

## **Diary of Dr. P. C. Kelly 1870-1939, Part I**

### **History**

Posted by: Jack Nida

Posted on : 2006/9/9 6:50:00

*(Due to its length, this interesting tale has been divided into 6 parts. A link to the next part of the series is displayed at the bottom of each installment.)*

On May 29, 1870, at a country post office in West Virginia named Looneyville, in honor of the family at who's house the post office was kept, was born the subject of this account. This post office was ten miles out of Spencer, the County Seat of Roane County. My parents were of the old Virginia Aristocratic Stock. Joseph Thompson Kelly, my father, was the son of Peter C. and Mary Woodside Kelley and was the owner of many slaves. Mary Catharine (Creigh) Kelly was the daughter of John and Delilah (McLung) Creigh. They were also the owners of many slaves. it is my opinion that both were brought up without being thrown on their own responsibility and without being taught how to make a living when thrown on their own responsibilities. It seems to me, looking back on the life at home, that the greatest asset possessed by my parents was that my mother was a lady in every respect and to this day she is spoken of as such by those who knew her intimately. Possessing a good character and a good name were to her the high points in anyone's life. My father was of the same school as my mother so far as prizing was, as polished a gentlemen as was my mother a lady. Father was the sole of honor and a very jolly agreeable man. They both always gave me good advice and instructed me to always be truthful and honorable in the discharge of my duties.

These instructions I especially remember as that of my mother. I remember many talks she gave me along these lines but I do not remember how she looked. In this connection, I wish to say that we never had a picture of my mother nor could we find one anywhere of her. She had seven brothers and four sisters and there were plenty of tin types of all of them but never of her. This always seemed to me very strange as I have many times tried to find a picture of her.

I was ten when my mother died. It was in October 1880. Her death left six little boys ranging from four to ten years in age for my father to care for. We were in very poor financial circumstances, it being only a few years after the terrible Civil War, and the south was bankrupt as well as all the south earners. My father had fought in the civil war four years and the Kelly Family had lost all their slaves and property. Shortly after we were orphaned by the death of my mother and, according to her dying request to my Aunt Sabina Creigh to keep us children together, we were taken by my father to the home of my Grandmother Creigh who then lived in Greenbrier County, West Virginia, a distance of approximately one hundred miles. So we were all fixed up as well as we could be dressed under our poor circumstances and we rode to Charleston in road wagons driven by neighbors Bill and Johnie Ferrel, a distance of forty miles to the nearest rail road.

I shall never forget the impressions that it made upon me as we entered Charleston, not then a very large city but appearing very great to me. I saw my first brick houses and they seemed to be fiery red and so wonderful. We did not go to a hotel but father left us small boys with a family by the name of Hobbs until he went somewhere to arrange for taking the train for Greenbrier County. It was shortly before sundown that he left us and we wandered out on the street a few yards from the house and

near a blacksmith shop where a white man was working. We were very timid and of course the town folks took notice of that fact.

While we were sauntering around we came in contact with some negro children and whether we talked to them or not I do not remember but this I do remember very distinctly, as we were near the negro children one or possibly two of them spat at us and the white blacksmith was up in arms when he saw it. He came out of his shop and scolded the negro children severely and said "If I ever see you negroes spit at a white child again, I will wallop you good" or something to that effect. I know it made me feel good as I was wanting to fight the negro child myself but was afraid to do so in town. If it had been in the country where I was not afraid, I would have been on his back immediately. It was considered in those days a great humiliation to allow anyone to spit on you and especially so to allow one to spit in your face. On allowing such to happen, one was considered a coward and to be a coward in those days was indeed a great disgrace.

I remember that once in school hours a year or two prior to the occurrence just related, a boy sitting in front of me turned round and spat in my face and the fight was on. They had to take me off of him or I probably would have done him much bodily harm. As it was, he was almost minus a scalp as he had long hair that furnished a good hand hold and I made use of it to perfection. I remember that just after the negro episode, it began to get dark and father was still out and I was so uneasy, afraid that we never would see him again, that I almost cried and maybe I did at that. It was so dark and nobody but strangers around and, to make it worse, I could hear the Great Kanawha River roaring and I could imagine dire things might have happened. Finally father came and I think a load as big as a mountain lifted from my shoulders. Everything then was lovely. Finally it came time to go to catch the train. Our neighbors, Billie and Johnie Ferrell started with us to the depot and I thought as we walked that we never would reach the place where we were to take the train. I thought it so strange that we walked in squares and not by way of a crooked road or pathway as I was brought up on.

Finally reaching the railroad depot (I did not know what it was then) we anxiously awaited the train wondering all the time what it was to look like. Our neighbors were both young men and were the jolliest fellows and kept ustalking most of the time. Finally the great monster arrived and father herded us on board. Everything was so strange and grand we were awe stricken. It started out running so fast it almost made me dizzy. However, after we were running for some little time, after the fashion of children, we all fell asleep in our seats. Those wonderful shiny soft seats were a wonder to us.

Along in the night, I woke up or partly woke and was so thirsty I went to my father and woke him and asked him to open the door of the car so that I could get off and get a drink of water. He said the train would run away from me and I thought it strange that the train would not stop long enough for me to get a drink. Father finally, after finding out just how little he realized the situation, "I will get you a drink". So he led me to a little closet door and picked up a glass and pressed a little button and the nice cool water ran into the glass and I had a fine drink of water. I wondered how on earth that little button could make a spring of cool water, even cooler than our spring at home.

We finally arrived at the country depot long before it was daylight and I thought it was the darkest place I had ever seen. There being nothing there but the depot and no one there at all and no fire, we finally found a bunk house where the railroad men bunked and ate. They let us in and we had a warm fire and they were negroes as well as I remember. When they got up, I watched them get breakfast and I saw one fellow mix up cornmeal into dough and then dig a hole in the ashes on the hearth and get a double handful of the dough and made what we call a dodger and laid it in the

ashes and covered it with ashes, then put a heap of hot coals on it and finally took it out well done and he beat the hard crust to get the ashes off and it looked good.

As soon as it was daylight we started out walking. It was, I learned afterwards, a distance of eleven miles to grandmothers. Whether there had been any arrangements made to meet us there I never knew but the fact is that no one met us and we started out to the country afoot as I suppose we were far too poor to hire a conveyance. Father herded us as he would a flock of ducks down the railroad track, always warning us to keep off the tracks. We reached a bridge that spanned Lick Creek which flowed out of a very rough canyon (hollow as we called it) with great wonderful high cliffs on either side. This was a wonderful sight to us as we had never seen but one large rock in our lives. That rock was what was called Cox's Rock and was located at our old swimming hold in Pocatolico River near Looneyville about two miles from our house. Many times father got the little ones together and we went to the big swimming hole at Cox's Rock and that was a sight to almost frighten us. The rock was known by that name for the reason a man by the name of Cox was drowned in the river many years ago and his body had been found there at the large rock. However, these huge mountains of rock we beheld on either side of Lick Creek were the world's greatest wonder to our narrow little minds.

We started up this hollow, as we called it, walking and, as I remember, we followed that winding rough road all the whole distance of the miles without a lift from any wagon. In fact, I do not remember that we ever saw a wagon on the whole trip. The first place of note we came to was Green Sulphur Springs and as we had never seen or tasted sulphur water, my father took us to the spring, which is one of the best sulphur springs anywhere to be found, and gave us all a taste of it and we unanimously pronounced it very punk or worse. It is to be remembered that this sulphur spring is in the vicinity of the now famous summer resort known as the White Sulphur Springs of which we never had heard of at that time. I suppose father knew about it, and in fact I know he did, as he was at that time familiar with the whole surrounding country. This place was and is also in the vicinity of the historic Ingram's Ferry or possibly Ingle's Ferry where the pioneers lived in Indian days and so graphically described by Dr. Hale in his book "Trans Alieghny Pioneers". I am at the present unable to say whether the name is Ingle or Ingram.

After pronouncing the spring water very punk we marched on up the hollow and the next place we came to was the big flour mill, or at least it appeared big to our eyes, and a swift place in the creek and it was owned by a man by the name of Michael Hutchinson and was called Hutchinson's Mills. There was a country store at the mill and a few houses and we decided this was about the greatest place we had seen since leaving Charleston, as we thought the biggest place in the world.

We traveled on up the hollow (Rough Canyon) for a few miles and finally came out on some fairly level land at a place known as the old Patterson Place where we went in and, as I found out, it was only one mile from grandmother's place. Mrs. Patterson was a very close friend of my grandmother and her family having lived as neighbors for many years. She knew of our coming and was not surprised at our arrival but seemed so glad to see us and petted all of us little motherless children and maybe gave us a slice of buttered bread. distinctly remember how good it felt to have someone pet me. After a short rest and a visit between my father and the lady, we went on to grandmothers.

I shall never forget the welcome we received there although they were in very poor circumstance and lived almost in the woods in what I called a very large log house. It was very pretty around it. I think it was drizzling rain when we arrived and they had a fire in the great fireplace made of native wood. I remember that as we six little boys were sat in a row of chairs before the fire how our dear old grandmother walked behind us and with her hands smoothed each one's hair and cried. We all cried.

I suppose we children only cried because the others were crying as I do not now remember that I felt any particular grief about the death of my mother after arriving at my grandmothers. In fact, I was much elated on arrival there and thought it the best place I had ever known.

For several days the older folks talked and planned I suppose about us little boys and how best to provide for us and while I do not know just what was said, I do know that my oldest brother and I were sent to live with my mother's sister Mrs. Jno Fleshman at Blue Sulphur Springs, a distance of nine or ten miles, to live and go to school that winter. I can never forget the first sight I had of Blue Sulphur Springs. We rode horseback over a very level country for several miles and seemingly without warning came out on the top of a great wonderful mountain ("Bennett's Mountain") where we also could see Blue Sulphur Springs far, far below us in a beautiful green looking valley. All the houses seemed to be painted white and looked so beautiful. I thought it would be impossible to go down that great mountain and the long winding road that we could see stretching out before us clown the mountain. However, the uncle and aunt thought differently and we finally came out in the valley a very short distance from the springs and their home. They lived, in the wonder of the world that we should be permitted to live, in one of those wonderful brick houses.

My Aunt Elizabeth Creigh had married a widower (Jno A. Fleshman) who had two sons, Adam and Thomas, to whom my brother William and myself were introduced. These two boys were something near our ages. Adam the oldest was near the age of brother Will and Thomas near my age of ten years and I think Will and Adam were near twelve and thirteen. Adam was rather an odd genius, very deliberate in his speech and having had a severe sickness some time in his life, he pronounced his words very queer and made use of some very odd speeches and the consequence was that we rather picked on Adam and had great fun when he would climb on us in a good nature way and maul us and laugh and call us funny names remember that when he got peeved at my brother Will, who was always trying to play tricks on Adam, he would cry out "Oh that abominable Will". Thomas was of a different type, very windy and boastful, always telling what he had done and what he intended doing and talking as though no one else could do as much as he could. They both were church members and in this connection I want to relate a short story.

Mr. Fleshman always had family prayer night and morning and we had to get right down on our knees twice a day and hear practically the same old prayer, part of which I still remember, when he would say "Oh Lord make our hearts a fit temple for thee in dwelling of thy holy spirit". Brother Will was as mischievous as could be and Thomas was no better, so we boys were housed in one end of the house with a fireplace and uncle and aunt in the other. One night as we were in the room all four of us boys together and the pet dog "Cap" was laying in the hearth asleep, and Aunt Lizzie had set her churn of cream near the fire to get ready for churning when Tom and Will got into a scuffle and turned the churn over, spilling the cream. This frightened Tom especially bad as he probably would get the lash on his back if it were known that he turned the churn over. So they went into a huddle to devise a way that would not let the blame rest on either one of the boys. Brother Will suggested that they tell Aunt Lizzie that the fire popped and a coal turned the churn over when he went against it, it being a tall old fashioned stone churn with a dasher in it.

The question then came up as to which one of the boys should tell this story and in the argument, my brother insisted that as he had invented the lie that Tom should do his part and tell it. In Tom's argument he said to brother William "You know that I can't tell that lie because I belong to the church and you will have to tell it." I know that they put it over without a hitch but I do not know who told the lie. I suspect it was Thomas who told it. Thomas was a natural born liar anyway so I do not think one more would have hurt him. The father of Thomas and Adam was I believe at heart a good man but I

have heard him talk to the boys like they were dogs and in fact he used to call Tom the "lyin hound" and "you lyin pup" and such names as that. At school we did but little good as I did not care whether I learned anything or not and Brother Will was so chock full of devilment that I do not think he gave any thought about improving himself. For instance, one day in school, brother was seated by another boy his age named Jno Littlepage and he was very sandy haired and at the age one would be expecting him to sprout a mustache. So the teacher, Miss Jennie Young, noticed brother feeling all over Jno's face and particularly his upper lip. She asked "Willie, what are you doing?" Willie answered "I am trying to see if John's mustache has sprouted. Whereupon the whole school was in an uproar of laughter.

On top of the pine ridge, almost straight up over the school house was an old soldier's cemetery with hundreds of graves in rows. There was in school a small boy by name of Willie Reliford and he was one of those timid and partly sissy boys and none of us like him overly well and always tried to do something to him to annoy or scare him. So one day we coaxed him to go with us at noon hour up to the cemetery in the woods. I do not remember just the details but we managed to get him isolated from us and then someone made a dismal sound of some kind and we all pretended to get scared and Willie almost broke his neck getting away from there. He never suspected the joke.

After school was out, we were taken back to grandmother's and after that were all kept together except William, the one that was with me at Blue Sulphur Springs. He was taken by one of our great aunts, being the widow of Dr. Thomas Creigh of Lewisburg, W.Va. This lady was a relative of Charles and Andrew Lewis, heroes of the Battle of Point Pleasant, W.Va., which in history is considered the first battle of the revolution. I do not know how closely she was related to them, but from what I have been told, she was constantly on the war path. Brother stayed with her some little time and when he came home to visit us we were rather jealous of him as he had grown into a very young man and wore shirts with collar and cuffs and seemed to be or feel that he was a notch above us. However, this might not have been his real feelings.

Aunt Fanny, as we were all taught to call her although we never saw her, had a relative by the name of Speed Thompson who was a lawyer and was a drinker of whiskey as well and Brother always called him Mr. Speed and as he grew up, I think that Mr. Speed gave him an occasional drink and finally brother William found it either necessary or convenient or both to have his sprees which have lasted until this day. He is the most amusing person when slightly under the influence of whiskey that I have ever seen. I think he would go ahead of George Burns on the radio programs.

As for myself, I was started to a country school one mile from home along with my other brothers. We had a lady teacher who, of course, was much my senior but, as I had been hired by the board of trustees to make a fire in the school house each morning before school time, I was always there when the school marm arrived riding horseback a side saddle. I, of course, would run out and get her horse and take care of it. She was a very talkative and jolly woman and I found myself secretly liking her too well and was jealous if anyone helped her alight and/or took care of the horse. After school, she traveled the same road that I went home on and I found myself, instead of racing with the other children, walking alongside of her horse talking to her. Her school came to an end as all schools do and that was the end of my beginning romance. However, a few years later I went to the same school with her twin sisters, Jessie and Emma Brown. Jesse was the smaller of the two and we had to go the same road home for a mile and I soon found that Jessie and I almost invariably walked close to one another and that we were holding hands most of the time.

This state of affairs ran on for a term or so when we were getting along towards fourteen or fifteen

years of age when one day at school our teacher went out of the school room as was his habit each day, leaving us all in the room together. We all used to wonder what took him out each afternoon and it finally got around that he had the itch and went out behind a tree to give himself a good scratching. The other pupils, some of them, had good times while he was out, and I thought I would not take advantage that way and sat still and studied my lesson as usual. But my downfall was in store for me.

One afternoon, the teacher went out and I was sitting by my friend, William Hutsonpiler. He was struck on Emily and I on Jessie Brown. As it happened, they got out in the floor and got in a scuffle over the broom. Mr. Hutsonpiler grabbed Emily and sat her on his knee and dawkled her up and down and I, not to be out done, grabbed Jessie and sat her on my knee and was going at it hard accompanied by the others and the girls were trying to get away. Oh, the teacher laughed good naturedly about it. That evening he told us that each one involved in the affair would have to stay in and study the next noon hour and, of course, we would almost rather have taken a beating than do that but we knew we were in for it. So next day as noon hour came near I rather thought I noticed the teacher was softening toward us a bit and especially toward me as he and I were very good friends and walked a mile together each evening and I am sure I was one of his favorite pupils. So just as it was nearly time to dismiss for noon, the teacher addressed the guilty parties and said, "Well what you boys did of course was not such serious an act but you must remember we have to have discipline in the school. I dislike to take your play hour away from you on this account so I am making you a proposition. I must punish you some way and if you that have been told to stay in at noon, or any of you, will get up and walk three times the length of the school room and back, I will consider the incident closed." Old Bill says "I'll walk mine out" and did and I said the same and did. The girls did not come back, and never did, so that ended our second little affair with the girls.

I must tell you that we had very crude ways of showing girls that we liked them in those days. One way was to get the measure of a girl's ring finger and not let her know about it. Sometimes getting some other girl to get it for us. Then we went home and whittled a soft poplar stick the size of the finger with a sixteenth of an inch shoulder below it and then wrapped a paper around the shoulder and melted babbitt metal or pewter or even lead for a ring in the rough. Then we took it and shaved it down smooth and polished and rubbed it to a brightness that would almost surprise anyone and then wrapped it and either gave it to the girl or, if too bashful to do that, we picked a girlfriend to take it to her and tell her who made and sent it to her. If it worked we had signs to know it and then we could talk better together. If it did not work, we claimed we did not care a hoot.

In my very young school days in Roane County I have been regarded as a fighter and I usually came out best in my fights. I was still going to school in Greenbrier County when one day a boy near my size and I got into a dispute and when we went into the school room from the playground, we sat one behind the other. It being myself who sat behind and we continued the quarrel in low whispers until the boy in front deliberately spat in my face. I went over the top of the desk and nailed him by the hair and almost took the top of his head off. He went home and told his parents of it and that evening his father came to my grandmother's place and tried to have me punished for it which they refused to do as they thought the provocation warranted my actions. He then went to the school and tried to have something done and failed.

From that time until I was a matured man, I never could endure the sight of that man and considered him my enemy. He is dead now and I have no love for him yet. I never spoke to him after that and one time I believe I would have shot him if he had been where I thought he was and at the time I slipped up to the place where I believed he was tearing out a dam in the creek where we had built for



swimming purposes. We all thought he was letting the water out as it seemed to be getting out some way but I do not believe that it was the weight of the water which forced the sods away and let the water out. It seems that my troubles started about that time as I was living with old maid aunts (bless their good souls) and three bachelor uncles. They thought I had to be controlled and I thought I was getting too big to be ordered around and decided I would not be ordered. So one evening, as was the custom, we had to get great piles of wood in the house for the night and morning fires. The wood was cut out in a field and had to be carried by hand. My uncle (one of them) told me to carry the wood to the fence and throw it over and then some of the others would carry it in the house, which would have been really the better plan. However, I did it differently, whether for contrariness or otherwise I do not now remember. When I had a load on my shoulder and came on the fence, I saw that I could easily step over it and did so and carried the wood to where it was to stay and this angered my uncle. He grabbed me and thrashed me severely with a stick of some kind and trounced me up and down so hard and so long that I thought he would hurt me or kill me. When I got away from him, a great hatred arose in me and I vowed that if I ever grew to be strong enough, I would whip this man unmercifully as he had whipped me. I vowed then and there that they never would see me smile or do a kind act to any of them. It was a hard resolution to come to as they were very kind and good to me as a rule and I knew any of them would die for me if need be. But I had been brutally beaten and I resented it bitterly and stuck to my resolution. My Aunt Sibbie Creigh called me to the dining room and tried to reason with me and I told her that my uncle had beaten me unmercifully and unwarranted. I showed her the great black and blue welts on my legs and body. I said to her that just as soon as I grew strong and able enough, I would beat this uncle just as bad as he beat me up. There was no help for it, I went around for two or three years never speaking a kind word to anyone and would not smile or laugh unless I could not help it. I think I succeeded in not smiling all but once or twice. I was growing larger all the time, biding the time when I would be able to make the attack. It hurt the family more than I am able to tell now but I now realize the great injustice I did them and the great injury I was doing myself.

One night after I had retired in a room upstairs with my brothers, I turned over in bed and the bed squeaked loudly as those old rope beds could do so well. The uncle called up the stairway for me to be still and not make so much noise. This was the uncle who had beaten me and I decided I would turn over when I got ready and did it again. He said if I did it again he would come up and do something about it. I immediately repeated it and I heard him start up the stairs and he would have to come through a hallway with a window behind him and from where I was I could have a good view of him and he could not see me at all. I had secreted the broken off pole of an ax just above my bed on what was called the wall plate and was in easy reach of me. I reached up and seized it and was ready for action when he came in the light. Something must have warned him as he did not come up the stairs more than half the way and turned back and that was the last of that. One other day when we were building a fruit cellar under ground and I was pitching dirt and smoothing it down on top, this uncle tried to tell me just how to do it and I put the shovel aside where I could easily get it if needed, told him that if he wanted it done any different to do it himself. He let this pass as I believe he knew what I would do if he tried to punish me.

It was getting worse all the time, so finally they wrote my father to come and get me as they could do nothing with me. He came and I was just about sixteen years old at that time and after visiting for some time, he made preparations to go back to Roane County and take me along and as we had but one horse, we had to ride and tie as we called it. That is he would ride first and I walk, then I ride and he walk. On leaving, they all cried so hard and seemed to hate it so bad that I was going, that I had to cry too, of which I was heartily ashamed but I could not help it.

My old grandmother who was a very fine old character called me to her side and told me that she wanted me to promise her one thing and she would be satisfied. She said, "We have tried to raise you right and keep you in respectable company. Now I want to ask that you always keep in good company and, if possible, with folks that know more than you do and that you may learn. I want to make a comparison of the way you will feel in the company of both kinds. When you see a dog that is happy he has not been in bad company and he will wag his tail over his back and feel good. If you see a sheep killing dog that has been in bad company, you will see that he has his tail tucked under his belly and sneaking around and ashamed of himself. So remember this and always go with respectable people and you will always feel proud of yourself and not ashamed." I promised her. In after years, I tested this out. Of course, I never deliberately threw myself in with bad persons but I was thrown with them and saw them do things that disgusted me and it was then I thought of grandmother's advice and her comparison.

We lived in an Irish neighborhood and when I could go to a gathering anywhere with them, it was the only pleasure I ever had as I had to appear mad at home all the time. The Irish got to liking me as I would tell funny stories on the Irish until one Irishman declared he did not believe more than one-half of the lies told on the Irish were the truth. On the morning we started away we met an Irishman or two on the road and they told us a funny story or two and when they found that I was leaving one of them said, "Ah, Mr. Kelly, you should not come and take our good boys away from here."

We rode and walked through Fayette and Nicholas Counties, crossing the Gauley River at Carnifex Ferry and staying at a great uncle's place by name of Allan McClung near Summersville, the county seat of Nicholas County. We then started on and went through Clay County and the county seat of Henry Clay or commonly known as Clay Courthouse. This town was situated on the banks of Elk River at the mouth of which is located the present capital of the State of West Virginia. From there we traveled by way of Newton, a small town at the three forks of Sandy and then on by way of Left Hand Post Office and on to my father's brother, Jno Kelley, who lived on a hill farm.

Arriving on Sunday everything seemed alright but on Monday morning, when my father came out in his work clothes, he looked so different to what I had recently been used to seeing him, that it made my heart seem to go to my feet and it took me quite a while to get used to him in his farm outfit. It was the beginning of a very lonely life for me. It was arranged that I should stay with this uncle and do some work and go to the country school that winter. My uncle was a very queer man. He was jolly enough if he liked anyone but grouchy and unfriendly if he did not like anyone. My brother Will was a grown man then and he was making his home there also and buying and selling cattle and other things that he could make a little money on and also connected in business with this uncle.

In some manner trouble arose between them and that soured the old man on me and he did not treat me nice at all. So one day, he told me that as soon as I got a job done for him that I had commenced to do, that he thought it best for me to get another place or something to that effect and it hurt my feelings so bad that I hardly knew what to do, but one thing was certain, I started to get away as fast as I could. After uncle left the house, I hurried away to the school house to get my books and got back to the house before uncle came in again and when I told my aunt. that I was going to leave she cried and sympathized with me and it always made me love her more than I would have otherwise as she was rather an odd woman and was very much brow beaten by my uncle. I left her crying and also left crying myself as I did not know just where to go.

I thought of an old man Vineyard, not more than two miles distant, who always had stock to feed and he was very old and I made a beeline for his place and, before getting to his house, sat on top of a



rail fence and cried very hard. I then went in to the house and told my story to the old man who was a very wicked old man and who wore a very long white beard. When I was through telling my woes, he said "damn that old John Kelley, he always was a mean old devil and has been mad at me for years just because I stole the buck horns off his barn and put them on my own. Yes, you can stay here and help me feed the cattle and hogs and go to school at the country schoolhouse." I felt so much better then.

I met up with a Mr. Phillip Ellis who was the father of the only boyfriend I had at the school at my uncle's place and he was a loud talker and when I told him what had happened to me, he swore very hard and told me that I could go to his house and live as long as I wanted to and go to school with his boys, which would have been the same school I had just left. This man was nothing more or less than a ruffian but he sealed my friendship for life by his talk that day.

I started to school and feeding the cattle and hogs and getting in wood for fires and stove wood for cooking and it was not long until I had won the good graces of the old cursing man for he never drew a breath without breathing an oath. However, he was good to me and after I went to bed one night and he was sitting by the fire talking to two stock men who were putting up for the night, I happened to hear my name mentioned and naturally listened for what I might hear and I heard the old man telling them that "he had one of the damndest best boys in the country to feed his cattle for him." He said, "Why that boy won't throw the fodder and hay down in a mudhole and let the cattle tramp it in the mud. He (meaning me) will go long distances to hunt a high and dry place to lay the feed." In fact, he bragged on me until I was tired and fell asleep. But I was not unthankful for this praise and I was proud of it and knew that for the present at least I was secure in a home.

As time went on, the old man became very fond of sitting up nights, telling me hunting stories and often told the same one several times. I took a great interest in all he told me and it pleased him very much. I found the old man a very interesting character to be with regardless of his rough manners. He never showed any courtesy to his womenfolk and said anything before them that he would say to any man. That made it sometimes very embarrassing to me. However, I got used to it and so did the women and so we went on and on.

One of his hobbies was to boast and brag of how much whiskey he had stolen in his life. He would often say to me, "I have stole more whiskey than any man in Roane County." Then he told me that he and another man was returning home from Charleston where they always got their drinking whiskey, that they spied a wagon and team ahead of them, and every little while the occupants would get out and come to the back of the wagon and take their front finger and hook out a jug of whiskey, drink and put it back. He told the man riding with him "God, I will steal that jug of whiskey if you will do as I say." The man agreed and Vineyard told him to drop back out of sight of the wagon while he stole the whiskey and then to ride hard and catch up with him and we will drink it ourselves. The man did so. Vineyard rode up to the hind-end of the wagon and hooked his finger into the jug handle, lifted the jug to his lap and then to the off side and advanced to opposite the drivers of the team and said "Good morning gentlemen". They replied good morning and he rode on after which the other man rode and caught up and they had a fine time drinking that whiskey.

He also told me another theft he made from one of my uncles who lived only three or four miles from him then. This old Vineyard was a tanner by trade and tanned all kinds of hides and among them buckskin. My Uncle John Stone, who had married my father's sister and whose name was Sally and was a New Yorker and a very polite and talkative man and so was my Aunt Sally and were of the aristocratic type. So Uncle John got hold of a buck hide and brought it over to Mr. Vineyard to tan for

him and Vineyard told me that old John Stone told him that he was going to make Sally a pair of buckskin gloves to use when she went to the garden for vegetables. Vineyard said "I put the hide in the tan trough and it came out fine and was a fine piece of work. God, it won't do to let old John Stone have that nice buckskin so I stole it and I made these very moccasins I am wearing right now out of it and a lot of buckskin strings and there is a lot of it left now hanging in that closet."

In that country, it was customary for the one who built the finest barn to nail the buck's horns on the gable. Uncle John Kelley built a good barn and put the buck horns on it. Old Bill slipped out there in the night and stole the horns and nailed them on his own barn and one day as Uncle John was passing Vineyard's place, he called to him and pointed to the buck horns. Old Bill said "God, old John Kelley got so mad and he never spoke to me anymore." Then he roared with laughter.

Old Bill had a neighbor with whom he had a difference with by the name of John Jett. He told me that he hated that John Jett worse than any man on earth and cursed and cursed him. Then he said "I am going to send to Charleston and get me a jug of whiskey and some Sunday I will send for old Bill Ferrell (an uncle by marriage of mine) and we will drink that whiskey all day and old Bill can help me hate old John Jett." My uncle and old Bill Vineyard could think of the worst things to say about anyone they disliked of anyone in the whole country and that was what he meant that they would sit around all day and call old John Jett hard names. Old John Jett was an ornery old rascal but his brother Jake Jett was a very nice old man and was well liked by everyone and was regarded as just a good old man who was drawing a pension for service in the civil war.

Old man Vineyard sat at the fireside with his feet propped up against the fireplace and holding on to his cane and his old gray beard hanging down and it was raining and the roads were muddy. The road curved round in front of the window so that anyone approaching might be seen for a quarter of a mile before he came to the big gate where he came into the house. That day old Bill pricked up his ears and said to me "Who is that coming down the road walking?" replied that I could not tell. He looked for a minute long and said "God, if it ain't old Jake Jett, the old government pauper. See, he has a new suit he has bought that with his government money. Too damn lazy to work for it, the damn old government pauper." And he railed out one oath after another against old Jake. Then he said "I'll bet anything the damned old whelp will be coming in here." Just then old Jake turned in and then the harangue of oaths were all but unbearable to hear and kept up until the man rapped on the door. I was sure that old Bill would order the man away cursing him but instead he cried out in the most friendly way "Come on in.". When Jake entered, the old man jumped up and met him halfway to the door and said "How are you Jake? I am so glad to see you. Where have you been for so long? Have a chair up to the fire." I never saw a man seemingly so pleased (and I found out afterwards that he was really pleased). They had an hour or two of the most friendly visit I have ever witnessed. When Jake got ready to go, old Bill said "Jake, I am going to rob the bees Friday and I want you and your wife to come up". They did and I was so surprised and disgusted at his actions that I just went out and said nothing. I found out afterwards that it was his custom if he liked anyone real well, he took a delight in demeaning that one to any stranger he might be talking to. That was just another peculiarity of his.

Finally trouble came for he and I. On Saturdays I worked in the field with his grandsons and we had to guess the hour to come in for dinner. The day being cloudy we came in a few minutes early and the orchard was up a run and the winter apples had been gathered and I suggested to the boys that we go around the point and get some of the stray apples that were left on the trees and that were now very mellow. Old Uncle Billy, as he was known there in the country, had sown a patch of turnips and it was out of sight of the house and we had to pass right by it on our way to the orchard. While

we were trying to get some apples off the trees, another grandson of old Billy's ran up to the fence of the turnip patch and looked in. At once, we knew that he thought we were in there pulling turnips. The little fellow saw he had been mistaken and said "Grandpap thought you were pulling his turnips". We all walked back together eating our apples and old Uncle Billy stood in the wood yard leaning on his cane, his old gray beard hanging down. He was cursing the most awful oaths and swearing that he could not have anything on account of our eating it up faster than it could grow. I walked up within a few feet of him and I could stand it no longer. I broke in saying "We were not in your old turnip patch" and told him what we were doing and I was acting so awful that the old man said "I am not talking to you". I broke out worse than ever then, saying that I was with the crowd and, of course, took it all to myself and then I went away.

I still continued doing my work just as I had before for a week and never spoke to the old man again until one morning he had to go to Ravenswood horseback and had to be away for several days. He had his overcoat on and horse saddled and ready to go but I noticed he fooled around for a long time near me and pulled out a very scrawny little apple out of his overcoat jacket and said as he handed it to me, "This is one of the finest little apples I have ever tasted". I took the apple and he began to tell me what he wanted me to do while he was gone. That was the last of our quarrel and we were the very best of friends until he died. I visited him on his death bed and he seemed much pleased.

After the winter was over and having worked on the farm through the summer and part of the winter feeding again and going to the country school, I had told my father that I was going to make an effort to get a little more education and that I intended working out for the money to do so with. I told him that I believed I could get high enough to teach a country school. That was a big thing in my estimation those days and I sometimes doubted if I could ever get to that point. However, On March the fifth, I would not attempt to give the year, I started working for our old family physician who was combining the timber and logging business with his practice. I remember the day very well as it was snowing in torrents that day and I wore a very long overcoat as I went to work and it was very comfortable but of the cheapest material possible. My wages were to be fifty cents per day and my board and room. I was a very hearty eater and I sometimes think back and wonder if I was much of a worker and also wonder if the Doctor L. W. Edgell did not lose on me instead of making my labor profitable to him. He was another odd character. Good natured to the core and liberal minded always. Kindhearted to all and would go the bitterest night to the most worthless families, no difference how worn out he was or the time and condition of the weather. He knew when he started on the trip that he would never collect for it. When he was remonstrated about this possibility by his wife, he would say as the case might be, "Oh well, it is a child that is sick and it cannot help it if its father is not worth a damnedest" or "Oh well, it is a mother in distress about her child and I must go to help her."

In this connection, I wish to say that things went bad with him and everybody began to sue him and as it was the custom of the law in that day when a man got sued, there was a legal form of paper to be filled out and stuck up on the premises. After so many suits were posted on the front of his office and about filled all available places for posting, the constable complained to the doctor of lack of space and went away only to return in a day or so to post another bill and the doctor said to him (McGlothlin Constable) "I have had a post sign board made for your convenience to post these suits on and there it is out there so you may not need more room but if you do, we will enlarge that board or put up another one". He was hard run and I had a hard time to get what I claimed he owned me.

To further illustrate his character or rather disposition, I will relate an incident between he and myself. In West Virginia, as everyone knows is a very hilly country and bottomland along creeks and small

rivers is not very extensive. The doctor lived on the banks of the head waters of Pocatolico River and had a good little field of level land bordering the river and the fence was near the bank. Often the bank would cave in to the river taking the fence. On one of these occasions, the doctor detailed me to rebuild the fence and I went out and set the fence a safe distance from the bank of the river to save it from being washed away the next rise in the river and also to give stock room to go between the bank and the fence easily.

In the evening the doctor went out with me to inspect my work and he saw what I had done and immediately began to curse and manifest his dissatisfaction with the way I did it. I felt very bad concerning it and said but very little until he finally was quiet for a few minutes and abruptly asked me if that was really my judgment in placing the fence where I had placed it or did I just do it thoughtlessly not caring whether or not it was right. He asked, "Do you see how much of my nice level land you have cut out in the field?" I answered and said "Yes doctor, I thought I was doing it the right way." He said "Did you do it as you would have done it if it had been your land instead of mine?" I said "Certainly doctor" and went on to explain my reasons. He said "Well, I should not grumble when a fellow thought he was doing the right thing for me so we will forget it and I will say that I am beginning to think your plan has merits." This made me feel good and I elaborated on how I thought I was going to please him with my work. We were good friends after that.

On another occasion, the doctor went out around a field that the cattle were constantly getting out of. We were to repair the fence and parts of it was what we called a brush fence and is made by falling so many brush in a windrow that stock can not get through or over it. The doctor had on his overshoes and his oil cloth leggings and his overcoat and we started around the fence and we would find weak places and fix some of them fairly well and some places I did not really think we helped one bit but he kept saying "good fence". So we finished the fence and a cow that could not get out of that field would have to be dead.

After I got through with that work, I went to what was called a select school, starting to prepare for teaching. I absolutely knew nothing in the books and when I got to the school,

I fell in with Beverly Noe, a young man that was so homesick that he would actually turn blue in color. I could not settle myself to study and he and I would get out together and throw rocks at the birds and any other thing that suited the occasion. We scuffled until we tore our clothes mostly to threads or shreds I should say.

One day we got into a tussle on a gravelly hillside under a shade tree and we had laid our school books down near and we forgot them in our scuffle and when we got through, they were all torn into pieces. We sure felt bad about them as it would take money to replace them. We would run races and jump to see who could out do the other and fight sometimes from arguments over who was the winner. In fact, we were as worthless a couple as I ever have been and consequently we had made no advancement.

The next summer I got up a select school at a church house near my home and could board at my father's place. Our teacher that year was one Josiah Hughes, a splendid teacher, and I got along better that year. I will have more to say about this Mr. Hughes later on in this account. After this school, I was able to pass a satisfactory examination and secured my home school against the advice of nearly everyone I asked about it. Everyone knew me as high tempered and would fight at the drop of a hat or less for that matter and they said that if I got mad at those children and would have to administer corporal punishment, I would likely break some bones and do other damage. However, the trustees, my father being one of the three, decided to risk it. I knew all the time that

they were figuring me wrong for there is nothing in the world that appeals to my sympathy than a child. Nor did they know that I always loved children and loved to see them develop. I would fight to the finish for a child if he needed help. However, I was no softy and I studied each of my pupils separately and acted accordingly with each individual pupil.

Of course, all children have a lot in common and in that case I treated them all alike. I had gone to school with a lot of them myself in the same little old schoolhouse. I had I believe about twenty pupils and all were likeable children and I got them started out fine and I would go out with them and play and before very long I was one of their best playmates and many is the time I had so many on my back that I would have to shake them off to get out of their way, girls and boys alike.

The county superintendent finally came to visit the school and he sat in the school for some time watching me go about my duties after which he made his talk and I dismissed for a short recess. He came to me and said "You like to teach do you not?" I asked him how he knew and he said "I know by the way you go at it." I felt much pleased at this and it gave me a lot more courage to still try to climb higher. It was the custom in those days for a teacher to chastise unruly pupils with a strap or a switch. I had no reason for ever having this to do.

At the last of the school, I had what is called a last day exhibition and had a fine gathering and a good time generally. We had the oration over Hamilton given by one person and one of the neighbor girls who was very tall and dressed up to suit act as the widow of Hamilton with one of the neighbor boys laying as a corpse representing the corpse of Hamilton and all in black. Some of the bias neighbors criticized the act and said that they feared God would strike some of us down dead in the middle of the performance but no such dire results materialized. It seemed that most of us younger people had more confidence that everything would turn out alright than a lot of the older people. During the time I was teaching this school, the man Philip Ellis that I have before mentioned as having talked so friendly and strong for me that he had cinched my lifelong gratitude and friendship, came to the school and told me that his horses and everything he had to farm with was to be sold unless he could raise twenty dollars. He asked me to loan it to him. Immediately, I remembered how good it felt to have a friend when in need and I told him that I had a county order for eighteen dollars and that was all I had at that time. He immediately told me that it would save his horses and other stuff. I gave it to him telling him that I had planned to go to Hamlin, Lincoln County, after school to again attend teachers school and that I wanted him to be very sure that he could pay it back by that time. He vowed he would sell everything he had or pay me the money at that time. I took his note and we parted. After my school was out, I bought the nicest suit of clothes I had ever owned and felt very important (I mean self-important). I immediately decided to go back to Greenbrier County to see my uncles and aunts and my brothers. It is to be remembered that I had never yet ridden on a train since I was ten years old, the time I was taken to my grandmother's place and it was on the same road (The Chesapeake and Ohio) I was to take and the same train. I arrived in Charleston and at the C&O depot when I realized that I had never bought a ticket and had never been away on a trip alone. I did not know how to go at it so I watched one or two go to the ticket window and I listened how they asked for their tickets and I did likewise and it worked. I arrived at that same country station then called New Richmond but now Sandstone and got off the train and went into the depot and who should I meet there but the Brown girls whom Hutsonpiller and I had dawdled on our laps in school some years ago. They showed friendly attitude but I was so very backward that I did not say much to them that time.

I was casting about how to get some way out to grandma's place when I met an Irishman who lived but a mile or two beyond my place. This Irishman's name was Cornelius McGillicuddy, commonly

called Con Mack. He had known me from my childhood and greeted me most cordially. I told him that I had no way of getting out home as I called it and he told me that he had ridden in to meet the train and bring the Catholic Priest out for the church but he said he could not see the 'Praste' anywhere and he had Powers' gray mare leading so he says "If I do not find the 'praste', you can ride the gray mare out."

There was a saloon in the mouth of the canyon (Lick Creek) and I knew this Irishman liked a drink of whiskey better than sugar and as I had some money, I invited him to go to the saloon and drink with me. He accepted and the upshot of it was that we both had two or three drinks and as I thought it time to start home, Con Mack says "See here now you know your old grandmother always keeps a little whiskey in the house for medical purposes and if I were you, I would take her a quart bottle of whiskey." I said "sure I will" and got it. Then Con Mack said, "see here now, you might break that bottle and lose the whiskey, so you had better let me carry it. I will put it in my inside pocket" and he did. He told me to ride the old gray mare of Powers and said I would let you ride my bay mare but she is so hard to ride, she might hurt you. I said alright and climbed the gray and he the bay and as we were both feeling good, we started up the canyon on a gallop and ran quite a distance and slowed down on the road at the edge of a high cliff. I looked back when I heard Mack saying "woe, woe" and beheld his bay standing as still as death and he jerking her bridal hard and saying "woe, woe you nasty thing, I want you to stop". She was at that time not moving a muscle and he gradually lost his grip and balance so at last he tumbled off and lay on his back. I got off and went to him and helped him on his wild horse.

Mack kept feeling better and better until he was worth millions of dollars before we arrived home which was after dark. On our way I broke the stirrup off Powers' saddle and was carrying it on my wrist to save it and I lost it. Mack was much alarmed and said "Powers will kill me for this". When we arrived at the barn at home, he told me that I had better pour out a little of Grandma's whiskey in another bottle. He could give Powers a drink that would keep him in a good humor, so I did. The next day it was learned that the "Praste" had arrived on that train but Con Mack did not see him and there was quite a stir about it.

We went to the house and walked in and Mack introduced me as one of his relatives. I sat there quite some time before they recognized me and they were glad to see me. I was glad to see them all except the uncle who had beat me. To save me from perdition, I could do nothing but hate him. I know that he felt so bad for what he had done and wanted to make it up to me. When he saw that I was still bitter against him, I could see it hurt him badly. But I could no more forgive than I could fly. I visited there for some time intending all the time to go on to the state normal school (Concord Mercer County) but as time went on, I felt more and more that I was not in condition to enter college.

So I went out in the country to a farm where the neighbors said a hired hand had worked for an old maid on her farm for so long that she had to marry him to pay the debt. They were the very best of people. The old maid, Miss Jane Hutchinson, was the sister of Michael Hutchinson of the Hutchinson Mills mentioned in the first of this account. The man's name was John Mognett and he just worshiped his wife. He took sick and had to stay indoors all the time and walk with a cane. I think it was an excuse to get to be with her. When he went out to the barn in the winter evenings (as he always did) he wrapped and bundled up until nothing but his nose was visible. He really looked very comical. I hired on at fifty cents a day and my keep. I remained there for three or four months and grew restless.

As there was a timber job hauling stave blocks to a saw mill a few miles away, I conceived the idea



of getting an ox team and hauling these blocks and that I would make more money than working single handed. I secured an ox team and wagon and bought me some feed and started to Mr. William Bower's place where I was to board. On my way there, one of my oxen laid down on me and was completely exhausted. This showed how good a judge of ox flesh I was as these oxen had been starved and were very poor. However, I was into it and had to do something so I let him rest for a while and fed a lot of costly feed into them.

The Bowers family were very good to me and had a very beautiful daughter. In fact, I made some effort to get to going with her. She did not dislike the idea very much, but we never came to any understanding. I suppose it was because of my backwardness. It finally blew over but the girl and everyone in their family were extra kind to me and treated me well. How this happened not to materialize further, I never could just understand.

I finally got my team in shape to haul. I hauled and hauled and lost money all the time. When I saw that I was losing money I decided to turn my oxen into a pasture and let them get fat and sell them. Before they got fat, I got in touch with an old Irishman in the neighborhood that had a nice black horse and I traded the cattle for the horse and finally sold the horse to my Uncle Joseph A. Creigh, and that was that.

There was another timber job not so far away and I concluded to go at it again single handed so I went over into the woods and applied for a job and the boss hired me at once. So, early the next day, I went to work. They were splitting three foot oak blocks into what they called bolts and then these bolts were sawed into staves for barrels. The blocks were set on end and two men were heavy mauls and a third man set iron wedges and all the two (of which I was one) had to do was maul all day long. I seized my maul in the morning and wielded it all day and when the six o'clock whistle blew, I had to get someone to help me let go of the maul handle. My fingers had cramped around the handle and I could not open my hand. I went in at six and ate my supper. The sun was high yet but I immediately went into my bunk and there I stayed until next morning when they called me to breakfast. I ate and started on the walk to maul. That day, I really thought I could never make it to the spot but finally I did. I repeated the dose of the day before and for nearly a month, I could not stay up in the evening until a decent bed hour. I was a very slender person, weighing only 145 pounds. I was six feet tall. So I was not considered much of a man. I met mostly roughens in this camp but made friends with all of them by joining in and telling funny stories with them. Before I left the camp, all except two would have fought for me. These two were peeved at me because I could out-wrestle them and because I seemed so small and they were big fellows, it hurt their feelings that I could outdo them. To make it worse, the whole crowd cheered and hurrahed for me. They were going to fight me and my boss, about the biggest ruffian in the whole bunch, stood ready to fight for me if I need him. He told me this afterwards. He talked only when necessary.

After this, I taught several terms of school and, if any reader of this has ever read the "The Hoosier School Master" can mostly visualize my experiences. They were of a different nature to a considerable degree. After teaching my home school as reported before, I applied for a school in one of the harder districts and finally was hired for the term. It was in a community where it was a common thing for one man to shoot down another and get away with it. I started in the school where one-third of the pupils were larger men and women than I was. I boarded with Mr. Alkana Carper, one of the board of trustees, and I was made to feel perfectly at home there in his house. We had good times and got along fine but trouble was in store for me and it soon broke.

[\(continued in Part II\)](#)