

A few years ago, my wife and I were visiting some relatives in Taneytown, Maryland. It so happened that I expressed a desire to go through these valleys and visit the old Eyler Homestead, where my mother was born and reared.

O.K. my cousin said, we have never been through that part of the mountain, and we too, would like to see where our great grand parents lived.

We were not aware of the condition of the road until we entered the mountain, it having never been improved and appeared very much the same to me as it was when I was a boy.

Considering the bumps and ruts we encountered on our way, our trip was not only perilous, but exciting for fear the auto would become stalled, and we would be left sitting along the mountain help- less.

However, we made the trip safely and were thrilled by the ever- lasting beauty along the way.

I was much surprised to see that most of the small farms along the mountain side were more or less in a delapidated condition. They were not the farms I remember many years back. The older farmers having passed away, the younger folks have wandered away from their mountain homes for more desirable homes and work.

Of course, there is some one living in all the old farm houses, but the land has been neglected and a natural growth of every des- cription almost obliterate the old farm buildings.

I suppose the highway situation has much to do with the condi- tion of this mountain country.

After stopping and looking over the home of our ancestors, we then traveled through the mountain gap in an opposite direction and arrived on the opposite side of the mountain, passing by Mount Saint Mary's College and Saint Joseph's Convent, near Emmittsburg, Maryland.

ADDENDUM

[W.K.H. did two or three drafts of this memoir. I used a different draft when I compiled a scrapbook fifteen years ago. It was slightly fuller than this one. I have been unable to locate that draft, but have taken the passages below from the scrapbook, into which they had been incorporated.]

THE CIVIL WAR

Our farm being located on the border line between the Northern and Southern armies, my parents suffered quite a set back due to the fragments of the Southern army on their march to Gettysburg driving away some of the stock. Therefore it was necessary for my father to drive the remainder of his stock to the mountains, especially the horses.

On the march toward Sharpsburg, Maryland, after the battle of Gettysburg, parts of the Union army passed through the valley and for several days and nights encamped around our farm. My father was hiding somewhere in the mountains with the rest of his stock, and mother was left alone with six small children, the oldest fourteen years of age.

The soldiers demanded food, therefore, mother was constantly baking bread and preparing food for them until the supply was nearly exhausted and her family only left with vegetables and a few chickens to live on. Pickets were stationed around the house and yard to see that no harm came to her and the children.

The soldiers, when they left, presented my brothers with two full Union uniforms, two swords and bayonets, two army muskets and a cannon ball. [Ed. Note. The captain gave grandmother a gold pen which is in my possession.]

The day after Confederate troops had passed through the valley there appeared at the kitchen door two Union soldiers and asked for food. Mother prepared a meal for them, and after resting for a few hours they inquired the way to go so that they might catch up with their outfit. Mother told them of two routes through the mountain, saying she did not know which route they had taken.

After departing, about two miles from our home, they ran into the confederate picket line, and one of the soldiers was captured. The other made his way back to our home and, appearing at the kitchen door, called my mother.

When she appeared at the door, the soldier with his gun pointed at her, accused her of treachery, saying she directed them into danger, and threatened to shoot her. She pleaded with him, saying that she being alone with her small children knew nothing of what was going on around her.

The soldier dropped his gun and said, "Madame, I see that you are innocent." He then told her of many instances where women took delight in running them into danger. He then asked for protection as he feared he was being trailed.

Mother had my oldest brother Americus accompany the soldier three miles across the mountain to her brother's farm in Eyler Valley, with a message that the soldier be cared for until it was safe. For two months ~~he~~ remained at my uncle's home. He told him that he had fully intended shooting mother after his buddy was captured.

[WHY W.K.H. LEFT THE FARM]

My life on the farm was very uncomfortable at times, especially when my older brothers came home to visit with plenty of money in their pockets and related stories of city life, the jobs they held, and of their travels through the states. Remaining on the farm until I was twenty-four, I felt the desire to try city life as my brothers had done.

I saved every cent I possibly could earn by plowing and cultivating town lots, working on the public highway, and doing other odd jobs away from the farm, when I could be spared. Feeling the need of a business education, I enrolled in a business college in Hagerstown, Maryland, about twenty miles from home.

[RETIREMENT FROM THE FARM]

In December 1906 it became necessary for me to seek a leave of absence. . . to assist my parents. . . to retire.¹ They were still trying to run the farm, fully stocked, with the aid of a hired man and an occasional day laborer.

I took over the farm management. . . and began making plans toward securing a tenant. . . and providing a convenient and comfortable home for my aged parents. After some weeks advertising and interviewing. . . I managed to obtain a farmer who was willing to farm on a fifty-fifty basis.

1W.K.H. left Hagerstown after completing a year-long course, probably in 1894. He lived several years in Baltimore, then moved to Philadelphia. Early in the twentieth century he obtained a position with a utilities company in Camden, New Jersey. The company was eventually absorbed by the Public Service Electric and Gas Company, and W.K.H. was transferred to the central accounting office in Newark. Since I do not know when the transfer occurred, I am uncertain whether he took leave in 1906 from the Camden or Newark company.

The day of sale [implements, stock, and house furnishings] arrived. Believe me, it was not an easy matter to see the home released of the many objects that were near and dear to us....There were many antique articles, furniture etc., sold that been in the family for a century and a half.

After the sale and everything had been removed, there was left a broken hearted group. To leave the old homestead where my father was born and lived all his life, and the surroundings, was the saddest thing that anyone could possibly experience.

[SALE OF THE FARM]

For eight years my parents enjoyed the comfort of their retirement [at 115 Clayton Avenue, Waynesboro, PA], then old age. . . took them, one year and one day apart, each eighty-four years of age.

The selling of the farm and the remaining household anti-ques, other than a few articles, was another sad event of my life. The grandfather's clock, one of the oldest antiques, was listed in my father's will to be inherited by me.