

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

By H.E. Smith

SOMERVILLE AND SON

She had a nicety of touch that detected the slightest inequalities of surface even in polished wood, and her eye was at once quick and correct. Little by little, almost unconsciously, John Somerville trusted Nellie with much of the decision in purchases, and the bookkeeping was often in her care for weeks together, when there was a pressure of work. Mrs. Somerville whined and fretted over the strangely masculine tastes of her child, but her father became more and more averse to parting with her in business hours.

Two years after Nellie returned from school, and just after her twenty-first birthday, she started one morning, as seen in the opening of my story, to look at some patterns to be sent for decision. Such matters were often entrusted entirely to her judgment, so she was not surprised to find her father had gone out, leaving the decision to her. After she had given the order, had answered a lot of letters lying upon the desk, had wandered all over the building and returned again to the office, she was surprised at her father's long absence.

One of the foremen, in the finishing department, coming to the office for some last orders about the shipment of some goods, said that Mr. Somerville had appointed to meet him there at noon, and the proprietor of Somerville & Son's frame factory was a man of rigid punctuality.

Ten, fifteen, twenty minutes Stephen Holton waited in the office, watching Nellie's busy hand as she folded, sealed and directed a lot of circulars, and thinking that never had he seen a face so fair, or heard a voice so clear and musical as Nellie Somerville's. As the clock struck the half-hour, Nellie looked up with a startled face.

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“Something has happened, Stephen,” she said; “my father is never half an hour behind time. Send someone to look for him. “The men are all at dinner Miss, Nellie. I will go myself.”

Even as he spoke, a messenger hurriedly entered the office saying; ‘Mr. Somerville was thrown from his horse while on his way here from the village, and is badly injured.” “Where?” broke from Nellie’s white lips. “We took him home, and he asked me to come here for you.” Even in her horror and grief Nellie retained some presence of mind. Looking into Stephen Holton’s grave, sympathizing face, she said:

“You will take charge here until you hear from my father. I will be responsible.”

“Thank you,” he said, deeply moved by her confidence in him at such a time. “I will try to do my duty.” “I am sure of that,” she answered, and extended her hand. Two minutes later she was hurrying homeward. None too soon was her clear head and quiet resolution brought to bear upon the excited household. Her mother was in hysterics, the servants bustling here and there, purposeless and terrified, and her father lying upon the bed in the hands of a surgeon and two gentlemen who had assisted in bringing him home.

There was plenty to do. In less time than would have seemed possible, the servants were in their proper places, Mrs. Somerville quieted, and Nellie, white as a sheet, but perfectly tranquil, actively engaged in waiting upon the surgeon.

The weary hours that followed taxed every nerve of the girl’s frame, but she bore the strain bravely; and when the surgeon led her to the drawing room, he felt a deep respect for the girl who had so nobly crushed back all selfish sorrow to aid her father in his agony.

Giving her a glass of water, and making her rest quietly for a few minutes he watched her face till the drawn rigidity of every feature relaxed, and the strained eyes looked piteously into his own.

“That is better,” he said kindly. “You may cry now.” Nellie’s lip quivered. “you have something to tell me?” “Yes. Are you strong enough to hear it?”

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“That he will die?” Oh, say he will not die!” “The injuries are not fatal. Your father may live for years.” Nellie’s tears fell fast now. “But” the doctor continued, “He will never be able to walk again. The injury to the spine will keep him a cripple for life.”

Never walk again! While, Nellie sobbed out her anguish in the drawing room, John Somerville, unconscious of the dread flat that had gone forth slept under the influence of a powerful opiate.

For many days the two women who loved him had no thought for anything but the strong man stricken down in the prime of his life, needing care like a little child. Under the influence of a real sorrow, the crust of selfishness melted from the wife’s heart, and she became a devoted nurse, forgetting the fancied ailments she had nursed for years, in ministering to her husband, as he lay helpless and suffering.

Their came a day when John Somerville was told, kindly and cautiously, of the doom before him. It took all the Christian strength of the man’s nature to endure the shock. Better death, he thought, than life at such a price. The first agony over, he thought of the factory, the breadwinner for wife and child-the business of his life. Must the old firm die at last, and the flourishing business be sold for want of a master’s care? Involuntarily he turned to Nellie and talked long and earnestly.

It was s surprise to him, in spite of what he had seen, when she replied: “I knew the factory would be your first anxiety, father, and Stephen has been here every evening to report to me, bringing me all the mail matter.

Today I went down myself. Everything is going well. The orders for this month are all filled, and the new ones under way. I have put in some new material. Do you feel able to go over what I have done?”

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SOMERVILLE AND SON

Clearly she explained every detail of the business in the four weeks that had passed since the accident and modestly showed him the memoranda she had kept of every business transaction.

“Nellie,” he said, when she finished, “if Heaven denied me a son, it has given me a good daughter. Will you take a son’s place now? With you to assist me, I can still carry on my factory, though I lie crippled here.”

There was a buzz of comment in the village when Miss Ellen Somerville assumed charge of the frame factory her father had owned so long. Some of the workmen refused to be “ordered about “ by a girl, and were promptly discharged: but the majority worked better under the stimulus of Nellie’s judicious praise. People who sneered at “masculine women” were forced to confess that Nellie was as womanly, if Not as helpless, as the finest lady of them all.

Patrons of the factory who prophesied its utter ruin were forced to confess that their orders were filled as promptly and as well as ever before. Yet in the counting house, only a woman controlled the entire business, kept the books, answered the letters, and guided every detail of the vast establishment.

Three years had passed since Nellie became the head of the business, when Stephen Holton wooed her for his wife. He had saved from his salary sufficient to make a pleasant home, and Nellie knew he loved her faithfully, as she had long loved him. With her happy consent, he sought her father to ask for his child.

“From all the world,” John Somerville said, “I could not have chosen a man to whom I would so gladly give my Nellie. It will comfort me, in the years that may be left of my life, to know that my brave girl has a protector when I am gone. Stephen, there is one wish very near to my heart that you can gratify.” “Name it, sir.”

“I shall, on your marriage day, deed to you the factory and business, subject only to a moderate life-income for myself and wife. I would like to keep the old man there. An act of the legislature will give you the right to be Stephen Somerville and Somerville & Son may still live in the old firm’s place.” When Nellie married, some months later she became the wife of Stephen Holton Somerville, Gradually she found her duties in her new home drawing her little by little from an active place in the factory; and, proud of her husband, she gladly resigned her authority to him, finding scope for her energies in the duties around her, till one sunny morning, walking over to her father’s she put into his arms a tiny crowing baby, and said with glad fears; “My business cares are over, papa. Henceforth I resign in favor of “Somerville and Son.”

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

OBSERVATIONS OF THE COUNTY AND TALKS WITH THE PEOPLE

Solomon Township-Glasco and the Valley of the Solomon-Up Fisher Creek-Brittville-South of the River-Enterprise and Spirit of the People

The township of Solomon was one of the original five which constituted the county of "Shirley" (now Cloud), and when first organized comprised the entire territory now embraced within the townships of Solomon, Lyon, Oakland, Meredith and Starr, and a strip three miles in width lying north of the latter four. By the cutting off of territory for the organization of new townships, it has been reduced to limits six by nine miles in extent, and lies in the south-west corner of the county. It is a highly favored portion of the county. Nature has wrought within its limits a perfect work, creating lines of beauty and attractive forms, which shall influence her people for good through all the future. With the Solomon River flowing through its southern portion bordered by a valley of pleasant landscapes; and drained by five principal creeks, along which lie lands fertile enough and beautiful enough for the most fastidious agriculturist, and with slopes enough to destroy monotony, - we cannot wonder at the pride with which the people regard their heritage-it is indeed a goodly land.

It is too, historic ground, In the days of early settlement the savages swept back and forth across the valleys, killing and plundering, and fleeing bloody-handed to the hills to exult over reeking scalps and divide the captured booty. Old settlers like Copts. Potts and Snyder, the Spaulding's and others, have a fund of reminiscences of that time of trial.

A ride of twenty miles brings one to Glasco, a ride that for the first time we took on Monday of last week. We could not have chosen a better time, for the weather was notably warm and genial, to the continuance of which during our trip, we owe one of the most enjoyable "expeditions" we have taken for many a day.

Glasco is most pleasantly located on Fisher Creek bottom, about a mile northeast of the Solomon River, one mile from the east and four miles from the south line of the township. It was originally called "Del Ray" and its Town Company is composed of the following enterprising gentlemen; H.H. and A.H. Spaulding, J.M. Copeland and H.C. Snyder.

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OBSERVATIONS OF THE COUNTY EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

AND TALKS WITH THE PEOPLE

Solomon Township-Glasco and the Valley of the Solomon-Up Fisher Creek-Brittville-South of the River-Enterprise and Spirit of the People

Glasco has three stores, a blacksmith shop, the next best school house in the county, a number of good residence, a surrounding country which ought to afford a large and healthy trade, and a promising future, whenever the locomotive shall, as it surely will in no long time, come thundering up the valley of the Solomon. J.M. Copeland and Biggs & Fuller keep on sale good stocks of General Merchandise, and C.J. Davis is engaged in the Grocery trade. The two former have dealt to a considerable extent in grain and produce, also. The schoolhouse is a credit to Cloud County.

It is a large and elegant structure, well built of white limestone, 24x40 in size, finished off in good style inside, and neatly fitted up with "Eureka" furniture. The structure cost District No. 5 about \$3,000.00. The builder was H.H. Spaulding, who has also erected for himself one of the most imposing two-story residences in the county, to which he is now building with his own hands, a fine addition 17x42 in size. He has also a large stone stable erected by him. Though not a stone mason by trade he seems to have the skill of a master workman, and is in demand to do contract work. He deserves credit for his courage and industry, which is certain to be still more largely, felt in the future development of his town and surrounding country. Mr. S. has 200 acres lying along Fisher Creek and the Solomon, and 40 acres of timber on Fisher. He has under cultivation 100 acres, 40 of which in corn this year. This of course was ruined, but he intends to try it again next year, and expects a large crop of corn, as well as spring grain. He has 5 acres in fruit trees and vines, including 700 fruit trees, most of them over three years old, and intends to plant a seedling peach orchard of 4 acres in the spring. We "put up" with Mr. S. Tuesday night, and found him a genial host.

We rode over to Fisher Creek on Monday evening, and, as the darkness began to envelope us, drew up at door of our friend Wm. Thompson, who, with his excellent family, received us as a friend and placed us under obligations not soon to forgotten. In this vicinity is a half section of as good land as lies upon Fisher; occupied and being put in an excellent state of cultivation by Mr. Wm. Thompson, his son-in-law J.C. Thompson and his son J.P. These are all enterprising men and good workers. The old gentleman, not with-standing heavy losses, is working away with a spirit and courage worthy of younger blood, and is making it "tell."

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

OBSERVATIONS OF THE COUNTY AND TALKS WITH THE PEOPLE

Solomon Township-Glasco and the Valley of the Solomon-Up Fisher Creed-Brittville-South of the River-Enterprise and Spirit of the People

He has 25 acres under cultivation; had a fair crop of small grains this year, and will try it again another year. He has 20 head of cattle and some 18 head of hogs. He has also comfortable buildings. We certainly wish him abundant success. J.C. and J.P. Thompson have, together, some 35 acres broken, 16 of which have been sown with fall wheat. They have fine farms and will undoubtedly get ahead. We will mention some of those who occupy this fine Fisher Creek Valley. At the north line of the township we find John Biggs with a good quarter, 40 acres of which is under plow. He has a fair dwelling, a stone stable, and an orchard growing.

Going down the creek, on the east side, we find Geo.W. Beers with 15 acres under cultivation. Opposite and next below is Israel Calhoun, a "Bach," with 200 acres-35 broken. Crossing the creek again we come to the fine property of the Thompson's, above referred to, and just below, that of Conrad Romeiser, who is working 25 acres and living in a comfortable dugout. Opposite Wm. Thompson's is H.W.Cook with a fine quarter section, 25 acres of which is broken. Next south is the farm of Rev. Newton Bracken. Mr. B. besides farming 30 acres of his fine quarter preaches at Glasco and Delphos. He was absent at Synod. Next south lays the farm of A.D. Teasley, who is about 2 miles northwest of Glasco. Mr. T. is working 100 acres. He raised this year 53 acres of small grains and had good crops; 38 acres of corn were destroyed by hungry locusts, which had been intended for his 33 head of hogs. He has just sown 36 acres of winter wheat and puts in 22 acres of rye. He means to sow 30 acres also to Spring wheat next year. He is an old settler, dating his residence here from 1866.

Next below Mr. Teasley's place lies another splendid farm-that of Capt. Snyder. The Captain is cultivating 100 acres. He raised, this year, 15 acres of spring and 22 acres of fall wheat. One item of his success this year worthy of note was the harvesting from 5 bushels of Red May seed wheat, of 135 $\frac{1}{4}$ bushels of splendid grain-27 bushels to the acre. He raised fair crops of oats, rye and barley. He has 52 head of hogs, 10 of cattle and 6 of horses. He has a fine orchard of about 1,000 apple and peach trees, and would have had considerable fruit had not the grasshoppers interfered to prevent. The Captain has good home and pleasant surroundings generally.

Fisher Creed is well timbered with walnut, oak, blackberry, elm, ash and cottonwood, the varieties, indeed, native to most of our streams. School District 31 has a good stone schoolhouse, located near Mr. Thompson's place, which when completed will cost the District \$800. It is intended to finish it up nicely inside and furnish with patent furniture.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

OBSERVATIONS OF THE COUNTY AND TALKS WITH THE PEOPLE

Solomon Township-Glasco and the Valley of the Solomon-Up Fisher Creek-Brittville-South of the River-Enterprise and Spirit of the People

THE "DIVIDE"

There are many good farms and stirring farmers on the divide between Fisher and Lost Creeks. J.S. Jones joins Wm. Thompson on the west. He is just out of Fisher valley, but his farm is a valuable one. He has 57 acres in working condition. He raised this year about 15 acres of winter wheat, and would have had fine crops of corn, Irish and sweet potatoes had not the locusts interfered. His winter wheat is looking fine (as, indeed, is all the winter wheat of this section) and he will sow 10 acres of rye. South of Mr. Jones is G.B. Vallandingham, whose stone residence stands conspicuously upon high ground. Mr. V. is working 25 acres, 18 of which are now in fall wheat. B. Day, J.P. comes next, with 40 acres broken and a fall grain field of 15 acres. Reed P. Bracken has a good place next south of Mr. Day's with 40 acres under the plow. He has some 6 acres of fall wheat. He has also, 5 acres devoted to nursery stock, fruits and vines of many varieties. Next west is Jos. Hostetler, with 30 acres under cultivation. This gentleman has a fine stone residence and good stabling. He has a flock of 84 sheep, which we understand are netting him handsome returns for his investment. C. Hostetler joins his brother Joseph on the northwest and has a fine quarter section, though but about 10 acres are broken as yet. He has "under way" a fine stone residence. John Berry-hill's farm lies upon the pleasant slope north of the Solomon. Fifty-five acres of this are in producing condition.

Lost Creek has some how made its way down to the Solomon, and found itself entering that stream near the western limit of the county, near Brittville, We did not visit it, but learned that there were some fine farms upon its borders. This stream is well timbered near its source, but not at all so after entering the broad valley of the Solomon.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

OBSERVATIONS OF THE COUNTY AND TALKS WITH THE PEOPLE

Solomon Township-Glasco and the Valley of the Solomon-Up Fisher Creek- Brittville-South of the River-Enterprise and Spirit of the People

The ride across the valley of the Solomon, to its south side where stands the pleasant village of Brittville, is a most enjoyable experience, especially upon a bright sunny day such as we were favored with. There is no denying that at such a time this broad and beautiful valley has manifold attractions for an appreciative eye.

Brittville is a town with a future; in infancy now, but with a substantial foundation to build upon. The place is located upon the west line of the county just four miles from its south line. It was laid out; forty acres in extent, in 1872 by judge Britt, who began the work of town building by erecting a large and substantial stone store building. Simpson, Beaver & Co soon occupied this with a stock of goods. Other buildings were erected, until now we have a village of well-founded pretensions. Trade is now represented by Parish & Bro. Who bought out the first mentioned firm and are doing an encouraging business, and Dr. M.M. Stanley with a really fine stock of drugs and medicines, occupying the fine stone building first erected. The doctor is a practitioner, and is also the first postmaster, the place having been recently given postal advantages. But the "cornerstone" of Brittville is its waterpower, and it has a splendid power. There is a stone dam, built upon the solid bedrock, completed in September 1873, and furnishing an eleven-foot "head" of water for mill power. Simpson, Shanks & Co who own the improvement, have been using this power since its completion in the successful running of a first-class saw mill, and, when we were there, were completing a grist mill, 28x36 on the ground, and having two high stories and a garret. It has two run of burrs, and capacity for more, as business shall require. Two of the Leffel Turbine wheels, one 40 and the other 35 inches, are in use to propel the machinery, which is all first-class.

There is underneath the sawmill a stone foundation 30x40 in size. Upon this, Mr. Simpson informed us, a three-story woolen mill is to be erected in 1876.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

OBSERVATIONS OF THE COUNTY AND TALKS WITH THE PEOPLE

**Solomon township-Glasco and the Valley of the Solomon-Up Fisher Creek-
Brittville-South of the River-Enterprise and Spirit of the People**

SOUTH OF THE RIVER

We had been told that we should find a beautiful country south of the Solomon, and we were not disappointed. Three creeks, named and numbered First, Second and third, set in from the hills south, along which lie some of the pleasantest of little valleys. These creeks are not heavily timbered, but they are bordered by some of the most valuable of farming lands.

Proceeding from Brittville up the west bank of Third Creek, about one and one half miles from its mouth, we came to the residence of M Louthan, a pleasant old gentleman and Justice of the Peace. Mr L is working 33 of his 154 acres; has a comfortable home and pleasant surroundings, "Luck" was against him this year, but he has spirit to "stay by" and try again.

On our way over to Second Creek we crossed the farm of E Louthan which sloping gently toward the Solomon and taking in a fine scope of bottom, will one day, if well cared for, be a proud possession.

Second Creek is a better populated than either of the other two. Among the workers of this favored valley are H M and I N Dalrymple, the former of who works 100 and the latter 75 acres. There is White Jones, also, who has over 100 acres broken; who this year raised 30 acres of wheat, and lost 50 acres of corn; who has about 20 head of cattle and a five acre orchard. Lower down the creek we found Capt Volney Baker, who has as fine a quarter as one would care to own, it would seem. It lies on both sides of the creek, and takes in a fine lot of timber. The Captain harvested 30 acres of wheat, which yielded 15 bushels to the acre, and lost 12 acres of corn. He has an 18-acre field of winter wheat, put in early and deep, which was looking beautifully. To the kind hospitality of the Captain and his pleasant lady we stand indebted for a good dinner.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

OBSERVATIONS OF THE COUNTY AND TALKS WITH THE PEOPLE

Solomon Township-Glasco and the Valley of the Solomon-Up Fisher Creek- Brittville- South of the River-Enterprise and Spirit of the People

The most prominent object on First Creek is a stately two-story stone residence, built high and commanding at magnificent view. This is the property of S P Fuller, whose finely improved farm is joined, on the north and west, by those of his brothers S B and G L. The brothers have together about 160 acres under cultivation, and they raised about 900 bushels of wheat and 250 of oats, this year. S P has a thrifty orchard started. He is setting out 10 acres of timber.

Recrossing the Solomon near Glasco, we found Capt J H Potts one of the substantial men of Solomon Township, busily obeying the injunction to "Make hay while the sun shines." We enjoyed a pleasant chat with the Captain, and obtained from him many interesting facts in regard to the early settlement of the valley in "times that tried men's souls." He has a valuable farm on the Solomon about a mile southwest from Glasco, with 80 acres under cultivation. He raised, this year, 20 acres of winter wheat, getting 18 bushels to the acre, and lost 45 acres of corn. Have 20 acres of fall wheat and 11 acres of rye now growing. Have a large orchard nicely started, and half an acre in Concord grapes. Has 15 head of cattle, and handles some 200 head for other owners. The Captain is evidently well fixed and prospering.

His neighbor, Wm Abbott, who has a good stone residence, has also a fine farm, 55 acres of which he is cultivating. This place has a salt spring. A short distance east of Glasco we find J Brockman and D Starks. The former has a fine stone residence, and other good improvements, including fencing for 20 acres. He is working 70 acres. The latter named gentleman has a fine farm near town. As we passed it we were surprised and delighted by the sight of a large and beautiful flower garden, with ever tint of color, apparently, in full bloom. We also noticed a neatly kept peach orchard of between 400 and 500 trees; also a thrifty hedge.

A half-mile east of town lay a valuable property belonging to the gentlemanly merchant J M Copeland. His is cultivating 80 acres; has three miles of two year old hedge; raised this year 25 acres of winter wheat, yielding 15 bushels to the acre, and has sown 25 acres of the same for another harvest; in the spring will sow 30 acres of wheat and oats; intends to have 10 acres in fruits and vines. He has a large and attractive stone residence. The east and southeast part of the township is a beautiful scope of country, but we have neither time nor space for a complete description. Among its best farmers and workers we will name John Downey, the Studt Brothers, C Horn, Abram and William Butler, and Mr. Isbell. There are others whose names we did not get, all of whom are energetic and prospering farmers. The township has four-week day and three Sunday schools, which fact speaks well for the moral tone of the people, whom we almost invariably found courteous and kind in demeanor as well as enterprising and public-spirited in their work and conversation.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

By H.E. Smith

February 12, 1875

SOME ONE IN THE ROOM

Elijah Croly, my husband, was owner and captain of a coasting-vessel, doing a good trade; and we occupied an old-fashioned and somewhat dreary house at Stepney. Elijah liked the place more than I did, and it was on his account that we stayed there so long. I thought it could make very little difference to him where we lived, for he was at home only two or three weeks out of every ten. I was often along two months at a time; and lonely enough it was sometimes.

“Get some one whom you like to stay with you, my dear,” the captain said, when I told home one day how unpleasant I felt to be alone so much. “Get any one you please, and before long I hope I shall be able to stay at home with you myself.”

“I took his advice, and after some inquiry I found a woman who I thought would suit me. Her name was Emily Sands, and she was a pleasant-faced woman of about forty. She told me that she had been left a widow, with no means, and had since earned her living by needle-work; and although I had intended that the woman who came every morning to do my housework should still come, I found Emily so handy and so willing that I soon discontinued the services of the other. She was so amiable and so vivacious, that I was satisfied that I had done the best that I could do in the matter.

“I hope so,” he said, doubtfully. “And don’t you think so?” I asked. “Well no,” he replied. “Now, I’d like to know why, Elijah. Do you see anything wrong about her?” “I can’t say that I do; I presume it is only a notion; but I have in some way conceived a kind of distrust of her face. I can’t explain it, and you had better not be prejudiced by it.”

“You may be very sure I shall not,” I rejoined, “if it has not more foundation than this.” And this was all that was said between us on the subject. I was too well acquainted with the captain’s sudden whims to attach much importance to this one. The captain remained at home this time barely two weeks. On the morning that he left to take his vessel for another trip, just after he had taken up his hat to go, he called me into the chamber, and shut the door.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

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SOME ONE IN THE ROOM

"Here is something, Fanny," he said, that I want you to keep safely for me till I come back." And he took a paper package from his breast pocket as he spoke. "There are ten fifty-pound notes in it - five hundred pounds in all. I will lock it up here in this bureau-drawer, and give you the key. And he did so. "No one would think of coming here for money."

"Do you think you had better leave it here, Elijah?" I asked. "Why not put it in the bank?" "I meant to; but I shall not have time. The money was only paid me last night. But no matter, the money will be safe where it is, and there will be no danger about it; or if you don't think so, you may deposit it yourself."

My husband took little thought of possibilities, and I presume that he never once thought of money from the time he left the house until he returned. As for myself, I was not so easily satisfied. I had heard enough of house plundering and outrages of that kind to make me afraid to keep this large amount with me. My uneasiness increased as the day wore on; and about three o'clock the same afternoon, I took the money and went to the bank, determined to deposit it. The bank was closed; all the banks were closed, for it was Saturday.

I took the package home again, replaced it in the bureau-drawer, locked it, placed the key in my pocket, and resolved that I would not worry any more about it. Emily called me to tea in a little while, and though not hungry, I went into the dining room and sat with her while she drank her tea and laughed and chatted in her vivacious way.

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BY H.E. SMITH

February 12, 1875

SOME ONE IN THE ROOM

The evenings were rather long, and Emily and I sat together in the dining room after the table was cleared, she reading aloud and I listening, as was our custom. When the clock struck ten she laid down her book; and I took my lamp, and bidding her good night went up to my room.

My chamber occupied the whole front of the second story, and Emily had a back room upon the same floor. A bell-wire ran from my room to hers, so that I could summon her at pleasure.

I placed the lamp upon the bureau, shaded it, and returned and locked the door. Then I drew my easy chair to the middle of the room, put on my slippers, and sat down for a few minutes before retiring. Immediately I became vexed at myself to find that I was looking at the drawer that held the money, and that I was feeling in my pocket to see that the key was safe. I felt no alarm; I had almost cured myself of my uneasiness; but it seemed as if that money, and the danger of its custody, would obtrude upon me. In the impatience of the moment I turned my chair half-round, and looked toward the opposite wall.

The shade that I placed over the lamp confined its rays within a small circle, beyond which the bed, the furniture, the carpet, and the wallpaper were obscure. In the corner, to the right of the door, was an antique, high-backed chair, a favorite piece of furniture. As I turned my own chair from the bureau, my eyes rested on this object; and I saw by the same glance that a human figure was sitting in it!

I could not at first make out whether it was a man or a woman; I only became conscious, as I sat in bewildering, dumb terror, that I was confronted by a stranger there in that semi-darkness – by some one who had hidden in the room for some object; and what that object was I well knew.

Judy Lambert
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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

February 12, 1875

SOME ONE IN THE ROOM

No person who has never been placed in such a terrifying situation as that can describe the sickening feeling which for a moment takes possession of the heart; and I can only say for myself that I motionless for a time-I know not how long-thinking of my helpless situation. There I was, locked up in a room alone with a ruffian, waiting, trembling, and expecting to hear him speak, or to become the object of some violence. For although, as I have said, I could not distinguish whether it was man or woman, I did not doubt that it was the former, and one of the most desperate of his kind. Presently, as my eyes fell to the floor, I saw a great pair of boots thrust out upon the carpet within the radius of the light.

I do not know how long we sat there in the semi-darkness of the room, facing each other, but motionless and silent; it might have been three minutes or thirty. The thought of alarming Emily suddenly occurred to me, and I reached out for the bell-cord. It should have been within easy reach of the spot where I sat; but my hand failed to find it.

A low chuckle came from the occupant of the old chair. "That was a clever thought of you, missus," came forth in a deep, rough voice, and in a tone of easy insolence. "Clever thought, marm; but bless your simple soul, do you think I was a-going to leave that' ere cord there for you to make a noise with? Not by any means. It's well to be careful when you're in this kind of business, marm; and so when you left me alone here before dark-I then being under the bed, you see-I crawled out and took a survey of the place.

Judy Lambert
Register of Deeds
(Continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

February 12, 1875

SOME ONE IN THE ROOM

My strength was returning; I became reassured as I saw that the man intended no violence to myself.

“What do you want?” I asked. He chuckled again, and replied, “Now that’s good; you’re a business woman, marm; you come right to the point, without any nonsense. I’m going to tell you what I want.”

He rose from the chair as he spoke, and crossed the room to the bureau, passing so close to me that his boots brushed the skirt of my dress. I shuddered, and drew my chair back-I could not help betraying my fear.

“Be quiet, marm,” he said. “I don’t mean to hurt you, if I can help it. Keep still, and I won’t. Let’s have a look at each other.”

He removed the shade, and looked at me for a full half a minute, as I sat in the glare of the lamp. He was a large, brawny fellow, full six feet high, and dressed in an old suit of fustian clothes. His face was entirely concealed by a crape mask; not a feature of it could I see, from his neck to the crown of his head. He leaned one arm upon the bureau, and regarded me attentively.

“You don’t know me,” he remarked, in an ordinary tone. “No, of course not; it’s best for you that you shouldn’t. I thought at first there was something familiar in your face; but I fancy I was mistaken. Well, to business, marm.” He assumed a sharp tone, and looked carefully at the bureau.

“I’ve got a pistol here, missus”- and he slapped his pocket; “but you’re too sensible a woman, I take it, to make me to use it on you. I want that money. There’s five hundred pound of it in this drawer; you have the key-give it to me!”

I handed it to him without a word. “I’ll leave you now in a minute, missus,” he said, rapidly inserting the key, turning it, and opening the drawer, with many thanks for your good behavior. Is this it?”

Judy Lambert
Register of Deeds
(Continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

February 12, 1875

SOME ONE IN THE ROOM

He took out the package, and held it up. "That is the money," I said. "She might deceive me, after all," I heard him mutter; and thrusting his forefinger into the end of the envelope, he ripped it open, and pulled the end of the notes out into sight! "Yes, here it is. Now---"

He had thrust the package in his pocket, and was about to close the drawer, when his eye was caught by something within it. He started, thrust his hand into the drawer, and, taking out an object that I was well acquainted with, he bent over and scrutinized it, holding it closer to the lamp. How I wish that I could see the expression of his face at that moment! He held in his hand an ivory miniature of my husband's face, a faithful picture, made by an artist years before, at my request.

"Whose face is this?" The robber demanded, in a voice that trembled with eagerness. "My husband's," I replied. "Your husband's? Yes, yes-but his name?" "Elijah Croly." "Captain Croly?" he demanded in the same tone. "yes" "The same who commanded the barque Calvert, that used to run out of Liverpool?"

I nodded my head. I knew that the vessel named was the last one that my husband had sailed on the ocean before he bought his own coaster; in fact, it was the same in which I came to England.

"This is Captain Croly's money? – This is his house? – You are his wife?" he asked, rapidly, giving me no time to answer his questions. "Yes, yes-I see it all. Great God!-to think what I was about to do!"

He dropped into the nearest chair, apparently faint with emotion; but while I sat in deep surprise at the unexpected turn that this affair had taken, he said, "You have no reason to fear now; I will not rob you; I will not harm you. Only don't make a noise. Please open the door, and you will find Jane-your woman, I mean-waiting in the passage."

I obeyed; I did not know what else to do. I unlocked and opened the door and there, to my astonishment, stood Emily Sands arrayed in her bonnet and shawl, with a bundle in her hand-waiting, I have no doubt, for a signal from within. She started upon seeing me; but the man immediately called to her by the name of Jane, telling her to come in.

Judy Lambert
Register of Deeds
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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

February 12, 1875

SOME ONE IN THE ROOM

She passed by me as she did so; and I whispered, "Oh, Emily, how could you betray me?"

She manifested no shame or sorrow, though I know she must have heard the whispered words; her face was hard and unwomanly, and its expression was sullen. I could not doubt that she had played the spy upon my husband and myself, and had betrayed us to this man.

"I've a very few words to say to you, ma'am," said the man; and all the boldness and insolence had gone out of his voice, leaving it gentle and sorrowful. "Just a few words to ask you to forgive us for what we meant to do, and to tell you what has happened to change my mind so suddenly, and why we can't rob you as we meant to do."

He took the package from his pocket with the words, and tossed it into my lap. "That money belongs to the man that I love and honor more than any other on earth. I'm a hard customer, ma'am; we live by dark ways and doings, Jane and I, and I wouldn't have believed when she let me in here today and hid me that I could have left the house without that money; but if I'd known whom it belonged to, I'd sooner held out my right hand to be cut off than come here as I have, and for what I came. I used to be a sailor, and I was with Captain Croly in the Calvert. He was the very kindest and best master that ever handled a speaking-trumpet, and there wasn't a man aboard the bark but loved him. One night off Hatter as all hands were sent aloft to reef in a heavy gale; and when they came down again I was missing. 'Where is he?' The captain asked; but none of them knew. They hadn't noticed me since we all sprang into the shrouds together. 'Over-board I'm afraid, said the mate; and the men seemed fearful that I was lost. The captain hailed me through his speaking-trumpet; and there came back a fain, despairing cry, only just heard above the piping of the storm.

Judy Lambert
Register of Deeds
(Continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

February 12, 1875

SOME ONE THE ROOM

Captain Croly never ordered any one else up; he cast off his coat, and threw down his trumpet, and went aloft before any one could get ahead of him. He found me hanging with one elbow over the foreyard, and just about ready to fall from weakness and pain, for my other arm was twisted out of joint at the elbow by a turn of the ropes. He caught me, and held me there till help came up from below, and then they carried me down, It was Captain Croly that saved me from a grave in the sea; and I would have robbed him tonight!

Forgive me, madam, if you can. We will leave you in peace, Come Jane!" The two passed out of my chamber, and from the house, leaving me like one in a dream. The woman I never saw again; and I have little hope that she ever reformed. She was one of the crafty, hypocritical kind, whose hearts are entirely bad, and who generally come to bad ends. But I am very hopeful that the man entered upon a new life after this occurrence.

He made no promises, not even intimation that he meant to do so; but I have faith to think that the heart that could treasure up a debt of gratitude, and stay the execution of a crime, as in this case, must have something in it strong enough to turn it virtuous ways.

"Well," said Elijah, in his joking way, when he came home next day after this eventful night, "you've not been murdered for that money, I see. Where's Emily? Has she run off with it?"

I handed him the package, merely re-marking that the woman had inexpertly left me, for reasons, which were best known to her. This was all the conversation that I had with him upon the subject; he never knew what I have now been telling. Perhaps I did wrong; but I was always reluctant to tell him all about it, and he died before I could make up my mind. But I never had any other secret from Elijah; and I believe I never had an adventure that made such an impression upon me as this.

Judy Lambert
Register of Deeds

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

The Wished-For Saw-Mill

In one of my angling excursions I went, by the advice of knowing friend Nibbs, to try the small river Toft, which runs through a pretty bit of country, and has on its banks the village, or more properly hamlet, of Whortle, where I took up my residence. The place had no inn, but that did not matter. Anglers are not particular as to lodgings. The cottage which gave me shelter was clean and comfortable enough; Mrs. Williams, a motherly dame, had a good store of sweet linen, and made capital bread. There was a difficulty about butcher-meat, but sides of bacon were suspended all over the kitchen ceiling, eggs were reckoned by the dozen, chickens and ducks were chuckling and quacking all around, excellent vegetables grew in the garden; and for fish, in my opinion, small river-trout are almost as nice to eat as to catch, which is saying a great deal.

I took a letter from Nibbs, and was installed in his accustomed quarters, for I found that he was in the habit of running down for a few days whenever business permitted him and several books arranged on the shelf of the sitting-room had his name in them. I feared at first that I was turning the couple out of their parlor, but they assured me that they had only used it on grand occasions, and lived habitually in the kitchen. My bedroom was over the sitting-room; and from the lattice window, framed with jess amine and And roses, I could see the little river as it ran babbling and sparkling by.

There was but one drawback, which was the close proximity of the workshop, in which either my host or his workman was constantly sharpening a saw; but even this was not an unmixed evil, for it conduced to that early rising which is so great a point in the angler's favor.

Nibbs had said, "Old" Peter Williams, and I expected something venerable, but the term proved to be familiar rather than descriptive, for Williams was not much older than Nibbs himself, and he was born in 1820. Mrs. Williams was perhaps a couple of years younger. Mrs. Williams was perhaps a couple of years younger. I was puzzled at first to think where the work was to come from to keep a carpenter shop in such an out-of-the-spot, but that difficulty was soon solved.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

The Wished-For Saw-Mill

There were a good many houses hidden away amongst the woods within a circuit of two or three miles, and there was no competition. Gentlemen residing about there were indeed, I afterward learned, rather addicted to amateur carpentering, a taste doubtless fostered by the profusion of wood all around; but amateur work rarely interferes with professional. Peter was probably saved many a little fidgety and unprofitable job by the skill of his neighbors, but was rarely done out of a good one.

It seldom occurs to a gentleman to supply his own household with coffins, for example. Still, the business was fluctuating; at sometimes more than Peter and his assistant could well get through, at others so slack that the man could make head against it, leaving the master free to indulge in the pursuit he loved, and with him fly-fishing was a passion. When any sport, taste, or affection fills the soul of a man to that extent, how ever he is certain to find some way of gratifying it under any circumstances. Though my host had plenty to do at the period of my visit, he was evidently glad enough of the excuse for acting as my cicerone to throw aside the plane for the rod for an hour or so, and he generally managed to accompany me a little way up or down the stream either in the morning or the evening. And it was lucky for me that he did so, for it was a difficult piece of water to fish, but he knew every inch of it. Without his aid, and using the ordinary flies, I should soon have quitted the neighborhood in disgust. As it was, I had capital sport.

And what was equally pleasant, when I came home, I had such a good welcome. It is a very great addition the amateur fisherman to display his spoils before a sympathetic gaze, and Peter Williams met me with the eagerness of a child expecting a new toy. I durst not have brought home an under-sized fish; it would have hurt his feelings. He admired any trout larger than the average, as though he had never seen such a thing before, weighed it, measured it, and wanted to know exactly where and how it was captured. Mrs. Williams was equally frank and friendly, and when I found that I should be welcome I proposed that I should come and smoke my pipe with the couple in the kitchen of an evening. They soon grew chatty and communicative, and I learned that they had a sorrow.

It was on the third occasion of my passing the evening in their company that I asked whether Hackle always came alone, and if he never brought a friend with him.

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Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

The Wished-For Saw-Mill

"Never, sir," Mrs. Williams emphatically. "I don't know where he could be put up."
"Why," said I, "you have another bedroom at the back of mine; the door was open when I came down to dinner, and it looked very comfortably furnished. Could you not put a second visitor there?"

Mrs. Williams knitted more quickly at the sock she was making, and offered no reply; Her husband puffed hard at his pipe. I saw that I had touched on a painful subject, but could not immediately turn to another, so there was an awkward pause.

"You see, sir," said Peter at last, knocking out his ashes, "the old woman would not have that room occupied on any account, because it was John's and she is always expecting John to come back. I know better, but mothers never stop hoping."

"I don't hope," said his wife, taking off her spectacles and wiping her eyes. "I am certain sure that my boy will come back to see us, if it is only for a few days, and then, when he finds everything just as he left it, maybe he will stop longer."

"Very likely," said I. "I would never do, I see, to have lodgers." "Children's all alike," said Peter. "You nurse them and coddle them, and plan for them, and all you get is ingratitude for them, and all you get is ingratitude. They are just like the birds; soon as they can fly alone, they are off. I don't say our John is worse than the rest, or so bad as many, for he has never disgraced us-only forgotten us."

"Don't say that, Peter," sobbed his wife. "I'll never believe it." "Well, I hope I am wrong; but I'm not. He has got hold of some pink-faced girl, and doesn't care a farthing for anyone else in the world. They are all like that at his age. "Does he never write?" I asked, feeling awkward, but wishing to show an interest.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

The Wished-For Saw-Mill

“Yes, he writes now and then, not often. Why should He? He knows my wishes, and is determined to have his own way.”

“You are hard upon him Peter,” said Mrs. Williams, “Young people have their way to make in the world.”

“I know that, old woman; but he might have made it here.”

“You see, sir, he is uncommon clever at carving, and that sort of work fetches a high price just now; it’s the fashion when they are doing up old churches and the like; that’s what tempted the lad away.

“Perhaps,” said I, “he felt that his talent was being wasted in a place where he had no particular object upon which to exercise it.”

“May be, sir, but he knew that I had set my heart on the saw-mill all my life, and that I could not work it, now with-out his help; he understood well enough, too, that it would be a better business for himself than working for wages, however high they may be, and a nice retirement for me in my old age. But that is just it, I expect; he did not fancy having for partner an old father, who might soon be getting past his work, though there is no sign of that about me at present, thank heaven!”

“Ah!” said I, “ you were thinking of setting up a saw-mill? It certainly ought to be a good place for one.” It certainly ought to be a good place for one.”

“It ought, and it is, sir,” replied Peter Williams growing excited. And then he entered into many lengthened particulars, of which this is the sun. The sawmill was an existing institution, all present in the possession of a Mr. Tankard, better known as Drunken Tommy, who was willing to cede his lease, good-will, and fixtures for one hundred pounds, and would probably take eighty. That sounds an absurd trifle to give for a sawmill, but you must remember that the Toft is a very little stream, and its waterpower quite Liliputian. Drunken Tommy did not make much of an income after he had paid his rent. But then he confined himself strictly to the sawing of trees into planks, and was indolent about that.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert (continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

The Wished-For Saw-Mill

An Active, intelligent, well-educated man, who combined the carpentering business, or rather made the sawmill subservient to it, might expect a very different result. And I could see that this was only part of Mr. William's belief as to the advantages to be derived from his pet project, and that he dreamed ambitious dreams of becoming a timber merchant. And to think that fortune, in a small way, was to be missed for want of a hundred pounds.

Could he not have borrowed that sum? Ay, he could; but that was where he and his son John had their first disagreement. John would have nothing to say to borrowing; and without the young man's cleverness, activity, and clear head for business, the father could not see his way. And so they parted, not in anger, indeed, but in coolness, considering that John was an only child, and had lived on terms of perfect affection with his parents up to that date. Nor could it be said that he left them capriciously, without good reasons; for having sent a specimen of carving to a famous firm, who were engaged in restoring a cathedral, he received an offer of employment, the terms of which might well dazzle a young country artificer. This happened three years before, and they had not seen him since. At first, his letters had been very regular, but gradually they grew less so, and now they had not heard from him for nearly three months.

I did not learn all this at one interview, for the couple interrupted one another, and confused the account, in addition to which, they persisted in assuming that I had a certain amount of previous knowledge, which I did not possess. However, when the ice was once broken, they often reverted to the subject to their self-willed son, and by degrees I got a connected narrative.

I had originally intended to limit my stay at Whortle to a week; but the quiet homeliness of the place suited me so exactly, that a fortnight slipped by almost before I was aware. I was not fishing all the time; there were two days of east wind, and three of unceasing rain, which, with a couple of Sundays, reduced my actual period of sport one half. Still I was not dull; for, as a rule, no man is so happy in his own society as the angler. But I made the unfavorable weather, which had intervened an excuse for allowing myself one week more, at the expiration of which I determined that I must leave, lest I should be keeping Nibbs out of his favorite haunt.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(Continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

The Wished-For-Saw-Mill

On the last evening but one, I hooked the largest fish I had yet raised. As Nibbs had told me, the Toft was difficult river to fish, in consequence of the bushes, which fringed the banks on each side. These concealed you, indeed, so that you could only throw a very short line; and when you hooked a trout, the method of securing him was to wind up till he was only about four feet from the top of the rod, and then lift him out clear of the boughs. But on the present occasion I could not do this, the fish being a weight, which would have smashed either rod or line to a certainty; and Peter was not there to assist me. So I played the trout, following him gently down the stream, and looking out for a clear spot to land him at. Fortunately (I mean for me), he was very firmly hooked.

“You have got a good one, sir,” said a voice-not Peter’s-at my elbow. “Ay,” I replied; “if I only knew how to get him out of the water. “I think I can help you,” said he, “I have no landing-net.” “Never mind; I can get down to the water’s edge through that bush; play him up to me, and I will slip my cap under him.” This was affected; and in less than a minute the speckled beauty was leaping before us in the grass.

“There are not man of his size in this stream,” said my friend in need. “I doubt whether my father ever took a heavier out of it.” I looked at him; he was a handsome young man, with a broad forehead, bright gray eyes, and a rather massive jaw. “Is your name Williams?” I asked, rather abruptly. “Yes,” said he, looking up, surprised. “I am lodging at your father’s house.” I explained. “All well?” he asked. “Quite.”

And I am anxious to see them, so I will say good-day for the present, sir,” and he strode off with an elastic step. I delayed my return beyond my usual dinnertime, and stole into the house somewhat sheepishly; and great joy is almost as sacred as a great sorrow. When Mrs. Williams brought me my food, I made a sort of half apology for taking her away from her son, and hoped his visit would be a long one.

“Life-long, I hope, sir” she replied, fairly laughing with delight. “He has been getting three pounds a week great part of the time, and has saved enough to buy the saw-mill. That was why he left us, because he knew that his father would never be happy unless he had his fancy. But he would not tell us what he was up to at first, because he was not sure of succeeding, and feared disappointing us. Later, when it was all right, he could not deny himself the pleasure of a surprise. I have had a week on the Toft quite lately. Drunken Tommy has ceded the mill to Williams & Son, who have improved the business considerably already. I had several chats with both, and found that each retained his original opinion.

“John is a very good lad,” said Peter; “first-rate; there is no better in England. He cannot see that those 3 years have been so much time loss. We could have repaid the hundred pounds principal and interest at the end of the first year.”

“I’ll never start on borrowed money while I can earn a crust, though the chance be ever so tempting,” said John. “The interest eats up your profit, and that breaks your heart. Then if you go ill, or have a turn of bad luck, where are you? We’ve got the sawmill, and the comfort of knowing that we have never been in debt, or owed it to the favor of any one.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

The Doctor's Fee
By H.E. Smith

What a vast difference between a simple country village and the crowded city; a difference not only in the structure of buildings and the width of street, but in the manners and customs and even in the thoughts and feelings of its inhabitants.

We do not pretend to judge where the greatest degree of happiness may be found. Perhaps not in one more than in another, for happiness is not confined to place, and is less dependent upon external than upon internal associations.

It would sometimes seem as if they're more of sympathy with the fellow beings around him in the unpretending villager, than in the busy citizen. True, this benevolent interest in the concerns of others may at times become annoying by its prying inquisitiveness, but the heart craves sympathy, and even this is preferable to the fashionable indifference and total ignorance of neighbor and neighbor.

What a sensation is caused by a birth or a death, a wedding or a funeral in the little world of a country village. All seem to participate in the joy or the sorrow.

To find a person ignorant of the event would be a source of exceeding surprise and wonder. News spreads like wildfire. The very birds of the air seem to carry tidings.

Sam Brown, an intelligent active little fellow, well known in the village has been seen to run at full speed from the machine shop to the doctor's office, apparently not finding that worthy at his post, darts across the way to house where some new-fangled practitioner has lately hung out his sign, and, in a moment, with the last mentioned personage at his side, takes his way to the shop again. This is enough. Every one in that part of the village knows that some sad accident has happened, and curiosity and sympathizing interest are expressed on every countenance.

Good Mrs. Walton, as she peeps from her door, is "thankful to Providence that none of her folks work at the shop," and "hopes to goodness" that it is not the engineer, "poor Mr. Whitman," because he has such a large family dependent upon him.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

The Doctor's Fee

By H.E. Smith

This was the opinion of the good wives of the village, and publicly and privately was it expressed. Lansing might have heard it, at any rate he must have felt it, but it appeared to make little difference in his proceedings. He was unremitting in his attentions to the injured man, and so established himself in the good graces of him and his wife, that they were quite deaf to the remonstrances of their benevolent neighbors, who earnestly desired that they should dismiss him at once.

"The arm is certainly doing better than we could have expected; why then should we dismiss the doctor?" asked the sufferer, as a deputation of the village worthies appeared at his bedside, and again began their remonstrances.

"Why, you see, neighbor, the case is this," commenced Philip Benton, who was to be chief spokesman on the occasion. (Philip Benton had received some early advantages of education and was regarded as having a "power of learning.") "You are a poor man, and having met with a severe accident, endangering life and limb, or I may justly say, injuring limb if not life, your neighbors holding you in high estimation, are willing to lend you a helping hand, for which purpose a subscription was set on foot, and quite a sum raised for your relief. Now this money we of course wish to be expended for the benefit of yourself and your family, but we do not feel willing that a large portion of it should be paid to this smart young doctor."

"Now if it were good Dr. Pembroke, the case would be different," chimed in Isaac Dobbs, the miller: "we should not mind paying him a moderate bill, and indeed he would have charged you little or nothing, and everything would have been properly attended to. I have it from his own lips. He greatly for you neighbor Whitman, and regrets that you were thrown into ignorant hands. In his opinion the limb should have been amputated at once."

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Judy Lambert

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

The Doctor's Fee

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Judy Lambert

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

The Doctor's Fee By H.E. Smith

“Thank God that Dr. Lansing differed from him,” exclaimed the sick man, with an energy, which startled them. Then speaking more calmly, he added.

“I am very grateful for your kindness, neighbors, and with my large family, there is indeed need of assistance. As to turning off the young doctor, I cannot see my way clear to do it, because he has done and is doing well with me. In all probability he will save my arm and restore its use, when as you yourself admit, Dr. Pembroke would have taken it off at once. Surely it is better to have two arms than one.”

There was a force in this argument, which none could gainsay, but, after a short pause, Philip Benton replied.

“This may be all very well, neighbor. I do not wish to say anything against the young man's skill, but it does not look well to see him trying to run you up such a great bill, Why, I have counted three and four times a day that he has entered your door. I understand he charges high-a dollar a visit, or something like that. Such imposition! Just for looking at a man. Now you can easily see that it would be trying to the feelings of your friends to think that they were raising money to pay stranger. I am empowered by Dr. Pembroke to say that if Dr. Lansing will give up the case, he will attend your gratis, and if you desire, I will call upon the young doctor and state this in a polite way. No doubt he will consent to the arrangement at once.”

Very reluctantly, Mr. Whitman agreed to this proposal. It was really strange how he clung to the young doctor, and how much he felt that he should miss his kindly words and smiles, and his gentle touch and light tread-so different from the bustling way of portly Dr. Pembroke.

There was no help for it. He might be dependent for a long time, and it was not for him dictate how his neighbors should befriend him.

**Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)**

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

The Doctor's Fee

By H.E. Smith

With his best coat and his most dignified manner, Philip Benton, or Squire Benton, as he was commonly styled, waited upon Dr. Lansing, and politely stated his errand; but, to his unutterable surprise, the request was as politely declined.

Dr. Lansing "regretted that he could not oblige Mr. Benton and the friends whom he represented, but the case had progressed so successfully under his charge that he could not conscientiously relinquish it to another."

Preposterous! And to speck of conscience in the matter, when it was perfectly evident that it was a mere avaricious desire to get all he could from the poor man.

It was the talk of the whole village. The minister from the pulpit denounced in very strong terms those who defrauded the poor. The old doctor gave a more expressive shrug than usual when his young rival was mentioned. Dobbs, the miller, gave the bags of grain an extra shake, and the worthy blacksmith wielded his hammer with unusual energy, as they thought of Dr. Lansing, while the auld wives raised their hands and eyes with indignation when they saw him pass their door, and the young maidens avoided returning his courteous salutation, although they indulged in a sly peep at his handsome form and fashionably cut coat, and sighed as they thought of the popular Dr. Pembroke.

Still everything went on swimmingly at neighbor Whitman's. The young doctor continued his visits, and the patient was making rapid progress toward health. It would be long, however, before his arm would regain its strength, and fears for the future would sometimes arise. In spite of the subscription, which had been raised for him, there were still many wants unsupplied, and nothing more could be expected from the neighbors, for they "had no notion of raising money to pay that spruce young doctor." In fact they were somewhat indignant that neighbor Whitman did not insist upon his dismissal.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

The Doctor's Fee

By H.E. Smith

At length, however, when the children were actually seen barefooted as the cold weather came on, and it was observed that the wood-shed was still unfilled, and a rumor was abroad that the cow was to be sold, charitable feelings were again called forth, and a special meeting was appointed at the vestry to see what could be done.

The room was well filled. Facts were stated, and expressions of opinion were desired. The great question was how to assist their neighbor without placing it in his power to pay the doctor's bill.

This all agreed was not to be thought of. The young man, as everybody knew, was well off, and by no means dependent upon his profession; and even if he were, it was but just that he should be a loser in this case, for had he not declined to resign the case to Dr. Pembroke, who had offered his services gratis? After much consultation it was decided that a committee should be appointed to receive subscriptions, and expend the money in any way, which they might judge to be for the benefit of the family. Fifty dollars were raised on the spot, and the worthy villagers went to their own homes well satisfied with the result of the meeting.

The committee was men of business, and two or three days passed before they were at leisure to attend to the duty, which had devolved upon them. At length they fixed upon an evening, and agreed to meet at neighbor Whitman's and ascertain from him what was most needed.

They found him comfortable seated in his armchair, with the youngest of his children climbing on his knee. He gave his neighbors a cordial welcome, and appeared so cheerful and contented that they hardly knew how to speak of the errand upon which they came.

At length after a few preliminary efforts, such as clearing the throat, poking the fire, etc, Squire Benton, who was as usual foreman on the committee, remarked that he was glad to see neighbor Whitman so smart once more, and supposed he would soon be at work again.

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"Very soon, I hope." Was the reply? "I am out of the doctor's hands at last. He gave me my discharge yesterday." "And a round bill with it, I'll warrant," exclaimed the three committeemen in a breath.

Neighbor Whitman smiled with a very meaning look as he quietly replied, "He did indeed." "I knew he would. I always said as much," cried Squire Benton, almost exultingly. "A mean piece of business it was, and what no gentleman would have been guilty of. Excuse me, Mr. Whitman, but if I had been in your place I would have sent him marching quick enough."

"I might have been a loser, Squire." "Not in my opinion. Dr. Pembroke would have done better for you than that young upstart. As to his bill, plain speaking is best, neighbor. At a vestry meeting the other evening, we raised fifty dollars for your benefit, and we are prepared to expend it for you in any way you see fit, always excepting paying the doctor's bill, That we must absolutely decline having anything to do with."

"It is not desirable that you should," replied neighbor Whitman, again smiling. "Seriously, gentlemen, I am exceedingly grateful for the kindness which has been shown me, but I would not willingly take what might perhaps be better bestowed upon those more needy than myself. I have just received a little gift which will enable me to purchase what comforts are really necessary until I can go to work."

"Indeed!" was the somewhat disappointed reply of the astonished auditors. "You are fortunate, certainly; but your doctor's bill, how will you settle that?" Read this note, gentlemen, and you understand the whole affair."

As he spoke he handed them a neatly folded envelope, containing the following note; "My Dear Sir:-I am happy to say that it will no longer be necessary for me to visit you as a medical adviser. As a friend I trust you will continue to welcome me at your fireside. You have requested me to hand you your bill. The enclosed is the only bill, which I could conscientiously offer you. Accept it as freely as it is given thanking Providence who enables us to be mediums of good to one another. "Very truly yours, F. Lansing. "This is the bill enclosed," continued Mr. Whitman, producing a bank note for fifty dollars. "You see, therefore, that I am well provided for the present, as your kindness when I was first injured has prevented my running in debt." For some minutes the committee made no reply. The "doctor's bill" had turned out so differently from what they expected that they were quite dumb with astonishment.

At length, however, Squire Benton stammered out that he was quite sure the neighbors would insist upon Mr. Whitman's keeping what had been contributed for him, and there would be ways enough to spend it in his large family. As to the doctor, he was free to say that he had been mistaken in him, and for one he would bear witness that he had behaved handsomely, as became a gentleman. The three visitors then bade neighbor Whitman good evening and took their leave. The news spread through the village in the usually rapid manner. The miller ground it in his mill, the blacksmith hammered it at his anvil; Dr. Pembroke left off shrugging, and the minister looked full at Dr. Lansing as he pronounced the text; "He that giveth to the poor lending to the Lord."

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

THE DEVIL'S HOLLOW

By H.E.Smith

In a certain Northern town, situated on the banks of a river, there dwelt, some years ago, an attorney by the name of Mason. He was in considerable practice, and had two clerks in his office, whose names were Mansell and Burton. In ability these young men were nearly on a par, but they differed widely in disposition. Burton was cold, close and somewhat sullen in temper: but in business, shrewd, active and persevering. Mansell, although assiduous in his duties, was of a gayer temperament, open as the day, generous, confiding and true.

Mr. Mason, without being absolutely dishonest, was what is called a keen lawyer, his practice being somewhat of the sharpest; and as the disposition of his clerk, Burton, assimilated in many respects to his own, he was a great favorite more intimately in his confidence, and usually employed on those delicate matters which sometimes occur in an attorney's which sometimes occur in an attorney's business, and in which the honesty of Mansell might rather hinder than help.

Mr. Mason had a niece, who, he being a bachelor, lived with him in the capacity of housekeeper. She was lively, sensitive and clever girl-very pretty, if not positively handsome. She had the grace of a sylph, and the step of a fawn. It was natural that such a girl should be an object of interest to two young men living under the same roof; and by no means a matter of astonishment that one or both of them should fall in love with her; and both of them did. As the young lady had but one heart, she could not retain the love of each. In making her selection, the choice fell upon Edward Mansell, greatly to the chagrin of his rival, and to the annoyance of Mr. Mason, who would have been pleased to find Burton the favorite suitor. However, Mansell was chosen lover, and Mr. Mason could not alter the case by argument; nor was he disposed to send away his niece, who was in some measure, essential to his domestic comfort; and, more over he loved her as much as he loved anything.

Matters went on this way for sometime; a great deal of bitterness and rancor being displayed by Mason and Burton on the one hand, while Kate and Edward Mansell found in the interview they occasionally enjoyed, more than compensation for the annoyance to which they were thus necessarily exposed.

It happened, at the time when Edward's engagement as an articled clerk was within a month of its expiration, that Mason had received a sum of money as agent for another party, amounting to nearly three thousand pounds, of which the greater portion was gold coin. The money could not be conveniently disposed of until the following day; it was deposited in a tin box in the iron safe, the key of which was always in the custody of Mansell. Soon after he received the charge, Burton quitted the office for a short time; and in the interim an application from a client rendered it necessary for Mansell to go out to get some bill-stamps. Having dispatched his business, he returned with all expedition; And in due time he took the key of his safe to deposit therein, as usual, the valuable papers of the office over night when to his inconceivable horror, he discovered that the treasure was gone.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

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Mansell returned and lingered on the skirts of the grove, until the sound of a light footstep on the beaten path which led to the place announced the approach of the loved being whom he felt he was about to meet for the last time. The poor girl could not speak a word when they met, but bowing her head upon his shoulder, burst into a flood of passionate tears. By degrees she became more calm, and then detailed to him a conversation she had overheard between Burton and her uncle; and gathered thence that the former had succeeded in convincing Mr. Mason of Edward's guilt, by a combination of facts which would have made out a strong case against the accused-the most formidable one being the fining of a large sum of specie in Mansell's trunk.

Knowing that he could not satisfactorily account for the account for the possession of this money, without the evidence of a near relative who had departed for the continent a week before, and whose address was unknown and return uncertain, Edward, to avoid the horror and disgrace of lying in the county goal in the intermediate time, resolved on evading the officers of justice, until he could surrender himself with the proofs of his innocence in his hands.

The moon had now risen above the hill which bound the prospect, and warned the lovers that it was time to separate. "And now, dearest," said he, "I leave you with the brand of thief upon my fair name, to be hunted like a beast of prey from one hiding place to another. Oh, Kate I bear with me the best assurance that one being, and that being the best loved of my heart, knows me to be innocent; and that thought shall comfort me."

"A remarkable pretty speech, and well delivered?" exclaimed a voice which caused the youthful pair to start and turn their eyes in the direction whence it proceeded, when from behind a solitary tree that grew in the Hollow, a tall figure, wrapped in an ample cloak, walked toward them.

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The place, as we have before said, had an evil reputation; and although Edward and his companion were, of course, free from the superstitious fears which characterized the country people, an indefinable feeling stole over them, as they gazed on the tall form before them.

Mansell, however, soon recovered himself; and told the stranger that, whoever it was, it ill became him overhear conversation that was not intended for other ears than their own.

"Nay," was the rejoinder; "be not angry with me. Perhaps you may have reason to rejoice in my presence-since, being in possession of the story of your grief, it might be in my power to alleviate it. I have assisted men in much greater straits."

Edward did not like the last sentence, nor the tone in which it was uttered; but he said, "I see not how you can help me; you cannot give me a clue by which I can find the box." "Yes; here is a clue," replied the other, as he held forth about three yards of strong cord. "Here is a line. Go to the river, at a point exactly opposite the hollow oak; wade out in a straight line until you find the box; attach one end of the cord to the box, and the other to a stout cork, but remove it not yet."

"The devil!" said Mansell. Whether he really believed himself to be in the presence of the evil one, or that the word was merely expressive of surprise, we know not.

The stranger took the compliment, and acknowledging it with a bow, said, "The tin box which you have been accused of stealing, is at the bottom of the river, and you will find that I have spoken no more than truth."

Mansell hesitated no longer, but accompanied the strange to the spot, and in a few minutes the box, sealed as when he last saw it, was again in his possession. He looked from the treasure to the stranger, and at last said, "I owe you more than life, for, in regaining this, I shall recover my good name, which has been foully traduced."

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He was proceeding toward the shore, when the other cried, "Stop, young gentleman! Not quite so fast. Just fasten your cord to it, and replace it where you found it, if you please." Edward started, but the stranger continued, "Were you to take that box back to your employer, think you that you would produce any other effect on him than the conviction that, finding your delinquency discovered, you wished to secure impunity by restoring property? We must not only restore the treasure, but convict the thief. Hush! I hear a football."

As he spoke he took the box from Edward, who now saw his meaning, fastened the cord to it, and it was again lowered to the bottom of the river, and the cork on the other end of the cord was swimming down with the tide.

"Now follow me in silence," whispered the stranger; and the three retired, and hid themselves behind the huge trunk of the tree, whence by the light of the moon they beheld a figure approach the water, looking cautiously around.

"That is the thief," said the stranger, in a low voice, in Edward's ear. "I saw him last night throw something into the river, and when he was gone, I took the liberty of raising it up; when, expecting that he would return and remove his booty, I replaced it, and had been unsuccessfully watching the place, just before I met you in the Hollow." By this time the man reached the river's brink, and after groping some time through the water, he found the box, but started back in astonishment on seeing a long cord attached to it. His back was turned to the witnesses of the transaction, so that Edward and the stranger had got him securely by the collar before he could make any attempt to escape. The surprise of Mansell and Kate may be more easily conceived than painted, when, as the moon beams fell on face of the culprit, they recognized the features of Burton, his fellow-clerk.

Mansell's character was now cleared, while Burton, whom Mason, for reasons of his own, refrained from prosecuting, quitted the town in merited disgrace. The stranger proved to be a gentleman of large landed property in the neighborhood, which he had now visited for the first time for many years; and having been interested in the young pair whom he had delivered so opportunely from tribulation, he subsequently appointed Mansell his man of business, and thus laid the foundation of his prosperity. It is almost needless to add, that Kate, who had so long shared his heart, became his wife, and shared his good fortune also.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

CAUGHT BY WOLVES

By H.E. Smith

That was a great winter among the scattered farms and settlements of the Upper Aroostook Valley, Bitter Cold, to be sure, but with just snow enough to make the going easy for man and beast. There never was such a time for sleighing and for “bees” of all sorts. Never such a winter for wild animals, either, and the whole country was alive with bear and wolf yarns. Trade was lively, and the smart-looking store at Square Four Corners could hardly ever be deserted by both its owners the same night, no matter what the frolic was.

That was the way the coolness began between the two members of the firm of Oakes & Mapleson. If it was Jim Oakes’ turn to go out. Harry Mapleson was sure he would spend the evening at Squire Galbraith’s on the hill, and when it was the other way Harry would scowl at his customers till shutting-up time, in the certainty that Jim’s cutter was hauled in under the capacious shed at the Squire’s.

Two bouncing, merry-eyed, self-willed, whole-souled girls were Maggie and Annie Galbraith, and such belles were they of the village and all the country round, that either Jim or Harry might have been in a manner contented, since they had a fair certainty that neither one of them would catch the Galbraith girls alone.

Foolish fellows, as they were, however, they let the mutual coolness grow, until now it was pretty evident that a crisis could not long be postponed. In fact, each one had determined in his own mind not to let the other out alone again, business or no business, and it was by a sort of common consent that they both made arrangement to go to the grand quilting bee at Elder Moseley’s out at the head of Feather Lake, a dozen miles away.

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Not a word did they say to each other beforehand, but they both hit on the same evening for calling at Squire Galbraith's to secure their partners. This too, was awkward again, and the girls themselves seemed to feel it. They were shy and offish, and there were endless blunders and blushes all around, but the upshot of it all was that Maggie was driven to the Elder's by Jim Oakes, while Harry Mapleson took charge of the blooming Annie.

The sleighing was splendid, and the fun at the quilting was of the genuine, old-time, up-country sort, but none of the party from Square Four Corners seemed to enjoy it to the full. Jeff Galbraith, the younger brother of the two belles, a sturdy, bright-eyed, practical joker of sixteen or thereabout, after teasing both couples to his heart's content, managing to keep both his sisters in the hands of other admirers for more than two-thirds of the time, finally retired to a corner to devise with himself the ways and means of fresh annoyance. Nor was it long before a bright idea came to him.

It did not take him a great while to effect a loan of the horse and "pongo" that had wrought his own weight to the quilting, so he would have a fair excuse for adding himself to Harry Mapleson's turnout, and a brief absence in the barnyard enabled him to effect certain promising alterations in the arrangement of Jim Oakes' cutter. It looked all the better for Jeff's plan that both the sleighs were of the coziest and diminutive pattern, hardly large enough for two.

So much done, and Jeff was back in the house just in time to call Harry out from the most comfortable quarters he had as yet; but Jeff looked serious and Harry came. "Have you heard all this about the wolves?" asked Jeff. "What about them?" said Harry? "Oh droves and droves of them in the woods. We must keep together going home, and I wish we had our guns along." Jeff was a trifle taken aback at this, for Harry replied: "Of course I have, and so has Jim. You don't take us for a pair of fools, do you? Double barrels, and plenty of buckshot." Jeff's face lengthened for a moment, for he thought of his lent horse and his work in the barn-yard; but his boyish recklessness came to his aid, and he replied:

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"All right; I'll borrow a gun of the Elder, and I'll ride home with you. Pop Watkins has borrowed my turnout to take his wife home with, for his girls want their sleigh to their own company." Harry again seemed much more philosophical and don't-care than Jeff had anticipated, and the young joker went off to find the Elder.

His request for a gun was received with a degree of sober acquiescence that was an awful cooler on the fun of the thing, and the old man said, as he brought out an enormous old "deer-gun" and the ammunition to match:

"Jeff, my boy, yer right. We folks right around the lake ain't in no danger, but I wouldn't like to be caught tonight betwixt there and square without weapons. That' are old iron throws a grist o' lead." Jeff inwardly acquiesced as he looked down the capacious double-throat of the big gun, and wondered. "If the old thing kicked very bad."

When the time came, as it soon did, for the "bee" to break up, the moon was shining brightly among the frosty trees and on the snowy hillsides, and everything was propitious for a ride home. And yet, not only Jim and Maggie, but Harry and Annie, felt as if the whole occasion had been one of cross-purposes and misunderstandings,

Just then, however, they had a special subject of conversation in hand, for half the talk among the women in the dressing-room at the elder's, had been about the wolves and their – doings, and both the girls were well satisfied with the forethought which gave them an armed escort.

The first few miles were quickly skimmed over, Jim Oakes, with his lighter load, gaining so steadily that he was half the time out of sight, ahead, in the windings of the road. The fences were few and far between, and much of the way was through the open and now leafless forest.

Whatever may have been the current of talk between Jim and Maggie, it was suddenly brought to a disastrous termination before they had got half way to their destination. A little rise there was in the road and a rough jolt over it, and, as the quick strain came, snap went the fastening of the twills to the cutter.

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CAUGHT BY WOLVES

By. H.E. Smith

Jim jerked upon the reins, but those in turn gave way, and the now free and frightened horse bounded homeward, leaving the disconsolate couple sitting helplessly in the cutter. A moment of silent dismay followed, though Jim had sprung out into the snow. As he stood, however, gazing after his runaway horse, his ears were saluted by a strange, long-drawn, mournful sound that came ominously through the stillness of the woods, and then seemed to be taken up and repeated again and again.

"Jim," exclaimed Maggie, "what's that? What can it be?" Jim's face was deadly white in the moonlight, and he hesitated for a moment before he replied; "Maggie Galbraith, that was the howl of a wolf, and it sounds as if there was a pack of them." Jingle, jingle, came the swift, jangling bells behind them, and in a moment more Harry Mapleson's cutter was along-side.

"The wolves! Maggie – the wolves – don't you hear them?" Cried Annie. "Oh, Annie! And our horse is gone," returned her sister. "What shall we do?" "Quick, Maggie!" here interrupted Harry Mapleson. "There isn't a moment to lose. Jump in here with Annie, and drive on home. Out of that, Jeff; we men must stay and fight it out, but the girls will have a good chance to get in safe."

Maggie's motions may have been slow, but before she could answer, Harry had caught her up, and put her down again in his own seat. "Drive, now!" he exclaimed, excitedly. "Tell the Squire to call out the boys, and come for us, but do you two hurry in." "What" cried the girls; "leave you here?" "Yes," said Jim, "it's your only chance, and maybe it's the best thing for us, if you get in soon enough. Whip up, now. Good-by, Annie!" "Good-by, Maggie!" shouted Harry Mapleson, and the quick jingle of the bells rang out again, for the girls had too much good sense to wait for more than "Good-by, Jim," "Good-by, Harry," and "Good-by, Jeff" – but which said which, it would have been hard for Jeff to have told.

Jeff's heart was smiting him terribly for the consequences of his practical joke, but none the less did he come in with a good suggestion; "We can't hope to foot it home in the snow ahead of the wolves," he said.

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"Of course not," said Jim; "they'll be on us before we've gone a mile." "Then we'd better make for the rocks," replied Jeff, "short order" Jeff's right!" exclaimed Harry. "We can back up to the rocks and keep the howling devils in front of us." The next half-mile's walking was as near a run as they could make it, and the steadily nearing sound of those warning howls was all the urging they needed, but it brought them up where the road passed near the foot of a high, rugged, perpendicular granite hedge.

"Hurrah!" suddenly shouted Jeff. "Let's have a fire. I've got some matches. Wolves hate fire." It was desperately quick work, but a long pile of fallen branches and fragments of trees grew rapidly near the face of the rock. There had been no time to lose, indeed, for, as Jeff knelt in the snow, over a handful of dry twigs he was coaxing into a blaze, his companions could already distinguish among the forest shadows the dark, grisly, crouching, bounding forms of their dreaded assailants.

"Hurry, Jeff, blaze her up!" shouted Jim Oakes. "Heavens and earth, what a lot of them!" exclaimed Harry. Jeff sprang to his feet, but his work was not accomplished till he had lit the pile in a dozen places. Merrily the dry birch and hickory bark caught the hot tongues of the curling flame, but before the heavier wood could be kindled, the forest glades around them seemed to blaze with fiery eyes. Bang – Bang – Bang.

"One barrel at a time!" shouted Harry. "Always keep one back." The first charge of the starving, ravenous pack had been a fierce one, but the rattling storm of buckshot checked it for a moment. Over rolled three of the monsters, only to instantly torn to pieces by their fellows; but even that delay saved precious time, and gave a chance to load up again.

"There was never such a wolf-bee in these woods before," said Jeff, as he rubbed his shoulder after the kick it had received from Elder Moseley's awful gun. "I guess everybody else must be safe, for they're pretty much all here." "It looks like it," said Jim; and while Jeff was busy loading and was not likely to hear he turned to his partner-in-trade and half whispered: "Harry, old fellow, we can't say how this thing'll turn out – let's be friends."

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CAUGHT BY WOLVES

BY H.E. Smith

"Give us your hand," said Harry. "I owe you anything for giving up Maggie as you did."
"Maggie!" exclaimed Jim; "Maggie? Ah, yes. What a fool I've been! Harry, my friend. I'm so glad Annie is safe." "I guess I've been a fool, too," slowly responded Harry; "but it's all right now. Ha! Here they come – for your lives, now, boys!"

The fire was blazing furiously now; but for a moment the forest devils seemed to have forgotten their fear of it, as they dashed around it, and into the open space at the end. Not a shot could miss, however and the effect of "six grist's of buckshot" was deadly, but it had to be followed with clubbed guns and fire-brands before the wolves again retreated.

It was a fearfully close thing, and not one of the three got off without a mark; but the firebrands carried them through. They hardly felt the bitter cold in their excitement, and could not have guessed how much of time had passed – it might have been minutes and it might have been hours. Again and again the pack came howling up, and Jeff declared that he had but one more load. His friends were but little better off, and things were beginning to look badly. Even the fire would not burn forever.

"Look out, now, boys," cried Jim; "they're a-gathering. I declare it seems as if there was as many as ever." "Not quite," said Jeff? "But here they come." Good aim and true all around; but it almost seemed in vain to check that maddened torrent of snapping jaws and glaring eyes. The woods had multiplied the echoes of the guns, but just as the three friends braced themselves for another "hand-to-jaw" struggle, another chorus of sounds broke gladly on their ears. Shouts, sleigh-bells, wild hurrahs of excitement and delight! – and in a moment more half a dozen swiftly driven teams came charging down the road from the direction of Square Four Corners.

The wolves heard, hesitated, fell back; but Harry Mapleson tossed his fur cap in the air for very joy, and that head-piece was the only trophy won by the wolves that night. It fell within reach of a yelling brute, which seized it and darted away, and the whole pack followed him, for the cracking of fire-arms had already begun from the "reinforcements.." The foremost sleight dashed gaily up, and the first to leap out were not the men. "Harry! Saved!" exclaimed Maggie Galbraith. "Oh, Jim, I'm so glad!" almost sobbed Annie, while the Squire added, half humorously: "I couldn't help it, boys; the gals would come along; and I guess I know now which is which, if you don't."

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Judy Lambert

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

THE LONE CABIN

By H.E. Smith

I had ridden hard and fast, and was astonished to find myself coming into a straggling settlement. On the course which I should have taken there was nothing of the sort. Somewhere I had crossed the right trail and taken the wrong one. Almost any traveler in the border sections would have been glad to thus stumble upon a place for food and refreshment. Not so with myself. In the breast pocket of my coat I carried five thousand four hundred and ninety odd dollars, United States money. I had received this amount from Maj.-Gen. T. M Lacey and it was to be carried through to Fort L-----, and placed in the hands of Col. Asa F Southard, to defray necessary army expenses.

"Get through at your best gait, Carnes," said the Major, "the money is long since overdue, and Southard's rather irascible temper must have been tried to the utmost. You know how the soldiers get to growling if uncle is at all delinquent in paying up. Ride in a careless manner, but be careful. I don't think that any one dreams of the arrival of this money-save, of course, the mail agent and the clerk who delivered me the packages."

I was directed over an unfamiliar section, hence my losing of the right route. I considered it my safest plan, so long as I had blundered upon the verge of the settlement, to boldly enter and rest as an ordinary traveler would do. Should I push hurriedly on, I might, by that very act, excite suspicion.

There were only two men in the bar-room when I entered; the landlord and the hostler. Under his familiar cordiality the landlord furtively eyed me in a manner that made me wish I was well done with my job, but I reassured myself with the thought that it was the consciousness of the responsibility reposing upon me that caused his glances to disturb me.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

THE LONE CABIN

By H.E. Smith

Before I had finished my supper two more travelers rode up, called out for the hostler, and ordered drinks, or rather one of them came in with the orders, and the other threw himself down on a bench outside and began loading a huge pipe. Strolling carelessly about the room, I managed to glance out of the window. My heart leaped into my throat, for the man outside-I recognized-from description of him-Bill Wolf-one of the most desperate characters that ever figured in the annals of border ruffanism. There was the huge red mustache, the thick, hairy throat, and the shoulders hunched up around his head, suggesting the shape of a mammoth clam-and the voice with a deep down intonation like the plop, plop, and plop of water hurriedly leaving a jug. If the description of the notorious renegade is inelegant, it has the merit of truthfulness, and must, therefore, be excused.

I went through with my supper in form, but whatever appetite I might have felt on my entrance into the inn, had vanished with my discovery. After a time the other fellow came in, having been out, he said, to look after the animals, and they also ordered supper. Now was my time to leave, which I did in a careless manner, passing some commonplace remarks with the two men as I crossed the dim, smoky bar-room? As they seemed to take no notice of me whatever, I felt my spirits rise with hopes that I should make a safe transit. It was quite duskish outside, but the hostler was flitting about the stable with his lantern, which emitted but a little more effulgent light than a white bean would have done, but he graciously brought out my steed at the order, and, mounting, I thankfully trotted away. The moon-a little passed full-would make her debut in something more than in an hour after sunset, and I pushed along at a smart trot so as to get well out upon the plains and into the right trail before that time. The animal went along at an assuring gait, and I was feeling infinitely relieved at my providential escape from contact with the desperate characters whom I had left at the settlement, when my acute, trained, ever alert ears detected the sound of swift riding. In which direction? From behind me, as the mildly floating breeze blew from that quarter. The face of the prairie in this section was a little rolling, but not so as to afford any shelter and not a shrub or bush dotted the expanse for miles.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

THE LONE CABIN

By H.E. Smith

I drew up my horse one moment to listen. No chance travelers ever rode like that. It meant **pursuit**. I gave my steed a galling lash and she broke into a convulsive gait, hove her body up with one or two plunges, stumbled going down from her knees to her nose, and pitched me literally heels over head. For an instant I was paralyzed with astonishment, the next I seized the bit to fetch up the fallen animal, which had in the meantime undergone a strange metamorphosis. She had lost her white face on or in the grass, and, passing my hand between her eyes, I found the hair was wet. In an instant I was examining the white legs-my horse had been peculiarly marked with white legs and face-and I found these sticky with whitewash. What then? Simply, my trappings had been transferred to another animal, gotten up to exactly represent mine in the evening. This discovery brought an appalling interpretation of the on-coming horse-men. I gave the horse the whip as soon as his unstable legs were well under him, and sent him a scouring on ahead, while I ran off to the right, making for a little hollow near a shallow, dry ravine. Here to my profound astonishment I discovered a lone cabin, or hut, about the dimensions of an ordinary country log-house, and, impulsively dashing up to this, I gave a rapid succession of knocks. A shrinking, pale, and cowering woman opened it.

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"What is it?" was her first question, noticing my breathless hast. Had I stopped for a moment's reflection upon the strangely is. Upon the strangely isolated position of the cabin, I should not have passed in by her with explanation:

"Is there any chance to hide here-my horse has thrown me and I believe a party of desperadoes is close up with me." I noticed that the moon was coming up dry and red in the east, when she mechanically closed the door behind me, before I had finished my explanation.

"No no: there is no place," she gasped, her quick ear now catching the sound of the coming horsemen. "This is all the room there is-and there is neither cellar nor attic." "But this?" I exclaimed, rushing for a dark object in the corner. "It's a coffin," was her quick response, "but there's no other chance-they are turning up to the door-get in." I had barely time to place myself in this receptacle for the dead, when a hoarse voice-one that I knew by the description which I had of it-called out:

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

THE LONE CABIN

By H.E. Smith

"Here you, Dick" The woman threw her apron over her head and opened the door. "Where's Dick?" "He hasn't come back yet," returned the woman.

"Oh, he aren't-Jen, hev yer hurd a horse go by to-night?" "Yes, only a little while ago-a small man?" "Yes-driving like the devil." "I hues," she said, and then paused, "you can hear the horse now," feigning to listen, Bill Wolf must have been of a suspicious nature. I heard him leap from his horse and strike with a jarring plunk upon the sod. A smoldering fire was burning on the stone hearth. I could imagine Bill's attitude-he had a hand on each door-casing, his brutal head was thrust inside the room; he was peering about the apartment.

"What in h---is that?" he questioned; and my heart stood still, for I knew he spoke of my retreat. "It's Stauffer's coffin. Dick is a going to carry it over to-night." "Stuff!" said the desperado, "as he made his bed, so let him lay-buzzards are the sextons-for the likes of him."

The woman sort of groaned, and then I heard. Wolf goes up and joggles the rain barrel at the corner of the cabin, and finally goes away with remark:

"He ain't far off; he couldn't stick to that blind critter when he began to hurry." "What shall I do?" What shall I do? Gaspd the woman; "they will be back in twenty minutes, for I believe that your horse is in sight, not more than three-quarters of a mile off, and my husband is liable to come at any moment."

"With him inside the house we might" "With him!" she emphasized it in despairing tones-"he's Bill Wolf's brother."

I was out of the coffin in a trice then, you may well believe.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

THE LONE CABIN

BY H.E. Smith

"It is death for you anyway," she moaned, "for I hear the rattle of Dick's axles already." "Stay; there's the rain barrel," said I, in desperation, "they've tried that once, they may not again."

Before you would be able to speak a sentence, the water was dashed out of the cask and stealing down into the arid soil, and I was in the barrel, and the woman dropping a tub half filled with water in at the top as a cover.

She had barely time to enter the house, the door of which, fortunately, opened on the side away from the moon, when a rattling vehicle drew up at the door, and I heard a hoarse voice raving and swearing at the woman for something done, or undone, and then from the bung-hole, the plug having been dislodged in the upsetting of the cask, I saw the furious return of the three renegades.

There was a good deal of loud talking, and explanations, and oaths, and stirring up of hot nectar, and rough remarks about the cistern in the corner; but both Dick and the woman seemed sore about that matter, and the man peremptorily refused to join the hunt because of the coffin.

"Well, you're going our way a piece," said Wolf, "likely enough you'll have the fun of seeing us wing the turkey."

The conversation was distressingly personal, made acutely so by Dick asking: "Is there water enough out there, Jen, to drink my horse?" "I'll see," she returned, moving slowly over the door-sill, and then, leaping to the cask, she lifted out the tub, and tipped my horse over a little so that I could spring out. I was behind the cask when Dick came to the door and chirruped his beast up to the tub to drink.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

THE LONE CABIN

BY H. E. Smith

"I'll go with you as far as the forks," he said, as two of them came out with the coffin and slid it into the body of the wagon. They then stepped back, probably to call the others. At that moment a wild and desperate plan entered my brain, but feeling for my knife, I found that it was missing, along with the belt to which it was attached. In the sudden jostle which the falling steed had given me, the girdle had been snapped and lost without my knowledge. The horses of the three renegades-my own, which had been retained by the hostler at the inn, among them-were hitched on the farther side of the door, where the moonlight, striking by the end of the cabin, rested fully upon them. It was suicide to attempt seizing one of them; but as the woman, with some purpose in her mind, sang out to the men to come back and get the last dipper-full of liquor which she had mixed, I seized the only alternative.

I sprang lightly into the wagon, lifted the coffin lid, and again crawled into the long, narrow prison. There was no choice. The flood of moonlight had swept so far toward my hiding place that only a part of my body was concealed by the barrel, and I knew that discovery was inevitable, for the man's horse stood in such a position that in order to recover the reins he must have trodden upon me, and there was no earthly thing, as far as the eye could reach over the plain, behind which a man could hide. Ah, but what if he should read just his freight? Can you think how my heart pumped away at the thought?

You wonder what my plan could be. I had none, other than the hope of having only one man to deal with, if he went on his way as he calculated. The three ruffians were mounted, and all were about to start, when the woman ran out with some sort of a blanket, and muttered something about covering the coffin. The man yelled out to her to mind her own business and let the thing alone.

She retreated with the cloth, but she had accomplished her purpose. In its folds she had concealed a bowie knife; under its cover she had raised the lid and dropped the weapon inside, risking giving me a cut as it fell upon me; but in the momentary noise and confusion I had got the weapon in my hand, and with its point raised the heavy lid of the rough box the fraction of an inch, so that breathing was easy if my position was cramped.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

THE LONE CABIN

BY H.E. Smith

The three horsemen spread out, remarking to each other: "Beat up the game now speedily before, by any miracle, he gets into the wooded belt by Buford's Springs."

They continued to halloo at each other for some time: their liberal potations surmounting their discretion. "Dick," they called back as they were driving off, "a cool twelve hundred apiece; throw out your old shell and join the hunt."

The driver mumbled something, but the whisky had thickened his speech so that it was unintelligible to me. If he did attempt to move the coffin, I was lost. They kept within hailing distance for the length of some three or more miles, Dick smashing the heavy wagon along at a stunning gait; and I expected every moment that my shell would be jostled out.

By and by, there was shout off to the right of a "tally ho" as if the huntsmen had sighted the quarry. Nothing but an unwarrantable amount of liquor could have influenced them to conduct themselves as they did, for no sooner had they called out from the right, than Dick came to a sudden halt, leaped from the seat, and ran off toward those who were hallooing.

For one instant my heart stopped beating at the thought of the hazard which I was about to run. The next moment I sprang from the coffin to the ground. A few lightning-like strokes and I had severed the traces and the hold-backs of the harness.

The whole scene is vividly pictured in my mind. The moon-lighted prairie, the little ravine toward which the renegades were dashing, the wagon standing in the trail-then the rattling of the falling thrills reached the ears of the party, and with a wild shout they turned toward me. I was on the horse's back, but boldly defined by the moonlight. There was the sharp report of two rifles. I felt a sting in my foot, another in my shoulder, but the horse was unharmed and the race for life began.

There was disheartening disadvantage for me, for I had no saddle, but I was riding for my life, and I held my steed between my knees, and took the broad trail with the fury of a tornado. The issue would rest mostly with the horse. I knew nothing of the one which I rode; I knew nothing of those that were pursuing me, excepting my own white-faced mare. She could run like an antelope and out-wind a hurricane.

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