

Submitted by: Glen Haney - bud at ncweb.com

Author Unknown - The Ashland Independent - 1881

Early in the gloomy forenoon of Wednesday of last week, without time for preparation or to bid his friends goodbye, The Independent reporter boarded a coal train of the A.C.&I. Railway for Rush Station, his objective point being the beautiful mountain town of West Liberty, the county seat of Morgan County, a point at which The Independent has many warm friends, and from which for some weeks the paper has not been favored with correspondence. The forager for news had reason to believe that he would be able to make connection with the afternoon train of that day on the E.L.&B.S. Railroad beyond the Means tunnel and reach the comfortable Carey House, at Morehead, in time for a supper of hot muffins, coffee, and incidentals. Little did he then know that there was a slough of despond, of three or four miles in length, lying between the mining village of Geigersville and the foot of the mountain penetrated by the famous Means tunnel, and Mount Savage Furnace. Captain Ed. Murphy, engineer of the coal train, put his iron horse through to Geigersville on time. The owner of the only available horses in the village, young Mr. Tyree, was found in the school-room intent upon the mysteries of addition, multiplication, division, and subtraction, and with him a bargain was soon struck for an immediate conveyance, by horseback, to Mt. Savage, ten miles distant, the nearest point at which the afternoon train for Morehead could be reached. In naming his terms for the service of himself and horses, The Independent man thought the young man had mastered the science of subtraction, but before the ride over the sea of mud and death trap bridges was over he became convinced that the youth was not unreasonable in the amount charged. The readers of this paper are spared a description of that terrible ride, suffice it to say that The Independent man "praised the Lord" when it was ended. The vicinity of Mt. Savage was reached just in time to hear the whistle of the locomotive as the train took its departure for Lexington. There was then no other course open but to lie over at Mount Savage until the train left next day.

A refreshing night's sleep at the well-kept boarding-house of Mr. Porter, found us well prepared to prosecute our journey on Thanksgiving Day. Thursday morning was a wintry one indeed; the snow came whirling down in eddies, besprinkling and whitening the earth. In a short time a construction train offered an opportunity to ride down to the East Kentucky and E., L., & Big Sandy Junction, at which place several hours were spent awaiting the incoming of the morning train from Mount Sterling and its departure in the early afternoon. Notwithstanding the absence of the Thanksgiving dinner of turkey, oysters, etc., the time was pleasantly passed in the company of our friend 'Squire Wiley Prichard, superintendent of the Mary Coal Company, and in making the acquaintance of Mr. Kavanaugh, a prominent coal and lumber merchant of Falmouth, Pendleton County. Here, also, our man met the agreeable and entertaining Mrs. Watson, the proprietress of the Olive Hill Hotel, who fortunately was his traveling companion as far as that picturesque village.

At last Conductor Thompson's "all aboard" was heard, and Engineer Ike Adams gave his iron horse a loose rein, and we whirled away to the westward at a lively pace. When nearing Lawton, the sharp and short toots of the whistle indicated danger ahead, and instantly the car windows were thrown up and the heads of anxious passengers were obtruded. Just before the train was brought to a stand-still, pieces of a saddle were seen on the track and the mangled body of a man was looked for with dread, but a few yards further on the recent occupant of the torn saddle was seen stumbling along the side of the road in pursuit of his bare-backed and rapidly fleeing horse. The man and horse had both barely escaped being run down and killed. The horse had become wild with fright at the approaching train and had kept in the middle of the track, despite the efforts of the rider to rein him to one side. Fortunately the saddle girth broke, the rider was thrown to one side, out of danger, and the train checked with only a few feet from the horse.

Hon. Geo. W. Herron, representative in the General Assembly from the counties of Carter and Elliot, was on this train on his way to the meeting of the legislature at Frankfort. Mr. Herron had with him a specimen of cannel coal, which, he informed the representative of The Independent, was taken from a large body of land on Sinking Creek, the mineral privileges of which have recently been leased by himself and Mr. B.F. Herron, his brother.

Farther along the road, W.W. Patterson, Esq., of Ashland, was met in the woods, surrounded by a gang of stave and timber workers.

Morehead was reached on schedule time, and all that our man saw, heard and learned there is told in another column.

The entire article can be found here:

<http://boards.ancestry.com/localities.northam.usa.states.kentucky.counties.morgan/1997/mb.ashx?pnt=1>