Only for snake bites."

And their chief camp in that day was Baton Rouge. No autumn of the antebellum days ever went by that they did not see a dozen or more of these sturdy farmers, lawyers, doctors, and business men of that country. Lords of the level land-encamped at Baton Rouge, with colored retainers from the home domain caring for their horses, wiping out their guns, making their hemlock beds, keeping ward and watch on camp. They were skilled as well in broiling the evening venison as in boiling the bedtime stew.

There, for half a month, they lived with never a care; politics, business, the lawyer's brief, and the doctor's scalpel alike forgotten, feasting on the freshest, finest game, which they gathered with pen and trap and gun from the deep woods of hill and hollow.

By day, it was a round to the turkey pen or, an exciting tramp to the wolf trap, or a chase after the shaggy bear or flying deer to the music of a score of well-trained hounds hot on

the flying trail. And when the winding horn had summoned all to the evening camp, by night it was jokes and songs and story-telling around the big pine-knot campfire when supper was over and the smoking was started.

And with them as guides, drivers of deer, trainers of bear, callers of turkey-equals in the hunt-were the Spencers, Bushes, and Townsends, local hunters of great renown. One of whom yet lives to recount the glories of those royal gatherings.

The last such gathering that ever met, was there in the fall of years long ago. The hunt went by listlessly for a week. The hunters sat at nights and smoked and smoked; nor song nor story was heard. There seemed something of great importance weighing on every heart.

They had heard a sound passing over toward the north, a sound new, but of dire importance, echoes of the cannon of Fort Sumter.

One night-the last one there-the owls were not calling, nor the whippoorwills. The shadow fell deeper on the hunters camp. One of the hounds raised up and looked out into the darkness, and throwing up his head, he began howling a long drawn, mournful cry. The others, one by one, joined him and Baton Rouge rang with the bloodcurdling discord.

"Morgan," said one of the hunters, rising in his bed and glancing at his gun, "John Morgan, the dogs have heard the call."

Next morning they packed their things and bade their wild camp farewell-a final farewell for most of them-and went back home, tarrying there only long enough for the good-byes and baby kisses.

Then their camps were far from Baton Rouge and those same guns were trained on human hearts as they followed the matchless Morgan to his hour of death, till the lost cause went over to its place on the pages of history.

Chapter 1

OUR BEGINNINGS

James Townsend, my great, great grandfather was born February 16, 1790, on Station Camp Creek, Madison County, Kentucky. This was just one year after George Washington became the first President of the thirteen states that made up Colonial America. The population of the United States was 3,929,000 including 698,000 slaves. The French Revolution under the direction of Napoleon had begun. Boonesborough had been established and the great sweep of people swarmed westward into a land that would become Kentucky. Kentucky was originally a part of Virginia and became the fifteenth state of Colonial America in 1792.

James was born of an acquisitive race with a pioneering spirit, and was drawn into the swirl of other people who rushed into the newly formed state to homestead, but before his dreams would be realized, a world of adventure awaited him. He was a man of destiny.

His father, Garrett, and brother, Thomas, came to Kentucky from North Carolina by way of the Cumberland Gap and the trail hacked out by Daniel Boone's party in 1775. For whatever reason they came, they found the land of their dreams on the waters of Station Camp Creek in what was then Madison County. It could have been the tranquil setting and security of the surrounding limestone cliffs and an abundance of fish and game, or it could have been from weariness, hardship and the dangers of travel. Boonesborough offered, if no protection, a diversion from marauding Indians from the north. There is much recorded evidence that the Townsends were well-known and respected by the leaders at Boonesborough, and that trade and commerce was conducted between them. Most likely they were also affiliated in the same church (Old Providence). In April, 1812 William Townsend was married to Eliza B. Ecton by William Bush who was probably Captain Billy. At that date in history, his powers as Captain would have given him authority to perform weddings. The Bushs were pretty well centered in and around the old Bush settlement just north of Boonesborough in Clark County.

Also, in 1812 the British, still bitter over their defeat in the Revolutionary War, had decided to teach us another lesson. They would sack and burn our Capitol in Washington before our forces could become organized and drive them back into Canada or into the sea. James Townsend had just reached military age and found himself mustered into the army and eventually into the Battle of New Orleans. It was during this campaign that he met his future wife, a Choctaw Indian girl by the name of Susan Robinson, living near the mouth of Tombigbee River in Alabama. She and her family, along with the Cherokees and other members of the so-called civilized tribes, had tasted and endured their bitter "Trail of Tears."

They were homesick and heartsick. A defeated, dejected, yet brave and beautiful nation of people, exploited for the enrichment of wealthy plantation owners, huge landholding companies headquartered in England, France and Spain or by whomever wanted their lands.

James Townsend, homesick for the serenity and solitude of Kentucky, must have painted a glowing account of the pristine valleys and ridges to this child of nature for she and her family followed him back to Kentucky. They were married on February 24, 1815. Shortly thereafter, they built and moved into a log cabin on a large tract of land (about 10,000 acres). James owned this land at the headwaters of Miller's Creek in Estill County and Sand Lick Creek in what is now Powell County. Powell County was established in 1852. The location of their house was some 200 yards from a huge limestone cave which he named Townsend's Cave, and the extremely rough and steep mountain, which offered a tortuous ascent of 500 feet in elevation from the valley floor to the narrow ridge road above at a place called "Three Forks," he named Townsend's Mountain.

The steep bluffs and crystal clear streams surrounding James Townsend's homestead must have awakened an inborn and inherent love, passed on to him from his Scottish highlands ancestors, for the wild and the free. The blowing sound of a fox horn replaced the wailing bagpipe and echoed from mountain to mountain and glen to glen as they called in their hounds from the hunt. The horn was also used to communicate to friend or kin in some distant cove, messages by prearranged codes, such as: return to camp, come over for supper, we have sickness or we need help!

Their first home was a one room pole type log cabin with dirt floor and stick and clay chimney which was scant shelter against the harsh winters of that early day. They were a rugged and determined people, accustomed to hardship. They also were busy and happy as they worked and planned for the future. They would build a new log house as soon as land could be cleared and logs cut, hewn and notched. It would have two rooms with a sleeping loft, built snug against winter's wind. The clearing of land had a three-fold purpose. Clearing provided material for building and fuel for the enormous fires required to heat their crude cabin homes. It also provided new land for corn and other crops. Corn was the staff of life, the source of the only bread available on the early frontier.

It was an ideal location, a great basin of fertile soil built on limestone base by eons of decayed vegetation deposits. Giant trees-oak, yellow poplar, linn and chestnut towered arrow straight into a blue sky that had never known any form of pollution. Wild turkey, passenger pigeons, deer and bear were abundant and they fed and grew fat on chestnut and oak mast. The ridges were rimmed by a narrow sandstone cliff which made a natural barrier against the wind, and a fence and shelter for their livestock. The cavernous rooms of the big cave below were

a never ending source of crystal clear cold water. It also provided a place to store milk products and other foods that needed to be kept cool and humid in summer, and other rooms that were dry and warm for winter vegetables, potatoes, squash and such.

Nature offered a sumptuous supply of food. There were always plenty of venison and other wild game and fish. There were blackberries in the alluvial coves and blueberries covering the higher sandstone elevations. Indeed, the James Townsend family lived in a veritable paradise. Their peace and tranquility was broken only by some rapacious animal on their land disturbing their poultry or livestock, or by some squatter who came, or was sent, to build a cabin and try to establish ownership to a part of their land. The latter was a constant source of harassment to them and increased as free land was taken up and land values climbed.

As the idyllic years went by, sons and daughters were born and grew up under the warmth and shelter of this peaceful homestead that had cradled them from birth. Five sons (Garrett, Reuben, James, Robert and William) and four daughters (Edith, Armina, Minerva and Nancy) filled the home and valley with activity and the mountain echoed the joyous sounds of laughter or the busy sounds of an industrious people as they went about the chores necessary to the everyday life on a frontier farm. There was the steely ring of hammer on anvil as someone mended a plowshare or fashioned horse, mule and ox shoes for their animals. The chop of an axe or thud of hickory mallet was made as someone split and rived wood shingles (boards) for roofs or paling slats for fences. Logs for new buildings were hewed and notched or just cut to clear more land to grow crops. Clearing of the land was a necessity in order to grow the food necessary for a growing family.

A pioneer homestead was a self-contained, self-supporting enterprise. In order to survive and succeed, a man and wife had to have a working knowledge of many crafts. They must be alert to danger and be able to treat any injury sustained by them in the wilderness. They must be capable of building a home with materials at hand. This includes being able to cut, hew and notch logs, rive boards, split puncheons for floors and build a chimney. The chimneys were constructed of either "stick and clay" or from sand rock picked up on the hillsides. The earlier models were crude one room, pole cabins with dirt floors and cracks chinked with clay mud. Later, logs were hewn and notched. Log houses were usually built with two large rooms which were separated by a stone chimney with fireplace opening to either side. They were usually one and one-half stories high plus gables which allowed for a sleeping loft to accommodate the large families of that era. They also had to know how to blacksmith, butcher, cure meat, raise all kinds of crops, and learn the proper way to store food. The wife had to be able to cook lots of food on a hearth or open fire and she usually began her tasks

around 4:00 a.m. Necessity also required her to doctor a sick member of the family or a sick animal with herbs gathered and stored in season for that purpose. The family had to be able to take homegrown wool and flax and spin it into yarn and wool thread. She would then dye the threads by placing them in the juices of polkberries, herb roots, blueberries, wild cherries, or other natural ingredients whose juices were extracted by crushing, boiling or soaking them. She would then weave the dyed threads by hand to make them into cloth or linen. She would make the cloth into blankets, clothes, jeans, socks, etc. Whatever garments were required by members of the home were almost always made by hand. Hominy and soap were made with hickory wood ashes. By adding water to the ashes in an ash hopper and allowing the water to drip for a few days lye was produced. Pork fat was then boiled with lye to make soap (outside, of course). James and Susan were well qualified to survive in the wilderness and to perform any of these chores. Their offsprings were taught the above trade at an early age.

James Townsend, by nature was an industrious man, a thinker and a doer. As he watched his sons and daughters become men and women, he anticipated and planned for their security by installing each on a farm containing from 200 to 300 acres. By the middle 1830's, he set out to acquire more land that was better suited for homesteads. Records in the Estill County Court house reveal many transactions wherein he acquired various tracts of land. Some tracts were mortgaged to Ambrose Bush and others in the year 1835. Also, book G, page 289, shows where he sold a farm containing 1,110 acres to Robert Martin of Clark County in November 1841, together with 21 head of cattle, 4 horses and 150 barrels of corn. Not bad for a mountain farmer!

View from inside Townsend Cave looking out.

Chapter 2

BUILDING A HOMESTEAD

The 1840's were busy years as the older children grew up, married, built homes and started families of their own on a portion of the homestead. This required the building of new cabins, cattle and tobacco barns, cribs and other necessary outbuildings to support a pioneer family. The clearing of new land was constantly being done in order to grow more crops, as fertility was leached from the soil by over-cropping of corn. All of these activities were accomplished with hard, demanding labor and crude tools--an axe, a froe and a homemade hickory mallet. Trees and brush were removed by axe. The trees, that were too big for chopping down were deadened by chopping a ring around them or by burning around them at their base. After they died and fell over, they were chopped into lengths that could be rolled together and burned. Some of these logs were five, six and seven feet in diameter and a man could spend a day making one cut. First, he would chop from the top of the log to the center. Then, he would chop footholds to stand on his heels, with his back to the log. Finally, he would chop from center to bottom. The cutting in lengths was usually done by the homesteader himself. After that, his neighbors and kin were all invited to a "working" or "log rolling" in order to have the necessary manpower to move these heavy logs. These occasions were social events and the entire families would attend. Older children helped with the work. The girls looked after the smaller children while the women folks would quilt, card wool or flax for cloth. They also helped prepare the enormous meals served on great scaffolds (tables) erected with split log puncheons in the outdoors. A jug of "corn liquor" was a must for these occasions. It was used as an incentive or reward for the greatest feat of strength or skill. Sometimes, in the crude games they concocted, the winner would drink and the loser would smell. Life was rugged but productive. Progress was slow but sure, without every event being centered around time. It was a relaxed, unhurried existence, a pleasant time to live and to enjoy the fruits of their labors and the great family gatherings on Sundays, special holidays or events.

Throughout this period James Townsend continued to acquire additional land for himself and his growing family. However, there was one underlying flaw that he was unaware of in the acquisition of land in that early date in history. All the land in the state had to be granted by land patents or grants called surveys. A survey often consisted of a reference: "as being all the land within a certain water shed" or bounded by "the dividing ridge." Most of the landgrants invariably "overlapped." Some political cronies which consisted of people in high places were given blank grants. These were filled in from crude maps and filed by proxy with the register of land office in the state wherein the land was located. Often the grantee never came in the state in person where the land lay. One such grant was

purchased by James Hoggin on the first day of November, 1819 under and in the presence of the laws of the Commonwealth of Kentucky. This purchase was for a 20,000 acre survey and patent of land made in the name of the Tarrason Brothers. This conveyance was made on the twentieth day of February 1850 by E.A. McCundy et als, in Deed Book 7, page 279 in the Powell County Clerk's Office, Stanton, Kentucky. This tract of land "overlapped" the land that had been owned and occupied by James Townsend for over 35 years.

In 1844, a survey of James Townsend's land was made by R. E. Martin of Clark County, Kentucky to establish certain lines and reference points. This survey embraced all the land on the headwaters of Billy's Fork of Miller's Creek and Puckett Fork of Big Sinking Creek (see Deed Book J, page 182, Estill County Clerk's Office). Another survey was made by James B. Hinds in 1845 of a tract of land containing 6,919 acres known as the James Townsend homestead tract. Another tract contained 500 acres on the waters of Billy's Fork of Miller's Creek and Evans Branch. The smaller tract was the homestead of James' son, Garrett Townsend. The larger boundary embraced Townsend Cave and Townsend Mountain. It was on this land that the first homestead cabin was built in 1815. Later a son, Reuben Townsend, was born in 1816, built his home nearby. Another son, Garrett (born 1817), who was my great-grandfather, built and raised his family on the 500 acre tract. Finally my grandfather, Sydney M. (Shug) Townsend (born 1852), lived there until 1914. A daughter, Minerva (born 1824) who married Bill Puckett, built on a tract of land on Townsend's Fork of Billy's Fork. This later became Ridgewood and is now known as J. J. Wells property. Another daughter, Armina (born 1822) built on and occupied a large tract of land James Townsend owned. This was located at the head of Armina Fork of Big Sinking Creek about one-half mile northeast of the Cathedral Domain. Her homestead was in the vicinity of what was later known as the "old Patterson Friendly farm."

By 1850, the Townsend clan began to feel pressure on the peaceable possession of their land. Harassment came in the form of threats and intimidation. Hired "squatters" were employed for the purpose of occupying and claiming a portion of their land. They were acting for the agent of some landholding company which had never set foot in Kentucky.

It required constant vigilance and the use of physical force to evict these "squatters." Sometimes they would set a torch to their cabins. There was at least one instance where the cabin was dismantled, loaded on an ox-cart and carted away in the absence of the squatter.

In 1851, the first tragedy and heartache came to the Townsend homestead. Their second youngest daughter, Edith (born 1833) died at the age of eighteen. She was a frail, shy and gentle girl. She was like her mother and had a strong reverence for her mother's people. She wanted an Indian burial. Her wish

was granted. She was laid to rest at night, in the yellow light of burning pine-knot torches. Her final resting place was in a lonely grave on a knoll overlooking Townsend's Cave. Tears glistened in the torch light on the faces of the solemn mourners. Unrestrained grief shook the stooped tired bodies of her mother and father. Long lonely days and nights filled them with heartache and grief. Many days would pass before the family's hurt could be healed and normal activity would return to the home.

A more detailed account of the this death and funeral is outlined in the following story, as written by Henry C. Townsend and told to him by his grandmother, Sally Ann Carpenter Townsend (born 1827, died 1894). Therefore, the date of his story would be the early 1890's. Henry (born June 25, 1866, died July 13, 1943) was the son of William Corporal and Nancy Wiseman Townsend. He was an ordained minister of the Church of Christ and was living in a log house on the exact location of James Townsend's original cabin as late as 1912. Permission for this story to be used in my book was given by his daughter, Sally Ann Townsend Jacobs. Her contribution to my story is gratefully acknowledged.

Chapter 3

A FUNERAL OF EARLY DAYS...
A REMINISCENCE

by Henry Clay Townsend

Note: Henry Clay Townsend (born June 25, 1866; died July 13, 1943) wrote this account of Edith Townsend's funeral. Permission to use this story was given by Sally Ann Townsend Jacobs, his only living child.

The unwritten history of a land is the history that is always and everywhere the richest in detail. It is the history that always and everywhere loses its quality and color when reduced to the written page.

Nor will the tale I am telling you be an exception to that rule, though it is just a plain story of an old-time funeral, far back in the beginnings of local history.

It was in the early days of the country, so soon indeed that the dimness of those days hangs over it. Only one witness lives, a grandmother whose hands are filled with good deeds, who is waiting for the years to end that she may carry home her sheaves.

I saw her the other day, and she told me the things I am trying to tell you--of the first death, the first burial, in this country. I thought you might like to hear it for it is strangely weird and fascinating as she paints it in the imagery of the days when the death occurred--the days when she lived with the birds and squirrels and bear and deer--wilderness life, and she as wild as they.

Her story impressed me much and I felt that were it written by pen skilled in narrative--a pen clad in description and bold in imagery, it would be among the finest pictures in our legendary history.

But that pen has hither taken no note of it, and may not. The story in its strange wild setting will be lost if it does not! And since my fortune has been to learn it from the last witness, I attempt the telling after my manner of words, uncertain though it be. And I shall be thankful if your imagination may supply the things I miss and so make it the full, rounded story it should be.

In the opening years of the last century, there came from the settlements in the Bluegrass country some dozen families "following the game." They picked their slow way by the Indian fields, through the roadless land to the midst of the country,

drained by waters of Millers Creek and Red River, it was a country still rich and fair and is now the borderline of old Estill Furnace.

It is a country comparativley level in many places, covered then by a magnificent forest which has long since vanished. There you could find a tangle of grapevines and woodbins and the herbage for a thousand deer. It was a country of fine water, caves, sinks, cliffs of rich coves and hill sides. It was an ideal land for life but a land not immune from death.

These settlers had been all through that land, some as the hunters of game, some as the makers of saltpeter, some as the builders of tar kilns--others with the forest--lust strong upon them. They all knew the land and were satisfied.

Among them, and chief in their midst, was a lean, sinewy stalwart hunter whose ancestral bent and early home in some far-off Canadian forest had fitted him for the wilderness about him. He was a good man, large hearted but peculiar, even for that day. He was widely known as a character in the country and was somewhat celebrated in local annals. In after years they called him "Uncle Jim" and many are the tales they yet remember of his odd sayings and his pranks and practical jokes, rough and uncouth sometimes, that he played on his friends and neighbors. But he was highly esteemed and his fame as an eccentric, brave and generous man, an ideal backwoodsman--is abroad even yet in his country. He lived until the Civil War, and his tragic death during the fearful days of '62 is a thrilling chapter of that country's unwritten history.

In the valley of the "sinks" near the cold-cave spring, Uncle Jim built his comfortable home. It was a log house of two rooms, after the pattern of the day, not unlike a score of others at the time. A few acres were cleared for corn, beans and potatoes making a large, long garden. There was a hen-house, a wolf-proof pen for the sheep, a stable for the horses and fenced lots for the cows and calves. This was the farm.

In one room of this home in the "sinks" lay Edith, sick with some fatal malady. She was the flower of the family and Uncle Jim's pet. Next to his good wife, she was the light of his life. An awful sorrow filled his heart as he watched her day by day slowly drifting to an unknown land. A land where his skeptical eye saw neither bird nor blossom, cooling breeze nor warming sun--only the darkness of a night that could not end. But he gave no sign of his grief, though his heart strings were broken. It was not in his race to grieve.

The neighbors within twenty miles, had heard of Edith's sickness. It had been arranged so that at least one person from each of a dozen families were there. Each ready and quick to do what might be needed to help the stricken family in the ordinary affairs of life and to make the sufferer's last hours more

comfortable. The doctor and the circuit rider from over about Indian Fields were there, each doing the best he knew-the preacher not in vain.

One morning in November when the leaves were falling, the end came and Edith was no more. It was the first death among them all in their new homeland. It affected them far more than any death, other than a near relative or dear friend, could possibly affect us in these days of populous country hurried business and sordid care. Strong rough hunters, some half wild, wept with the family as though a sister had left them, and even the little wrens living in the hollow of a house log, flew anxiously about, as if they understood.

Two or three men, best skilled in such work, made a coffin of walnut and cherry, while others under direction of the father dug the grave.

Uncle Jim had Indian blood in his veins, a thing not uncommon in his day. He was descended through some generations from a noted chief of a great northern tribe who had contended oft with warlike southern neighbors in the "Kain-tuckee." It was a tribe that had for ages buried its dead under great piles of stones on the tops of the hills. So his first impulse, when he found that his child must be buried, was that she should rest like the maternal ancestors rested. But the White blood, predominant, called for the White man's grave with the coffin and the shroud.

He compromised the conflicting impulses by directing that a grave be cut out in the solid limestone on top of a ridge half a mile away, and that a slab of limestone be cut to cover it.

While some worked at the grave and its cover, others went into the cave and brought out two large sheets of limestone. These two pieces of rock had a kind of stalactite, full of holes and grotesque carvings, made by water in other ages. These were for tombstones. When finished, about 60 people were there, more than half of them women and they had everything ready.

All day the sun had been hiding in the dark, heavy clouds that did not seem to move. A low, sobbing wind moaned through the tall pines on the ridges. Nature itself seemed sad with a loneliness that was over all, and a leaden-gray fog curtained the dying day.

Off to the south, on a jagged point of cliff, a solitary wolf howled over and again-a long drawn, mournful cry. It was calling, it seemed, for some far-off mate. And two panthers called to each other occasionally from the depths of the forest.

It was six o'clock in the evening when word came that the grave was right. Then all was astir with quick activity. For obvious reasons the burial must be that night. Quietly, but with

utmost order, they took up the march to the grave. Six of the strongest women, aided by another six in relief, carried the bier, a cedar frame the men had made, while all the other women lighted long torches of rich pine and took their places in the line some before, some behind the coffin. The men with their long rifles carried ready for instant use, ranged on either side and the slow march began.

The little wrens followed them to the yard gate, flying bewildered in and out among the torches, one of them resting a moment on the coffin. Then, the mother of the lost Edith, for the first time, broke into a wild lamentation for the child they were taking from the home forever. Her sorrow went deep into the hearts around her, which were tuned in sympathy with this mother's grief--so deep that it had been voiceless till now.

Through the little gate and up the hillside, past the gap in the cliff and along the ridge overlooking the valley, the train winded its way slowly. Winding through the shadows of the wood under the arches of cedar until the grave was reached.

The wolves, that had gathered about the ridges and cliffs and howled all the day, now closed in from all directions till there seemed a hundred about them. In the flare of the torches they were seen springing from one covert to another, yet never daring an attack. Occasionally one, bolder than his fellows, came up close to the line, with his white teeth gleaming in the light, and his eyes outshining the uplifted torch.

Down in the valley, on either side of them, the fog was settling into great banks, stirred by the moaning winds, rolling and massing into the strangest phantoms with long, bony fingers reaching out through the cedars over the leaping wolves to grasp the strange procession. The great trees stood dark grim spectres against the gray and shifting ground and the torches lighted the narrow circle of the unearthly scene-the like of which had never been--one never to be forgotten.

At the grave while the men faced out with guns at ready the women lowered their charge to its resting place. Then, they put the stone slab over it and covered in the fresh damp earth. The stalactite gravestones were lifted into place and firmly set.
Then the circuit rider standing at the head of the grave with uplifted face, the light of another world upon him, spoke to them the message that alone can soothe when sorrow wrings the heart. How Edith had surrendered her heart to Jesus and His love--painting in simple yet sublime the words the difference between the night around them there, with its sorrow, gloom and danger, and the land where Edith was the newfound glories burning on her enraptured heart-the land where there was no night.

Chapter 4

THE BOOM YEARS

Estill County was stirring with activity as it entered the decade of the 1850's. The iron-smelting industry that had begun in 1810, shortly after Estill became a county, had flourished and expanded into booming proportions by the fifties. Cottage Furnace and Estill Steam Furnace were built on Tipton Ridge in 1854. The largest and best known was Fitchburg Furnace which was built in 1858. They prospered until after the Civil War, creating demand for labor, services, and almost every conceivable type of raw material and products available: timber for charcoal, food and forage for men and animals, housing and etc. It also required vast numbers of oxen and mule teams. They were used to deliver charcoal and ore to the furnace sites by rugged wagon trains and to remove and haul away the smoldering hot slag and refuse, from the work area.

My grandfather, Sidney "Shug" Townsend, and other old timers, who lived in that period and used ox drawn wagons to haul the hot slag, told of wetting down the green, oak wagon beds that were made from rough three inch thick lumber to keep them from catching on fire between filling and dumping. Whenever possible these wagons were parked at night in deep pools of water. This allowed the wheels to soak and keep "dished" and tight so the iron wheels would not get loose and come off. The beds could be dumped by tripping a trap door in the bottom of the wagon bed. The filing was done by hand with long handled shovels in the blistering heat. Perhaps most of these tasks were done by slaves or convicts. They probably were indentured by the prisons to which they were sent and guarded and driven by sadistic overseers. They may have been immigrants from Ireland, Italy or some Slavish country, who left oppression and hunger in their native land to come to the land of promise. Their plight was scarcely better than that of the slaves or convicts. The plight of the convict was worst of all. He was a helpless pawn at the mercy and disposal of heartless men. Society had paid these men that imprisoned him for crimes less cruel and shameful than the ones he was being subjected to as a prisoner and ward of the state.

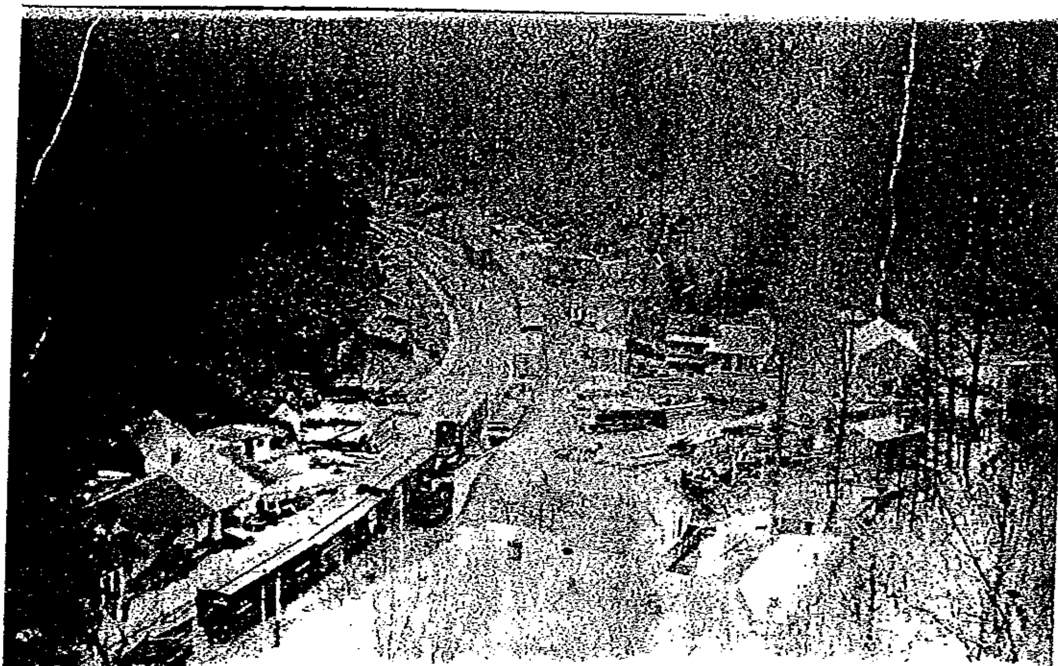
As late as 1890, the prisoners were used to dig and blast the L. and E. Railroad tunnel through the mountain at Torrent, Wolfe County, Kentucky. The work was extremely hard and hazardous. Many were killed and buried on top of the hill overlooking the tunnel in which they were killed. They were buried in nameless, unmarked graves, now covered by the workings of a saw mill. At least one hobo found on the tracks on Walker's Creek was buried there. These were the days of separate facilities for whites and blacks and even in the Potter's Field this practice was observed. The whites were buried on the hill over the tunnel and the blacks were buried on a plot of land contributed by A. J. Legg, on the end of the ridge overlooking

Walker's Creek, known as "Nigger's Point." All are forgotten men in life and death. Respect for human life and the dignity of man was a rare attribute of the early builders and exploiters of our land and resources. Historians, in their zeal to portray the glory and romance of our early expanding nation, have forgotten to mention, or have glossed over the gluttony, ruthless and even savage tactics employed by some of our leaders and corporations in those early days.

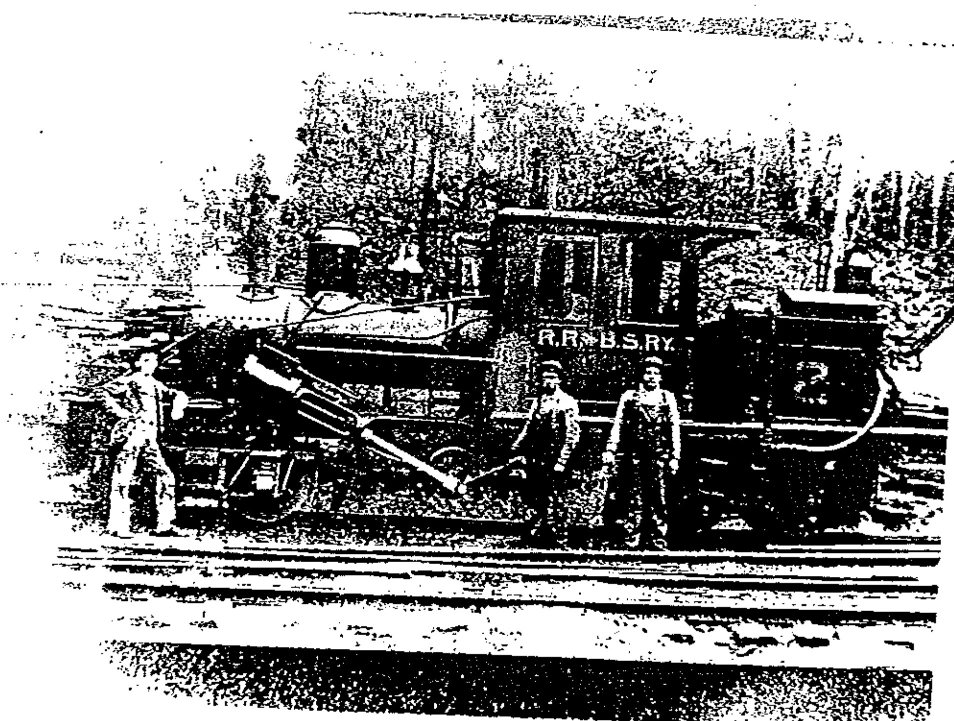
Oxen were less temperamental and excitable than mules or horses. For that reason they were almost always used to pull the slag wagons. On more than one occasion wagons were burned up when the slow plodding beast, numbed by exhaustion and thirst, would not respond to the driver's command to move on after dumping the slag and the dried out beds would catch on fire underneath.

The pig-iron produced by these furnaces was hauled to Red River by the same slow wagons. These roads were narrow and rutted. They had been cut down by iron bound wagon wheels which had exposed outcropping of rock ledges as much as two feet high. It was then loaded onto flat-boats and floated to the Clay City Forge & Mill to be processed into finished products. Cannon balls which had been manufactured in Clay City were used in the Battle of New Orleans. Flat-boats were also used to ship these finished products. James Townsend and his family witnessed or participated in many of the events described above to supplement their need for cash to pay taxes and mortgages on their land. Mostly, it provided a ready market for any farm product they wanted to sell and employment for the skilled drivers and their teams of oxen and mules. The Townsend men were gifted craftsmen of that day. The men could fashion with skill from wood, stone, or the blacksmith's forge any item required on the farm or frontier industries of that day.

In 1852 Powell County was established out of the land taken from Clark, Estill and Montgomery counties. Later, in 1870, Lee County was created. A portion of both counties were taken from that part of Estill County. James Townsend's land was contained in both counties, making it necessary to document and record deeds in both counties. This was quite a burden on unlearned men that were isolated from the county seats. Ignorance of these requirements caused a lot of problems and some owners to lose their land. Some of the deeds were carried on the person of James' sons and grandsons until others had filed deeds before them. Those prevoiusly recorded deeds described the same boundaries covered in their deeds and they were evicted for trespassing. These faulty filing and recording procedures, coupled with the seven years peaceable possession law robbed James Townsend and his heirs of much of their land. This will be discussed in greater detail in a later chapter.



View of Torrent, Kentucky from cliff looking toward tunnel. Building in foreground is L. Park Hotel circa 1915.



Beattyville & Southern locomotive. Men in picture left to right: Richard (Dick) Riggs, E.W. (Cain) Spencer, Engineer and Doc Gilley, Fireman (circa 1898).