

Submitted by: Glen Haney – bud at ncweb.com

John Wesley (Wes) Ray wrote a number of very interesting articles for Hunting and Fishing type magazines. The ones that I have come across are from circa. 1905. The Ray family appears to have all moved from Carter County by 1920 and gone west. I am posting contact information concerning the Ray family if anyone is interested in contacting a relative:

I am seeking information regarding Milton Ray, John Wesley Ray, and Samuel Preston Ray, brothers who lived in Olive Hill, Kentucky around 1900. Their father, James Ray, resided in Terra Haute, Indiana as late as 1914. The brothers, Milt, Wes, and Pres as they were known, may have come to Olive Hill from Indiana. This would have been prior to 1900. Pres married Mary Bentley around 1900 and they had six children, Pearl (1902), Esther (1903, my mother), Thurston (1905), Hazel (1907), Troy, and Raymond. Pres died of pneumonia in 1914. Milt went out to Oregon around 1912, and following Pres's death Wes went west also. Milt was involved in the manufacture of work boots for loggers and the like. Milton had four sons, Curtis, Earl, Gordon, and Arvil. Wes was a writer who wrote for sporting magazines, may have worked as an editor on a newspaper in Oregon, and was a friend of John Fox, Jr., and a fishing buddy of Zane Grey. Around 1927 Milton and John Wesley came east and visited their sister-in-law, Mary, then living in Cleveland, Ohio. Milton returned to Oregon and was never heard from again. John Wesley stayed on in Ohio and is said to have died in Springfield, Ohio. My interest in this is that I am writing a family history and am trying to unearth material about my maternal grandfather and his siblings. I am especially interested in the life and work of John Wesley Ray and his literary friends. My e-mail address is: rabebling@hotmail.com.

In the Mountains of Eastern Kentucky.

It was a stormy night in December. The northeast wind tugged and tore at the great forest of spruce and laurel, and howled and shrieked around the three corners of a hunter's cabin. Within that log hut a new life had begun. That was the winter of 1857. From that night I date my age.

It was an ugly night for a story to begin, but I couldn't have a say so in it. My father told me afterwards that the same day of my birth he killed 7 deer and 2 black bear, which completed a list of 400 deer and 50 bear. He kept a list of the large game he had killed. He was a pioneer of this-then-vast wilderness of northeast Kentucky, and a mighty hunter.

I had a brother two years older than myself, and it was our father's delight to have us with him on hunting trips. When I was 10 years old I owned a rifle—a very small fire arm. My father had a gunsmith to make it, which cost him \$18 in trade, for ginseng, wild bees wax and pelts.

I became an expert shot. At 12 years of age I had killed my bear. It was at this age also that I earned my first pair of shoes. I dug ginseng—a plant as common then as rattle weed is now, and tramped 15 miles and sold it to a peddler for 60 cents a pound, and paid the modest price of \$3.00 for a pair of stogy shoes.

The following winter my brother and I joined in to make some money trapping, and by the middle of October we had a line of deadfalls and snares thirty some odd miles. We worked for "who laid the chunk," and in March we floated down the Kinikiknic to the Ohio River in a "Dugout filled with pelts, and from there by boat to Cincinnati, where we located a fur house and sold for good prices, though it would surprise young trappers if I were to quote the prices we got for fur then. The best mink brought 60 cents, and of course other fur sold in proportion.

Our catch for that winter was 170 coon, 592 opossum, 80 mink, 92 red foxes, 13 wildcat, 4 catamounts. We had 37 deer skins and 1 panther's pelt. I have hunted and trapped every winter since and dug roots and herbs during the summer. Game is getting scarce, but by going further back in the mountains each winter I manage to make a comfortable living.

A WINTER'S TRAPPING.

THE stillness of night brooded peacefully over the desolate stretch of forest. A young moon was dropping through a bank of soft clouds to its setting beyond the dark expanse. A soft breeze stirred the sleeping spring, while ever and anon came the discordant squawks of the night hawks.

My brother and I had left the settlements behind us, and after two weeks hard work we were comfortably installed in a substantial log hut far up in the spruce and laurel country of Eastern Kentucky. It was our first winter in the wild. I was 12 years old, my brother 14.

We had one rifle and a cap-and-ball Colt's revolver and a coon dog. Our trapping outfit consisted of 24 rather primitive steel traps, a large ball of hemp cord, spun by mother to be used for loops, and 100 sets of the figure 4 for deadfalls.

Referring to a faded and time-worn diary, I traced on the yellow pages the following:

"Got her up al rite" (meaning the cabin) Ocktober the 25, 1875. Hou I wish Dady was with us, we git so lonesome. Last nite we hard a Panther Scream, en Jist above our cabin, whur tha is a kave, a passel of coon's fought en whut a rackit it beet 40ty.

Novembur 10. Got 100 deadfalls set, 55 Loops, en our Steel Traps al out. too morrey we aim tu bild a Bear pen. (Same day). Old Bruze, our Coon Dog, got chawed up mity bad in a mixup with a monstrous big Catamount. 1 of his ears is plum tore off.

Novembur the 15—Bruther Bill had a mighty bad spel of The Collicks, casiened by eatin tu much of Black walnut curnils.

(Same day.) We ketched our first Black Bear in the Pen we had bill. Bill warnt able to go the round with me, en when I kum up tu whur the Bear was in the pen, how bad I was skeert. I no nou whut the Buk-ager is, that Dady en old man rnuck talks about.

I hed the Colts Pistel, I had tel rest the muzle agin the side of a bush, I was shaking So. The Bear was on his hiñe feet bumpin his head agin the top of the pen en beathi agin the logs with his monstrous pa's. I took aful good aim an fired. I liked tu fainted. 1 thout shore the brute wood git ont an eat me. I never Seed Sich Struggles. (I wll tel the truth) I drapped mi Pistel an Shinned up a Black Jack Saplln. In a fue minits the Bear was plum Still, and I skoot- ed down tu whur I cud peep inside the pen. en no une nose hou glad I was! he was dead as a dore nale. I left him an went home tu see hou Bill was, he was a heap Site better, en had bin en shot 2 Wild Ducks en was kooken une fer dinner (we aint ketched eny mink yit). After Bill an me goes back tu Skin the Bear. We had a plum time of It. Gist afore dark we got the hide off en it tuck us both tu tale it. Each feller caryed and end of a Stick thet we put thru the rolled hide. It got mitie dark^en beguned tu Snow befoar we got home.

Novembur 16—SmornIn 5 In Snow on ground. Bill Starts on the ded-fall line en I go over the Loops. I, alsoe, go tu the Bear pen tu git Sum fat ofen the karkuss tu make Bear Oil tu greeze the Traps en Guns. When I sits in site of the pen I see's Sunthin inside eatin of the karkuss. I slips up en thar was a big She Panther en a little baby Panther that looked like a half grown kitten. This time I had the Rifle which was so hevy. I had tu have a rest, en while I was huntin fer a rest the varmits ran away, but it gived me and ldy. I sot the log as we had fer the Bear, but this time lighter. (Same nite). Arter dark we got our intyre ketch on bords, as follers—5 mink, 11 Posum, 7 coon. 1 Wild Cat, If! mus Rat—Purtie good.

Desembur 1—No excitement, ceptin 2 loggers come tu our cabin en tryed tu raze a fuss with us, aiming tu scare us away, Then tike our house en Fur. I got aful Scared (not at them) but at Bill, he's aful hot heded en I thout shore he 'ud Shot une 'of them. (I don't want tu hurt eny human bein) T woodent be Huntin en Trappin, only I ha fter make a livin sum hou, en God made the varmits tu be used, I reckon.

Las nite, Desembur the 3 me an Bill gone coon huntin. He ketched Fore big coon en a half grown Wild Cat. Nex mornin we put the largest coon en the Yung Wild Cat in a tite pen together—en Gee—a—Whilicers! I wish Dave en Sol kud bin har tu seed the cyrcuss. I told Bill I'de bet him 2 Box of Jackson Crackers thet the coon ud chaw the cat al rite, en Bill lowd he'd bet tuther way —The flte gist lasted bout 5 minits, en Bill wil git tu Shute the Jackson Crackers, at

Chrismus—I gess. The coon's pelt warnt no kount. So fer our ketch is—12 mink, 34 Posum. 11 Coon, 2 Wild Cat, 40 musRat, sides lots of Quail, Pesants, Ducks, Wild Tirhy. Also, 1 Bear, 2 Panther. (We caut the Panther en her Kitten in the Bear pen). I am tryin tu pet the purtie kitten but Gee, he's al fire an Toe. It scratched me mity bad unced, but I gess I'll pet him al rite. A Mountin Snow Storm is up. Gess we wil hafter make us a Snow-Sled.

Wes Ray
Olive Hill

.A Patriarch of the Wild

BY WES RAY.

It was in a quaint isolated bit of country, far from the reach of grasping greed that I, very unexpectedly, came upon a tiny cottage set a few rods back from a noisy, meandering brook. It was indeed a primitive wild. My attention was wholly absorbed in a contemplation of the beauties about me. Rising on either side the brook, like sentinels towered mighty, rock capped mountains fringed with laurel and ivy and bedecked with many kinds of autumnal flowers. Farther down this turbulent stream just before it loses itself in a thick growth of black-jack, a cliff rises, spire-like, to meet the clouds. This mass of rock viewed from where I was standing certainly aspired to the ideal in beauty and the grand in sublimity. How long I thus stood, drinking in the panorama I cannot reckon; I was called away from the delightful vision by someone in the little cottage singing low and sweet, in a quivering voice came that old familiar air: "Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me." Silently I tiptoed along until I stood by the doorstep I caught the refrain: "Hide me, O My Savior hide 'till the storm of life is past," and not until the echo of the last stanza had died away did the singer stir. Then I heard a slow step towards the door; it opened slowly and there in the doorway stood a venerable looking old man somewhat stooped in form. Time's frosty fingers had caressed his locks and his expressive countenance spoke "Peace on earth, good will to men." "Why! Bless me if it hain't jest a sprite of a lad." The old man was evidently surprised to find one so young in the trackless forest.

"Wa-al. now I wunder! I'm rail glad thet ye ken sing so well. I 'spect yer dear mamy taught ye 'n prehaps learned ye too pray! Come right in." I entered, the aged gentleman knelt by a little cot and never before had I heard such words—words that breathed nope and trust, words that throbbed and pulsed with a

sincere devotion. It called forth memories of my childhood, when my saintly mother knelt by my bedside and asked the Savior to watch over her darling boy

When we arose there was moisture in my eyes and I impulsively spoke up: "O. sir. You do not know how near this me back to those other days; days brim full of joys that I can never, never recall but which I hope to take up again when I meet my mother in yonder time !"

"Sonny. I'm overjoyed tew her ye ha-ar with me; the Father has surely sent ye tew cheer his old servant up, for many times, my boy, when I cannot follow the trap line: I weary uv life, 'n fain would I lay down this old body, but God's will be done .After I prepare oar 'snack' ye must tell me sunthin "bout yer- self 'n I'll give ye sum facts concerning my life here in this out-o'-th'-way place."

The old man busied himself about the preparations for dinner and I become much interested in studying the pictures that hung against the walls. Surely the old hunter and trapper had exercised great judgment in his selection. There were "The Creation of Man." "Moses," "David." and "The Master." all by that master hand Michael Angelo And another master of art had found a place upon this humble wall; besides there were numerous paintings of hunting scenes, a piece of fine netting covered a photograph that hunt; above the dresser. I carefully lifted this bit of gauze and there framed in a wonderfully carved mahogany frame a beautiful maiden smiled down upon me. Surely this *most* be the "Virgin Mary" thought I. The beauty of that face was indescribable, It called up a vision that never fades from the soul. The vision of mother. Never in my weary wanderings have I gone beyond the overshadowing thought of mother. Stand on the surf-beaten coast of the Atlantic, or roam over the western wilds and every dash of the wave or murmur of the breeze will whisper "Mother." Tho' I love through the green groves of the sunny South, in the smile of the soft skies and in the kiss of the balmy breeze, mother lives again!

The kind old man announced dinner and we repaired to the kitchen and commenced a hearty meal of vegetables, wild meats and Indian fritters, such as only an expert woodsman knows how to bake.

Briefly I related my past life to my host, nothing of importance happening during the fourteen years of a rather hum-drum existence, except to hustle, hustle for the necessaries of life, I was looking out for trapping territory and had, by mere chance, come upon his place. At great length the old man revealed to me his past history:

"No, no, Sonny, I hain't never hed a son 'er darter. I've been livin' ha-ar nigh ontu sixty years; come ha-ar whin I war jest a striplin', warn't mor'n eighteen. In course I've visited some with my kinsmen; but fer th' most part I've been in these parts. My days air not marked by anny great deeds, but God has given me the peace 'n quietude of th' simple life—th-' white life. Indeed I hev been wonderfully

blessed; not in this world's goods, but in good health, sound sleep, clean thoughts, 'n sartin prospects uv life beyant this vale."

"After all," I interrogated. "Isn't that the very best life?"

"Ya-as," he replied slowly, gazing thoughtfully at the flickering logs in the old fashioned Dutch oven, "right ye be. Bub. Th' best things uv life air not th' sordid things that clink 'n rot. Ha-ar I've been fer years 'n years, 'n th' var- mits air jist es plentiful es whin I fuss settled twixt these mountains. In course I could uv kilt 'em all in a few years 'n moved on tew new trapping ground, but that would hev been greed 'n I tell ye greed's a grievous sin. I trap some in th' winter season, enuff tew buy th' nessarys uv life, then I kill some game fer meat, 'n I cultivate my truck patches 'n th' good Lord does the rest. In course I dig some seng 'n seal, but no late hits gittin skace.

Gladly I consented to remain with Uncle Jerry and spend the fall and winter hunting and trapping. I had to journey back a distance of fifteen miles to bring my traps and some extra clothing. The evening that I returned Uncle Jerry had just bagged a big fat turkey and was plucking its feathers preparatory to putting it in the pot. I was as hungry as a bear and the smell of that delicious fowl cooking made me very impatient. It seemed that supper time would never come. While Uncle Jerry was preparing our evening meal I took my little squirrel rifle and sauntered down towards the "Spires," a name that the old gentleman had given the great tumble of limestone. I stopped to watch a family of gray foxes sport and play at the mouth of their den, which was situated on a narrow ledge directly opposite me across the creek. While standing thus I heard a splash in the water a few rods down stream and looking in that direction I beheld a large sleek otter. I was so much excited that I had my gun in position to shoot before I could think sanely, "Bang!" Yes, I had fired at the pretty animal and its pelt worthless. Surely I had hit it, for he had sunk the moment the gun cracked. No! There his head protrudes farther down the branch. How glad I was that the ball had missed its mark! I watched it until it swam to the bank; then I retraced my steps to the cottage. Uncle Jerry asked me what I had shot at. I hesitated before I told him, for well I knew that he would be displeased when he learned the particulars. "I shot at an otter, Uncle, but honest I didn't mean to, or rather. I was sorry after I had fired."

"That's a good boy. Always tell the truth, but hit would been a pity ef ye'de kilt th' critter, fer a wilful waste makes a woful want, 'n 'sides, it haint right no how," admonished Uncle Jerry in a kindly tone. Supper over, I washed the dishes while he milked the little Jersey, a pretty cream colored cow, that one of his nephews had given him when she was only a small calf. Late into the night we sat by the flickering blaze in the fireplace, for the night was cool, and while the katydids were prophesying frost, Uncle Jerry was telling me one of his hunting stories

"A feller by the name uv Andy Jackson Tomilton 'n me war down in th' swamps in Arkensaw huntin' arter bn-ar 'n sich critters. We war both young then andi purtie rude. We built our shack in the biggest swamp ye ever sot eyes on. Hit 'stended fer miles 'n miles in every direction. We hed tew tote our grub 'n traps fully fifteen miles, 'n et time- we hed tew wade water 'n mud up tew our waists but we war gritty 'n bimby we got all our supplies stored snug 'n dry in the lean-to;' then we started in to blaze out our trapping line.

"Mv course lay along th' margin uv a narry lake, a sea uv mud, I should ov said. I made tolerable speed th' fuss day out 'n when dark came I had covered prehaps twelve miles. A thick fog hed settled 'n hit war getting awfully chilly. I hunted about for a convenient spot tew spread my blanket: but th' hull earth seemed tew be full uv water. Finally, when it was gitting quite dark I found a monstrous sycamore th' trunk uv which was quite holler, with an opening jest large enough fer me tew squeeze through. So intew this I crept 'n I war tickled good 'n hard when I found

it tew be sich a cozy nest. I spread my blanket 'n tho' I war a leetle fer room, I soon dropped inter a sleep. Along in th' night I war 'i ed by th' wind tearing 'n thrashin' thru th' great trees. Th' big sycamore that I occupied rocked 'n groaned so terrible that I looked ev'ry moment *for* it tew crash tew th' earth. I'll tell ye, bub. ef ye ever witness a storm in th' swamp yell not fergit it soon! Wa-al, th' wind kept on increasin' till it war a regular hurricane, and then th' great trees began tew fall. There war a raspin'. scrapin' sound agin th' tree that I war lying and I knew that it war a fallen tree that had partly lodged agin th' sycamore was slidin' down. Bimbi th' storm passed and I could hear it for away in th' swamp, tearing 'n grinding at th' great forest

"It warn't long 'till I war deep in sleep agin 'n whin I finally woke a streak uv daylight war strugglin' thru a leetle crevice uv th' sycamore, jest barely large anuff tew light th' interior so'se I could desarn my surroundings. I examined th' opning that I hed crawled thru th' evning before, 'n my heart sank within me! A monstereous poplar hed fell 'n wedged across th' only outlet. Thar I war. traped like I hed trapped hundreds uv coon 'n sich. Imagine my feeling*! I war already hungry, having eaten nothin' since noon th' day before. It would be days, 'n maby weeks before my pardner would become uneasy about im safety. Then he might hunt for years ' thar were not one chance in a thousand that he would ever find me. I war indeed, in despirate straits. I thoughtt about trying tew dig away th' earth from under 'th tree's roots, like varmits do, but I hed no tool tew work with Only one hope remained. My good old mother hed taught me early 'n life tew pray tew th' Father when in great need 'n tew always trust him fer deliverance. Ya-as. I prayed es I hed never prayed before. I warn't no coward, but I war young loved life. I hed a sweetheart back in old Kaintucky 'n there war my poor old father 'n mother. What ef they could know that their boy war caged in a living tomb, slowly dying frum hunger n' thirst. It war there, imprisoned withM th' tree, that I learned th' great lesson uv patience. I realized that life es full uv pitfalls 'n

entanglements, into which our unwary feet often stumble; it was that that I war reminded uv th' frailty uv human hopes 'n aspirations. Es th' leaves uv th' tree, once flourishin', once verdant, lose thar vitality 'n finally waste away, so it es with our desires 'n anticipations. In answer tew my prayers, in my cramped 'n narry prizon, came a comfortin' thought: I had never wronged no one; my life hed been clean, fer th' most part I hed lived with God in th' solitudes! 'Be not dismayed et th' trials uv life; they air sent fer yer good. Th' Farther knows what keys in th' human soul tew touch in order tew draw out its sweetest notes uv joy 'n gladness.'

"Th' days dragged slowly by 'n I war gradually starvin' tew death, sich terrible thirst thet I hed tew endure! It makes me shudder tew think on't yit! Many times thru th' long lonesome nights hope would stir my weary soul es I would catch th' sound uv some prowling animal. 'That's surely Tomilton this time; he's tracked me thru th' swamp 'n now- sweet deliverance!' N' then I would shout es loud es my weakened condition would 'low. Then I would strain my ears tew listen, only tew hear some animal scamperin' away.

"Patience! Patience! All th' world learns patience; it's th' ballast uv th' soul thet will keep it frum rollin' n' tumblin' in th' greatest storms. I hed no means uv reckoning time, but it seemed thet I hed been thar fer years when thar gathered another storm. I could hear the sullen roar uv th' wind far in th' west 'n now 'n then I caught th' low rumble uv thunder. An oppressive stillness brooded about thet part uv th' swamp thet I war imprisoned in. It warn't long 'till th' storm war on, 'n never before did I hear sich an awful orunchin, grindin', frightnin' noise. It seemed thet th' warrin' elements frum th' hull earth hed met in thet particular spot tew engage in one terrible battle! Great trees were hurled tew th' earth es tho they war straws, 'n joy uv joys! Th' great sycamore slowly parted just above my head 'n with a death groan it went tew th' earth. God hed heard my earnest prayers 'n delivered me! I war so weak thet I could scarcely stand, but I managed to crawl up 'n over th' high stump, howsumever, not 'till I hed

threw my rifle 'n traps outern th' stump. Th' rain war peltin' down like fun; but th' wind hed passed. Th' cool rain tended tew revive me 'n hidin' my traps away in th' holler uv th' fallen sycamore I shouldered my rifle 'n slowly tramped away tew th' south, which war th' direction uv camp. .My only thought was fer sumthin tew eat 'n drink. Arter goin' a few hundred yards I came tew a small branch 'n, oh! how precious thet muddy water looked. I lay down 'n took one swallow, then arter a leetle another. I war very careful not tew gorge it down et once, fer well I knew th' penalty! Thet water fetched new life in my weak frame 'n once more I took up my journey. I kilt a pheasant arter I hed traveled about 'n hour 'n with th' aid uv flint 'n tinder I hed a fire goin' 'n before long I hed a nice roasted bird. I could uv devoured it in a few moments, but reason said: 'Eat sparingly.' I reached camp jest es night war stealin' o'er th' great forest. My pardner, Tomilton, was no whar in evidence. Sick 'n weary I tumbled into my bunk 'n whin I opened my eyes again th' sun war up over th' swamp 'n th' fog war liftin' fast. I kicked out 'n

prepared my breakfast 'n with a heart full uv thankfulness, I ate heartily uv th' plain food. I couldn't help but wonder whut had became uv my pardner; hed he met with some accident? Or war he out in th' swamp huntin' fer me? After breakfast I staped out tew look erbout a mite 'n note th' signs uv th' weather. Arter potterin' erbout fer erwhile I turned 'n retraced my steps tew th' shack. I war 'bout tew enter whin I noticed some writin' above th' door. It war printed in large letters, evidently with a piece uv charcoal. This es whut I read:

" I heve slid for a dryer klime. I hunted sum fer ye, but I got th' shakes. I think I've got 'em good 'n hard. Ef ye ever cum back ye'de best lite out fer th' Ohio. Ef ye decide tew stick tew hit ye ken hev my traps ' n grub. Yur Pard Tomilton.'

"Wa-al, thet made me sorter homesick, but th' die war cast 'n I 'tended tew stay over winter, come whut might! I soon got used tew stayin' by myself, 'n I done a good winter's trappin; but I took care not tew go tew roost enny more in a tree trunk, I did."

The fire had burned to embers and the room was quite dark when Uncle Jerry story was finished, and after he had offered up his evening prayer, we retired for the night. I slept on the little cot and the white clean blankets and bleached sheet was truly inviting to slumber.

I was up with the lark next morning and from the portico I obtained a magnificent view of the great cliff. Far down the stream, standing sphinx-like, serene and grim, as I gazed upon this mighty tumble of limestone, the aspect gradually changed. The morning sun was lighting up its crevices and touching its peaks with gold. I stood watching the miracle. Such a kaleidoscopic change of light and shade. It was impossible to describe or paint the beautiful scene.

Uncle Jerry came out and silently stood by my side. After a lapse of perhaps ten minutes, he spoke:

"Behold th' greatest uv God's miracles. I tell ye, sonny, ef I had never sot eyes on a Bible thet big cliff at sunrise would tell th' hull story. Ya-as my boy, thet 'n many things besides teaches me thet ef we air led thru life by God's law we shall eternally feast our vision upon scenes more beautiful than these."



'A CLIFF RISES, SPIRE LIKE, TO MEET THE CLOUDS.'

We breakfasted in the neat little kitchen and after the chores were done the old man took me to see the Rainbow cliffs, situated two miles above his cottage, on Crystal creek. We took our rifles along and before we arrived at the Rainbow we had bagged enough "grays" and pheasants to supply our larder for quite awhile.

The Rainbow was lit up by the bright autumn sun and truly it presented a scene possessing every element of beauty and sublimity. I lingered long there amidst the laurel and birch, absorbing its quiet peace like a sponge breathing deep of the exhilarating atmosphere, full of ozone purified by pine and spruce.

The next day we visited Pawpaw flat, a dense grove of Pawpaws covering a flat bit of land some twenty acres in extent. We gathered a few Pawpaws, which were just a bit mellow and of a golden hue.

We spent a few days hunting for seng and golden seal. After the first "white" frost Uncle Jerry brought out his casting rod and straightway w a tussle with the finny tribe. We tramped three miles down stream to the pond, which is an ideal place for black bass, both large and small mouth. Here we found a few pickerel and his larger cousin, the pike, was there in plenty. Having nothing but "fishin line 'n pole." I had to content myself with fishing for the smaller varieties of pan fish. While fishing in a mass of watercress with a red-worm, 1 hooked a yellow cat that would probably weigh three pound. This was an extraordinary occurrence. Uncle Jerry succeeded in landing some fine bass and two large pike.

Ere long the mountains and valleys were wrapped in a mantle of King Boreas came and entered triumphant on his frosty throne. We trapped some, but not enough to make it a financial success. We surely feasted off the fat of the land, for we were in the midst of a paradise for the small game hunter. Many interesting stories of pioneer days Uncle Jerry told to me as we sat before the without. Never shall I forget the story that followed my inquiry of "Whose picture?" I referred to a photo that bong above the dresser. The old man was silent for a long time, gazing towards the covered photograph.

"Son," said he, "never hev I breathed tew living soul th' story uv thet picture. but ye seeme so like my own self, so sentimental like, thet I don't mind tell I ye all. tho' it rings this old heart tew do

"Ye remember whin ye fuss came here I told ye thet I warn't more'n eighteen. Well. I war a leetle off. I war jut in my twenty-first year. I came away home 'n kindred, my heart crushed a great sorrow I I sought out this lonely spot, built this cottage 'n hung her picture up there. She was a beautiful gal. beautiful in loveliness 'n purity, gentleness 'n grace. In short she war all thet es good, refined 'n ennoblin'. She war tew be my wife. Preperations war bein' made fer th' wedding. I war th' happiest mortal on earth 'n I went 'bout my duties with a light heart, praising th' Father fer sich joy. But th' darkness or dispair was tew soon shut out the bright sunshine thet filled my bein'. Th' uv my life, Ellen, war stricken with a fatal fever 'n when her saintly spirit fled tew th' God thet gave it, thar rose a star uv hope above th' storm of grief. Be- yant th' chilly river we would be together fer aye."

The old man fumbled in his blouse pocket and drew forth a packet that was worn and yellowed with the soil of age and from the packet he tremblingly took a tress of auburn, a faded rose and a wedding ring. Through tears that furrowed down his cheeks he gazed at them for a long, long time, and then handing them to me he remarked : "Thru all these lonely years, filled with tears, thet picture hangin' gin th' wall 'n them trinkets has been my guardian angel."

How I admired this grand old patriarch. Through all these years of isolation from the world he not grown cynical, cold nor selfish. He was as warmhearted as a school boy. I have never regretted my winter's stay with Uncle Jerry; indeed I gained in wisdom, purity, Godliness and every attribute that goes to make a better man by my association with him. It is a fact that by nature we are all possessed with a quality that our character, habits and principles take their form and color from those of our intimate associates. To associate with persons wiser, better and with more experience than we ourselves possess, is always inspiring and invigorating. We become partners in their wisdom. We learn not only by what they have enjoyed, but from what they have suffered. Thus I was loath to part with the chaste and venerable old gentleman; but spring had come and father was needing me in planting out the crops. Real tears gathered in my eyes as I shook the old man's hand and bid a reluctant adieu to the familiar old mountains

that speak of earthly peace and furnish glimpses of edenic beauty that is too rarely seen on this old earth.

Trapping the Mink.

Many years have now past but I still remember one February morning at three o'clock my father yelled—"Roll out Son, if you want to go the round with me this morning." A snow storm was in full bloom. After a hasty breakfast of corn bread, venison and black coffee, we both swung out on the trail. Father was trapping for mink and promised to take me along. This was mating season and about one mile up stream, close to a pond where a small stream emptied into the Tygart we came to a small hollow log and in this log was a female mink. On the outside father had set three Newhouse traps and two of them were sprung each holding a male mink. Farther up the trap line we came to a hollow tree. Inside this father had imprisoned another female mink. He had set five traps on the outside and three of them were sprung, each holding a large male mink; five minks in less than two miles trapping. I was small then but I learned a secret that morning that easily knocks out any method known to the trapping world. Brother Trapper you can readily understand why these minks were imprisoned. The next thing is how to catch the female mink, alive and unharmed.

Get four boards six inches wide and nail them together forming a long box. In one end make a trap door by inserting piece of board nine inches long; fasten the end of the board with leather hinges, thus you have a door that inclines toward the center of box. Take a stick the size of a pencil two inches long, and set upright. Now you have the door set. If you have already located den—which every old trapper knows is easily done by certain signs—insert the trap with door raised about one foot into the hole. If you cannot find such a den, make one, into which after placing the box, close up all other openings and see that box is solid. Let swing door rest on pencil. No bait is necessary. The female mink will enter in order to hide from the male and you have your mink as sure as shooting.

You will ask: "Why can't we catch the male mink by this method?" Simply because the male mink is rarely, if ever, in their home dens at this season as they are traveling and seek drifts, etc., by day.

WES RAY, OLIVE HILL

THE HOOT OF THE OWL.

By WES RAY.

The stillness of an August night brooded peacefully over the wild country. A new moon was dropping through a bank of billowy clouds to his setting beyond the rugged mountains. A low zephyr stirred the sleeping pine, and all was tranquil. Now and again the "yap yap" of the fox or the call of a coon was heard. The Big laurel isn't an ideal camping place, for nowhere can he found a more desolate tumble of great cliffs, scarred and seamed with bottomless chasms and fringed with dense laurel growth.

I was up there after seng. and had pitched my tent in a little cove high above the stream and yet the mighty cliffs towered hundreds of feet above me.

It lacked twenty minutes of midnight in this particular night as I sit upright on my blanket and consulted the camp clock with the aid of my electric lamp. A cold sweat had started out on my body was it a horrible nightmare? Such an unearthly sound! It was as though thousand demons had been turned loose from the infernal regions. I sat there trying to calm my nerves, and persuade myself that it was nothing more than a frightful dream.

After a little while I nestled again in my blanket, and was just beginning *to doze* when the second time there smote upon the sultry night a sound that would make the stoutest heart quail. The mingled war whoops of a thousand braves were tame in comparison with that demoniac, weird hullahalo. From a hundred cliffs came the mocking "Ha. Ha. Ha!" Again I sat upright and lit up the tent with the flash light: all was still save the discordant squawk of the night hawks and the prowling wild animal Ten minutes passed and the same horrible sound filled the tent I could not go to sleep again. I had heard of haunted places and had laughed at the stories, but on this occasion I didn't feel the least inclined to laugh. Surely I was up against a real specimen of the ghost family, and it seemed that I was op against it hard, for it certainly had me hemmed in. It would he almost certain death to try to abandon the cliffs in the dark with Only a flash light to guide me.

The early morning hours dragged slowly by and at short intervals came that Wild "Ha. Ha. Ha."

As the bright August sun began to scatter the night mists my courage returned and I mentally vowed to solve the mystery of the Laurel cliffs.

Breakfast over I sat out to inspect the cliffs and ledges. I carefully went over the territory for several hundred yards on either side the Big Laurel, but found nothing except numerous dens of varmints, buzzards and owl nests. I dug but little seng that day and as darkness settled about the big cliffs I began to get nervous.

At about 8 o'clock the same uncanny racket commenced, but I managed to get a little sleep that night. For three days I hunted for a clew to the mystery but not a thing came of it except that each day became more nervous.

How easy it would be to more out of it. JUST pull tent stakes, pack and tramp: but that wasn't me! I am of a stubborn nature; it isn't bravery it's pure downright mulishness. When I undertake to do a thing you can find me right on the spot—which explains why I didn't move on. I buckled down to "Biz" and divided my time digging sing and hunting for my strange neighbor with the wonderful voice.

Gradually I became accustomed to it and would oftentimes go to sleep on my blanket at night while I listened and wondered what it could be.

By this time the moon was full, and at night the ledges were lit up quite plainly. Chancing to be in an adventurous mood, I started out, early in the night, to try a theory that I had worked out. As the hideous yells smote upon my ear I noted the nearest ledge from whence the sound came and made all possible speed to it. Arriving there I searched carefully, but could find nothing. As I was giving the search up, I heard the "Ha, Ha, Ha," of a night owl far above me in the cliffs. Little did it sound like the haunt, but I had an idea. I retraced my steps as fast as I had come to my tent. I had just sat down on a boulder close by the tent, when again came the weird sound. At last I had solved the mystery. It was that old laughing owl perched somewhere high up above, and I had pitched my camp at a point that caught the echoes from hundreds of drum-like rocks.

Two weeks later I visited a small town twenty miles distant to get a supply of "grub," etc. Two U. S. marshals and a young fellow calling himself a detective were at this village preparing to journey back in the mountains to look after a "Shiners Den" that had been reported to them. The young fellow was very anxious to return with me and it seemed that the two officers were anxious to get nil of him. I assured him that there was no moonshine stills in the immediate vicinity of my camp, but he was sit on "roughing it" awhile, and so we tramped back to my tent together. He interested me with wonderful stories of adventure. Surely he must be the bravest of the brave thought I. It was late in the afternoon when we arrived at the tent. My detective friend went into ecstasies over the wild and rugged grander of the mountains We had a hardy supper which my friend enjoyed immensely, and we were both burning a pipe full of real city tobacco. whilst I was listening to a hair-raising story of how this great detective had rescued a beautiful girl from a band of cut throats when—!

No wonder the young fellow tore through the tent, taking flap, pulling up pegs and almost capsizing the whole business. That sound had tried *my* nerves to the utmost. "For gods sake let's get out of this," the young fellow whined. He was so frightened that I had to actually hold him while I explained that it would be very dangerous to attempt to get away from the cliffs in the dark. "Mercy on us, what shall we do?" the fellow bawled. I had began to repair the tent when again the

demon - like "Ha, Ha. Ha," echoed from seemingly a thousand points. "I'm going to get out of this awful place." the detective panted, and again I had to reason with him to keep him from dashing out into the dark night to certain destruction.

"How about that band of robbers" I asked, "Did you capture them after you had rescued the girl?" But he wasn't in the mood to finish his narrative.

"Can we not get out of here by some means?" he begged. I know it may be cruel not to tell the fellow what caused the awful sound: but he had tried to set himself up for a "dead game" detective, and I couldn't help teasing him some

"Did you ever visit a Shiner* den*" I asked him. "Never did," he answered "Why?"

"Well, those wild hoop* are unmistakably symptoms of a moonshine still. What you hear is the Shiners laughing. They probably have been drinking too much moonshine, and to-morrow morning is your time to pounce upon them. You will have no trouble to locate them, for they are surely in those cliffs."

"I shall do nothing of the kind. If I ever see daylight again I will leave this infernal place." the great detective almost sobbed.

And sure enough, after a sleepless night, he begged me to go back with him to the village he offered me his good watch *for my trouble* which I refused. However I accompanied him to within a few miles of town and after giving him careful directions to follow a small stream, which would land him at the village inn, we parted.

For two weeks I kept pretty busy digging- seng and fishing for black bass. One bright morning I lit out for the village to see if there was any news from home and to mail a few letters. I found the two United States marshals at the inn. I related to them the episode of the young fellow and I began to think that they would surely never quit laughing. They returned with me next day and at night they lay long into the night listening to the echoes of that old owl. They shared my camp for two weeks and were then loath to bid farewell to such pleasures as they had seldom enjoyed. Those gentlemen were true sportsmen; but as for the young detective, it was well that he went home to his mammy. I am sure that he had crammed his silly head with the Pinkerton's and Brady's yarns; but he found things as they really are up there in the mountains and he didn't "make good." He surely didn't.

Olive Hill, Ky. WES RAY.

CAMPED IN A HAMMACK, Wes Ray

The vanities of the city was on my nerves and I vowed to leave it behind my path and seek the open sky, the rivers song, the happy cry of the woodland bird where life is in rhyme and the unfettered wild wood folk teach me that life, after all, is worthwhile.

I pitched my tent, or rather, I hung my hammock in the branches of a great water elm on the banks of the wild and rugged Tygart. Close by a rippling brook lost itself in the blue waters of the little river. Giant poplars, hickory, ash, oak and chestnuts covered the steep bluff. Honeysuckles were just bursting forth in such a gorgeous array of color as Solomon never dreamed of. The odor of the vast forest was one great flower garden. Indeed it was a pleasing prospect.

Maytime and apple blossoms had enticed me away to this leafy forest where one finds all things pleasing to the senses. The woodland breeze that soothes the tired brain as nothing else can soothe—it was here I dreamed the happy hours away.

Camping in a hammock. Did you ever? Strange as it may seem, that is just what I did. There on the river's brink I lived a veritable tree dweller. Now let me describe my habitation. The hammock had a covering of oil cloth supported by light willow hoops forming a half circle. This top was fastened to the side bar of the hammock by hinges thus, in fair weather, the roof could be thrown off, whilst in rainy weather I had a snug, dry shelter. On another limb close by I had a water proof bag of about three bushels capacity, suspended by a stout rope. This was my commissary, bread, etc., to last about two weeks.

Here is the bill of fare as nearly as I can remember: For breakfast, white bread, roasted trout and a handful of mixed nuts. For dinner, rye bread, roasted squirrel. For supper, white bread, wild honey and wild raspberries. This I washed down with a tin cup of cold limestone water that I got from a tiny spring that bubbled out of the earth close by the roots of the elm.

I had special contracts with two large herb medicine companies, and thus I combined recreation with a handsome profit. Day dawns and bids the blushing sky "Good Morning." An appetizing breakfast. Then I slip down the rope ladder and after a deep draught from the life giving spring I hie me away across the fern covered hills in quest of roots and herbs, never forgetting to take a lively interest in the beauties of Nature about me. Bird-song and bee-song, wildsong and tree-song, music everywhere.

Next month I will tell you something about my tree home above the rippling pools of trout laden waters, for I lingered until summer waned and the autumnal voices crooned.

AULD LANG SYNE.

A light frost had turned to golden the foliage of the wood. The pawpaws down in the bottoms were getting mellow. Away up in the coves, from among the big timber, came the rasping sound that thrills the sportsman; the grays are waxing fat from the kernel of the hickory nut, and as we sat on the trunk of a fallen pine and watched the chipmunks scamper about, there is wafted to our ears the faraway call of the old turkey gobbler. A thick haze hangs in the south and ever anon comes the distant rumble of thunder. I had taken a "day off" and had wandered into the dear old forest that is closely associated with to my boyhood outings. It was a typical fall day glorious golden October, with a changeless turquoise blue—to the farthest bound shown the blaze of crimson tinted foliage triumphant seal of nature's bounty, the fulfillment of springtime promises. On this particular ramble my mind was occupied with retrospective reflections. Here in this bit of wild I oft times went with father to carry the grays. That was many years ago. But today it seemed not so long ago as yesterday I was a wee toddler much too small to sport a gun but I can distinctly remember how it thrilled me when "Pap" said: "Come along son and pack the squirrels for me." Those were the happiest days of childhood, but that is a "past," that is part of the great forever!

The days of auld lang syne have gone, only fond memories linger and I am ever glad to extol the virtues of a father that any boy might be proud of. He was a constant inspiration to my youthful ambitions; none could sympathize with my boyish troubles like father. He was patient. He toiled against great odds, for his children's sake, oft times sacrificing his own comforts to please us. When I think of his deep and inexhaustible love I sometimes fear that we did not realize the great blessing of such a parent and when I reflect upon the long years of unwearied toil: of the deep soul-felt devotion to the interest of his sons, I doubt whether it is possible for youth to repay enough love and gratitude for all this bestowal of parental devotion. Oh! What thankfulness fills my being, every day my heart glows with gratitude and holy respect for a father that tried hard to teach his boy the ways of a clean virtuous life. Tho' he is separated hundreds of miles from us, yet I can see his kindly smile, hear the words of encouragement that were always ready for his boys. I am overjoyed that his old age is crowned with success, for his were a thorny, rugged path in his younger life.

I lingered long in the deep forest; the great red orb of day was sinking in the west, the hills caught the sunset glow, and as I listened to the stir of wings my soul arose far above the sod. Fain would I have lingered but the chill air of night whispered the tidings of "jack frost" and I journeyed back to my humble abode. Whilst creeping along through the bowery maze of tangled vine I was meditating upon the lot of the poor man. Truly he has a hard furrow to hoe! it seems as if fate marks him out for misfortune; but after all, a humble life isn't half bad: God's sun shines as warmly and as brightly upon the hut as on the brownstone mansion. Thus I passed through the underbrush and finally emerged into the lane. Just beyond stood a tiny cottage and some one was singing "The corn tops ripe and the meadow's in the bloom and the birds make music all the day," and as the yard gate closed behind me I caught the refrain "*Then my old Kentucky home goodnight.*"

WES RAY, Olive Hill, Ky.

This brings to an end all that I have concerning Wes Ray. I am aware that he wrote other pieces when he lived in Carter County and that he continued to write after he left the area. There is some evidence that he wrote a magazine story about the shooting of Dora Hand a Dodge City Kansas "actress". That would have been a departure from his writings about his own self.

I feel very privileged to showcase this previously unheralded Carter County author. I close with a charming poem that he composed.

Glen Haney

JUNE TIME.
June-time, rose-time,
 Blossoms everywhere;
Song-time, dream-time,
 Glad month of all the year.
Bird-song, bee-song,
 Singing, singing praise;
Wind-song, tree-song,
 Along the flower decked ways.
Its now the world, in sweet attune,
Delights to sing the praise of June!
 —Wes Ray.