OPINION

Heaven Is A Lot Like Kentucky

Berkley Men

Heaven Is A Lot Like Kentucky

By Charles Mattox

"They didn't have corn at Boonesboro, and so the first spring that we came out (1779) the women would follow cows to see what they ate, that they might know what greens to get. My wife and I had neither spoon nor dish when we began life. Only I had a butcher knife…I brought out two horses. One I sold to Ulor Spahr (Mathias' son) the other the Indians stole."

William "Lazy Bill" Clinkenbeard, on the harsh living conditions at Captain John Strode's Station, Draper Manuscripts, volume 12 CC.

October 1782, inside Captain John Strode's Station, near present day Winchester, Ky.

The heavy drops of rain pelted the wooden shingles on the small cabin roof with a steady, hypnotic rhythm.

But Lazy Bill didn't notice the rain; didn't notice the way it fell in cool, misty torrents across the fort yard and the surrounding fields. He was under the hypnotic spell of that rhythmic rain and lost in deep thought again.

Autumn was coming.

Though he could neither read nor write, he was an intelligent and strong man with a mind as sharp as good British steel.

He was a Berkley man.

Their Virginian neighbors had made the perilous journey with them along the Cumberland Trail to Fort Boonesboro. They then set out to a place near David McGee's Station, where Captain John Strode began building in 1779.

The Berkley men built several cabins there and placed stockades in between them. Lazy Bill, his wife and his brother, Isaac, lived together in one small cabin inside the fort with their old friend, John Kirk. Their former neighbors; Thomas Swearingin and his son Van, Presley Anderson and his family, the Spahr and Bennett clans, members of Patrick Donaldson's family, Robert Taylor and several others from their former homes in Martinsburg, Virginia; now lived in adjacent cabins at Strode's Station.

Martinsburg was part of Berkley County Virginia, and the heads of the various Martinsburg clans, which settled in northeastern Kentucky, were known simply as the Berkley County men, or Berkley men.

The Berkley men and their families survived the Cumberland Trail, the "Hard Winter" of 79-80, and the annihilation of Ruddle's and Martin's Station in June of 1780.

Lazy Bill thought of those things while mesmerized by the rainfall; thought about how they had buried their old friends Patrick Donaldson and Jacob Spahr and several others following the April 1781 attack on their own station. Several Berkley men had also perished during the British and Native American invasion of Aug. 1782.

But more Berkley men and their families came to Kentucky. Strode's cousin, Captain John Fleming, brought his cousin, Thomas Jones, out in 1780. Fleming had married Donaldson's widow and Jones had married one of the Donaldson girls in the spring of 1782.

A wild young Irishman named Michael Cassidy, who was now living with Jacob Spahr's widow, came out in the late summer of 1782, just in time to save Fleming who was wounded during the Battle of Battle Run, an initial skirmish, which led in part to the Defeat at Blue Licks.

Cassidy, an eastern war hero, had been a scout with General George Washington at Valley Forge and had been presented a British sword following the surrender of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown.

But there was something about the five-foot-tall, wild Irishman that Lazy Bill did not like, and though he couldn't put his finger on it, he thought about it considerably.

An unbelievable roar outside the cabin revived him from his trance.

He looked out the window and saw a huge black bear chasing a big hog straight toward them from across the small, muddy lane that led to the fort.

Before he could react, Van Swearingin jerked his gun from its post, leaned out the window and shot the bear.

The bear screamed, made a death slap at the hog, ran back across the lane, jumped a small rail fence into the garden, and fell dead.

Van Swearingin let out a loud war whoop and began dancing near the window.

Lazy Bill could do little more than smile as he took his butcher knife from its scabbard and walked outside toward the bear, hugging his wife and reassuring her that all was fine.

"Looks like fresh bear tonight!" Lazy Bill shouted, as men, women and children, ran outside in the misty rain to see what all of the commotion was about. *"Aye there, let me give ye a hand,"* Cassidy said in his thick Irish accent as he pulled his knife from his belt, while walking outside of the Spahr cabin

"Thanks Mike," Lazy Bill said for he knew that Michael Cassidy was indeed proficient with a knife and he would learn more about that during the great retaliatory northern raid they would join in the weeks to come.

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OPINION

Steve's Report

Autumn

Steve's Report By Steve Scalf

Last Friday morning, I rousted my two oldest out of the house a little earlier than they preferred and dragged them along with me to help pick up some large, flat rocks and load them into the back of my truck.

It was a cool, clear morning, with just enough breeze to barely carry along faint catches of scent from the nearby woodlands. The mist still hung heavy in the air, muting the sounds around us, making us want to talk in low whispers ourselves, as if we were in church.

We were nearly to the bridge that runs across Stoney Creek when I eased the truck to a stop and pointed across the meadow. "Look kids! Just look at all those wild turkeys!" There must have been at least 25 of them.

After watching them for a few moments, I decided to move on – only to stop 50 feet later to examine the creek and see how much the water level had risen with the recent rainfalls. Sam was impressed. "It's got to be at least twice as high as it was when I drove by here yesterday," he exclaimed.

I was just about to move on when he suddenly pointed in the water right beside the bridge and said, "Look at how large that bird is!" At first I didn't see it, but then the bird stirred and my eyes were drawn to the movement. Then the blue heron stretched its wings, hesitating for just a moment before hopping lightly into the air, gracefully flapping its wings as if in slow motion and gradually moving away to a quieter spot upstream.

The crisp, morning breeze stirred some of the earlier leaves as they fluttered to the spongy, dew-laden grass. Many of the black walnut trees had already shed most of their foliage, leaving nothing but the green spheres hanging like ornaments. And once again, I was struck by the beauty of the stillness.

It's strange how at this time of the year, as the lush greens of summer fade away – as life gives way to the bareness of winter – I feel more alive than at any other time of the year. I am more aware of nature in the fall. I can hear the forest trails calling to me. "Come! walk this way and see what treasures we can uncover."

I am weary from that morning's wrestling match with the rocks and felt the need for the rejuvenating effects of nature, so I heed the call, following the creek bed as it winds its way towards the Licking River. I walk along a deer track, stopping occasionally to examine the hoof prints in the soft soil. They are fresh, probably from that morning. A couple of does and their fawns had come this way.

An outcropping of rock beside the deer track invites me to have a seat, and I politely oblige. The sun is high in the sky and peeks through the canopy of leaves above me, creating a dapple of shadow and light. The leaves murmur as a gust of wind passes overhead, but there is scarcely a breeze from my perch.

I sit and listen and after a few minutes, the animals who had taken shelter as I approached began to resume their activities. A squirrel scampers up onto the far end of the rock and gives me a curious stare. Around the bend, I hear the rat-a-tat of a woodpecker as it diligently seeks after a bore beetle.

I remain there for nearly a half hour, hardly moving, trying to become a part of the woods around me, rather than just a casual passer-by. But I have to get moving; the rock is draining every last bit of warmth from my backside, and I can feel it cold starting to settle in my hips. I take one last deep breath and exhale slowly, savoring the scent of woods before retracing my steps.

As I step from the trees into the open sunlight, I am smiling from ear to ear. My muscles are still tired from the morning's chores, but I have been refreshed to my very core. I feel a prayer form in my heart, giving thanks and praise to God for creating a place as beautiful as Kentucky.

And that's my two cents
Steve Scalf

OBITUARIES

Ronald F. Uptegraft

Ronald F. Uptegraft, 77, of Cynthiana died on Tuesday, Sept. 22, 2009, at his residence. Born in Keystone, Indiana on Aug. 9, 1932 to the late Gerald and Agatha Ickes Uptegraft, he was a retired 3M Company employee and a U.S. Army veteran of the Korean Conflict.

He is survived by his companion, Rita Looker of Cynthiana; a son, Ryan Uptegraft of Carlisle; a daughter, Victoria (Brandon) Cain of Fort Campbell; and a granddaughter, Kayleigh Morgan Cain.

A memorial service was conducted at 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 29, 2009 at Battle Grove Cemetery by Bro. Josh Hilderbrand. Memorial contributions may be made to Hospice of the Bluegrass. Ware Funeral Home was entrusted with the arrangements.

Paulette Denton Bloomfield

Paulette Denton Bloomfield, 61, died on Monday, Sept. 28, 2009 at her home. She was born on June 19, 1948 in Nicholas County and was a former employee of Jockey International and Kentucky Textiles and was a member of the Carlisle Christian Church.

She is survived by three sons: Gregory Bloomfield, Stephen Bloomfield and Jason Bloomfield; one daughter, Stephanie Bullock; her mother, Catherine Mitchell Denton; a brother, Calvin (Melanie) Denton, a sister, Judy (Wayne) Livingood, three grandchildren: Cathy Bloomfield, and Jarrod and Jayce Bullock; two nieces, three nephews and several great-nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her father Ranson Calvin "Buster" Denton.

Graveside services will be held at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 30, 2009 at the Carlisle Cemetery by the Rev. Darrell Sexton. Casket bearers will be Bill Denton, Calvin Denton, Jr., Michael Goodpaster, Derrick Livingood, Wayne Livingood and Ralph Purcell. Arrangements are under the direction of Mathers-Gaunce Funeral Home. Memorial contributions suggested to Hospice of the Bluegrass. Condolences may be left at www.mathersgaunce.com

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editor,

I read with concern that the Nicholas County Fiscal Court opposed the leasing of land to place a weather tower at West End Park. I was not at the meeting, so I am relying on information reported in The Carlisle Mercury as to their reasoning for denying the University of Western Kentucky the lease so they could place a weather tower that would benefit every citizen in Nicholas County. The COST of a chain link fence was placed over the VAULUE of my LIFE and every citizen in this county.

How much the chain link fence would cost was not reported. I question if they even had a estimate when they voted against leasing the land. I see the need for the fence and understand why one would need to be placed around the tower for safety.

According to the newspaper article, one magistrate Daryl Stacy said, "My constituents don't want a tower? I wonder how he polled his constituents. How many of you did he contact to solicit your opinion before he made his decision?

What was the vote? Did all of our magistrates vote against it because they thought the county did not have the financial funds to get to Lowes or Reid and Vice and purchase chain link fencing and have county workers erect the fence.

If the county cannot afford a fence then have a fundraiser. I personally will donate.

Knowing even seconds before a tornado hits can save lives!

Luann Kelly
Carlisle, KY.

** Editor's note: The estimated cost of the fence, as discussed during the fiscal court meeting, is $2,500. That information was included in the story and appeared on page 3 of last week's Carlisle Mercury. The project was only discussed and no action (vote) was taken as discussed in the last paragraph of the story, which ended on page 3.*

Editor,

Many of the 100 or so homes surrounding Lake Carnico have long been plagued with sewer problems. The long-running quest for sewers for the Carnico area may actually result in a construction project in the next year or two.

Largely through the effort of former State Representative Carolyn Belcher and current state Representative Sannie Overly, state grant funds of $1.4 million have already been earmarked for a project that could make the sanitation district's plans a reality. At a meeting of the district's board of commissioners on September 10, agreement seemed within reach on a means and method to utilize the funds that are presently available to do something toward getting community sewer service to as many of the Carnico

See LETTER Page 11

When Tomorrow Starts Without Me

When tomorrow starts without me, and I'm not there to see;
If the sun should rise and find your eyes all filled with tears for me;
I wish so much you wouldn't cry the way you did today,
While thinking of the many things we didn't get to say.

I know how much you love me, as much as I love you,
and each time that you think of me, I know you'll miss me too;
But when tomorrow starts without me, please try to understand
that an angel came and called my name, and took me by the hand,
and said my place was ready, in heaven far above,
and that I'd have to leave behind all those I dearly love.

But as I turned to walk away, a tear fell from my eye,
For all my life, I'd always thought, I didn't want to die.
I had so much to live for, so much yet to do,
It seemed almost impossible, that I was leaving you.
I thought of all the yesterdays, the good ones and the bad,
I thought of all the love we shared, and all the fun we had.

If I could relive yesterday, just even for a while,
I'd say good-bye and kiss you, and maybe see you smile.
But then I fully realized, that this could never be,
for emptiness and memories, would take the place of me.
And when I thought of worldly things I might miss come tomorrow,
I thought of you and when I did, my heart was filled with sorrow.

But when I walked through Heaven's gates I felt so much at home.
When God looked down and smiled at me from His great golden throne,
He said "This is eternity, and all I've promised you."
Today for life on earth is past, but here it starts anew,
I promise no tomorrow, but today will always last.
And since each day's the same day, there's no longing for the past.

But you have been so faithful, so trusting, and so true.
Though there were times you did something, you knew you shouldn't do.
But you have been forgiven, and now at last you're free.
So won't you take My hand, and share My life with Me?

So when tomorrow starts without me, don't think we're far apart,
for every time you think of me, I'M RIGHT HERE, IN YOUR HEART.

-by Ella Pettit Swebillius

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