

THE BURIED

TREASURE:

A RABBIT HASH MYSTERY

BY WILLIAM H. NELSON

Foreword

Special thanks to Wanetta Clause who provided the original text for this reproduction. Without her generosity, kindness, and encouragement, this book would not have been possible.

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NINETEEN HUNDRED NINETY SEVEN

Foreword

On December 13, 1798 the provisions for the creation of Kentucky's thirtieth county were passed by the Kentucky General Assembly. In honor and memory of the one man whose courage, dedication, and perseverance eventually made his name synonymous with Kentucky, this county was to be called Boone, and it was to officially begin its operational status as a county on June 1, 1799.

As a permanent tribute to Boone County's bicentennial milestone, the Rabbit Hash Historical Society has endeavored to republish a series of important literary works, all with Boone County ties and connections. The ultimate goal and intention is to provide the citizens of Boone County an affordable, comprehensive collection of otherwise rare or hard to find Boone County related works which can be made available and enjoyed by all and at the same time serve as a tangible reminder of this important event for our county.

This first effort in the series is entitled The Buried Treasure: A Rabbit Hash Mystery. It is of course no mystery why it was our first selection for reprint. Even though the exact date of the original publication is not known, it is believed to be the last decade of the 19th century. It was written by William H. Nelson who at that time was a resident of Rabbit Hash, after marrying the widow Frances Carlton. William H. Nelson was the editor and publisher of an Aurora and Lawrenceburg newspaper, as well as the Burlington Advertiser in 1849. He was also a local Boone County school teacher and reportedly the town blacksmith. Local oral history has it that The Buried Treasure: A Rabbit Hash Mystery was written in answer to or in competition with a Rising Sun local mystery, Bogus Hollow, which was set in the hills and hollows behind Rising Sun, Indiana, across the river from Rabbit Hash. In keeping with the chicken-or-the-egg phenomenon, oral tradition also has the order of the two publications reversed. The real treat in this

book comes at the end as an addendum. The author includes, as he states, "by request", a brief description of the origin of the name of Rabbit Hash, Kentucky. This is the first written or published material thus far uncovered concerning the history of the town's name.

As president of the Rabbit Hash Historical Society, I would like to welcome you to this literary journey through Boone County's past 200 years and introduce you to some of the legends, stories, and authors who lived in and loved this county then as we do now. On a personal note, I wish to dedicate this endeavor to the two men who shared their love of Boone County history with me. Robert Hayden Wilson was the epitome of the local Boone County oral historian, a genetic trait and talent in his long line of Boone County lineage. Even as an octogenarian, his flair for detail as well as delivery was unprecedented. What charisma! He once inspired these lines in a song:

Tell me another river story
Even if you have to lie
I got plenty of time to listen
Don't take it with you when you die.

And William Conrad, Boone County's own Historian Laureate whose desire and respect for historical accuracy has instilled in me, as if by osmosis, a direction and a work ethic only to strive for. He is my mentor and hopefully I his protege'. Mentors are seldom equaled, but a protege' can become another's mentor.

Happy Birthday Boone County!

Donald E. Clare, Jr., President
Rabbit Hash Historical Society

Rabbit Hash, Kentucky
March 8, 1997

A Rabbit Hash Mystery.

Back of Rabbit Hash on a spur running westwardly from the precipitous hills, and about half way to the summit, stood, until quite recently, a large oak tree, one of the few primeval monarchs of the forest that grew in this vicinity. Mighty in bole and limb it easily dominated all the denizens of the forest around it. How long it had towered, a gigantic sentinel, in its airy outlook over the surrounding country, man may never know; but for untold centuries the sap of life had coursed through its veins, it had budded, grown green with leaves, borne its harvest of fruit in a regular procession of countless years; and at last it had fallen victim to fire, recklessly placed in its heart by unappreciative hunters.

Before its fall this oak was a fitting mate to that tree of the poet's by which he stood and "seemed almost annihilated." Could one have read the volume of its life what wonderful tales of the past might have been gleaned from its pages! In its infancy the aboriginal children of the forest had climbed its slender stem or played beneath its sheltering leaves. The grown-up chief, with twanging bow and whizzing arrow had, with unerring aim, brought down the frisky squirrel from its spreading branches.

During the many long centuries of its growth it had witnessed the decay and dispersion of at least two distinct races of people; the first, an unknown one, being overcome and driven out by their Indian successors, who were in their turn ruthlessly set upon and destroyed by the more warlike and grasping white man. It had seen the mastodon, the buffalo, the elk, the deer, a countless multitude, roaming the unbroken forest, unharmed by those powerful promoters of civilization, powder and ball. All these, with the primitive peoples, it had

seen wiped out from the face of the earth, so that the places that once knew them shall know them no more forever.

In an idle hour it was worth the toil to climb up to the old oak and rest under its cooling shade. Its elevation gave the gentle breezes full play, and while one idly lolled on the carpet of grass the eye could wander over the magnificent landscape spread out so smilingly before him. From the north came the flashing river, on whose sparkling waters were mirrored the lofty hills, the fruitful farms, and the last remnants of the once unbroken forest. To the west, and near at hand, snugly ensconced in her fertile valley, smiled the beautiful city of Rising Sun; beyond her lay the gap cleft in the hills by Arnold's creek; while parallel to the course of the river ran the crowning heights until they were again cleft by historic Grant's creek. These, with other charming features unnoted here, constitute a landscape of unrivaled beauty.

This description would be incomplete without a reference to another tree of the same species, younger in years and smaller in trunk and limb, but of large size and hoary with age, that grew on a similar ridge across a deep ravine some 150 yards distant from the giant and at about the same elevation. The view from this point was as grand, and the sight as commanding as that from the other. The reason for including this second tree in the narrative will be apparent further on.

From both of these points at a distance of eight miles may be seen that wonderful product of the glacial epoch known as Split Rock or Knobly; while just above, on the Indiana side of the river, is the mouth of Laughery creek, so named in honor of Lieutenant Laughery, an officer in the government service, who was decoyed ashore by the cunning of hostile Indians, who set upon the small party of whites and nearly entirely destroyed them. The young leader being desperately wounded early in the action but still solicitous for the safety of a large sum of government money, (mostly in Spanish gold coins which had been entrusted to his care for delivery at

various stations below,) summoned to his presence during the hottest of the fray, two young men in whom he reposed perfect trust. Finding that they had so far escaped injury he placed in their care this treasure, besought them to leave the fight, and while still unwounded, attempt to reach the nearest station.

Sadly regretting to abandon their beloved officer in this his great peril, but recognizing the demands of duty, they bade him a sad and affectionate farewell, and at once sought the shelter of the contiguous forest. As the battle was beginning to rage on the upper end of the sand-bar opposite the mouth of the creek, they were then on the Kentucky side of the river. Running back into the woods until clearly out of sight of the conflict, they shaped their course by and down the river. As the bag of coin was heavy it impeded their flight, but by carrying it in turn they made rapid progress.

But alas! before they had escaped from the noise of the fray in which they had so recently been participants, and which was still a tumult of terror and death, one of these young men fell a victim to his arduous struggle in the path of duty. The course they were pursuing took them over the bluff that rises back of Split Rock, from the summit of which a very steep slope falls to the edge of the chasm which terminates in a perpendicular drop of 70 feet. One of the runners had just been in turn relieved of his burden, when pushing ahead trying to break an easier path for his comrade, his foot caught in an entangling vine which threw him to the ground, and before he could grasp a friendly support he rolled to the edge of the precipice and thence fell with a sickening thud down on the cruel rocks below. So quickly had this catastrophe occurred that the remaining fugitive was dazed by the untoward event; but laying down his burden he crept cautiously to the brink of the chasm and looking down into the frightful abyss could see the form of his late agile companion lying a pulpy mass below.

Realizing the dreadful nature of this most unfortunate accident and clearly perceiving that no effort of his could

restore his comrade to life, he returned to the spot where he had left the treasure and gathering it up, sadly resumed his now lonely flight. Crossing Woolper Creek some distance above the mouth, he passed on down over the knob until he came into the level plain below. At a place not far below the present site of the neat little village of Bellview he suddenly ran into an Indian settlement. Luckily for him the warriors of the tribe were all out engaged in the battle going on above, the sounds of which he could still distinctly hear; but the boys of the place were all gathered in one spot carrying on a mimic fight in imitation of that in which their sires were then so hotly engaged. Simultaneously he and the boys discovered each other, and he at once changed his course and attempted to reach the cover of the dense thicket near by. The little savages, though startled by this abrupt appearance of a white man in their midst and seeing him about to escape, fitted their arrows and let fly a cloud of arrows at the retreating fugitive. The little imps aimed truly and shot with much force. Numbers of their arrows struck him and pierced his clothing, three entering his body with such force that they were hard to extract, and one reached a mortal spot near the heart.

With purpose unabated he ran on his way, fortunately not being further molested by the Indian boys, who did not join in pursuit. With every step the pain from the wounds grew more intense. By the time he had crossed Middle Creek his strength had begun to fail, and he realized what he had not done before, that his race was about run. But with a brave heart, though with flagging steps and slow, solicitously caring for the valuable treasure intrusted to his care, he painfully pursued his weary way. Suffering from thirst, his wounds feverish and painful, he stumbled along with uncertain gait, and at length reached the second oak tree to which reference was made at the outset. From pain and weakness he could go no further; his journeyings were over. Falling, rather than lying down on a bed of leaves conveniently near, and casting his eye up in

the direction of the battle from which he had escaped early that morning, he could clearly discern the scene of that conflict. As his thoughts wandered over the fate of his young commander and his comrades, thence to the old Virginia home and the fond old widowed mother, and blue-eyed lass waiting his return, the retrospect was so over-powering that unconsciousness kindly came to his relief and shut out the weary scene.

From this torpor of the faculties, after a long interval of insensibility, he was aroused from his lethargy by the touch of a light hand on his brow. Looking up with fast glazing eyes he saw the sympathetic face of a young Indian girl bending over him. Seeing that there was yet life in that worn and suffering body she knelt down by his side and pillowed his aching head on her lap. Then smoothing back the hair from his clammy brow and chafing the icy hands in her own, she earnestly inquired,

“White man hurt?”

These words so kindly uttered arrested for a moment the fleeting spirit, and by a last despairing effort, with duty reigning supreme, he placed his feeble hand on the bag of gold, and with broken and painful speech he pleadingly implored,

“This bag not mine. Hide.”

These words were the culminating effort in the line of duty; the breath fluttered over the purple lips, a hazy film glazed the sightless eyes, the hands fell limp and nerveless by his side, and with a gasp and shiver, just as the sun set beyond the western hills, his pains and his duties were over.

When the Indian girl realized that the end had come, with much trepidation, yet with an overpowering impulse in the claims of humanity, she composed the fast stiffening limbs and closed the staring eyes; and these duties done she sat down near by to ponder over the dying request of the white man.

“This bag,” she quoted, “not mine. Hide?”

This was a strange request, but she evidently regarded it

as sacred. At length her mind being fully made up she communed with herself:

"I will do as he asked; I will hide it. I will take it over to the big tree yonder; then I will dig a hole amongst the roots and bury it where it will be safe forever."

Over this portion of the story were it not necessary to proceed, it would be a melancholly pleasure to linger; but other scenes that equally claim attention must no longer be ignored.

* * * * *

Many years (it is not necessary to be exact in this particular,) after the occurrence of the events recorded above, a young man might have been seen lying by the side of a muddy road in northern Mississippi. He was making the long journey on foot back to his Indiana home, as was the custom of many flatboatmen who voyaged to New Orleans as "hands" on the primitive "broadhorns" that were the only vehicles of traffic with the newly-acquired southern states. He was a brave and active young fellow for whom the toil and perils encountered on this long journey had no terrors. He was accustomed to hardships and contemptuous of danger; but on this particular afternoon as he was sturdily pressing forward, unsuspecting of harm, and thinking of the many long miles to the next stopping place, one of those violent storms of wind and rain, not infrequent in that region, suddenly burst upon him. The wind and rain buffeted him, the thunder roared and the lightning crashed; branches of trees were torn off and sent whirling through the air, but through it all he trudged manfully forward undismayed by the roar of the elements around him.

But just as the storm was beginning to abate in its fury a heavy limb torn from an adjacent tree struck and bore him to the ground. At first the shock stunned him, and for a short time he laid without sense or motion; but with returning consciousness he attempted to rise, when, to his dismay, he found it impossible to do so. A solicitous search for the cause

of his helplessness, revealed the unwelcome fact that his thigh was broken. This was a predicament and a misfortune that he had never contemplated. Here, on a lonely road but little traveled by the white man, many miles from the nearest house of shelter, and in a country yet claimed by Indians, who were not always friendly disposed towards travelers, were evils enough to appall the stoutest heart. But dismayed only by the pain and his inability to proceed, his courage did not fail him. Realizing, after many futile attempts to rise and walk, that his walking days were for the present over, he crawled to the road side and composed himself as best he could at the root of a big tree.

Notwithstanding his drenched condition and the pain of his hurt he soon fell asleep. Long had he been soothed by "tired nature's sweet restorer" when he was suddenly awakened by a hubbub of voices, to find a party of Indians standing around him. When they saw that he was awake the leader of the party inquired how he came there and what he was doing. Understanding their dialect he easily and briefly explained the situation and concluded by exhibiting his broken limb. After this they withdrew a short distance and engaged in an animated discussion. He could not distinctly hear what they were saying, but from an occasional word that reached him he knew that he was himself the subject of the debate. There seemed to be two parties to the argument, one friendly, the other hostile; but in a short time an amicable agreement seemed to have been reached, and they returned and resumed their stations about him. After squatting awhile in silence the leader inquired,

"What white man want do?"

Frank, for so the young traveler was designated by his acquaintances at home, replied:

"Want to get to Foster's"; (which was the first stopping place on ahead.)

"No; no go now, too much far; too much hurt;" the chief

protested; at which the entire party grunted a guttural approval.

"D--- if I know, then, what to do. If I lie here I shall starve; and as it is, already I am dying for a drink of water."

At this, at a signal from the chief, one of the party ran off into the forest, and in a few minutes returned bearing a pipkin of water, of which Frank took deep draughts until his thirst was greatly assuaged. Being much refreshed, he felt encouraged to try, in his way, to make a bargain with his visitors. In his most alluring and seductive tones he pleaded:

"See here, fellows; you know if I have to stay here the jig's soon up with this coon," and waxing eloquent he continued:

"I must get to Foster's, and if you fellows will take me there I'll buy you a gallon of whiskey, and you can have a h--- of a time."

As this was an argument which was accustomed to have much weight with Frank himself, he expected to see its seductive influence operate favorably to his wishes on the assembled bucks. But while they smacked their lips, and their mouths watered at the talismanic word "whiskey," the leader shook his head and replied:

"No do; carry you to tent, old squaw fix leg, soon be well, walk on home:" which decision seemed to meet the cordial approbation of the entire party.

Without further colloquy several were sent into the thicket with their hatchets, and they soon returned with some poles to which they wove a litter of slender twigs. Tenderly placing Frank thereon they carefully lifted the helpless burden and by a blind path bore him off into the heart of the forest. Being garrulously given, notwithstanding the pain of his wound, he kept up an incessant fire of questions, objurgations, and profanity, of which latter he was an expert; but the stolid cortege pursued their way without deigning any reply to these vaporings; and presently the procession came out on a little settlement in a cleared space on the banks of a sluggish bayou. The little village consisted of twelve or fifteen bark

tents and log cabins, and to the largest and most pretentious of the latter Frank was borne, followed by the entire clamorous population. At the open door of the hut, ready to receive them, stood an old and venerable-looking squaw.

As we have before in this history met this woman, but under circumstances that precluded a personal description, it may not be out of place to regard her with more particular attention. In truth her commanding presence and the great respect shown her, would testify that she was a person entitled to more than a casual glance. The years of her life might be difficult to enumerate, and her age would be set down somewhere from sixty to a hundred. Her unwrinkled face and active gait might indicate the former, while the snow-white hair, with an indefinable air of long experience might signify the latter. Though but little over the medium height her dignified bearing caused her to appear taller than she really was. Her eyes, apparently undimmed by age, had seemingly the power of seeing through everything on which they rested. In a word, her whole appearance—the firmly poised head, the erect bearing, the pleasing contour of face, the benevolent features, and the kindly though piercing light of her wonderful eyes, would convince one at first glance that she was not only a woman with a history but that she was a person in whom could be placed implicit trust.

Bidding the bearers enter with their burden she showed them how to gently lift and place him on a comfortable couch of skins in a corner of the hut. Then dismissing all the crowd except one to assist her, she forthwith began an examination of her patient's injury. It needed but little skill to determine what was the matter, and after satisfying herself of the nature of the hurt, she told him that it was a simple fracture, and that without accident, he would be able to walk in about six weeks.

It is not necessary to go into detail of this young man's convalescence, nor to depict his life while with these people. Being confined to the hut by his injury he saw but little of them;

but all, as occasion offered, treated him with great kindness and respect. Whether this conduct was inspired by the venerable squaw's influence or not, it rendered his weary days of confinement less irksome. She, from the first, seemed to have a warm attachment for her helpless patient. She was his only physician and nurse, and in that dual capacity was aroused in her heart first, sympathy, then pity, and afterward motherly affection. Often, as their acquaintance ripened she regaled him with reminiscences of her early youth; and to one of a sympathetic nature (which he was not,) such confidences would have been extremely interesting. But his equipment was differently constructed. To him

"A primrose by the river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more."

On one occasion, however, but a few days before he was able to resume his journey, her reminiscent mood carried her back to the time of Laughery's defeat, describing the locality and picturing scenes and incidents connected therewith; a portion of which aroused Frank's interest as it had never been aroused before. Her account began on the evening of the battle, when her lover, a young chief to whom she was soon to be united, imparted to her the warlike tidings. Laughery's boats as they floated slowly down the Ohio, were constantly watched by the Indians, and runners were sent on ahead to arouse the warriors and have them to meet at the appointed place. She told how the descending boats were decoyed ashore, very early in the morning, by false cries for help by a white renegade: how they were attacked by overwhelming numbers: how the din of musketry and the shouts of the warriors reached her ears as she sat all day alone by the oak tree, grieving: of how her young lover was shot early in the action; and how but few, if any, white men escaped.

She then told of the death of the young white man at the oak tree: how he was buried in a shallow grave the next day, and covered with stones by the returning warriors: how, at his strange request, she had hidden the bag of gold-at which part of her narrative Frank became suddenly and overpoweringly interested. When told why she was with a tribe different from her own, and so widely separated from her kindred, his interest in the treasure part of her story was so intense that he gave but little heed to anything else. He gathered enough, however, from her narratives to learn that in a short time after the battle she had run away from her tribe, going southward, because she was expected and commanded to espouse her dead lover's brother, who was a cruel, heartless wretch.

Instead of encouraging the narration of these and other interesting episodes in her wonderful life, Frank's mind was working on that Buried Treasure. From her description he readily recognized the great oak, which he had often gazed at in admiration of its size, as it grew on the hillside opposite the little city in which he lived. His plans for the recovery of the gold were already maturing; and, as he said to himself in a burst of enthusiastic confidence; "I'm not the chap I take myself to be if I don't have them yellow boys bagged as soon I get home."

Having at length so far recovered from his injury as to take longer walks about the vicinity, and his heart being continually set on this alluring vision of wealth waiting for him on the far off Ohio hills, he announced one evening to the old squaw and the others standing by, that as he was now well enough to travel he would in the morning resume his journey. It would be a pleasing task to record the incidents of his leave-taking; how the kind old squaw hung around his neck and wept bitter farewell tears; of how he overwhelmed her with professions of gratitude, and made her take at least half his little store of money; of how he embraced every member of the village, and vowed undying friendship; but as Frank was weak on the

sentimental side of all questions, if anything like these occurred he forever failed to disclose them, and the reader, therefore, is at liberty to fill in this part of the story to suit his or her fancy.

Early the following morning our hero-(we might as well stop right here now and confess that the exigencies of this history require a hero, and as no better has turned up, or is likely to turn up, Frank is, perforce, adopted as such, and is turned over to the tender mercies of the reader who is expected to receive and honor him in that capacity. A few readers may remember him as having already figured in history as the god-father of Rabbit Hash, and to those his title of hero will not seem an empty honor.) After this long parenthesis, which sadly interrupted the flow of the narrative, a fresh start is necessary. So, then, early the following morning our hero shook hands, American fashion, with every individual of the village who was assembled to see him off - man, woman and child - bade them all good-bye, turned after going a short distance, swung his hat several times around his head, and then without more ado pulled out on his long journey.

Of the incidents of that arduous feat of pedestrianism the writer is not sufficiently informed, nor has he the inclination to set them down here. Knowing Frank's convivial weakness it may be affirmed with confidence that whenever he came to a stopping place where good liquor was to be had the temptation to lay over for a day or two and have a "good time" was irresistible. Notwithstanding these seductive hindrances the journey progressed favorably, till at last on a lovely morning in late June he arrived, somewhat footsore, at his native city. The rest of that day and night he devoted to rest, and, as he said, to "sprucing up."

As this is in no sense a biography the reader must not look for the details of the life of our "hero". That he followed the common lot of falling in love, indulging in the bliss of courtship, and finally marrying, are not sufficient peculiarities to justify

extended detail. His black-eyed beauty accepted him, with his failings, and their voyage of life began under humble circumstances. She soon discovered that he possessed a secret that she could not fathom; but while it did not interfere with his daily labors she wisely contented herself with keeping a close watch on his actions. Behind a veil of secrecy he concealed the great purpose of his life, toward the accomplishing of which he had, by no means, been idle.

Dwellers in Rising Sun had latterly been somewhat surprised at seeing on every dark night a mysterious light occasionally flashing out over in the Kentucky hills, in the vicinity of the big oak. At first it attracted but little attention, being attributed to 'possum hunters in quest of their marsupial delicacy; but as the strange light was viewed by increasing numbers the unusual exhibition became common talk, and various reasons were given as the cause of the fitful illumination. Some thought it was a Jack o'lantern, some averred it was a comet; while others, susceptible to ghostly influences, were afraid it was a ha'nt.

In these discussions Frank often bore a prominent part, but so carefully guarded were his words and actions that he gave no sign of having superior knowledge of the matter. This state of affairs continued so long a time that parties were at length formed to cross the river at night for the purpose of investigation, but no matter how brightly the light shown while they were on the water it always vanished before they reached the oak tree. So often were these attempts at investigation frustrated that the solution of the mystery was finally given up as a bad job, and the subject passed into the limbo of ungratified though insatiable curiosity.

As Frank was naturally industrious this hubbub of curiosity and conjecture did not seem to interfere with his labors, but he steadily pursued his avocation as a calker and accepted such other jobs as came to his hand along the river front. But as time passed it began to be noted by his acquaintances that the

love of liquor was growing upon him; but no one saw in that any connection with the mysterious light. Did the loss of sleep and the arduous midnight toil around the big oaks demand a stimulant to sustain his flagging energies? If so, they got it; and its frightful embraces, which tightened with every year, were never more unclasped from the helpless victim.

These occurrences, necessarily so briefly recorded here, covered many long years. And as Frank's bibulous appetite continually increased his acquaintances began to wonder how, with that octopus of drink gnawing at his vitals, he was able to support his now large and rapidly growing family. In view of this unfortunate habit his friends were much surprised when he bought a small farm on the Kentucky shore, directly opposite Rising Sun, and but a few rods from either of the two oak trees. The wonder was how with his confirmed habits and the necessities of his large family, he could have saved enough to accomplish so considerable a purchase. As he grew palsied with excess-when his body would shake as with an ague, and his teeth would chatter like castanets-people wondered how he managed to obtain his now necessary daily ration of a quart of whiskey. No one suspected that he had a hidden store upon which to draw as necessity required. Did he have such a store? is still a pertinent question which may never be satisfactorily answered.

By one who has given this whole matter much thought and considerable investigation the following facts were ascertained: Amongst the roots of both the big oaks the soil and rocks seemed to have been removed for quite a depth; so much so, from the lesser one that the roots being exposed caused it to decay, and a few years ago to succumb to the injury and fall headlong down the hillside. Now, one may fairly ask, if Frank was the agent in removing the soil and rocks from about the roots of these trees, why did he apply so much fruitless labor at the smaller tree when the old squaw had doubtless told him exactly where she had buried the gold? The reply to this

would be that as she had mentioned both trees in her narrative he got the two somewhat mixed in his memory, especially after making many fruitless searches about the larger.

The question might also be rationally asked why Frank so persistently guarded his secret not only from the community at large, but from his friends and his wife and children. As the answer to this question would involve the solution of a deep psychological problem it is passed by as one of the inscrutable mysteries that environ human actions.

But did he never give a hint to any one of his secret? In the opinion of some of the better informed he may have favored his particular chum, a young man named Solsburg, who moved to Texas about that time, and has never returned. If his contemplated trip to the re-union at Rising Sun a year or two ago had been carried out something of importance might have been learned from him during his visit.

But, did Frank ever show, by word or deed, that he was possessed of a great secret? Perhaps not. But before coming to a conclusion on this question the following facts (the concluding ones in the history of his life,) should be taken into consideration:

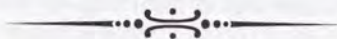
Several years ago, (not to be exact about dates,) as an old and prominent citizen of the neighborhood-one who has been elected to many offices of honor and trust by the voters of old Boone, and whom Frank looked up to and greatly admired-was passing by the latter's residence he heard a feeble voice calling his name. On looking around he saw Frank lying prone upon the ground. Going up to him it was discovered that his leg was broken, and that the bone, which appeared to be decayed, was protruding through his garments. A surgeon was speedily summoned, and amputation performed, but it was soon evident that the operation was ineffectual, and that the patient was doomed. When the last hour came our old citizen was by the sufferer's bedside, willing to do anything in his power to sooth the parting agony. As the dying man's

breath grew feeble and the clammy sweat bathed his brow he beckoned to his old friend to bend his head down to his lips. In this supreme moment he made agonizing efforts to speak, but power of speech was gone, and all that could be distinguished were the gaspingly uttered words,

"Big-oak."

Thus passed our hero, leaving the still unsettled question: Did Frank find the buried treasure?

[THE END]



The following description of Rabbit Hash (which is inserted here by request,) was originally written for the Lawrenceburgh Register:

RABBIT HASH, KENTUCKY

THE ORIGIN OF ITS NAME

While it is true that "a rose by any other name may smell as sweet," it does not follow that the cognomen of our flourishing little town could be changed with like felicitous result. Rabbit Hash! Euphony in the sound and gustatory longings in the idea. The name fits the place, and the place, by harmonious consistency, is admirably adapted to the name. By its euphonious nomenclature it has achieved a national notoriety-being known at least by all postmasters who can read-and any change thereof would be repudiated by the citizens as uncalled for and ridiculous.

We are satisfied with our name, Mr. Register; and while, no doubt, you would give big boot to swap names with your enterprising city, no sum that you could offer would tempt us

to part with our historical appellation.

How, you ask, did the name originate? It has been wisely said that in every great emergency a genius will arise competent to guide the helm of State. As with nations, so with municipalities; and our city was not an exception to the rule. The place had begun; it had houses and inhabitants, but no name. It was indifferently called anything by everybody, and as it was not yet christened it answered to all such unauthorized calls. But at last, when the burden seemed too great for endurance, a genius arose who lifted us out of the slough of despond. By a bold stroke, though it may have been unwittingly, he bestowed upon us a name which is destined to go "ringing down the grooves of time." May his memory never perish!

The time when this auspicious event occurred was Christmas day. A.D. 1847. As all of your older readers know, this was during the great forty-seven flood. For several days the river had been rising steadily, until now all the houses on the bank were flooded, and the owners were compelled to seek quarters with their more fortunate neighbors. It was a time of considerable hardship and suffering. Snow two feet deep covered the ground, and that combined with the extreme cold, made communication with the outside world extremely uncomfortable and somewhat hazardous.

Christmas day fell on this inauspicious season. Instead of the usual rejoicing at its advent, a pall of gloom overspread the community. No roast turkey and mince pies; no eggnog nor rum flip were to be had or expected. Instead of the usual hilarity the masculine portion of the community stood around in sheltered places and watched the great flood sweeping by in majestic grandeur, bearing on its turbulent breast a great wealth of miscellaneous drift. Dwelling houses, submerged above the eaves, on some of which domestic fowls were perched; great stacks of lumber; bridges; saw logs, rafted and unrafted; shocks of corn and stacks of hay, and miscellaneous

drift, composed of the wreckage of all these and everything else that could float were upon the waters.

The scene was fascinating in its grandeur, and our citizens surveyed it with feelings akin to awe. Although a similar scene had been witnessed for several days, still it was forever new. They realized to some extent the great value of the heterogeneous mass continually floating by, and spasmodic efforts were put forth to save some of it.

On this Christmas morning these efforts were somewhat relaxed, owing to the character of the day. Conversation was spiritless, and few words were uttered, save about some scene or incident connected with the watery panorama before them. At length one of the crowd, stimulated by hunger and visions of many past savory Christmas dinners, turned the talk to this interesting theme. Then, in turn, each one joined in by telling what he wished for or hoped to have on his festive board. One said he would have roast goose, caught in the drift the day before; another had a fat hen, caught in a similar manner: another a fat 'possum, unwarily caught napping and grinning in a hollow leg; and so they went on from hog to hominy, until all but one of the party had announced their bill of fare.

This one was the jester, although the butt of the company. He stood somewhat apart, shivering violently, not so much from the effects of the cold, however, as from the chronic influence on his system of over-indulgence in any and every kind of alcoholic stimulant that he could buy, beg or borrow. When it was noticed that he had taken no part in the gastronomical conversation some one asked:

"Well, Frank, what are you going to have for your Christmas dinner?"

With a leer and a wink that seemed to intensify his fit of shivering, his teeth chattering like castanets, he answered in just two words, "Rabbit Hash!"

This laconic utterance repeated in wide and wider and still increasing circles captivated the public mind and grew to the

place with so persistent an attachment that it could not be rooted out-and thus was the melodious name originated and fastened upon us.

Many persons, when they first hear this peculiar name, decide that it is ridiculous, and also conclude that the citizens partake of a like character. Neither is the name nor the people ridiculous. Nor is the town the insignificant hamlet that the uninformed suppose it to be. According to one of the tests of greatness applied to cities, namely, the size and numbers of its suburbs, Rabbit Hash is a considerable city. New York boasts of her great suburb, Brooklyn; San Fransisco of its Oakland; and why should not Rabbit Hash feel proud of its beautiful suburb, Rising Sun? But for the accident of the Ohio river choosing its channel between the two places, when there was plenty of room for it elsewhere, they would have united into one, and Rising Sun would have been saved the expense of a separate municipal government. However, our sheltering and protecting hands are over her, and we will guide and protect her until such time as we can take her into our fold.

In regard to its size perhaps the following illustration may enable the readers of the Register to form as correct an idea as possible aside from the advantage of optical experience: Let one imagine himself standing in the midst of the place at the intersection of the principal thoroughfares, and with an imaginary radius of five miles in length let him protract an imaginary circle. If this is done with mathematical accuracy, in the center of this circle, which will be ten miles in diameter, stands Rabbit Hash. Not many western cities can boast of a greater area than this. Such showing puts it in the class of cities to which Cincinnati and Louisville belong, and the three might appropriately be called the Big 3 of the Ohio valley.

Should a visitor climb the high hill in the rear of the town he could survey from its summit a magnificent panorama of hill and dale, of fine farms and comfortable dwellings: and if he happened to be a surveyor, and could get the job of laying out

in forty-acre lots all this fine country that he saw before him at five dollars a lot, he could realize a handsome fortune. This enterprise is awaiting the coming of the proper person to reap its benefits.

Like other large cities, Rabbit Hash has the right to complain of the incomplete returns of the census enumerator. Hardly a moiety of the number of inhabitants was given-even the thousands which for "caws" inhabit the leafy tree tops on the rugged hillsides being omitted:-but we can account for the fraudulent returns on the supposition that jealousy of our growth by such rival cities as Chicago, St. Louis, Cincinnati and Louisville prompted them to suborn the census-taker to testify as he did.

As for its antiquity, it goes back to the time of Nineveh and Babylon. Athens and Rome, not to mention the Tower of Babel. Its rock-ribbed foundation is co-eval with Adam, and its first settlers were descendants of either Shem, Ham, or Japheth. Of its early history there is no written account, nor does traditionary lore yield reliable data. Many evidences of early settlers, however, abound showing that here and hereabouts the red man roamed monarch of all he surveyed, shooting with his arrow birds and squirrels and rabbits-from the latter of which his squaw concocted a savory compound called "hash."

We may conclude this article by wishing that a more competent historian and statistician would take the matter in hand and give a more graphic and satisfactory account than we have been able to give in this paper.

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